Energy efficiency for community buildings

Quick wins checklist

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A checklist of quick wins

Use this checklist to identify quick, low-cost actions you can take with your community building that can cut energy bills, reduce carbon emissions, and make buildings more comfortable for staff, volunteers, and visitors.

Low-cost actions

A DIY energy audit - or better still, a professional, independent energy assessment - can help you understand the full range of improvements you could make to your building. While it's important to work with professionals when considering more complex or costly upgrades (like insulation or renewable energy), there are many simple, affordable steps you can take right now.

This checklist focuses on those practical, day-to-day actions: things like managing heating, stopping draughts, switching off unused equipment, and engaging users in energy-saving habits. There's also space to assign responsibility and track progress - so energy efficiency becomes part of your ongoing building management, not an added extra.

Small changes can make a big difference. Every action here applies to most community buildings and is a step toward a more sustainable, affordable and resilient community space.

Build awareness & support behaviour change

Encouraging everyone in your building to use energy wisely can lead to significant savings.

Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken
Display "Switch off" reminders near light switches and equipment		☐
Provide basic energy-saving guidance to staff, volunteers, and regular users		☐
Create a "closing down" checklist for end-of-day routines		☐
Use the building's noticeboards or newsletters to share energy-saving progress		☐
Take and track monthly energy meter readings to monitor impact		☐

Reduce Heat Loss & Improve Comfort

Simple draught-proofing and insulation measures help retain warmth and reduce heating costs.

Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken
Fit draught excluders or seals on external doors and windows		☐
Add curtains over doors or large windows to keep warmth in		☐
Use rugs or carpets to reduce floor-level draughts		☐
Repair any broken windows or frames		☐
Insulate exposed hot water pipes and tanks		☐
Fit reflective radiator panels behind radiators on external walls		☐

Improve Heating Efficiency

Make sure heating systems are used and maintained effectively.

Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken
Lower the thermostat by 1°C where comfortable (1°C can save up to 10% of costs)		☐
Set heating timers to match building use		☐
Lock heating controls to prevent unauthorised adjustments		☐
Avoid using electric heaters where possible		☐
Ensure the boiler is serviced regularly		☐
Bleed radiators and check for cold spots		☐

Save Electricity & Use Efficient Lighting

Reducing electricity use helps save costs and cut emissions.

Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken
Replace all bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs, starting with high-use areas		☐
Switch off lights in unused rooms		☐
Fit timers or motion sensors in low-use areas		☐
Switch off external floodlights after a set time		☐

Manage Appliances & Equipment Smartly

Cut standby power and ensure efficient use of devices.

Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken
Switch off unused appliances (kettles, projectors, printers)		☐
Unplug chargers and electronics at the end of each day		☐
Use plug-in timers where appropiate		☐
Activate power-saving modes on computers and monitors		☐

Plan for Improvements & Long-Term Impact

Lay the groundwork for more significant upgrades by understanding your building and usage patterns.

Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken
Complete a DIY walkaround energy survey		☐
Apply for or commission a professional energy audit		☐
Keep a log of maintenance issues affecting energy use		☐
Identify and plan for long-term improvements		☐
Develop a building maintenance plan to keep the building dry and in good repair		☐

How Locality can help

Locality provides paid specialist advice, support and resources to help organisations take action on climate change. Our team of specialists across the country can help community organisations, charities, social enterprises, local authorities, affordable housing providers, funders, and others.

We've worked with a range of organisations to help them save money and reduce the carbon emissions from their building or service, and to set up new income-generating projects like re-use, food growing or energy production.

We can help you assess your options and decide what actions to take, seek funding and partners, and showcase your project. We've developed research and practical tools to help community organisations decide what project is right and how to measure impact.

We can help with:

- Developing a **strategy and business plan** for your project.

- **Engaging and influencing your community.**

- **Funding**, like grants, loans, community shares, contracts, or trading income.

- **Collaborating** with your local authority and other public and private sector partners.

- **Measuring the impact** of your project or service.

- **Marketing** your project and inspiring others to take action.

To see how we can help you, please contact us to enquire about our consultancy, or visit our website to find out more.

Locality is the national membership network supporting community organisations to be strong and successful.

Unlock the power in your community with us

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