



NGN: Supporting Communities to Achieve Affordable Warmth & Safety Scheme



Information for applicants
October 2024





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1 Hello

Hello and thank you for your interest in this funding scheme. We've created this document to try and answer any questions you may have. We don't want to waste your time planning out a project and writing an application which is unlikely to result in you being awarded funding. Please do take the time to read through this guidance, as it will give you the best chance to submit a successful project application. If after that you still have questions about whether to apply, we're a very approachable team. Drop us a line or set up a phone call so we can talk through your idea.

2 Background

NGN is working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) to help create a network of community organisations who can provide much needed support for customers in energy crisis.

In response to the current cost of living crisis and energy price cap increases, this scheme is being piloted to support people in NGN's network area. It's particularly focussed on helping people who will struggle to stay safe and warm over the cold winter period, but we know that it's not just the winter months that are tough, and advice and support are needed through the year.

The scheme provides funding and support for very local initiatives who can help customers with carbon monoxide safety and alleviating fuel poverty. Don't worry if this is not your main area of work, we really want to help you to add this sort of support to the services you are providing already.

Grants will be made available to small organisations who are able to meet the eligibility criteria and are successful in their applications to the scheme. The online page could be handy if you want to share a summary of this scheme with your colleagues or contacts: https://www.cse.org.uk/my-community/community-projects/ngn-affordable-warmth





3 Aims

The NGN Supporting Communities to Achieve Affordable Warmth & Safety (SCAAWS) scheme has been set up to establish and support a network of small community organisations, through which vulnerable customers will:

- Be provided with current information on the help available to them, and be offered access to support if they need help to maintain a safe and warm home.
- Be supported with critical primary needs, energy and food poverty and debt support where needed.
- Be supported to join the Priority Services Register where eligible (this is a simple sign
 up which offers extra security and support in the event of an unplanned outage from
 all of the regional utility companies).
- Be more aware of the risks of Carbon Monoxide and how to mitigate these
- Have reduced stress, and improved health and wellbeing as a direct result of being helped at a time of unprecedented need.
- Be supported to access emergency funding and crisis support (e.g. fuel vouchers, clothes banks etc) and access to energy funding schemes (such as Warm Homes Discount, or Energy Company Obligation funding for measures).

4 What are we looking for?

The fund is intended primarily for providing gas safety, basic energy advice, and fuel poverty support to customers.

You might engage with people mainly from a different angle (e.g. not initially about energy), and that's great, because we really want to expand the network and reach more people. For example you could be a community centre, family centre, faith group, food bank, warm hub, disability support provider, refugee advice service or another locally based organisation or group providing support to vulnerable people. Or you might already be geared up to offer exactly this sort of help around energy and fuel poverty and you need funding to carry on doing what you do, or to expand your offer. That's great too.

The fund provides an opportunity for you to give more help to your customers in crisis. A lot of people are missing out on provision and information about energy and about gas safety which could help them to stay safe and warm. For example:

- Do your customers have a carbon monoxide alarm at home?
- Do they know why it's worth signing up to the Priority Services Register?
- Are they getting all the benefits they are entitled to?
- Do they know what to do if they can't pay their energy bills?
- Are there simple changes they can make at home to keep energy costs down?





We anticipate that in many cases the funding will mean you can provide this sort of support as an add-on to your existing funded provision, and will be a way in which crucial information and advice about gas safety and tips about home energy use can be shared with those who will most benefit from it. We want to know that you are also able to provide and/or tap into to other crisis support services (e.g. food banks), and that you're embedded in the community you support.

We can help you with tools, resources and training (e.g. energy saving tips, benefits of signing up to the Priority Services Register, free e-learning on carbon monoxide awareness, webinars on basic energy advice) which will mean you can have these conversations with your customers and beneficiaries. You can use the fund for a wide range of energy and gas safety related support, we'd love to hear about unusual ideas for supporting customers. We're keen to see new staff and volunteers involved in giving support, and we're also happy to fund tried and tested approaches which you have already set up.

