



**CENTRE FOR
SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY**

Shaping a Sustainable Energy Future

Lessons from 25 Years of the
Centre for Sustainable Energy



Centre for Sustainable Energy

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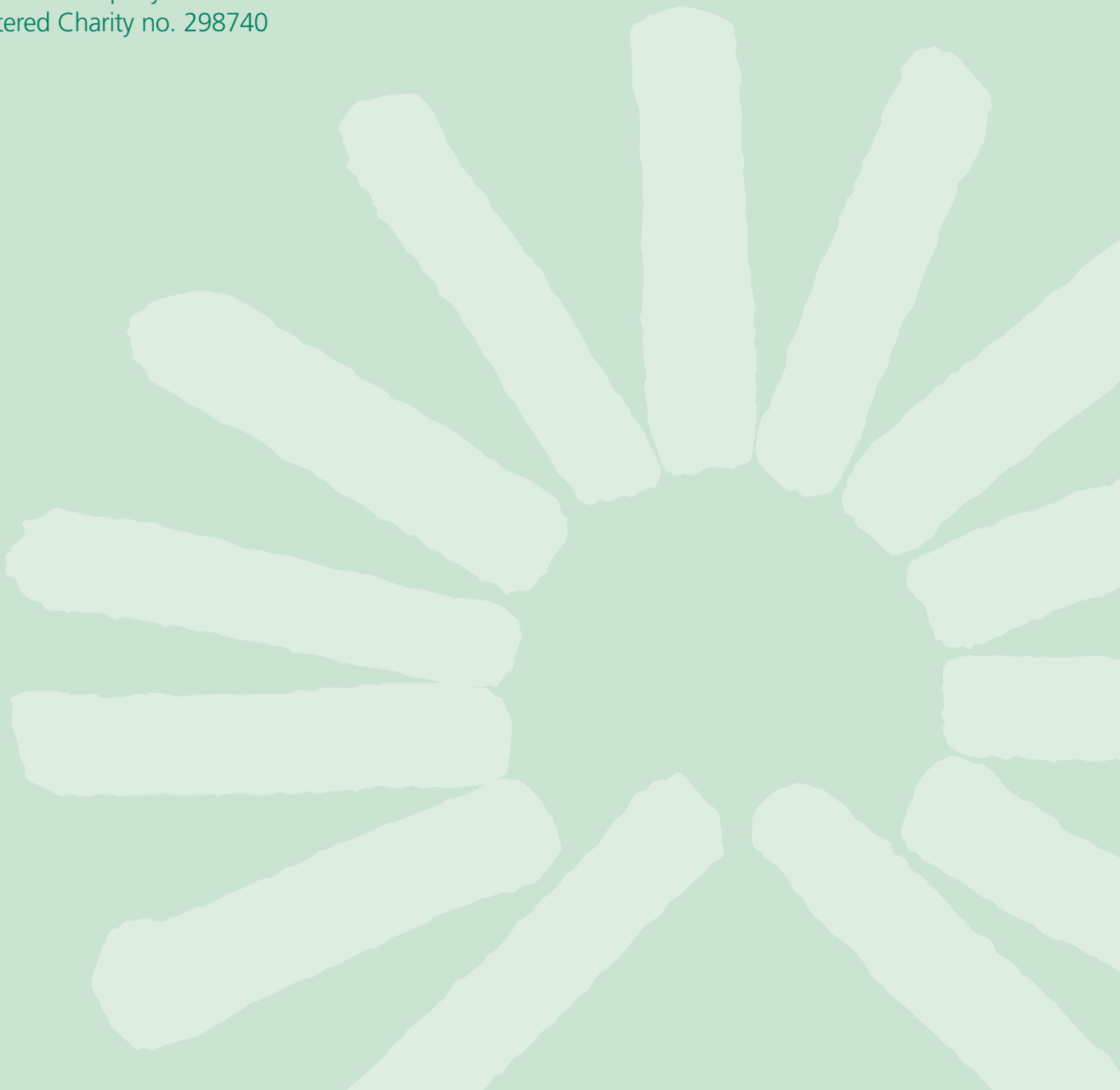
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Registered Company no. 2219673

Registered Charity no. 298740



Introduction

As befits any healthy 25 year old, we've used our 'silver jubilee' as an opportunity for looking forward rather than harking back.

Over the years, we've developed and delivered many hundreds of projects. Yet we've rarely found the opportunity to review what we've learnt about what does and doesn't work. That's why we're marking the occasion by drawing together seven lessons that we hope will help inform not just our own future work, but that will also be useful for anyone working in the sustainable energy sector, from project management and programme design to funding and policy-making.

Not that we've got all the answers – far from it. Several of the lessons detailed here are negative – about what *not* to do – and we're still struggling to find the right formula for success.

