



# Toolkit 2023

Achieving a healthier community and healthier planet together

A Green & Healthy Future for Frome is a partnership made up of the following:



Funded by:



# Guide to this toolkit

This toolkit is intended for use by people who want to take action on climate and health including: healthcare professionals, local authorities, social enterprises and community organisers. It aims to share learning for anyone looking to adapt the Green & Healthy Future for Frome model in their own communities.

A Green & Healthy Future for Frome wants to achieve a health and climate win-win by exploring ways to help local people make changes which are good for their health and the planet's health. This community-led initiative is based on the fact that these issues are firmly linked – if we improve one, we'll also improve the other, enabling everyone to share in a healthier, fairer and more sustainable future.

The programme is a partnership between **Edventure: Frome, Frome Medical Practice, Frome Town Council** and our local community. Our programme is made possible by the **Climate Action Fund** through **The National Lottery Community Fund**.

This toolkit is part of a series of six and tells the story of one project strand: **Healthy Homes**. The full series is:

- Future Shed
- Cycle Together
- Choosing Wisely
- Green Community Connectors
- Storytelling
- **Healthy Homes**



## Inside

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This Storytelling Toolkit was written by Nikki Brain and Hannah Burd, Project Manager (until February 2022) from the Green & Healthy Future for Frome project. Thank you to Kate Thomas and Deb Geraghty from the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Charlotte Carson at Frome Medical Practice and Jo Morris at Frome Town Council. Thank you to the GHFF Evaluators Veronica Wignall (until April 2022) and Owen King. All photos by Nikki Brain/ Jo Morris/ The Centre for Sustainable Energy

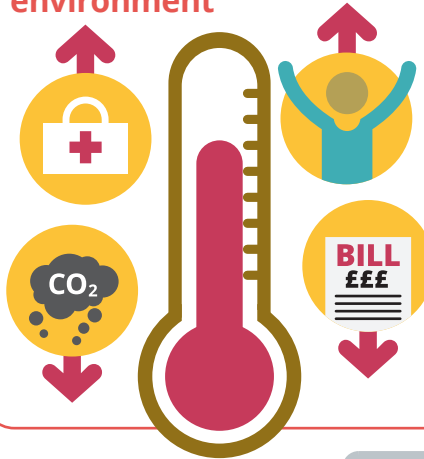
**This toolkit was completed in February 2023. An earlier working version was published in July 2022.**

## In brief Healthy Homes



## Why?

The Healthy Homes team ensures that Frome residents get support to live in a warm, healthy environment



Housholds at risk of fuel poverty and susceptible to cold related illness

Reduce carbon emissions whilst maintaining a healthy temperature in the home

Train local people to provide their community with energy efficiency support

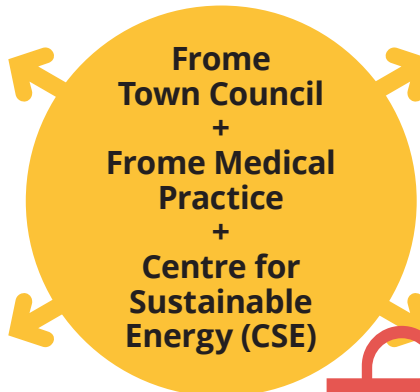
## How?



GP REFERRALS



TEXTS & LETTERS



SOCIAL MEDIA



WINTER WARMTH PACKS



WEBINARS



REGULAR ENERGY ADVICE SESSIONS

## Outcomes & Insights

After the first year of the project our achievements include...

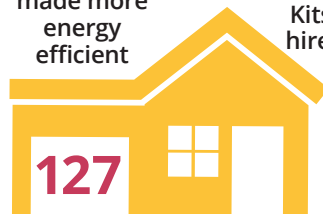
863 people received support



**£146**

A minimum energy bill saving of £146 per household

89 houses made more energy efficient



165 Winter Warmth packs donated



5 Energy Saving Kits available to hire from SHARE library

Where would you hold an energy advice session in your area?

## Checklist

- ✓ Partner with an organisation with home energy expertise
- ✓ Medical Practice to share information with patients and train staff
- ✓ Train up community champions to provide advice and signposting
- ✓ Understand grants and schemes available in your area
- ✓ Be visible - think cafés, supermarkets, town centre

# What is Healthy Homes?



Healthy Homes is a partnership between Frome Town Council, Frome Medical Practice and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE).

The project aims to ensure that Frome residents get support to live in a warm, healthy environment- whether that's helping people on low incomes to access financial support for energy efficiency measures, or providing retrofit advice to homeowners wishing to make home upgrades. Free training is also available to all who want to understand more about home energy.

This project was funded by The National Lottery's Climate Action Fund.

