UK Government

RAF048/2324: Evaluation of the consumer advice and information programme

Final Report – Technical Annex

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026)

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Introduction

This document provides details on the technical method for the evaluation of the Consumer Advice and Information (CAI) Programme. A separate evaluation report provides details of the CAI programme.

The evaluation covers the Home Retrofit Advice and Information Line ("the phoneline") and Local Energy Advice Demonstrator programme (LEAD) within the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's wider Consumer Advice and Information programme.

Evaluation approach

Our aim was to conduct a full evaluation of the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) programme and Home Retrofit Advice and Information Line within the wider DESNZ Consumer Advice and Information programme. The evaluation would collect and analyse primary and secondary data, enabling an evaluation of the services' delivery processes, outcomes and value for money (and provide lessons for future policymaking). The intention on project inception was to deliver this evaluation in two waves of activity for each service.

Programme Theory of Change

Detailed Theories of Change (ToC) were developed at the outset of the evaluation for both the phoneline and LEAD. This encapsulated how the schemes were thought to generate the desired benefits and any assumptions behind this theory. The ToCs were originally generated through review of programme documentation and discussion with the programme delivery teams. As well as setting out the inputs-activities-outputs-outcomes logic, the ToCs covered:

- Assumptions on which the successful operation of the scheme was predicated.
- External factors; the social, cultural, economic and political factors, laws, regulations that influenced change along the major pathways of the ToC

The Theories of Change are included on the subsequent pages.

Figure 1: Home Retrofit Advice and Information Line Theory of Change

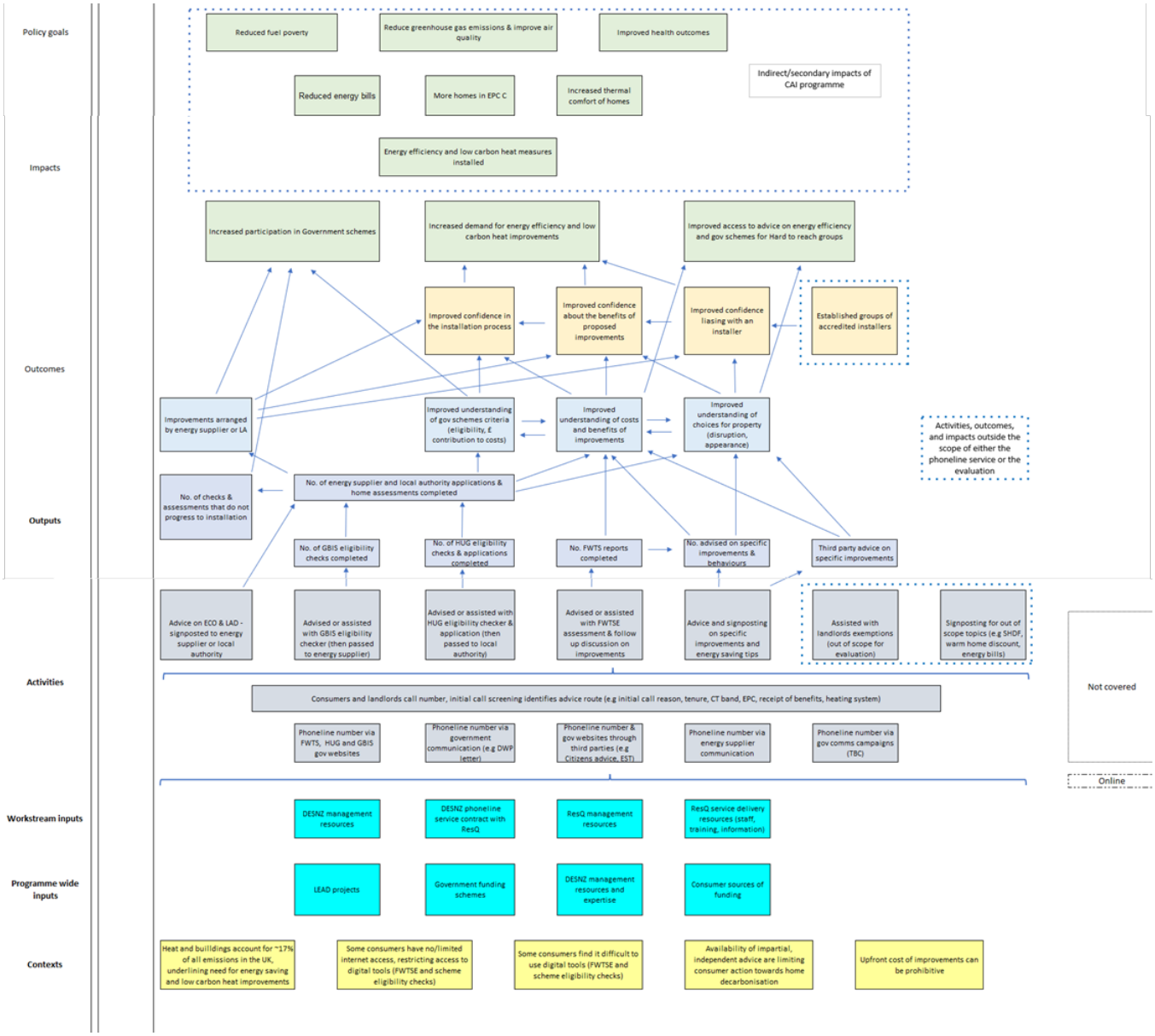

Figure 2: Home Retrofit Advice and Information Line Theory of Change Assumptions and Implications for the evaluation

Assumptions	Implications for research
Measures perform as expected	Outside the scope of the evaluation to explore in-use performance
Measures are getting maintained	Outside the scope of the evaluation to explore in-use performance
Stated effect of risk measures is achieved	Outside the scope of the evaluation to explore
The core and low carbon heat measures installed are sufficient to improve EPC ratings	Outside the scope of the evaluation to explore installed in-use performance
Measures are correctly installed	Outside the scope of the evaluation to explore installed in-use performance
There is sufficient capacity in the local supply chain to meet demand for core and low-carbon measures	Beneficiaries will be asked about the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
There is sufficient capacity in the supply chain to undertake quality assurance	Beneficiaries will be asked about the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Financial assistance is (or will be) in place on time and at a level to ensure measures can be installed	Beneficiaries will be asked about the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Services are received and provide a positive experience in line with what was agreed with the beneficiary	Beneficiaries will be asked to describe the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Beneficiaries' customer understanding on core measures (if deemed), depending on improvement type & circumstances, is sufficient	Beneficiaries will be asked to describe the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Beneficiaries perceive the benefits of core and low-carbon measures as outweighing the costs and effort required to undertake them	Beneficiaries will be asked to describe the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Consumers have sufficient trust in suppliers following their initial engagement	Beneficiaries will be asked about the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Consumers with barriers or vulnerabilities receive suitable or effective support and/or enhanced assistance when needed	Beneficiaries will be asked for their perspective on the advice provided
Consumers have trust in complexities of Government schemes	Beneficiaries will be asked for their perspective on the advice provided

Assumptions	Implications for research
Consumers are happy to give privacy-affecting data	Beneficiaries will be asked for their perspective on the advice provided
Consumers have sufficient digital access and literacy	Beneficiaries will be asked for their perspective on the advice provided
Information provided is accessible, accurate and tailored to the specific needs of consumers	Beneficiaries will be asked for their perspective on the advice provided
Consumers trust and use tools and services and receive value from this support	Challenging for the evaluation to explore in practice; beneficiaries may report where advice felt inconsistent/confusing
Consumers trust that local authorities provide consistent and reliable information on eligibility criteria	Challenging for the evaluation to explore in practice; beneficiaries may report where advice felt inconsistent/confusing
Energy savings tools and technologies provide a simple service and improve consumer engagement	Challenging for the evaluation to explore in practice; beneficiaries will be asked to describe influencing factors
Low-carbon technology can be engaged with and post-retrofit support is provided	Beneficiaries will be asked to describe the factors that influenced their decision to progress or not progress improvements
Adequate resources have been allocated to provide ongoing advice and support	Important factor: whether someone needing support was able to obtain it; evaluation will not explore effectiveness of post-installation support
Local authorities are sufficiently resourced and capable of delivering the core efficiency / LCT measures	Beneficiaries will be asked for their perspective on the advice provided
Consumers who are eligible for benefits are in receipt of Octopus benefit at time of the call	Important factor: whether someone who requires financial support can obtain it; out of scope to explore detailed individual cases
Consumers with a temporary visa or who are not the main residents have the core measures removed in their home address	Important factor: whether they were informed; findings will rely on supplier monitoring and system-generated insights

Figure 3 LEAD Theory of Change

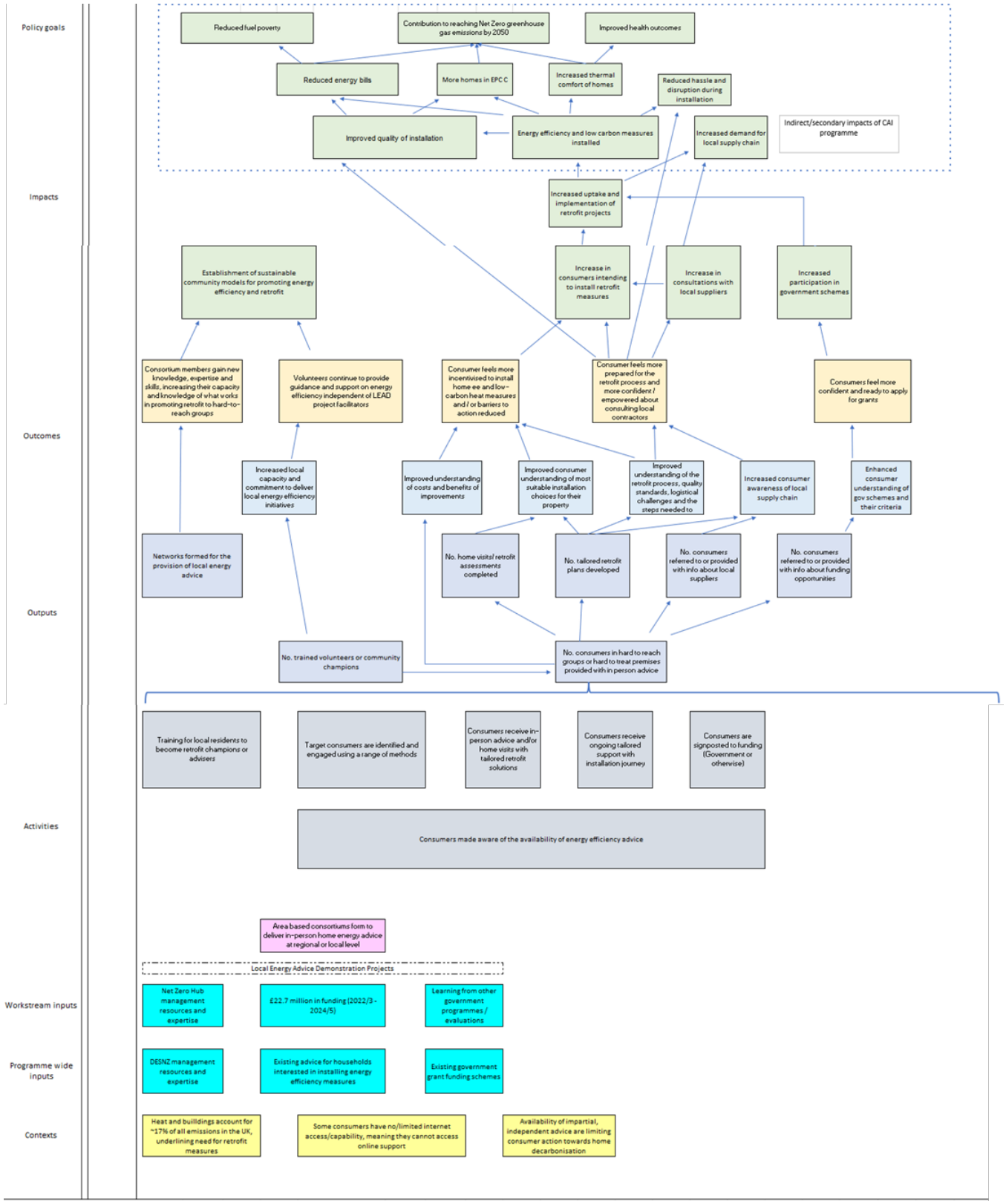

Figure 4 LEAD Theory of Change Assumptions and Implications for Evaluation

Assumptions	Implications for research
Measures perform as expected	Outside scope of evaluation to measure performance after installation
Measures are optimally operated	Outside scope of evaluation to explore whether infrastructure is operated and maintained correctly
Rebound effect is minimised	Outside scope of evaluation to measure changes in consumer behaviour as a result of cost savings
Home ee and low carbon heat measures installed are sufficient to imrpove EPC ratings	Outside scope of evaluation to assess impact of measures on EPC rating
Measures are correctly installed	Outside scope of evaluation to assess quality of installation
There is sufficient capacity in the local supply chain to meet the demand for ee and low carbon measures	Outside scope of evaluation to assess whether there was adequate capacity in local supply chain
There are sufficient skills in the supply chain to undertake quality installations	Outside scope of evaluation to assess skills of local suppliers
Forecast hassle and disruption during installation is tolerable	
Suppliers are reliable and provide a quality service in line with what was agreed with the beneficiary	Outside scope of evaluation to assess relaibility of suppliers and quality of installation process
Financial barriers to installation of retrofit are removed	Beneficiaries will be asked whether, and if so, how, financial barriers were addressed
Consumers have sufficient trust in suppliers following their initial engagement	Those beneficiaries who have engaged with suppliers will be asked about their experience, their level of trust in the supplier and the factors which cinfluenecd this.
Consumers have sufficient motivation to take action	The beneficiary survey will assess consumer motivatiobn levels post intervention. Questions will probe into what factors influenced their motivation, whether the intervention addressed motivational barriers, and what additional support might enhance their willuingness to take action.

Assumptions	Implications for research
Community initiatives and projects can secure funding or generate enough value to maintain operational viability without LEAD funding	The evaluation will examine the financial sustainability of community projects through interviews with project leaders. This will include the sources of funding post-LEAD, the sustainability of these sources, and any value creation activities that contribute to their ongoing viability.
Consortium members and local volunteers remain motivated and committed to applying their new skills and knowledge over the long term	The final evaluation will include surveys /interviews which gauge ongoing commitment levels and the factors influencing this. Any longer term assessment of motivation levels will not be possible as this will be outside the timeframes for this evaluation
There are no significant delays or complexities in Government funding schemes	Those beneficiaries who have applied for Government funding will be asked about any delays or administrative complexities in accessing government funding.
New partnerships and networks result in a successful collaborative relationship, with complementary skills and aligned goals	Interviews with LEAD projects will explore the quality and effectiveness of colaboration, whether skills and knowledge complemented each other and whether this has laid the groundwork for continued collaboration
Volunteers have sustained access to information and resources to continue providing accurate advice, and there are mechanisms for them to engage the local community about retrofit	Final evaluation will explore what mechanisms have been put in place to ensure volunteers can access relevant information and resources, and to assess any evidence of sustained community engagement by volunteers. Any longer term assessment will not be possible as this will be outside the timeframes for this evaluation
Consumers are provided with accurate information on installation requirements and effective support/advice on finding and engaging suppliers	It is unlikely to be feasible to assess the accuracy of the information provided on installation requirements as ths is technical in nature and would require knowledge of the specific needs of each premise. However interviews with beneficiaries will explore the usefulness of the information provided and whether it was perceived to be accurate.

