

IMPACT REPORT 2025-26

Tackling the injustice of fuel poverty
and building lasting solutions to
the climate emergency.



cse.org.uk



Charity 298740
Company 02219673

Focus on fairness

Fairness lies at the heart of CSE. We speak up for those at risk of being left behind ...

The past year has seen the UK take significant steps towards a smarter, cleaner energy system. Record levels of renewable power generation were achieved – 65% in March 2026. An overhaul of grid connections will allow for a more strategic and cost-effective future for our energy network. And innovations in the energy market are providing more opportunities for people to be rewarded for adapting when and how they use electricity.

Yet little of this has made much difference to those struggling with rising bills. Energy debt continues to grow. And although the government, Ofgem and the energy industry are making the right noises about fairness in the clean power transition, I'm not yet seeing much evidence of this in practice.

This is where CSE makes a difference with our unique focus on fairness and on finding

practical solutions that benefit the people and communities most at risk of being left behind.

In our support for people at risk of fuel poverty we delivered record levels of financial benefit for our clients last year – £1,685 on average. We also deepened the support available to tenants and groups we identified as struggling to access services, for example the Somali community in Bristol and armed forces veterans in Wiltshire.

In our housing energy retrofit work, we reached many fuel poor customers who would otherwise have been missed by grant schemes, and secured quality installations for them. Our Smart Energy Action Plans and award-winning Energy Choices Tool helped them benefit fully from their new low carbon technology.

We have partnered with – and built the capacity of – hundreds of local partners across the country to tackle fuel poverty and upgrade community buildings. The newly launched Community Energy Go

supports the development of community energy schemes in areas which have previously not had the opportunity to develop them.

I'm enormously proud of the huge impact CSE has made in the year and the lives we have changed. Looking ahead we will continue to champion the needs of those worst-served by the system – and use our experience to demonstrate what good should look like for the national energy advice, retrofit and community energy programmes set to emerge from the government's Warm Homes Plan and Local Power Plan.



Janine Michael
Chief Executive
June 2026



More about us ...

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

We do this by sharing our knowledge, practical experience and policy insights.

We've been doing this for over
45 years.

Our vision:

We work towards a world where sustainability is second nature, carbon emissions are cut to safe levels and fuel poverty is replaced by energy justice.

In practical terms this means:

- ❖ No one suffers a cold home in winter, and homes are healthy to live in year round.
- ❖ Everyone is empowered to take action on energy and support net zero.
- ❖ Every building is zero carbon and liveable.
- ❖ Places are shaped for sustainable energy.
- ❖ The energy system is green, smart, fair and works for all of us.

[Donate](#)

The year in numbers 2025-26

20,143

Households supported through our energy advice service.



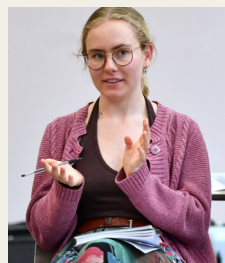
41,460

Survey responses received in our research to understand how we design flexibility services that are both functional and fair.



£33.9 million*

Total financial benefit secured for people through our energy advice service.



1,850

Young people reached through our high-quality education and youth leadership programmes.



£2.3 million

Value of grants distributed to community organisations to run community-focused energy projects. They supported 26,557 households.

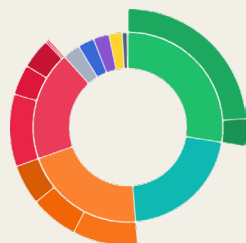


6,969

Number of energy efficiency measures installed as a result of our projects, and 2,610 tonnes of avoided CO₂ emissions.

9,266

Users of our Impact Community Carbon Calculator, generating 328 reports on local carbon footprints.



£1,685

Average financial benefit for households helped through our advice service.



871

Community organisations supported to take action on climate change or tackling fuel poverty.

31

Local authorities used our services ([see Funders and Clients](#)).



* Financial benefits are based on recorded data of the real financial savings achieved for each of our advice clients in one year (2025-26 alone). They include benefits claimed, energy efficiency measures installed, fuel vouchers and much more. They exclude future years impacts e.g. savings made over the lifetime of the energy efficiency measures installed.

