



# A Just Transition in Retrofits: interim report

**The London Sustainable  
Development Commission**

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Research, engagement and report conducted by The Young Foundation



## About the London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC)

The LSDC was established in 2002 to provide independent advice to the Mayor of London on ways to make London a sustainable, world-class city. The Commission works to promote sustainable development, embed sustainability into London-wide strategies and help make sustainability a meaningful and understandable concept for all Londoners.

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## About The Young Foundation

The Young Foundation is the UK's home for community research and social innovation. As a not-for-profit, The Young Foundation brings communities, organisations and policymakers together, driving positive change to shape a fairer future.

Working to understand the issues people care about, The Young Foundation supports collective action to improve lives, involving communities in locally-led research and delivering distinctive initiatives and programmes to build a stronger society. The Young Foundation also powers the Institute for Community Studies.

**For more information visit us at: [youngfoundation.org](http://youngfoundation.org)**

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# Executive summary

London's journey to become a net-zero, climate-resilient city must be inclusive and fair: a 'Just Transition'. The London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC) published a report in 2023 with recommendations for how London's leaders can achieve this goal.

In order to achieve net zero, 2.2m homes in London need to be 'retrofitted': insulated so they're cheaper to heat in the winter and stay cooler in the summer, and are powered by renewable energy. As well as cutting carbon, retrofits cut bills and tackle fuel poverty, while creating healthier, more comfortable homes. But we also know that the uptake of retrofit schemes is uneven across different groups of Londoners.

## **This work aims to help more equitable uptake of retrofits by Londoners.**

The LSDC is researching how Londoners' perceptions of home retrofits differ depending on age, ethnicity, sex and disability. The full research findings will be published in February 2025, along with a toolkit to help retrofit delivery providers design more inclusive retrofit programmes.

The research uses a 'participatory action' methodology, recruiting community members to interview their peers in order to gather more a nuanced understanding of their lived experiences. We also interviewed 15 expert stakeholders who work on retrofit delivery and policy to learn from their insights.

This **interim report** presents what we have heard from interviewees at the midway point of the programme.



## Interim research findings:

**There is no one common barrier** faced by households with protected characteristics: Specific issues affect groups with intersecting protected characteristics in different ways across the retrofit journey. Disadvantages may be related to: limited power over decision-making, language barriers, awareness and digital exclusion barriers for engaging certain groups in participating in retrofit; barriers due to the timescales and disruption of retrofit adaptations affecting for other groups; and issues of specific negative past experiences with agencies and narratives that affect the trust and buy in of other groups.

However, **future retrofit initiatives should address the following common challenges** frequently faced by households with protected characteristics:

- **Inflexible support schemes:** Current funding and support available through government for retrofit are perceived as inflexible, and the offer does not always meet the buildings requirements, or the needs of the tenant or owner. Households often feel 'missed' by criteria, or excluded on the basis of whole household income when they did not necessary have 'disposable' income; savings; credit; or budget flexibility to adopt retrofit schemes and share costs.
- **Complex needs perceived as 'bad for business':** retrofit providers may regard households with multiple barriers to retrofit as being bad value for money, due to the added cost of adapting processes and providing more support. This viewpoint does not consider that targeting those with multiple barriers could represent better value for money and indeed create strong social value, because retrofit may address multiple issues at once (improved physical and mental health, reduced energy poverty, etc).
- **Onerous, not person-centred initiatives:** Current retrofit programmes put all the onus of being well-informed and decision-making on the householder or tenant, with limited support. Most provision is restricted to giving households a level of information and then expecting them to decide what is right. This is challenging for many households as levels of technical understanding of this new area are not high, and subject to

additional barriers for those with protected characteristics, including not having English as a first language; hearing and visual impairment, digital exclusion; requiring awareness of home adaptation options, trade-offs and implications of retrofit; and time constraints for the householder to be fully aware of what they are consenting to.

- **Poor representation and limited understanding:** Staff on retrofit projects do not tend to reflect the communities with which they are engaging. Funding does not typically support retrofit provider staff to be trained or to engage specialist support to engage households with protected characteristics or multiple and complex needs, and bespoke tailored support and good practice is limited.
- **Poor evidence on post-retrofit home performance:** how the rollout of retrofit measures might affect households with different protected characteristics in the immediate and long term future has limited consensus and is not well or routinely communicated by councils or providers. This dissuades households from having their home retrofitted as the way their homes would feel, perform, cost and impact on their health, wellbeing and mobility, appears greatly variable and poorly evidenced. This is more acute among those who may be more vulnerable, including households with protected characteristics.
- **Integrated barriers but not integrated solutions:** People with protected characteristics, or from a minoritised group, tend to face a combination of barriers that must be overcome if they are to have their home retrofitted. These barriers can also feed into each other, requiring complex, multi-pronged solutions. However, provision of integrated support – such as 'one stop information shops' about retrofit, or integrated home assessments for people with protected characteristics that can take into account their care needs, is limited; and very little best practice of working with or providing for people with protected characteristics appears available in current retrofit provision.

- **Retrofit support varies depending on where you live:** Not all local communities in London have community organisations that can readily support people to make retrofit decisions, or with home disruption and citizen advice more broadly, meaning residents in boroughs that do have access to these organisations may be at a disadvantage. There is a potential role for existing community organisations to provide retrofit advice and social infrastructure for residents who may be vulnerable or experiencing specific and complex needs.
- **Provision is not often locally mediated;** outside organisations with little or no base of trust, knowledge, and support in the community, can win tenders and are indeed needed given the lack of retrofit provision, however delivery can be challenging without a local intermediary organisation to engage residents and build trust. The local authority or Council does not always have the capacity, and is not always the most trusted source, to undertake this.

There is however a strong material, ethical and social benefit for improving the inclusivity of retrofit provision, which is currently under-recognised by providers. Improving provision for those with multiple barriers, rather than a 'one size fits all' which is normally mediated by housing stock, could represent better value for money in the mid-long term; as retrofit models become more accessible to all, through designing for those with multiple needs, in what is called 'designing for extremes'. This in turn can reduce frictions and support greater take up of retrofit, therefore reducing delays, delivering higher units of homes that have been adapted successfully, and improving the value for money and efficacy of retrofit programmes. Improving inclusivity of retrofit can create *strong social value*, because retrofit may address multiple issues at once (improved physical and mental health, reduced energy poverty, etc).

We are only at the start of our findings, and this interim report presents the early findings from the LSDC Just Transition in Retrofits programme. It explores the current landscape of retrofit provision and the known challenges and barriers for individuals and households with protected characteristics in taking part. It also presents findings from engagement with the retrofit sector, looking at the types of provision, intervention and approach that are available to seek to support households through what can be a disruptive but ultimately beneficial journey to make homes warmer, healthier, greener and cheaper to run in the capital.



# Context

The Mayor of London has set an ambitious goal for London to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Greater London Authority (GLA) is seeking to develop policies that consider how the transition will impact the everyday lives of Londoners and enable them to engage. Going beyond the conventional framing of a just transition as [re-skilling workers for new green jobs](#), by focusing on how to include *all* Londoners in switching to low-carbon living. This includes addressing the barriers that communities and certain households must overcome if they are to take part, and by seeking to create fairly shared opportunities to experience co-benefits – across health, housing, economic prosperity and social wellbeing, from a just transition.

For more than 20 years, the London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC) has provided independent advice to the Mayor of London on how to [integrate sustainable development into policymaking, to improve Londoners' quality of life](#). Their [2023 report](#) outlining London's 'journey to an equitable net-zero city' focuses on the unique challenges faced by a global city such as London and explores what a just transition to a net zero future by 2030 could look like.

A crucial component to delivering a just retrofit transition to the people of London, is helping fuel poor households to engage in and undertake retrofit on their homes. The need for improved energy efficient homes across the capital has been further exacerbated by the pandemic, increased energy costs and cost of living crisis. One of the steps being taken to support these households, is the establishment of [London Office of Retrofit](#) to help coordinate retrofit activity across the city, with a key priority to '*support a just transition*'.

As part of the transition journey, the [LSDC's 2023 report](#) recommended London's political leaders 'build trust by convening community engagement

that informs decision-making'. The report outlined some core requirements:

- Engage with citizens, convening dialogue that informs decision-making and practical solutions
- Engage a wide and representative cross-section of Londoners, especially those whose voices are seldom heard and most affected by changes.
- Build people's capacity to meaningfully engage by giving them the right information and skills, while breaking down barriers to engagement – including by paying participants for their time.
- Frame issues around people's lived experiences instead of separate policy areas and discuss them in everyday language.

