



Cabinet Office

Learning from

The Community Energy Peer Mentoring Fund

July 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Energy Peer Mentoring Fund (CEPMF) aimed to increase the capacity of community energy, through peer mentoring from existing community energy groups to new ones, and by creating new opportunities for social action to achieve energy goals. The learning from the fund suggests that it was successful in both of these aims and moreover, that the social action that happened as a result was successful in achieving a range of energy goals.

Peer mentoring was found to have enabled new community energy activity to get going quickly and effectively by removing perceived barriers that can arise as a result of lack of relevant knowledge and skills in volunteer led groups. In addition to this, by bringing diverse groups together, peer mentoring resulted in opportunities to create new projects and built networks that will increase the capability of community energy groups through knowledge sharing on an ongoing basis. 12 mentors supported 35 new groups and 138 individual Champions to get started on community energy activities.

Through their activities, these new groups and Champions involved 1490 volunteers, who gave the equivalent of 2 years of their time and delivered a range of benefits to their communities. Self reported data from CEPMF projects shows that benefits included 9 renewable energy installations that attracted significant investment; installation of energy efficiency measures in over 400 homes and advice on energy use and managing energy bills to over 400 households.

Further to this, qualitative data collected by CEPMF grantees suggests that community groups and volunteers are particularly effective at achieving certain energy goals. They are close to the communities they serve, and can act as 'trusted messengers' in local energy campaigns. This means they are well placed to gain support within their communities for installation of renewable technologies; more likely to be trusted by households to assess their energy needs and provide advice on energy use and managing bills; better able to encourage those in fuel poverty to identify themselves as able to benefit from support; and through their activities able to create a sense of cohesion and empowerment in the communities they serve.

The CEPMF was funded through the Centre for Social Action, which aims to build the evidence for what works in relation to social action projects, with a view to catalysing the growth of effective social action models. It is hoped that making the learning from the CEPMF available will inform thinking and practice of community energy groups and policy makers in planning and delivering future community energy initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is the Community Energy Peer Mentoring Fund?

The Community Energy Peer Mentoring Fund (CEPMF) was launched in November 2013 by Cabinet Office and the Department of Energy and Climate Change. It was funded through the Cabinet Office's Centre for Social Action. Social action brings people together, on a voluntary basis, to tackle issues that matter to them and to shape their local areas. It aims to increase social cohesion, and complement public service delivery by increasing resources available to tackle social issues. Social action is core to this Government's vision of a Bigger and Stronger Society¹ where everyone has the chance to contribute to their community, and where communities are self confident and civically engaged.²

The Centre for Social Action aims to test and robustly evaluate the impact of social action and support the growth and mainstreaming of high impact models.³ The Centre runs programmes across a range of policy areas including youth, health, rehabilitation and community action. Since it launched in April 2013, the Centre has invested £36m in 215 projects, involving over 2 million people. Through its investment in the CEPMF, the Centre aimed to catalyse growth of community energy. Publishing learning from the fund furthers this aim by demonstrating the potential impact of community energy to community groups and policy makers; and by drawing together lessons learned about what works to facilitate growth of best practice.

1.2 Why did Government run this fund?

In January 2014 the UK's first ever Community Energy Strategy was published.⁴ It set out the potential for individuals and local communities to make an important contribution to transforming the way that energy is generated and used in this country.

Drawing on case studies, the strategy demonstrated that community-led action can often tackle energy challenges more effectively than Government would be able to alone. For example, increased community ownership might lead to more local support for deploying renewable electricity technologies, which in turn could unlock additional investment; community activities provide opportunities to save money on energy bills, such as collective switching schemes; and community groups are often well placed to help vulnerable and fuel poor members of the community access the benefits of changes that are taking place in the energy system.

Community energy is currently a small sector, with around 5,000 community energy groups active in the UK since 2008 - but it is rapidly expanding⁵. The Community Energy Strategy pointed to a number of barriers to growth, including difficulties faced by

¹ See '[Building Civil Society Together](#)', a speech from Rob Wilson MP, Minister for Civil Society (June 2015)

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439105/Social_Action_-_Harnessing_the_Potential_updated_June_2015.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/centre-for-social-action-funding>

⁴ DECC (2014), *Community Energy Strategy: Full Report*
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275163/20140126Community_Energy_Strategy.pdf

⁵ Ibid

fledgling groups in accessing the right skills and expertise. It identified an opportunity for established groups to share their knowledge about setting up and managing community energy with new groups in order to save resource expended on 'reinventing the wheel'.

The 2014 strategy also pointed to the challenges of engaging and maintaining the commitment of volunteers and the wider community. Long-term sustainability of community energy depends on continuing motivation and participation.

The CEPMF was developed in this context. Following an open call for applications, 12 community energy groups were awarded grants through the CEPMF, ranging from £10,000 to £50,000, with a total of £500,000 distributed. The fund aimed to increase capacity in the sector by:

- Bringing community energy groups together so that more established groups could mentor emerging groups, helping them to get started by sharing knowledge, experience and best practice.
- Creating new opportunities for social action, engaging more communities and new volunteers.

1.3 Who were the 12 groups that received funding?

Please see **Annex A** for an outline of each project that received a grant. 'Community energy' encompasses projects with a range of aims such as generating energy, reducing energy use, managing energy and purchasing energy. It includes diverse activities such as installing solar panels on public buildings, working in neighbourhoods to help residents make their homes more energy efficient, managing woodlands, or developing hydropower systems. The groups funded through the CEPMF engaged in very different activities. Whilst each of the groups has captured project specific learning, this report will focus on emerging themes across the programme about what works in relation to growing community energy.

1.4 Who else was involved?

EDF Energy became part of the CEPMF by providing pro bono support to the 12 grant recipients. Senior staff from EDF energy with a particular expertise volunteered to act as mentors to the 12 energy groups depending on their geographical locations and provided ongoing business support where and when needed.

1.5 What is the purpose of this document?

This document consolidates findings about what the projects achieved and captures lessons learned about facilitators and barriers to the successful growth of community energy. It is intended that publishing this will influence the thinking of community energy groups and policy makers, enabling them to build on the best practice captured here in future planning and projects.

Evaluation of the CEPMF was done internally by grantees, with the aim of helping the groups supported through the CEPMF to develop skills needed to evaluate their work. The CEPMF has been evaluated in a number of ways:

- Grantees attended an evaluation workshop and were provided with an evaluation framework to help them develop ways to measure the impact of their programmes. Grantees conducted process evaluation to help them understand

how the different elements of the programmes were working. The framework is included at **Technical Appendix A**.

- Further qualitative data about facilitators and barriers to successful growth of community energy has been collected through a case template completed by grantees (**Technical Appendix B**), telephone interviews with staff at grantee organisations, and a focus group held by Cabinet Office in January 2015.
- Grantees projected their own outputs at the start of the projects and monitored their progress against these throughout the projects.

The process evaluation to understand facilitators and barriers to growth of community energy was highly successful. Grant recipients gained many valuable insights into factors that maximise the impact of their activities. This report pulls out themes that emerged across the projects.

Impact evaluation was less successful. Although grantees generally reported that the evaluation workshop and framework were extremely useful, they all reported that the timescale of the CEPMPF proved too short to robustly demonstrate impact. Additionally, most CEPMPF grantees struggled to get adequate response rates to follow up surveys and therefore do not have statistically significant quantitative data. Both of these factors also affected the ability to draw firm conclusions from economic evaluation, as well as difficulties faced by some grantees in obtaining accurate information about household incomes and energy bills. Nevertheless, grantees have been able to demonstrate the achievements of their projects, which are presented in Chapter 2, and they now have the tools needed to measure impact as projects progress.

2. WHAT HAS THE PEER MENTORING FUND ACHIEVED?

Peer mentoring activities undertaken by grantees included established community energy groups mentoring newer groups to help them get started; and community energy groups mentoring individual volunteers to help them become community Champions, equipped to develop and lead community energy projects in their local areas.

The key finding in this section is that peer mentoring was successful in increasing capacity of community energy, resulting in new community energy groups and Champions getting started. Enabling factors included the sharing of knowledge from more experienced community energy groups to newer groups and individuals, removing barriers to them getting started; creating new networks and partnerships that presented new opportunities for community energy activity; and motivating volunteers to commit to community energy activities.

