

# Energy Advice Service

## About this project

This guide is for a **12 month Gold Award project**. It is suitable for **group** volunteering.



Through this project you'll help the National Energy Foundation to meet our aim of improving the use of energy in buildings while making a difference to the people and places around you.

## What does it involve?

A little bit of practical advice can go a long way. By providing an Energy Advice Service, you could help your community to cut their energy bills, understand their energy use or install energy measures. This project involves organising four drop-in sessions to provide practical advice and researching answers to questions raised by the community. You'll learn about organising events and gain a more in-depth knowledge of energy through your research.

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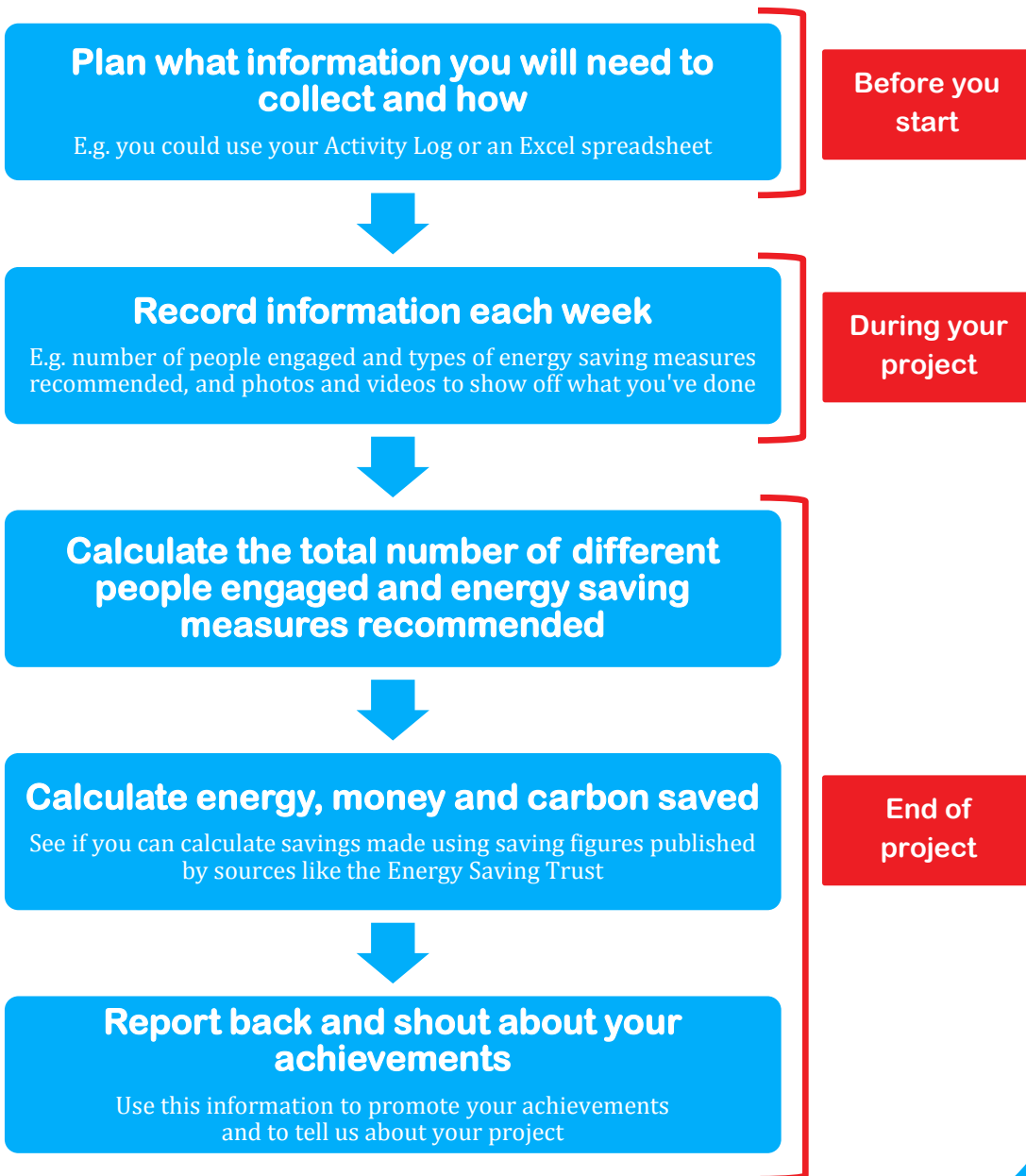


