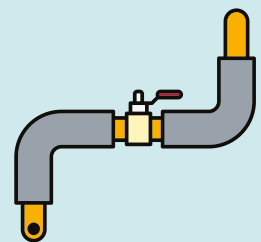
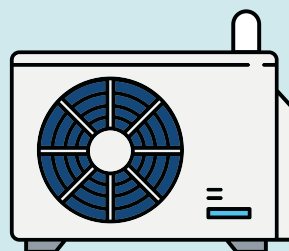
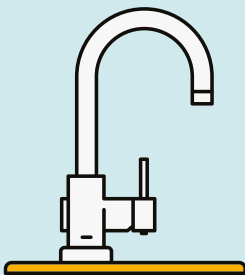
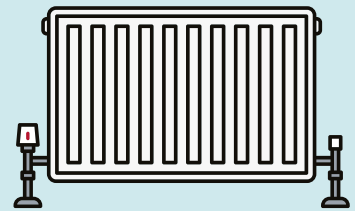
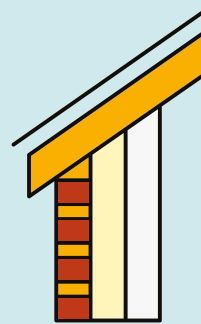
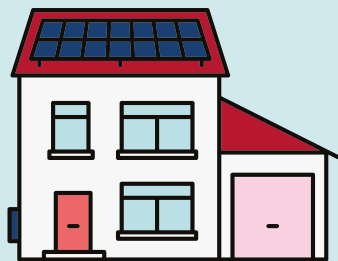
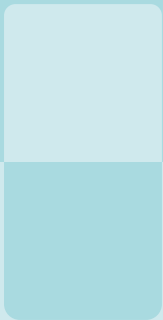


# Home Energy Advice North East

## LEAD Best Practice Guide

Developing a targeted marketing campaign for retrofit energy advice



# Introduction

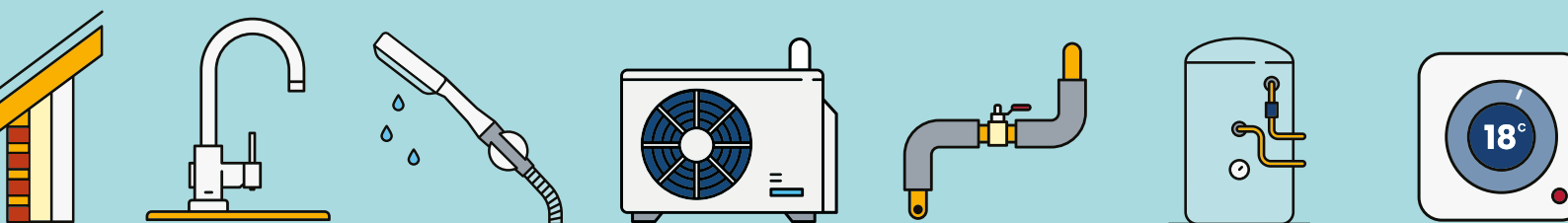
**Domestic retrofit is a strategic priority for the North East region** and the North East councils have a long history of delivering practical programmes to help people reduce heating and energy use in their homes. This includes supporting residents with energy efficiency and affordability through fuel debt advice, income maximisation of benefits and switching energy tariff.

Although the North East has been one of the most active regions in delivering home energy efficiency measures, it has some of the highest fuel poverty levels in the country due to income levels and remaining poor quality buildings. In the North East **as many as 220,000 households are estimated to be fuel poor** (Gov, 2023).

Scaling up domestic retrofit is a huge economic development opportunity for the North East but residents face multiple barriers including high upfront capital costs, slow return on investment, lack of knowledge, lack of trusted installers or advice and disruption to their homes.

Following a successful allocation of funding from the national Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) programme run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) in January 2024, the **North East Combined Authority (North East CA)** appointed Energy Saving Trust to deliver its LEAD project, with **Groundwork North East and Cumbria** and **Community Action Northumberland** as local delivery partners.

North East CA's LEAD project has been delivered alongside a One Stop Shop telephone and web advice service funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; both projects are delivered under the overarching brand Home Energy Advice North East.