**Below: Energy advice drop-in at ASDA, Frome**



# Why we set up Healthy Homes

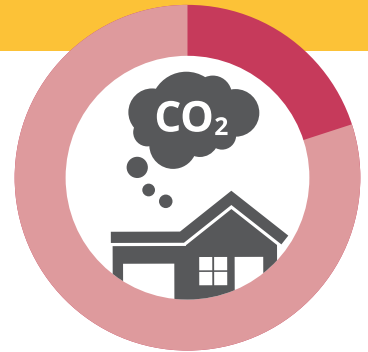
Our homes account for over 20% of carbon emissions nationally and it is estimated that 26 million homes will need energy efficiency improvements to enable us to meet our climate change targets. At the same time, cold homes are a significant health risk linked to higher chance of pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses as well as exacerbating existing illnesses such as diabetes and arthritis. Insulating homes and reducing energy use is a clear climate- health win-win; it also has financial benefits for households through reduced energy bills and for local economies through skilled job creation.

We set out to improve outcomes related to health, climate change, the energy efficiency of local homes, fuel poverty and ultimately to improve the resilience of our community. Our aims were:

- To improve the health and wellbeing of Frome households identified as being at risk of fuel poverty and susceptible to cold related illness
- To improve the income of households supported and where possible reduce their carbon emissions whilst maintaining a healthy temperature in the home
- To increase Frome's resilience by training local people to provide their community with energy efficiency support

A number of government and non-governmental sources of support exist that enable people to take up home efficiency measures, but many of these are complex to navigate, misunderstood and underused. We set out to raise awareness of these, highlight wide eligibility within our community and to make the access of these existing schemes easier. The available support includes, or has previously included:

- Energy Company Obligation- households in receipt of certain benefits or EPC below E. Includes First time gas central heating (FTCH) scheme
- Government grant schemes
- Grants provided directly by Local Authorities
- Winter fuel & warm home discount payments
- Priority Services Register
- Boiler Upgrade Scheme- new Government grant scheme for low carbon heating
- Free advice and support from CSE (in South West England): switching supplier, using heating controls, home draught proofing & money saving advice, debt
- Futureproof- paid for service supporting whole house retrofit (in SW England)



## 20%

**Our homes account for over 20% of carbon emissions nationally**

# How did we set up Healthy Homes?

We set out to try a novel approach to engaging people with boosting the energy efficiency of their homes. Doctors are amongst the most trusted people in any community<sup>1</sup> and health issues are a key factor that motivate people to change their lifestyles. These changes in lifestyle can also have a beneficial effect on the planet too.

GPs also have opportunities to spot where someone's health is being adversely affected by their living conditions. We were interested in whether GPs offering patients most at risk of poorer health outcomes would make it more likely that they would take-up home improvements that could both benefit their health and reduce their household carbon emissions.

We have integrated Healthy Homes information into every COPD and Asthma letter that is sent out to patients (sent out in letter form or in text message form). The letter/ text is signed by the patient's own GP and includes links to further support on offer through Healthy Homes. We included this information in patients' very first COPD or Asthma invitation letter/text and also in each annual patient review invite letter/ text.

**Right: Healthy Homes information displayed on the Frome Medical Practice website**

**Frome Medical Practice**  
SUPPORTING YOUR HEALTH

Opening Hours | Online Services | Contact Us

EXPAND NAVIGATION

HOME / GREEN AND HEALTHY FUTURE - HEALTHY HOMES LETTER

## Healthy Homes – Living in a cold or damp home can affect your physical and mental health

Frome Medical Practice is working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) who can provide you with free and impartial advice and support on how to make your home a warm and healthy place to live. If your home isn't as warm as you would like, or you would like assistance in reducing or managing your energy bills, then we would like to help.

**Get free, impartial advice from the Home Energy team at CSE**

Get help with:

- Improving your home's energy efficiency, including advice and financial support to get a new heating system or insulation
- Tips on avoiding damp, condensation and mould
- Help with claiming benefits including the Warm Home Discount Scheme
- Clearing or reducing fuel debt
- Switching to better value and/or green energy tariffs
- Understanding energy use, such as heating systems, bills and meter readings
- Fuel vouchers or emergency support

**Call the CSE's helpline on 0800 082 2234 for free advice, to book a home visit to help or to find out more about the free drop-ins around Frome to talk to an expert in person.**

## How we set up Healthy Homes?

To ensure that all patients could request more information, we added an Online Form to the practice website that requests a call back or email contact from the Green Health Connector.

Healthy Homes information was added to the waiting room/ entrance screens.

Any updates or Healthy Homes information was added to the GP updates by the Green Health Connector and shared in the monthly meetings.

Frome Medical Practice and Health Connections Mendip kept their own Social Media channels updated with Healthy Homes information and events.

Leaflets were left with Reception staff, Health Connectors and the Home visiting team.

