

This toolkit is funded by the National Lottery and brings together the learnings from the Energy Learning Network.



Energy Learning Network
Rhwydwaith Addysg Ynni

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Community energy

Widening Participation

A sector-first toolkit with practical resources, insights and case studies.

Using this toolkit will help community energy groups increase their impact through greater involvement of people from across their communities.

March 2026

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**Centre for
Sustainable Energy**

Widening
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toolkit

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About this toolkit

This toolkit aims to help community energy groups increase their impact through the greater involvement of people from all walks of life. It includes useful resources, examples and case studies.

We recommend you read the introduction and background first, but after that you can move around the toolkit however you want, using the links in the menu on the left. There's no one-size-fits-all approach to widening participation. Community energy organisations vary, so take what is relevant to you.

The toolkit is funded by the National Lottery and brings together the learnings from the Energy Learning Network, a UK-wide project aiming to increase the scale and impact of community energy, and the experience of the participating community groups. It was made possible thanks to the input and collaboration from 23 organisations [included in the acknowledgements here](#).

Help us improve

Thank you for your interest in the Widening Participation Toolkit. In order to understand how people are using this resource, and what progress or challenges they experience, we'd like to send users a short evaluation survey at some point in the future – once they've had a chance to read and use the toolkit.

If you're happy to help, please send us your email address using the online form. Scan the QR code or click on the button to open the form at bit.ly/4ewhi4D. We may also send you relevant updates and further resources.

Information about how we store and process your data, is on the form.



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Why widen participation?





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Why widen participation?

Community energy aims to put people at the heart of the energy system. It brings economic benefits and clean power to communities. This contributes to national priorities to reduce carbon emissions and alleviate fuel poverty.

Community energy is about achieving a [more resilient, inclusive energy system with affordable, clean energy for all](#). As a sector, it plays a crucial role in working towards a just transition.

These aims come at a time when the community energy sector is set for rapid growth. The Local Power Plan has a target of supporting over 1,000 local and community energy generation projects. To share the benefits of this growth fairly, more people from all backgrounds and lived experiences will need to be involved.

However, questions remain about who is involved in community energy. And is the aim of an inclusive energy system that brings environmental and economic benefits to communities being met?

Who is involved in community energy?

There is a lack of data about who is involved in community energy. A [2022 study](#) commissioned by Community Energy England looking at membership in three community energy groups found that 67% were male, 95% were White/White British, and 88% were over 50. A [YouGov poll](#) found lack of time and money top of the list of reasons people don't take part in community energy. These are only two studies – the bigger picture is still unclear.

We know that community energy groups are well placed to provide [trusted advice and support](#), working with underserved communities. But without being intentional about widening participation, there's a risk the growth will benefit similar people repeatedly. Capacity in the sector may also be limited without bringing in new people with different backgrounds and skills (beyond technical expertise, to include community engagement and local knowledge).



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The value of wider participation

The value of community energy is clear. It delivers clean energy that's locally owned to re-distribute power and resource to communities, strengthening their resilience and reducing inequalities. Widening out who is involved in community energy is a huge opportunity to increase its impact.

Benefits of widening participation in community energy include:

- Working with new communities – broadening geographic and demographic reach. This ensures benefits such as lower bills, local ownership, and clean power reach people most impacted by the cost-of-living and climate crises.
- Unlocking capacity and leadership – bringing in more people and new skills, broadening the leadership and volunteer base, reducing workload and burnout by sharing responsibility more widely.
- Strengthening trust at scale – building trust with new groups, collaborating with community leaders and enhancing project support through authentic engagement.
- Aligning with funder and policy priorities around just transition – strengthening funding bids and getting long-term funding security. This helps create more paid jobs and training opportunities.
- Protecting the core value of being a community-led movement while the sector grows.

Ultimately, without widening participation, community energy may struggle to represent the communities it aims to serve. Widening participation is an opportunity to strengthen and grow the core aims of achieving a [more resilient, inclusive energy system with affordable, clean energy for all](#).





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Background



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Background

This section provides a deeper understanding of what widening participation means, with practical examples.

Access, participation and belonging

Widening participation is about engaging the people and communities who are often underrepresented in specific sectors and places. We've given examples about what it means and how it can remove barriers so people can be involved in your work.

Access is about understanding what is stopping people engaging. Examples of this include:

- Providing energy advice in different languages spoken in the local community.
- Running a drop-in session on different days and times so people with different commitments can come to it.
- Offering non-financial routes into membership (e.g. volunteering hours) to remove financial barriers.
- Training community champions from different backgrounds to help share information about community energy projects or schemes.

Participation is about how organisations' activities and policies acknowledge and understand different people's experiences. Examples of this include:

- Role descriptions that use easy to understand language and a recruitment approach that supports people from different backgrounds getting involved.
- Offering roles with flexible hours or job-shares to support parents, carers or people with





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health conditions.

- Advertising roles through community venues and networks, not only online.
- Staff and board members complete equity, diversity and inclusion training.

Belonging is about finding out what is being done to make people feel included and that they belong. Examples of this include:

- Celebrating different cultural events.
- Hosting open days or energy workshops in collaboration with cultural community groups.
- Making adjustments so people can succeed and enjoy their role e.g. inclusive meetings, flexible working hours, having flexibility for prayer time at meetings and events.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Widening participation work is a core part of work on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). It means giving access to everyone, regardless of their background. It's about working to reduce barriers so people can meaningfully engage, have a say and contribute to decision-making in their local community in a way that works for them. This aligns with community energy's aim of creating an inclusive energy system with affordable, clean energy for all. EDI is core to the work community energy does.

But while we often hear about EDI, what do these words mean, and why are they important?

Equity: fair treatment, access and opportunity for everyone to succeed regardless of their background or circumstance. Also removing barriers that prevent some people being part of things and succeeding (e.g. giving them a tool or resource to help success). **Equity is different to equality.** Equality gives everyone the same opportunity in the same way, while equity shapes an opportunity to fit the needs of an individual.



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Diversity: the different experiences and perspectives that we have. The differences could be because of things like our age, gender, ethnicity. Diversity is about who is represented in a space or organisation.

Inclusion: valuing and celebrating differences and encouraging a culture where people connect and feel a sense of belonging. Also bringing people in who have previously been excluded or not represented in activities or decisions, ensuring that they are fully able to participate.

Why EDI makes us stronger

EDI isn't just the right thing to do. It strengthens organisations and the communities we work in. Research shows that diverse teams perform better, make more innovative decisions, and keep talent more effectively. Boards and executive teams with greater diversity are also linked to higher social and environmental impact. This means organisations with inclusive leadership can deliver stronger outcomes for their communities. By embedding EDI in how we recruit, govern, and engage, we make sure our work reflects and benefits everyone in the communities we serve. Sources: McKinsey & Company: "Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters" (2020) and "Diversity Matters Even More" (2023).