What we're **not** looking for:

This scheme is unable to fund:

- Larger, more experienced organisations (for example an established and long-running Citizens Advice Bureau). If you are this type of organisation, but would like to seek funding from NGN, the Centre for Sustainable Energy can put you in contact with NGN to explore a direct contract with them. Please email ngncommunity@cse.org.uk if you are interested in this.
- Work that only involves handing out leaflets. While your work may include giving people information leaflets, this needs to go with talking them through the information and providing advice based on their experience and needs through at least a five-minute conversation.
- Unrelated provision as a standalone service, completely separate from energy advice (e.g. counselling, drug and alcohol support, advocacy, family support, wellbeing courses). But you could use this funding to provide additional support to those customers you're engaging with already through other funding streams. And if you're providing crisis support it means you can get more help to those who most need it.





5 Geographical location

Applications are welcome for groups and organisations operating within the NGN area (<u>use</u> <u>the postcode checker here</u>).

We are currently looking for applications from the North of Tyne and Northumberland area so please only apply if you are based and operate in this area. We will be accepting and reviewing applications on a rolling basis and closing the fund as soon as we have successfully allocated the funding.

You might provide support over quite a wide area, or be focussed on a very local patch, that's ok. But to be eligible you must be supporting customers who live within the NGN operational area.

6 Funding available

We are looking to provide grants of up to £8,000 for project delivery between 1^{st} December 2024 and 30^{th} April 2025.

7 Costing out your support

In the application form you'll be asked how much funding you're applying for, and how many people you intend to support. We know it can be difficult to gauge this when you're still in the planning stage. As a guide, we expect projects to provide support which costs around £85 per client on average, with all customers receiving some form of energy advice. However, some organisations may be able to reach a much larger audience for a lower cost per household. There is a balance to be struck between meeting a larger number of customers at a lower cost per customer and meeting the needs of those with greater needs at a higher cost per intervention. Across the whole grant scheme, and within each funded organisation, the average costs will reflect this.

Please note what eligible costs this funding covers (and does not cover) in the tables below:

✓ - we can fund (this is an eligible cost):

✓	Staffing costs for delivery, project management and reporting and staff/volunteer expenses.
√	Training course fees to upskill staff and volunteers (although please note that CSE will be providing basic energy advice training as part of the scheme).
√	Publicity, venue hire and any other direct costs (for outreach and events).
√	Reasonable operational overheads.





	The cost of fuel vouchers. Variable amounts per multiple occupancy household.
✓	Please refer to the Charis Shop for more information on this:
	https://charisgrants.com/shop/

* - we can't fund (this isn't an eligible cost):

×	Energy efficiency measures/items for householders. The funding can't be used
	directly for buying winter warmth provisions such as blankets or hot water
	battles, or for household energy efficiency measures e.g. radiator reflector
	panels or draughtproofing.

8 Eligibility Criteria

We're looking for small grassroots organisations who:

- ✓ Have experience working with underserved and seldom heard groups.
- ✓ Are embedded in their local area and able to engage and connect with individuals who may not otherwise access support.
- ✓ Have capacity to provide support and can complete by 30th April 2025.
- ✓ Are either legally incorporated (Registered Society / Charitable Incorporated Organisation / Registered company) and have a bank account with at least two signatories; or are able to partner with an organisation who meets these criteria.
- ✓ Have a clear plan for this project.
- ✓ Have robust administrative and management systems, including the ability to record customer interactions, provide summary data for reporting, and willing to share detailed records for audit mid-way through the funding period.
- ✓ Are keen to join a network of similar organisations to share learning and best practice.
- ✓ Will use the funding to provide support with carbon monoxide safety and energy advice.

We expect that most of the households you support through this scheme will receive direct advice or a referral for outcomes with an asterisk (*) in the table below. You may also support households with the other outcomes listed in the table.