In response to these recommendations, in 2024, the GLA, commissioned a study to better understand how a just transition in retrofit can be achieved focused on key challenges that policymakers must consider, including:

- How can we ensure that retrofitting homes responds to the needs of each household?
- How do we identify those homes that should be prioritised?
- How do we ensure that retrofit policy, provision, and practical delivery, can all work for protected communities?
- How can investment in retrofit across London be used to secure sustainable, well-paid employment for the people of London?

The national policy landscape has a direct impact on London, the GLA and London boroughs. This is reflected in the range of retrofit programmes put in place during the previous parliament, aimed at helping to support households improve the energy efficiency of their homes, which included the [Local Authority Delivery scheme](#) and [Home Upgrade Grant](#). Each of these funds used a competitive tendering process, undertaken by local authorities, which has historically created issues for London Boroughs, due to the tender's methodology making it difficult for boroughs to secure funding and deliver the programs, due to the types of property the tender seeks to retrofit, the scale of funding available and the timeframes within which the funding must be spent.

Recognising the challenges these funding models pose, in recent years the GLA and boroughs have worked together to alter their approach, leading to an increase in retrofit delivery in the city. However, the major barrier they face is the 'stop start' nature and fragmentation of many of these programmes, which makes adopting a strategic approach extremely difficult.

The new government's Warm Homes Plan has pledged to increase retrofit funding by a further c£6.6bn, over this parliament, taking overall funding to c£13bn. The GLA and London Councils' [Retrofit Delivery Plan for London](#), sets out the delivery challenges from previous funding and how a new parliament, could develop policy and funding to overcome these challenges. By integrating these recommendations into the Warm Homes Plan, the government could avoid previous delivery barriers and knit together other retrofit and net zero projects. This is vital, as home energy efficiency programmes are being [launched](#) and councils are gearing up to secure funds, making a clear UK strategy crucial if we are to effectively grow the sector, with the limited funds available. However, at the time of writing this report, the government has yet to announce any details on the plan and how this will impact current retrofit policy.

## Overview of the study

The LSDC appointed The Young Foundation to deliver this programme of research, which has been called *Just Transition in Retrofit*. The programme aims to hold space for London's residents and retrofit stakeholders to work collaboratively, to create 'green' solutions that respond to lived experiences. The research uses participatory methods (described later in the report) to recognise and empower diverse voices and build participation among those traditionally less heard in research.

The aim of the *Just Transition in Retrofit* programme, is to understand how experiences of retrofitting housing, designed to support a net zero transition, may differ for people with protected characteristics. The research is produced with residents and stakeholders, and explores how retrofit solutions can be more inclusive and remove barriers or reduce risks for people with protected characteristics across the retrofit journey. The evidence is based on primary and secondary research, and a toolkit, designed to enable retrofit delivery organisations - including the GLA, London boroughs and retrofit providers - to develop and deliver retrofit initiatives that are more inclusive, equitable, effective and responsive to the needs of affected communities.

This report provides a snapshot of the key findings, at the half-way point in the *Just Transition in Retrofits* project. It outlines what is now known about the retrofit challenge from the perspective of inclusion, provides a description of the participatory methodologies used, and details the findings to date.

It is important to state that while the emerging insights are by no means conclusive, they will inform the delivery of the rest of the project. This includes engaging with key stakeholders with power over policies, to test our findings and that the direction of the project is aligned with and can start to inform their priorities.



## The retrofit challenge

Home retrofit refers to the process of improving homes and buildings to make them more energy efficient, requiring less energy to light, power, heat, cool and occupy, and even cook within the home.

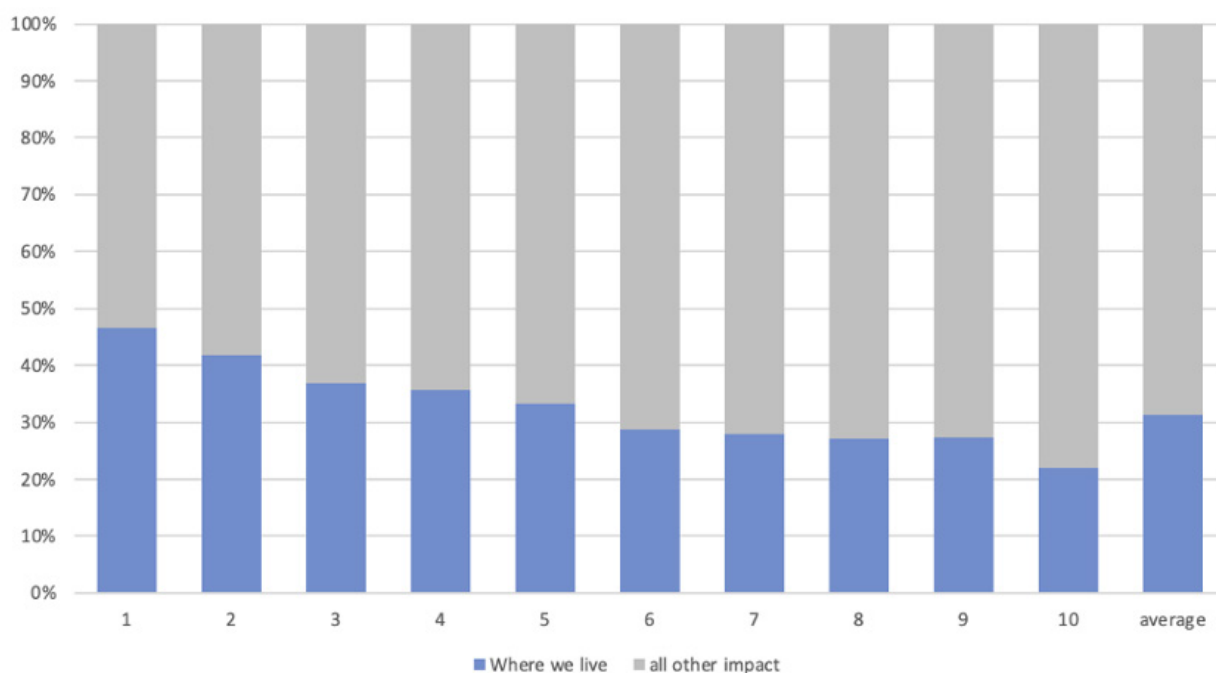
To put the scale of work that is required in London in perspective, the city currently has a population of 9m people, living in around [3.8m dwellings](#), of which [just under 1.5 m \(39.5%\)](#) are expected to require retrofitting. [Half a million of these retrofits, will be social homes](#), equating to around 15% of the total housing stock. While [13.2% of London's households are in fuel poverty \(471,000 homes\)](#), making it crucial that there are policies in place that enable us to reach these homes and enable people to live in the warm, healthy and affordable accommodation they deserve.

It is crucial to recognise that retrofit changes the fabric and or energy performance of the home, and are likely [to affect a range of household routines and practices, with a range of impacts on individuals and households](#). This will mean experiences of home retrofit will differ for individuals, households, and communities with different characteristics, including protected characteristics. As they will have different barriers (finance, accommodation type, family size, etc) that they must overcome if they are able to retrofit their home. Followed by different experiences of their new retrofitted home, once the work is completed (new technology, new cooking equipment, etc).

Energy use arising from heating and occupying a home is a major challenge to the transition to net zero, as it will require changes to how homes are heated and powered. This could lead to social injustice if not carefully managed. For instance, rising energy bills may disproportionately affect the poorest households due to poor performance of homes, outdated energy systems and technologies, or inability to switch supplier, due to tight incomes or not being the sole decision-makers about property (if in social, or tenured housing, for example).

Energy use within the home represents a substantial proportion of household emissions, particularly for those on lower incomes. To put this in perspective, emissions for households in the lowest 10% of incomes represent nearly 50% of their total emissions, [which drops dramatically to 20% for households in the top 10% of incomes](#). However, it is essential to recognise that, even though emissions vary greatly across incomes, they still represent a significant percentage of every household's environmental impact.