Policy and influence

The policy landscape has seen some significant changes in the last year with the publication of the Warm Homes Plan and Local Power Plan.

This sits alongside reforms to energy infrastructure planning and grid connections and new regulations covering heat networks and smart energy.



This year, CSE's focus has been on shaping a fair and deliverable net zero transition, challenging approaches that weaken consumer protections or leave low-income households behind, while promoting reforms that cut bills, build consent and accelerate delivery.

We responded to over 30 consultations and calls for evidence across a range of topics, as well as giving evidence to select committees on several occasions. Our four main policy asks for the year include:

- 1 Fuel poor households need affordable low carbon heating.** We've seen positive reforms to standing charges, but we need to see more significant decreases in the cost of electricity relative to gas, alongside the rapid deployment of the Warm Homes Plan.
- 2 Consumer protection is key.** The latest in a long line of failed insulation scandals comes at a pivotal time for retrofit. The new Warm Homes Agency needs to deliver rigorous technical monitoring alongside impartial

advice at all stages of the retrofit journey.

- 3 Capacity building of some smaller local authorities is necessary to allow them to engage in net-zero delivery.** Local authorities play a pivotal role in the delivery of net zero, but they vary in their ability to manage the demands of increasing regulatory responsibilities (e.g. for Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and Awaab's Law), an expectation to engage in Regional Energy Strategic Planning, and the ambition of the Warm Homes Plan.
- 4 Building community capacity brings long-lasting returns.** The government must recognise the wider benefits of community energy and ensure that the financial and regulatory environment is in place that allows projects to succeed. We need investment in programmes like [Community Energy Go](#) that develop projects in underserved communities. There's also an opportunity to support community retrofit which is so far being missed.

Policy and influence in action

Chloe McLaren Webb, Fair Transition Research Lead, looks at how CSE uses its participation in a government working group to ensure that load control licenses include requirements for customer protection and fairness.

Over the last year, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Ofgem have run public consultations on licensing for load controllers.

Load controllers are the organisations that manage electrical load to and from smart energy appliances such as electric heaters. Load control plays a critical role in supporting consumer-led flexibility and optimising the electricity system for the transition to net zero.

CSE wants these licensing proposals to embed customer protections and an obligation on the flexibility-service providers to treat customers fairly. We believe both are in the interests of the energy sector; if customers are treated equitably and are protected when things go wrong, it will help build consumer confidence in the smart energy market.

Our platform for this is our place on DESNZ and Ofgem's Load Control Licensing Working Group where CSE represents consumer voices in debates with industry about the scope and focus of the regulations.

So far we've helped Ofgem to produce guidance around customer protection within the regulations. This guidance addresses:

- Potential risks to the customer.
- Best practice around collecting the right information to understand if an offer is right for a customer.
- What type of information customers need to make good decisions before taking up a service.

Our contribution is based on a deep understanding of the flexibility landscape. This is gained through projects like [CrowdFlex](#) and [Smart and Fair](#), and through the delivery of smart energy advice over the last few years.

Ofgem also plans to monitor the load-control offers on the market and the number of customers using them. Though not as comprehensive as we would like, this meets one of CSE's longstanding policy demands as an understanding of the market is a critical part of consumer protection.



Increasing impact through innovative tools and data

We develop software that helps government and the energy industry plan for decarbonising our homes and buildings. And we pioneer new open-access tools to help people make smart energy choices.

National Zoning Model

The National Zoning Model was commissioned by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and identifies heat network opportunity areas. The tool is fundamental to achieving the government's ambition for heat networks to meet 7% of England's heat demand by 2035.

The latest release identified viable zones across the country, with outputs already informing pilot projects helping government target where heat networks can realistically grow.

[heat-network-zoning](#)

Heat Network Routing and Growth Model

Also commissioned by DESNZ, this tool makes advanced heat network analysis quicker and more accessible by reducing reliance on specialist expertise. It was built in partnership with sustainability consultancy ERM and is powered by our THERMOS optimisation engine so the government can help more places with heat networks.

