



International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS): Energy connectors

OVERVIEW

ICOS works to improve the quality of life of BAME people in the North East, through targeted interventions and projects – everything from English classes and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to cultural events that promote diversity and social cohesion. Over the last three years, they've helped more than 500 people. They're also part of the Sustainable Sunderland Programme, which has helped more than 250 local community members to reduce their energy bills and make environmentally friendly choices.

ICOS have received two previous Northern Powergrid grants – they were initially funded to deliver one-to-one energy bills advice, and they supported 50 individuals with issues including energy debt, changing their energy provider and collective switching. Thanks to a second grant they delivered workshops in the Sunderland area on energy use.

SOLUTION

With the new funding, ICOS proposed a range of energy advice sessions at local community centres and other venues, providing basic information on all aspects on energy and carbon reduction to identify how energy is used. Five local people would be trained as Energy Connectors/Champions and deliver the sessions.

OUTCOMES

A total of 69 people have now benefited from the energy advice sessions to date. The funding has paid for training for 4 volunteers, as well as 9 PRS registrations, with a further 8 people expressing an interest too. ICOS held a further three workshops in March 2018 and are on track to deliver the project. They found some interest in the PRS within BAME communities, including Eastern European migrants.

OBJECTIVES

To provide basic information on all aspects on energy and carbon reduction to identify how energy is used, via a number of sessions delivered by trained local people.

Also to set up a community energy purchase scheme in one of the local areas where ICOS has already delivered environmental projects and clean-ups.

MORE DETAILS BOX OUT

Project title: Energy connectors

Group name: International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS)

Theme: Reducing energy

Area of benefit: Sunderland

Duration: 12 months