

Green  
+ Healthy  
Frome

# Healthy Homes



**LEARNING INSIGHT #2**  
**HEALTHY HOMES:**  
**HOME ENERGY ADVICE**  
MAY 2026



Green and Healthy Frome is a partnership made up of the following



Funded by:

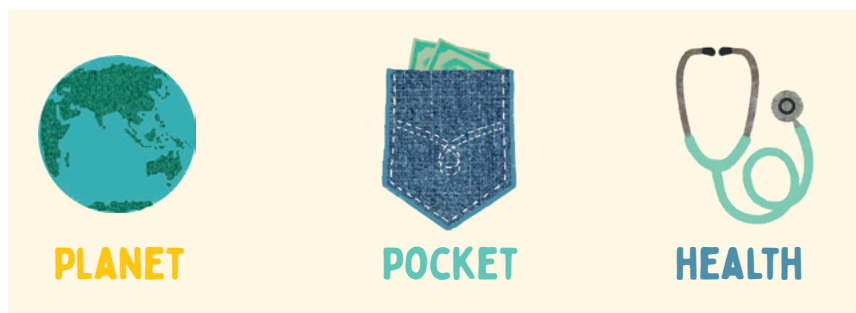


# WHAT IS GREEN AND HEALTHY FROME?

Green and Healthy Frome<sup>1</sup> is a partnership of Frome Medical Practice<sup>2</sup>, Frome Town Council<sup>3</sup> and Edventure Frome<sup>4</sup> (a community, learning and social enterprise hub). The project is funded by the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund<sup>5</sup>. After a two year development phase (April 2021 to March 2023), we achieved a three year full award (April 2023 to March 2026) to upscale our programme.

Our mission is to engage our community to make changes which are good for the planet by highlighting climate, health and/or cost of living benefits. We do this by:

- Modelling and embedding sustainable practices into existing systems and structures, both at community and organisational levels
- Promoting community engagement and network building by working with community groups, individuals, and other organisations to enable action on climate and to amplify our impact
- Providing free resources to individuals, families and households, enabling them to make choices which are good for their health and good for the planet, often saving money too
- Using storytelling to promote behaviour and culture change within and beyond Frome
- Using evaluation to share our insights, learning and impact



*GHF's core message is that 'people's health and the health of the planet are firmly linked - if we improve one, we'll also improve the other - enabling everyone to share in a better future'.*

You can explore Green and Healthy Frome<sup>6</sup> to find out more about what we did, what we learned and what happened next in Frome.

<sup>1</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.fromemedicalpractice.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/>

<sup>4</sup><https://edventurefrome.org/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes/climate-action-fund-our-shared-future>

<sup>6</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/>

## INSIDE

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## WHO IS THIS FOR?

This learning insight is for Local Authorities, health providers (e.g. GP practices, NHS partners), community organisations and VCSE sector, public-facing services and climate, health and cost-of-living programmes.

# WHAT IS HEALTHY HOMES (HOME ENERGY ADVICE)?

Healthy Homes is a partnership between Frome Town Council, Frome Medical Practice, and the [Centre for Sustainable Energy](https://www.cse.org.uk/)<sup>7</sup> (CSE). The project supports residents to live in warm, healthy homes by providing:

- Energy advice drop-in sessions
- Home visits from trained staff and volunteers
- Support to access grants and financial assistance
- Winter support (e.g. Winter Warmth packs and advice)
- Support for households experiencing fuel poverty
- Training for frontline staff and community organisations
- Specialist casework for more complex cases and access to grants

## WHY HEALTHY HOMES?

Homes account for over 20% of UK carbon emissions, and millions of households require energy efficiency improvements to meet climate targets. At the same time, cold and damp homes are linked to:

- Respiratory illness (e.g. pneumonia, asthma, COPD)
- Increased risk of falls, heart attacks and strokes
- Worsening long-term conditions (e.g. diabetes, arthritis)
- Poor mental wellbeing

As our climate changes, health risks associated with homes which are too hot in summer are also emerging.