In addition to the work at the Medical Practice, the project team organised activities across the town including:

- Five webinars open to the public covering issues such as how to reduce energy usage at home, heat pumps, and whole house retrofit
- Regular drop-in advice sessions at visible locations including the market place and ASDA
- Energy Essentials training, provided by CSE to people working in public-facing roles in Frome to enable them to signpost to the service and provide basic advice
- Link with Somerset Retrofit Accelerator pilot- virtual Open Homes, discounted retrofit plans for able-to-pay households

**Right: One of the monthly drop-in advice sessions at ASDA**

<https://greenhealthyfuturefrome.org/>

## Highlight: Energy Advice drop-ins

Frome Town Council, Frome Medical Practice and CSE held monthly energy advice drop-in sessions around Frome. Visible locations were chosen and advertised well in advance through Frome Town Council's communications channels. Where more in-depth advice was needed, contact details were taken so a CSE adviser could follow up by phone. 255 people received advice through the sessions.

## What key ingredients allowed us to set up Healthy Homes here?

- Dedicated project leads in place at Frome Town Council and Frome Medical Practice
- Established collaboration between Frome Town Council and Frome Medical Practice allowed close day-to-day working and quick resolution of issues
- Existing support provided in our geographical area by the Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Existing community organisations and initiatives focused on energy. In Frome these include [Frome Renewable Energy Co-op](#) (FRECO) and [Solar Streets](#) (itself a collaboration between FRECO, Frome Town Council and [IDDEA](#)).



# Outcomes and insights

## Healthy Homes reach

After the first year of the project:

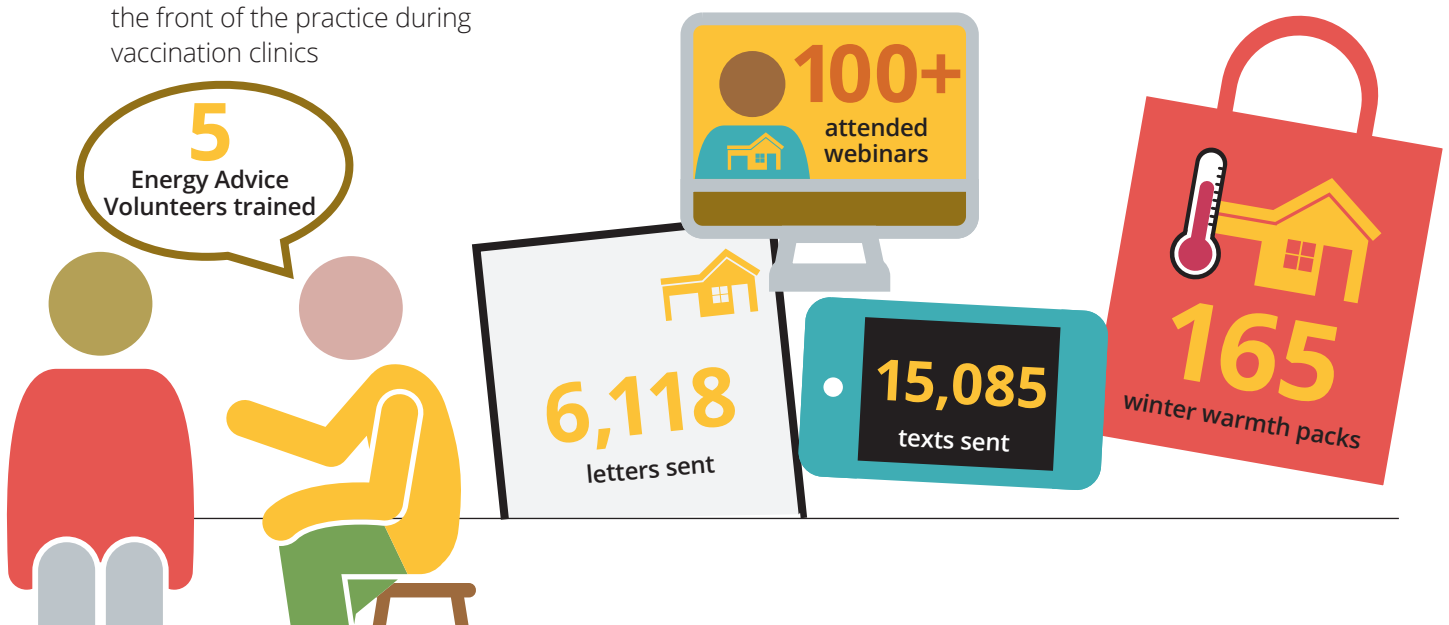
- 255 people have received energy advice at 17 drop-in events held at the library, cafes, supermarkets and the Town Hall
- 6,118 letters and 15,085 texts sent to at-risk patients by Frome Medical Practice
- 5 webinars attended by 100+ people (also available as online resource)
- 10 people trained through Energy Essentials training
- 165 Winter Warmth packs donated
- 5 Energy Advice Champions volunteers trained and awarded City and Guilds Level 3 in Energy Awareness
- Details shared with Medical Practice staff through monthly GP/ clinician team meetings and newsletter
- Comms on the Medical Practice's rotating power points and Social Media
- CSE banner displayed outside the front of the practice during vaccination clinics

## Case study: Healthy Homes Drop Ins

Healthy Homes energy advice drop in sessions welcomed people with wide-ranging concerns regarding their energy use and efficiency. Several people visiting the drop-in sessions simply had a conversation and/or picked up information leaflets, while others were referred to CSE for further immediate support.