Outcome	Activities
Personalised energy advice (e.g. energy efficiency behaviour change)*	 Information and advice for behaviour change at home to save energy and money, tailored to the individual. Information on measures householders can take to improve comfort and warmth e.g. draughtproofing, closing thick curtains when it's dark. We expect most or all the people you support through this project to receive some form of basic personalised energy advice and support for winter resilience. This do NOT include just giving out leaflets or sharing something on social media – you need to have at least a





Outcome	Activities
	five-minute conversation with someone to accompany leaflets to count this under personalised energy advice.
Support to access benefits eligibility checks*	 Providing information about how clients can check their benefits eligibility and how they can apply for what they are eligible for. This may be a conversation, rather than directly checking/applying there and then. However, you might also be supporting clients directly to apply for benefits e.g. sitting with them and going through the process together. Alternatively, you may be making referrals to another organisation for clients to access benefits eligibility checks.
Support to access debt advice*	Advice on managing debt and liaising with energy companies to avoid debt enforcement or debt recovery procedures, or making a referral to an agency that is Financial Conduct Authority registered and can give financial advice (note, you should not give financial advice if you are not FCA registered).
Carbon Monoxide safety awareness advice* Note that free training and resources (CO alarms and information leaflets) on this will be available to order for all successful applicants.	Providing advice about carbon monoxide safety is a key outcome for this scheme, and really important for vulnerable customers who tend to be more at risk. This advice also includes doing carbon monoxide awareness surveys with households you are supporting.
Support to sign up to the Priority Services Register (PSR)*	 Directly signing up clients to the Priority Services Register. Where you're not able to directly sign up clients, you can share information about PSR with them so they can sign up themselves if they wish. Sharing information and spreading awareness about PSR (where directly signing someone up isn't appropriate) can be counted towards this outcome. For information about the PSR: https://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/priority-customers/
Support to access fuel vouchers	 Providing or enabling (through referral/signposting) someone to access a fuel voucher. If you plan to use this funding to purchase vouchers, you need to include this in your project budget and the grant amount you are applying for.
Support to access energy schemes and/or energy efficiency improvements	Supporting clients to access financial support to cover cost of energy (e.g. Warm Homes Discount) and/or accessing energy advice schemes (locally and nationally)





Outcome	Activities
e.g. Warm Home Discount, ECO funding	 and funding for small and large energy efficiency measures (e.g. Energy Company Obligation funding). This could include directly working with clients to apply for energy schemes or where you're not able to directly apply with clients, you can share information about energy schemes with them so they can sign up themselves if they wish. Sharing information and spreading awareness about energy schemes (where directly signing someone up isn't appropriate) can be counted towards this outcome.
Support to access other crisis support – food, clothing or housing.	 Providing or enabling (through referral/signposting) someone to access other crisis support such as for food, clothing, housing, or white goods.

We know this list might seem quite daunting if this is an area of work you are expanding into. However, one of the aims of the fund is to help upskill staff and volunteers in organisations that do not offer this sort of support as their core activity. To help you help your clients, online training will be available on Energy Essentials, Carbon Monoxide Awareness and signing customers up to the Priority Services Register. In addition, there will also be quarterly training and networking events to support your organisation throughout the year. We also can provide checklists and video guides, and signpost you to other tools and resources (such as information sheets on all aspects of home energy, benefits check screening tools, and information about national funding schemes).

If you are applying for this funding to provide a different service and you're not focussed primarily on the support areas above, you're unlikely to be successful.

If there are other areas where you feel you would benefit from further information or training, please let us know in the application form so that we can talk about how best to support you.

9 Completing the application form

Please read through this guidance before completing the application form.

Application	Details and what we're looking for
form section	
Basic Eligibility	We ask you to provide details of your organisation including your legal form (e.g. community group / charity / CIC) and – where appropriate – your registration number.
	If you are a very small or grassroots group you may not yet have gone through the process of becoming legally incorporated. This doesn't exclude you from applying if you are able to work with a partner organisation who is incorporated and has agreed to hold funds for you. In this instance,





please ensure you have discussed this with the partner before applying. We ask you to provide their details and a named contact we can confirm the application with.

If successful, we'll need you to submit your bank account details and evidence to show it is your bank account (e.g. a paying-in slip). You must have an account in the organisations name which requires the signatures of two unrelated people to make a withdrawal. You don't have to provide all these details at this stage, just to confirm this on your application.