2.1 Successes of the peer mentoring process

Increasing capacity of the community energy sector

In just one year, 12 mentor organisations were able to support **35 community energy groups** to get started, and to train **138 individual Champions** to catalyse and lead community energy activity in their areas.

Knowledge sharing

Sharing of knowledge, experience and skills was a key way in which peer mentoring enabled growth of new community energy activity. It helped groups to understand the process for setting up community energy at the start; to overcome perceived barriers to progress; and to improve the quality of their outputs and activities.

'Woodlands need to be unravelled, unlocked and demystified for people so that they have the confidence and skills to take on projects. This has to be through like-minded organisations working together. More projects and more people involved will lead to more knowledge and fewer barriers'- participant National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) programme

'The strength of the peer mentoring was that each group's practitioners got to share skills with neighbouring groups'- project lead, Ouse Valley Energy Services Company (OVESCO)

'Woodland management/ legal/ support issues for groups are all icebergs and worry a certain group of woodland enthusiasts who fear getting too much wrong. This is a cultural question and best remedied by a woodland manager taking their concerns away by supervising their first steps.'- participant NAAONB programme

The funding received enabled mentor groups to share knowledge by delivering training and learning events; creating templates, toolkits and e-learning modules; and offering informal guidance from staff and volunteers. A list of knowledge sharing products created by the groups, along with hyperlinks where available is at **Annex B**.

Making Connections

A further way in which peer mentoring increased the capacity of community energy was by building connections, networks and partnerships. This increased the resources available to groups to maximise their impact, by enabling sharing of physical and non-physical assets. For example, NAAONB were able to help the groups they mentored with small amounts of funding for training and equipment, as well as giving them access to use of a Land Rover. Wiltshire Community Land Trust (mentor) and Wilton Community Land Trust (mentee) publicised each other's events through their separate channels, which extended their reach and resulted in good attendance at the events they ran to promote community energy.

Additionally, creation of new networks facilitated ongoing sharing of learning between similar community energy groups on a sustainable basis.

'The benefit personally has been to build bridges to a number of emerging woodland centres which will, in time, provide emergent woodland groups with all the experience and confidence they are looking for'- participant NAAONB workshops.

'The [peer mentoring] process encouraged the groups to work together and develop projects together. The project has resulted in the establishment of Community Energy South as a support network'- project lead, OVESCO.

In some cases new partnerships created opportunities for groups to develop new projects by combining expertise, which was able to attract further investment, as demonstrated in the case study below.

CASE STUDY: SUTTON HEAT

The Sutton HEAT project trained volunteers to deliver household energy audits and install low-cost energy saving measures for households in the London Borough of Sutton. To deliver the project Bioregional, a group that has 20 years of experience in delivering projects that promote sustainable ways of living, mentored and partnered Action on Energy, a small community group in Sutton. Action on Energy brought its capability to recruit volunteers and reach into local communities and Bioregional's expertise on energy saving measures allowed a programme to develop that could deploy this community capability to help households save energy.

'Since Bioregional does not have a community engagement programme with volunteering, this relationship allows both partners to have more opportunities and greater impact'- Bioregional

The partnership between Bioregional and Action on Energy has attracted further investment. In early 2015 Bioregional obtained new funding worth £10k to run a small school energy project and Action on Energy supported this by providing energy monitors and delivering workshops for parents. Additionally, Action on Energy has secured a £15k contract to deliver auditing and basic energy saving measures to social housing tenants, and is currently in negotiations to secure a further £40k for the remainder of the financial year.

Investment attracted by partnerships created through the CEPMF was not only financial. For example, through partnering with Muslim Agency for Development and Education in Europe and Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, London Sustainability Exchange attracted over 50 hours of pro bono support from finance experts to explore Shari'ah compliant funding mechanisms for community energy.

Building Energy and Momentum

The peer mentoring process also catalysed the growth of community energy by creating enthusiasm and momentum for getting new projects started. This was the result of sharing examples of success and creating a community of like-minded people. The importance of this cannot be underestimated in a sector in which relies largely on volunteers.

'An important part of the peer mentoring process was that it gave the mentor groups an understanding of what they have achieved and that it is powerful to share that with others- there was an energising effect from the peer mentoring aspect of the project'- participant in Cabinet Office focus group.

'Peer mentoring increased/ re-ignited motivation in woodland social action. This has happened through meeting like-minded and 'inspiring' people during the study days and training, engendering a sense of 'I'm not doing this alone. There are others I can relate to/ share with/ learn from'- project lead, NAAONB.

2.2 Achievements of social action projects

This section pulls together examples and self reported data from the CEPMF projects to demonstrate key achievements. A key achievement across the projects is the mobilisation of 1,490 volunteers. For those projects that focussed on promoting energy efficiency in households, successes include installing energy saving measures in over 400 households and delivering advice on energy use and managing bills to over 400 households. For those projects that focussed on instalment of renewable energy technologies, successes included 9 renewable energy installations, which attracted significant amounts of investment, and further instalments started.

Additionally, CEPMF grantees found that community energy groups are particularly well placed to reach out to and support people in fuel poverty, for reasons set out below. They also gathered qualitative evidence that their projects had wider benefits for the communities they served, such as community cohesion and empowerment.

Increasing resources

Mobilising the community through social action resulted in increased resources to achieve energy goals in local areas. According to self-reported data submitted to Cabinet Office through quarterly monitoring against projected outputs, the grantees and the organisations they mentored through this fund **engaged at least 8,620 people** through the events and seminars they ran and the communications networks they created. The projects involved a total of **1,490 committed volunteers**, who gave at least **19,250 hours** of their time. That is the equivalent of 2 years.

The projects engaged with people in different ways. Benefits delivered to communities include:

- 411 households received energy audits or advice on energy use and bills.
- 420 household energy efficiency measures were installed and 57 households benefitted from retrofits.
- 22 people were supported to switch energy supplier.
- 8 primary schools benefitted from development of lesson plans about energy efficiency.
- 9 renewable energy installations were developed during the lifetime of this grant, with further sites identified as suitable for installation.

It is not possible to put an overall figure on monetary value generated by the community energy activity of mentors and mentees in the CEPMF, as much of this can only be crudely estimated, and many impacts will only be fully realised beyond the lifetime of this project. However, some estimates of value generated, including savings for households, are included throughout this chapter.

In relation to increasing resources available to achieve energy goals, many projects attracted significant amounts of investment, including:

- Hydro power organisations supported by My Green Investment's peer mentoring programme attracted £2.65m via share issue, with more groups ready to launch next year.
- Renewable energy projects supported by OVESCO raised £500k via share issue, with more groups ready to launch next year.
- Programmes supported by Repowering's peer mentoring scheme raised £60,000 through community share offers.

Maintaining energy security and tackling climate change

The CEMPF grantees have demonstrated that there are a number of ways in which community energy can contribute to maintaining energy security and tackling climate change, impacting in ways that might not be possible without social action being core to the activity.

Firstly, community energy groups are well placed to gain local support for the instalment of renewable technologies, as demonstrated in the case study below.

CASE STUDY: SHEFFIELD RENEWABLES

Sheffield Renewables, mentoring Dearne Valley Eco Vision, installed solar panels on the roof of Swinton Fitzwilliam Primary School. This has reduced the carbon footprint of the school by 25.5% and is set to save the school £22,500 from its electricity bills over the next 20 years. As part of the funded project, a further 45 schools in the area have been assessed for solar panel suitability, of which 37 have been identified as potential solar schools. Dearne Valley Eco Vision is now equipped to take forward more installations in the area. Support for further installations has been gained by demonstrating the potential benefits of solar power and by combining installation projects with a series of project-based lesson plans in the schools, which are changing attitudes towards energy efficiency.

'It was clear that children, staff and parents recognised the value of renewable energy, particularly PV, in reducing Carbon Footprint, which is a central tenet of both the Dearne Valley Eco-Vision and Eco-Schools'- Dave Wilde, Eco Schools Officer

'The benefits to the region include a much lower carbon footprint and cheaper electricity bills. Perhaps most significantly, by working with children in these schools we have helped to instil a sense of environmental responsibility, attitudes that are likely to endure through to adulthood'- project lead, Sheffield Renewables

Sheffield Renewables estimate that if the Dearne Valley region exploits its potential, £835,000 of electricity savings could be realised over 20 years and 11,100 tonnes of CO₂ can be saved in the region.

Additionally, CEMPF grantees have demonstrated that projects that work through volunteers and communities are able to maximise the impact and reach of messages about saving energy particularly effectively.

