

# Report: Evaluating how we have delivered a Kent-wide housing retrofit programme – Kent, UK

## Context and rationale

Across UK homes £3 billion is wasted in energy every year. In Kent an estimated 10% of residents live in fuel poverty – an issue exacerbated by poorly insulated housing stock.

In 2013 the UK government launched the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) schemes to help to fund the installation of energy efficiency measures into homes. In Kent the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership (KMSEP) was established to oversee and advise on a scheme to ensure that residents in Kent could take advantage of this ECO funding.



Left: Image of a house during the installation of external wall insulation.  
Right: Image of a house after installation.

## About the Kent-wide housing retrofit programme

The Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership (KMSEP) developed the Kent and Medway Warm Homes scheme to support residents in Kent and Medway to save energy in their home.

The Warm Homes scheme initially offered free heating and insulation measures to eligible residents, and can currently offer subsidised heating and insulation through Energy Company Obligation funding. The programme focuses on helping vulnerable people, and those who struggle to pay their fuel bills, to install efficiency measures.

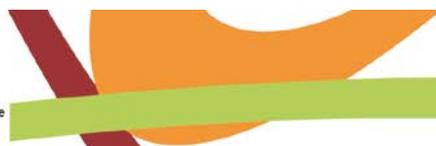
## How we collaborated

The KMSEP was established between 13 local authorities, one unitary authority and key partners across the housing, business and health sectors. Collaboration has included:

- Oversight of the Warm Homes programme through biannual KMSEP meetings and the establishment of a KMSEP Project Board
- Development of a Kent wide brand for retrofitting (Warm Homes brand) through workshops and task groups
- Commissioning and funding of a Kent-wide Warm Homes call centre (funded through 12 district partners, Medway Unitary Authority and KCC)
- Procurment of the KMSEP Retrofitting Framework, working together across the partnership to consult on procurement and assess tenders.

## Key results of the Collaboration

- 1450 insulation and heating measures installed in more than 1400 homes.
- £1.7m of ECO and other funding drawn into Kent to support retrofitting
- Lifetime savings of more than £5.5 million to Kent residents and 25,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> saved.
- Resident and SME support events held and resources developed
- A strong local partnership developed leading to success in joint funding bids.



## Barriers and proposed solutions

- Meeting the needs of a diverse range of partners with different aims and objectives
- Ensuring clear and consistent messages around programme offer and funding in a complex and changing market
- Managing residents expectations around an offer , as funding reduces
- Identification and engagement of the right residents eligible for support
- Creating a simple and clear customer journey within the context of Green Deal
- Managing issues around procurement to meet the needs of all partners and enable signposting for private residents
- Maintaining momentum of the project in an environment of reducing funding.



## Lessons learned and success factors

- Identify priorities and agree action plan early on to ensure all partners are aware of and on board with key goals
- Clear and consistent messages agreed by all are key to managing expectations and ensuring project success
- Working through existing communication channels and 'trusted professionals' enables effective targeting and engagement of the most vulnerable residents
- Allow sufficient time for effective consultation on legal and procurement processes for maximum partner involvement
- Maintain effective communication within the partnership being open about issues as well as sharing success.

## Resources

- Full-Time project coordinator (KCC)
- Partner staff to attend 2 full partnership meetings annually
- Partner staff to attend 4 KMSEP Project Board meetings annually
- KCC funding for joint communication material
- District funding contribution to deliver the Kent Wide Warm Homes Call Centre
- Procurement and legal support.

## Perspectives, continuation of the action

The Warm Homes Scheme will continue to be delivered across Kent and Medway utilising ECO and other forms of funding. Key next steps and priorities for the partnership are to:

- Investigate of additional funding streams and resources to develop the programme
- Strengthen the links between energy efficiency, housing and health
- Develop a fuel poverty strategy for Kent and Medway
- Influence the future direction of central government priorities.



### Transferability - the success factors for collaboration

- Identification of the right partners/stakeholders to involve and the role/level of involvement of each partner
- Strong involvement of the partnership in the early identification of common goals and agreement of an action plan for delivery
- Ensuring buy in to the key priorities from a high level in partner organisations and the involvement of key champions
- Time and commitment to developing partner relationships
- Open and transparent communication with the partners on issues to foster a sense of joint responsibility and willingness to problem solve and overcome barriers together
- Celebrate successes and well as reviewing issues
- Use of existing communication networks and 'trusted professionals' to engage with residents is more effective and saves resources
- Task groups/project board are considered valuable by partners and are a good way of maximizing the use of officers time when resources are tight.

### Contact Us

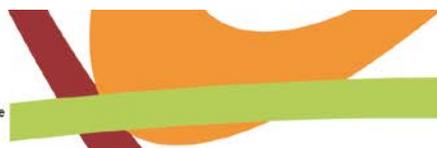
For further information contact the **KCC Warm Homes Team**

Email: [warm.homes@kent.gov.uk](mailto:warm.homes@kent.gov.uk)

Website: [www.kent.gov.uk/warmhomes](http://www.kent.gov.uk/warmhomes)



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