Assumptions	Implications for research
Consumers perceive the benefits of ee and low-carbon measures as outweighing the costs and effort required to implement them.	Beneficiaries will be asked for their views on the cost-effectiveness and overall benefits of implementing energy efficiency and low-carbon measures. It will also explore factors influencing their perceptions, such as initial costs, perceived savings, comfort levels, and environmental impact
Training for volunteers increases their capacity to provide energy advice and there is a supportive infrastructure (e.g. access to information, tools and resources) for them to apply their skills effectively in the local community	Interviews with volunteers will explore whether they felt had the necessary skills, resources and support to provide advice on energy efficiency and retrofit, and felt confident in their ability to provide this advice.
Consumers are willing and open to receiving new information and changing their perceptions	Surveys of beneficiaries will explore initial attitudes towards energy efficiency and advice before they received support, whether they were willing to engage with advisors and (if relevant) the reasons for their reluctance.
The information provided is accessible, accurate and tailored to the specific needs of consumers	Beneficiary survey will seek feedback on the accessibility and relevance of the information provided. It would not be feasible to assess the accuracy of the information.
Consumers trust the advice given by LEAD projects	Surveys will ask beneficiaries to rate their level of trust in the advice provided and the factors which influenced their trust.
Trained inddividuals/retrofit champions remain motivated and committed over time to volunteer their efforts	Interviews with volunteers/retrofit champions will explore their motivations for getting involved, the strength of their enthusiasm and commitment to providing energy advice, the time that they have dedicated to it and whether the rewards justify the efforts. This will also explore whether they expect their commitment to persist in the future.
Consumers are willing and available to engage in-person	Interviews with LEAD projects will explore whether they encountered any resistance to in person engagement and the reasons for this.
Access to homes for visits and assessments is available and households are co-operative	Interviews with LEAD projects will explore whether they encountered any resistance to home visits from beneficiaries, whether they were cooperative, and the key factors explaining households unwillingness to agree to home visits

Assumptions	Implications for research
The information obtained from home visits/assessments is sufficient to develop effective, customised retrofit plans	Interviews with beneficaciries to assess their satisfaction with the retrofit plan, and whether they felt this was sufficiently tailored to their specific needs and those of their property
Consumers who are referred to funding opportunities understand the information provided	Beneficiary surveys to assess consumers' understanding of the information provided, its perceived usefulness, and assess any gaps in information
There is a sufficiently large number of target consumers (hard to reach groups or households living in HTT premsies) in the project areas, and effective methods and tools to accurately identify the target consumers	Evaluation will explore whether it is possible to use Census data to assess the number of target consumers in intervention areas and whether initial targets were realistic. Interviews with LEAD projets to explore what work was undertaken to understand the size of the target population when setting targets, and th perceivede effectiveness of their engagement methods
There is sufficient interest in the subject of retrofit/ee that households are willing to engage with LEAD projects	Interviews with LEAD pojects to explore the barriers to engaging consumers and whether interest in retrofit was a barrier
There is sufficient trust in the retrofit advisors and LEAD project that consumers are willing to engage	Interviews with LEAD pojects to explore the barriers to engaging consumers, whether trust was perceived to be a barrierand what methods were successful in overcoming this. Beneficary surveys to explore their turst in the advisors, and the factors that influenced their perceived trustworthiness.
Advisors have the necessary skills and knowledge to offer accurate, practical retrofitting advice	Interviews with LEAD projects to explore the skills and experience of advisors. Survey beneficiaries to assess their perceptions of the knowledge and skills of the advisor, the practicality and usefulness of the advice.
Adequate resources have been allocated to providing ongoing advice and support	Interviews with LEAD projects to explore the assumptions that informed their original cost estimates and output targets, and whether these have proven accurate and the factors which explain this.

Assumptions	Implications for research
LEAD advisors have accurate and comprehensive information about funding opportunities to effectively guide consumers.	Interviews with LEAD projects/advisors to explore their knowledge of funding opportunities, and their confidence about identifyinga nd recommending the most relevant funding opportunities for beneficiaries based on their circumstances. Beneficiary surveys to explore their satisfaction with the signposting to funding opportunities and its relevance to their circumstances.
There is sufficient interest and willingness among local residents to participate in training programs and take on roles as retrofit champions or advisers.	Interviews with LEAD projects that have recruited volunteers to explore the ease of recruitiing volunteers, what incentives were offered, and the nature of any barriers faced.

Contribution analysis

Theory-based outcome evaluation was used to test whether the programme was achieving the desired outcomes through the expected causal pathways. Specifically, a contribution analysis framework was developed including specific contribution claims and evidence tests that informed the development of research instruments. Evidence from multiple strands of data collection was synthesised to test contribution claims (and possible alternative explanations for the observed outcomes). Details of the contribution claims and hypotheses tested for each of the services is included in this annex.

Value-for-money analysis

Our value-for-money analysis followed a ‘4 Es’ approach, assessing the economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity of programme spend.[1] This too is a theory-based approach, framed in reference to the inputs-activities-outputs-outcomes logic as set out in the theory of change.

[1] King and OPM (2018). The OPM approach to assessing value for money: a guide. Oxford: Oxford Policy Management Ltd.

Evaluation Objectives

Alongside programme delivery, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) committed to deliver an interim and final evaluation of the CAI programme, incorporating process, impact and economic evaluation. Through assessing programme delivery and outcomes, the evaluation sought to provide understanding to enhance the design and delivery of CAI programme delivery and future programmes. The full set of evaluation questions, and coverage in the main body of the report, are as follows:

Table 1: Home Retrofit Advice and Information Line evaluation questions

Phoneline	
Process	
How satisfied were service users with the advice they received? a. How easy or difficult did users find it to access the phoneline? b. How satisfied were users with the advice they received? c. Was the service effective at providing consumers with information and guidance around home energy efficiency measures?	Section on 'What are customers experiences of using the service?'
How effective is the phoneline? a. How easy / difficult did customers find using the phoneline service? b. What aspects of the service are working well / less well? c. Are any enablers important to the effectiveness of the phoneline? d. Are there any barriers to the effectiveness of the phoneline? e. Was the advice they received useful? Did it prompt them to take action, or do they plan to do so in the future?	Sections on 'How effective is the phoneline?"
Who has been reached by the service? To what extent were the phoneline able to reach / serve: i) Hard-to-reach (HTR) households ii) Hard-to-decarbonise(HTD) properties To what extent has the phoneline supported HTR groups who were finding it difficult to use digital tools? To what extent has the phoneline supported HTR groups who were likely to be excluded from advice otherwise?	Section on 'Who has been reached?
What works well / less well in serving HTR consumers via a phoneline?	Section on 'How effective is the phoneline?'
Outcome Evaluation	

What has been achieved? Summarise the outcomes of the service as a whole (against targets)	Section on 'What has been achieved?'
Who has been supported? What is the profile of beneficiary households? (both in terms of reach, and action taken) Considering sub-groups such as property tenure, type and age, household demographics such as income level, fuel-poor, and various types of vulnerability, region, and by measure type advised.	Section on 'Who has been reached?'
What difference have the services made to users, and to whom? To what extent has the following increased / improved? To what extent has the following increased / improved? a. Consumer awareness of government schemes b. Consumer participation in government schemes c. Increased consumer awareness and trust of home energy efficiency and low-carbon heat measures d. Awareness of suitable energy efficiency measure installation choices e. Increased consumer trust f. Consumer propensity / intention to act g. Consumer demand for energy efficiency measures How has the advice encouraged consumers to act? What part of the advice (if any) had the biggest influence? If customers have not been encouraged to act, why not? Are there any notable barriers to consumer action following advice?	Section on 'What are the impacts of the service'
Subsequent benefits Where customers pursued installations following advice, what benefits have they experienced, e.g. do they: i. experience reduced hassle and disruption during installation (and lower consumer detriment)? ii. Report lower energy bills? iii. Report increased thermal comfort of their homes? iv. Report improved health and wellbeing?	Section on 'What are the impacts of the service?' (Early insights only)
Attribution What are the other factors that influenced consumers to engage with the service (and take action if relevant), why, and what difference did they make? What would have happened had the service not been there to support the consumer?	Section on 'What are the impacts of the service?'
Economic evaluation	

Does the phoneline demonstrate good value for money, also considering findings from the process and outcome evaluation? Economy – What was the cost for the activities delivered and how did these compare to expectations? How have projects minimised the costs / reduced cost escalations for each activity? Efficiency – What were the costs to achieve outputs, how do these compare to expectations and do these offer value for money? What factors contributed to variation in cost per household advised, compared to expectations at appraisal stage, or suitable proxies? Effectiveness – What outcomes have been achieved by the service and how does this compare to expected outcomes? How reasonable are the costs required to achieve the outcomes (e.g. given their target demographic)? Equity - To what extent are the services are available to and reach all people that they are intended to?	Section on 'Does the phoneline represent value for money?'

Table 2: LEAD evaluation questions

LEAD	
Process evaluation	
How satisfied were service users with the advice they received? a. How easy or difficult did users find it to access the in-person advice? b. How satisfied were users with the advice they received? c. Was the service effective at providing consumers with information and guidance around home energy efficiency measures?	Section on 'How effective were the LEAD projects?'
How effective are the LEAD projects? a. What types of delivery models did the LEAD projects use? Were they effective? b. What were the characteristics of successful projects? d. What the benefits / challenges of local / regional advice delivery? e. Were there any challenges or barriers to the effectiveness of the LEAD projects? f. Are the LEAD projects being implemented as intended within their budget, exploring any differences between forecast and realised cost per household advised?	Section on 'How effective were the LEAD projects?'
To what extent have the projects been effective in engaging hard-to-reach (HTR) consumers and consumers with hard-to-decarbonise (HTD) homes?	Section on 'To what extent have hard to reach customers and hard to decarbonise homes been reached?'
What approaches are most effective in engaging HTR consumers and consumers of HTD homes?	Section on 'How effective were the LEAD projects?'
What have the LEAD projects learned? What insight has been generated regarding the customer journey (when seeking advice about decarbonising their home and taking action)? How do customers seek information about energy	Section on 'How effective were the LEAD projects?'

performance measures, and how do they act on / respond to them?	
How have the LEAD projects complemented existing Government services (such as the web site and phoneline, and any others)?	Touched on in 'How effective were the LEAD projects?' and in 'Overall Conclusions'
Which project typologies are most cost effective and why?	Section on 'Assessing the effectiveness of projects'
Outcome	
What has been achieved? Summarise the outcomes of the LEAD projects as a whole (against targets)	Section on 'What has been achieved'
Who has been supported? What is the profile of beneficiary households? (both in terms of reach, and action taken) Considering sub-groups such as property tenure, type and age, household demographics such as income level, fuel-poor, and various types of vulnerability, region, and by measure type advised.	Section on 'To what extent have hard to reach customers and hard to decarbonise homes been reached?'
Effectiveness of project types Which project types have been more / less effective in achieving outcomes and why?	Sections on 'How effective are the LEAD projects?' and 'Case Study Approach' section.
What difference have the services made to users, and to whom? To what extent has the following increased / improved? a. Consumer awareness of government schemes b. Consumer participation in government schemes c. Increased consumer awareness and trust of home energy efficiency and low-carbon heat measures d. Awareness of suitable energy efficiency measure installation choices e. Increased consumer trust f. Consumer propensity / intention to act g. Consumer demand for energy efficiency measures	Section on 'What difference have the services made to users?'

h. Consumer participation in government grant funding schemes (e.g. through signposting)	
How has the advice encouraged consumers to act? What part of the advice (if any) had the biggest influence?	Section on 'What difference have the services made to users?'
As a result of the advice, did customers: a. undertake EE installations they would not have otherwise pursued b. proceed with an installer consultation c. bring forward EE installations they would otherwise have delayed undertaking	Section on 'What difference have the services made to users?'
Have service users gone on to install home energy efficiency measures independently?	Section on 'What difference have the services made to users?'
If customers have not been encouraged to act, why not? Are there any notable barriers to consumer action following advice?	Sections on 'What were the challenges and barriers affecting the effectiveness of LEADs?'
Subsequent benefits Where customers pursued installations following advice, what benefits have they experienced, e.g. do they: i. experience reduced hassle and disruption during installation (and lower consumer detriment)? ii. Report lower energy bills?	Not possible to explore within the timescales of the evaluation.

iii. Report increased thermal comfort of their homes? iv. Report improved health and wellbeing?	
Attribution What are the other factors that influenced consumers to engage with the service (and take action if relevant), why, and what difference did they make?	Section on 'What difference have the services made to users?'
What would have happened had the service not been there to support the consumer? - Would the consumer have sought advice at all? - Has the advice helped the consumer to take action more quickly than they would otherwise have done? - Could the consumers have accessed advice through another means (e.g. the phoneline or through .gov)? If yes, what value did the locally provided advice provide? If no, why not?	
To what extent are the projects likely to continue providing advice after CAI? To what extent have they developed a self-sufficient delivery model that does not require government funding? Do they require any support to do this?	Not in main body of report. Content in separate Case Study document.
To what extent have LEAD projects successfully scaled up their operations, and what factors have contributed to or hindered this?	Not in main body of report. Content in separate Case Study document.
Economic	
Does LEAD demonstrate good value for money, also considering findings from the process and outcome evaluation? Economy – What was the cost for the activities delivered and how did these compare to expectations? How have projects minimised the costs / reducing cost escalations for each activity? Efficiency – What were the costs to achieve outputs, how do these compare to expectations and do these offer value for money? What factors	Section on 'Value for Money' section

contributed to variation in cost per household advised, both between projects and compared to expectations at appraisal stage? Effectiveness – What outcomes have been achieved by the programme and how does this compare to expected outcomes? How reasonable are the costs required to achieve the outcomes (given e.g. their target demographic)?	