CEMPF grantees have provided some examples that suggest people are more likely to take on board messages about energy saving behaviours if these are delivered by a volunteer. A theoretical framework that may be useful in explaining how this works is MINDSPACE⁶, which sets out principles for influencing behaviour through public policy. It suggests that peoples' reactions to messages about what is and is

⁶ <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/MINDSPACE.pdf>

not socially and legally acceptable are often influenced by the messenger delivering them. Sometimes, it may be more effective to use messengers that are not seen as agents of the state or other authorities.

Northfield Ecocentre, which ran a project aiming to increase uptake of energy saving advice in immigrant communities, found that 91% of respondents to a survey of participants in their project preferred receiving energy advice from someone within their own community.⁷ Thornbury Centre, which ran a project aiming to reduce energy bills for fuel poor households, found that people were often reluctant to get involved because lack of numeracy skills to calculate meter readings was a perceived barrier. Home visits from volunteers were an effective way to overcome this, gaining trust from participants and helping to allay fears.

Volunteers are able to tap into the underlying values of their communities and to locate energy saving messages in this context. The case study below demonstrates how this can increase the impact of energy saving campaigns.⁸

CASE STUDY: LONDON SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE

London Sustainability Exchange's project, 'Green Mosques', sought to tackle fuel poverty by promoting energy efficiency among Muslim populations in London. The project used Islamic values to engage people and tapped into the powerful social networks of volunteers in an attempt to build a new social norm. The project found that linking Islam and the environment was an effective way to create understanding of climate change and related issues and solutions.

'Using the Quran gave it meaning'- Project Champion

Working with volunteers from within the Muslim community was an important aspect of the success of the project, with volunteers acting as 'trusted messengers' for energy saving messages.

'Having the knowledge of Islam and what it says about the community, sustainability and environment gives us a way into the community to spread the green message as well'- Project Champion

The project also observed a multiplier effect for its messages about climate change as a result of volunteers spreading the word through their own networks.

'Once you are in the role you feel more responsible, there is more awareness even if you are not necessarily working at that time, and are always trying to pass on the information and remind people'- Project Champion

An additional advantage of working through volunteers observed by CEPMF grantees was being able to leverage volunteers' personal networks to identify new opportunities for energy saving. For example, volunteers that joined the fledgling groups mentored by Middleport Environment Centre identified opportunities to work with Shrewsbury Town Football club and Autonomy, an Aspergers support group.

⁷ Survey results are not statistically significant due to low number of respondents. For more details of how surveys were developed, please see Technical Appendix A.

⁸ This finding is corroborated by the learning from the Social Action Energy Pilot, which was funded by Cabinet Office and delivered in early 2014:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355924/Energising_Communities_e-book-_final.pdf

These opportunities were identified as a result of two volunteers being members of the football club, and through a volunteer's work contacts. Sutton HEAT worked with volunteers that identified an opportunity to combine their energy awareness training with their work on curtain fitting. Sutton HEAT is now planning to run a number of workshops on how to line existing curtains with a thermal material.

Saving money on energy bills and reducing fuel poverty

A number of the projects catalysed through the CEMPF sought to save households money from their energy bills and were successful in achieving this goal. As part of their internal evaluations, some grantees used data from household energy bills to estimate savings that their projects had generated for households. Estimated savings include:

- London Sustainability Exchange did retrofits for 57 households and estimated the collected annual savings as a result of increased energy efficiency at £2,419, or around £42 per household.
- Thornbury Centre calculated that households in the area had saved £5,875 as a result of switching energy providers based on advice received from volunteers.
- Middleport Environment Centre reported that volunteers had assessed 77 people for Warm Homes Discount eligibility, at an estimated value of £10,780.

Many of the projects that focussed on household energy saving sought to work with those in fuel poverty to help reduce energy bills. CEMPF grantees reported that identifying people in fuel poverty was challenging. Projects were able to broadly target communities that may need support by relying on information about average income but getting information about an individual's situation was difficult. One common reason was that participants often lacked knowledge about their energy use and energy bills. None of the projects were able to gain the information needed to identify people as fuel poor against the low income high cost definition⁹ and found that volunteers were more easily able to get information to assess peoples' situations when asking about broader proxy indicators, such as income level, benefits received and fuel expenditure. Even where people were able to give this information, a further barrier was that many were unwilling to divulge personal information and suspicious about what it would be used for.

However, CEMPF grantees identified that ability to build trust with people and communities that may need support is an advantage that community groups have in identifying people in fuel poverty. CEMPF grantees found that being able to spread the message about their activities through existing networks in the community built confidence and encouraged people to come forward and identify themselves as able to benefit from the support offered.

'The people who came to us came either by word of mouth or through the promotional events. The people in need ended up finding us- then further needs were identified'- project lead, Thornbury Centre

⁹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319280/Fuel_Poverty_Report_Final.pdf

London Sustainability Exchange identified that the way conversations were initiated by volunteers was also an important factor in whether people were willing to identify as able to benefit from the support. People were often reluctant to engage in a conversation about 'poverty' but were happy to discuss how they could reduce their energy bills and carbon footprint.

The case study below demonstrates that community groups can be particularly effective at reaching out to people in fuel poverty in hard to reach communities, who may be reluctant to seek support from other services.¹⁰

CASE STUDY: NORTHFIELD ECOCENTRE

Northfield Ecocentre mentored Greencare Enterprise CIC in order to increase uptake of energy advice services in ethnic minority, immigrant communities. Research (George et al) confirms that vulnerable consumers frequently face multiple barriers in accessing information, advice and support and that within immigrant communities there is increased risk of lack of knowledge, entitlements and sources of help. This contributes to high levels of fuel poverty in these communities.

'The approach taken using volunteers within the community helped to break down barriers that are traditionally there within these communities towards standard delivery mechanisms, not least language and cultural issues. The project was able to find and support the most vulnerable households within often very insular communities'- project lead, Northfield Ecocentre.

'Mrs H is a single mother with three children. She has accumulated over £1,000 worth of fuel debt with her energy provider and she was really stressed with the situation. The first thing we did was to assess her property and to determine the energy efficiency. The next stage was to perform an energy audit in order to determine the level of assistance suitable to her situation. Finally, we have checked her annual energy bills for irregularities. Although her bill was accurate, we mediated between Mrs H and her energy provider in order to implement a payment plan. Mrs H is now making regular payments. Lessons we have learned from this project indicate how reluctant this community is to ask for support and how little faith they have with the system'- blog written by Hamze Mohammed, Director of Greencare Enterprise CIC

Once in contact with people in need of support to reduce their energy bills, CEPMF community energy groups were able to identify a range of related needs. For example, Thornbury Centre identified that participants didn't only need advice about reducing their energy use, but also information to ensure they were in receipt of correct benefits, help to develop money management skills, support to prevent overpayment on utility bills and support to access grants that households may be entitled to. Moreover, CEPMF grantees demonstrated that community energy groups are well placed to be able to link people up with a range of other services available in the community. For example, London Sustainability Exchange partnered with Income MAX, which was able to advise people on maximising their incomes.

Community energy groups can also inspire wider social action, which enables them to harness local assets and mobilise local people, including those in fuel poverty themselves, to find solutions. This is demonstrated in the case study below.

¹⁰ George et al (2011), 'Too many hurdles: information and advice barriers in the energy market', University of Leicester

CASE STUDY: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

'An indirect outcome of this project has been the development of an initiative between Silverdale and District Woodbank and Bittern Countryside CIC, a social enterprise. Three local families in fuel poverty have benefitted from grants towards the purchase and installation of wood burning stoves. These have been installed in damp houses with inefficient and expensive night storage heaters. The families have been encouraged to become members of the Woodbank to harvest their own fuel and learn about woodland management. The grants have been financed by people in the locality donating their winter fuel allowance'- NAAONB project lead.

'I've learned more about the range of management systems and the potential involvement of local people. It has also contributed to thinking about a local energy strategy and how wood fuel can be a central part of that'- participant in NAAONB project

CEPMF grantees found that helping people to heat their homes efficiently resulted in health benefits. For example, the Sutton HEAT project worked with an elderly lady to reduce heat loss in her home and in particular to enable her bedroom to become warm enough to be habitable. Measures installed through the project have helped to reduce condensation in her home. The lady has severe respiratory problems and believes that the support provided by Sutton HEAT could prevent her from being readmitted to hospital. One of the community groups mentored by Middleport Environment Centre forged links with the local Patient Participation Group and their activities were able to strengthen the PPG's excess winter illness project. The local GP practice invested in thermometer cards for distribution to vulnerable patients.