The chart shows UK home emissions compared to all the other emissions the average person is responsible for producing. The horizontal axis shows households by income decile (the population broken down into ten equal parts based on income), whilst emissions % is shown in the vertical axis. Households in poorer income brackets tend to have higher emissions from the home due to poor home performance. This is in turn created by quality of housing stock, limited adaptations and retrofit to date, outdated energy systems, supply and lack of smart, energy saving technologies, to name a non-exhaustive list of factors. (Owen, A, for the Institute for Community Studies, 2023)

Research undertaken by a range of different research organisations, has illustrated how potential policies could impact different households. However, to date these findings have not been mobilised into policy. Utilising this research and the recommendations to identify which approaches to retrofit should be provided, will be crucial if policymakers are to reflect social needs and, where possible, increase social equity.

There is a substantial evidence base on social justice and social equity in housing, including energy, fuel, and warmth. Much of this is focused on groups that are most vulnerable to energy

poverty or energy insecurity, as reducing their energy use due to scarcity or cost, negatively impacts people’s health and wellbeing. Research has found that protected characteristics, household composition and socio-economic status - and the intersections of these - can increase vulnerability to energy insecurity (see: Berry, 2019; Walker and Day 2012; Snell et al 2018; FoE 2011). The table below explores the specific dimensions of energy insecurity in the home for different vulnerable groups.

## Existing evidence

We have summarised below the existing evidence from our desktop research, highlighting a range of characteristics that might make households more vulnerable to energy poverty and insecurity.

Barriers	Potential policy interventions
'One size fits all' approach to retrofit eligibility criteria applied, with insufficiently nuanced approach.	Interventions that actively seek vulnerable groups rather than expecting households to come forward.
Overall public interest in retrofit measures is low, even when support schemes are in place. Distrust of retrofit due to lack of information on the returns or benefits and/or previous injustice or experience of poor home improvements.	Greater understanding of barriers to uptake and how these might be experienced by distinct groups and places.  Normalise retrofit through area/community level proliferation, such as the use of 'show homes'.
Only a minority of homeowners can afford retrofit measures (upfront, and ongoing/changing running costs) without a loan.	Removing upfront costs, providing a range of financial packages for support.
Vulnerable households face barriers including the burden of proof and paperwork, physical barriers, concerns around physical disruption and disruption to the energy supply during retrofit installations, concerns or scepticism around recent technologies, and lack of aftercare from providers or Councils.	Area/community-based approaches to overcome social and cultural barriers to uptake of support schemes should be better suited to the needs of the groups targeted, underpinned by a better understanding of those groups.
Spatial components can impact uptake, such as the distribution of rented vs privately owned homes.	Ensuring mixed tenure policies for areas with multiple types of housing, so scaled approaches can be taken. Landlord engagement by local authorities is essential.
People with disabilities may struggle to engage, due to the disruption cause by retrofit process, inflexibility of retrofit timescales and measures, or inadequate solutions. Also due to a lack of influence on decision-making.	Greater engagement with communities to ensure retrofit policies are accessible to them.
Inflexible or high household costs associated with caring responsibilities or health conditions.	Greater engagement with communities to ensure retrofit policies are accessible to them and do not disrupt caring or health routines.
Lack of digital skills or confidence.	Digital support for communities, including retrofit support teams.
Digital exclusion may compound the lack of access to trusted information.	Training on the effectiveness of retrofit measures and support schemes for digital inclusion for residents, alongside retrofit rollout.
Household compositions, including households with complex dependencies.	Financial and social support to help with disruptions to the home.

It is important to note that households face a combination of these characteristics - alongside spatial disadvantages such as being on the fringes of, or disconnected from neighbourhoods, or having low access to services, [making these households vulnerable to being able to engage in retrofit](#).

It is important to recognise contributors that may affect people experiencing disadvantage and their experience of retrofit, including those classified as being in fuel poverty. The Greater [London Authority](#) define fuel poverty as, the condition where both a household's income is below the poverty line *and* they are required to spend more than average on their energy bills. Building on this definition of fuel poverty, other important contributors that may affect people experiencing disadvantage and their experience of retrofit, include household type, tenure, home dependency, and suitability for retrofit measures, as they are baked into the UK's housing landscape.

Building on these contributors, this project seeks to understand how protected characteristics – defined by Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation - and multiple, intersecting factors and different communities across London, meet barriers to retrofit rollout and uptake. Of these, this project places particular focus on sex, ethnicity, age, and disability. The people of London are keen to take part in the transition, reflected in [89% of Londoners wanting to prevent climate change](#), however London's retrofit challenge suggests a disconnect between wanting to see action and being empowered to act. This research aims to begin bridging this gap, focused on creating practical, person-centred and place-sensitive solutions for individuals with protected characteristics to engage meaningfully in retrofit.

The rest of this report describes primary research designed to investigate these barriers, which seeks to produce a toolkit and recommendations to increase the accessibility of retrofit measures and schemes. The research draws on the expertise of both retrofit providers and experts and individuals with lived experience of protected characteristics from London boroughs with different place and population profiles.



## Just transition in retrofit

This work draws on The Institute for Community Studies' conceptual approach, which was developed to understand how scenarios for the transition to net zero would affect households and communities. That research, which was undertaken by The Institute for Community Studies, University of York, University of Leeds and Trinity College Dublin, drew strongly on the concept of *participation* to explore the risks of unequal impacts, or of households being left behind, [and the barriers and opportunities households face in a just transition](#).

That research developed a 'person-centred, place-based' approach to a fair transition, which is used in this work.

### Person-centred transition planning

Person-centred transition planning responds to the journey individuals and households face when net zero measures, such as domestic retrofit, are introduced. Each stage needs to be accounted for in transition planning, recognising that this journey will look different for different people.

- **Awareness:** understanding where individuals and households start on their journey, their attitudes towards net zero, how they navigate misinformation, and how they envision what change will look like.
- **Accessibility:** navigating the affordability of net zero measures, and the suitability for household profiles, managing factors that affect households' vulnerability and participation - including time, dependencies, and emotional energy.
- **Acceptance:** agreeing what measures can be adopted, managing expectations, navigating decision-maker roles, acknowledging trade-offs, negotiating fair responsibility of the burden, trusting the technology, financing, and leadership of the change.
- **Adoption:** adopting times and processes, navigating disruption to the home or community, managing ongoing expectations of individuals or household.
- **Adaptation:** acclimatising to different energy, home, lifestyle, and work practices, supporting household budget fluctuations, responding to climate impacts, and recognising that net zero technologies can shift.

The person-centred retrofit journey (source: The Young Foundation, 2024)



# Our approach

## Intersectionality and protected characteristics

This research seeks to explore how those with protected characteristics – specifically relating to age, sex, disability and ethnicity – experience ‘green’ home adaptations, such as domestic retrofit. [Our journey to net zero](#), research, conducted a comprehensive narrative review that synthesised the vulnerabilities of individuals, families and communities in the transition to net zero.

The evidence base from an initial literature and scoping review proved to be highly limited. However, recurrent studies find a principal problem is energy schemes, home adaptation programmes and energy and home retrofit policies are often designed around the ‘average’ consumer, which misses adaptation necessary for households with protected characteristics and households with complexity around energy usage.

Where there are individual studies, these are very specific to one small community, or one type of protected characteristic, often with small samples and not easy to generalise from. This makes the second stage of the project engaging those with protected characteristics in their own voice, increasingly important to building the understanding of what affects their engagement with retrofit.

However, the experience of individuals with protected characteristics is not necessarily common to groups with similar characteristics on paper and will vary. However, it does give greater context to how individuals with these protected characteristics are experiencing the transition to net zero, and how these might intersect with other known vulnerabilities, such as tenure:

### Age:

- Those who do not own their homes, particularly private renting tenants, are especially vulnerable to being left behind in the transition to net zero due to lacking decision-making power over the energy systems, energy performance and carbon footprint of their homes, and often being caught between more powerful bodies including private landlords, housing associations or shared ownership arrangements.
- Tenancy is particularly common amongst younger residents in London, meaning young people may be disproportionately affected by poor energy efficiency. The programme has a particular interest in hearing from those between the ages of 19 – 34, which is the average age of a first-time buyer in London.
- Tenancy and age intersect with poverty in the UK, particularly in major cities. Over the past 20 years, the proportion of people living in poverty in the Private Rented Sector has increased from 8 to 19% [42]; when we consider this with the fact many tenants are in younger age categories, this places a renewed risk on spending power and economic barriers to retrofit, alongside challenges of the tenant affording changes to living costs – including energy bills – *post-retrofit*.
- Studies, mainly international, have suggested an ‘age-friendly’ approach to urban design, including retrofit, is increasingly needed, particularly for housing specifically designed for elderly communities or supportive housing. The UK evidence base around older age groups and retrofit is extremely limited, however limited evidence suggests older people may also need more support with changes that adapt the quality and use of the home, due to home adaptation needs or lack of access to digital skills or resources.