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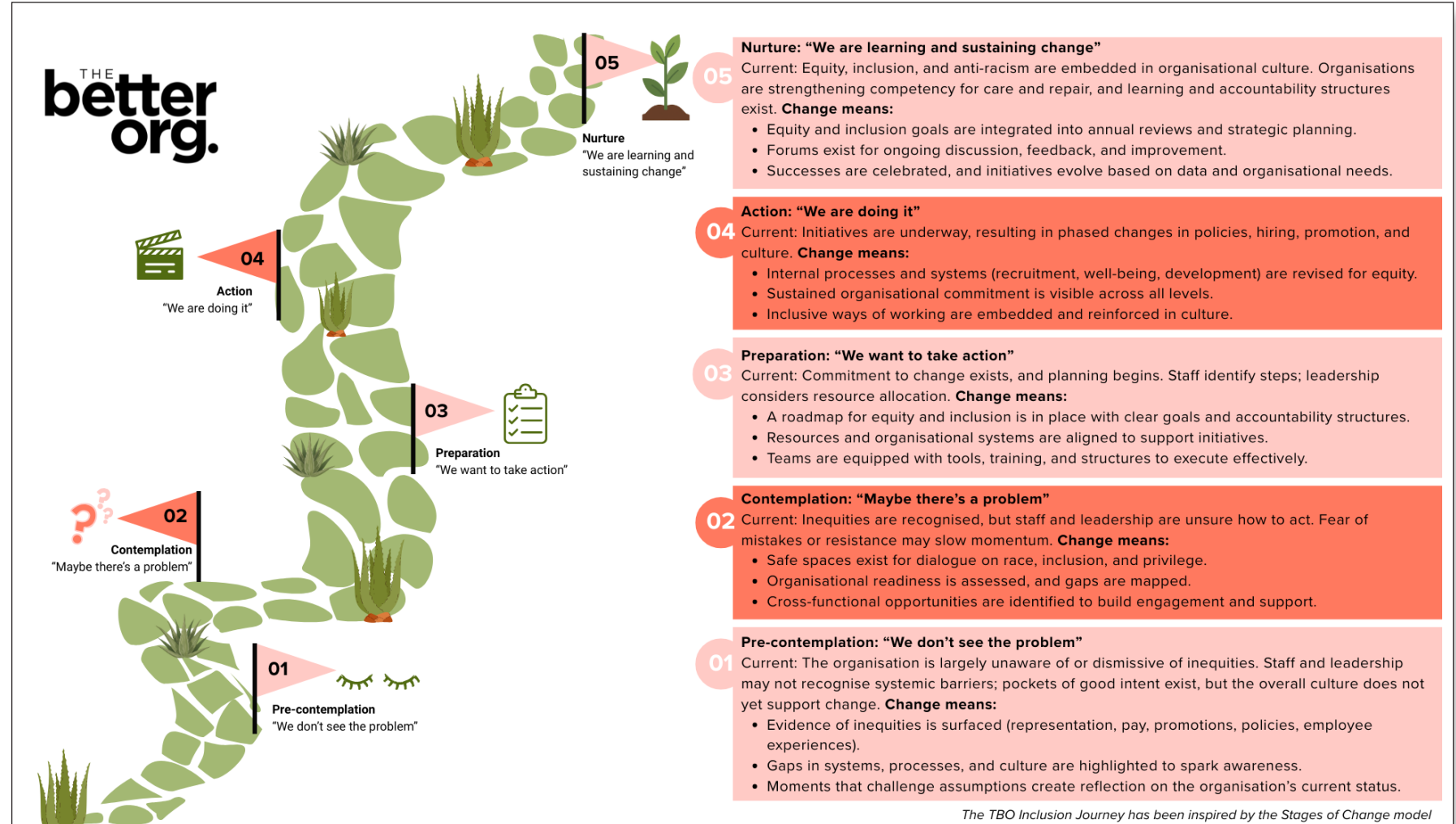
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Below is a graphic from [The Better Org](#), the organisational development and learning consultancy, illustrating a journey of inclusion.





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Reflective activity

To start thinking about EDI, you can use these prompts as an individual or as a group in a meeting.

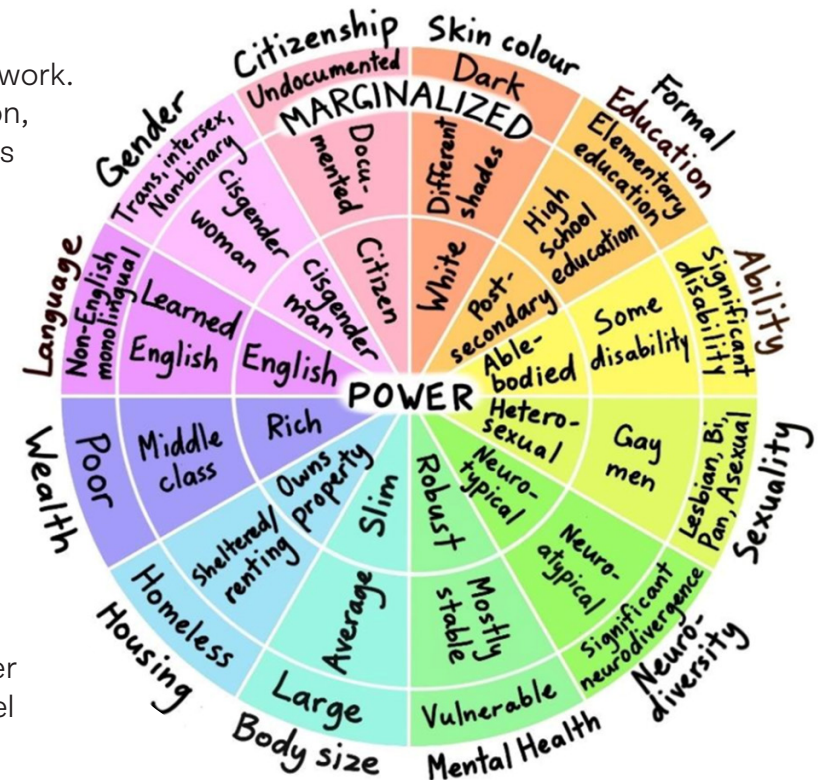
- What does EDI mean to you personally?
- What does EDI mean to your organisation?
- How is EDI relevant to your role?

Using tools can be helpful to organisations that are starting their EDI work. The Wheel of Power and Privilege helps us understand our own position, thinking about what power we hold and how that affects the privileges we have. It can be an important framework to build on EDI work, thinking about who is included in conversations or decision-making and what power they have.

Wheel of Power and Privilege

The original version of the Wheel of Power and Privilege graphic comes from the [Canadian Council of Refugees \(CCR\)](#). We've used (with permission) an illustrated version from [Sylvia Duckworth](#).

The wheel links to intersectionality, which understands that different types of discrimination based on someone's identity (e.g. gender or race) can intersect with each other and reinforce or change each other (Source: [EDI toolkit, Intersectionality](#)). The different parts of the wheel could combine for someone to experience privilege or oppression.





Good practice

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Good practice

Widening participation can feel like a daunting subject. This section brings together resources you can use to start thinking about gaps in who you engage, followed by good practice principles to support widening participation in your activities.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- Who is in your area? Use Census data to fact check this.
- Which local groups in your area work with parts of the community who you don't engage with your work? Can you set up a meeting to have a chat about collaboration?
- Which locations could you try as new places to start conversations with different people?

Who is in your community

Before you start thinking about engaging different people and communities, you can start with thinking about who is in your community.

Use Census data to get a record of the demographic data of your community. Census lets you [search for an area to get statistics](#) or you can [draw your own custom area on a map](#). Looking at things like age, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, and social and economic deprivation data can tell you more about who is in an area.

[Community engagement planning tool](#). This tool helps you think about how much interest and power people have in the activities you do. You put sticky notes on a grid based on a person or group's interest and power in your work. It can identify those who may be less engaged. It may be a good idea to review it regularly, as good engagement can increase people's interest and power in your work.

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Reaching and engaging different and new communities

Building relationships, trust and credibility are important for reaching new people, and you might not have that straight away. Partnering with well-trusted local people or groups can help with this. Emphasising the value and benefits of your work shows the relevance to their community.