[routing-and-growth-app](#)



Solar Wizard

This app calculates the potential to generate electricity from rooftop solar panels for homes in England, Scotland and Wales. It provides quick and independent predictions about the viability of solar PV, from a single house to a whole street.

solarwizard.org.uk



More innovative tools and data on p8

Increasing impact through innovative tools and data (continued)

Energy Choices Tool

A free, impartial service giving every household a personalised route into the smart energy transition regardless of income, confidence or technical knowledge. 556 people have received tailored advice since launch, with over half creating a smart energy plan.

ect.cse.org.uk



Flexplorer

An interactive tool showing how by shifting when you use energy can cut bills. Showing people a simple way to cut bills and carbon.

[cheaper-bills-with-energy-flexibility](#)



Impact Community Carbon Calculator

The Impact calculator estimates greenhouse gas emissions for any parish, ward or local authority in England, Scotland or Wales. It's used by communities to understand and act on their carbon footprint. The website had 10,000 users this year.

impact-tool.org.uk



CSE's Climate Action Plan

We believe we owe it to current and future generations to reduce our own operational carbon emissions.

Over the last five years we've taken action to reduce our emissions across every aspect of our work, led by our Climate Action Working Group.

This year, we released our Climate Action report, which sets out our net zero targets, outlines our emissions reduction work so far, and establishes a baseline carbon footprint for the year 2023-24 which we can measure progress against.

We're committed to: net zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030; a 30% reduction in Scope 3 emissions by 2030, with our 2023-24 emissions as a baseline; and net zero across all scopes by 2040, with year-on-year reductions in line with that goal.

As a climate charity, our carbon footprint is only part of our story. Our work also actively prevents emissions across the UK. In 2023-24,

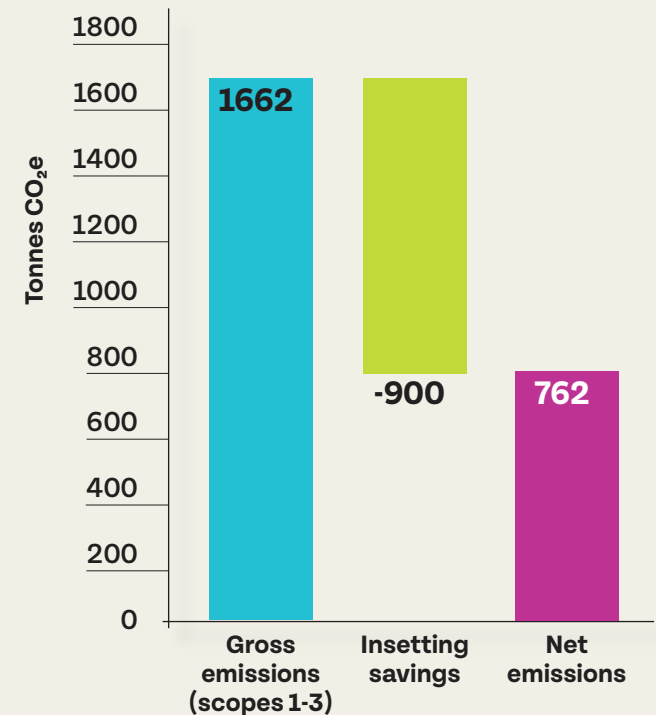
our retrofit work alone prevented 900 tonnes of CO₂ being produced. If we subtract this from our total footprint, we reduce it by half.

A large proportion of our footprint (77%, or 1,280 tonnes out of total 1,662) came from distributing fuel vouchers and funding retrofit measures. These are activities we can't cut as they're the result of supporting people who can't afford to heat their homes. Alongside these, we also report the downstream carbon savings resulting from our retrofit activities to provide a fuller picture of our overall climate impact.

This year, the impact of our retrofit work has almost tripled, resulting in 2,610 tonnes of avoided CO₂ emissions.

[Read our Climate Action Report here.](#)

Our emissions (2023-24)



CSE's gross emissions (blue), minus our insetting savings (green) give us our net organisational carbon emissions total (pink).