Healthy Homes was designed as a climate - health - financial 'win-win', reducing emissions while improving wellbeing and lowering energy costs. A key innovation was the partnership with Frome Medical Practice which enabled:

- Trusted communications from GPs, nurses and allied professionals, whose information and advice encouraged more vulnerable residents to access support with their homes
- Addressing the root causes of cold, damp and mouldy homes, not just the health symptoms and social impacts of substandard homes and energy inefficiency



<sup>7</sup><https://www.cse.org.uk/>

## IMPACTS

The changes we were hoping to achieve were:



### CLIMATE

- Reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from inefficient homes
- Increased uptake of renewable and low carbon energy options



### HEALTH

- Improved physical and mental wellbeing
- Reduced GP visits and hospital admissions



### COMMUNITY

- Increased community capacity via energy advice champions
- Allied professionals trained to identify cases and signpost
- Beneficiaries better informed and able to signpost others



### FINANCIAL

- Savings to NHS health services
- Lower household energy bills
- Increased access to grants and financial support



## SETTING UP

Healthy Homes was built on a novel partnership between health and climate sectors, using the trust and reach of a large GP practice and a local council to engage residents.

To strengthen our impact and learning we partnered with the [Centre for Sustainable Energy](https://www.cse.org.uk/)<sup>8</sup> (CSE) to provide:

- Technical expertise
- Training and specialist support to our staff and volunteers
- Casework support



## WHAT WENT WELL

The partnership with CSE allowed us to build local capacity and knowledge over time, moving from reliance on external expertise to a more community-led model, with staff working alongside energy advice champions to deliver our multi-faceted programme.

Partnering directly with Frome Medical Practice, a formal partner in the Green and Healthy Frome (GHF) programme, enabled us to reach vulnerable residents - in particular respiratory patients - who might otherwise be unaware of the advice, information and support available.

By partnering with CSE for technical advice and casework, we were able to offer a menu of tailored support, including for more complex cases. Casework included access to current information on grants for energy efficiency measures alongside advice and financial support (for those eligible) to help with energy bills and communicating with suppliers. CSE also provided specialist advice to our staff and initially led our volunteer energy advice champion training, building long-term capacity in Frome.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

Data sharing and confidentiality presented problems to our team. The project originally aimed to combine CSE regional data on household energy performance certificates (EPCs) with patient data from the Medical Practice to offer targeted support to people living in energy inefficient homes and at risk of cold- and damp-related illness. However, this level of data sharing was not possible due to GDPR concerns. Instead, information was provided to all FMP patients deemed to be at risk via medical professionals. To enable evaluation of Healthy Homes, a consent checkbox was added to CSE self-referrals generated by Healthy Homes drop-ins, allowing CSE to share contact details with Frome Town Council for monitoring purposes. These examples highlight the importance of understanding GDPR legislation and organisational policies so that data can be shared safely and legally, both to deliver an effective service and to enable evaluation. We continued to encounter data sharing issues throughout the project lifecycle, however we were able to use anonymised data provided by CSE to find out more about beneficiary and neighbourhood profiles, support and outcomes.

<sup>8</sup><https://www.cse.org.uk/>

# DELIVERY PHASE

In order to reach as many members of our community as possible, we ensured that our communications referenced the health and financial co-benefits of Healthy Homes. Financial relief in particular was a key motivator during cost of living crises. The team also offered practical support via home visits. 'Winter Warmth' packs (warm clothing, thermal mug) were distributed via home visits and community facing events. Our local renewable energy community [FRECo](https://www.freco.org/)<sup>9</sup> contributed some of their profits to the scheme to enable us to purchase the necessary kit.