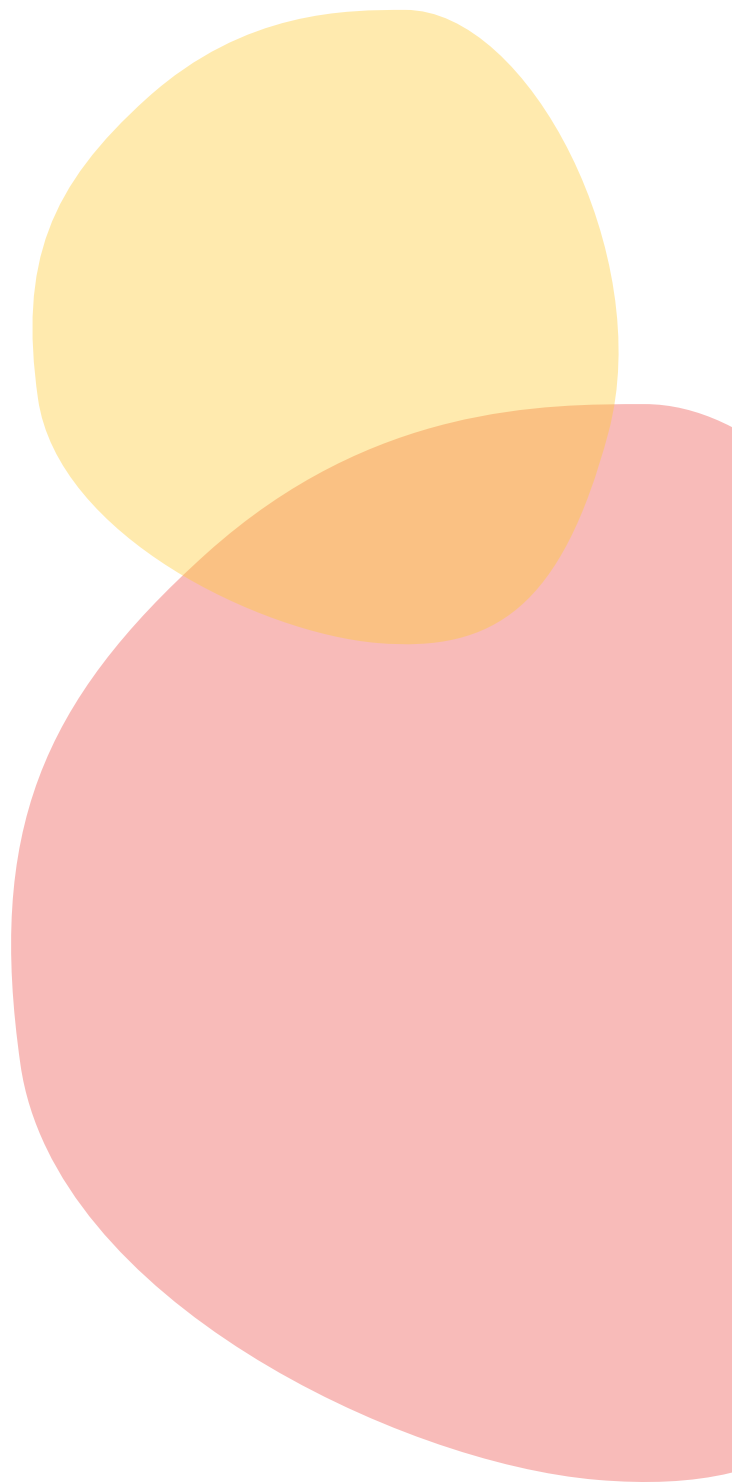
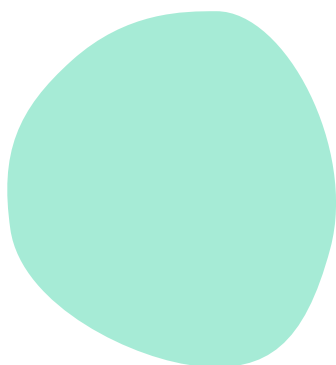
### Sex and gender:

- We have been sensitive throughout when discussing research participants' protected characteristics, as we recognise these issues can be highly delicate.
- However, research shows it takes a London woman 5.3 times longer than her male counterparts to buy a property, limiting their bargaining power to make decisions about changes to their home due to tenure; but also creating potential challenges to negotiation power on other processes including retrofit provision.
- Gender can intersect with social relations, in affecting who makes decisions about the home – including in participating in retrofit journeys. Women are more likely to have less decision-making power over changes to the home if they are in a heterosexual relationship with a man, for example. This can in turn be affected by intersections of class, culture and ethnicity.
- The evidence on experiences of individuals whose gender identity differs from their sex registered at birth, when it comes to making green choices, including participating in retrofit, is extremely limited.
- Women often report challenging or discriminatory experiences with tradespeople in their homes, or fear of being alone in the home with tradespeople. For women from ethnic minority backgrounds this can be compounded by intersecting cultural issues; and trans and non-binary people also report similar intersecting issues, negative experiences and concern about allowing tradespeople into their homes for fear of discrimination or abuse.
- Whilst we recognise the Equality Act of 2010 recognises 'sex' and 'gender reassignment' as protected characteristics, some of our participants in this study identified as non-binary or fluid in terms of their gender identity. As has been well reported in other studies, these groups also have experiences of discrimination in relation to improvements in the home or interactions with agencies and services; and as a result we also include a focus on gender alongside sex in this study.

### Ethnicity:

- The experience of retrofit for individual ethnic groups is limited. It is known that ethnic minority communities tend to be more vulnerable to energy insecurity and therefore, more at risk of injustice in energy transition, due to above average incidences of overcrowding, low quality housing and fuel poverty among ethnic minorities (see Ethnicity Boost survey, Bourzaroskvi et al, 2022).
- Minority ethnic communities are likely to live in the private rented sector, as analysis of the UK's 2011 census by the Race Equality Foundation found that private renting had increased among all groups since 1991, with tenure insecurity particularly pronounced among young people and ethnic minority groups (Finney & Harris, for Race Equality Foundation, 2013), and early analysis of the most recent Census shows this has increased again. Given how tenancy disempowers households in access to retrofit, decision-making over retrofit, affordability, and long delayed time frames, evidence suggests ethnicity is layered with tenancy in creating disadvantage in retrofit.
- However, studies including the Ethnicity Boost survey on energy market engagement (Bouzarovski et al, 2022) have identified a 'diversity penalty' for households from ethnic minorities across the UK. A London-based study found a high level of mistrust and disengagement with energy companies, with participants from ethnic minorities were more likely to experience issues paying their energy bills and were less likely to switch provision, leaving them on higher tariffs and vulnerable to overpaying or flexibility injustice (see Lorenc et al, 2013, and other sources).

- Support and information are often not tailored to, nor reaching ethnic minority communities, due to being streamed through a limited number of increasingly digital channels. Studies by Citizens Advice and Debt Advice agencies have found that ethnic minority households are as such overrepresented among those who seek help in dealing with billing queries, tariff checks, fuel debt and arrears, disconnections, price comparisons and government support. (see Citizens Advice Newcastle, 2020). Further studies have identified an 'information deficit' particularly impacting ethnic minority households, due to the repeated perception of them being 'hard to engage' (Macgregor et al, 2019).
- Evidence suggests relations with authorities and agencies – such as local authorities, tradespeople, energy suppliers, and government suppliers may be disproportionately affected by issues including lack of trust and political disenfranchisement for certain ethnic minority groups, often due to their previous experience of injustice in access to services, which leads to low uptake of retrofit measures.
- This is likely to be exacerbated for people whose first language is not English, or for people who live in multi-generational households, as information, schemes and awareness campaigns are often not provided in second or third languages outside of English.