To reach new people through a local group you could:

- Share information leaflets about your energy advice service and other activities for them to include in their newsletter or at a drop-in event.
- Run an interactive consultation activity at a youth group or in a school.
- Give a presentation about community energy and how people can get involved at a local group meeting e.g. Women's Institute, young farmers, faith group. Also consider collaborating on an activity such as a cosy winter crafts afternoon where people make items like draft excluders. This allows people to discuss energy, but in an activity that isn't exclusively energy-focussed.
- Consider translating advice leaflets or training multi-lingual energy champions in languages spoken locally. People speaking in their first language can find it easier to understand technical energy information, than in a different language.

A helpful resource for making community energy feel relevant to different people is [Britain Talks Climate](#). This evidence-based toolkit helps engagement with people's priorities, questions and concerns about climate and nature. For example, for energy, the research suggests highlighting stories of people who have benefited from clean energy in their home or community.



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Go where people are

There may be lots of people who for one reason or another are unable to come to an event at a particular time or on a particular day. Perhaps they have childcare commitments, or they're at work, or simply can't get there easily. Or maybe they're less interested in the topic, or they feel they won't be heard. Going to where people already are, rather than relying on them coming to you can help. Think again about who is in your community and where the gaps are in your engagement and consider re-directing your outreach efforts. Ideas where you can go include:

- Local library, post office, doctors surgery, or supermarket.
- University freshers' fair or college careers fair – if you want to reach students or young people.
- Warm spaces, coffee mornings, foodbanks.
- Faith spaces.

Be mindful of taking lots of people's time and knowledge without giving anything back. Building a partnership goes both ways, so think about what you can offer them, as well as opportunities they give you. For example, can you provide free energy advice to people who are part of their community? Also communicate any outcomes of consultation or engagement work you do, and be clear about how you will use the data or information people share.

Understanding the community well

Asking people more about a specific topic or project can help make your work relevant to them. You will find out more by speaking to people in outreach and events you do. This can involve simple engagement like getting people to complete a short survey on paper, or asking them to add thoughts to post it notes onto a big piece of paper.



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Community leaders

Working with community leaders can be particularly impactful when reaching out to new groups. They understand barriers people face, have strong networks, and can be trusted messengers. This can help you develop confidence engaging their community. Community leaders are often stretched for time and resource so it is important the relationship is two-way and you are clear about what support you can provide. Examples of community leaders include, group organisers, faith leaders, staff and volunteers at community centres, and trusted influencers.

Resources

[Ladder of Participation](#) – framework to help you think about how you’re engaging people

[Tarjimly](#) – low cost translation service.

[Inclusion good practice guidance](#) – from The Heritage Fund.

[Public engagement guide for EDI](#) – has useful prompts to think about who you’re engaging and how.

[Planning Aid Wales](#) – Community Engagement Guide.

[Horshader Community Development](#) – first community group in Western Isles to have community-owned wind farm.

[Learning from a Scottish Island context](#) – Engaging Minority Voices in a Just Transition.

[Energise Manchester](#) – approach to inclusive language.

[Faith Network 4 Manchester](#) – resources for solar installations with faith groups and places.

[Bengal Dragons Foundation case study](#) – working with Muslim communities in Wales to install solar panels to mosques.

Centre for Sustainable Energy [advice sheets in different languages](#).

Changeworks [energy advice sheets in different languages](#).

Third Sector Support Wales, [directory of all third sector, community and voluntary services in Wales](#).



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Case study: Bristol Energy Network

Bristol Energy Network (BEN) run an [Energy Champions programme](#) offering advice and support for people to make their home warmer and reduce their bills. They noticed a lack of diversity in who was engaging in the project and so took these practical steps:

- They changed the messaging on promotional material to make it relevant to people beyond homeowners. A focus on tackling mould, bill savings and making homes comfortable in the short-term, kept it relevant to people renting or on lower incomes.
- They reserved some home energy assessment spaces for people in rented or in social housing, or those with disabilities or from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- They developed successful partnerships with organisations representing those experiencing digital exclusion, financial hardship or living with a disability, and with the leaders of different faith groups.
- They supported energy champions with training and resources to become trusted messengers in their own communities.

BEN also use the [Bristol Just Transition Framework](#), to help critically think about their project design and delivery. This includes principles like ‘We will make sure that everyone is more able to cope with the difficulties made by climate change and nature loss’.



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Case study: Repowering London

Repowering London used colourful postcards as a hook so people had something easy to engage with that could spark an exploratory conversation. After a short amount of information about their work, the postcards included prompts like:

- How can we solve the energy crisis as a community?
- What does your community need?
- What comes to mind when you hear the word co-operative?
- How can we make being part of the co-op family friendly?

They put the postcards at pop-up stalls, community fairs, local shops, bus stops and with neighbours. The postcards also collected contact information and demographic data, so Repowering London could involve interested people in the future, and understand who they were reaching. They noticed people were more trusting sharing data on paper, after a warm-up conversation with someone.





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Case study: South Seeds

South Seeds is a community-led organisation based on Glasgow's Southside. Their energy team includes four part time energy officers who support residents with their home energy use. The area is mixed in terms of income, nationality and tenure, so staff are aware how detrimental it can be to make assumptions when speaking to people. The energy team try to give an unbiased service, with compassion to the people they support, asking open-questions throughout their advice work.

South Seeds used a grant available through the Energy Learning Network to attempt to expand who they reach with energy advice. While they generally engage a diverse range of people, many without English as a first language, they were aware that not everybody in the community knew about their service. Their energy team conducted short surveys outside the food bank and housing association drop-in. This enabled them to connect with vulnerable residents.

The survey asked if participants knew about South Seeds and, if not, what they would do if they did have an energy issue. It prompted conversations about gas and electricity at home and helped the energy team understand how vulnerable people are managing to live with continuously high energy prices. The survey raised awareness of the service, and showed people that barriers, including different language needs, can be addressed by South Seeds multilingual advice team.



How the organisation runs

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How the organisation runs

Understanding who is currently involved in your work and what skills they have can help identify gaps in organisational diversity. This section explores how changes to your recruitment process can support more inclusive and accessible recruitment. Also how policies can support embedding EDI in your organisational practices.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- How could you do a skills or demographic review in your organisation?
- What happens in your current recruitment process and what changes could you start making to it?
- How can you create policies to bring in different people to your work?

Where to start

Before thinking about changes to the way your organisation runs, understanding who is involved and what skills they have can help you see where the gaps are. Doing a review is one way to understand where you currently are. You can do this with board members, paid staff and volunteers.

Demographic review:

CSE has created a [demographic survey template](#) you can send to people in your organisation. You'll need to change the introduction text in red so it's relevant for you. The survey is designed to anonymously collect some key demographic information from your staff and volunteers, and all the questions are optional so people can skip any they want. If you collect this data on an annual basis, you can monitor any changes over time.



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If you're ready to do an in-depth measurement of the representation and diversity of your organisation's leadership, board, staff and volunteers, The Big Issue Investment has a measurement tool spreadsheet, [which is available to download here](#).

Skills review:

Chairs Network Scotland's [Board Skills Audit guidance and template](#) – a self-assessment exercise for your board to highlight what each trustee brings to a committee and identify any gaps in ability and knowledge on your board. The form is simple, and you could adapt the categories so you have a form that's relevant to your organisation.

Reach Volunteering's [How to complete a skills audit guidance](#). This includes a free to use online form template that organisations can use to identify the skills gap in their boards. The form has several categories, and you could edit this down as is relevant to your needs.