Table 3: Research questions relating to the overall lessons learned from CAI

Overall lessons learned		
10.1	What lessons have been learned about the most effective ways to deliver energy efficiency and low-carbon heating advice to consumers?	Overall conclusions
10.2	How could the services be improved?	
10.3	Were the LEAD projects successful at demonstrating the effectiveness of local, in-person advice, and generating learning for future government policymaking on consumer retrofit advice provision?	
10.4	What have the LEAD projects learned for future interventions? - Is Government funding required to support this type of advice? - Thinking about the future, which consumer groups should be targeted with locally delivered advice and how should it be provided? (Do some consumer groups require locally delivered advice more than others, and why? Are there types of HTR consumers that are more likely to act?)I	

Summary of evaluation data sources

The evaluation draws upon the following data:

	LEAD	Phoneline
Primary research	**Customer surveys (n=887, RR=11.4%[1])** Two cross-sectional survey tranches for subset of projects (13/35) which submitted enough customers' details to yield project-level estimates, within which we used quota sampling (with project size determining the quota of interviews). The number of interviews completed per project ranges from 59 to 137. Survey estimates are unlikely to be representative either of the programme as a whole or the subset of projects included in the sampling frame due to gaps in coverage. We suspect that consumer details provided skew towards those who received more intensive advice and support. **Customer interviews (n=11)** For projects which submitted insufficient customer details to achieve a meaningful survey, but the department remained interested in, we conducted a small number of additional in-depth interviews.[2] **Ethnographic research (n=11)** This included: a) 8 video diaries using the Indeemo smartphone app – Consumers shared video responses, photo responses and written note responses to a variety of questions at two time points; within 1 week of receiving the advice and 3-4 weeks after the advice was received. b) 3 face-to-face observations of advice delivery and follow-up interviews: due to recruitment challenges for the online Indeemo method, a small number of LEAD delivery sessions were observed in person. This included asking consumers questions both at advice delivery and then following up 3-4 weeks later over the phone. **Interviews with LEAD projects (n=57)** 57 in-depth interviews across a selection of 14 projects which were (i) included in the customer survey and (ii) of interest to the department due to their advice delivery model. **Interviews with Net Zero Hubs (n=5)** Interviews with representatives from each of the regional NZ hubs, who managed a portfolio of projects in their region. **Interviews with DESNZ officials (n=4)** 4 interviews with DESNZ policy and delivery staff involved in the development and management of LEAD.	**Customer surveys (n=437, combined RR=15%)** Longitudinal survey conducted in two tranches, August-September 2024 (n=223), and January-Feb 2025 (n=214). Final sample was a census of those who consented to recontact by researchers (around 71% of all customers), with a response rate of 15% (W1=14%, W2=16%). The combined sample corresponds to ~10% of all callers from FY23-24 Q1 to end of FY24-25 Q4. **Customer interviews, including follow-up (n=55)** Two phases of qualitative interviews targeting the same group of customers who called the phoneline between November and December 2023: Wave 1 achieving 33 interviews (conducted in April, May and July 2024), and Wave 2 in January 2025, with a subset of 22 individuals from the original 33 to capture longer-term experiences. **Call centre site visit** Site visit to the contractor delivering the phoneline service (ResQ) on 10th April 2024 - including in-person interview, call observation and discussion with advisors. **DESNZ staff interviews (n=3)** 3 interviews with DESNZ policy and delivery staff involved in the development and current delivery of the phoneline.
Secondary data	**Project data and monthly monitoring reports** Project monthly monitoring reports up to July 2024 were analysed, including both KPI measures and free text responses on progress and lessons learned. There are known issues with the consistency of interpretation of KPIs across projects – see 'analytical risks and limitations' below. **Project invoices** Project invoices were used in the value-for-money analysis.	**ResQ monitoring data** Analysis of the phoneline service dataset containing records of all call instances. Despite previous challenges with this dataset, we now have a good understanding of its composition and any gaps. **Invoices** ResQ invoices were used in the value-for-money analysis.

Notes:

1. Response rate calculated using achieved responses relative to valid telephone numbers in sampling frame.
2. CSE Futureproof Wiltshire, Testlands Community Hub and Rossendale Valley Energy.

Home Retrofit Advice & Information Line

Contribution claims

The phoneline evaluation tested the following contribution claims. Section 2.3.1 of the evaluation report summarises the strengths and limitations of evidence used to test contribution claims. Key limitations are the lack of customer demographic data in the service monitoring dataset and the non-random nature of the survey sample for the customer research.

Table 4: Phoneline evaluation analysis of contribution claims

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Report reference	Evidence supporting/disputing	Evidence test met?
1. The phoneline has supported hard-to-reach groups and hard to decarbonise property types	1. Phoneline beneficiaries are from Hard to Reach (HtR) groups	Survey	2.4.2.2 to 2.4.2.4	Evidence of higher proportion of elderly, disabled, lower income than average. Lower access to internet than national average.	Yes
	2. Phoneline beneficiaries are living in Hard to Decarbonise (HtD) properties and contexts	Survey	2.4.2.2 and 2.4.2.3	Some evidence that respondents were from HtD homes, but national comparisons not readily available	Yes
2. The phoneline has supported hard to reach groups who were finding it difficult to use digital tools	1. Beneficiaries report difficulties using online tools Find Ways To Save Energy (FWTSE), scheme eligibility checks and applications	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.2.4.	Few respondents (4% with GBIS, 10% FWTSE) reported difficulties with government online tools.	No

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Report reference	Evidence supporting/disputing	Evidence test met?
	2. Advisors complete scheme eligibility checks and applications	Survey, Service monitoring data	2.4.1.3	44% of callers reported that advisors had helped them check their eligibility	Yes
	3. Advisors use the FWTSE tool to provide advice on Energy Efficiency (EE) and Low Carbon Heat (LCH) improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.1.3	RESQ advisors report few calls being driven by issues completing or using FWTSE. Survey respondents do not report this as a primary reason for calling	No
3. The phoneline has supported hard to reach groups who were likely to be excluded from advice otherwise	1. Beneficiaries report not previously engaging with gov schemes or EE advice in the past	Survey	2.4.2.4.	Most (56%) had previously sought EE advice in the past	No
	2. Beneficiaries report difficulties using online tools (FWTSE, scheme eligibility checks and applications)	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.2.4.	Few respondents (4% with GBIS, 10% FWTSE) reported difficulties with government online tools.	No
	3. Beneficiaries provide positive feedback on the advice they received through the phoneline	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.3.1	Satisfaction 95% post-call, and 61% at point of survey. Advisors generally praised for helpfulness and professionalism	Yes
4. The phoneline has contributed to awareness and	1. Beneficiaries recall being advised on government schemes	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.1.3	68% called for info on government schemes, 44% reported being supported with eligibility checking, and 39% given info on schemes.	Yes

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Report reference	Evidence supporting/disputing	Evidence test met?
understanding of government funding schemes within hard to reach groups				Monitoring data (call outcomes) dominated by advice on gov schemes.	
	2. Advisors provide advice on government schemes	Survey, Service monitoring data	ditto	ditto	Yes
	3. Beneficiaries report the phoneline helped them to understand the government support available	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.5.1	Some customers provided clear info that was consistent with what energy suppliers provided, other customers found inconsistency.	Partially
5. The phoneline has contributed to participation in government funding schemes within hard to reach groups	1. Advisors complete scheme eligibility checks and applications	Survey, Service monitoring data	2.4.1.3	Mixed, 44% of callers reported that advisors had helped them check their eligibility, whereas service monitoring data (call outcomes) suggests this was rare	Partially
	2. Beneficiaries report completing eligibility checks and applications during or following a call with an advisor	Survey, qualitative interviews	ditto	ditto	ditto
	3. Beneficiaries report that eligibility checks and applications were helped by phoneline advice	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.3.1	Some customers were provided clear information that was consistent with what energy suppliers provided, other customers found inconsistency.	Partially

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Report reference	Evidence supporting/disputing	Evidence test met?
	4. Beneficiaries report contact with local authorities or energy suppliers	Survey	2.4.4.1	40% contacted their energy supplier, 46% looked for more information, 44% went on to complete an eligibility check, 30% applied to one.	Yes
	5. Beneficiaries report local authorities or energy suppliers arranging home assessments	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.4.1	Qualitative research captured individual positive and negative experiences.	Partially
	6. Beneficiaries report local authorities or energy suppliers arranging the installation of improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	1	Qualitative research captured individual positive and negative experiences.	Partially
6. The phoneline has improved awareness and understanding of energy efficiency (EE) and low carbon heat (LCH) improvements within hard to reach groups	1. Beneficiaries recall discussing EE and LCH improvements, how they work, practical considerations, potential benefits and costs	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.1.3 and 2.4.5.1	Most respondents cited information on government schemes, EE and LCH improvements were discussed to a lesser extent. Monitoring data (call outcomes) supports the above. Some evidence on improved understanding.	Partially
	2. Advisors use the FWTSE tool to provide advice on EE and LCH improvements	Survey, Service monitoring data	2.4.1.3	RESQ advisors report few calls being driven by using FTSE. Survey respondents do not report this as a primary reason for calling. Monitoring data (call outcomes) supports the above.	No
	3. Advisors provide advice on specific EE and LCH improvements	Survey, Service monitoring data	2.4.1.3	RESQ advisors report few calls on improvements. Most survey respondents cited information on government schemes.	Partially

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Report reference	Evidence supporting/disputing	Evidence test met?
				Monitoring data (call outcomes) supports the above.	
	4. Beneficiaries recall being signposted to other sources of advice on EE and LCH	Survey	2.4.4.1	40% contacted their energy supplier, 46% looked for more information, 44% went on to complete an eligibility check, 30% applied to one.	Yes
	5. Beneficiaries would be willing to discuss EE and LCH improvements with friends and family	Survey	2.4.5.1	Reported improved confidence is low	No
7. The phoneline has increased consumer incentive to adopt EE and LCH improvements	1. Beneficiaries report having a better understanding of EE and LCH improvements following advice	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.5.1 and 2.4.3.1	Most customers reported no change in their understanding of the most suitable measures for their property (66%), the costs and benefits of energy efficiency measures (64%), and the steps needed for installation (58%); around one third of respondents (29%-33%) reported improved understanding in these areas. 64% of respondents agreed that it was clear what their next steps were.	Partially
	2. Beneficiaries can describe the steps required to implement improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	ditto	ditto	ditto

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Report reference	Evidence supporting/disputing	Evidence test met?
	3. Beneficiaries report they are taking steps to implement improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.4.1	40% contacted their energy supplier, 46% looked for more information, 44% went on to complete an eligibility check, 30% applied to one.	Yes
	4. Beneficiaries describe how advice was helpful when considering and planning improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.4.1	Most already had an idea of what they wanted to do and believed they would have gone ahead and installed measures anyway. Quite weak evidence on the additionality of advice from a customer perspective.	Partially
8. The advice provided by the phoneline has led to EE and LCH improvements	1. Beneficiaries report they have installed improvements following advice	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.4.1	25% had decided to install an energy efficiency measure (a total of 15% having installed a measure).	Yes
	2. Beneficiaries describe how advice was helpful when implementing improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.4.1	Most already had an idea of what they wanted to do and believed they would have gone ahead and installed measures anyway. Quite weak evidence on the additionality of advice from a customer perspective.	Partially
	3. Beneficiaries describe the factors that influenced their decision to not progress improvements	Survey, qualitative interviews	2.4.5.4	Funding and more information as principal reasons.	Yes

Review of programme documentation and data

Table 5 below summarises the key datasets used in the evaluation. The evaluation also drew on a desk review of various programme documentation.

The evaluation customer dataset provided by the department was a key source, containing details of customers advised by the phoneline service who had opted in to their data being used for research purposes during the evaluation. For the first wave of customer research, DESNZ provided a dataset covering customers advised between 16th March 2023 to 13th June 2024. An updated dataset for Wave 2 covered 7th March 2023 to 27th November 2024. Where customer data is referred to, the advice period is clearly indicated.

Limitations or potential biases with this evidence

The analytical value of the service dataset (whole service) collected by ResQ is relatively low. Demographic data is not captured. The dataset also contained variables of interest that are not consistently captured for most advice interactions. These were “Property Age” (captured against 9% of customers), “Property type” (captured against 30% of customers). For analysis of who the service has supported, the evaluation has relied on the customer surveys.

Table 5: Key data sources used for the evaluation of the phoneline service

Source	Notes on source and use in the evaluation
Phoneline service dataset	Excel dataset supplied by DESNZ for use in final analysis and reporting. Contains records of all call instances from service start-up 23rd February 2023 until 12th April 2025. A complete two-year advice period of 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2025 was used in all analysis and reporting. Variables include unique call reference, customer reference, call reasons, call outcomes, customer satisfaction scores and whether the customer consented to evaluation.
Phoneline evaluation customer dataset (opt in)	Excel datasets provided by DESNZ during the evaluation to support the two phases of telephone survey (customer contact details). Dataset 1 covered advice delivered from 16th March 2023 to 13th June 2024, dataset 2 covered advice delivered from 7th March 2023 to 27th November 2024. Customers must opt-in to evaluation to be included in the dataset.
Monthly ResQ contract costs	Summary monthly costs of ResQ contract supplied by DESNZ to support the economic evaluation.

ResQ site visit

The site visit to ResQ enabled the research team to gain a detailed understanding of service delivery from the perspective of ResQ and to observe a small sample of incoming calls. A member of the research team visited the ResQ call centre site at Seaham on 10th April 2024.

The visit firstly involved an in-person, 45-minute semi-structured interview with the Phoneline service manager. ResQ staff involved in the establishment of the service were unavailable at the time, so the interview focused on the following topics:

- ResQ team involved in delivering the service
- Service management and monitoring - meetings, service targets, key performance indicators, reporting process, data provision, DESNZ feedback
- Current service – how customers find out about the service, call demand and call types, scope and content of advice provided, customer journeys (what happens after calls), how customer feedback is captured
- General reflections from current service delivery and any planned changes to service delivery in future
- Other comments on the phoneline not covered and anything else the evaluation should consider.

The interview was recorded. Interview notes grouped the interview recording into both anticipated themes from topic guide and any emerging themes from the discussion.

Following the interview, ResQ facilitated the researcher sitting with an advisor and listening to incoming calls. Call volumes were low at the time of the visit. Five calls were listened to with an additional pair of headphones linked to an advisor's telephony system.

With low call volumes at the time of the visit there was an opportunity to discuss with other advisors their perspectives of providing advice to customers. The following topics were used as prompts during conversations:

- Where callers find the phoneline number
- Reasons for customers calling in
- The types of information provided
- The topics or situations that advisors find more challenging to advise on

Limitations or potential biases with this evidence

Despite the small number of calls listened to during the ResQ site visit, the examples provided an opportunity to observe how calls were handled and were a good illustration of the range of enquiries advisors were handling.

During conversation ResQ advisors were able to clearly and succinctly describe more challenging advice situations. It was not practical to attempt to corroborate this through e.g. listening to recordings of phone calls.

In-depth interviews with policy and delivery staff

Interviews with DESNZ policy and delivery staff enabled the research team to develop a detailed understanding of the context prior to establishing the phoneline service, the service development phase through to contract award, and the current delivery of the service.