**Disability:**

- The need for a healthy, warm, energy secure home is typically high for those with disabilities. National Energy Action estimates that since the April 2022 price increase, 800,000 more people with health conditions and/or disabilities are in fuel poverty, finding those with respiratory conditions, and some people with severe health problems often face disproportionate bills due to need to power a lot of electric medical equipment from home; whilst those experiencing physical disability and mobility may require specific retrofit measures due to already present home adaptations related to supporting mobility in the home.
- Evidence shows households with inflexible home adaptation needs due to health, disability or caring responsibilities are less likely to uptake retrofit measures. Further research is needed to understand particular reasons and barriers to this, for individuals experiencing specific disabilities, which the second part of this study will seek to contribute to.
- Whilst studies focusing specifically on households with disabilities and *retrofit*, are very limited, studies considering home adaptation provision more broadly for families with disabilities have found 'institutional and attitudinal inertia restricts communication between developers and planners in responding to the needs of these families' (Staples & Essex, 2016).
- Low uptake may be led from other factors, not solely due to complex needs from experiencing the protected characteristic, and may be due to poor relations with government or other agencies or poor past experience of agency intervention, fear of disruption or concerns about how retrofit measures will impact their daily lives in the future.
- Disabled people alongside low-income families and several other groups in this study, also remain relatively disenfranchised within mainstream politics and policymaking, which has been found to lead to 'policies that continue to treat these groups as passive recipients of interventions' (Snell et al, 2017) - not as active participants or even co-designers of more effective, inclusive, retrofit and energy adaptation policies and approaches.

We sought to engage a group of peer researchers whose lived experiences were reflective of the protected characteristics that this research seeks to understand, recognising that these characteristics intersect to form an individual identity.

**What is peer research?**

Peer research aims to reveal authentic insights into people's lives and experiences. It is about research being done with them rather than to them.

A peer researcher is someone who has had similar experiences of something to the people they are 'researching' - this could be based on place, or it could be based on experience. Increasingly, organisations want to speak to people about their lived experiences when designing or evaluating programmes, and the best people to understand someone's experiences are other people like them.

**Our approach to peer research**

- Peer research aims to make research accessible to all – we had no assumptions of prior knowledge about net zero in our recruitment of the peer research.
- Instead, we focused on engaging with individuals who were curious, non-judgemental, and interested in engaging their peers in conversations about what a just transition means to them.
- We recognise the expertise in the lived experiences of our peer researchers and pay ethically at The London Living wage.
- Our organisational infrastructure provides wrap-around support for peer researchers, grounded in our comprehensive, interactive Peer Research Training curriculum.

## Place-sensitive

Recognising that the experience of individuals with protected characteristics varies between places, the programme focused the initial research in four London boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Croydon and Haringey.

The rationale for selecting these boroughs was focused on exploring areas where a) retrofit need is high; and b) where known barriers to retrofit (that may be non-specific to those with protected characteristics) may intersect strongly with known disadvantages for those with protected characteristics:

- **Fuel poverty levels** – the first phase, saw the team use a data-led approach, to highlight all the boroughs with a high percentage of households living in fuel poverty (in the four boroughs selected between 13% – 15.5% of households are living in fuel poverty, compared to the London average of 10%), recognising that the primary

social aims of retrofit are to alleviate fuel poverty and energy insecurity, alongside reducing households environmental impacts.

- **Housing stock** – for the second phase, the research team then reviewed the housing stocks across London boroughs. With the aim of selecting boroughs that reflect areas with a mixture of housing stock, requiring different retrofit approaches, and with different tenure types, necessitating different decision-making powers.
- **Demographic data** – the final phase of analysis focused on demographic data indicates, ensuring that the boroughs selected would reflect a diversity of experiences of the protected characteristics that this research seeks to engage, creating the conditions to allow for a range of peer researchers and interviewees to engage in this work.



## Building engagement

An emerging evidence base suggests that the term 'retrofit' itself feels regressive, 'correcting' something rather than transitioning to a more desirable and environmentally responsible way of living (Monteiro, 2022). While finding the right terms to describe contemporary approaches might seem a small issue, positive language and 'soft power' are, in fact, essential tools for reimagining a new, equitable world (Monteiro, 2022).

This project responds to this, showcased as 'Powering sustainable London homes'. The peer research role was advertised in August – September 2024, using a range of tools, including across social media platforms, through The Young Foundation's national Peer Research Network, and through community groups, WhatsApp groups and by engaging established, trusted infrastructure within the four boroughs. The peer research opportunity was shared with Brent Pensioners Forum (a vital independent advocate for older people in Brent) and Haringey's Community Voices project, building on the engagement of residents in community research.

This resulted in a strong application response, with the referral approach particularly effective to engage those of different ages who would not normally come forward to community research programmes.

The peer researchers recruited within the four boroughs reflect a range of lived experiences and long-term health conditions, relating to protected characteristics and disability, balanced with a reflective mix of housing stock and tenure type.

The Young Foundation's leading peer research training and infrastructure approach was used to build research skills, learning and collaborations. This started with in-depth peer research training lasting two days (delivered online), covering topics such as research ethics, data protection and safeguarding, as well as basic research skills, with a focus on interviews. The peer researchers then had a day-long co-design session, generating a peer interview guide (appendix A).

At the time of writing, the cohort of peer researchers are conducting interviews with their 'peers' (friends, families, and neighbours) who share their experiences of protected characteristics seeking to understand how they perceive and engage with green home adaptations, such as domestic retrofit.

# Powering sustainable London homes

**We're looking for ten residents aged over 18 from four London boroughs to join our team of peer researchers.**

- Do you live in Haringey, Barking and Dagenham, Croydon or Brent? We'd love to hear your thoughts and ideas on 'green' home adaptations.
- Receive training from The Young Foundation to work as a peer researcher in your community. No prior experience is required.
- Earn the **London Living Wage** speaking to your peers.
- Work flexibly over 20 days between June 2024 and February 2025.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 12 July 2024**. Find out more at [bit.ly/45hTBGR](https://bit.ly/45hTBGR)

## Engagement with retrofit stakeholders

The aim of this research is to ensure that retrofit can work for individuals with protected characteristics and understanding how retrofit stakeholders in the four boroughs are currently thinking about supporting these individuals is crucial to a just transition to retrofit.

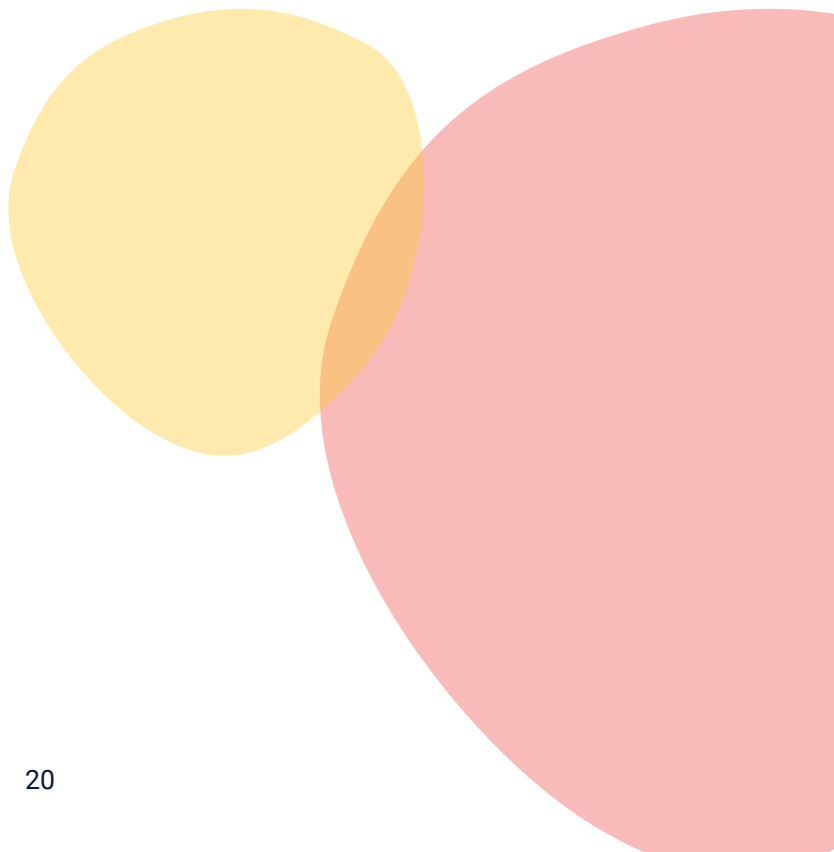
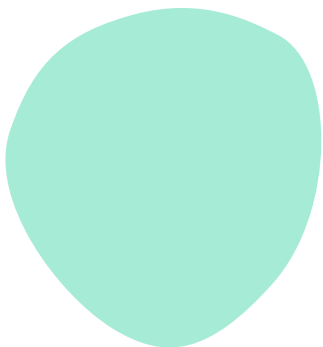
Alongside the engagement of individuals with lived experience of the protected characteristics this research seeks to explore, interviews were conducted with retrofit stakeholders. The interviews aimed to gain insights into existing approaches to inclusion for people with protected characteristics in retrofit, in order to assess gaps in provision and identify unanswered questions about how to offer and conduct retrofit inclusively.