Frome Medical Practice embedded signposting to Healthy Homes into a variety of targeted and universal communications for both patients and staff:

- Letters and texts signed by GPs to COPD and asthma patients
- Screens and displays in waiting rooms
- Website forms for referrals
- Internal staff updates and meetings

Whilst we did not introduce a formal system to find out how beneficiaries heard about Healthy Homes, self-referrals to CSE from Frome postcodes increased four fold during our development phase and we are confident that GP communications were a significant factor in this increase.



<sup>9</sup><https://www.freco.org/>

<sup>10</sup><http://www.greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.mysociety.org/climate/neighbourhood-warmth/>

<sup>12</sup><https://www.fairerwarmth.com/>

Frome Town Council's (FTC) Healthy Homes staff and volunteers and CSE colleagues provided multiple touchpoints in our community to raise awareness of the support and services on offer:

- Community drop-in sessions in a wide range of settings including the central shopping precinct, 'pantry' sessions providing subsidised food, JobCentre 'Improving Lives' multi-agency days, 'Money Matters' sessions and a local carers' day
- Volunteer and staff-led home visits
- Attendance at community and GHF events and activities where climate, health or cost of living were a theme (e.g. Green Hacks Day)
- Training for frontline organisations (e.g. public health nursing team, Fair Frome, landlord/tenancy forum, 'Money Matters' team) with a focus on enabling participants to provide basic advice and signposting for households in need, including identifying and responding to fuel poverty
- Public webinars (e.g. energy saving, heat pumps, retrofit)

Over time, the delivery of Healthy Homes evolved in response to identified needs and opportunities within our community. Developments included:

- Recruitment of a Volunteer Coordinator to manage and support our growing cohort of Energy Advice Champions
- Energy-saving hardware and support to install in the home if required (e.g. radiator reflectors, draught proofing, window film and thermal curtains)
- A new Retrofit strand in the 'full award' phase of GHF (from April 2023) - see [Learning Insight # 4](#)<sup>10</sup>
- Trials of digital tools to empower residents to better manage energy in their homes and to access relevant advice and information ([Neighbourhood Warmth](#)<sup>11</sup> and the more successful [Fairer Warmth](#)<sup>12</sup> platforms)



## WHAT WENT WELL

As Healthy Homes became embedded, we experienced a high demand for home visits and personalised support. This had resource implications, with initial home visits requiring two or volunteers or one staff member working to our lone working policy, which ensured safety check ins. We recruited a strong contingent of Energy Advice Champions, with 7–10 active volunteers at any given time and a total of 20 active volunteers over 3 years. During energy crises and associated rising costs, we noticed increased engagement. Equally we noticed a winter ‘peak’, although overall demand for Healthy Homes services has increased across annual cycles.

The Healthy Homes team has developed effective partnerships with local organisations, and our volunteers provide additional capacity to work across satellite settings (pop-ups and hosted sessions) where the team can engage with the public, in particular those at greatest risk due to financial pressures or social vulnerabilities (see **Engagement** below for examples). As Green and Healthy Frome expanded its offer into Retrofit from 2023 and Renewables from 2025, the Healthy Homes team was able to access wider advice, information and funding opportunities for lower carbon households in Frome.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

Volunteer programmes need dedicated coordination to be sustainable, with consideration of the resources needed to match volunteer capacity with project tasks. Some volunteers had very limited availability, and as the scheme progressed we introduced a minimum commitment requirement. Volunteer schemes also need capacity to manage health and safety, support / supervision and volunteer development. We would recommend that any similar project considers the scale and scope of volunteer support required for a safe and effective service.

Digital tools are not for everyone and we found that many residents and volunteers didn't want to engage with digital platforms and tools. Non-digital routes must remain available for residents who prefer a more traditional approach or are digitally excluded.

By incrementally building the competence and confidence of our staff and volunteers via training and mentoring, we have built local capacity and community. Frome Town Council (FTC) has reduced their reliance on CSE now that the Healthy Homes team is able to manage more complex and specialist cases. CSE has ‘cascaded’ their training offer so that FTC staff can now lead bespoke Energy Advice Champion training for volunteers and other stakeholders.

# ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Over the course of three years, we have been able to test and learn from a variety of public engagement activities. We discovered that engagement was most effective when it was local and visible and delivered or hosted by a trusted source (e.g. health, local government and reputable community organisations).

Consistent and repeated messages across all channels and via in person events proved to be an effective strategy, with demand for Healthy Homes steadily growing across GHF's lifecycle. As identified above, an emphasis on health and financial impact alongside climate messaging provides powerful motivation, especially when cost-of-living pressures are paramount for residents.



## WHAT WENT WELL

By delivering regular and one off 'pop-up' sessions in familiar and high footfall locations, we were able to integrate with local infrastructure (e.g. bi-weekly markets) and wider health, social and voluntary sector provision. Healthy Homes was visible in Frome Medical Practice, Frome community hospital, the library, food bank, pantry, 'Money Matters', Job Centre and Citizens' Advice. We supported careers days, social worker awareness sessions and local charities. Training of allied professionals, such as public health teams, increased awareness of need and vulnerability whilst generating signposting and referrals.

Across the Green and Healthy Frome partnership, we were able to use both project and partnership communication channels, as well as those of allied local organisations. We were fortunate to have dedicated comms support both for GHF overall and within Frome Town Council and Frome Medical Practice. Interfaces included information screens at Frome Medical Practice, social media, radio and local press. The team also harnessed learning from similar programmes such as [Cosy Kingdom](#)<sup>13</sup> to inform their comms approach.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

A regular and visible presence helps to build awareness and engagement. For example, we found that in Frome's Food Bank people did not want to stay and talk, whereas in the Pantry we were able to engage with users and this became a regular venue. Initial 'pop-ups' at Frome Medical Practice were quiet, however over time uptake grew. Joining hosted multi-provider events, such as the Job Centre's 'Improving Lives' events, reached our wider community, including those living in economic hardship.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Our final [GHF Evaluation Report](#)<sup>14</sup> provides detailed learning on the topic of monitoring, evaluation and learning - a huge challenge across our multi-faceted project. For robust monitoring of Healthy Homes, we would have needed partnership-wide shared systems to track engagement and action from initial enquiry to advice and information to measures taken. For example, advising a homeowner on insulation and referring them for a grant can only be matched to carbon savings if the grant application is successful and installation is completed. We can then project financial and carbon savings over a time period thereafter.

The data which we were able to collect included attendance at events, home visits, referrals from our programme to CSE (with further referrals from CSE's Somerset-wide offer), casework uptake and outcomes and some qualitative feedback (surveys, quotes and case studies from individuals). We also tracked volunteer numbers and volunteer hours. The carbon and financial savings below are a conservative estimate as we were not able to measure all impacts.

## MEASURABLE IMPACTS

3,766

Number of engagements (not individuals)

5,803

Number of letters and texts sent to Frome Medical Practice patients

OVER 100

Number of events and sessions

333

Referrals to CSE from Healthy Homes

99

Home visits

£197,000

Financial savings

23.23

Carbon savings (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>)

282

Volunteer hours contributed by 20 volunteers

## WHAT WENT WELL

As Healthy Homes progressed, we reviewed data collection fields across partners and work packages to improve consistency and enable aggregation of Healthy Homes data for further analysis. It became clear to our team that boundaries between energy advice and retrofit were artificial.

Each household required a tailored approach depending on the fabric of the home, the needs and lifestyle of householders, their financial means and whether they were tenants of social or private landlords or homeowners. By year 3, GHF was delivering work packages across energy advice, retrofit and renewables, enabling a comprehensive Healthy Homes service with ongoing support from CSE for both energy advice and retrofit strands.