Interviewees were identified by DESNZ based on their respective roles in relation to the phoneline. Three separate interviews with DESNZ staff were conducted remotely via MS teams during March and April 2024:

1. Staff involved in the current delivery of the phoneline (28th March 2024)
2. Staff involved in establishing and developing the phoneline service (28th March 2024)
3. Staff involved in establishing and developing the phoneline service (23rd April 2024)

A semi-structured topic guide was developed. Topics covered during interview varied according to the role of interviewees on the phoneline:

- All - Confirm role/s in relation to the phoneline service
- Interviews 2 and 3 - Establishing the service – the anticipated scope of advice provision, customer journeys, service budget, timelines from business case development to supplier in place
- Interviews 2 and 3 - Overall reflections from establishing the service
- Interview 1 - Service management and monitoring - meetings, service targets, key performance indicators, reporting process, data provision, ResQ feedback
- Interview 1 only - Current service – how customers find out about the service, call demand and call types, scope and content of advice provided, customer journeys (what happens after calls), how customer feedback is captured, supplier feedback, service cost data
- Interview 1 only - Overall reflections from delivering the current service
- All - Other comments on the phoneline not covered and anything else the evaluation should consider

All interviews were recorded. Interview notes grouped the interview recording into both anticipated themes from topic guide and any emerging themes from the discussion.

Limitations or potential biases with this evidence

The outline business case for the phoneline service was developed during 2022 and interviews covering the development of the service were conducted approximately two years later. After

such a length of time, recollection of key details is a practical concern – however, no significant inconsistencies between findings from interviews and documentary sources were found.

In-depth interviews with phoneline users

Aims and objectives

Wave 1: 33 interviews with phoneline users were conducted to understand consumers' phoneline experiences, including what they had called the phoneline about, what the outcomes of the call were, and their levels of satisfaction with the call. In addition, we used these interviews to help inform the further planned research, including exploring whether consumers remembered the phoneline; how they described the phoneline (given the lack of 'brand' identified through stakeholder research) and how well the questions worked with this audience.

Wave 2: 22 interviews were conducted with callers who had been interviewed in wave 1. We followed up with the same phoneline users as had taken part in wave 1, to explore longer-term impacts of the phoneline, experiences with installed measures (which had been too early to fully tell during wave 1), to better understand their full customer journey, and to understand how perceptions of the phoneline might change over time.

Sample

The sample frame was the DESNZ customer database of those who had called the phoneline – and opted into recontact by researchers – during November and December 2023. We excluded cases from the sampling frame as per table 6 below, leaving 683 valid cases:

Table 6: Data cleaning customer opt-in database for sampling

Variable name	Descriptor	Rationale
Insert Stamp	Customers advised between 1st Nov to 30th Dec 2023	Research population for W1 qual drawn from all those advised 1st Nov to 30th Dec 2023, approximately 4-8 months since advice (those advised in January 24 to be retained for the W2 survey).
Call reason	Not in scope	Removed these cases. Initial enquiries related to energy bills, Warm Homes Discount; Green Deal; Winter Fuel Payment, smart meter complaints. Call handlers try and reach in-scope outcomes even when customer's initial query was out of scope. In this case, ResQ have suggested the call would be logged as 'in scope' on close and thus retained.

Variable name	Descriptor	Rationale
Call reason	Out of Scope	As per Not in scope above
Call reason	Not in scope - Warm Home Discount	As per Not in scope above
Call reason	Landlord exemptions	Removed these cases. Customer advice is in relation to landlord exemption register. According to contractor briefing note, this is in scope for phoneline service, but out of scope for the evaluation.
Call reason	Landlord exemptions advice	As per Landlord exemptions.
Telephone1 and Telephone2	Customer phone number	Removed cases where neither Telephone field contained an 11-digit number.
Deduplication	Duplicates removed	Where customer was advised more than once, the most recent record was retained. Where addresses were duplicated, but customer name was not, we retained both cases as the sample unit was decided to be on individual, rather than property basis.

We randomly selected 190 cases for the interviews. There were no large differences in the randomly selected sample compared to the whole population on call reason or customer type.

Interview process

Wave 1:

We sent introductory emails to customers where their email address was present in the dataset and attempted initially 3 call attempts per customer (later increased to 5). Respondents were offered a £20 *Love to Shop* voucher incentive to thank them for taking part. Calls were completed in batches, so 123 customers were contacted.

We completed 33 calls during April, May and July 2024 (with a break for the pre-election period); which was a response rate of 27%.

A semi-structured topic guide was produced covering:

1. recall of the phoneline

2. where they found the phoneline and how it was described
3. their motivations for calling and what was discussed on the call
4. satisfaction with the call (ease of use, helpfulness, clarity of next steps)
5. what they'd gone on to do next, and how influential the phoneline had been in any actions taken
6. benefits and challenges of any measures undertaken
7. previous use of digital tools and energy advice
8. demographics (covering vulnerability characteristics as proxies for "hard to reach" populations, including age, benefits, disability) and property type

Interviews were kept quite open to enable the interviewer to explore the experiences of the respondents, as we understood that there were a variety of things that customers could call the phoneline regarding and wanted to explore these in-depth to inform the quantitative survey. Interviews lasted between 10-30 minutes.

Wave 2:

The sample was 32 of the 33 participants interviewed in wave 1; who had agreed to being recontacted.

We sent emails to customers where their email address was present and reminded them that they had agreed to take part in another interview; and attempted up to 5 call attempts with each participant. A £30 *Love to Shop* voucher incentive was offered to thank them for taking part.

We completed 22 calls during January 2025. Some participants were unavailable to take part, and some we were unreachable on the provided telephone number.

A semi-structured topic guide was produced covering:

1. What had happened since the first interview (this was tailored to each respondent depending on the outcomes they'd reached in Wave 1).
2. Role of the phoneline in taking action, if action had been taken since Wave 1
3. Experiences living with installed measures
4. The impact of their subsequent customer journey on perceptions of the phoneline
5. Changes in knowledge and confidence since using the phoneline, and impacts of other elements of the customer journey on knowledge and confidence

Interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 10-40 minutes.

Analysis

Analysis was conducted for both waves on a deductive basis, using anticipated themes from the topic guide, with space for inductive thematic analysis on the more open questions.

Wave 1 data was analysed initially, and after completion of Wave 2 interviews, themes were added to the analysis matrix from Wave 1, to ensure that the complete customer journey for each participant was captured.

Limitations and caveats

As with all qualitative research, the findings cannot be taken to be representative of the whole population. However, this is not generally the aim of qualitative research, which is to explore the breadth and depth of experiences.

Wave 2 interviews were conducted approximately 1 year after respondents had used the phoneline, and as such, recall was not perfect; however, as respondents had already taken part in wave 1 interviews, their recall was better than expected. Additionally, the longer elapsed time meant that respondents were able to talk more about their experience with measures (particularly over the winter months), which they had not been able to do in Wave 1.

Not all respondents from Wave 1 were willing or able to take part in Wave 2. There is a risk that this could have introduced an element of self-selection bias to the follow-up research (e.g. with customers who had had poorer post-call experiences perhaps not being as willing to take part). However, participants who declined to take part generally cited time availability as the reason, rather than dissatisfaction. Furthermore, interviewees had a range of experiences and so we are confident that a breadth of views was captured.

Survey with phoneline users

Aims and objectives

A survey with phoneline users was conducted across two waves (with unique customers per wave) to quantify the experiences of phoneline users. The survey covered similar topic areas to the Wave 1 qualitative research (described above).

Sample

The sample frame for both survey waves was the DESNZ customer opt-in database (i.e. 63% of all in-scope callers). The databases were filtered to the appropriate advice window for each wave (shown in Table 7 below); and the data was cleaned to the same specification as per the qualitative research, shown in Table 6 above. For Wave 2, deduplication was undertaken to ensure that customers who had been included in the Wave 1 survey were not included (i.e. if they had contacted the phoneline during both advice windows).

Table 7: Phoneline survey sample

	Fieldwork dates	Advice window	Unique customers advised*	Available sample**	Interviews completed	Survey response rate	Total in-scope phoneline population

							represented by survey***
Wave 1	Aug-Sept 2024	1st Jan 2024-31st May 2024	2,287	1,617	223	14%	10%
Wave 2	Jan-Feb 2025	1st June 2024-31st October 2024	2,301	1,243	214	17%	9%
Total			**4,588**	**2,860**	**437**	**15%**	**10%**

*In-scope topics only

**Following evaluation opt-in, cleaning and de-duping across advice periods

***Interviews completed as a proportion of unique customers advised

All units were included as a census of individuals who opted in to the evaluation and were in-scope. At least one contact attempt was made for all records. In the evaluation plan, we had estimated that we would achieve 150 interviews[2] for Wave 1 without any stratification applied. However, the response rates achieved proved to be higher than expected and, ultimately, 223 interviews were completed (13.8% response rate). Based on this response rate, in Wave 2 we anticipated achieving 189 interviews. Again, we achieved a higher response rate (17%).

Taken together, the total achieved sample for Waves 1 and 2 was 437. The achieved sample for the survey represents 10% of the customers who called the phoneline during the advice window covered by the survey.

Survey

- **Wave 1**
  The survey was scripted on Winning Moves CATI software and took place during August and September 2024, with a small number of interviews conducted as a pilot, before the main stage commenced. Following the pilot, some changes to the survey were made to improve the flow of questions, simplify some wording, and correct routing errors.

- **Wave 2**
  The Wave 1 findings were reviewed, and some small changes were made, including the addition of two questions to capture digital exclusion (access to the internet, and confidence

[2]Based on assumptions informed by the in-depth interviews conducted in advance of survey fieldwork.

using the internet) as well as an open-ended question to help understand the role of the phoneline in decisions to undertake installations.

The survey was scripted as per Wave 1 and took place during January and February 2025.

For both waves, each interview was approximately 20 minutes long. Respondents were not offered an incentive to take part. 5 call attempts were made and the whole sample was used.

Analysis

Datasets from Wave 1 and Wave 2 were combined to produce a complete dataset for all 437 respondents. The data was not weighted as there was no sample frame data to weight the survey data to. Analysis was conducted in MS Excel, with frequencies produced for each question. Comparisons of interest were discussed, including differences in satisfaction levels between different call reasons, and between those at different stages of their journey. Otherwise, only descriptive statistics were produced. Where percentages are discussed in the report, these exclude “do not know” and “did not answer/null” responses. For some demographic questions, non-response was high, and this has been noted in the main report where relevant.

Limitations

Primary data collection with phoneline users relied on the contact details of those who chose to opt-in to recontact by evaluation researchers immediately following the ResQ call. The opt-in rate was 63%.[3] As the decision to opt in may be influenced by customers’ experiences of the service, this may create some selection bias in the survey estimates.

There is also likely to be some non-response bias even among those who opted in; again, this could bias the survey estimates.

ResQ customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is captured by ResQ via an immediate post-call automated survey. On close of all in-scope calls, customers are asked if they would be willing to complete a short survey. 5.4% of customers completed the survey, and rated the following on a scale of 0 – 10, where 0 is extremely dissatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied:

1. How satisfied are you with information that’s been provided?
2. How would you rate the advisor you spoke to today?
3. How would you rate the Consumer Advice and Information line?

[3] This is the proportion of all in-scope unique call instances that were yes to “ConsentME”, within the phoneline service dataset as detailed below.

The mean scores for each of these fields were 9.4, 9.0, and 9.1 respectively. The average of scores across all three questions are used to calculate the number of customers “satisfied” with the overall service (where customers provided a rating of 6 or more) and “not satisfied”, and a satisfaction rate (%), expressed as “satisfied” divided by the sum of “satisfied” and “not satisfied”.

Limitations of this automated customer survey include (a) the very low response rate, (b) social desirability bias possibly influencing customers’ scores and (c) the inability of respondents to gauge the accuracy of the advice received at this stage.

Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) programme

LEAD evaluation scope

Due to limited available customer details to use for primary data collection (due to delays in delivery and shortcomings in project recordkeeping), the decision was taken to focus on a sample of 13 LEAD projects for which it was feasible to yield sufficient survey responses for meaningful quantitative analysis.[4] As the selection of shortlisted projects was principally guided by the availability of sufficient consumer contact details to achieve meaningful sample sizes for project-level quantitative analysis, the selection comprises projects achieving higher delivery volumes. In some cases, this may also reflect better performance against KPI targets (suggestive of a successful advice model), and result in a sample that may overrepresent more successful projects, leading to potentially skewed programme-level estimates.

As a result, we did not seek to quantify the LEAD programme's impact or value for money, or validate estimates of installations achieved/conversion rates from advice to installations at the programme level (i.e. across all LEAD projects), using survey estimates. Due to the limited coverage of our sampling frame, robust/valid statistical estimates of these metrics would not have been feasible. In some instances (where they do not give a misleading estimate of core benefits) we report statistics for the pooled sample as 'indicative' estimates for the wider LEAD customer population; we also identify statistically significant differences between projects to compare advice models (with the caveat that within-project sampling frame coverage issues could still threaten the validity of these comparisons due to differential selection bias across projects).

In the interest of synthesising multiple strands of evidence to reach robust conclusions, we focussed qualitative data collection on the same subset of projects. Similar caveats apply around coverage gaps therefore apply for our qualitative data collection; this could lead to negative views on the programme being underrepresented in our qualitative evidence corpus.

Programme documentation and data

A number of documents were reviewed to provide contextual information to CAI and the LEAD programme more specifically, to inform the development of research tools and sampling strategy, and to undertake an analysis of the project typologies employed by the LEAD

[4] Had we followed the analytical approach set out in the invitation to tender, sample sizes per strata (i.e. project) would be unlikely to give sufficient statistical power to identify significant differences between projects; furthermore, we concluded that the range of advice delivery models was too broad to develop an analysis by pooling sample across multiple similar projects.

projects. The documents reviewed, along with the nature of the review are set out in the table below.

Table 8: Programme documentation and data review for evaluation of LEAD

Source	Notes on source and use in the evaluation
Defining and identifying complex to decarbonise homes	DESNZ research, published January 2024 and available https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defining-and-identifying-complex-to-decarbonise-homes Informed hard-to-decarbonise definition and design of research instruments for customer survey.
LEAD Application Guidance	Word document supplied by DESNZ. Provided background information on how organisations should apply for funding to set up a LEAD. Supported review of service need and development.
LEAD Application Form	Word document supplied by DESNZ. Provided background information on how organisations should apply for funding to set up a LEAD. Supported review of service need and development.
Summary of LEAD projects	Local Energy Advice Demonstrator Competition: successful projects - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Provides a brief overview of each of the 36 selected LEAD projects. Used to inform an analysis of the different project typologies employed by the LEADs.
LEAD project submissions (x36)	Supplied by DESNZ. Used to inform an analysis of the different project typologies employed by the LEADs.
Monitoring data from the LEAD projects	DESNZ supplied collated data across the LEAD projects on a monthly basis to inform LEAD progress against KPIs. This was used for contextual information, to support the undertaking of LEAD interviews. The data from July 2024 was used to inform the sampling of the customer survey in the interim evaluation and the data from December 2024 was used to inform the sampling of the customer survey in the final evaluation.

Source	Notes on source and use in the evaluation
LEAD project reports i.e. monthly updates on progress.	Supplied by DESNZ, for each LEAD project. Reports from each LEAD up to July 2024 were systematically reviewed to identify what is working well and less well, and for whom in the delivery of the projects. These are described as successes, failures and learnings. These data were used in the interim evaluation to inform the qualitative topic guides for interviews with the LEADs and other stakeholders, and to then triangulate with findings from these interviews.