To date, the project has conducted 15 interviews with stakeholders of domestic retrofit programmes and policies, building an evidence base and understanding of how these stakeholders think

about the retrofit challenge, and what change might meaningfully engage Londoners in a just transition.

Interview participants included:

- national stakeholders (policymakers, CEO/ Directors of national organisations).
- regional stakeholders (Borough retrofit leads, London focused policy makers, key London focused organisations).
- practitioners (retrofit providers, community energy organisations and those working with London communities).



# Emerging insights

The Just Transition in Retrofits programme is running until March 2025, and we are at the mid-way point where currently, a substantial amount of community voice data is being collected through the peer research and participatory workshop methodologies. Although the findings from the programme are still in an early stage insights have emerged, and these will inform the rest of the research.

The emerging insights from interviews conducted with retrofit stakeholders are below. These are not conclusive, but give a snapshot of the findings that have emerged so far.

## Factors that impact individuals with protected characteristics

Retrofit providers were not broadly aware of the barriers preventing individuals with protected characteristics or those belonging to minoritised groups from taking up retrofit measures. These are based on their experience of retrofit delivery and need to be corroborated through other research methods in the second part of this study.

### Practical barriers:

- **Disruption:** Deep retrofit is extremely intrusive, requiring tenants and owners to do detailed planning to ensure they are ready. This may not be attractive or achievable for everyone, especially for those with mobility or health issues, or dependents such as children, or elderly relatives or co-inhabitants.
- **Inflexible support schemes:** Interviewees perceived current funding and support available through government to be inflexible, commenting that the offer does not always meet the buildings requirements, or the needs of the tenant or owner; people often felt 'missed' by criteria, or excluded on the basis of whole household income when they did not necessarily have 'disposable' income; savings; credit; or budget flexibility to adopt retrofit schemes and share costs.

- **Long wait times:** Interviewees complained of a lack of qualified staff with the practical skills to deliver retrofit projects, creating long lead times to work being delivered and (in some cases) work not being possible. Staff are not trained to recognise the needs of residents with protected characteristics; and timeframes are often 'stop/start' making a linear programme of support for residents with complex needs difficult and unpredictable to deliver.

### Overlapping vulnerabilities

The core barrier referenced by interviewees was that people with protected characteristics, or from a minoritised group, tend to face a combination of barriers that must be overcome if they are to have their home retrofitted. These barriers can also feed into each other, meaning all barriers must be overcome for engagement to be possible. An example is that a large family will struggle to be rehoused during a retrofit programme, or to find a local connection who they can stay with during a deep retrofit. Time would compound this barrier, in having to drop multiple children off at different schools, which may be further from the temporary accommodation, or travel to work becoming impractical due to increased journey time. If the family is also living with disabilities they may be unable to move due to accessibility issues (or the temporary accommodation is not being adapted to them), or travel issues (such as not owning a car).

### Changing the narrative

Interviewees said retrofit providers may regard those with multiple barriers to retrofit as being *bad value for money*, due to the added cost of adapting processes and providing more support. This viewpoint does not consider that targeting those with multiple barriers could represent better value for money and indeed create strong *social value*, because retrofit may address multiple issues at once (improved physical and mental health, reduced energy poverty, etc).

### Social infrastructure

Not all communities have community organisations that can support people to make retrofit decisions, or with home disruption and citizen advice more broadly, meaning residents in boroughs that do have access to these organisations may be at a disadvantage. This is not easy to fix, as it takes time to get a new community base or organisation up and running and trusted by the community, not to mention the learning curve of on-boarding community organisations to retrofit concepts. Working through organisations who are longstanding but may have a different purpose (such as faith organisations, health or social support organisations, or schools) could be one solution, where there is patchy social infrastructure.

### Non-representative staff

Staff on retrofit projects do not tend to reflect the communities with which they are engaging. This challenge is reflected in the community energy sector, where one interviewee anonymously shared that “it is challenging to develop a diverse workforce in the voluntary sector, as 80% of staff tend to be volunteers. Due in part to the lack of time and funding to plan and do detailed outreach, which results in better-off people making up the majority of the volunteering team.”

### Negative experiences

Retrofit providers observed that if someone has a negative experience with other services, such as fuel poverty support, or water discounts, this can quickly filter through the community and make it harder to win hearts and minds. The same has been experienced on council- and local authority-led projects, where peoples’ experience of poor-quality service, unfinished works, or even risks or

harms resulting from home improvements or local area improvements, affects their trust in any new retrofit scheme.

### Social isolation

Greater support is required for people with certain disabilities, as some groups are socially isolated and may have had little positive interaction with those outside their community. Long-term engagement, focused on building trust, is vital. This isn’t currently accounted for when providers are applying for funding. An interviewee anonymously shared that research has been done on how to effectively engage with deaf communities in Leicester, due to the isolation often associated with deafness. This highlights the importance of developing policies that actively seek out vulnerable communities, and designing ways of collaborating with them that suit their needs.

### Difficulty making decisions

Current retrofit programmes are perceived to put all the onus of decision-making on the person, giving them all the information and then expecting them to decide what is right. This may be difficult for people who already speak English as a first language and have a base understanding of heating systems and insulation, let alone those for whom English is a second language, and who may not have technical knowledge and experience. Interviewees shared that it might be more suitable to take an approach that “hides the wiring,” providing simplified explanations of preferred options to facilitate decision-making. Decision-making may also be affected by health constraints; time constraints; or by the emotional labour of living with certain protected characteristics.

### Procurement

Procurement processes undertaken by local government do not always consider what has worked for communities before. This includes recognising the value in organisations that may have spent decades building trust. Without this reflected in the tendering process, outside organisations with little or no base of trust, knowledge, and support in the community, can win tenders, which sees them delivering work with no history in the community, making delivery much more challenging.

## The Opportunity: making retrofit 'just'

The following suggestions were made for how to make retrofit provision more inclusive, based on the experience of interviewees and retrofits providers, and on wider evidence of introducing schemes in the home for people with protected characteristics.

### Improving accessibility for people with protected characteristics or minoritised groups

- **Developing accessible language** - It is crucial to develop the correct language for each community. Although this requires a place-sensitive approach, there is usually a base language that can be used. This should be adjusted in every place, in line with communities needs and experiences.
- **Trusted sources of information** - Interviewees said messages around retrofit are not reaching people. They acknowledged that retrofit is complicated and will probably only be undertaken once in a person's lifetime, limiting the incentives to get informed. Interviewees shared that trusted sources of information are important, particularly guidance around decision-making and trusted providers.
- **Council retrofit officers** - Interviewees identified the opportunity for boroughs to have dedicated retrofit officers to ensure there is a direct point of contact to provide trusted information.
- **Increasing certainty** - Interviewees shared that retrofit schemes should have certainty and security 'built in', so snags or complications are dealt with quickly. Without these assurances, their experience was recurrently that people and communities have lost trust in previous programmes.

### Community retrofit champions

Community champions were identified as a potential route to increasing uptake. They should reflect the communities they are serving and be included as part of funding proposals. Interviewees identified community leaders as potential retrofit champions, including staff at community centres and foodbanks, and faith leaders. They identified the following potential roles for community champions:

- **Support** - an individual that communities can talk to before, during and after retrofit, so people feel they have someone supporting them.
- **Technology training** – delivered by trusted people, training individuals to use recent technology, such as heat pumps or smart tariffs, to ensure they benefit from them. Interviewees caveated the importance of reviewing the effectiveness of technology regularly to ensure people can derive benefits from upskilling and taking up recent technology.