Wider benefits for individuals and communities

CEPMF grantees also reported a range of indirect impacts that benefitted individuals and communities.

Grantees reported that the social action catalysed through their projects created a sense of social cohesion, participation and empowerment in communities.

'Social networks and friendship groups made social action fun and easier for people to engage. Social action creates a powerful introduction to community energy and creates a buzz around community energy'- project lead, London Sustainability exchange

'It was a really nice role to be in, to empower people to help themselves'- project champion, London Sustainability Exchange

'Participation in a project such as this is a social thing. In addition to the subject focus aligning with people's sense of principles or community priorities, the experience needs to be socially positive and developmental'- project lead, Middleport Environment Centre

'I feel much more confident in being able to make a positive difference in my community now that I have some practical skills/ knowledge and its been a great way to get to know some of my neighbours better!'- participant Centre for Sustainable Energy youth community energy

Additionally, a number of the CEPMF projects provided examples of the benefits of creating opportunities for volunteers to gain skills, qualifications and work opportunities. For example, the NAAONB was able to help some of the participants in its project to gain chainsaw qualifications. The growth of Action on Energy's organisational capacity through the peer mentoring it received as part of the Sutton HEAT project created opportunities for both paid and voluntary work experience in the direct delivery of energy saving measures and also in ancillary areas such as customer services.

2.3 Would these achievements have happened without the CEPMF?

It is not possible to say that the fledgling projects that benefitted from the expertise of peer mentors would never have got up and running without that support. However, it is clear that access to peer mentoring speeded up their progress significantly. Feedback that demonstrates this includes:

'The mentoring process between Northfield Ecocentre and Greencare Enterprise CIC speeded up the delivery and quality of the advice significantly, allowing a new, very small and inexperienced organisation to get up and running quickly'- project lead, Northfield Ecocentre

'Most new community energy groups have a lot of enthusiasm but need knowledge and information to take their ideas forward. There is a lot of information and knowledge to be shared and this takes time to ensure the new volunteers understand the technical information and the legal processes'- project lead Sheffield Renewables

Furthermore, as detailed in section 2.1, formation of networks and partnerships that have created new opportunities for community energy, as well as strengthening activity and making it more sustainable, would not have happened without the structured peer mentoring that was achieved through this fund.

There is also strong qualitative evidence from across all of the CEPMF grantees that peer mentoring activities could not have been as effective without this funding. This is demonstrated in the quote below:

'Peer mentoring was not completely new to us as we have been offering free guidance and support to community energy groups on an ad hoc basis for a few years now. This has necessarily had to be mainly via email and short visits as we had no funding to do this. The challenge for us in the past has been finding the time to help other organisations when there was no income from doing this. Having the Peer Mentoring grant meant that we had the time to develop our written information, time to have lots of face to face contact with DVEV and that volunteers could be managed and supported in providing advice and guidance to others'- project lead, Sheffield Renewables

3. FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY ENERGY

This section draws together emerging themes identified across the CEPMF projects as facilitating the growth of community energy. It is intended that lessons learned will inform thinking and practice in the community energy sector and amongst policy makers working with the community energy sector. Section 2.1 demonstrated that peer mentoring was an effective way to grow capacity of community energy by helping new community energy groups get started. This section pulls together lessons learned about how to maximise the impact of peer mentoring. Key enabling factors identified are:

| What helps? | What gets in the way? |
|---|--|
| ✓ Identifying needs of mentee and designing mentoring programme to meet needs. | ✗ Mentors operating in inadequate or unclear legal and regulatory frameworks, for example around professional indemnity. |
| ✓ Structuring mentoring process around the practical steps groups need to take at each stage of setting up. | ✗ Lack of support from mentors for mentees to become confident to take forward projects. |
| ✓ Ongoing and responsive communication and support from mentors as mentees start to deliver their projects. | ✗ Scheduling peer mentoring sessions at times that don't work for the intended mentees. |
| ✓ Facilitating networks that allow mentees to support each other too. | ✗ Inadequate financial and human resource to support the mentor's activities alongside its other business. |
| ✓ Making materials produced by mentors available online. | |

Section 2.2 sets out the particular benefits that volunteers and communities have in achieving energy goals and set out the achievements of the social action projects that got going through the CEPMF. This section pulls together lessons learned about working effectively with volunteers and communities. Key enabling factors identified include:

| What helps? | What gets in the way? |
|---|--|
| ✓ Recruiting volunteers through existing networks. | ✗ Being unable to recruit volunteers with the right skills. |
| ✓ Offering volunteers clear incentives and personal benefits from participating in the project, both at the recruitment stage and throughout the project. | ✗ Recruiting volunteers in summer, when people are likely to be away or uninterested in energy bills. |
| ✓ Groups getting to know the volunteers they are working with and arranging activities that are in line with their lifestyles and motivations. | ✗ Arranging activities at times that don't fit in with volunteers' lives and work. |
| ✓ Recognising and celebrating the contribution of volunteers. | ✗ Short project timelines that don't allow growth of grass roots movements by volunteers in their communities. |

3.1 Facilitators and barriers to effective peer mentoring

3.1.a What factors contributed to success?

Design of peer mentoring process

1. Basing the design of peer mentoring activities on clearly scoped needs of the mentee organisations was an important way of ensuring their utility and maximum impact. Needs were identified through interacting face-to-face, via email, and by after-session surveys. For example, NAAONB gathered feedback from participants in its initial study day and planned a programme of one day training events to address the biggest perceived barriers that participants had identified. This resulted in positive feedback from participants and the Training Events:

'It was tailored to our needs and pitched at the right level for us in our development of the Woodbank'- participant NAAONB project

2. Designing a structured mentoring process with clear next steps for mentees to follow ensured that knowledge disseminated was practical and clearly applicable to progressing projects on the ground. A number of the mentors structured their workshops and seminars around the stages of setting up and operating a community energy project. Feedback from mentor projects that did this includes:

'The peer learning process gave a great deal of structure to the workshops. This structure gave a very helpful baseline from which to work and points of reference from which we could refer back'- project lead, My Green Investment

'Very practical sessions: we looked at communications and business planning- it focuses the mind, we're working out a structure and planning ahead, not just bumbling along'- participant NAAONB project

Communication and dissemination of material

3. Ongoing communication with mentees was important in order to provide support at different stages of their project delivery and to keep up momentum, including when challenges arose.¹¹ Effective ways of doing this included regular meetings/ seminars and staff from the mentor organisation being available for phone calls or to respond to questions via email. Some CEPMF grantees also used technology effectively to make ongoing communication quick and responsive, and the potential for this to keep participants engaged in the project and feeling supported is captured in the example and the suggestion below:

¹¹ The need for ongoing support and communication has been noted as an essential component of long living community projects in other research, for example:
http://media.wix.com/ugd/caf2de_e3b28d55dd6043849973ba2b9532beef.pdf

'It was felt like there was a bit of lost opportunity to connect the catalysts to each other outside of the training programme. Social media could have been used more effectively and possibly should have looked into ways to incentivise connections between catalysts'- project lead, Centre for Sustainable Energy

'The use of Whatsapp was helpful for Champions to keep in contact, make arrangements and discuss plans'- project lead, London Sustainability Exchange

4. CEPMF grantees found that informal approaches such as knowledge-sharing workshops or networking events can enable participants to learn more from each other as well as from the mentor.

'Much of the learning came from group to group as well as peer to group. Even groups who have operational projects are still learning new information'- project lead, My Green Investment

5. Making resources developed through the peer mentoring process available online was a good way to disseminate knowledge more widely, building sustainable ways of sharing knowledge between community energy groups.

'The e-learning modules have also been helpful. When I receive phone calls from new groups, I am able to refer them to the e-learning modules, and once they have reviewed those, they can then come back to me with further questions'- peer mentoring lead, My Green Investment

3.1.b What are the potential barriers to effective peer mentoring?

Legal and regulatory framework

1. Lack of provision, clarity or confidence in the legal and regulatory framework can result in mentors being reluctant to share information. One example of this that arose in the CEPMF was a group dealing with installation of renewable technologies reporting that they felt cautious about giving advice on certain matters and sharing certain documentation from other similar schemes without professional indemnity insurance.