One drop-in visitor was signed up to the Priority Service Register, given information leaflets and advice on their energy bill, and supported to receive a £250 grant from the Local Authority. Another, living alone in a draughty house with a poor EPC rating, was referred to CSE who were able to support them with multiple phone calls and advice over several home energy management issues, as well as signposting to other services including the Citizens Advice Bureau and befriending services.

Visitors attending the drop-in sessions were also invited to come to the Town Hall for a phone appointment with CSE. For one parent living in a 1700s home with a low EPC rating and no loft insulation, in receipt of various benefits, this was a chance to speak to an informed energy advisor who was able to refer them to a Local Authority for a £250 support grant, and to a specialist for 1st time loft insulation to reduce bills and keep their home warmer. Another person calling CSE in a booked phone appointment asked for advice on how to balance carbon footprint with keeping the house warm.



Frome resident picks  
up a free Winter  
Warmth pack



# Impact

863

863 referrals to CSE in Frome since project began, this is over 4 times the amount of referrals in the previous year.

Cases include general energy efficiency advice, support dealing with suppliers/ metering, access to support schemes such as the Priority Services Register and Warm Homes Discount, referrals to paid-for services, and inquiries that require no further action. 127 cases logged have led to referrals for grant-funded retrofit work including:

- 37 x Cavity Wall Insulation
- 1 x double glazing
- 2 x External Wall Insulation
- 7 x Internal Wall Insulation
- 34 x loft insulation top-ups
- 7 x new loft insulation
- 20 x new heating systems
- 14 x boiler upgrades
- 2 x solar PV

All together, the total financial saving of the Healthy Homes scheme including bill savings and other interventions comes to £158,032 in benefits to Frome area residents. (data collected by CSE).



Since the project began there have been 863 referrals to CSE, over four times the amount of referrals in the previous year

## Key lessons learned

### Data sharing and confidentiality

The original premise for this project was to overlay data held by the CSE on energy performance of households in Frome (EPC Register) with patient data at the Medical Practice to identify patients living in uninsulated homes who were at risk of cold and damp related illness, to provide targeted support. It quickly became apparent that this type of data sharing could not be supported by the Practice due to GDPR concerns, so the EPC element of the project was removed and instead information was shared with all patients.

In order to allow the project Evaluator to contact people for interviews, a check box was added to the CSE referral forms for the Healthy Homes drop-ins, where people could agree to their contact

details being shared with Frome Town Council for evaluation purposes.

For any project involving data sharing, understanding GDPR legislation and individual organisations' data policies is key so data can be shared safely and legally.

### Repetition

A key learning has been repetition of activities on a regular basis, and repeating messages through different channels. All messages are more effective when repeated, and over time we found people were coming to drop-in sessions with pre-prepared questions. The overall number of referrals increased over time as we built up the project.

# Next steps

## Supporting whole-house retrofit

Our houses account for 20% of carbon emissions in the UK, and it is estimated that 26 million houses across the UK will need retrofitting (i.e. upgrading with insulation, low carbon heating, new doors & windows, ventilation) to meet our 2050 climate change targets. Lack of a national retrofit plan means that currently, local authorities and community projects are looking for ways to support retrofit at a local level. This includes building out the local supply chain and training in low carbon construction and skills. In the next phase of the Healthy Homes programme we will explore how to catalyse whole-house retrofit in our town.



Above: Energy advice drop-in session

Below: Energy Saving Kit

## Offering a community support service

Providing energy advice can be invaluable but we have recognised that some people may not follow up on this advice or may require support to do so. We now have a team of five trained Energy Advice volunteers who can help with practical activities such as installing LED lightbulbs, draught proofing and setting heating controls.

5 Energy Saving Kits containing an energy usage monitor, humidity and temperature monitor, fridge freezer thermometer and a radiator key are now available to hire via SHARE – the library of things based in town.



## References

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<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/ipsos-mori-veracity-index-2020-trust-in-professions>

Watch our short films to see our project in action and download our other toolkits at [www.greenhealthyfuturefrome.org/storytelling](http://www.greenhealthyfuturefrome.org/storytelling)

## Contact:

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<https://greenhealthyfuturefrome.org/>