Recruitment

Once you've identified gaps, a next step could be recruiting staff, volunteers, directors or trustees to fill those gaps. This can increase the diversity of people and skills contributing to your organisation. Inclusive and accessible recruitment can take more time and resources. Be prepared to commit to it and find funding and time where possible to support the process.

Here are some things to consider about your general work on recruitment:

- Offering an informal chat about the role can help people understand what you're looking for in an application and encourage people from underrepresented backgrounds to apply.
- Reducing the number of stages in your application process makes it easier and more accessible. For example, just having an application form and one interview keeps it to two stages and reduces the amount of time people need to spend applying.



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- Think about where you advertise the role. Will the advert be seen by people you'd like to apply? Go back to your partnerships with other organisations, and think about how they could promote the role to different people.

Applications

These suggestions could be used in your application process.

- Check your role description for inclusive language. Making the words clear and easy to understand helps people know what you're looking for and link it to their experience. Microsoft Word has a [readability feature](#) where you can change your tone from formal to casual writing. It will offer suggestions for improving the clarity of your words.
- If your organisation has underrepresentation from a particular demographic, you can state in your job advert that you particularly welcome people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people to apply for this role. You could also consider aligning with the [disability confident employment scheme](#), guaranteeing an interview to disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for the role
- Charity Job has an Applicant Tracking System where applicants can optionally complete an equal opportunities form, anonymously sharing some demographic information about them. This means you can track the diversity of applicants while the role advert is live, and do more targeted promotion as needed. The platform also anonymises CVs and cover letters to reduce bias when sifting applicants.
- [Equal Jobs platform](#) also attracts ethnically diverse candidates.
- Giving the opportunity to provide a video cover letter is helpful for people with dyslexia, but does remove the application anonymity.



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Reviewing applications

Some organisations in the environment sector have started proactively providing interviews to people who are from backgrounds currently underrepresented in the sector or their organisation. For example, Students Organising for Sustainability has an opt-in guaranteed interview scheme for candidates who declare a disability or are a person of colour and meet the essential criteria of the role profile. More information about how to do this, and manage the whole recruitment process, [is in an example recruitment policy from the RadHR site](#).

Interviews

Adjustments and things to consider when interviewing.

- Proactively ask for adjustments you can make during the interview process. For example, someone might need longer to complete an interview task because of dyslexia, or need step-free access to the building.
- Change the way you ask questions in an interview. Instead of asking “Tell me about a time when you worked under pressure to deliver something” ask “What would you do if you were giving someone one-to-one energy advice, and the phone went, while a contractor also needed to access the office”. This doesn’t rely on people having extensive experience to draw on, but instead tells you how they would practically handle a situation.
- Think about biases: [unconscious bias is about the associations we hold, outside our conscious awareness and control](#). It affects everyone and is triggered by our brain automatically making quick judgements and assessments. It is influenced by our background, experiences and stereotypes. It can influence our decisions in the workplace, including for recruitment. [Harvard has unconscious bias tests](#) you can do to check your assumptions if you’re recruiting.





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Policies

To support changes to the way your organisation runs and recruits, you may need new or adapted policies. [RadHR](#) has a library of policy templates and examples. These are aimed at the community, cooperative and voluntary sector so are relevant for community energy. A guide on [How to recruit new people without reproducing systemic inequality](#), is particularly relevant to recruitment work.

You can also think about developing an equity, diversity and inclusion policy. NCVO has a [template policy](#) designed for small charities and voluntary organisations. It's important that an EDI policy doesn't just tick a box or end up sitting on the shelf. The policy should be actively used to support work on widening participation and EDI, and be reviewed regularly.

If you're a trustee or director, using policies to pro-actively support your widening participation work can help everyone feel supported in their role. You want to address issues earlier on, rather than find out about them when someone leaves. With hybrid working, you should also consider how policies are relevant for people working remotely as well as in-person.

Other resources

Directory of Social Change

[The Governance App](#) is a free way for a board to review and improve governance.

Co-ops UK

[Chosing your Legal Form](#)

NCVO

[Approaching diversity through equality and inclusion.](#)

NCVO

[Charity Essentials](#): designed especially for charities, this is an online basic health check on how your organisation is performing, identifying strengths and areas for development.

Harvard University

[Inclusive meeting guide](#) (PDF).

The Co-op Foundation

[Resources for diversifying and retaining a diverse board and workforce in charities.](#)



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UK Energy Research Centre

Charity Job

SCVO

WCVA

[Governance guide for community energy organisations.](#)

[New Research on Neurodiversity in the Energy Sector: Making Sure all EDI Initiatives Succeed.](#)

[Inclusive recruitment guide.](#)

[Support & learning](#) and [training](#) on governance for charities in Scotland.

[National support body for voluntary organisations in Wales.](#)



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Case study: Grand Union Community Energy

Grand Union Community Energy (GUCE) worked with Community Energy Pathways as part of the Community Energy People (CEP) project to recruit three new paid staff. GUCE’s Chair and project lead completed EDI training which gave a good understanding about why diverse recruitment mattered. Another GUCE Board Director was part of the project this toolkit is based on, enabling them to align on making EDI a priority in recruitment.

CEP supported GUCE to reduce the number of steps in their recruitment process. GUCE used Charity Job and anonymised applicants to eliminate bias during the first screening. Different board directors were involved in the screen to bring multiple perspectives in. The role descriptions highlighted GUCE’s priority for candidates from diverse backgrounds, and that additional needs for interviews would be accommodated.

Once blind screening and shortlisting had happened, virtual interviews with shortlisted people were led by the project lead. These were recorded and sent to a small team for review to create a short list for further face-to-face interviews. CEP was also involved in interviews to give a new and different perspective.

Before this project GUCE had two freelance contractors (one man, one woman, both white, degree level educated) and six board directors (two white women, four white men). Overall those involved with GUCE at board and contractor level were 71% white male, 29% white female.

The new roles were all offered to women and a new female board director has been added. Representation of people at volunteer or contractor level is now 60% female, 40% male and 90% white, 10% Black. The average age has also dropped as new people were younger on average.



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Youth engagement

Securing a sustainable future for community energy and making sure future generations benefit from a better environment and energy system is important.

A poll found that people aged 18-24 [have the highest levels of support for a community energy project in their area](#). Around [one third of 16-24-year-olds are very worried about climate change](#), while only 9% of them feel they have a great deal of influence on decisions to tackle climate change. Community energy is a way young people can be involved in shaping a better future.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- What local schools, colleges, youth groups or universities are in your area? Can you have a meeting with them to see where you can work together?
- What tasks could be completed by a young person? What are the benefits to you and to them if you can offer that experience?
- What funding could you use to cover staff time working with young people?

Work experience and volunteering

One way of working with young people is partnering with a local college, university or youth organisation and host a placement. Think about what you can offer young people, as well as what they can offer you. There might be skills missing from your organisation that young people are well placed to bring.

The type of work people from a local college could get involved with include:



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- Social media and marketing.
- Event management.
- Updating CRM or website.
- Phone calls to suppliers or customers.
- Spreadsheet work e.g. members, finances.
- Sit in on board meetings.



If you only have capacity to offer young people work in your organisation on a voluntary basis, think about what else you can give back to them. Can you cover basic travel and food expenses or offer them a free training course?

You can also think about further pathways once someone has completed a placement. After training and experience with you, they may be well placed to continue working in the organisation. Having peer-to-peer mentoring could also be an option for people who've got experience and can support a new young person.