Development of project typologies

As stated above, the LEAD project summaries and the LEAD project submissions were reviewed as part of a project typology analysis of the 35 projects. The information was used to record information against, and categorise where relevant, the LEADs as follows:

- whether the project is targeting hard to reach customers and / or hard to decarbonise homes
- the breadth of their target audience
- the geographic scale of the project
- the methods used to engage customers
- the type of support / advice they provide

The project typology was used to inform the sampling and research tools.

In-depth interviews with policy and delivery staff

Aims

Four interviews with DESNZ policy and delivery staff and 5 interviews with representatives of the Net Zero Hubs were conducted to inform the process evaluation of the LEAD programme. The interviews helped to understand different perspectives on what is working well in delivery, the challenges and to capture learnings to date. These data have been triangulated with the other sources of data gathered in the evaluation.

Sample

Nine interviews were conducted in total. Respondents included:

- the SRO for LEAD, DESNZ
- Policy Lead, DESNZ

- Policy and Engagement lead, DESNZ
- Policy team member, DESNZ
- a representative from each of the five Net Zero Hubs (who had direct management responsibility for projects and reported to DESNZ)

Method

Interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length and conducted and recorded via Teams across August and September 2024.

Topics

A qualitative topic guide was developed to structure the interviews. The key topics covered:

1. The respondent's role and responsibilities
2. Views on what has worked well and less well in the delivery and management of LEAD
3. Views on what makes a LEAD project successful or less successful
4. Views on effective and less effective approaches to customer engagement (DESNZ respondents were not asked these questions)
5. The extent to which LEADs are engaging with hard to reach consumers and consumers living in hard to decarbonise homes
6. The extent to which LEADs are achieving their intended outcomes
7. Other influences on consumers engaging with LEAD
8. Views on the economy and efficiency of LEAD so far to inform the economic evaluation
9. Learnings from delivery to date.

The topic guide was used flexibly and covered the questions that were most relevant to the individual's role and responsibilities in relation to LEAD.

Analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and notes were written into an Excel grid for analysis. Analysis was conducted at a group and at an individual level to identify the key themes emerging on each topic. Findings from the analysis of these interviews was initially shared with DESNZ as a fieldwork summary in September 2024 for review. The analysis of these interviews was then also synthesised and triangulated with the other sources of evidence gathered as part of the interim and final evaluations.

Limitations or potential biases with this evidence

Respondents were asked to reflect on around 8-10 months of delivery of LEAD, and most of these respondents had a lot of valuable insight to share. A balance had to be struck relating to coverage against each topic in the guide, focusing on the areas of most relevance to each respondent and the length of the interview and subsequent respondent burden. If there is a limitation with the evidence it is that respondents have focused on the key things that they recall over the course of delivery to date, rather than providing a thorough assessment of everything that has worked well and less well.

It is possible that the Net Zero Hubs respondents wanted to reflect their good work, in order to be looked upon favourably for future projects, although a review of the evidence suggests the respondents have provided a balanced view on delivery to date.

In-depth interviews with LEAD projects

57 interviews with representatives from 14 LEAD projects were conducted; 23 interviews in wave 1 and 34 in wave 2.

Sample

In wave 1, resource was allocated to conduct approximately 24 interviews with representatives from LEAD projects. As a result, six LEADs were selected on the basis of:

1. Projects that DESNZ were particularly keen to learn about given the engagement methods and delivery models employed.
2. Projects that had made sufficient progress in engaging customers to ensure the interviews would be worthwhile in gathering respondent views on what they thought had gone well or less well so far.
3. Enabling triangulation of evidence with other research elements such as the customer survey and the customer video ethnography[5] (to be reported on in the final evaluation).

In total, 23 interviews were conducted. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 9: LEADs selected for qualitative interviews, in wave 1 reason for selection and number of interviews conducted

LEAD	Reason for selection	Number of interviews conducted
Plymouth Energy Community	LEAD involved in customer video ethnography. LEAD involved in wave 1 customer survey. Making good progress with the number of customers advised to date.	5
Rossendale Valley Energy	LEAD involved in customer video ethnography. LEAD developed an app, perceived to provide valuable insights.	4

[5] Four LEADs have been selected and have been asked to identify and recruit six customers each who they have provided advice to, to participate in video diary research. Customers are asked a series of questions, via a video ethnography platform, to provide feedback on the advice and the service they received.

GMCA	LEAD involved in customer video ethnography LEAD involved in wave 1 customer survey A large-scale project, also using a unique model involving a large retailer. Making good progress with the number of customers advised to date.	7
Yes Energy	LEAD involved in customer video ethnography LEAD involved in wave 1 customer survey Model employed perceived to provide valuable insights as they have their own installers.	3
City of York	LEAD involved in wave 1 customer survey LEAD targeting specific customer groups, perceived to generate valuable insights.	3
SELCE	LEAD targeting specific customer groups and hard to decarbonise homes, perceived to generate valuable insights.	1

The case study approach adopted in the final evaluation stage (wave 2) resulted in 34 LEAD representatives being interviewed. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 10: Interviews conducted in wave 2

LEAD	Reason for selection / DESNZ interest in project	Number of interviews conducted
Basingstoke & Deane	Not provided	3
BVSC	“One of the only projects within LEAD who specifically targets faith groups to help coordinate retrofit messaging and installs.”	2
CSE FutureProof Wiltshire	"This project has engaged with rural communities through summer festivals and open home events throughout the year. They have provided useful insights on those in the	2

	able to pay market (above £31k) especially in relation to barriers for these communities."	
East Lindsey	"This project uses an energy van to target hard to reach consumers in rural regions, using mobile units in this way seems to be positively impacting the project's KPI targets both for advice given and measures installed."	4
GMCA	"This project has been working in partnership with B&Q in retail setting and has given more pieces of advice than any other project (over 11,000)."	2
North of Tyne	"This project has focused on social housing tenants predominantly and handholding through schemes which would be interesting to explore further."	5
Plymouth Energy Community	"Has developed a system of '5 Archetypes' to categorise the local area to apply different forms of retrofit advice based on their archetype assessment – which is very innovative and not replicated by any of the other projects across LEAD and has seemed to have helped when generating 'leads.'"	3
Rossendale	"Has been working with local GP surgeries and are getting great conversion rates between pieces of advice given and this advice translating into measures installed."	5
SELCE	Not provided	0[6]
Surrey County Council	"Uses a mock house that they set up in retail spaces and shopping centres to talk people through the retrofit process – to see if they are eligible for grants or help them with upskilling to retrofit for the able to pay market."	4
Testlands Wellbeing Hub	"This is the only project across the whole of LEAD whose settings is based in a gym / spa /in a wellness setting focusing on consumers who are already engaged in wanting to live healthier lifestyles."	1
WYCA	Not provided	2

[6] SELCE were not able to participate in an interview as part of the final evaluation, but were interviewed as part of the interim evaluation.

Yes Energy	"This project has focused on housing that meets the necessary parameters for funding criteria so have been useful in providing insight into any pinch points in the consumer journey in terms of grant funding."	1

For both the interim and final evaluation stages DESNZ supplied a contact for each of the LEADs selected. Winning Moves contacted each of these to explain the purpose and value of the interviews and check their willingness and ability to participate in an interview. They were also asked to suggest other colleagues involved in the delivery and management of their project for us to interview, aiming for approximately one to five interviews per LEAD. Interviews included respondents who were involved in developing their bid for LEAD funding, project managers and advisers and community volunteers engaging directly with consumers.

Method

All interviews were conducted remotely via MS Teams. Contacts were either emailed or called to pre-book a convenient time for the interview. Most interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. A small number of interviews were shorter, between 30 and 60 minutes depending on the role of the individual, their involvement in the LEAD, the extent of their feedback and if they were being re-interviewed for the final evaluation following an interview for the interim stage.

Interviews were conducted across August and September 2024 at the interim stage to provide respondents with sufficient time and flexibility to participate whilst managing summer annual leave and LEAD project commitments. Final evaluation interviews were conducted across January to March 2025.

Topics

Qualitative topic guides were developed for each stage. The topic guides were used flexibly, to allow the interview to focus on areas of most relevance to the respondent. Key topics covered in the interim evaluation interviews are as follows:

1. The individual’s role and involvement in LEAD
2. An overview of the LEAD project, it’s aim, how it is delivered and what their proposed outcomes were based on
3. Views on the delivery and management of LEAD
4. What approaches are most / least effective in engaging hard to reach consumers and consumers living in hard to decarbonise homes, based on delivery to date
5. The benefits and challenges of delivering energy efficiency advice locally
6. Outcomes and impacts achieved so far, and other influences on these
7. Views on the sustainability of the project when LEAD funding ends in March 2025
8. Views on the economy and efficiency of LEAD so far to inform the economic evaluation
9. Learnings from delivery to date.

Key topics covered in the final evaluation interviews are as follows:

1. The individual's role and involvement in LEAD (if not covered in a previous interview)
2. An overview of the LEAD project, it's aim, how it is delivered and what their proposed outcomes were based on (or an update on any changes to the project if interviewed previously)
3. Learnings about the most / least effective ways at engaging HTR customers and customers with HTD homes and the retrofit customer journey
4. How their project has performed against the forecast KPIs and their expected customer profile
5. What difference their project has made to their customers
6. How well their project has encouraged customers to take steps towards installing measures
7. Barriers faced by customers to install measures
8. Views on the economy and efficiency of LEAD so far to inform the economic evaluation
9. Their plans for advice delivery after LEAD finishes.

Analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and notes were written into an Excel grid for analysis. Analysis was conducted at a LEAD project level and collectively to identify emerging themes against each topic. The analysis of these interviews was then synthesised and triangulated with the other sources of evidence gathered as part of the interim evaluation.

Limitations and biases

For both stages of the evaluation, only individuals from a relatively small number of LEAD projects were interviewed (6 in wave 1 and 13 in wave 2, out of the total 35 LEAD projects). Whilst there were some common themes emerging from multiple LEADs, the views expressed by the projects interviewed may not be representative of all LEADs. To balance this, the evidence from these interviews was triangulated with the evidence from the interviews with the Net Zero Hubs who were able to share higher level views across a wider number of projects.

Each interview was short, relative to the scale and nature of their LEAD project. Whilst interviewers aimed for a balance between depth and breadth in each interview, inevitably interviewees revealed insights that (a) were most pertinent to them (b) they wanted to divulge.

Survey with consumer beneficiaries of LEAD

A telephone survey was conducted to quantify the experiences of consumer beneficiaries of LEAD. The questionnaire explored:

1. Satisfaction with the advice provided
2. Understanding of, and confidence in, retrofit measures before and after advice
3. Likelihood to apply for funding from a government grant scheme following interaction with LEAD project
4. Likelihood to install a retrofit measure following interaction with LEAD project
5. Influence of interaction with LEAD project on subsequent actions
6. Customer characteristics (i.e. demographics – optional)

The survey was conducted in two cross-sectional tranches – which we refer to as wave 1 and wave 2.

Wave 1 (September 2024)

Sample

Where projects had provided this data, the survey sample frame included consumers having interacted with a LEAD project up to July 2024. Wave 1 aimed to conduct interviews with 168 consumers having interacted with the following LEAD projects:

Table 11: Target number of Wave 1 survey completes by project

Project	Target number of interviews for Wave 1
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	47
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council	31
Surrey County Council	27
YES Energy Solutions	16
Basingstoke and Deane	16
Plymouth Energy Community Trust	16
City of York	15

These LEAD projects were selected as they had (or were anticipated to likely have at time of fieldwork) submitted sufficient customers' details by July 2024 to achieve enough responses to conduct statistical analysis (assuming a typical survey response rate). At this stage, we anticipated expanding the number of projects in the sample for Wave 2.

Across the seven (of 35) LEAD projects included in Wave 1, there were 6,859 consumer records with usable phone numbers. Of these:

- 2,008 were excluded because they were duplicates, i.e. the same phone number or e-mail address already appeared elsewhere in the database[7]
- 3 were excluded because the same phone number appeared in the phoneline database (the survey of phoneline beneficiaries was scheduled before this survey).
- 38 were excluded because they had been reserved by the consultancy commissioned by GMCA to undertake their own evaluation (an agreement made with DESNZ, GMCA and the relevant consultancy).
- 90 were excluded because they were individuals from within the delivery organisation. Although services have been offered to some staff by some LEADS, these were excluded from the survey on the basis they might not provide an objective view of the LEAD.

Hence, 4,720 cases were retained following the exclusions above. 133 responses were achieved. Quota sampling was used; a target number of interviews (quota) was set for each LEAD project and fieldwork was conducted until that target had been met – except for the sampling approach for GMCA and Birmingham Voluntary Council which are outlined below. As the number of contact attempts was not the same across the database, records did not have an equal chance of participating in the survey (non-probability sampling). The table below shows target numbers of interviews, as well as achieved response rates, per LEAD project:

Table 12: Number of records in sample frame by LEAD project

LEAD project	Number of records	Number of records contacted by phone	Number of interviews	Response rate[8]
Basingstoke and Deane	256	137	15	10.9%
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council	1,805	571	13	2.3%
City of York	92	91	15	16.5%
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	1,327	619	31	5.0%
Plymouth Energy Community Trust	344	174	16	9.2%
Surrey County Council	528	131	27	20.6%
YES Energy Solutions	368	197	16	8.1%

[7] This was largely due to duplication in projects' monthly monitoring data submissions, and in rare cases due to customers seeking advice twice.
[8] Completed ÷ contacted by phone

It became apparent during fieldwork that, for some LEAD projects (GMCA and Birmingham Voluntary Council), customers struggled to recall the advice provided. Looking at the type of advice that these customers had along with comments they made when contacted, the low recall may be due to them receiving limited engagement with the LEAD. As a result, the sampling approach was adapted during fieldwork to prioritise those customers who had had more meaningful engagement with the LEAD to ensure interviewing resource was used effectively. This should be considered when interpreting the findings.

More specifically:

- GMCA: As the database contained no information about the level of engagement that each customer had had with the project, no prioritisation of the sample was possible. On that basis and with a high incidence of non-recall, we decided to halt fieldwork. Hence, interview numbers were reduced to 31 from the originally proposed number of 47. The 31 interviews were included in analysis and these were with customers who could recall enough about the advice to provide meaningful responses to the majority of questions. Where customers had very poor recall of the advice, interviews did not proceed. The issue was the amount of resource required to work through the sample to identify customers who had sufficient recall.
- Birmingham Voluntary Council: Following conversations with the delivery team, we received additional data containing information about how customers had interacted with the project. Using the new data, we were able to identify clusters of customers where recall might have been stronger. These were:
    a. Customers supported by the MECC trust or ECO Birmingham (n=104)
    b. Customers supported through Witton Lodge Community Association (WLCA) or one of their linked groups where the additional data suggested they had more in-depth support (n=84)
    c. Customers supported through WLCA or one of their linked groups where the additional data suggested they went to a café (n=189)
    d. Customers supported through WLCA or one of their linked groups between March and June 2024 who were recorded in the database as having had personalised advice (n=143).