Our work programmes

Each of our six work programmes focuses on where CSE has a strong track record, formidable skills and unique insight. They are areas where we are best placed to drive change and maximise our impact.

Our work programmes are the foundation of our [2022-28 strategy](#) which directs how we work towards our vision and high-level objectives.

The following pages describe our impact in each work programme in 2025-26 ...

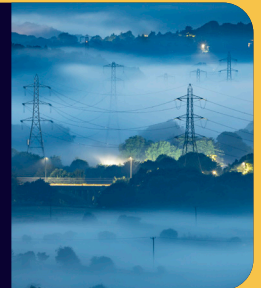
Fuel poverty



Housing energy retrofit



Local authority support and action for net zero



Community action on energy



Future generations



Fairness in the energy system



WORK PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW

Fuel poverty

We support people struggling with high energy bills and cold homes.

2025-26

- **20,143 people were directly supported by our energy advice service.**
- **In total, we secured £33.9m of financial benefit to our clients, an average of £1,685 per household (up 52% on the previous year).**
- **1,709 Smart Energy Action Plans (SMEAPs) produced for households.**
- **A further 26,557 households indirectly reached, through grants to community organisations**



We help people reduce their energy bills, tackle damp and mould, and make their homes resistant to long winters and overheating in summer. We also help them understand and better navigate today's rapidly changing energy system.

In 2025-26, we supported 20,143 households living in fuel poverty – or at risk of it. We did this through one-to-one telephone support, long-term casework, home visits and community events (we ran 146 events and attended a further 493). Altogether, we secured financial benefits worth £33.9m for people – that's an average of £1,685 per household.

We built on our partnerships with public health teams, the NHS, community groups, foodbanks and housing teams to ensure our support could reach those who needed it the most.

In January we launched a **national freephone advice line** and added WhatsApp and British

Sign Language to our communication channels. And we deepened the support available to some of our local communities such as the Somali community in Bristol and the armed forces veteran community in Wiltshire.

Our [Smart Energy Action Plans](#) (SMEAP) service helped prepare people for the transition to a smarter energy system. In particular, we worked with social landlords and their tenants to make the most of new technologies installed in their homes such as heat pumps and solar panels.

We also launched the national [Energy Support Network](#) and our CPD-accredited Retrofit and Smart Energy Essentials [training](#) to upskill advice organisations on smart and low-carbon technology advice. In an initial four-month pilot, we supported over 120 staff from 75 organisations across the UK.

WORK PROGRAMME

CASE STUDY

Fuel poverty

Leanne* and her husband's energy supplier told them (wrongly) they were £19,000 in debt. A year later her husband died and Leanne was left living alone and struggling to stay warm in a home with broken heaters ...



When Leanne and her husband's energy supplier went bust, their account was taken over by a new company who told them they were £19,000 in debt. They knew this couldn't be possible as they'd never been behind with their payments, but they were afraid to turn on the heating in case it made things worse.

The couple were referred to our [Warm & Safe Wiltshire advice service](#) by Age UK.

A CSE caseworker visited the home where they called the new supplier. The customer service advisor confirmed there had been "a glitch in the system", apologised and stressed that Leanne and her husband didn't owe any money.

During the home visit, our caseworker noticed that some of the couple's night storage heaters weren't working. Funding to upgrade their heating system would have been available, but at this point, Leanne's husband was struggling with his mental health and didn't want to request any help.

Some months later, Leanne's husband passed away.

Now living alone, grieving, and struggling to stay warm on her state pension income and with inadequate heating, she contacted CSE again. We successfully applied on her behalf for new night storage heaters and solar PV panels, and got her £300 in shopping vouchers to keep her going in the meantime.

"Having someone by my side was exactly what I needed to not crumble after my partner passing away," Leanne told us. "And now I have brand new night storage heaters which have helped me stay warm without breaking the bank this winter."

"Having someone by my side was exactly what I needed to not crumble after my partner passing away"

* Name changed for privacy.

Housing energy retrofit

We help people make their homes greener, warmer, healthier and cheaper to heat.