Young people and the running of your organisation

Involving young people in the governance and running of your organisation can bring in new perspectives, ideas and skills. While you might find young people through a school, college or youth group, also consider recent graduates or people in the early part of their career. Many young people will already have excellent experience and relevant skills including project management, fundraising and community engagement. They can lead meetings, projects and strategy work.

Things to consider for youth involvement in the running of your organisation:

- Be mindful of using clear language and avoid jargon and acronyms without explaining them.



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- Set achievable and realistic goals. If someone is also studying, they might be involved for a limited amount of time. Goals that can be achieved in a specific timeframe keeps motivation up and gives a sense of achievement at the end.
- Giving people a clear title for their role (e.g. project coordinator, social media coordinator) is useful for their CV and sense of belonging.
- For school or college aged people, meeting one-to-one before and after a key meeting helps them prepare and answers questions. Explaining how meetings run and how they can contribute ensures their ideas are listened to and valued. Similarly, making sure the rest of the board are ready to include and listen to a young person in more than a tokenistic way helps make it a friendly and welcoming environment.
- Having a young person as a co-opted board member may help with the level of commitment.

Practical considerations

This list gives some practical things you'll need to think about when you're working with young people:

- Can you consider apprenticeships for paid staff members, where [government schemes](#) could cover 95% of the cost? You could use this to train people with a [Level 4 Renewable Energy Apprenticeship](#).
- What benefits or training is someone going to get from being involved? This could be key skills for their CV or completing a training course. Offering to be a reference for the future is also helpful.
- Can you fund participation beyond just travel costs? This could extend to covering food expenses or accessible resources.
- Be flexible and understand the needs of the young people you're working with – they might not be available in a traditional 9-5 weekday capacity, so think about working with them on evenings and weekends and having online meetings.



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- Staff and volunteers working with under 18s or vulnerable adults should get a DBS check, and one member of the organisation should do safeguarding training ([suggested low-cost training options here](#)).
- Think about building in staff time for supporting and training a young person. Funding can be used to cover staff time to host placements, and you might be able to build this into project funding, particularly if the project involves any engagement or outreach.

Resources

The National Lottery	Community Fund - Involving Young People in Organisational Governance (PDF).
WCVA	Involving Young Trustees Toolkit for Organisations (PDF).
Arts Council England	Youth Voice: Youth boards and governance .
Centre for Sustainable Energy	Educational resources: Teaching climate and energy .
Younity	Adopting an Intergenerational Approach in Community Energy : blog with case studies and tips.
Young Trustees Movement	Organisation working to increase number of trustees aged 30 and under on charity boards.
Roundhouse	Guided by Young Voices: How to include young people on your board and in decision-making processes (PDF).
Energy Garden	Environmental Education & Youth Training in London .



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Case study: Grimsby Community Energy

Grimsby Community Energy partners with Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education, and Franklin Sixth Form College, hosting 22 student placements since 2022. They use grant funding to cover the wages of the students – through a mix of grants from Northern Powergrid, Shared Prosperity Fund and Coops UK Booster Fund. Their placements vary from two to 12 months. Investing staff time in upskilling and training students at the start can then free up staff time later when they can handover tasks. One way of making training efficient is to have all the placement students in on one day to do training together.

Benefits for the placement students include building up their skills and CV, networking at events and conferences, and building confidence in areas that might be more challenging.

Case study: Dorset Community Energy

Dorset Community Energy (DCE) took part in the Youth Environmental Service (YES) programme to recruit a young person, Huda, as their new Communications & Engagement Coordinator. This is a paid position, and DCE got funding from the Trellis Foundation to cover Huda's wages.

Huda has brought a new perspective, helping DCE develop new approaches and improve their communications and engagement with a younger audience. YES provide mentoring to Huda, and further recruitment support to DCE.



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Case study: Action Renewables

Action Renewables is a charity in Northern Ireland providing support and expertise on renewable energy. They sponsor the Landscapes Northern Ireland Youth Ranger programme. As part of the partnership, they connect and engage with young people about climate, energy and environmental issues. Action Renewables staff attend events on the programme to harness the passion of young people and raise awareness of their work. This is done through fun, practical activities and time for the young people to ask questions about working in the energy sector.

As a result of the partnership the youth rangers can be ambassadors for renewable energy and energy efficiency at local events. They also receive carbon literacy training (provided by Climate Northern Ireland) and are actively involved in biodiversity and habitat improvement schemes in their area.





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Investing and share offers

Share offers are often used by community energy groups to raise finance for a project, for example, to put solar panels on a school roof. Share offers traditionally rely on people making an upfront financial investment, on which they'll get a return.

But not everyone can afford this. [A 2020 survey conducted by Co-operatives UK](#) found that of community share investors in the UK (not necessarily to energy-focused share offers) 73% were university graduates, 92% were white, and one in three were aged over 65. Widening who is investing in shares means the financial benefits generated by share offers are received by a greater diversity of people.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- **What could be stopping people from being part of your share offer? What barriers could you remove so different people can invest?**
- **How are you tracking who is investing in your share offers? What optional forms can you add to your share offer investments so you can track who is investing?**

Suggested ways of making share offers more inclusive are listed here:

Lower minimum share offer amount

Can you reduce the minimum amount needed to invest? You can apply this as standard, or you could make the minimum amount lower for people in a key demographic or geographic part of the community. For example, you could make the share amount lower for people living closest to a site you're doing a renewable energy project. Or you could identify a more economically disadvantaged part of the community to make the minimum amount lower.





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Volunteer time ‘credits’ for share discounts

If people volunteer for your organisation, their volunteer hours could turn into credits that give them a discount on the cost of buying a share.

Paying shares in instalments

To spread the cost of a share into smaller, more manageable amounts, consider having the option for someone to pay in instalments rather than in one go upfront.

Group shares

Shares are often bought by an individual. Providing an option for a group to buy a share could increase the number of people that benefit from an investment and spread the cost of investing among multiple people. For example, a local faith group could buy a share together and receive the return on investment to spend on activities they do as a group.

Pay It Forward shares and gift shares

As a way of redistributing wealth in the community, you could add the option of a Pay It Forward share. An example of this is a campaign to open a community run LGBTQ+ venue. [Friends of the Joiners Arms](#) gave an option to buy a share for someone else in the community who would like to become a member, but doesn't have the finances to buy a share. If you've done activities to understand who is in your community, this could help decide which members of the community receive a Pay It Forward share, because they're underrepresented in your work. You could also reserve shares for people from certain areas or offer them to a certain group of people first.

Some other practical things to think about include:

- **Have different application routes – think about offline as well as digital options.**
- **Provide support in different formats during the application process. In-person drop-in sessions, an email contact and phone number people can call.**



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- When people apply for a share, include an optional form for them to share demographic details so you can track who is investing and if changes you make to the way you run a share offer are having an impact.

Communicating your share offer:

- Provide case studies showing a more diverse range of local people who have been involved in a share offer. This gives an example for those underrepresented in your shares can identify with. Building trust in a share offer can help increase the appeal of it.
- Think about where your share offer is promoted to increase the diversity of people who are aware of the opportunity. Consider in-person promotion and engagement in physical spaces where parts of the community who you don't normally engage are.
- Social media posts and short videos can also increase awareness and promote the share offer to a wider audience.
- [Croydon Community Energy](#) made a video and clear, visually engaging guide to their first share offer. This helped explain the share offer to people who don't know how it works, or were new to community energy. They also translated the information into some of the key languages spoken in the area.
- Make sure application documents are accessible and transparent (e.g. accessible language, clear FAQs to describe risks, available in different languages). Research has found people found the word membership more appealing than investment, so being flexible about language can broaden the interest.