'Whitby Esk Energy was the 'peer'. They broke down the project process that they went through and shared that learning, however, they were very clear, that this was just their experience and they were not there to act as a consultant and give advice as they were not insured under a professional indemnity to do so. There were at times some friction, when groups felt the 'peer' should give more information, or share documentation, however, the peer, did not feel that this was within their remit to do so'- project lead, My Green Investment

Challenges of mentoring volunteers

2. Many of the new community energy groups that were mentored to get started were manned entirely by groups of volunteers, and some projects mentored individuals to become Champions. Confidence amongst volunteers was sometimes a barrier to carrying forward activities, as demonstrated in the example below:

'[Champions] have volunteered and remain with 'the programme' but the concept of 'taking responsibility' for [leading other volunteers] was problematic. Where the teams have been successful the mentor has normally been someone who has worked in the past. This seems to give them the confidence to 'lead' and support others. But some people did not see the mentor role as a knowledgeable friend and felt some level of responsibility for the success/failure of their mentees. This, we believe, may have caused their decisions to stop being mentors'- project lead, Thornbury Centre

CEPMF grantees found that Champions needed increased levels of support in order to mentor and lead other volunteers. The Thornbury Centre responded to this by developing more hands on support.

'Our Peer Coordinator supported initial meetings between mentors and their mentees'- project lead, Thornbury Centre

3. CEPMF grantees found that life events and personal priorities sometimes reduced the level of commitment from individuals and was a further barrier to putting the mentor's advice into action. Similar obstacles arose in relation to projects working with volunteers more widely, and examples of solutions that worked well are included in the section below.

'The main obstacle was that (she) got a good job during the time of the project, so I believe it became rather irrelevant for her, and she did not have time to devote to it'- mentor, Centre for Sustainable Energy project

'I think this was a very good scheme but (her) interest seemed to taper off as the year went on, due to spending time abroad and her interests changing direction'- mentor, Centre for Sustainable Energy project

Resourcing the mentorship programme

4. Adequate levels of resource, both in terms of money to develop products and pay for events, and in terms of the time of people at the mentor organisations is key to enabling effective peer mentoring. CEPMF grantees have all fed back that this funding allowed them to develop structured and focussed peer mentoring programmes and resources, whereas before quick phone calls here with groups requesting advice on an ad hoc basis was all that would have been possible. However, participants from some groups still fed back that it would have been useful to have access to more of the

mentor's time and it is clear that lack of adequate resource can be a barrier to the effectiveness of peer mentoring.

'One partner felt that the mentoring strand was underinvested in, as the coordinator had too much else on. Two partners commented on the logistical challenges of getting partners together to plan the project, with limited time available for project management'- project lead, NAAONB

A number of CEMPF grantees have suggested that organisations need to be paid for providing a peer mentoring service. The question of how to sustain resource to allow peer mentoring to develop and thrive on an ongoing basis is one to be considered by the community energy sector and policy makers. This issue has been picked up before and a range of solutions have been discussed. For example, DECC's 2014 document 'Learnings from the DECC Community Energy Efficiency Outreach Programme' pointed to the need for some centralised resource for community groups.¹² Some grantees had success in securing investment from local partners and felt this was part of the pathway to sustainable peer mentoring activities.

'OVESCO match funded the CEMPF through West Sussex County Council- this enabled the project to develop quicker and be flexible. We feel that match funding should be supported through these schemes and a section should be bespoke to reporting success, scaling up and a route to sustainability'- project lead, OVESCO

¹²https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274867/ceeop_eval_in_decc_formattingFINAL.pdf

3.2 Facilitators and barriers to working effectively with volunteers

3.2.a Volunteer recruitment

What facilitated volunteer recruitment?

1. Feedback from CEPMF grantees suggests that recruiting through existing networks may be a more effective way of engaging committed volunteers than recruiting through more general advertisements or on stalls at events.

'For the recruitment we tried a number of methods for advertising the opportunity, putting adverts in the local Voluntary Service Council and other volunteer websites with limited success. We found that word of mouth and people linked to the project in some way were the best ways for finding volunteers'- project lead, Northfield Ecocentre

'Recruitment was linked through existing networks and volunteers from other areas. Success has begun as volunteers have begun to recruit friends and neighbours'- project lead, Thornbury Centre

2. CEPMF grantees found that small incentives can play a role in catching the attention of potential volunteers to engage in a discussion about the project. For example, one group found it challenging gaining the initial attention of passers-by whilst running their stall at a local event. They changed their strategy to address this issue by offering giveaways such as energy saving light bulbs. This worked as a hook to get initial conversations flowing.

The incentive of a clear offer around benefits of participating in the project was also a reason why many volunteers then actually committed to the opportunity. Reasons that motivated volunteers to sign up included gaining new skills and learning how to save money on their own energy bills. For example, Action on Energy registered with a DWP scheme to provide experience for people who had been unemployed for a long time. Gaining new skills was a good motivation for commitment to the project.

What was challenging in recruiting volunteers?

3. CEPMF grantees identified that seasonal factors have a significant impact on success of volunteer recruitment strategies, for example there can be barriers to recruiting during the summer. They recommended that this should always be factored into project timelines.

'Students proved hard to recruit in the summer terms and therefore it was decided to focus on the new arrivals and second year students in October'- project lead, Middleport Environment Centre

'People may have been less likely to see energy bills as a pressing issue during summer and therefore were less interested in getting involved'- participant, Cabinet Office focus group

4. Recruiting volunteers with the right level of skills to take on some of the projects dealing with installing renewable technologies was challenging, and success could depend on the particular area, as demonstrated in the example below:

'We also recruited volunteers in Sheffield to carry out the feasibility study of all the schools in Dearne Valley and to manage the installation of the first solar PV scheme in Rotherham. It is much easier to recruit volunteers with technical knowledge in Sheffield as we have a pool of students and ex-students from the 2 universities'- project lead, Sheffield Renewables

3.2.b Retaining volunteers

What facilitated volunteer retention?

1. CEPMF grantees found that getting to know their volunteers and understand their lifestyles and motivations could enable community energy groups to work effectively in particular communities, planning projects around volunteers and engaging in the most effective manner. This way of working was able to successfully overcome challenges presented by working with certain target groups, including the challenges described below:

'We recruited volunteers from within the immigrant, ethnic minority communities we wanted to deliver advice to, as these people spoke the language and would provide networks from which clients could be found. However, working with people from these communities presented some challenges, as immigrant communities can be very transitional in their nature and have limited English, which made training them a little difficult'- project lead, Northfield Ecocentre

'It is highly possible that one of the reasons for [drop out or not following through] is that many of the catalysts saw the project as a good opportunity to increase their job prospects by participating in the project, particularly the training sessions. With a desire amongst young people in the job market to try and stand out from the crowd it would not be unexpected that some catalysts saw this as a free opportunity for some good training'- project lead, Centre for Sustainable Energy

2. Volunteers needed to have a reason to stay part of the project. CEPMF grantees found that volunteers who had a pre-existing interest in the energy project and commitment to its aims were likely to keep motivated by a sense of seeing the project progress. But it was necessary for these volunteers to see progress. For example, one group found that volunteers maintained interest when there was activity occurring, such as gaining approvals from their local council on building ownership. This created momentum and motivated volunteers to continue taking part. The same group identified that where there was little activity going on, volunteers attended less meetings and were reluctant to invite others to join the project.

'Once volunteers were recruited they were retained as they were enthusiastic about the plans for Dearne Valley. They will be sustained by running the share offer and then planning and managing the installation of the next solar PV schemes'- project lead, Sheffield Renewables

For volunteers that may not have had a strong pre-existing interest in the project, the social aspect of activities was identified as one possible reason that volunteers kept engaged with projects.

'With time a small group emerged who were individuals who had benefitted personally from the work of the project and appeared to operate out of gratitude and respect for the project staff. Elements of social contact and friendship kept them involved'- project lead, Middleport Environment Centre

And just as clear personal benefits were important for many volunteers at the recruitment stage, a number of CEPMF grantees found that clear personal benefits kept volunteers engaged throughout. This included small material rewards for ongoing participation, for example:

'Retention improved when people realised that they could win the incentives i.e. the love to shop vouchers. After 2mths people then got into the routine of reading their meters. They realised that the more often they read their meters the more accurate their savings became and the more chance they had of winning the prizes'- The Thornbury Centre case study

It also included longer term benefits, such as a range of opportunities to learn new skills. A number of grantees suggested that future projects could benefit from having more formal training built into them to help participants work towards a qualification.