## How to use this guide

- Follow this step-by-step guide to plan, run and evaluate your very own energy saving project. You might take more or less time than is set out in the guide to complete a step – don't worry, this is your project so you can decide how you use the time available. If you have other ideas that aren't included in the guide, feel free to use them and adapt the guide to meet your own needs.
- Refer back to the [Energy Tutorial](#) to get ideas for energy saving tips you might need during your project.
- Make sure you keep safe. When your project involves activities outside of your home, you should carry out a risk assessment and ensure you have appropriate adult supervision if you're under 18. [Click here](#) to download tips and a template risk assessment form.
- At the end of each week, update your Activity Log to keep a record of what you've done and save any photos, videos or other materials you've produced. Download an Activity Log to fill in by [clicking here](#).
- When you finish your project, complete the [End of Project Survey](#) and send information about what you've done, along with your photos, videos and materials produced, to [energyenvoys@nef.org.uk](mailto:energyenvoys@nef.org.uk) to claim your Energy Envoy Certificate from the National Energy Foundation.
- Remember you must spend a minimum of **one hour per week** volunteering for the time required at your level for it to count towards your Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

## Tracking your progress

At the end of your project you'll need to report the number of people you've engaged. This will include people given advice about energy, reached by social media, attending events and presentations, and engaged about energy in any other way! You may also be able to calculate the amount of energy, money and carbon saved through your project. Here's what you should do:



## Week 1-3



If you haven't already, make sure you've completed the three week [Energy Tutorial](#) first to get lots of ideas and tips that will help you with your energy saving project.

## Week 4-5



Start your project by thinking about the profile of your local community. The first couple of months of your project will be spent gathering information about your community to identify particular areas of need and what types of advice might be useful. Factors to think about include:

- Who lives in your community? How much energy do they consume compared to the national average? Are they high or low energy users? How many people are in fuel poverty?
- What types of houses are found in your community? How old are they? Do they have solid walls or cavity walls?
- What energy sources are available and used in your community? Are any homes off the gas network? What renewable energy sources are available? What renewable energy sources are currently being used?
- What else?

Revisit the [Energy Tutorial](#) for other ideas and for a reminder of how to answer some of the questions. Useful sources for statistics include the Office for National Statistics, the Department of Energy for Climate Change and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Use these two weeks to identify all the questions you'll try to answer through your information gathering and to plan how you'll try to answer them. You could carry out a survey or questionnaire of local people, walk around your local area to look for particular features or research statistics online. You'll have four weeks to carry out your information gathering, so you'll have time to go into a lot of detail and to collect information in a range of different ways.

Don't forget to keep a record of what you've done, the number of people you've engaged and the different energy saving measures you recommend, and save any photos, videos or other materials you've produced.

## Week 6-7



Use these two weeks to produce everything you'll need for your information gathering. You could be writing a survey or questionnaire, planning a walking route or a list of statistics to research online about your community. Think about what you'll need during the information gathering and take these things with you.

## Week 8-11



Carry out your information gathering during these four weeks. If you're walking around your local area or talking to people you don't know, make sure you do this in pairs or small groups, and have adult supervision if you're under 18. Keep a note of everything you find out and double check your list of questions to make sure you've gathered all the information you need.

## Week 12-14



Review all the information that you've collected. What does the information tell you about the needs of your community and what types of energy advice would be most useful for the people living there?

Use the information to choose four different topics for a series of drop-in sessions, workshops or information evenings that you'll run for your community to provide practical advice. You'll run one session per week for four weeks. The sessions could be aimed at the whole community or could focus on particular groups, such as the fuel poor, or particular property types, such as solid wall houses. Ideas for topics include:

- Saving money by switching energy supplier. You could ask people to bring their energy bill information and use a price comparison website such as uSwitch to see if they could save money by switching energy supplier. Many energy bills now have QR codes on them that you can scan to compare prices.
- Making homes more energy efficient. You could fill in an online assessment tool with each person who attends the session to identify energy measures they could install in their home. You could also arrange a trip to a local [SuperHome](#) or another property where a range of energy measures have been installed to inspire people and enable them to learn about what's involved.
- Installing particular measures. You could run sessions about installing particular measures, such as comparing different types of light bulbs (using an energy monitor and light meter to demonstrate the benefits of LEDs), using slow

cookers (including a demonstration and samples for people to try) or things to think about when installing solid wall insulation.

- Finding an installer. You could use a website such as [YouGen](#) to find local renewable energy or energy saving installers who could run advice sessions about installing particular measures.
- Funding energy measures. Is there any local or national financial support (e.g. grants) that you could explain? You could check with your local council, who might be willing to run a session about available funding.
- What else?

You might be able to get other ideas by revisiting the [Energy Tutorial](#). Try to define your aims and objectives for the sessions, e.g. how many people do you want to engage?

You'll also need to think about where you will run your four energy advice sessions. You could run the sessions at your DofE centre, your school, the local library, at a café or in a community hall. Ideally the events will be open to the public, so try to pick a neutral venue which is accessible and well-known within the community.

