

# Eastside People Power Impact Report



August 2025

## Building people power and improving resilience to climate change

In Easton and Lawrence Hill, we know our community is resilient. We are resourceful and creative and care about each other and our neighbourhood. Many residents have already had lives and families uprooted by rapid change or natural disaster and made a new life here for themselves and their children. Time and again we have proven what we are capable of when we are tested and work together with a common goal.

Our Eastside People Power demonstrator project set out to strengthen these foundations of resilience, equipping our community with the skills, resources and connections we need to respond to the challenges of climate change.

Our community told us they were concerned about rising energy prices and cold homes and wanted to build local skills and knowledge. We also heard from residents and community leaders that they didn't feel climate action was for "people like them", not seeing themselves in the representations of who climate action was for and the forms it took.

Our demonstrator project was a response to these conversations and priorities. We set out to create welcoming, empowering spaces for shared learning and action, to build a strong network of local champions from across our diverse community and to embed local skills, knowledge and resources for greater resilience to rising costs and extreme weather.

Many members of our community who had never taken part in climate action before got involved with the project. Eastside People Power was about meeting people where they were at, leading with concrete benefits like lower energy bills, warmer homes, new skills and connections while reducing our local carbon emissions. We are grateful to Bristol Energy Network for sharing their expertise as our energy partner.



## Eastside Community Trust and our local community

Eastside Community Trust is a hub of community activity in Easton and Lawrence Hill, two of the most diverse wards of Bristol. We run Easton Community Centre and Felix Road Adventure Playground and a range of activities to make our neighbourhood a place of possibility for everyone. In 2021 we created a community climate action plan with residents as part of the innovative Community Climate Action Project coordinated by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership and funded by the National Lottery. This project addressed plan priorities around energy and leadership.



# Embedding energy skills and knowledge in our community

We completed **two cohorts of Warm Home Champions training**, learned about home energy and heating with **thermal imaging surveys**, gained **DIY draught proofing skills** and learned **steps to reduce energy bills at home**. Equipped with new skills and information, residents took steps to **make their homes more energy efficient** and comfortable. They **shared information** with others, **identified barriers to action and potential solutions**, and helped **develop resources** tailored to the high levels of social and private renting of our local community.



**Reduced carbon emissions from resident actions: 50.1 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e**



**All respondents** reported that they had **learnt new skills** to save money and make their homes more energy efficient and **improved their confidence** using existing skills. They also reported they were **more likely to take action** in their home after participating.

Insulation **New doors** LED bulbs **Secondary glazing** Draught excluders **Replaced window seals** Radiator foil **Filled in gaps & cracks** More efficient use of heating & appliances

## How we engaged more people from across our community

To ensure energy skills, information and support reached further into our community, Eastside People Power trained up **15 Warm Home Champions from culturally diverse backgrounds** with deep community connections, ran practical, hands-on workshops with **10 grassroots groups and faith communities** and hosted regular drop-ins and public events in our spaces. Activities and promotion focussed on **simple, low-cost measures** that people could do whether they owned their homes or rented from social or private landlords.



**Energy help desk drop-ins**



**DIY shallow retrofit workshops**



**Champion languages**

Arabic, Bengali, Somali, Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Czech, BSL, Polish, Urdu

## Case study: Rani Kaur

Rani joined the Warm Home Champions programme to learn how to make her home more comfortable and affordable to heat, and to share what she learned with others in our community. With support from Eastside and Bristol Energy Network, Rani set up an energy help desk at her local Gurdwara where she used her Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu language skills to share information with people who had never received energy support before.

She then recruited the temple to the Resilience Hub pilot and has gone on to participate in the Climate Leadership programme and help develop accessible resources. Rani now sees a role for herself in climate action and is committed to improving the planet and local people's lives.

***"I didn't think of myself as a climate activist, but the idea of helping people who are struggling with energy bills and making sure they can get the information they need – that felt like something I could do."* - Rani**



Read Rani's full story of change [here](#).

# Community buildings as hubs of climate action and resilience

Our Resilience Hubs pilot developed a model for community buildings to reduce their carbon emissions while strengthening local resilience to climate change and rising



## Improved understanding of energy use and heat loss

in community buildings to identify challenges and solutions and develop models of support, including a Community Hub Surgery event and Practical Toolkit for Bristol's community buildings



**21** Community buildings engaged



**4** Community building thermal imaging surveys

## Safe, comfortable spaces in extreme temperatures

"The office definitely feels warmer now with the new insulation. It's the talk of our team!"

- Tenant at Easton Community Centre

## Trusted sources of information



**8** Members of front line staff trained to offer basic energy support and sign posting



## Places to learn together

Residents learned draught proofing skills in "real life" and gained confidence filling in draughty doors, windows, gaps and cracks that needed fixing in community buildings



**35** Drop-ins, energy help desks and workshops held at hubs

"This felt so empowering! You learn a lot from doing, and now I know I can do it at home."

Participant in "Real Life" Draught Proofing workshop at Felix Road Adventure Playground

## Modelling the art of the possible in our buildings



We have shared our progress and learning with our community as we decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of our two hubs. Signage encouraging energy efficient behaviour, updates on actions we've taken and interpretation board explaining our decarbonised energy system have helped raise awareness, inspire action and build local consent for green technology.



"I felt encouraged, hopeful and impressed by Eastside Community Trust taking leadership over environmental issues such as advice on energy efficiency."

Reduced carbon emissions from resilience hubs: **8.2 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e**



# Residents leading climate action

The Climate Leadership Programme brought together 24 community members for a series of creative workshops facilitated by Dr Zakiya Mckenzie and "what's possible" trips to learn, connect, share ideas and shift the narrative of who leads on climate.



## Celebrating global traditions and local action

"I really enjoyed being part of such a diverse group sharing different experiences and languages. Inspiring and accessible."



## Strengthening networks

"Bringing people and our purposes together like this is a really valuable experience."

## Embedding creativity and wellbeing in climate action

"It feels good to use creativity and to make something together. Even if we cover heavy topics in the session, I leave feeling really positive. That's what keeps me coming back -- along with the people and food!"



## Learning from other communities

What's Possible Trips took us to other communities to learn from their energy, lending and food-growing projects.

"It's inspiring to see how other communities are tackling the same issues and then look at what we can do here."



## Creating safe spaces for conversation, learning and connection

"I love to have the time to share with people who are also interested in climate issues and learn more about it without feeling like I already have to be in the know."

**"I've felt so included in this space. It's certainly inspired me!"**

Quotes and feedback in this report came from an end-of-project Warm Home Champions evaluation questionnaire, activity feedback cards, one-to-one interviews and end-of-project focus group with leadership programme participants.

# Accessible resources to inform and inspire



- **Print "How to save money" guides** with simple energy-saving tips and easy-to-follow instructions
- **Short energy films** in **English, Somali and Punjabi**
- Climate Leadership **"Bay Leaf Review" zine**
- **How to Develop a Resilience Hub guide** and Community Building toolkit
- **Getting Ready for Winter features** in **Up Our Street** community magazine



**"Now that I know that things do happen, it feels worth being a part of!"**  
Climate Leadership Programme participant