3. Several groups also identified that volunteers needed recognition for their contribution to the projects in order to create sustainability. Suggested ways of doing this included awarding certificates and sending letters issued by the funder.

What was challenging in retaining volunteers?

1. A common barrier to keeping volunteers engaged that was identified by CEPMF grantees was availability of volunteers' time. Commitments such as work or family meant that some volunteers had to drop out of their project or lower the number of hours they volunteered.¹³ As mentioned above, this can be overcome by rearranging the events and meetings to accommodate volunteers' lifestyles.

'Some people work full or part time are only available at weekends and in the evenings, all have a range of other commitments and their time is precious. We had to rearrange a couple of events to accommodate people's needs. We staged a mixture of week-day and weekend events. Weekend events were usually held on a Saturday morning, to avoid sporting events'- project lead, Wiltshire CLT

'To be willing to participate people need to know as early as possible and preferably 6 weeks in advance, the date, time, location and duration of an event'- project lead, Wiltshire CLT

2. All grantees reported that the short timeline for the CEPMF meant they were not able to build up a grass roots movement that would create self-sustaining momentum for participation in community energy, and many recommended that project timelines should be longer in order to understand whether this is possible and to properly evaluate the longer term impacts.

¹³ Other research has also found that volunteers need time to plan their involvement with projects: http://www.climateexchange.org.uk/files/4413/8315/2952/CXC_Report_-_Success_Factors_for_Community_Energy.pdf

CONCLUSIONS

As well as providing evidence that peer mentoring increases the capacity of community energy, and demonstrating the achievements of social action projects in relation to energy goals, CEPMF grantees also gained a wealth of insight into facilitators and barriers to the growth of community energy. It is hoped that drawing together and publishing the learning from the CEPMF, both in relation to achievements and process, will influence the thinking and practice of community energy groups and policy makers in designing and delivering future projects.

An important learning that came out of the CEPMF was that peer mentoring and community activity as a whole needs to be adequately resourced if it is to achieve maximum impact. This has been noted before and a range of solutions have been suggested including making centralised resource available¹⁴, as well as accessing local resource which was done successfully by one of the grantees in the CEPMF fund through match funding from the local Council.

It is hoped that the learning from the CEPMF will provide additional context for conversations about securing and maximising resource to progress at the national level and at the local level.

¹⁴https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274867/ceeop_eval_in_decc_formattingFINAL.pdf

Annex A: Who were the 12 groups that received funding?

| Organisation | Location | Project Outline | Legal structure | Grant Amount |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Bioregional | London | Bioregional lead on a project called Sutton Heat, delivered by Action on Energy across Sutton. The project was designed to tackle fuel poverty, working closely with local voluntary and social care organisations with a view to supporting vulnerable households to stay warm over the winter and help reduce their energy bills. | Charity and Social Enterprise | £47,642 |
| Middleport Environment Centre (MEC) | West Midlands | Based in Shrewsbury and Silverdale, Middleport Environment Centre teamed up with Marches Energy Agency, Beat the Cold and Keele University to work together and support volunteers in designing and delivering activities and events to raise awareness about energy efficiency in the home. | Charity | £27,900 |
| Sheffield Renewables Limited | Yorkshire and Humber | Sheffield Renewables Limited ran several workshops with Dearne Valley Eco Vision (DVEV) to give them information about how to set up a community energy organisation who will install solar panels on the roofs of schools in Dearne Valley. | Community Benefit Society (CBS) | £13,925 |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------------------|---------|
| My Green Investment C.I.C | England Wide | My Green Investment worked with Whitby Esk Energy to help mentor other community hydro groups based on the experience they have gained from the <u>Whitby Esk Energy project</u> (a 50kW Archimedes screw hydroelectric power turbine on the River Esk at Ruswarp, near Whitby, North Yorkshire.) | Community Interest Company (CIC) | £30,900 |
| National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) | West Midlands, South West, North West. | NAAONB worked with mentees in 3 sites across England to develop volunteer management of local woodlands as well as stronger wood fuel supply chain to provide domestic heat. | Limited by Guarantee (LBG) | £46,486 |
| Northfield Ecocentre | West Midlands | Northfield Ecocentre worked with Green Care Enterprise who had a core group of volunteers from the Somali community, and recruited more over the period of the project to create a team of 'energy champions'. Northfield Ecocentre trained these volunteers in energy awareness and in delivering advice and produced fact sheets and other advice materials written in English and Somali. | Charity | £27,703 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------|
| The Thornbury Centre | Yorkshire and Humber | The Thornbury Centre set up the Street Life E-Teams (SLET) project with the aim to save local residents of Bradford Moor money on their energy bills through mentoring behaviour change. They trained a group of E-Mentors who then went onto supporting local residents, friends, family or neighbours. | Charity | £49,897 |
| London Sustainability Exchange (LSX) | London | LSX ran Green Mosques, a project with an aim to tackle fuel poverty through social action and volunteering to promote energy efficiency among London's Islamic community, using Islamic values to engage people, and working with their powerful social network to create a new social norm. | Charity | £49,067 |
| Ouse Valley Energy Services Co Ltd (OVESCO) | South East | OVESCO mentored 12 new Sussex energy groups to set up their own not for profit co-ops through 10 months of 12 training modules | Community Benefit Society (CBS) | £45,186 |
| Repowering Limited | London | Repowering mentored 5 new energy groups to develop governance, action plans and community share offerings. | Community Benefit Society (CBS) | £48,000 |
| Wiltshire Community Land Trust Ltd | South West | This experienced community land trust ran | Community Benefit Society (CBS) | £31,925 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--|---------------------------------|---------|
| | | a project called Creating Powerful Communities. This was a series of seminar, workshops and visits for local community groups to learn about a range of successful community-led initiatives (local and further afield), including energy saving and energy and income generation. | | |
| Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) | England Wide | Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and UK Youth Climate Coalition (UK YCC) joined up with the aim to increase young adults' skills and understanding of sustainable energy. This involved recruiting 20 young people (aged 18-29) as 'catalysts' paired with 20 mentors, who are experienced members of a community energy group, with shared interests and a similar location as the catalysts (their mentee). | Community Benefit Society (CBS) | £49,506 |

Annex B: Knowledge sharing products created by CEPMF grantees

| Grantee | Knowledge sharing devices |
|---|--|
| Bioregional | ➤ Ongoing one to one support to help existing community group set up and deliver an energy project. |
| Middleport Environment Centre | ➤ 18 events, including volunteer training sessions and activity sessions. |
| Sheffield Renewables Ltd | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Several workshops sharing knowledge about setting up a new community energy group. Topics including: possible legal models, incorporation process, how to set up the board, role descriptions, business planning and guidance on community solar energy. ➤ Guide to community solar booklet. ➤ Lesson plans for local schools. |
| My Green Investment CIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Breakdown of community hydro process into four workshops, which were then turned into e-learning modules. ➤ Ongoing support via email and phone. |
| National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 open study visits to existing woodland social action groups. ➤ Training events to support start up of woodland social action groups. Topics included: running and sustaining a group, understanding woodland management, making the most of wood fuel and setting up legal structures and entering into legal agreements. ➤ Videos to share learning from activities. ➤ 3 knowledge exchange events to discuss common issues. |
| Northfield Ecocentre | ➤ Ongoing one to one support to help mentee set up as a community enterprise group and deliver energy project to benefit Somali community. |
| The Thornbury Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training sessions for volunteers on how to lead other volunteers in community. ➤ Monthly 'street energy saving events' for volunteer Champions to cascade their knowledge to others in the community. ➤ Training sessions for front line workers. |
| London Sustainability Exchange | ➤ Ongoing partnership working to bring together expertise of community energy groups with groups that work with Muslim communities. |
| Ouse Valley Energy Services Co Ltd (OVESCO) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivery of 12 training modules about setting up and delivering community energy. Topics included: rules/ terms of agreement, business planning, finding a renewable energy site and technical plans, legal and finance, community outreach, writing share offers document, monitoring success, launch event, final contract and leases, installation, maintaining project and sustainability. ➤ Roadshow to share understanding of work of community energy groups with professionals. |
| Repowering Limited | ➤ Training sessions to help new community energy groups get started. Topics included: governance and legal structures, project planning, technical feasibility for solar, community engagement, communications, developing proposals and building owner negotiations. |
| Wiltshire Community Land Trust Ltd | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 5 visits to community led low carbon projects. ➤ 2 visits to local sustainability focussed businesses. ➤ 10 bespoke seminars for groups interested in building low carbon homes. ➤ 2 large networking events. ➤ 'How to guide- community energy case studies' |
| Centre for Sustainable Energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 4 full day seminars to allow energy catalysts to learn about energy efficiency, renewable technologies, the UK planning system and community energy in the UK. ➤ Evening webinars. Topics included: behaviour change, energy policy, fuel poverty, marketing and publicity, open homes events and project management. |
| Central CEPMPF knowledge sharing | ➤ In addition, knowledge sharing between the grantees in the CEPMPF was facilitated by creation of an online platform for the 12 groups to access bespoke resources, useful links, progress updates from fellow grantees and links to appropriate networking sites. |