<sup>14</sup><http://www.greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning>

## WHAT WE LEARNED

We did not align partners around a shared set of indicators early enough to develop a complete and consistent dataset, with data sharing across partners and GDPR compounding the issue of tracking individuals, households and related outcomes. Our evaluation framework was not sufficiently developed at the outset to manage the complexity of the Healthy Homes work. Due to data sharing limitations and different systems across Frome Town Council, Somerset Council and CSE, we could not always attribute outcomes for Frome residents directly to Healthy Homes interventions. In retrospect, we would have:

- Collected more data more consistently, with clear follow-up protocols, to demonstrate our full impact
- Involved partners, staff and volunteers in the initial evaluation design phase
- Made provision for the additional staff hours required to gather data, contribute to evaluation, complete activity and impact reports and deliver learning insights, films etc.

We know from conversations with beneficiaries and professionals that Healthy Homes contributed to improved health and wellbeing, however we were unable to measure these impacts across our caseload. In line with funder guidance at the time of GHF's inception, the project's evaluation framework mainly focused on carbon emissions data and financial savings. However, by the end of our funding cycle the Climate Action Fund had published a new impact framework which balanced environmental, economic, social and health impacts, recognising the value of the co-benefits which were embedded in GHF's approach.

In the next iteration of Healthy Homes, fully funded by Frome Town Council, we are developing a monitoring framework with a small number of carefully selected indicators in order to measure health, financial and carbon impacts. This will enable us to provide evidence to stakeholders (including Town Councillors) of return on investment and support compelling bids for further funding.

### CASE STUDY:

## AUDREY - FROM NO HEATING TO A WARM, EFFICIENT HOME

When Audrey contacted the Healthy Homes team, she was caring for her husband, who had significant health issues, in a home without central heating. Their only source of warmth was a wood burner which was difficult to manage and insufficient. Following the initial home visit, the Healthy Homes team made a referral to CSE for more support. Through this, Audrey was able to access grant funding for a heat pump and solar panels, transforming not just the warmth and the comfort of their home, but how the family functioned day to day.

As the new system was unfamiliar to Audrey, our volunteer visited to check that everything was working properly and explain how to use the system. Audrey told us that personal support made a real difference, helping her to feel confident and in control.

Audrey had been unable to access her energy bills due to an incorrect email address held by her energy provider. Once this was resolved, we helped her set up an account and arranged for paper bills so she could manage her bills more easily. When Audrey raised concerns about rising costs, we reviewed her energy use and supported her to switch to a more suitable tariff with another provider. We also helped Audrey to submit meter readings and set up her account, ensuring a smooth transition. Finally we submitted an application to the Smart Export Guarantee scheme, enabling Audrey to be paid for surplus electricity generated.

What began as a cold, difficult living situation was transformed into a warm, efficient home where Audrey and her husband could feel more comfortable and secure. Healthy Homes support led to improved health, reduced carbon emissions and reduced energy costs for the household.

## RESOURCES

- [Healthy Homes - Frome Town Council](#)
- [Green and Healthy Frome - Our Learnings](#)
- [Cosy Kingdom – Stay warm, save energy](#)
- [Home - Centre for Sustainable Energy](#)
- [Annual fuel poverty statistics report: 2026](#)
- [Health effects of home energy efficiency interventions in England: a modelling study - PMC](#)
- [Effect of energy-efficient homes on residents' health: evidence from a natural experiment in the Netherlands - ScienceDirect](#)



## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information about Healthy Homes please reach out to the team via our page [Healthy Homes](#)<sup>15</sup>

Thanks to Jo Morris and Caroline Wasjblum at Frome Town Council and all of the volunteers who support this vital work. Thank you to the National Lottery for funding our Project and for your support along the way.

We are very grateful to our partners CSE for their work with Frome residents, community and our team.

Illustrations: Jenna Herman [jennadoodles.co.uk](http://jennadoodles.co.uk)

Design: Nick Moyle [inkcapdesign.co.uk](http://inkcapdesign.co.uk)

You can find our other learning insights and toolkits on Green and Healthy Frome's '[Our Learnings](#)' page.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup><https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/our-community/our-sustainability-work/green-and-healthy-frome/healthy-homes/>

<sup>16</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/>