2025-26

- **6,969 energy efficiency measures were installed as a result of our help last year. This is up 19% from the year before.**
- **Through our installs, we saved 2,610 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.**



Retrofit through ECO Flex

Thousands of low-income households have benefited from fully funded or subsidised heating and insulation upgrades through our involvement in ECO Flex. We worked closely with several councils and hundreds of installers to assess eligibility and process a stream of funding applications quickly and accurately.

We also made sure installers met the right standards before taking part in the scheme, and supported residents by connecting them directly to appropriate installers. The result was loft and cavity insulation, solar panels and heat pumps installed in thousands of homes.

Impartial energy advice and assessments

We continued to provide clear, impartial advice to homeowners and landlords who want to make their homes more energy

efficient. Our tailored support helps people understand what would work best for their property and budget, and includes heat pump suitability assessments and streamlined retrofit surveys to support informed, cost-effective decisions.

In Frome in Somerset we worked with the town council to deliver tailored energy surveys for older and historic homes. This supported sensitive retrofit approaches for hard-to-treat properties, balancing energy improvements with the need to protect building fabric and character.

We also provided people with post-installation support, enabling them to make the most of the new smart energy measures fitted into their home through retrofit programmes. This included helping people switch to a more advantageous tariff for their energy bills, and ensuring they got the Smart Export Guarantee for energy supplied to the grid by their new solar panels.

Housing energy retrofit

Warmer homes and lower bills in Somerset: our work with the local authority on ECO and other home-improvement schemes.



Working with Somerset council, we delivered large-scale upgrades to more than 650 properties – that’s lower bills and warmer homes for thousands of residents.

Around 550 of these properties were social housing and the improvements were funded through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). The properties were improved with heat pumps, insulation, solar PV or smart controls.

The remaining 100 were low-income privately owned homes and the upgrades were administered through the Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) scheme. Somerset council had secured this funding to support households most at risk of fuel poverty. We worked alongside the council to identify eligible households and provide the technical support needed to deliver the programme cost effectively to bring maximum benefits to residents. This included carrying out retrofit assessments, coordinating works and

supporting project delivery, making sure each home received the right measures and that they were installed properly.

Measures included insulation and low-carbon technologies such as solar and improved heating systems. For the people living there, the impact has been immediate: lower energy use, reduced bills, warmer homes and improved comfort and wellbeing. One resident told us: “We immediately felt the improvement in comfort from the insulation, and our bills have already decreased because of the solar.”

By enabling tenants and homeowners alike to upgrade homes that would otherwise have remained inefficient, the programme is delivering lasting financial, social and environmental benefits. It shows how targeted funding, combined with strong technical delivery support, can make a real difference for people facing fuel poverty.

Local authority support and action for net zero

We use our technical expertise, policy insight and stakeholder engagement skills to support local authorities on their journey to net zero.

2025-26

- **We worked with 31 local authorities on their journey to net zero.**
- **We supported four counties in the South West with their early stages of Local Area Energy Planning.**



To meet our national targets we need to local authorities to lead the transition to net zero at pace, even as funding and capacity remain limited. In 2025-26, CSE helped 31 councils make confident, evidence-based decisions that support immediate delivery, while also laying the foundations for future investment.

Heat network zoning

As the UK's national heat network zoning policy is being rolled out, CSE has been bridging the gap between policy and place by releasing a new Heat Network Routing and Growth Model. This is being used by DESNZ on behalf of councils to assess heat network opportunities faster and more consistently.

In Westmorland and Furness we combined zoning outputs with real-world heat demand data and local knowledge to identify three heat network opportunities across the local authority area. This has given the council evidence that low-carbon heat networks are

viable, even in a largely rural area, and will support the investment case or the next stage of development.

Working with social landlords

Through Flex Direct, we worked with about 50 social landlords to explore how energy efficiency retrofits could be better coordinated with grid needs. Our findings are helping shape more realistic and scalable delivery models that work for social landlords across the country. These delivery models are now being tested to show how retrofit programmes can unlock energy system value through flexibility.