# Objectives

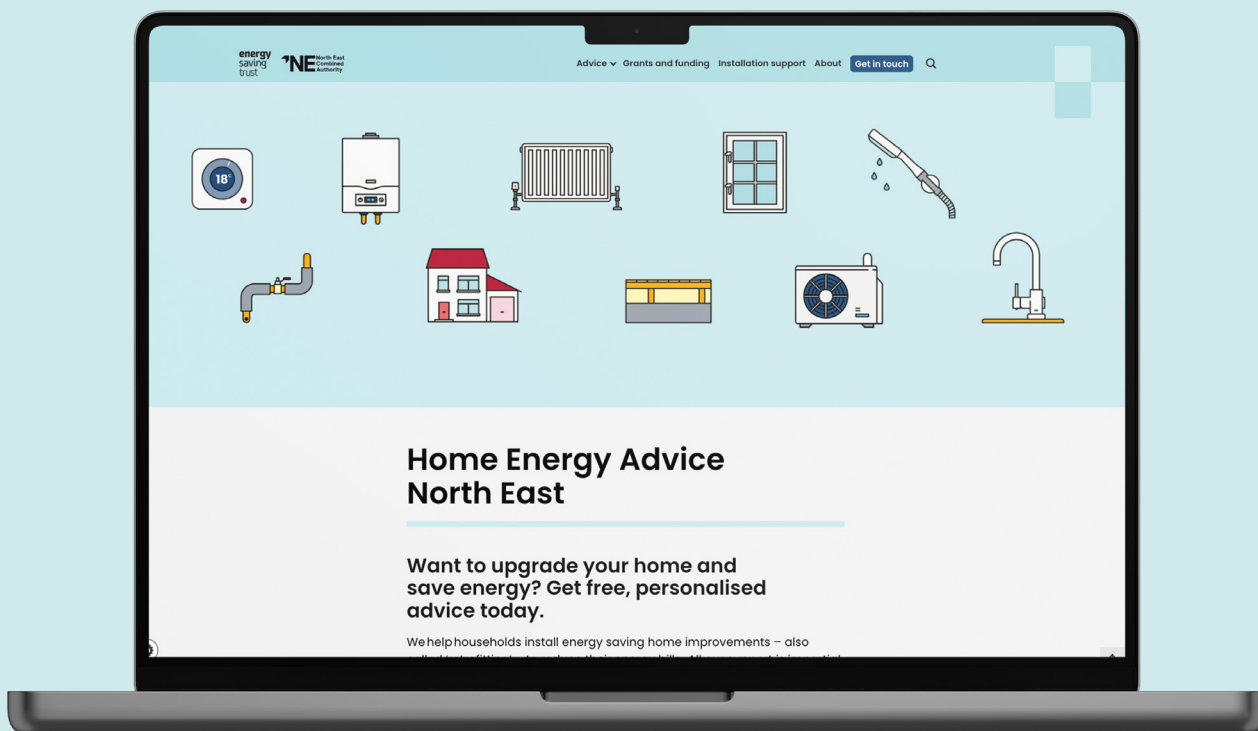
The overarching objective of the LEAD programme is to trial different approaches to in-person energy advice, using learnings to inform the development of an approach to energy advice provision that could be replicated nationally.

The programme is focused specifically on targeting hard-to-treat properties and/or hard-to-reach residents.

## North East CA's LEAD offer includes:

- Free and impartial advice on energy saving home improvements, delivered in the home
- A property report detailing energy saving recommendations, accessible through a QR code
- Face-to-face advice provided at community events

The marketing objective was to reach 1,500 households over a 12-month period.



# Challenges

## Audience

The LEAD audience is 'hard to reach' which presents challenges when developing marketing approaches. Non-digital communication methods were needed to reach the digitally excluded, but these can often be more expensive.

Equally, rural householders can be challenging to engage with as properties can be widely dispersed creating fewer opportunities for out of home advertising or community events. These challenges were taken into consideration when developing the marketing campaign which included a broad mix of communication methods tailored specifically to the LEAD audience.

## Messaging

Research has shown that householders don't understand or engage with the word 'retrofit'. Instead, the term 'energy saving home improvements' was used in all marketing materials as a clearer and more positive descriptor of the offer. Using plain English was also key to ensure marketing messages were accessible to all audiences.

Through desk research and audience insight from Experian, we recognised that for the LEAD audience overall, warmth, comfort and saving money were primary motivators, over and above environmental concerns.

Our campaign strapline: 'Free in-home support, tailored to you: reduce your energy bills to create a warmer home'; was devised to convey the tailored hand-holding level of support offered by the service, with a focus on reducing energy bills and increasing warmth.



# Challenges

## A joined-up approach

Our LEAD programme was marketed alongside a one stop shop (OSS) telephone and web advice service. We created an umbrella brand identity which brought the OSS and LEAD services together under one service name: 'Home Energy Advice North East'.