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Other resources

Co-operatives UK

[Guidance and webinar](#) on Shariah compliant community shares. This resource was produced after Co-ops UK's Community Shares Unit team helped [Bradford Community Energy](#) ensure that their share offer was in alignment with Shariah law to enable members of the local Muslim population to participate.

University of Strathclyde

[Case study \(2022\)](#) (PDF) looking at a share offer by Glasgow Community Energy which had a £50 minimum share amount and prioritised members closest to renewables site if more money than the target was raised.

Democratic Finance Scotland

[Case studies](#) and support for local and community shares.



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Case study: Awel Aman Tawe

[Awel Aman Tawe](#) is based in the Amman Valley in south Wales. The charity was created by local people in a former coal mining area. Through their Awel and Egni co-ops they've developed a community wind farm and more than 100 rooftop solar sites on schools, businesses and community buildings.

Seven sites now include batteries and electric vehicle charge points; the aim is to use more of the solar on site rather than exporting it to the grid. Over 80 community organisations and schools are co-op members, owning more than £100k of shares and enjoying a income stream from the projects. They include a range of groups such as [Merched y Wawr](#) (a women's organisation which supports the Welsh language, culture and arts), schools, sports clubs and community centres. The shares were donated to these groups as part of the business model in order to widen local participation in the co-ops in an area where few local people could afford to invest directly.

Using the profits they generate, Awel Aman Tawe now employ a full-time education officer to work in schools across south Wales raising awareness of climate change and sustainability. They are also the driving force behind Hwb y Gors, a refurbished primary school below the wind turbines that serves as a low-carbon community hub providing services such as free energy advice and community transport. Over 1,500 local people were involved in the development of the building, contributing their artistic and building skills as well as their time. The engagement put the needs and aspirations of the local community at its centre, while complementing other community organisations in the area.





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Involving people in different ways

While traditional models like share offers provide a way of involving people in your work, expanding opportunities that don't rely on financial investment can help involve a greater diversity of people in your work.

This section explores ideas for involving people in non-financial ways. Some of these may rely on you having some funding to cover direct costs or expenses. You can use the [section on resourcing your work](#) to see where there's opportunity to find funding, or build these costs into existing projects.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- What opportunities are there to find out the type of non-financial rewards people are interested in?
- How can you give back to members or people who are involved in your organisation in non-financial ways? What existing knowledge and skills can be used for training others?
- How can you build budget and resource for non-financial returns into project design or volunteering schemes?

Good ideas

While investing financially is one way to become a member of a community energy organisation, this section explores non-financial ways people can get involved. [Research from Repowering London](#) has found people feel investing time and investing money to be distinct but equally valuable forms of investment. You might consider the following:

- Asking people to sign up to a mailing list. If you have capacity for a newsletter (printed or email), this can be an easy hook to keep people in touch with your work.



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- Giving people the option to become a Community Member without making a big financial investment. Repowering London [is using a CoShares page](#) for people to become a Community Member for £1 that gives them a say of how the project is run and how the income generated is used.
- Asking for volunteers. Thinking about where and how you advertise volunteer opportunities can also broaden your reach and participation. Go back to who are your trusted messengers and where they could share the opportunity.

It could be useful to map out a journey someone could take through your organisation. Below is an example from Repowering London, based on the research and feedback they got from a local community. This journey isn't always linear, people will





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move around it in their own way based on interests and needs. It might also work differently in your area, so engaging people is key to understanding it.

Repowering London have done community-led research on building more inclusive energy cooperatives, [their full toolkit has useful learnings, ideas and resources.](#)

Non-financial ways of giving back to people

- Providing energy advice or tailored support for people applying for household grants.
- Training and learning opportunities – energy advice training, retrofit training. What skills and opportunities can people get that will help their CV? Can you provide a reference for them for future opportunities?
- Giving people mentoring or coaching opportunities with another staff member or volunteer that has expertise in something they're interested in e.g. retrofit.
- Giving people small energy efficiency items for their home – LED lightbulbs, draughtproofing materials.
- Social opportunities to bring people together – celebration events, awards, socials, raffles.
- Giving people compensation in the form of vouchers if you've done a focus group or similar. You can also do a prize draw for a survey.





Plans and impacts

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Plans and impacts

Having ideas about changes you want to make to support widening participation is a great start. However ensuring you have a clear plan, and understanding how you will measure change, helps you be intentional about your efforts and see what impact they've had. This will help with learning lessons as you go, as well as supporting future funding applications.

This section provides a template to make a plan, along with prompts for measuring impact.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- When could you meet with other people to think about your goals and aspirations on widening participation?
- What data could you be collecting in the work you're already doing?
- How can you start making sure useful data is collected in future projects or events?

Setting goals and aspirations

You might feel daunted by different things you can do on widening participation. It can help to think about specific goals and aspirations that are relevant to your organisation. This breaks things down into smaller pieces, that work towards the bigger picture.

But what are goals and aspirations?

Goal: A specific outcome you'd like to achieve in a specific timeframe (e.g. a year) that progresses widening participation in your organisation. It can be a small step towards a bigger piece of work. Make sure it's possible in your context and how you're operating now and over the next year.



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Aspiration: A longer-term piece of work that you'd like the organisation to be working towards over the next two to three years.

Use these prompt questions to identify a goal:

- What are the current challenges and barriers around widening participation in your organisation?
- How can you start working to address some of these challenges in the next year, to form the basis of a goal?
- What is the link between the goal and the organisation's wider objectives? How could the goal feed into progress on these objectives?
- What have you already learned about the needs and interests of the local community? What could you do to learn more about this?

We've provided a template action plan for goals and aspirations. This template is something you could complete in a board meeting with key members of staff, trustees or volunteers.

Measuring impact

Measuring change your work has made, and when you've achieved something, are important ways to understand how your widening participation work is making a difference. It can also help evidence change and this can support funding applications. This section provides ideas for what, how and when you can measure the impact of your work. When you set goals and aspirations, you could add these ideas to each goal so you know how to measure progress on it.

How many people engaged in something

Ideas for measuring this include:



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- Counting the number of people that came to an event or engaged in a particular project or piece of work e.g. share offer, number of people receiving energy advice.
- You can count this at the event or through sign-ups or registration forms.



Who engaged with it

Ideas for measuring this include:

- [You can adapt our demographic survey](#) to be an optional form people complete. You can do this on paper for in-person engagement, or an online version if you're running something digitally. The important thing is to keep this form separate from any other data you're collecting that can identify them e.g. name, email address. You can emphasise the information provided is anonymous and is only used for you to track who you're engaging so you can improve efforts in the future.
- Because of the lack of data about who is engaging in the community energy sector, consistently tracking this will contribute to sector-wide efforts on measuring widening participation.
- You can monitor this through surveys at events, during a share offer, when you're giving energy advice, or with onboarding information for staff or volunteers.

What change has happened with those people as a result of your work or project?

Questions you could ask in a survey or interview include:

- Before today, how much did you know about community energy? (nothing - a lot)
- How confident do you feel explaining what community energy means to someone else? (not at all - very confident)



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- In your own words, what does community energy mean to you?
- How confident do you feel about understanding your home energy use (heating, appliances, bills, etc.)? Not at all - very confident)
- What changes have you made at home since [date], and why?
- What energy topics at home would you like more support or information about?
- What have been your highlights of being involved in [project/event name]? This could also be a participatory group activity.
- What is something new you learned from this session/event?
- Why did you choose to take part in this event/project?
- What helped you feel included today?
- Is there anything we could have done to make this session more accessible, comfortable or enjoyable for you?