Local Area Energy Planning

And in the South West, we worked with Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire to complete early stages of Local Area Energy Planning. [See case study on p16.](#)

WORK PROGRAMME

CASE STUDY

Local authority support and action for net zero

Early-stage local energy planning in the South West is helping councils act now – not just plan for later.



Local authorities in the South West have strong net zero ambitions but limited capacity, cash and confidence to deliver them. This is despite coming under pressure from voters to demonstrate progress in this area.

Local Area Energy Planning can help a council understand where it needs to start, but full technical plans are costly to commission and take time, and councils are understandably reluctant to commit.

So what to do?

CSE has been working with four councils – Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (photo) – on a more proportionate and practical approach. Instead of producing a full technical plan, we focused on a set of foundational actions: establishing a robust local energy baseline; accessible data; stronger governance; and delivery-focused programmes.

Over 200 stakeholders took part in the project, from external partners to senior council officers and decision-makers. This shared process helped build a common understanding of local challenges and opportunities. It also created space for practical conversations about governance, capability and next steps.

These local authorities are now more confident and better equipped to lead their own local energy planning. By reducing the pressure to commission complex modelling, the project shifted the focus to real-world delivery, investable projects and future commissioning.

Importantly, the work demonstrates a scalable, repeatable regional model that can be applied elsewhere for early-stage local energy planning.



Community action on energy

We help communities be at the forefront of designing and delivering community-based action on energy.

2025-26

- **871 community organisations supported to take action on climate change or fuel poverty.**
- **We distributed grants worth £2.3m for community-focused energy projects. This included £1.8m awarded to 64 organisations for advice and fuel poverty projects that reached 26,557 households.**
- **Through our work, 4,594 community stakeholders were trained or upskilled.**



Our support for community organisations covers a wide range of services including training, consultancy, providing freely available printed and digital resources, and disbursing grants totalling £2.3m. We worked with 160 community-building managers to access over £20m through the government's VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme.

[Community Energy Go](#) is a programme that connects community groups with free expert advice to help make their community energy projects happen. Launched in March 2026 and developed with Ashden and Community Energy England, the programme is designed to facilitate new community energy projects in areas that haven't had them before.

[Future Energy Landscapes](#) is working in Wiltshire, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, helping to upskill residents on routes to community owned energy, and provide critical insights for local authorities for future renewable energy opportunities.

Almost 400 people have engaged across 20 Future Energy Landscapes workshops.

In the North East and Yorkshire, we facilitated networking events for [Seeing is Believing](#) that brought together 135 people from councils and community groups to look at community energy and net zero action. And with Wessex Community Energy Network, we brought together community energy groups from across the region to skill-share and build a stronger, more connected sector.

As support partner on Social Investment Business's [Energy Resilience Fund](#), we provided technical retrofit building advice to voluntary sector applicants, including through a programme of 20 webinars.

WORK PROGRAMME

CASE STUDY

Community action on energy

We design and deliver grants programmes that support community groups. Bristol charity Bricks has made use of a grant from Bristol City Leap to improve the popular St Anne’s House community hub ...



Bristol City Leap’s [Community Energy Fund](#) offers grants of up to £50,000 to support projects through their development phase – often the most difficult to find funding for. It also offers interest-free loans for capital costs. So far CSE and partners have awarded £680,635 in grants and loans to 54 projects.

One beneficiary is Bricks, a Bristol charity that aims to build the resilience of Bristol’s creative and social enterprise communities.

The charity was awarded £10,000 from Bristol City Leap’s Community Energy Fund to produce a retrofit plan for [St Anne’s House](#), a popular creative and community hub.

Bricks’ plan was developed in collaboration with 200 people including local residents and the people who use St Anne’s House including members of the Four o’clock Club (for families) and Morning Meetup (for older people and those living with chronic health conditions, and young people in a climate action zine-making programme [photo, left]).

The thermal comfort of the building has already improved. And Bricks has been able to leverage a further £8,000 from Clarion Homes to install secondary glazing and insulation.

Bricks are known for their creative approach and interest in public art. People in Bristol may have seen the [crocodile by Dorcas Casey](#) – made at St Anne’s House in collaboration with over 100 local residents.