    To ascertain if these customer clusters were indeed more likely to recall support, we targeted each of these groups in turn; however, recall remained low.

    For these reasons, and as we did for the GMCA project, we halted fieldwork. Interview numbers were reduced to 13 from the originally proposed number of 31. The 13 interviews were included in analysis as these respondents provided meaningful responses to the majority of the questions in the survey.

Survey

The survey was scripted on Winning Moves CATI software and took place during September 2024, with a small number of interviews conducted as a pilot, before the mainstage commenced. Following the pilot, some changes to the survey were made to improve the flow

of questions, simplify some wording, and correct routing errors. Pilot records were included in the final sample.

Each interview was approximately 15 minutes long. Respondents were not offered an incentive to take part. Overall, no record was called more than four times.

Analysis

The data was not weighted as not enough was known about the population of customers supported by LEAD to weight the data meaningfully and accurately. Analysis was conducted in Q software, with frequencies produced for each question. Where the overall sample base was sufficient (i.e. $n \geq 20$), responses were tabulated using the following variables/question responses:

- LEAD project
- 'Prior to interacting with the project, have you ever sought information about energy efficiency measures?'
- 'Have you considered installing or completed the installation of an energy efficiency measure in the past?'
- 'How did you first hear about the LEAD project?'
- 'Are you installing energy efficiency measures following interaction with the LEAD project?'
- Hard to Reach score (0-6; with one point given for each of: presence of at least one individual over 65 years old in the household, presence of at least one individual 16-64 years old and unemployed in the household, annual gross household income under £30,000, respondent in receipt of benefits, presence of at least one individual with disability in the household, existence of a pre-payment meter).
- Years lived in property
- Whether property is listed or is located inside a conservation area
- Property age
- Property type

Wave 2 (February-March 2025)

Sample

Wave 2 was a second cross-sectional wave (using the same survey questionnaire). The sample frame was provided by DESNZ and consisted of data gathered by the individual LEAD projects; it included consumers advised before December 2024.

These LEAD projects were selected because they had a sufficient number of consumers to sample from and contact details were available to facilitate a telephone survey. On this basis,

four new projects were added in the Wave 2 survey for the first time; West Yorkshire, North of Tyne Combined Authority, East Lindsey and South East London Community Energy.

Wave 2 aimed to conduct interviews with 887 consumers having interacted with the following LEAD projects – however, based on response rates achieved in Wave 1 and sample availability, Winning Moves provided DESNZ with the following expected numbers of interviews per project. These numbers were agreed to be the **minimum number of interviews** per project; fieldwork was agreed to continue until the allocated resource was exhausted, even after these numbers had been reached:

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (expected number of interviews for Wave 2: 79)
- Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (expected number of interviews for Wave 2: 52)
- Surrey County Council (expected number of interviews for Wave 2: 43)
- YES Energy Solutions (expected number of interviews for Wave 2: 39)
- Basingstoke and Deane (expected number of interviews for Wave 2: 40)
- Plymouth Energy Community Trust (expected number of interviews for Wave 2: 39)

And for the four projects added in Wave 2:Overall, the expected number of interviews across all ten LEAD projects included in the Wave 2 survey was 512.

Across the ten LEAD projects included in Wave 2, there were 14,975 consumer records with usable phone numbers. Of these:

- 5,898 were excluded because they were duplicates, i.e. the same phone number or e-mail address already appeared elsewhere in the database.
- 888 records were excluded because that sample had already been exhausted[9] in Wave 1 (i.e. responded to the survey or were previously uncontactable).
- 28 were excluded because they had been reserved by the consultancy commissioned by GMCA to undertake their own evaluation (an agreement made with DESNZ, GMCA and the relevant consultancy).

8,161 cases were retained following the exclusions above. 767 responses were achieved. Quota sampling was used; each project was allocated a resource, i.e. number of days, and fieldwork carried on until that resource was exhausted, unless the aforementioned minimum number of interviews had not been reached yet, in which case fieldwork continued up to the point that number had been reached. To enable statistically robust comparison across projects, the minimum number of interviews per project was set at 55; a higher number of interviews was set as target for certain projects:

- Where the number of usable customer contact details was high.
- Where response rates observed in Wave 1 were high, if applicable; for projects introduced in Wave 2, W1 response rates for similar projects were considered.

[9] i.e. either a complete interview, a refusal or the maximum number of contact attempts (5) had been reached.

For the Birmingham and West Yorkshire project, resource was specifically allocated to conduct interviews in languages other than English. Extra resource was also allocated to the East Lindsey and North of Tyne projects, where sample was available and analysis during fieldwork showed that the team was more likely to achieve interviews with hard-to-reach consumers (for whom additional responses were deemed valuable).

For the Birmingham and Greater Manchester projects, recall remained a challenge in Wave 2 (W2), as it had been in Wave 1 (W1). However, in W2, this limitation was anticipated and accounted for in the sampling design. For example, we proposed conducting 58 interviews in Birmingham, based on a total of 2,410 available records. Unlike W1, no sub-sampling was applied in W2. Instead, we continued fieldwork until the target number of interviews specified in the sampling plan was achieved.

As the number of contact attempts was not the same across the database, records did not have an equal chance of participating in the survey (non-probability sampling). The table below shows target numbers of interviews, as well as achieved response rates, per LEAD project:

Table 13: Number of records in sample frame by LEAD project

LEAD project	Number of records	Number of records contacted by phone	Number of interviews in Wave 2	Response rate (completed/contacted by phone)
Basingstoke and Deane	277	277	46	16.6%
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council	2410	1423	58	4.1%
East Lindsey	457	446	124	27.8%
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	1513	1480	108	7.3%
North of Tyne Combined Authority	606	592	108	18.2%
Plymouth Energy Community	427	304	58	19.1%
South East London Community Energy	378	369	59	16%
Surrey County Council	737	584	58	9.9%
West Yorkshire	860	783	92	11.7%
YES Energy	496	479	56	11.7%
Total	8161	6737	767	11.4%

Survey

The survey was scripted on Winning Moves CATI software and took place across February and March 2025, with a small number of interviews conducted as a pilot, before the mainstage commenced. Following the pilot, some changes to the survey were made to improve the flow of questions, simplify some wording, and correct routing errors.

Each interview was approximately 15 minutes long. Respondents were not offered an incentive to take part. Overall, no record was called more than four times.

Analysis

The data was not weighted. Analysis was conducted in Q software, with frequencies produced for each question. Where the overall sample base was deemed sufficient, i.e. with at least 50 responses, responses were broken down with respect to the following variables (crosstabulations):

- LEAD project
- Whether energy efficiency measures had been considered in the past per LEAD project (3-way table)
- Whether interaction with LEAD project involved a home visit per LEAD project (3-way table)
- Gross household income (coded)
- Number of people in household aged over 65 (coded)
- Property type (coded)
- Property age (coded)
- Years lived in property (coded)
- How they first heard of the LEAD project (coded)
- Whether they have installed energy efficiency measures

Limitations

Fieldwork showed that LEAD projects captured consumer data in diverse ways. Whereas most projects only recorded consumers who had had a home visit or, generally, a more in-depth interaction, there were other projects which had recorded every single interaction, including lighter touch ones. Thus, despite our best efforts to target consumers with a more meaningful engagement, any comparison across projects should be treated with caution.

As for all LEAD data collection strands, our decision to limit our focus to a subset of projects may mean that the customers surveyed are not representative of the full range of experiences across the projects not included in the case study approach.

For some projects, significant non-response could engender biased survey estimates if, for example, non-response is driven by dissatisfaction with the service received.

In-depth interviews with consumer beneficiaries of LEAD

Aim

In-depth telephone interviews were conducted to better understand the experiences of consumer beneficiaries who had received home visits via LEAD projects. Three projects that were selected of interest for the final evaluation (see Evaluation Scope above) but where the customer base was not large enough to allow for sufficient quantitative interviews to be conducted were selected for the in-depth interviews. These projects were also the subject of other elements of the research including qualitative interviews with LEAD project staff and the ethnographic research, and so their selection would also enable triangulation with these other elements. The three projects were:

- Rossendale Valley Energy – project delivery was to collaborate with GP surgeries to target patients with specific health conditions to improve engagement with energy efficiency and retrofit. The project also used the Fairer Warmth app to help consumers navigate the retrofit journey
- Testlands Wellbeing Hub – the only project across the whole of LEAD that was intended to be based in a gym / spa / wellness setting focusing on consumers who are already engaged in wanting to live healthier lifestyles
- Wiltshire CSE – the project was to provide personalised retrofit surveys combined with follow-up advice to motivate consumers to take energy efficiency actions, engaging able to pay communities.

Sample

The sample frame was provided by DESNZ and consisted of data gathered by the individual LEAD projects; it included consumers having interacted with a LEAD project up to December 2024. The following table details the population in each of the three LEAD projects and the guidelines used in selecting the sample to be approached.

Table 14: Number of records in sample frame and guidelines used in sample selection

LEAD project	Number of unique records	Guidelines used in sample selection
Rossendale Valley Energy	185, coded for method of delivery as NHS, outreach venue, community event, telephone and home visit.	Customers were coded according to method of delivery. These included three customers coded as “NHS”. As the project delivery rationale involved collaboration with GP surgeries, these three customers were contacted as priority. Following this, consumers recorded as having received a home visit (32) were prioritised for contact.
Testlands Wellbeing Hub	158, coded for method of delivery as digital	Customers were coded according to method of delivery. Those coded as

	platform, home visit, outreach venue, telephone and Thermafy survey	receiving a Thermafy survey (79) were prioritised for contact.
CSE Futureproof Wiltshire	73, all coded home visit for method of delivery	Customers were sorted at random prior to contact.

Method

Customers of Rossendale Valley Energy and Testlands Wellbeing Hub were contacted by telephone to arrange a convenient time to undertake the interview. The only available contact information for customers of CSE Futureproof Wiltshire was email and so initial contact was made via email inviting customers to opt in to the survey and provide a contact telephone number. All were offered a £20 voucher as a thank you for their time (either Love2shop or Thecharityshop). A total of 11 interviews were completed by telephone between Monday 17th March 2025 and 2nd April 2025. Interviews typically lasted between 25 minutes and 45 minutes.

- Rossendale Valley Energy – 7 customers were contacted and 3 completed interviews.
- Testlands Wellbeing Hub – 7 customers were contacted and 4 completed interviews.
- CSE Futureproof Wiltshire – 43 customers were contacted by email and 4 completed interviews.

Topics

Key topics covered in interviews were:

- Previous experience of energy efficiency advice and retrofit
- Experience with the LEAD project including any expectations, and reservations, the support and advice that was provided, how it was provided and any recommendations that were made for retrofit
- Any energy measures installed or planned
- Satisfaction with the advice and support
- Influence of the LEAD project on awareness of energy efficiency measures
- Influence of the LEAD project on confidence in installing energy efficiency measures
- Awareness and use of government funding schemes
- The role the LEAD project played in any installed or planned energy efficiency measures.

Analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and notes were written into an Excel grid for analysis. Analysis was conducted to identify key themes against each topic. The analysis of these interviews was then synthesised and triangulated with the other sources of evidence gathered.

Limitations

As for all LEAD data collection strands, our decision to limit our focus to a subset of projects may mean that the customers we interviewed do not reflective the full range of experiences across the projects not included in the case study approach.

A small number of consumers were interviewed and so the findings should not be considered representative of all customers advised by these projects.

Ethnography with consumer beneficiaries of LEAD

Aims and Objectives

Ethnographic research was conducted with consumer beneficiaries of selected LEAD projects to gather a deeper insight into the consumer journey by becoming immersed in the consumers' environment and observing behaviour and interactions over time. Specifically, this research element looked to generate a better understanding of in person advice such as home visits; how they were delivered and how these influenced actions taken by consumers.

Two separate workstreams were designed to collect this evidence:

1. Online ethnographic research through the Indeemo App: using a smartphone app, consumers shared video responses, photo responses and written note responses to a variety of questions at two time points; within 1 week of receiving the advice and 3-4 weeks after the advice was received.
2. Face-to-face observations of advice delivery and follow-up interviews: due to limitations with the Indeemo method, and to verify reflections made based on the online responses, a small number of LEAD delivery sessions were observed in person. This included asking consumers questions both at advice delivery and then following up 3-4 weeks later over the phone.

Sample

For the online research, participants were recruited from four projects – an opportunity sample based on which projects were (a) delivering at scale (b) responsive to requests from the department and (c) had delivery models of interest. A total of eight consumers completed the research, as seen in the table below.

Table 15: Number of responses to the online ethnography research by LEAD

Selected LEADs	Plymouth Energy Trust	Rossendale Valley Energy	GMCA	YES Energy
Number of consumer contacts shared	7	9	1	1
Number of consumers onboarded onto the Indeemo app	7	7	1	0

Selected LEADs	Plymouth Energy Trust	Rossendale Valley Energy	GMCA	YES Energy
Number of consumers who completed both sets of tasks	4	4	0	0

Subsequently, four LEADs were selected for participation in the face-to-face observations. As above, these were chosen in collaboration with DESNZ where they had an interest in understanding more about the delivery model, where this felt particularly unique or project performance was considered high, whilst also considering feasibility of travel for the evaluation team. As such, GMCA, Rossendale Valley Energy, YES Energy and Birmingham Voluntary Services Council were selected. In total, three energy advice events (workshops, drop ins etc), two home visits were attended, and interview questions were asked to five separate consumers across these events.

Process

Online ethnographic research (video diaries)

Once DESNZ had selected LEADs for the online research, the projects then recruited the consumers on our behalf. The evaluation team shared recruitment resources to be used, including invitation wording and privacy information documents. Where consent was received, contact information was shared with the evaluation team who then reached out to the consumers over the following two weeks, via at least three phone calls and / or emails, to onboard them onto Indeemo. If weeks had passed and no response was received, the consumer was removed from the sample.

After the initial onboarding call, which introduced the Indeemo app and gained consent for data processing and sharing, consumers were asked to complete the first set of tasks on Indeemo. This consisted of eight tasks, each focusing on a different aspect of the consumer journey. Consumers responded to the questions and probes presented by uploading video, photo responses or notes describing their experiences or opinions. Upon completion of this, consumers were told that they would be contacted within 3-4 weeks to complete the second set of tasks, which consisted of another three tasks. Where responses were incomplete, or the evaluation team had questions based on the response, consumers were asked to provide further information both through the app and over email.

Each task set was anticipated to take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Consumers received £40 in online Love2Shop vouchers for completing the first set of tasks and an additional £50 of online vouchers for completing the second set. LEADs who provided the requested six consumer contacts received £150 in Love2Shop vouchers or as a charitable donation for their efforts.

Fieldwork was conducted between August 2024 and January 2025.