Geographic eligibility

We want to know that the project being delivered is within NGN's operational area, which covers northern Cumbria to the North East and much of Yorkshire. If you're not sure, there is a postcode checker here: https://findmygdn.co.uk/

About your project

This is the part where you can tell us what you plan to do.

Project purpose and activities

Please briefly summarise the purpose of your project in a maximum of 250 words. You should tell us what you plan to do and why e.g. deliver energy advice through a drop in session at the local foodbank in order to reach families in the area who are at risk of, or are experiencing, fuel poverty.

We ask you to tell us the activities you will deliver to meet your aims through a checklist question. If you will do any activities that aren't covered in the list provided, please add them in the 'other' box. We'll ask more about the outcomes (e.g. energy advice delivered, Priority Services Register sign ups) in another section of the application form.

Audience

Take some time to tell us **who** (your audience) you would support with the project and how you would reach them (e.g. through advice in your offices or through attendance at a foodbank) and why you are well placed to reach them. This could include reasons why your organisation is uniquely placed/skilled to connect with your audience. NGN would like to see provision directed at those and who may not have previously accessed energy advice support. So please tell us if you are meeting a particular need for energy advice in a community which may have traditionally been excluded, or which faces specific barriers to access this support.

NOTE: we can fund the provision of energy and gas safe advice on its own, and/or as an add-on to your core service provision. But this funding must be primarily for the provision set out in the eligibility criteria above – and not as the main funding for other (non-energy based) activities.





Project Timeline

You'll be asked to provide an overview of when you will deliver the main activities of the project. Your project should run from 1st December 2024 – 30th April 2025.

We understand you may need to build in a little time to set up the project and train any staff or volunteers.

Project outcomes

Total households supported

Tell us how many households you intend to work with in total as part of this funding.

Households supported for each outcome

Then, under each outcome listed in the table, please tell us how many households you will support for each outcome. We expect that most of the households you support through this scheme will receive direct advice or a referral for outcomes with an asterisk*. Please refer to the Eligibility Criteria on page 7 in this guidance document for more information on what activities can be counted towards each outcome. If you are providing households with any other support not listed in the table, please include delivery numbers and details for this.

The number of households you put for each outcome includes those you will support directly *and* those you will make referrals for. For example, if you plan to support 100 households directly with support to access benefits checks, and then plan to refer 50 households to another organisations for support to access benefits checks, the total you would put under that outcome is 150.

Fuel vouchers

Please tell us if you're planning to support households to access fuel vouchers and how to plan to do this by selecting the option that applies to you. If you are *not* distributing fuel vouchers, you can ignore this question.

Referrals

If you plan to support people by referring them to other organisations (e.g. AgeUK or debt advice services) please let us know how many referrals you expect – this could be a number *or* a percentage of the total households you will support through the funding. For example, if you are delivering this project to support 150 households, and you plan to refer 50 households, you will refer approximately 33% of clients. Please tell us which organisations you plan to refer people to.

Grant agreement

The number of households you put for each outcome will form part of your grant agreement and will contribute to the success of the scheme. We can help you with providing this sort of advice if it's outside your main area of work. However, if you do not intend to spend the majority of the funding on delivering the core energy related criteria (page 7), your application is unlikely to be successful.





Organisation capacity

Capacity

We want to know that you have capacity to deliver the project and that you have the right people in the right roles to run it well.

For example:

- Who will manage the project? What experience do they have of project management? How much time per month will this take?
- Who will deliver the project activities (this may overlap with the project manager)? What relevant experience do they have and how much time per month will this take?
- Will any of your staff or volunteers undertake training to ensure they have the necessary skills to deliver this project? Will you be recruiting any new staff or volunteers?

Additional value

We'd like to know what difference receiving funding via this scheme would make to your organisation. This could include giving you the ability to add energy advice in your existing offer or support, or that it would enable you to continue/expand your energy advice provision.

Recruiting staff/working with other organisations

Please tell us if you'll be recruiting new staff for the project and what your timeframe is for this. If you are delivering the project with a partner organisation, please tell us about your relationship, and how you will record customer interactions and outcomes. Please tell us why you have chosen to partner with them and what additional value this will bring.