The Community Energy Fund is being delivered by CSE in partnership with Bristol Energy Network, Bristol and Bath Regional Capital and Praxis Research. This £1.5m fund supports energy-related community projects that reduce energy consumption and interact with the [Bristol Heat Network](#).



WORK PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW

Future generations

We inspire young people to play a meaningful role in the transition to our future energy system

2025-26

- **We supported 1,850 young people through our high-quality education and youth leadership programmes, double last year's number.**
- **We reached 42 schools and 67 teachers and youth workers through our education programmes.**



Bright Green Future

Sixteen young people graduated from our transformative youth leadership programme, [Bright Green Future](#). Students conducted research on carbon footprints and explored how to make the energy grid smarter and fairer. They join an alumni network of around 350 young adults embedding sustainability into their careers.

Youth work in Bristol

With Bristol council we disbursed grants to fund [youth-led climate action](#) around the city. This included working with the Global Goals Centre on their Earth Day Heroes awards, and funding grassroots organisations to plant food, publish zines and fix bikes. Nearly 800 young people got involved.

We delivered 33 inspiring workshops for young Bristolians at community youth clubs to catalyse local climate action and promote equity in the net zero transition. We connected young people aged 11-14 to

practical initiatives, from nature conservation to electronics repairs and wind turbine engineering.

School workshops

We delivered 20 climate change and energy workshops in 16 schools. In total we helped 570 key stage 2 pupils to plan a green energy future for their local area and to set action pledges for their schools.

First time bill payers

We ran three focus groups with 20 students and care leavers to [investigate how they approach their energy bills](#). We engaged a further 139 people at housing fairs, drop-ins and training sessions, advertising our services and learning what young people need to guard themselves against fuel poverty. ([See case study on p20](#))

WORK PROGRAMME

CASE STUDY

Future generations

Mia has been involved in CSE since the pandemic and continues to be a voice for young people in the charity's projects and governance.



Mia first got involved with our [Bright Green Future](#) (BGF) leadership and empowerment programme for 16-19 year olds during the pandemic. Unable to meet other young people face-to-face, she took the opportunity to gain skills and meet like-minded young people on the BGF online programme. This culminated in Mia and other participants creating a video and other content for a social media campaign about slow fashion and sustainable lifestyles.

Mia's passion for sustainability led her from the BGF programme to a Human Geography degree at University of Reading, where she is now an Energy Advisor for the student union.

As part of CSE's first time bill payer project, Mia is drawing from her degree, her BGF experience and her Energy Advisor skills to bring youth insight into research on energy literacy, fuel poverty and the challenges young people face when moving out for the first time.

Mia has a particular interest in making energy information accessible and relevant for young people, and brings expertise in youth engagement, sustainability and practical energy advice.

Her support on the [First Time Bill Payers](#) project and through the [Youth Advisory Board](#) has been invaluable, ensuring the project is rooted in the needs and voices of young people.

“ I've been honoured to learn about how young people pay energy bills and overcome any struggles they face while doing so.

I've loved being a member of the Youth Advisory Board and hope I can continue this work in the future, in whatever capacity is possible.”

Fairness in the energy system

As the UK makes the transition to a low-carbon energy system, we want to see the benefits made available to all and costs shared fairly.

2025-26

- We received **41,460** responses to our survey into what ‘energy flexibility’ means in practice.
- **36** smart energy options were tracked and profiled to support our smart energy advice, with **213** smart energy offers now in our advice database.



Our work promotes fairness in the energy transition by making sure that the focus of network planning isn’t all on infrastructure and power generation, but about people and their homes as well.

Flex Market Accessibility

In [research for National Grid’s Distribution System Operator](#) we identified 2.7 GW of domestic flexibility capacity across National Grid’s licence area, demonstrating the significant system value of household electrified heating. The findings highlighted that storage heaters are both a source of grid constraint, and an opportunity to engage vulnerable householders in demand flexibility.

