



West Dunbartonshire Council: Partnership in the Local Energy Saving Scheme



SUMMARY

The Local Energy Saving Scheme (LESS) was created to reduce the energy use of every household in West Dunbartonshire and respond effectively to emerging and on-going energy related issues such as fuel poverty and climate change. LESS makes use of CERT (Carbon Emissions Reduction Target) investment to fund energy efficiency measures for over 70's, people on low incomes, and those with disabilities. In the past year, over 800 homes in West Dunbartonshire have had insulation measures installed.

BACKGROUND

The Scheme

The Local Energy Saving Scheme (LESS) launched in West Dunbartonshire in July 2008. LESS is a unique local partnership between West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC), Scottish Hydro Electric, SOLAS Insulation, The Pensions Service and Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre – Strathclyde and Central.

All homeowners in West Dunbartonshire, whether owner occupiers, private tenants or council tenants, are offered a free home energy report, a free insulation survey and quote, two free low-energy light bulbs, and free insulation for those residents who qualify and subsidised insulation for all other residents.

Carbon Footprint

West Dunbartonshire has one of the lowest carbon footprints in Scotland – 11.47 tonnes CO₂/capita. WDC is committed to maintaining a low carbon footprint and meeting the challenges of fuel poverty and climate change, while also working towards the commitments in Scotland's Climate Change Declaration. The LESS project helps to address all of these issues.

Insulation

Free insulation is available to householders aged over 70 or on certain benefits. This free support is particularly relevant in West Dunbartonshire where over 11% of the population are aged over 70; over 22% of the working age population derive some or all of their income from benefits; and 23% of the population have a disability or long-term limiting illness. WDC is insulating its own housing stock – 11,600 homes or 26% of the total housing stock in the area.

For householders who don't qualify for free insulation, they are offered subsidised insulation. It is estimated that installing loft insulation will save an average 3-bedroom home £150 and around 800kg CO₂ annually. Cavity wall insulation offers householders saving of £115 and around 610kg CO₂ annually.

Working with local business

The installation work is carried out by Solas Insulation, a local community business based in Dumbarton. Partnership with Solas Insulation has the added advantage of creating jobs for local people and boosting the economy of West Dunbartonshire.

KEY CONTACTS

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Carbon Footprint



11.47 tonnes
CO₂/capita



LOOKING AHEAD

Outcomes & Benefits

In the first year of the scheme, LESS benefited over 800 homes in West Dunbartonshire. Solas Insulation undertook a street by street approach, contacting every household and local community organisations to ensure maximum publicity and uptake of LESS. LESS was well-publicised at its launch, but it is acknowledged that additional community-wide publicity and support from WDC is required to continue the momentum of the scheme and to ensure it can benefit as many residents as possible.

It is estimated, this has saved at least 564 tonnes of CO₂ from homes in West Dunbartonshire and it is hoped to continue to build on this figure year on year as the scheme reaches more households.

The scheme has now been extended to residents in Inverclyde and East Dunbartonshire.

Next Steps

Through the LESS scheme, householders are offered energy and tariff advice and advocacy with a view to eradicating fuel poverty. There are plans to extend this community support through further engagement with local and national agencies who deliver complimentary services in West Dunbartonshire including Citizens' Advice, the Carers Centre and MacMillan Cancer Care.

It is also hoped the LESS scheme can attract funding from the Climate Challenge Fund and Scottish Power 'Energy People's Trust' to extend community support and also begin a programme of fun awareness raising sessions at local schools to promote the benefits of LESS and energy conservation.

West Dunbartonshire Housing Tenure