Times that you could do this measurement include:

- Short reflective interviews with key staff or volunteers.
- Short reflective questions with project beneficiaries e.g. people you're giving energy advice to, investors in your share offer.
- In group settings, this could also include a goal-setting activity.



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- Compare baseline demographic data with demographic data of who's engaged after a specific bit of widening participation work.

Example action plan

Below are action-plan templates for goals and aspirations. Remember, once you've completed your action plan, keep coming back to it and updating your progress. If things don't go to plan, don't be afraid to change your goal or aspiration and make new ones based on what you learn.

Forgotten the difference between a goal and an aspiration? [Click to go back](#).



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Action plan example for a goal

Goal

Build partnerships with different communities in the city.

Where are you currently at?

Have one partnership with the local school we installed solar on.

What and who do you need to progress this?

Desk-based research into different community groups in the city, including youth groups and different faith groups.

What will it look like when this goal has been progressed and achieved?

Three new partnerships with organisations and better understanding of what people in that community would be interested in getting involved with around community energy.

How will you measure progress?

Number of new partnerships made.

New insights and information from community engagement which can help design future projects to be more inclusive and involve new and different people.

Overleaf: Action plan example for an aspiration.



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Action plan example for an aspiration

Longer-term aspiration

Widen the membership of the organisation through a share offer.

Where are you currently at?

Only done one share offer, 30 people invested. Don't know much about who they are.

What and who do you need to progress this?

Time to promote share offer in-person at events.

Budget and resource to make short video explaining the share offer. Translate this into a few key languages spoken in the area.

Update share offer to reduce minimum investment amount and give option of pay it forward shares.

What will it look like when this aspiration has been progressed and achieved?

More members are part of the community energy group and they are from a wider diversity of backgrounds that are represented in our local area.

More people get a financial return on investment from the share offer.

How will you measure progress?

Demographic tracking when people buy a share.

Question in share offer about how people found out about it to understand which promotion routes worked.

Amount of money raised.



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Other resources

Egin

[Proving and Improving toolkit](#). Measuring impact toolkit (English and Welsh).

NVCO

[Evaluation resources](#), including a helpdesk for small charities.

Think NPC

[Starting to measure your impact guidance](#), a good resource for beginners. There's also a very useful [data diagnostic questionnaire](#) to get a tailored report on measuring impact.

Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership

[Inclusion in Action toolkit](#) – useful templates for planning and evaluating inclusion work.



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Wellbeing and collective care

Wellbeing and care are often overlooked elements of community-led activities. There's growing evidence that community organising and climate-related anxiety can contribute to stress, burnout and poorer mental health.

Yet often missing from organisational planning is consideration for the wellbeing of people doing the work. It can be rare to ask the question: how are staff, volunteers and trustees supported in their work? Or does wellbeing feature in budgets, timelines and delivery plan? This is despite people being the most critical resource in community energy organisations.

This is also true of widening participation. It is often acknowledged as important, but can be thought of as an add-on. The emotional and reflective work that widening participation involves is also often less recognised. This includes building trust with underrepresented groups, having difficult conversations about inclusion and building long-term relationships.

Widening participation, wellbeing and collective care are connected. Collective care is about having a shared responsibility for people's mental health and wellbeing in a community or organisation (**Act Build Change**). What we do is connected to others and because of that, caring for ourselves and each other is not just a personal responsibility, it's also a shared responsibility. In the community energy sector, this care is important for our work to be effective and sustainable in the long-term.

This section offers practical ideas and examples to support wellbeing and community care in community energy work.

These questions help you think about where you could start working on this topic:

- How could you start conversations about people's wellbeing in your organisation?
- Where can you build wellbeing practices into your projects?



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- What external resources can provide a framework for reflection meetings or one-to-one meetings that help you understand what support people need?
- How can you reduce the risk of isolation for those working or volunteering from home?

Supporting yourself while working on widening participation

Working on widening participation can be deeply meaningful, but it can also be emotionally demanding, especially for people from marginalised backgrounds who may carry personal experiences of exclusion into their roles.

Some things to consider are:

- **Recognising emotional labour:** Acknowledge that outreach, relationship-building and trust work take time and emotional energy, and should be recognised in role descriptions, workloads and funding bids.
- **Boundaries and role clarity:** Encourage clear boundaries around availability, responsibilities and expectations. For example, avoid assuming staff or volunteers will always be available outside working hours to attend community events.
- **Peer support and reflection spaces:** Build in regular spaces for staff and volunteers to reflect on challenges, share experiences and learn from each other - this could be monthly reflection sessions.
- **Shared responsibility:** Widening participation shouldn't be on one individual alone. Spread responsibility across teams and boards so it's part of organisational culture rather than dependent on one role.

Practical example: A community energy group schedules quarterly reflection sessions where staff and volunteers discuss engagement challenges. These sessions are counted as paid work time and included in project budgets. Consider getting an external facilitator to support these where budget allows.



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Preventing burnout through care

Burnout can often come up in work that aligns with people's values and passions, particularly where people feel responsible for addressing urgent social and climate issues with limited resources.

Strategies to ease burnout include:

- **Realistic planning:** Set achievable goals and timelines that account for capacity, not just ambition. Build in contingency time for delays, learning and rest. Review goals and timeline throughout the year to see if things need changing.
- **Rest as a collective value:** Normalise taking breaks and time off after intense project periods. Leadership should model this behaviour. Support contracted or freelance workers to have a pause after they've reached a milestone or project completion by avoiding giving them back-to-back work with no gaps.
- **Monitoring workload:** Regularly review workloads and redistribute tasks where possible to prevent chronic overwork. Check in with contracted or freelance workers that what you're asking them to do is achievable in timelines you've provided.
- **Signposting to external support** such as counselling, peer networks or union advice where appropriate.
- **Find a union that's relevant for the charity sector** and join it with colleagues. This could help advocate for a better working environment and support with solidarity and collective care among staff. [The Trades Union Congress](#) can help with finding a union.
- **Finding what brings you joy:** These can be simple things like going to a park or having a hot drink with a colleague or friend. Having moments of lightness where the only purpose is to improve your wellbeing can ease feelings of pressure.





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Practical example: After a demanding delivery period, a community energy organisation plans for an organisational break during the December period. There is a two-week pause on delivery. This allows for the small team to come together and take part in team-building exercises as well as planning for the next quarter. As a result, staff can engage in making a shared workplan for the new year because they feel rested and able to reflect on the past year of delivery.

Practices to support wellbeing

We have included some internal and external practices to support wellbeing and care. By including wellbeing and collective care into organisational planning and delivery community energy initiatives can become more inclusive, resilient and effective. This not only supports individuals but also strengthens the collective capacity needed to deliver long-term, community-led energy system change.

Internal practices:

- Regular check-ins that focus on how people are doing, not just what they are delivering.
- Clear policies on flexible working, compassionate leave and reasonable adjustments.
- Trustee or board-level responsibility for staff and volunteer wellbeing.

External resources:

- Mental health and wellbeing organisations offering low-cost or free resources for the voluntary sector.
- Peer networks within the community energy sector, where people can share their experiences in a collective.
- Toolkits on community care and sustainable activism.



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Practical example: An organisation creates a simple wellbeing resource list shared internally, including local support services, sector peer groups and guidance on managing climate anxiety.