Within this umbrella brand, the two services were differentiated through the use of partner logos and straplines.

Although two distinct marketing campaigns were delivered, this over-arching brand enabled us to present a unified service across the North East and created opportunities for cost savings.

For example, a single website was developed for the programme, with LEAD and OSS each having their own distinct areas on the site.

**energy saving trust** **NE** North East Combined Authority

### Home Energy Advice North East

**Free in-home support tailored to you**

Our advisors are ready to help you to reduce your energy bills and carbon emissions.

18°C

Place this card in a room where you spend most of your time to help you keep an eye on the temperature of your home.

**If you struggle to heat your home because of money worries, or because your home is in a rural area, poorly insulated or off-gas, we're here to help with free, impartial expert advice.**

#### Top Energy Saving Tips

- Is your room thermostat too high? Room thermostats do not need to be any higher than 18° to 21°C.
- Not all rooms in your home need to be heated equally. Use radiator thermostatic valves to control the temperature of individual rooms.
- Control your heating using the timer or programmer so you're only heating your house when you need to.

**Book your free in-home appointment today**

**energyadvicenortheast.co.uk/in-home-support**

# Developing and delivering the campaign

In devising the marketing campaign, we utilised the marketing funnel approach, using a mix of broad awareness raising activity to reach large numbers and create multiple opportunities to see or hear the campaign message, through to very targeted activity with a clear call to action.

## PR

Press releases were issued at key points during the campaign. These included a 'coming soon' announcement, an official launch press release and a celebration piece when a milestone had been achieved. The releases achieved local news coverage reaching 855,716 people and included a radio interview on BBC Radio Newcastle.

In addition, articles were featured on North East CA and local authority websites as well as in local authority magazines which are distributed to every resident.

## Paid digital

A paid search advertising campaign ran from July to March. This enabled us to reach a more specific audience with ads being geographically focussed and served to those searching for relevant terms on search engines. These ads were the main drivers of traffic to the website, achieving 11,250 impressions and over 900 clicks.

A social media advert ran on Facebook and Instagram targeting the LEAD demographic and those with relevant interests. The ads achieved 2.6m impressions and reached 223,000 users.

## Organic social

Social channels were set up on X, Facebook and LinkedIn with regular content raising awareness of the service. Partner amplification of posts was actively encouraged and enabled a wider audience to be reached.

Partners were also provided with branded templates and suggested copy, to enable them to create their own social posts promoting the service. 19,000 users have been reached through LEAD organic social posts.



## Direct mail

Energy Saving Trust's Home Analytics data was used to create carefully targeted mailing lists focussing on properties with poor energy efficiency and using indices of multiple deprivation and benefits data to target lower income groups. A branded letter featuring partner logos promoted the home visit offer. The mailing created a spike in demand early on in the programme and also helped raise awareness and generate word of mouth that then continued into later months.

## Literature and event materials

Each local authority area had a dedicated LEAD energy advisor. Advisors were provided with a suite of materials to support them in delivering events and community engagement activity.

These included posters and leaflets to distribute locally to community hubs, libraries, GP surgeries and other locations. Branded poster templates enabled advisors to tailor content to promote their attendance at local events.

Advisors were also supplied with pull up banners and branded tablecloths to use at events. An eye-catching PowerPoint presentation promoting the service was displayed on laptops on event tables.

Branded thermometer cards and pens were used as event give-aways to encourage conversations with advisors.

## Stakeholder pack

A digital stakeholder pack was shared with all local authority partners to promote the range of materials available to support them in promoting the service through their own channels.

As well as showcasing hard copy materials such as posters and leaflets that could be ordered, the packs included template news articles and social posts as examples of tailored content.



# Conclusion

A 12-month delivery window meant that marketing was a priority from the start. Campaign branding had to be developed very quickly. A dedicated website was built in a matter of weeks so the wider campaign could direct residents to the online registration form on the site.

There was also a need to generate visits for advisors from the outset, so the campaign was front-loaded with the main activity, such as the direct mail campaign, taking place early on.

Marketing expertise was essential in navigating these challenges. Through a carefully planned campaign, clear branding and messaging, and targeted approaches, 1.4m people have been reached by the campaign, far exceeding the original objective of 1,500.

Advisors also exceeded their delivery targets thanks to quick mobilisation of the marketing campaign enabling demand to be generated early on.



HM Government



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NET ZERO HUB