### Co-designing with communities

Interviewees pointed to the importance of co-design processes with residents to ensure that retrofit initiatives reflect the community's needs. They said there is an opportunity to listen to communities' opinions, which in their experience as providers is currently not valued enough or simply not happening. Many questioned whether they would have the expertise in-house to support or run co-design processes themselves and many had found councils or commissioning authorities also lacked capacity to run these processes, even if they often had greater experience or understanding of them.

In co-design and for wrap-around awareness raising, trusted information and support during the retrofit journey, **Community hubs** were identified as valuable. Interviewees said to be effective, these need a physical presence in locations, where all members of the community feel safe and comfortable. They should be open for people to drop in for advice and guidance as needed, while not feeling the pressure to commit to retrofit measures the first time they seek support.

**Community energy groups** were identified as a potential starting point for community hubs, as they have grown significantly in membership. There is an opportunity to use these groups to develop awareness and support for retrofit.

Finally, **training local people to deliver retrofit** – rolling out training courses that reflect the retrofit jobs that will be available, in line with local plans and provision, was seen as an opportunity by providers who were also experiencing shortages of skilled workers and training gaps. This should help to educate and make communities aware of the opportunities retrofitting offers, and must include provision being delivered in each community in ways that meets their needs - for example, the use of local languages. Additionally, this approach should create economic benefits for communities.

### Changing indicators

It was discussed by interviewees that current policy and funding for retrofit, values the carbon emissions saved from retrofit, over the social benefits of people living in more energy-efficient houses. Interviewees said if policy took greater account of social benefits, it would be easier for project leads to deliver for communities.

- **Retrofit as a journey:** Additionally, they identified that outlining retrofit as a journey, not as something that must be completed now or in the short-term, would be beneficial. This would allow people to be active and engaged, without worrying about funding expensive components of retrofit.
- **Outreach indicators** - Interviewees shared that indicators of outreach should focus on meaningful levels of engagement, rather than number of people reached. They viewed conversion through deeper engagement as more important than reaching large numbers of people with superficial outreach.

### Financial wraparound support

Interviewees identified the opportunity to build in financial support for the other work that households will need to undertake after a retrofit, such as painting and decorating costs. They said this could go even further, building in wider works, such as rewiring a property and carrying out safety checks. This points to the opportunity to think more expansively about the financial implications and

incentives of retrofit. Flexible funding was also seen as incredibly important; interviewees, particularly retrofit providers, called for greater flexibility in funding to enable them to develop engagement packages tailored to community need.

### Exemplars

The interviews highlighted examples of initiatives aimed at individuals with protected characteristics and/or minoritised groups:

- **en10ergy** recruited a person of Colombian heritage to collaborate with Colombian women on energy advice and increase uptake in retrofit in the community.
- **London South Bank University's** work in Lambeth highlighted the need for communities to be 'retrofit ready'. Their approach was to develop workshops with residents, ahead of the programme, so people know what is coming down the line.
- The **Holbeck** scheme in Leeds is a community hub that is staffed by people from the community, offering not just retrofit support, but also renovation.
- **Energy Advice - SELCE** offer energy advice through translated materials and with advisers who speak a variety of languages.
- The **Irish one stop shop model** offers comprehensive retrofit support in a single space on town high streets.
- **National Energy Action** is piloting a retrofit logbook/building passport that helps the industry decide what works are needed on each home, while giving the tenant or homeowner information and a starting point.
- **Demonstrator homes** of which there are many models. Interviewees felt green 'open homes' events positively influence people's decisions. Specific demonstrator homes that show how retrofit is compatible with living with home adjustments for certain disabilities, care needs and age-related needs were discussed as important, as 'universal' demonstrator home designs or those designed for the 'majority' market were not going to convince those with protected characteristics to see retrofit as accessible for them.



## Factors that impact making the retrofit offer more inclusive

Retrofit providers who were interviewed identified key factors impacting the offer they are able to make to potential retrofit clients and households. These include practical barriers to funding retrofit initiatives, misaligned incentives, and barriers to delivery.

- Government funding tends to come in annual cycles, which makes it difficult to deliver - especially as the current funding must be tendered for, which means local government and community energy companies are unable to effectively plan and staff their retrofit work, until funding has been confirmed.
- The UK Government has not produced a long-term retrofit plan, with clear actions, outcomes, and goals. This lack of policy and strategy has made it hard for the private sector to invest as, without a clear road map and long-term strategy, the private sector must evaluate the risk of potential policy changes and difficulty in securing investment.
- Most retrofit funding focuses on substantial changes (heat pumps, internal wall insulation, etc), while there is a lack of funding available for low-cost components of retrofit (cracks and gaps). This approach requires people to make big decisions on their home before seeing any value in, for example, reduced energy costs, less mould, and healthier homes.
- The low value of labour costs in government-funded retrofit means tradespeople are less likely to bid for work if there is the chance to bid for private work.
- Datasets on housing types are used for tendering purposes. However, these data sets do not reflect the locations of houses, or the likelihood of people taking up retrofit support, making them tough to implement.



## Peer researchers

As mentioned above, at the time of writing peer interviews are ongoing. However, insights from engagement with the peer researchers and resident peers they interviewed are beginning to emerge:

1. Costs were identified as a major worry, as they limit households' ability to participate. This may be most applicable to households on lower incomes but may also impact those with limited disposable income who might struggle with any upfront costs. The peer researchers identified funding support as a potential lever for overcoming this barrier, including part-funded schemes and interest-free or low-interest loans.
2. Tenure was identified as a significant barrier, with the peer researchers noting people who do not own their home may not be willing or able to participate in retrofit measures, due to disempowerment by landlords; or the disruption/benefit ratio being short-term, too low, or poorly evidenced
3. Access to information was identified as crucial to both entering and progressing through retrofit. Peer researchers shared that information may not always be available through the right channels or reach the right people. Time was also a factor, in there being a limited 'run up' to a retrofit project or an uncertain timeline once residents have been engaged.
4. The complexities of household dynamics were remarked on by the researchers, as a major potential barrier, which interacts with access to information. They said information needs to reach not only decisionmakers, but also those who might be more impacted by disruption within a household, such as older people or individuals with long-term health conditions.
5. Trusted sources can be hard to come by, and researchers explained sometimes it would be most suitable for a trusted individual to speak to the entire household, ideally in person. This is partly due to mistrust in providers, described by an anonymous community researcher as "cowboys," with another sharing "we need reliable people doing the job". The community researchers shared the potential value of guidance and support for those who may struggle to ask for help, particularly older people or individuals who are migrants.
6. People may not understand how the rollout of retrofit might affect them in the present and future, putting them off having their home retrofitted as the way their homes would feel, perform, cost and impact on their health, wellbeing and mobility, appeared greatly variable and poorly evidenced. This was seen as more acute among those who may be more vulnerable.

The community researchers shared "small wins" as a potential lever for overcoming barriers to trust. They said individuals might be more willing to start with small retrofit measures with low cost and/or disruption to the household. They suggested seeing the benefits of these small measures would generate trust and buy-in for bigger measures.

## Next steps

The peer interviews and interviews with retrofit stakeholders has built an initial evidence base, gaining insights into how individuals with protected characteristics and retrofit stakeholders are currently thinking about retrofit, identifying barriers and opportunities for support.

The next step in the project is to bring together these two groups in a series of three collaborative workshops, attended by 35 London residents with lived experience of the protected characteristics and 15 retrofit stakeholders. The aim of these workshops is to hold space for the two groups to work collaboratively to develop inclusive retrofit solutions, exploring how this journey might differ from place to place.

Workshop one	Workshop two	Workshop three
Explore the end-to-end journey of retrofit from the perspective of a panel of residents with different protected characteristics and intersectional identities.	Understand how to adapt existing measures, engagement practices and retrofit solutions for retrofit providers to meet the needs of people with different protected characteristics.	Residents and stakeholders collaboratively develop more inclusive solutions for each stage of the retrofit journey.



# Annex 1: Peer interview question guide

## Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in a short interview about how changes should happen to our homes to reduce energy bills. This interview is part of 'Powering Sustainable London Homes', a project looking to understand how change should happen when it comes to people's homes, and what support might be helpful. In this interview, I'll ask questions about your home, and how you think change should happen.