CrowdFlex

To test how domestic energy flexibility can support the grid while remaining inclusive, we surveyed 37,000 households over two years, linking feedback to household characteristics and energy data. This was part of a project

called [CrowdFlex](#), led by National Energy System Operator (NESO). Additional longitudinal research with 800 participants, and three focus groups, provided deeper insights. Our recommendations, evidencing the need for inclusive design, support and consumer protections, were shared with Ofgem, government and the energy sector.

NESO Buildings Heat Model

Also with NESO, we developed a tool for modelling a house’s heating system. The Building Heat Model takes a series of user inputs – heating technology, property size, radiator sizing etc – to simulate how a household uses energy to heat their home to a desired temperature. The model is helping NESO researchers gain a fuller understanding of the impact of decarbonising residential heating, the patterns of peak demand, and the costs of network expansion.

WORK PROGRAMME

CASE STUDY

Fairness in the energy system

Our ongoing [Smart and Fair programme](#) has continued to deliver for consumers and networks – providing the tools and evidence needed to help make smart energy work for everyone.

One barrier to engaging in the smart energy market is the sheer number of products, services and tariffs out there. CSE’s Smart and Fair team have analysed nearly 300 of them. We asked questions such as:

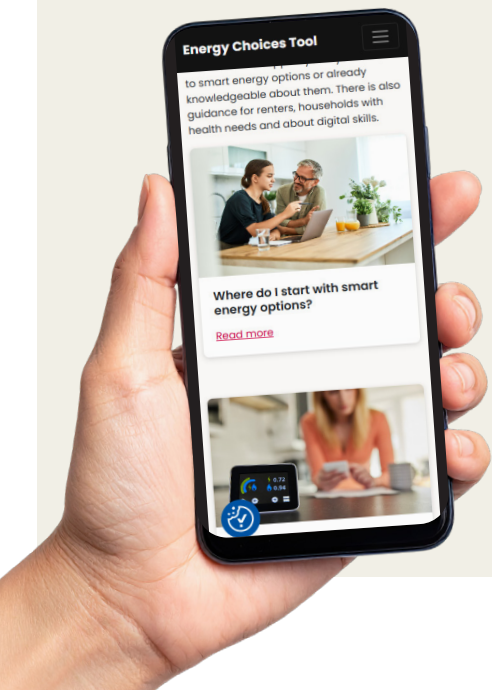
- Do they reduce your fuel bills?
- Are they available to all, or restricted to customers on particular tariffs or with internet access?
- Do they shift when you use electricity, or help you make the most of your appliances?
- Do they cut carbon emissions?

We track availability and the financial value to households, and take deep dives into market trends that we share with professionals from the energy sector in [regular webinars](#).

This understanding of the smart energy market feeds directly into our energy advice, underpinning [Smart Energy Action Plans](#) and the [Energy Choices Tool](#) [photo left]. In 2025, over 100 attendees from 60 organisations

attended our annual Smart Energy Advice Forum to learn from best practice shaped by Smart and Fair. Advisors reported that the forum strengthened their ability to support households with smart energy advice.

One of Smart and Fair’s goals is to engage the public and spread awareness of smart energy offers. To help inform people about demand flexibility, we created a [self-guided graphic tool](#) that explores how on some tariffs energy prices vary throughout the day, and how money can be saved by shifting when energy is used. The tool demonstrates that people can reduce their bills without reducing energy consumption – a core message behind demand flexibility. In just a few months, the tool had over 400 users.



Our funders

Thank you to all CSE’s funders and clients for their support of our work in the past year ...

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NHS Bath & North East Somerset Council, Swindon & Wiltshire ICB

NHS South West Secure Data Environment

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North East Net Zero Hub (via Community Energy England)

North West Net Zero Hub (via CAG Consultants)

Northern Gas Networks

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The Aurora Trust

The Blagrove Trust

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The Walter Guinness Charitable Trust

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Wiltshire & Swindon Community Foundation

Wiltshire Council

Wolverhampton City Council

Zero Carbon North Somerset

Together, we're tackling the injustice of fuel poverty and building lasting solutions to the climate emergency.

CSE is grateful to all members of staff and trustees whose hard work, dedication and compassion are central to the achievement of our mission and goals.

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