Compare your ideas for venues by considering the pros and cons of each. Factors to think about might include:

- Location – how will you get there?
- Point of contact – who will you need to talk to?
- Permission – would they be happy for you to run the sessions there for free?
- Anything else?

By the end of these three weeks, you should have chosen your four topics, defined your aims and objectives and arranged where you're going to hold the advice sessions.

## Week 15-19



The next twenty weeks will be spent planning and preparing everything you'll need for the advice sessions – that's one hour per week for five weeks to plan and prepare everything for each session. This might involve researching what advice you'll give, producing handouts, organising the layout of the room, timetable for each session and the equipment and resources you'll need on the day (e.g. samples of particular measures, laptop, projector, ...) and contacting experts who could run a session. You'll have extra time to prepare publicity later.

You'll also need to prepare a short feedback form so you can record feedback from the community about how useful the session was, what they intend to do next (e.g. having been to the session, do they plan to follow any of the advice or install particular measures?) and contact details for all the people who attend each session. Make sure you read the [Health and Safety Guidance](#) about recording personal details.

It's important that you record contact details so you can contact everyone after the event to find out what they actually did next and whether they need any additional advice. Prepare a few follow up questions to find out this information and plan how you will contact people (e.g. by phone, arranging a meeting in a public place or doorstep survey).

These timings are only a guideline, so don't worry if your planning takes more or less time than this.

Use these five weeks to plan and prepare everything you need for advice session one.

### Week 20-24

Use these five weeks to plan and prepare everything you need for advice session two.



### Week 25-29

Use these five weeks to plan and prepare everything you need for advice session three.



### Week 30-34

Use these five weeks to plan and prepare everything you need for advice session four.



### Week 35-38

It's time to publicise your advice sessions so people are aware they're happening and to make sure as many people as possible come! You could be displaying posters, posting invitations through letter boxes, contacting or visiting people who you'd like to come, advertising in a local newspaper or newsletter, writing an article or blog post, or posting



on social media. Do any local community groups or organisations have mailing lists through which they'd be happy to promote your advice sessions?

### Week 39



This is it, your first energy advice session. This is your chance to improve people's lives by helping them to make practical changes to the way they use energy. Remember to take all the materials and equipment you need with you and to collect feedback and contact details from everyone who attends.

Don't forget to take lots of photos and videos to record the memories and make a note of the number of people you engage. Good luck!

### Week 40



Energy advice session two.

### Week 41



Energy advice session three.

### Week 42



Energy advice session four.

### Week 43



Well done for running your four energy advice sessions! This is a reflection week. Reflect on how your advice sessions went and the feedback you received. What went well and what would you do differently if you did it again? How useful did people find the sessions and what do they plan to do next? Make notes in your Activity Log. You could also produce video clips to record your reflections.

Next week you'll start contacting everyone who attended your advice sessions to find out what they actually did next and whether they need any additional advice. Make sure you've prepared all the questions you're going to ask and decided who will contact which people, when and how.



## Week 44-47



Taking steps to save or generate energy isn't always easy, but hopefully you've helped your community to better understand how they can make practical changes to the way they use energy.

During these four weeks, contact everyone who attended your advice sessions to find out what they did next (e.g. have they followed the advice or installed any measures?) and whether they need any additional advice on the topic. Make sure you record all the responses you receive.

If anyone needs any additional advice, you might be able to answer their questions on the spot. If not, make a note of their questions and see if you can research the answer or find an organisation or other expert that the person could contact for more information. Pass on any useful information you find to the person who's in need of additional advice. If you aren't able to find answers to the questions, let them know and make a note of this so you can report this back in your End of Project Survey.

## Week 48-49



It's time to share your achievements with your wider community. Start by deciding how you will share the message about your project and with who. You could deliver a talk for your classmates, use social media, contact the local newspaper or write an article for a newsletter. Remember to explain why your project is important in terms of helping people to improve how they use energy, describe what you've done and the impact of your project demonstrated by the feedback you received and the number of people you engaged.

Use these two weeks to prepare materials for this and to make any necessary arrangements. Make sure you have made a note of your key points and print off anything you need. Copies of materials used, photos and videos will all help to bring it to life.

## Week 50-51



During these two weeks you will share your achievements with your community. You could be giving a presentation, promoting an article you've written or using social media to spread the message about your project. Try to share your achievements as widely as possible!



And finally, don't forget to thank all the people who have helped you with your project.

## Week 52



Congratulations on completing your energy saving project! It's time to evaluate your project and reflect on your achievements by filling in the End of Project Survey. To claim your Energy Envoys Certificate from the National Energy Foundation, please fill in the survey by [clicking here](#) and send your photos, videos and other materials produced to [energyenvoys@nef.org.uk](mailto:energyenvoys@nef.org.uk).

Thank you for volunteering with us!