Technical Appendix A: Evaluation Framework

Centre for Social Action Community Energy Peer Mentoring Evaluation

Background

The Centre for Social Action has approved a number of grants to support the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC's) Community Energy (CE) Strategy. The grants are awarded for the Community Energy Peer Mentoring Fund and are of values ranging from £10k and £50k to Community Energy groups, the aims of the fund are to:

- test the impact of peer-to-peer support between established and emerging Community Energy (CE) groups on energy targets
- increase opportunities for sustained social action

The government is committed to the transparency agenda and encourages public scrutiny of how public funds are used. In addition to ensuring that the use of public funds satisfies the requirements of accountability and probity, evaluation of the effectiveness of innovative programmes such as the Peer Mentoring Fund provides further opportunities to learn about what works and how traditional methods of delivering desired policy outcomes could be improved. The Cabinet Office is committed to a robust evaluation of funded programmes. We therefore request that you to undertake an evaluation of your project. This note, with the associated annexes provides guidance on the evaluation process.

Community Energy Peer Mentoring Fund – EVALUATION

1. As stated in the funding conditions in your grant agreement, you must demonstrate that some of your allocated budget will be attributed to an evaluation of the programme.
2. This guidance is based on one of two scenarios. The first is that the evaluation might be conducted by an independent evaluator who is committed to testing the stated outcomes of your specific programme in furtherance of the two broad outcomes of the fund. The second is that grant recipients will conduct the evaluation in-house, in this case we expect that you will procure the skills of an experienced researcher. The Cabinet Office is arranging a training event for grant recipients intending to carry out the evaluation in-house that will take place in March 2014 prior to you submitting your draft at (3).

In either scenario we ask that the evaluation includes the survey measures as outlined at **Annex 1** and **Annex 2** so that we are able to gather full and consistent information from the Fund. Your evaluation does not need to be limited to these statements, but it should include these measures if your programme involves engaging with participants, such as mentees or households.

3. You are required to share an evaluation plan, drafted in the form of **Annex 3**, with the appointed grant manager and Cabinet Office by **24th March 2014**.

4. If you are planning to appoint an evaluator and do not yet have one in place, we advise that you use the template provided at **Annex 3** to ensure your provider has taken account of everything the programmes should measure and will be a useful way of comparing across the bids. A copy of this evaluation plan should then be shared with the appointed grant manager and Cabinet Office by **24th March 2014**.

Scope of your evaluation

5. The evaluation should aim to provide answers to three aspects of your programme, namely:

- What worked well/less well in terms of delivering your programme (a process evaluation);
- What difference the intervention made (an impact evaluation)
- An assessment of whether the benefits justified the costs (a cost assessment)

6. As part of capturing the difference the intervention has made we ask that you carry out a survey of participants (or mentees) where applicable, before they start the intervention and following completion of this. **Annex 1** contains the series of questions that you should administer.

In addition the survey should include questions to capture the specific learning outcomes that your intervention is designed to deliver (e.g. relating to specific behaviours). **Annex 2** outlines some examples of the types of measures and approaches that could be taken in this section.

Please note that your evaluation does not need to be limited to these questions and measures, but measures outlined in **Annex 1**, and the types outlined in **Annex 2** must be included as a minimum.

We are aware that the impact of some types of interventions may not be measurable immediately. For example, changes to patterns of social action or energy use may not take place over the duration of your programme. However, in such cases, we suggest that you collect relevant (indicative) information at the start of your programme, which could help you to assess baseline behaviours, and then collect data again following

completion to assess the *potential* impact of the intervention, such as data on attitude change. These results can, where possible, be supplemented with longer-term, fuller assessments of impact.

Reporting your findings

7. You (or your evaluator if commissioning an independent evaluator) should produce a report at the end of your programme and no later than 30 April 2015. This is required to include full detail of the findings on the outcomes measured relating to energy efficiency and social action. It should consider value for money, recommendations for improving future delivery and design of your programme. The Cabinet Office is interested in the longer-term outcomes of your project and would welcome reports 6 months and 12 months after you have completed your programme, where possible. Depending on the structure of your programme, this may be before or after March 2015.

8. Reports should be accessible to a range of audiences, and pay particular regard to explaining findings in an understandable manner, avoiding technical jargon where possible. With this in mind the report should utilise materials and insights gained through any qualitative work to provide quotes, case studies and photos to bring the findings to life. Reports should also be focused in terms of length, and it is anticipated that the initial report be no more than 10 pages, including a 1-2 page Executive Summary. Please note that these should not be viewed as the minimum length, and the Cabinet Office is open to innovative and/or alternative ways of presenting the evaluation findings.

9. If you choose to publish your plan and promote it publicly, all reports should be sent to the Cabinet Office prior to publication for final approval and for discussion by the supporting advisory groups. The Cabinet Office will provide comments where necessary which should be integrated into final versions of these documents. It should be noted that policy colleagues involved in delivery of the programme will require opportunity to read and comment on the final report, therefore additional clearance should be built into timescales for publication in order to accommodate this activity.

10. Copies of all final reports will be provided to the Cabinet Office and you agree that the Cabinet Office may use the reports in connection with the work of the Office for Civil Society. The Cabinet Office also reserves the right to request the anonymised participant data relating to your evaluation results.

11. You will be required to work closely with the Cabinet Office upon publication and ensure all communications are coordinated. Any communication materials to be used should be submitted to the Cabinet Office for sign-off or agreement before use.

Annex 1- Suggested format for a general (Mentee / Participant) survey

The following is a list of questions which should be included in your surveys given to participants before they start the programme and following completion. Other questions can also be included, if relevant for your organisation, but we ask that the following are included as a minimum.

In addition to these questions each survey should also include a clear introduction to:

- *outline the topic and purpose of the survey (e.g. This survey aims to collect data on social action and energy use, which will allow us to understand how effective our programme is. It also aims to capture other details about types of people interested in participating in community related programmes)*
- *Who the survey is being carried out by (and for whom) (e.g. this Survey is being carried out by x on behalf of [programme/Cabinet Office].*
- *Statements about confidentiality (e.g. Any information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be used to identify you)*

Then at the end of the survey, include:

- *Consent questions (If you wish to follow up participants at a later date) (e.g. [evaluation company]/[Organisation] would like to contact you again in future to see how you are getting on. Your contact details will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Are you happy to be contacted? Yes/No).*

In addition you (and/or your independent evaluator) should ensure that all personal data is collected, stored and analysed in line with the Data Protection Act.

Participants should be assigned unique identifiers so that their before and after-programme surveys can be linked without the need to include personal contact information within the survey.

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| UID | | | | |
| | | | | |

(You could assign each respondent with a unique identification number (UID) – to be used on all questionnaires to enable you to match before and after surveys and to avoid the identification of respondents in completed questionnaires)

Section 1. Social Action

Q1

Which, if any, of these types of social action have you carried out in the last 12 months? (Tick as many that apply)

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Discussed community issues or community news with someone else | |
| 2. Donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation | |
| 3. Done paid community work | |
| 4. Done voluntary local community work (e.g. organising a street party in your area) | |
| 5. Done other voluntary work | |
| 6. Been to any community meetings (including Council meetings) | |
| 7. None of the above | |
| 8. Prefer not to say | |

Q2. How often have you carried out any of the activities listed in question 9 in the last 12 months?