These questions are optional, so you only need to answer them if they're applicable to you.

Previous experience

We would especially like to work with smaller organisations on this scheme who may not currently have a long history of offering extensive fuel poverty support, but are interested in expanding into this area. This is why we ask whether you have previous experience delivering energy advice. It's not a problem if you don't because we will provide free energy training to all successful applicants, including on carbon monoxide awareness. We are also happy to signpost you to other training available. You can include training time / fees in your project costs.

Project budget

Budget

Please tell us the total amount you are applying for and provide a clear and realistic budget. For example, this may include:

- Staffing costs for delivery, project management and reporting
- Staff and volunteer expenses;
- Reasonable operational overheads;
- Training fees;





- Publicity, venue hire and any other direct costs;
- The cost of any fuel vouchers, the funding *can* be used to cover the cost of these.

Please note you cannot use this funding to cover the costs of energy efficiency measures or warmth items for householders.

If you will be using match funding, please let us know how much and whether it is secured yet. Clarify how NGN funds would complement existing (funded) activity and allow you to deliver more.

Cost to deliver

We expect the average cost per interaction to be around £85/household, with all households receiving at least a basic level of energy advice (e.g. if a project is awarded £10,000, it should support at least 115 people). We want this funding to provide personalised energy advice to as many people as possible, but also recognise that some types of interaction and client groups may cost more or less than this. If this is the case, please provide a brief explanation.

Reporting

We will ask you to give a general written update on your project progress and to share high-level data (aggregated data) at the end of each month by giving the total number of new households you have helped (e.g. who have not previously been supported through this funding), and the number of households who have received specific types of support. We will not ask you to provide individual customer data although you may be required to provide anonymous detailed customer records so CSE can audit your internal record keeping as part of due diligence checks for project reporting. We know reporting can be time-consuming, so we are just asking for totals each month (e.g. not individual customer records), but we will carry out more detailed sample audits during the project.

In the application form we want to know about the systems you have in place for recording and tracking customers – for example:

- What customer details do you currently record? Who inputs information?
- Do you already have a CRM system in place? Do you use spreadsheets / database / manual records? Will you be setting up a new system for this project?
- How do you track customers if multiple members of staff are working with them?
- How do you count referrals (e.g. to other organisations)?
- Are you able to pull out data as needed for monthly reporting?
- Do you have any experience in estimating the financial impact of your support for individual customers? (this is optional for this scheme, however if you do capture this information, we'd like to know about it).





	We have tried to set up a reporting system which will be as easy as possible for you to use, while providing us with all the information which is needed. If you want to see the template report you will be required to submit each month, before you put in an application, please let us know.
Additional	Learning from the project
information	Please tell us how receiving funding via this scheme will help you in the future. Examples might include, being able to offer energy advice to a new audience or building staff knowledge and capacity to deliver energy advice.
	Training
	The Centre for Sustainable Energy will provide training to all successful applicants to this scheme. Please select anything from the list provided in the application form you would like to receive training on.
Final project	Please take the time to read through the statement by each ticking box on
declaration	this page as you are going through it. It's important you understand what the requirements of this scheme are, and what you will need to do if your application is successful.

10 Support for funded organisations

Successful applicants will join a network of local community organisations working in this space, and will be able to access:

- A resource pack (aimed at supporting project staff and volunteers in their work with vulnerable customers).
- Training on causes and symptoms of carbon monoxide harm.
- Information about the benefits of being on the Priority Services Register and how to help customers sign up.
- Information on accessing fuel vouchers.
- Access to printed materials (advice factsheets, thermometer leaflets, & CO leaflets).
- There will be networking events held online throughout the scheme.
- Opportunities to provide NGN with local insights to help shape future schemes.
- Support with monitoring and reporting.
- Guidance on communication and promotion.
- Named point of contact at CSE for any enquiries throughout the funding period.
- A monthly newsletter with relevant news, support and resources to this scheme.
- Possible future funding opportunities.

