

Lancashire Green Homes Advice Service

2020/21 report



Introduction

In September 2020 [MORE Renewables](#) made a grant from its community benefit fund of **£3060** to Green Rose CIC to deliver a Green Homes Advice Service for Lancashire. The purpose of this service was to offer any homeowner, landlord or tenant impartial advice on how to lower their energy bills and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from their domestic property. This has included:

- Helping households to identify what support they might be eligible for
- Supporting them as appropriate to access grants to make home improvements including heating, insulation, and glazing - especially from the Government's Green Homes Grant
- Making them aware of trusted local installers that have the appropriate accreditation
- Helping them to lower their bills and switch their energy tariff to 100% renewable electricity
- Signposting them for additional support to address fuel poverty issues such as emergency heating replacement, fuel debt, and benefits checks

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions the service was delivered via freephone 0800 207 or by email – with some clients also receiving follow up information by e-mail or letter.

This report summarises progress made by the service in 2020/21.

About Green Rose CIC

Green Rose CIC is a social enterprise based in North Lancashire which aims to help households reduce their energy bills and carbon footprints.

As well as delivering the Green Homes Advice Service we are also the local delivery partner for the national [LEAP energy advice programme](#) which supports households in fuel poverty (i.e. with low incomes and high energy costs)

Any surplus that we make in 2020 and 2021 is being invested in [Morecambe Bay Foodbank](#).

Delivery

Following the launch of the Green Homes Grant in September we made local advice providers and community groups aware of the new service and began to receive calls and emails from residents – mainly in North Lancashire. The Green Homes Grant programme required residents to jump through a number of hoops to apply, and was very orientated towards web applications – meaning that digitally disengaged households were excluded. We provided straightforward advice and helped residents and landlords to understand what they could realistically expect from the scheme.

We also approached a range of local low carbon and heating and insulation contractors to develop a register of potential installers that local households could approach. Many were cautious about registering for the Government’s new ‘Trustmark’ scheme which is designed to provide a single overarching accreditation for companies engaged in retrofit. Previous government schemes, such as the Green Deal, were badly managed and resulted in significant losses for the retrofit industry. They were also very unwilling to provide the usual onsite surveys or quotes due to large numbers of speculative queries.

It turned out that their scepticism was well founded as the application process, which was administered by a Canadian company with offshore call centres, was beset with delays. There were significant delays in suppliers receiving payment and many quotes were rejected on what seemed to be spurious grounds. Lots of contractors were left out of pocket and with unhappy customers.

With the programme nominally ending at the end of March 2021 the Government were under pressure to extend the scheme, which they initially did for 2021/22 (albeit with a reduced pot of £300 million). We continued to promote the service but found it difficult to give clarity to households on timescales and available installers. Then suddenly at the end of March the Government announced that the voucher scheme was closing after all, giving only 4 days-notice. It’s estimated that in total only around 60,000 homes will ultimately be supported – around **10%** of the original target.

Outcomes

Outcomes	2020/21
Clients supported (original proposal estimated at least 100 to be helped)	66
Lancashire contractors engaged (Insulation, low carbon heating, solar, retrofit assessment)	26

Planned activity for 2021/22

We would like to continue delivering the service during 2021/22 and **have sufficient funding remaining to maintain the freephone number and to support at least 30 more clients.**

Despite the loss of the GHG voucher scheme, we have continued to provide advice on low carbon, heating, and renewables to households that are ‘able to pay’ for works and there remain some subsidies available – such as the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI).

We are also very excited about the potential offered by the GHG Local Authority Delivery Programme (LAD) which is being offered by councils across England – including Lancaster City Council – and delivered by [Cosy Homes in Lancashire \(CHiL\)](#). It is estimated that there will be nearly £1 million available to private households in Lancashire during 2021 for measures such as solid wall insulation, heat pumps and solar PV.