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. At least once a week | |
| 2. Less than once a week but at least once a month, | |
| 3. Less often than once a month | |
| 4. Other | |
| 5. Prefer not to answer | |

Q3. How many hours have you spent on all forms of social action in the last 4 weeks?

| | |
|--|-------|
| | Hours |
|--|-------|

Section 2. Social Capital and Wellbeing

There is considerable interest in people's wellbeing and levels of social capital in different communities, and these are now being measured across the country. Please could you answer the following questions – your answers will help us to understand the project within the context of social capital and wellbeing.

Q4

We'd now like to ask you how you view other people. Generally speaking, would you say that ?

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Many of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted | |
| 2. Some can be trusted | |
| 3. A few can be trusted | |
| 4. None of the people can be trusted | |
| 5. Just moved here | |
| 6. Prefer not to answer | |

Q5

How strongly would you say you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Very strongly | |
| 2. Fairly strongly | |
| 3. Not very strongly | |
| 4. Not at all strongly | |
| 5. Don't know | |

| | Wellbeing Module | NOT AT ALL | COMPLETELY | | | | | | | | | | DK / Other |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Q6 | Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q7 | Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q8 | Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q9 | Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section 3. Demographic details

Q10

What was your age on your last birthday?

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 16-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 45-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 55-64 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 65-74 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 75-84 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 85+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q11**Are you...?**

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Male | |
| 2. Female | |
| 3. Prefer not to say | |

Q12**What is your ethnic group?**

| | |
|---|--|
| White | |
| 1. English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British | |
| 2. Irish | |
| 3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller | |
| 4. Any other White background (specify) | |
| Mixed / multiple ethnic groups | |
| 5. White and Black Caribbean | |
| 6. White and Black African | |
| 7. White and Asian | |
| 8. Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background (specify) | |
| Asian / Asian British | |
| 9. Indian | |
| 10. Pakistani | |
| 11. Bangladeshi | |
| 12. Chinese | |
| 13. Any other Asian background (specify) | |
| Black / African / Caribbean / Black British | |
| 14. African | |
| 15. Caribbean | |
| 16. Any other Black / African / Caribbean background | |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| (specify) | |
| Other ethnic group | |
| 17. Arab | |
| 18. Any other ethnic group (specify) | |
| 19. Don't know | |
| 20. Prefer not to say | |

Q13

What is your religion?

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. No religion | |
| 2. Christian | |
| 3. Buddhist | |
| 4. Hindu | |
| 5. Jewish | |
| 6. Muslim | |
| 7. Sikh | |
| 8. Any other religion (specify) | |
| 9. Prefer not to say | |

Q14

What is your work status?

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Employee in full time job (30 hours or more per week) | |
| 2. Employee in part time job (less than 30 hours per week) | |
| 3. Self employed - full or part time | |
| 4. Government supported training (e.g. Modern apprenticeship / Training | |

| | |
|---|--|
| for work) | |
| 5. Unemployed and available for work | |
| 6. Permanently retired from work | |
| 7. Full-time or part time education (i.e. at school, college or university) | |
| 8. Looking after family / home | |
| 9. Permanently sick / disabled | |
| 10. Other (specify) | |
| 11. Don't know | |
| 12. Prefer not to say | |

Q15

Please indicate the highest educational or professional qualification that you have obtained to date, if any?

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. GCSE/O Level/CSE | |
| 2. Vocational qualifications (=NVQ1+2) | |
| 3. A Level or equivalent (=NVQ3) | |
| 4. Bachelor degree or equivalent (=NVQ4) | |
| 5. Masters/PhD or equivalent | |
| 6. Other (specify) | |
| 7. No formal qualifications | |
| 8. Don't know | |
| 9. Prefer not to say | |

Q16

How long, in total, have you lived in your current area [local authority?]

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Less than 1 year | |
| 2. 1 year up to 2 years | |
| 3. 2 years up to 5 years | |
| 4. 5 years up to 10 years | |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 5. 10 years up to 20 years | |
| 6. Over 20 years/all my life | |
| 7. Don't know | |
| 8. Prefer not to say | |

Q17

How long, in total, have you lived in your current area [\[neighbourhood?\]](#)

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Less than 1 year | |
| 2. 1 year up to 2 years | |
| 3. 2 years up to 5 years | |
| 4. 5 years up to 10 years | |
| 5. 10 years up to 20 years | |
| 6. Over 20 years/all my life | |
| 7. Don't know | |
| 8. Prefer not to say | |

Q18

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Yes | |
| 2. No | |
| 3. Prefer not to say | |

Q19

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Yes, limited a lot | |
| 2. Yes, limited a little | |
| 3. No | |
| 4. Prefer not to say | |

Annex 2 Programme specific learning outcomes

In addition to the general questions outlined in Annex 1 we ask that you include questions relating to specific outcomes for your programmes. You could use this section to assess the prior knowledge that participants already have about what your own programme is designed to teach them.

- We suggest that for single events such as seminars and workshops the programme related questions are asked at the beginning and at the end of the event.
- For interventions or programmes that take place over a longer period i.e. several weeks or months, these questions could be asked at the beginning, middle and end of the intervention.

The specific questions in this section and their wording would be entirely at your discretion but for consistency we suggest that they take the form:

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 represents very little or none at all, and 10 represents a lot or quite a lot... [**Your specific questions about the outcomes your intervention is designed to accomplish**]

Examples

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

[illegible]

| | Programme Module (Mentees) | NONE / NOT MUCH | VERY | DK / Other |
|-----|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| | | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | 11 |
| Q24 | How would you rate your confidence in coaching families to reduce energy use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | Programme Module (Mentees) | NO AWARENESS | | | | | | | | | | | | VERY AWARE | | | | | | | | | | | | DK / Other |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------|
| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q25 | How would you rate your awareness of different coaching styles and methods? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | |

Technical Appendix B: Case study template

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Project Name | |
| Issue | <i>A brief statement outlining the challenge your project was addressing e.g. on average at least 65 people a day die in the UK in Winter as a result of illnesses due to cold homes.</i> |
| Aim | <i>Briefly outline the aim of the project and how this has been addressed e.g. this project uses social action to help reduce fuel poverty with trained volunteers draft proofing houses and giving advice on how to keep houses warm.</i> |
| Outline of project | <i>A more detailed explanation of how the project works e.g. we ran four workshops, two in North London and two in South London at which volunteers were trained how to draft proof houses. Volunteers then used their links and networks in the community</i> |
| Project summary | <i>A brief statement to summarise the completed project e.g. the project received £8,000 and ran from March-Nov 2014 during which time three new groups were created....</i> |
| Key project successes | <i>Please use this section to outline what you feel were the project's main successes. Where applicable please include details of your measures of success</i> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Key project challenges | <i>Please use this section to outline what you feel were the main challenges / difficulties your project faced, what strategies you used to overcome them; and how well you feel they were overcome</i> |
| Volunteers | <i>Please use this section to feedback specifically on the processes of recruiting, retaining and sustaining volunteers (i.e. the program's strategy for longer-term volunteer engagement). For each stage please describe the challenges, how these were overcome, the program's successes, and where applicable, your measures of success</i> |
| The peer mentoring process | <i>Please use this section to feedback specifically on the peer mentoring process, again thinking about the challenges, how these were overcome, the program's successes, and where applicable, your measures of success</i> |
| Recommendations for set up of future funds | <i>What worked well and what could have been done better in relation to the set up and management of the fund. What would your recommendations be for the design of future funds in terms of the way Cabinet Office and the Department of Energy and Climate Change set up and manage the fund?</i> |
| Key Learning Points | <i>What would you do differently if you ran your project again? Please list your key learning points.</i> |
| Funding legacy | <i>What do you believe the immediate, medium and longer-term impacts of the funding you have received as part of the community energy peer mentoring fund will be? For example, do you believe the groups/organisations that you helped set up will continue for the foreseeable future; are there any plans to grow these groups / seek additional funding etc.?</i> <i>Immediate impacts</i> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p><i>Medium-term impacts</i></p> <p><i>Longer-term impacts</i></p> |
| Support required from Government | <i>What support (from either the Cabinet Office or the Department of Energy and Climate Change) would you like to see to enable the project to continue?</i> |
| Support required from other sources | <i>Please use this section to identify any other sources of support that would help you continue this project, include details of any activity you may have already taken / be planning to take. Where applicable please identify how the Cabinet Office / Department of Energy and Climate Change may support in this</i> |
| Any other information | <i>Is there anything else you would like to add?</i> |