Resource pack:

You will be able to access a resource pack we've out together in collaboration with NGN, aimed at supporting your project staff and volunteers, to include:





- Explainers of fuel price cap, energy rebate scheme, etc.
- Benefits checkers (e.g. Marie Curie and Age UK)
- Links to e-learning modules (Carbon Monoxide and Priority Services Register)
- Carbon monoxide resources
- Online CSE resources on home energy advice
- Links to CSE videos and information on fuel poverty, energy advice
- Guidance on communication

11 Reporting and communication

Reporting requirements

You will need to have internal systems for recording customers, including the type of support provided (e.g. carbon monoxide awareness provided, Priority Services Register sign ups). This could be a spreadsheet, database or manual records. We will be auditing a sample of the funded projects, so we would expect you to be able to provide these records on request within a reasonable time frame if you are selected in the sample.

Specifically, each month we will ask you to report on your progress.

Firstly, we ask for a general update on your project using a written online template in Google docs which you will have a link to, using the following questions (where they are relevant). The idea is for this to be as straightforward as possible, so just a sentence will be enough in response to most of these questions, but of course we'd like to hear more if you have updates to share.

- Tell us about what you've been up to in this past month (key achievements and activities)
- Have there been any challenges?
- Submit a good news story about the work you've done in the last month or generally good practice (e.g. anonymised short case study about a client you've helped, or a good event or outreach approach you used).
- How many households have you referred to other organisations this month?
- What training or support have you accessed from CSE and others in this past month?
- Do you have any photos to share?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share or ask?

Secondly, we need some numeric information (using a Google sheets template) about the number of households you have helped in different ways, based on the targets you include in your application form which will be reflected in your grant agreement:

Total number of householders you have supported through the project

And of these, the number who you supported with these specific types of support:

Personalised energy advice (e.g. energy efficiency behaviour change)*





Support to access benefits eligibility checks*

Support to access debt advice*

Carbon Monoxide safety awareness advice*

Number of carbon monoxide alarms given out

Support to sign up to the Priority Services Register

Support to access fuel vouchers

Support to access energy schemes and/or energy efficiency improvements e.g. Warm Home Discount, ECO funding

Support to access other crisis support – food, clothing or housing.

We appreciate this might seem like a long list – we can signpost you to resources to help with all of the above. And you are welcome to email us in advance of making an application to ask for guidance on this.

Communications

We will ask you to provide at least one case study, with an image which can be shared, and to mention the fund in messaging about your funded project. You may be contacted by NGN to build on your case study (or make a video blog) during the course of your project. It would be valuable if you could flag any events or activities which you think would make a good feature or which you would like NGN's help to promote. There may be specific opportunities through the year (e.g. national awareness days) to raise your profile and flag key messages.

12 Other things you need to know

Payment plan

We intend to pay successful applicants 60% on signing of a Grant Agreement, and 40% on successful completion of the project, when final reports are submitted. If you need to make a different arrangement - for example because you plan to complete early and need to ensure there is no cash flow issue - please let us know and we can tailor your payment plan. Receiving your second and final payments will be dependent on you making sufficient progress and successfully reaching the target number of households for each outcome which will be in your grant agreement (based on the numbers you put in the application form and subsequently agree with CSE).

Governance

We will ask you to provide details of a secondary contact who should be a director of trustee, with the authority to sign a grant agreement on behalf of the organisation.

Legacy

We are keen to capture any learning and insights from the groups throughout this project, so will ask you to submit case studies and have regular discussions with CSE and NGN.





Contact with CSE and NGN

Funded projects will have a named contact at CSE who will be your first point of contact for support, reporting and any enquiries.

It may be possible for NGN staff to attend your events, meet with you to talk about news stories and case studies, and hear your feedback in online meetings and face to face networking events. When you report back on your project each month, CSE will share your information back with NGN.

13 Application form

Please access the application form of the NGN Affordable Warmth and Safety scheme here.

There is no formal deadline for applications. We will be accepting applications on a rolling basis, and as soon as we have allocated all the funding we will close the application form. Therefore we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

We will notify applicants of the outcome of the application within 10 working days of the submission date.

If you need a printed copy of the application form, please call or email us using the details below.

Questions

If you have any questions, hesitations or concerns about applying, please email us on ngncommunity@cse.org.uk

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