

Wales & West Utilities Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Healthy Homes for Wellbeing

Exeter Community Energy (ECO-E)

Tom Robinson

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January 2024

Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)

In order to qualify as a VCMA Project, a project must:

- a) have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project;
- b) either:
 - i. provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or
 - ii. provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or
 - iii. reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;
- c) have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;
- d) go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and
- e) not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.¹

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair, and replacement

In order to qualify as a VCMA Project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance² servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:

- a) a GDN has to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role;
- b) the household cannot afford to service, repair or replace unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance; and
- c) sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement.

¹ If part, but not full, funding is available through an external funding source for an eligible project, VCMA funding can be used for the remaining amount.

² Essential gas appliances are gas fuelled heating systems (including gas boilers and gas fires), and gas cookers.

Criteria

Information required for the registration of VCMA projects

| Information required | Description |
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| Project title | Healthy Homes for Wellbeing |
| Funding GDN(s) | Wales & West Utilities |
| New/ Updates PEA | New |
| VCMA Project contact name, email and number | Tom Robinson – tom.robinson@wwutilities.co.uk – 07890 315438 |
| Total VCMA funding required (£k) | £992,000 |
| Problem(s) | <p>Rising levels of fuel poverty, caused by low incomes in the south west, high rental costs comparative to income, lots of hard to heat, energy inefficient older and heritage housing stock, large off gas grid rural areas, increased fuel costs, and general living costs rising faster than incomes. The solution for many is simply to turn their heating off.</p> <p>Complexity of the energy market exacerbated by general lack of knowledge around energy behaviour, a lack of understanding, even in frontline services, of the links between cold damp homes and poor health. As we move through the energy transition, many are being left behind as fast-moving technological advances are out of reach. Fuel poor consumers have a lack of trust in energy suppliers and their pricing models.</p> <p>Complicated grant funding schemes means fewer people can access funds to improve their homes and remain stuck in inefficient housing. Devon is plagued by rogue cold callers, who confuse vulnerable people on their doorsteps by misrepresenting grant schemes and councils, make false promises, give bad advice, and leave homes worse off.</p> <p>Rural isolation in Devon due to a lack of support services in rural locations, and poor transport links means vulnerable households in those areas are unsure where to seek help.</p> <p>For many vulnerable people dealing with fast paced ever changing technological solutions is stressful, confusing and in some cases impossible. Poor broadband/4G options in some rural areas add to this issue. Devon's aged and vulnerable population are in danger of being left behind in the transition to a smarter energy system.</p> |

Criteria

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| <p>Scope and Objectives</p> | <p>Exeter Community Energy (ECO) will provide expert and in depth one to one advice and practical support for low income and vulnerable households to improve energy efficiency, energy behaviour and understanding to combat fuel poverty. Wholistic advice, incorporating money and debt support, will be delivered by telephone, on home visits, via an extensive outreach programme and at a new energy advice centre in Exeter.</p> <p>They will develop new tailored advice services to enable better long-term outcomes for residents and make lasting change, and work with WWU to deliver enhanced services to our communities.</p> <p>To support the advice work they will also develop a range of educational and awareness raising programmes to enable better knowledge share, improve skills, and build new partnerships.</p> <p>They will be able to reach more households, doubling their current impact. Strengthening their team will ensure long term sustainability of the project. They will create new jobs and safeguard existing roles.</p> <p>By helping households to improve the efficiency of their homes and reduce their overall energy costs ECOE will help them increase their levels of disposable income and improve health and wellbeing outcomes, alleviating the effects of fuel poverty on their lives.</p> <p>ECOE will also work with WWU to identify and support households most at risk ensuring sign ups to PSR, referrals for locking cooker valves, and increased CO dangers.</p> <p>ECOE will also work with their network of delivery partners and potential funders to match fund up to £500,000 bringing the project to its intended capacity and allowing up to 4,000 home visits through the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP).</p> |
| <p>Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria</p> | <p>Strengthen /improve core advice services and increase capacity by opening energy advice centre in Exeter, delivering face to face advice to 10,000 households, of which 5,000 will be home visits to vulnerable households; Telephone advice via 0800 line to 5000 households; Delivery of outreach programme across 5 districts, targeting vulnerable groups; 9750 PSR sign ups; Support 4500 households</p> |

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| | <p>with money and / or debt advice incl. benefits checks, budget plans, regulated debt advice; New referral partnerships and frontline worker training and education, joint events and regular newsletters; Social impact study – survey 500 clients.</p> <p>New service/projects will include adding Smart Energy Plans and Heat loss surveys to standard advice delivery; Development of a Home Safety Advice programme; Launch of Heat Doctor project – testing/pilot (Match funding for measures costs); Development of Handyman (care and repair) service – testing/pilot (Match funding for cost of measures); Development of a ‘safe’ small business network to ensure vulnerable and rural households have access to service.</p> <p>Development of online resources for residents to help them remain connected to services and kept up to date in a fast-changing sector; Toolkit for communities enabling them to deliver their own energy awareness events; ECOE will train 50 community energy champions and 500 frontline workers. They will create new roles which include - HR/Training Manager; Energy Centre Manager; Complex Caseworker to alleviate stress experienced by energy advice team; Marketing/Comms Officer; Community Engagement Lead; Health Partnership Coordinator; additional triage team and home energy advisors to enable them to keep up with the increasing demand for energy help. They will improve our support for our team by developing a robust training and CPD programme, as well as a Support the support worker programme, designed to help alleviate stress and improve resilience on all levels. To maintain a focus on progress toward the outcomes listed above, WWU and ECOE will form a steering group, meeting quarterly to discuss and identify ongoing risks and mitigations. WWU would expect to see approx... 12% of each target achieved each quarter, for example 1,200 of the 10,000 homes reached per quarter. In addition, WWU will request case studies and client testimonials to further demonstrate the success of the initiative, throughout the project term.</p> |
| Project Partners and third parties involved | This project will be funded by WWU and delivered by ECOE, utilising partnerships with |

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| | <p>the Energy Saving Devon consortium consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon County Council • District level authorities • Trading standards • Public Health • 5 community energy groups • NHS Devon |
| Potential for new learning | <p>The project will allow us the opportunity to analysis the effectiveness of our safety messages being delivered by localised support organisations; This in turn can shape the way we work with smaller communities in our overall network which may not engage with us on a regular basis.</p> |
| Scale of VCMA Project and SROI calculations, including NPV | <p>We have taken the forecasted numbers expected by ECOE for the two-year delivery period and calculated the following SROI over a 5-year period:</p> <p>Total Gross Present Value = £3,747,474.90 Net Present Value = £2,777,326.06 SROI per £1 spent = £2.86</p> |
| VCMA Project start and end date | <p>This project will begin in January 2024 and end in March 2026.</p> |
| Geographical area | <p>Exeter, Mid Devon, East Devon, Teignbridge and Torbay.</p> |