Face-to-face observations

The evaluation team contacted participating LEADs, who organised observations to be attended. For the home visits, this included obtaining consent from the attending advisor and consumer for a member of the evaluation team to be present during delivery. Each event typically lasted between 1-3 hours, with the evaluator present for at least half of the event.

At one event, and at both home visits, consumers were interviewed using a short 15-minute topic guide and received £40 in physical Love2Shop gift vouchers for their participation. These consumers were called 3-4 weeks later to conduct follow up interviews of 15 minutes and received a further £50 in Love2Shop vouchers, which were sent to their homes. LEADs who successfully organised an observation received an additional £100 in either Love2Shop vouchers or as a charitable donation for their efforts.[10]

These observations were conducted throughout February 2025.

Research tools

Online ethnographic research

Task lists were produced and uploaded onto the Indeemo app.

Task list 1 covered:

1. Information on consumer and property characteristics
2. Energy efficiency problem and / or measures they already have in place
3. How and why they accessed the advice
4. What advice was delivered
5. Initial impressions on the advice and planned actions

Task list 2 covered:

1. Any actions that have been taken since the advice was delivered
2. Any barriers to actions
3. Final reflections on the advice, including how trustworthy it is

Observation

Observation guides were given to the members of the team attending the event. For the events, notes were taken on:

1. The set-up, purpose and aims
2. Delivery – messaging, language, tools used, engagement techniques
3. Types of advice given and next steps suggested
4. Consumers – target audience, those who engaged well, consumer views on advice
5. Researcher observations on drivers, barriers, anything else

For the home visits, notes were taken on:

1. How the visit was arranged / what led to the visit

[10] In two instances, the LEADs had not participated in the online research, therefore were given the original £150 incentive.

2. The consumer – characteristics, level of knowledge, desires for the advice
3. The property
4. The structure of the visit
5. The advice provided, tools used, how It is delivered, next steps
6. Consumer reactions

Follow-on questions, asked to consumers at both the events and the home visits, followed the same structure as the online research tasks.

Analysis

All data (notes, videos, photographs) was analysed thematically against the relevant research questions. In addition, less structured thematic analysis was conducted to populate the case study outputs. An individual case study was produced for each respondent to the online research, each home visit and each event (13 total). These varied depending on the amount of information available however broadly followed this structure:

1. Introducing the consumer(s) and / or the event
2. A diagram of the customer journey
3. The advice and how it was delivered
4. Customer reflections
5. What happened next (follow-on actions)
6. Final evaluator reflections on key themes relevant to the specific individual / event.

Limitations and Caveats

Projects from which customers were selected were identified by DESNZ officials based on their perceived strengths in delivery, therefore findings from the ethnographic research cannot be generalised and considered representative of the overall customer experience across LEAD projects. There is also potential for selection bias, should projects have elected only to refer customers who they believe had positive experiences. To offset this risk, the in-person observations were conducted; however, during observations, consumers may have reacted differently to the advice due to the presence of the observer and social desirability bias. Where possible, events were attended by two observers and analysis validated by another member of the team to avoid observer bias.

In multiple instances, it seemed that the 3-4 weeks left between data collection for consumers was not long enough for any substantive actions to be taken. We may have missed some longer-term actions or impacts as a result, although we did ask for projected reflections on planned actions to mitigate against this.

Specifically for the online research, the demographic of individuals was not as varied as anticipated, with multiple consumers being female, eco-conscious individuals, living alone in large houses.

Contribution claims

Table 16: LEAD evaluation analysis of contribution claims

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
LEAD projects' engagement activities have improved consumer awareness and trust of home energy efficiency and low-carbon heat measures	1. LEAD beneficiaries report improved **knowledge** of the different types of energy efficiency and low carbon heat measures, how they work and their potential benefits	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part - Some customers have an increased understanding, but not all	47% of customers report an increase in understanding of the most suitable ee measures for their property 38% of customers report an increase in understanding of the costs and benefits of energy efficiency measures 39% report an increase in understanding of the steps they need to follow to install energy efficiency measures	Customer examples (from customer quals and ethnography) are mixed and varied. - Some customers said the advice has increased their understanding. Some customers (typically those who have had a home visit and a report) have a deep knowledge of the options available to them and what they should do next. Customers who have received lighter touch advice may have a better understanding of e.g. one or two measures e.g. the amount and type of loft insulation that they require, or that using radiator reflectors will help to keep their home warm. - Some customers said that the advice did not increase their understanding. Some of these were customers who were relatively knowledgeable about their home and had already undertaken some measures. The advice has not gone over and above what they already know. Other customers were only provided with relatively light touch advice e.g. energy saving tips, for example in situations where the LEAD did not think the customer was 'ready' for advice about measures. Some LEADs reported that some of their customers wanted more information about costs / benefits of measures, and this was a potential area to improve on in the future. However some of the qualitative interview examples of customers who received reports suggests that they have been provided with a range of scenarios, with information about costs and benefits. Increased understanding will depend on where the advice was provided, whether clear, written information was provided, whether there was follow up advice, and the technical and interpersonal skills of the adviser.

[11] Either: ‘In full’, ‘In part’, ‘Not supported’, ‘Not enough evidence’

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
	2. Beneficiaries express higher levels of **trust** in the effectiveness and reliability of these measures. This includes believing in the long term benefits, such as cost-savings and environmental benefits	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part - Some customers have increased confidence but not all.	1. 39% of customers report increased confidence in ee measures sufficiently warming up their home 2. 26% of customers report increased confidence in ee measures not having any serious defects 3. 28% report increased confidence in ee measures saving more money than they cost 4. 31% report increased confidence in navigating the process to install ee measures	Some LEADs reported that customer scepticism in measures was challenging to overcome. Both LEADs and some customers reported concerns about the return on investment of measures. Affordability of measures is a significant barrier. Some customers did not perceive the savings to be worthwhile. Some LEADs said improvements in advice provision on return on investment was needed in future. Confidence in the process to install is affected by whether the customer is eligible for funding, the extent to which the LEAD provided hand-holding and / or follow up support, the circumstances of the customer (e.g. their HTR characteristics). Confidence in measures saving money and in navigating the process is also affected by the extent to which the property needs other work doing to it before measures can be installed. This can be perceived as complicated and expensive by the customer.
	3. Beneficiaries report they would be willing to recommend energy efficiency measures to friends and family, indicating trust in and positive perceptions of ee and low carbon solutions	Beneficiary survey	Insufficient evidence - not asked. N.B. Within the timescales of the LEAD project, it may have been difficult for customers to have installed measures and are confident enough in them to recommend to family / friends.	9% of customers said they heard about the LEAD through family / friends, although these may not have been recommendations as such.	Not covered specifically in the qualitative research.
By providing education, advice and support, LEAD projects have enhanced consumer incentives to adopt energy efficiency and low carbon measures, driving increased action towards home retrofitting.	1. Beneficiaries cite **barriers** which would have prevented them from pursuing ee retrofit measures (if they had not received advice from LEAD projects)	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In full	52% of customers had sought information about ee measures before 71% had considered installing or completed the installation of ee measures in the past. For those that had not considered measures in the past, almost all (98%, n=260) said they had faced one or more barriers. Barriers include: 50% could not afford them 46% did not know enough about them 37% said there were no financial incentives or subsidies provided by Govt 33% had not thought about it before 28% did not think the cost savings were worth the hassle or expense	The qualitative evidence (from LEADs and customers) confirms the broad themes identified in the survey. A broad range of customers have been advised, some with no knowledge at all about energy efficiency measures and some who already had a good understanding. For customers who did have some awareness, being overwhelmed by other sources of information, a lack of impartial advice and affordability were key barriers.

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				28% were concerned about disruption 23% said there were no suitable installers 15% didn't think there was a reason for such measures to be installed 15% said the responsibility was with their landlord	
	2. Beneficiaries report **improved knowledge and awareness of the benefits of ee retrofits as a result of advice/support received from LEAD** projects, and that they believe the benefits outweigh the costs	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	[Repeated from row 2] In part - Some customers have an increased understanding, but not all	[Repeated from row 2] 47% of customers report an increase in understanding of the most suitable ee measures for their property 38% of customers report an increase in understanding of the costs and benefits of ee measures 39% report an increase in understanding of the steps you need to follow to install ee measures	Qualitative evidence was mixed. Some customers are now aware of the benefits. As the advice was impartial, the advice was easier to understand (the customer doesn't have to think about potential bias in the advice source) and trust. For some customers, they believe the benefits will outweigh the costs. This is more likely to be the case where the measures are funded. For many other customers however, affordability and potential return on investment is still an issue. Examples of customers who would need to spend tens of thousands of pounds for solid wall insulation, or renewables, and they do not think they will get their money back through energy savings. This sometimes relates to the preparatory work required on the home before energy efficiency measures can be installed. For some customers served, they are struggling to pay their energy bills each month, with some not putting their heating on at all as they can't afford it. They are unable to self-fund measures.
	3. Beneficiaries report that **the barriers preventing them from pursuing retrofit measures have diminished (fully or partially)** as a result of the advice and support received from LEAD projects, providing them with greater incentives to pursue retrofit measures	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part - barriers have diminished for some, but not all	24% Improved - I could not afford them (n=131) 43% improved - I didn't know enough about them (n=115) 18% improved - I did not think the cost savings were worth the hassle or expense (n=73) 21% improved - there were no financial incentives (n=94) 15% improved - I don't think there is any reason for such measures to be installed (n=39) 12% improved - there aren't any suitable installers in my area (n=59) 35% improved - the advice about ee measures is too confusing (n=71)	From the customer qualitative interviews and ethnography, where the customer's barrier was not knowing enough information / finding other sources of information confusing, LEAD appears to have been effective (impartial, in person, tailored appear to be the key factors). Some barriers still remain (evidenced in the qualitative research with customers and LEADs): - Affordability - Return on investment - Complex funding streams and changing eligibility criteria - Insufficient supply chain

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
	4. Beneficiaries report they are **taking steps to implement recommended measures**, or plan to do so in the near future	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation Monitoring data (KPI 2)	In full	**Next steps** Following interaction with the LEAD 68% have taken one or more steps: 40% have looked for more information from other sources 41% have completed eligibility checks for a govt scheme 17% have contacted energy supplier about financial support 17% have contacted LA to get help with installing 6% have sought financial help from other sources **Decision to install** 29% of customers have decided to install A further 43% of customers are still considering / waiting for confirmation of eligibility / awaiting information before deciding. Of those who have decided (n=258): 22% are in the process of planning and obtaining quotes 12% have already started an installation 66% have completed an installation **Monitoring data** KPI 2 reporting shows 10,246 measures have been installed by customers.	Customers participating in the qualitative research have thought about the advice and recommendations, and some have taken next steps. Some of the next steps e.g. checking for eligibility, contacting LA / energy suppliers, have been assisted by the LEAD (qualitative evidence from LEADs also supports this).
	5. Beneficiaries report that the advice and support received from LEAD projects was pivotal in motivating them to take action.	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	Of those who have made the decision to install (n=258): 28% of customers would not have looked for information on ee measures online without the LEAD 45% would not have consulted an advisor or local contractor about ee options and costs without the LEAD 41% would not have researched available government incentives and subsidies and / or applied for support without the LEAD 37% would not have worked out the cost and benefits for themselves 26% would not have gone ahead with installing any ee measures	The qualitative interviews (with customers and LEADs) evidence the importance of the interpersonal skills of the adviser in motivating customers to take action e.g. providing clear information, not judging or patronising, understanding the customer's personal circumstances. The qualitative evidence (from customers and LEADs) also supports other evidence that suggests follow up support is important in keeping customers up to date / on track / and motivating them to progress towards install.

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
				without the LEAD Of those that have installed already (n=39), 44% said the LEAD influenced them the most to decide to install ee measures	
Through signposting to funding opportunities, LEAD projects have led to greater participation in government grant funding schemes than would otherwise have been the case.	1. Increase in **awareness and understanding among beneficiaries about available government schemes, i**ncluding details on eligibility criteria, benefits and application processes	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	23% of customers said they found out about Govt schemes that they did not already know about (n=887)	In almost all cases from the qualitative research with customers, the LEAD has informed the customer about their potential eligibility for funding, considering a range of schemes. The evidence suggests that the LEADs have been crucial in helping customers understand their eligibility and how to apply. Some customers are still confused about the process however, particularly when there have been changes to eligibility criteria (evidenced in the qualitative interviews with customers and LEADs). Some customers (from the customer qualitative interviews and beneficiary survey verbatim) have been confused about the LEAD's role in the funding schemes (e.g. they have said they have been dissatisfied with the LEAD, but because they have found out that they are ineligible for funding and / or the eligibility of schemes has changed).
	2. Beneficiaries report greater **motivation and confidence in their ability to apply for and secure funding** due to the support and information provided	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	In part	Of those who applied or intend to apply (n=264): 55% are more confident to apply	The qualitative evidence (customer qualitative interviews and ethnography) suggests that some customers are motivated to apply and more confident to apply because of the advice and support that the LEAD is offering. Where customers have been left to apply and go through the funding process without follow up LEAD support, customers have been confused, particularly regard which organisations are involved and because of the length of the process (evidenced in the customer qualitative interviews and ethnography).
	3. A measurable increase in the number of applications to government funding schemes from the target groups compared to similar groups not involved in LEAD projects or with similar groups from LEAD projects which did not provide signposting to funding opportunities	Funding applications	Not feasible	N/A	N/A

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
	4. (If 3 is not feasible): beneficiaries report that they applied for funding through Government schemes and that they would not have applied, or would have been less likely to apply, without the support from the LEAD project	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	In part	30% Have applied or intend to apply (n=754) 23% Have found out they are not eligible (n=754) Of those who have made the decision to install (n=258): 41% would not have researched available government incentives and subsidies and / or applied for support without the LEAD	Most customer examples from the qualitative interviews and ethnography were aware of whether they were eligible / ineligible For funding. Those eligible had applied. Not all had heard about whether their application was successful.
	5. Quality of funding applications improves, as evidenced by a higher application success rate for beneficiaries who received support from LEAD projects compared to similar groups not involved in LEAD projects or with similar groups from LEAD projects which did not provide signposting to funding opportunities	Funding applications	Not feasible	N/A	N/A
	6. (if 5 is not feasible): **beneficiaries report that the support provided from LEAD projects improved the quality of their funding application and believe this played an important role in their application being successful**	Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	Insufficient evidence	Not asked in the beneficiary survey	The triangulated qualitative research identifies a potential risk of the LEAD referring customers to funding schemes where the LEAD themselves had not seen the property. E.g. the referral is made based on a conversation between the LEAD and customer at an event. The installer involved in the funding goes out to visit the property and informs the customer they are no eligible e.g. because of something unique about the property e.g. size of loft space, hoarding etc. LEADs reported that often, customers did not have a good awareness /understanding about their home. Where LEADs have seen the property e.g. through a home visit, the quality of application is likely to improve. Further research may be useful to confirm.
By providing information about contractors, along with ongoing quality assurance support, LEAD projects have enhanced consumers confidence about consulting local installers and led to more consultations than would have occurred without the intervention.	1. Beneficiaries report that they received advice on **recommended contractors** in their area, how to engage them, and the quality standards to expect	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	25% of customers said suitable contractors / installers were recommended to them	Some customers in the qualitative interviews / ethnography said they received information about this. LEADs offered information on this at varying levels. At best, LEADs signposted customers to Trustmark / MCS to find providers (evidenced in qualitative interviews with LEADs) The evidence from customers and LEADs suggests that customers would like the advice to go further in this regard - they would like recommendations of installers who have conducted work in the local area, from an impartial source. Customers would also value

