

Eastside People Power

Story of Change: Rani Kaur

Rani wears many hats in her Easton community. She is a long-time volunteer at her local temple, a dedicated grandmother, an extra set of hands at the Felix Road Adventure Playground kitchen, and works as a Centre Assistant at Easton Community Centre. It wasn't until she was approached by an Eastside colleague about being a Warm Home Champion, though, that she saw herself having a role in climate action.



"I didn't really think of myself as a climate activist, but the idea of helping people who are struggling with their energy bills and making sure members of my community can get the information they need -- that felt important to me and like something I could do."



As a member of the first cohort of Eastside Warm Home Champions, Rani took part in a course with nine other residents keen to learn more about home energy. Each champion participated in a home thermal imaging survey to see and feel where cold draughts were coming in, then met for six weekly sessions led by Bristol Energy Network to understand practical changes they could make at home.

Together with the other champions, Rani learned steps she could take to use energy more efficiently to make her home more comfortable and healthy while lowering her energy bills. DIY workshops equipped her with practical skills like replacing door seals and filling in gaps around skirting boards where cold air could come in, reducing cold draughts and heat loss.

"I enjoyed the sessions because we had different kinds of people, and everyone had their own experiences and things they wanted to improve in their home whether they rented or owned it. So it felt like it was for everyone."



"If I didn't know anyone I wouldn't have come and joined in, but I am so glad I went for it and tried something new!"

Eastside People Power is a climate resilience and leadership project run by [Eastside Community Trust](#). It is part of the wider [Community Climate Action Project](#), funded by the National Lottery and coordinated by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership.

Spreading the word

Once Rani had learnt the basics of home energy, she was keen to make sure the information reached further into the community to others who could use it.

She helped develop resources like Eastside's "How to save money and energy" pocket guides to make them clear and engaging to a wide audience, not just people already knowledgeable about energy.



She then worked to get these materials out into the community by setting up an energy help desk at a local Sikh temple with Eastside and Bristol Energy Network. Her long-time involvement with the Gurdwara meant she was able to coordinate the drop-in for one of the most important days in the Sikh calendar when the temple would have high footfall to reach more people.

Rani shared her new energy-saving knowledge and experiences with the people who stopped by the help desk, and her Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi language skills meant she was able to explain the information to people who hadn't been able to access it before.

Rani also connected the Gurdwara to Eastside's Resilience Hub pilot programme to build their members' understanding of how the building could reduce heat loss and lower its energy bills.



"You can only get up the ladder by starting with the first step. It can be a small step, but once you start doing it you get in the habit and things just go from there. Don't be afraid to start!"



Taking the next steps

What started as a desire to help people with their energy bills turned into a bigger question for Rani: what kind of a world are we leaving future generations and what can we do as a community to help the environment? This motivated her to get involved in the Eastside Climate Leadership programme, where she met other members of the community interested in climate action, and joined day trips to learn more about things other communities were doing.

As the Eastside People Power project comes to an end, Rani feels her work on climate is just getting started. She has new skills, confidence and connections, and the more she has learnt the more passionate she has become about doing her part and encouraging others to find their role in climate action. As Rani says, **"We need to make sure the world we pass on to our grandchildren and others' grandchildren is better than it was left to us."**