

Green Open Homes West LEAD

Supporting Green Open Homes and Not-Yet-Green Open Homes events in the West of England, and self-led home energy surveys for young people

Activities

This project provided a boost for **Green Open Homes** activity in the West of England by providing small grants, training and resources for community groups to run Green Open Homes events, in which householders volunteer to open their home to visitors to view and discuss real-life retrofit examples.

CSE found that extra support was needed for communities running Green Open Homes in traditional buildings, to ensure that the right emphasis was placed on repairs, maintenance and sensitivity to historic features and fabric. The Twyi Centre was engaged to deliver in-person **training** to help community groups better understand the challenges and solutions to retrofitting traditional buildings. CSE also developed its own free three-part Retrofit Basics online webinar course to provide accessible training for all.

Not-Yet-Green Open Homes evolved from the original approach to incorporate a guided tour of traditionally built homes that had not yet been retrofitted (or only partly so). This gave an opportunity to discuss possible retrofit measures *and* to point out pre-existing problems needing resolution first, such as disrepair and sources of damp. These were led by a CSE retrofit expert alongside Climate and Community Action Dundry and Sustainable Clevedon

Open Homes events usually involve a mix of open private homes and public building events. While some successful Open Homes events allow any visitor to drop in, many households are more comfortable with invitation-only. Not every community is ready to host their own event; CSE ran '**Portishead Energy Expo Day**' with Portishead Council as an alternative introduction to the community, delivered in a central location and attended by local people willing to talk about their retrofit experiences.

The project also engaged young people through Scout groups, libraries and events, creating a 'Sherlock Homes' **self-led home energy survey** for ages 10-14. This helped to reach families who would not normally engage in advice through other methods.



Key project information

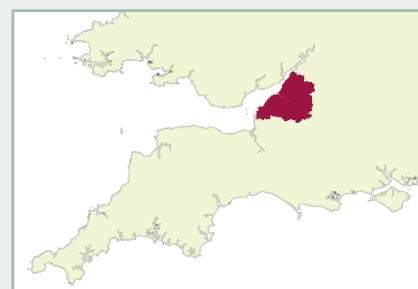
Awarded: £480,885

Duration: Oct 2023 to Mar 2025

Reach: Bespoke advice to 2,000 people, 2,000 people engaged overall

Lead partner: Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)

Supporting partners: Bristol Energy Network (BEN), Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE)



Replication

- Green Open Homes is a great approach in communities with people willing to open their retrofitted homes to visitors. It can be run by volunteers, but some communities may prefer a third-party organisation to take a lead. An event usually involves a local cluster of 5+ homes, and smaller events often lead to larger ones later. Costs typically include insurance and publicity.
- Open homes should avoid promoting poor practice (e.g. 'super homes' with damp problems). Ideally homes should be vetted first, which can be supported by free training developed via LEAD.
- Visual examples can be a great motivator for repair and maintenance, as well as retrofit.
- Not-Yet-Green Open Homes can make retrofit feel more achievable, and put less pressure on home openers to have a 'perfect' home. It can be helpful to focus on typical local housing types or common issues, and works well for smaller events or even community buildings. A retrofit expert is needed as a guide, to ensure messages are good practice.
- Where relevant, Not-Yet-Green Open Homes are a great opportunity to show the impact of disrepair and damp on heat loss and mould, highlighting low-cost actions as well as retrofit options.
- Sherlock Homes can be run by volunteers using the pack developed by CSE. It's designed for people new to retrofit, from aged 10 upwards.

Resources

- [Project profile](#), [further information](#), [case study](#) and on CSE's website.
- The [Green Open Homes National Network](#) was co-established by CSE in 2013. The website contains extensive resources covering every aspect of Green Open Homes event delivery.
- The [Retrofit Basics online course](#) (3 x units, each under an hour long) is freely available on CSE's YouTube channel.
- The [Sherlock Homes pack](#) is available on CSE's website.
- [The Tywi Centre](#) provides built heritage sector training and advice.
- Other relevant LEAD Toolkit contents (see [South West Net Zero Hub website](#)): **(Not-Yet-) Green Open Homes** (method), **Youth Engagement** (method).
- West of England LEAD contributed to the SWNZH LEAD Webinar Series: [Innovations in domestic retrofit advice - Retrofit, Planning and Historic Housing](#) 22 Oct 2024 (39:41 to 59:09) (see also [full slides](#)); [Innovations in domestic retrofit advice - Retrofit, Engagement and Communication](#) 11 Dec 2024 (41:33 to 1:03:52) (see also [full slides](#)).

Contact this project

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About LEAD

LEAD is managed by South West Net Zero Hub and funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The programme is trialling innovative approaches to retrofit advice for hard-to-reach groups and hard-to-treat homes. Find out more [here](#).

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