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
					impartial QA of installers work to reduce their nervousness about engaging them.
	2. Beneficiaries report they are more **knowledgeable about the quality standards to expect for retrofit installations** and more confident about engaging and negotiating with contractors as a result of the advice received.	Beneficiary survey	In part	31% of customers said they are more confident about navigating the process to install ee measures	The qualitative evidence from LEADs and customers suggests that this was less of a focus for most LEADs. The qualitative evidence is insufficient to support this claim.
	3. Beneficiaries report that they consulted local installers on the recommended list, and that the information and support provided by LEAD projects significantly influenced their decision to do so.	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	Insufficient evidence	However, of those who have made the decision to install, 50%, n=257) say they decision was influenced by a suggestion by an installer or other relevant professional. This suggests that a relatively large proportion have interacted with installers.	From the qualitative interviews with LEADs, most LEADs did not have a list of recommended installers. There are customer examples from the qualitative interviews / ethnography where the LEAD has signposted the customer to installers. The qualitative and ethnography evidence suggests that customers would liek a list of recommended installers (from an impartial source) but also need hand-holding support and follow up support relating to this. Some LEADs provided this, and other LEADs did not.
	4. Beneficiaries report that their engagement with local installers was positive, and some have progressed to arranging actual retrofit measures.	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	Insufficient evidence	Whilst there is evidence that some installations have happened, we do not know the customers views on the installers.	There are some qualitative examples (qualitative interviews / ethnography) of customers proceeding to installs. Insufficient evidence to say whether there is happening on a wider scale.
By using targeted, community based strategies and in-person engagement, LEAD projects increased access to, participation in, and trust in energy efficiency and retrofit advice among hard-to-reach consumers that are underserved by digital or phoneline methods	1. A large proportion of beneficiaries in LEAD projects are from a **hard-to-reach group (**e.g. minority ethnic communities, people in fuel poverty, disabled or people with health conditions, digitally excluded) and these groups make up a signicantly higher share of beneficiaries compared to digital or phoneline interventions	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In full	82% of customers (n=887) could be classed as HTR: 43% have someone over 65 53% of households have nobody in full time employment 40% have one or more with a disability 17% are from an ethnic minority 29% have a household income of less than £30k 43% are in receipt of benefits 7% do not have access to the internet	Qualitative evidence (customer interviews and ethnography) provides examples of a wide range of customers from vulnerable customers with multiple hard to reach characteristics, and customers who are able to pay and already have some knowledge of energy efficiency measures. The majority of LEADs have served a wide range of different types of customer, even if they planned to target specific customer groups (evidenced in the beneficiary survey and qualitative interviews with LEADs).

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
				13% are not confident using the internet	
	2. Beneficiaries report there is a **low likelihood that they would have sought advice** on retrofit measures if they had not been engaged through the LEAD project	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In full	A lower proportion of HTR customers (49%) said they had sought information about ee measures in the past compared to 64% of customers who are not hard to reach	Examples in the qualitative research found customers that engaged in the energy efficiency advice because of an event they went to where the LEAD also attended - they are unlikely to have sought advice if this had not been the case. This includes customers who had never thought about energy efficiency improvements and customers who had given it some thought but had been overwhelmed by other sources of information and had not sought advice. Other customers had sought advice before, e.g. and had found the LEAD through an online search and /or through contacting their energy supplier who had referred them to the LEAD.
	3. Beneficiaries from **HTR groups report an improved understanding of energy efficiency concepts and retrofit measures** following engagement	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	Some HTR customers have improved their understanding, but a lower proportion compared to non HTR customers. Most suitable ee measures 40%/52% Costs and benefits 33%/42% Steps needed to follow to install 36% / 56%	The qualitative evidence (customer interviews, LEAD interviews, ethnography) suggests that customers have a wide range of personal characteristics and circumstances and live in a property with it's own unique characteristics and circumstances. This emphasises the challenge in providing advice that meets the needs of all customers. The ability for customers to increase their understanding will be affected by factors such as: - How the advice was provided (at an event or in the home) - The extent to which the LEAD provided hand-holding and /or follow up support - Whether the customer was eligible for funding or not (as this may have affected the depth / detail of the advice provided by the LEAD e. where customers were eligible for e.g. loft insulation, this may have been the only measure advised upon, compared to other customers who have have received a whole house survey). - The technical and interpersonal skills of the adviser. - The existing circumstance of the home e.g. is

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
					preparatory work required before the installation of energy efficiency measures? - The customers own wants, needs, motivations and concerns (as this may have affected the level of advice provided by the LEAD).
	4. Beneficiaries from **HTR groups report confidence and trust in the advice provided, and show willingness to consider or implement suggested energy efficiency measures**	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	Some HTR customers have improved their confidence, but a lower proportion compared to non HTR customers: Confidence in ee measures sufficiently warming up their home 37%/51% EE measures not having serious defects 24% /33% Saving you more money than they cost 26% / 41% Navigating the process to install ee measures 29% / 42%	From the qualitative interviews and ethnography with customers and qualitative interviews with LEADs and from observation, some HTR customers may have only received lighter touch advice / information about energy saving tips. They may not have been ready for information about energy efficiency measures. This may be a later step in the journey for some customers.
	5. Beneficiaries from **HTR groups report a decrease in scepticism and reluctance about the benefits and effectiveness of retrofitting**	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	See cell above	Some examples of this happening, evidenced in the customer qualitative interviews / ethnography. However, some LEADs reported that customer scepticism was still a barrier, suggesting LEADs have been less effective in this regard.
LEAD projects' provision of tailored support and advice to homeowners living in hard-to-treat properties has significantly increased the adoption of retrofit measures (or their intention to implement them) among this group.	1. Homeowners living in **HTT properties have been identified and have received advice** through LEAD projects	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In full	64% of customers live in a HTD property. The majority of these customers are also HTR. (Only 9% of customers surveyed were HTT only).	Examples evidenced in the customer qualitative interviews and ethnography, of customers with very unique properties which make them HTT (as per the broad definition of HTT / HTD used by the projects, and because lots of properties have their own unique circumstances which make them hard to decarbonise e.g. hoarding issues, roofs that require maintenance, loft conversions, extensions and out-houses, size of loft space) and often makes them ineligible for funding. Supported by views from LEADs.

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
	2. Homeowners living in **HTT properties demonstrate an improved understanding** of the specific retrofit measures suitable for their properties and the potential benefits	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	In full	A higher proportion of HTT only customers report an increased understanding of the most suitable ee measures for their property (62% compared to 47% of the survey sample)	Examples evidenced in the customer qualitative interviews and ethnography.
	3. Specific **barriers that prevent homeowners in HTT properties from adopting retrofit are reported to have diminished**	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	The proportion of customers living in a HTT home citing barriers to adopting retrofit measures are similar to the whole survey sample, suggesting there aren't any significant differences in the barriers faced by customers living in HTT compared to non HTT homes. The sample sizes are too small to detect any statistically significant differences regarding whether barriers have been overcome (compared to non HTT customers)	Qualitative evidence (from customer qualitative interviews and ethnography) suggests that customers have been reassured by the advice from LEAD, even if the barriers haven't been resolved e.g. complex issues relating to their property and deciding on a way forward.
	4. High levels of **satisfaction** with the support provided, indicating the support was relevant and effectively addressed their specific needs.	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	In part	The proportion of customers living in a HTT home that are satisfied is similar to that of the wider survey sample (66% vs 58%).	Examples of satisfied customers evidenced in the customer qualitative interviews and ethnography.
	5. Homeowners express **greater motivation and confidence** in their ability to proceed with retrofitting projects as a result of the support received	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	In part	The proportion of customers with increased confidence in navigating the process to install is the same as the whole survey sample, suggesting no differences.	Examples in the qualitative interviews and ethnography with customers, of customers who have been reassured by advice, the advice has moved them along in their understanding, even if the customer is yet to make a decision about what action to take and when.
	6. Homeowners in **HTT properties who have implemented retrofit measures report that this would not have occurred (or would have been less likely) if they had not received support and advice from the LEAD project**	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Ethnography and observation	In part	No significant differences evident for HTT customers.	The qualitative evidence from customers suggests that the LEAD advice has moved them along the journey in this regard because it was impartial; they may have sought advice elsewhere but they are unlikely to have trusted those sources of advice as much as LEAD.

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
Partnerships formed by the LEAD projects have enabled participating organisations to gain new knowledge, expertise, skills and networks, thereby enhancing their operational and strategic capacities	1.New partnerships are formed or existing partnerships are strengthened, leading to broader collaboration beyond LEAD projects.	Qualitative interviews with LEADs	Insufficient evidence		
	2. Consultees from delivery organisations report improvements in specific capabilities as a result of partnership working on the LEAD project (e.g. technical skills related to energy efficiency, customer engagement strategies)	Qualitative interviews with LEADs	In full		Projects reported lessons learned from LEAD from customer engagement to surveying homes and using diagnostic tools.
	3. Delivery organisations incorporate new methods or practices learned through their partnerships into their operations	Qualitative interviews with LEADs	In part		Some lessons learned have been adopted and trialled. However there are some examples of lessons learned that haven't been adopted due to one or more reasons e.g. focus on KPI 1 achievement / not believing it is part of their remit)
	4. Signs of organisations expanding their services or changing their strategic approach based on insights gained from partnerships	Qualitative interviews with LEADs	Insufficient evidence		Some projects are continuing their delivery post LEAD funding and / or have bid for / secured funding to do something similar.
	1. Beneficiaries cite barriers which would have prevented them from pursuing retrofit measures if they had not received advice from LEAD projects	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In full	52% of customers had sought information about ee measures before [Repeated from row 5] 71% had considered installing or completed the installation of ee measures in the past. For those that had not considered measures in the past, almost all (98%, n=260) said they had faced one or more barriers. Barriers include: 50% could not afford them 46% did not know enough about them 37% said there were no financial incentives or subsidies provided by Govt 33% had not thought about it before	Examples evidenced in the qualitative research with customers (interviews and ethnography) of customers who would not have sought advice, they engaged with the LEAD because they were attending the same event as them. Barriers evident for all customers involved in qualitative research. Supported by views of the LEADs.

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
				28% did not think the cost savings were worth the hassle or expense 28% were concerned about disruption 23% said there were no suitable installers 15% didn't think there was a reason for such measures to be installed 15% said the responsibility was with their landlord -	
	2. Beneficiaries report improved knowledge and awareness of the benefits of ee retrofits as a result of advice/support received from LEAD projects (see first contribution claim)	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	[Repeated from row 2] In part - Some customers have an increased understanding, but not all	[Repeated from row 2] 47% of customers report an increase in understanding of the most suitable ee measures for their property 38% of customers report an increase in understanding of the costs and benefits of ee measures 39% report an increase in understanding of the steps you need to follow to install ee measures	
	3. Beneficiaries report that the **barriers preventing them from pursuing retrofit measures have diminished (fully or partially)** as a result of the advice and support received from LEAD projects	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	[Repeated from row 2] In part - barriers have diminished for some, but not all	[Repeated from row 7] 24% Improved - I could not afford them (n=131) 43% improved - I didn't know enough about them (n=115) 18% improved - I did not think the cost savings were worth the hassle or expense (n=73) 21% improved - there were no financial incentives (n=94) 15% improved - I don't think there is any reason for such measures to be installed (n=39) 12% improved - there aren't any suitable installers in my area (n=59) 35% improved - the advice about ee measures is too confusing	LEADs have helped to overcome barriers that are within their remit/ control e.g. the customer did not know enough about them (evidenced through qualitative interviews with LEADs and qualitative interviews / ethnography with customers). Barriers such as affordability, availability of financial incentives, potential costs savings (that are largely outside of the control of LEADs) remain as significant barriers in the customer journey (evidenced through qualitative interviews with customers and LEADs and the ethnography).

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
				(n=71)	
	4. Positive feedback from beneficiaries regarding the effectiveness of the support provided by LEAD projects in facilitating retrofit decisions and actions	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	58% of customers are satisfied. % Customers agreed: Advice was clear and easy to understand 67% Addressed personal needs 55% LEAD was trustworthy 75% Clear what the process to install was 56%	Satisfaction varies by project, and also by factors such as: - How the advice was provided (at an event of in the home) - The extent to which the LEAD provided hand-holding and /or follow up support - Whether the customer was eligible for funding or not - The technical and interpersonal skills of the adviser. - The extent to which the customer knew about energy efficiency measures already. - The customer's own wants, needs, motivations and concerns, the extent to which LEADs found out about and understood these, and the extent to which the LEAD was able to tailor the advice and recommendations to these.
	5. Beneficiaries report **greater motivation, preparedness and confidence in their ability** to proceed with retrofitting projects as a result of the support received	Beneficiary survey Qualitative interviews with customers Qualitative interviews with LEADs Ethnography and observation	In part	31% report increased confidence in navigating the process to install ee measures	Qualitative evidence found examples of where this is the case. There are also examples where customers are not sure what do next e.g. they are waiting to hear if they have been successful with a funding application, there are complicated issues related to their home that need more consideration, and / or affordability appears to remain as a significant barrier. Some customer have also got 'stuck' at the finding / engaging with installers stage.
	6. Beneficiaries who have implemented retrofit measures report that **this would not have occurred (or would have been less likely) if they had not received support and advice from the LEAD project**	Beneficiary survey	In part	26% of those who have decided to install (n=258) say they would not have done so without the LEAD	Examples of this evidenced in the qualitative interviews and ethnography with customers. It is possible that some customers would have installed without the LEAD advice (those who were more interested / more knowledgeable), but the LEAD has likely spurred them on to take action sooner than they would otherwise have done.

Contribution claim	Contribution evidence test	Evidence sources	Conclusion[11]	Quantitative evidence / notes to support claim	Qualitative evidence
By leveraging community-based networks, local partnerships, and volunteer engagement, LEAD projects have identified a sustainable model that will enable them to continue offering energy efficiency advice after LEAD funding has ended. The sustainability of these projects is underpinned by effective capacity building within the community, and access to alternative funding streams that ensure financial independence.		Qualitative interviews with LEADs	In part	Some LEADS have a plan to continue	A small number of LEADs have been given a funding extension to cover their costs and retain staff for a relatively short amount of time until further funding can be secured (e.g. devolution funding for Combined Authorities). A small number of projects say they have secured other funding to provide advice, although this may not be in the same format as LEAD, the LEADs say the learnings from LEAD will be taken into consideration in the development of the new service. A larger number of projects do not have any confirmed plans to continue advice provision after LEAD (at the time of interviewing).

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