Other resources

Mind	Mental health for small workplaces resources.
Mind	Wellness Action Plans.
ACEVO	Workforce wellbeing in charities (PDF) with Mental Health First Aid England.
TARSHI	Self-care resources to support awareness of stress, thoughts and emotions.
Mental Health First Aid England	My Whole Self : tools to help people work well and at their best in workplaces. My Whole Self: Guide to creating inclusive workplace cultures (PDF) is specifically about creating inclusive workplace cultures.
Acas	Guide to reasonable adjustments at work.
Acas	What flexible working is.



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Resourcing your work

Funding and training are fundamental parts to making widening participation happen. We know these can often feel difficult to find so this section brings together a list of relevant options that can help resource your widening participation work.

Training

If you're planning on getting bespoke training or consultancy to support your widening participation work, here's some things to think about:

- Do they understand the context of your work around energy at a community level? You want to make sure the support is relevant to the work you do.
- Is the training online or in-person? This could affect who provides the training, if you need it to be in-person.
- Where can you find funding? High quality training or consultancy that's relevant to your organisations' needs and context is unlikely to be free.

Free training

[Free online equality and diversity training course](#) (England only).

[Acas e-learning](#) on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Local authorities sometimes offer free training for Community Interest Companies. Check with your local authority for details.



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Low-cost training

Impact Culture: online training modules covering EDI, microaggressions, power and privilege, and intersectionality. Each module costs £10.

Level 2 safeguarding training for working with young people.

Seeds for Change: provides training on topics including running co-ops and developing a strategy. Also resources on facilitating meetings and coming to democratic consensus.

SCVO training – for Scotland-based organisations.

Medium to high-cost training

People Support Co-op – paid for services for governance and HR support.

NCVO – safeguarding training.

The Better Org – organisational development and learning consultancy.

Funding

Getting funding that’s specifically for widening participation work can be challenging. Think about how you can build widening participation costs into existing projects that you have funding for, or project ideas you’re finding funding for. If you’re building these costs in, clearly explain to the funder why they will make your project more effective with better





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outcomes. It could enable you to reach different people, upskill people in underserved communities, or support a change in organisational policy and practice.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has a [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#) which can help calculate how much carbon would be saved through a project if you have energy or emission data. These statistics can support funding applications.

Here are examples of costs for widening participation that you could build into project ideas:

- Budget for translating materials or paying interpreters, particularly if your project is for energy or retrofit advice.
- Budget for travel and food expenses for volunteers, and you could include small energy efficiency items in this as a way of giving back to volunteers.
- Training to upskill energy champions who are multilingual and are trusted in different parts of the community. Budget to cover staff time to deliver and attend training.
- Time for staff to do inclusive and accessible recruitment – you could include this under project management if you're designing a project which will need new staff.
- Wages for a young person to receive training, and support delivery of a project.
- Budget for making engaging materials in different formats and languages to promote a share offer.
- Consider designating a percentage of income generated from membership subscriptions or sale of energy towards widening participation.

Below are some options for different funding. It's in different sections depending on what you need funding for.



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General

[Awards for All England](#)

Funding for projects that bring people together to build strong relationships and improve communities, England only.

[Barnwood Trust](#)

In Gloucestershire, focus on disability and mental health.

[Co-op Local Community Fund](#)

Supports projects that provide access to opportunities and resources for people to thrive.

[Community Foundations](#)

Covers most the UK and helps small organisations find funding.

[Community Works](#)

Extensive funding opportunities list.

[Esmee Fairbairn Foundation](#)

A range of grants for work including core and project funding.

[Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme](#)

Funding for energy related projects covering a wide range of criteria.

[Forte Charitable Foundation](#)

Grants for small and medium local organisations working to address local issues in deprived communities (both urban and rural).

[Garfield Weston Foundation](#)

Supports a wide range of charities across the UK. Covers core and project funding.

[Greggs Foundation](#)

Offers core funding and has some geographic areas of focus, as well as on communities experiencing deprivation.

[Groundwork](#)

Tips for applying for a community project grant.



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[Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

Supports the transition to a future free from poverty, in which people and planet can flourish

[My Funding Central](#)

Free account for organisations with annual turnover of less than £30,000. Search their funding database and get email updates.

[The National Lottery Community Fund](#)

Several different funding programmes covering a wide range of areas.

[The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts](#)

Array of different trusts.

[Thirty Percy Foundation](#)

Your local authority or council may have Section 106 funds or Community Infrastructure Levy funding available for local projects.

Share offers and investment

[Co-operatives UK Booster Fund](#)

This provides support to get your share offer ready, for England-based organisations only.

[The Reach Fund](#)

Provides investment readiness grant support to charities and social enterprises with a specific focus on those already close to the point of taking on social investment.

Youth work

[Youth Environment Service](#)

Support for creating an accessible entry-level role in organisations, including support with recruitment process, training and wage subsidy for the young person.

In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales



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[Welsh Government](#)

Capital grant scheme for improvement of community facilities.

[Energy Service, Welsh Government](#)

For public sector and community groups to plan and deliver local energy projects.

[Volunteering Wales Grants](#)

Funding to increase volunteer engagement by removing barriers, and creating high-quality volunteer opportunities.

[Funding Scotland](#)

Funding database for charities and community groups.

[Hugh Fraser Foundation](#)

For registered charities including those in the environmental sector. Focused on support for young, elderly, disabled and under-privileged communities. Scotland only.

[SCVO](#)

Funding search for Scotland.

[Funding Wales](#)

Funding database for charities and community groups in Wales.



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Community energy	Delivery of renewable energy, energy efficiency or retrofit projects which are led by community members to benefit a local area.
Community engagement	Working collaboratively with groups of people linked by a specific geographic area, interest or situation.
Co-operatives	A business or organisation that is democratically owned and controlled by its members, to meet their shared needs. The members can be its customers, employees, residents or suppliers, who have a say in how the co-op is run (source: Co-operatives UK).
Discrimination	Discrimination means treating someone ‘less favourably’ than someone else, because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. These are called protected characteristics.
Diversity	The different experiences and perspectives that we have. The differences could be because of things like our age, gender, ethnicity. Diversity is about who is represented in a space or organisation.
Equity	Fair treatment, access and opportunity for everyone to succeed regardless of their background or circumstance. Removing barriers that prevent some people being part of things and succeeding (e.g. giving them a tool or resource to help success). Equity is different to equality . Equality gives everyone the same opportunity in the same way, while equity shapes an opportunity to fit the needs of an individual.

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Governance

The way that people organise themselves to achieve a shared goal.

Inclusion

Valuing and celebrating differences and encouraging a culture where people connect and feel a sense of belonging. Also bringing people in who have previously been excluded or not represented in activities or decisions, ensuring that they are fully able to participate.

Intersectionality

A term originally from Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. It recognises that people's lives are shaped by their identity (for example gender, race, disability, sexuality, class) and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression. (Definition adapted from [Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind toolkit](#).)

Investment

The action of investing money, usually for profit (getting something back, normally money).

Just transition

How to make work on climate change and nature loss fair. The problems made by climate change and nature loss are often worse for people from disadvantaged groups ([source: Bristol Climate Hub](#)).

Measuring impact

Understanding what change has happened (or not happened) after a project or event.

Share offers

People buying shares (investment) in an organisation. This is a way for the organisation to make money and use that money to do something that benefits the people who bought the shares, and the local community.

Widening participation

Engaging people and communities often underrepresented in specific spaces and places.

Young people

There are lots of definitions of young people. For this toolkit, we mean people up to the age of 30.



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CSE supports people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

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