The project is funded by the London Sustainable Development Commission, which is part of the Greater London Authority. It is being delivered by The Young Foundation, in collaboration with a group of Community Researchers from across London. The interview will be conducted by me, (NAME), a Community Researcher.

We're keen to hear how you think change should happen when it comes to your home.

## Consent process

I'm going to tell you about how this interview will work, and then I'll ask whether you're happy to participate.

I'm going to ask a total of seven questions (with some sub-questions), and you'll be free to skip any that you'd rather not answer. The interview will last no more than 30 minutes. As a thanks for sharing your views, you will be paid £10 through our online payment system Ayda.

I'm going to recording audio from this interview, and we may use direct quotes that you share. However, we will not use your name, and will only refer to you as an anonymous participant.

The recording of this interview will be stored in our secure Microsoft Enterprise SharePoint server and will be deleted 6 months after the project closes.

The recording and any quotes will only be used for the purpose of this project. You can at any point ask to have one or all of your responses removed from storage. For instance, if you change your mind about anything you've shared, you can ask to have it struck from the record.

## Questions

**Home:** We'll start with some questions about where you live, and what your home is like.

1. Where do you live?
2. How long have you lived there? How long do you intend to stay in the area?
3. Can you tell me a bit about your home?
  - a. What is the building like?
  - b. Do you own your home or rent? From whom?
  - c. How many people live in your home and what is their relation to you?
  - d. How long do you intend to stay in your home?
  - e. What are your energy bills like?
  - f. What kind of energy do you use?
  - g. Is your home generally warm or cold?

### Home improvement

Now I'm going to ask you about how you think change should happen when it comes to your home. I'll ask you to imagine what it might be like to make changes to your home, and what support might be helpful.

Some people may find it difficult to imagine changes to their home. Feel free to skip any questions you'd rather not answer, and if you feel distressed, we can stop the interview at any time.

4. What, if anything, have you heard about changes you can make to your home to reduce energy bills?
  - a. *If the person has heard about potential changes, ask questions below:*
    - i. Where did you learn about this?
    - ii. Are there any changes you've already made to your home?
    - iii. Are there any changes you've considered or are considering making?
  - b. *If the person has not heard anything about potential changes, go to explanation below, followed by question ii below.*
    - i. There's a range of changes that can be made to homes to reduce energy bills. Changes can be small, like adding draft excluders to doors and windows, or bigger, like adding insulation to walls to help regulate temperature. Some changes can happen right away and don't cost a lot, while other changes may require some construction works and may be more expensive. Each home is unique and will likely need a combination of changes.
    - ii. Thinking of everything from smaller to bigger changes: are there any changes you would consider making to your home?
      1. *If the person answers "No", ask: Why not? Then go to question 6.*
      2. *If the person answers "Yes" or describes potential changes, continue to question 5.*
5. What challenges, if any, might come in the way of making these changes to your home?
6. What, if any, support might help you to make those changes?

## Annex 2: Methodology

Our exploration of how retrofit can support a just transition is grounded in Participatory Action Research, collaborative research, education, and action oriented towards social change (Kindon et al, 2007).

**Peer research** sometimes known as ‘community research’ is a participatory research method in which people with lived experience of the issues being studied play an active role in directing and conducting the research. It involves professional researchers and people with lived experience (peer researchers) working as equal partners (Toynbee Hall, 2023). Like other participatory methods, peer research recognises that individuals within any community being researched are themselves competent agents, capable of participating, including as researchers. This methodology moves away from the ‘extractive’ model of social research, and empowers those affected by change to play an active role, developing solutions *with* people, as opposed to *for* people.

Embracing peer research alongside a programme of engagement of retrofit experts and providers, the voices of London residents with protected characteristics are brought to the fore, while actively engaging stakeholders at the other end of the spectrum (delivery providers). Following peer research, we will convene a cross-borough participatory panel of residents with different protected characteristics, who will assess how solutions could be made more inclusive at all stages of the retrofit journey. They will work through participatory workshops with retrofit experts and providers, to compare, contrast views and to identify and find solutions for gaps. This ensures that findings are meaningful and actionable, enabling retrofit experts and providers to hear directly from local residents with protected characteristics.

The methodology of this programme

Stage	Actions/outputs
1. Set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and training of 10 peer researchers</li> <li>Recruitment of 15 retrofit experts and providers</li> </ul>
2. Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews with 15 retrofit experts and providers</li> <li>Co-design of a peer interview guide with peer researchers, drawing on the findings of the interviews with retrofit experts and providers</li> <li>Delivery of peer interviews by peer researchers (about five per person, for a total of around 50 interviews)</li> </ul>
3. Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of a resident panel of around 45 participants from across London</li> <li>Delivery of a series of three workshops attended by London residents and retrofit providers and experts, co-facilitated by peer researchers</li> </ul>
4. Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-analysis of workshop results between peer researchers and Young Foundation team</li> <li>Co-production of a final report, toolkit, and accessible outputs by Young Foundation team and peer researchers.</li> </ul>

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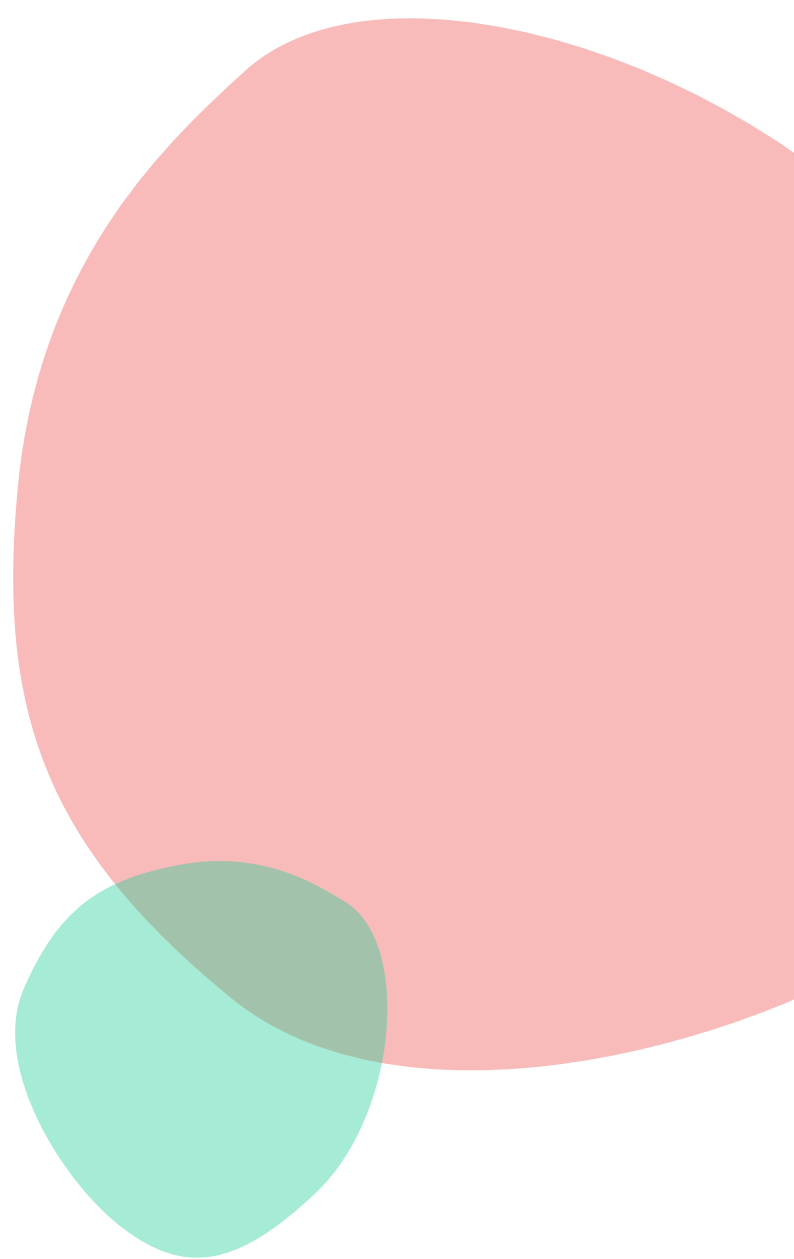
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