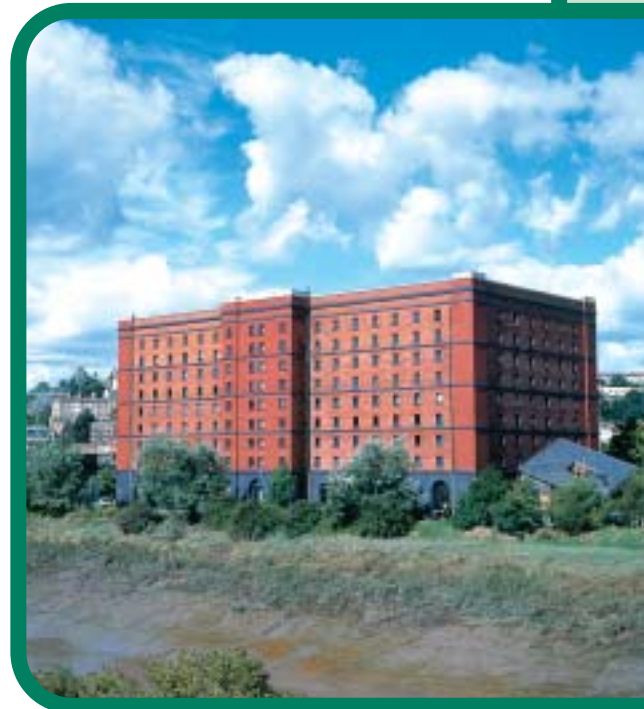
What we do think is clear is that we need to:

- stop designing initiatives as if 'ordinary people' were as informed, interested and similarly motivated about sustainable energy as we are
- rethink the way energy advice is 'done'
- recognise the potential for energy education to influence energy-saving behaviour in the home
- improve significantly the targeting and effectiveness of programmes to alleviate fuel poverty
- do much more to establish effective processes for genuinely engaging people and communities in proposed technical solutions
- regulate the energy markets to meet the full range of sustainable energy objectives, not simply economic goals relating to price and choice.

We hope the lessons from our first 25 years detailed here have direct relevance to the policy and practice that will be shaping a genuinely sustainable energy future.

Simon Roberts

Chief Executive
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**CENTRE FOR
SUSTAINABLE
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The Need to Learn

The need for sustainable energy projects, programmes and policies to work better has never been greater. The Government has thankfully committed to some genuinely ambitious social and environmental objectives for its energy policy: to cut carbon emissions by 60% by 2050, having eradicated the scourge of fuel poverty some 30 years earlier.

These are hugely challenging objectives, particularly when we realise they mean a doubling of the historic rate of improvement in energy efficiency and unparalleled growth in renewable energy installations.

Hitting these targets is fundamental to the achievement of a sustainable energy system, one in which all current generations can afford to meet their basic needs for warmth and light while future generations are protected from the dangers of severe climate change.

- We have to start actually reducing energy demand – not simply containing its growth
- We have to address directly and permanently the millions of cold, damp homes at the root of fuel poverty
- We have to fast-track the deployment of renewable energy.

As we've said before, 'business as usual' is no longer enough – we need instead some 'unusual business'. We need to develop a new wave of innovative thinking and project design that will interest people, both as energy consumers and citizens, in ways which deliver the changes required.

And that needs:

- the right policy framework
- well-informed funding decisions by all the agencies, foundations and trusts involved
- best practice project design and management on the ground.

Seven Lessons to Shape a Sustainable Energy Future

Reviewing our experience, we didn't find lessons in rocket science. Indeed, some of our conclusions felt almost too obvious to spell out. But sometimes the most obvious lessons – particularly the ones about needing to involve people and communities on their terms to deliver sustainable energy – are also the most overlooked.

Nor did we find easy solutions – magic wands to wave to transform failing proposals or mediocre programmes into high achievers.

But we do think we've found some key lessons from our own work. And we believe that if these are applied widely they could help achieve the necessary step change in energy efficiency improvement, break down barriers to renewable energy and secure genuine and lasting reductions in fuel poverty.

The seven lessons:

- 1. The 'software' is as important as the 'hardware'. Engaging people and communities is as fundamental to success as technical rigour.**
- 2. Don't assume people are as interested in and motivated about sustainable energy as we are.**
- 3. Go with the grain of people's lives. Don't expect them to come to you or share your priorities.**
- 4. Energy education can hit home (now!). Children are a proven route to securing immediate and lasting energy-saving behaviour at home.**
- 5. Energy advice needs to get smarter.**
- 6. Existing programmes to alleviate fuel poverty are poorly targeted and are wasting opportunities to make a lasting difference.**
- 7. Sustainable energy markets are about more than just price and choice.**



Visit www.cse.org.uk

This briefing can inevitably only scratch the surface of the work the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) has done in the last 25 years and its current initiatives to advance sustainable energy policy and practice. Our website contains extensive and up-to-date details of the projects mentioned in this briefing and many others which have informed the analysis outlined here.

Lesson 1

The 'software' is as important as the 'hardware'. Engaging people and communities is as fundamental to success as technical rigour.



Meaningful stakeholder engagement paves the way for effective strategies and informed decision-making

PHOTO: PAUL BOX

CSE was founded by people with a shared insight: technical solutions to social and environmental problems require real human engagement to succeed. That understanding remains central to CSE today and pervades all of our work.

One example is the REvision 2010 project in which CSE was a lead partner. This achieved the adoption of county-level targets for renewable electricity generation across the South West region. It mapped available and feasible renewable energy resources to ensure that local targets are challenging but achievable.

But alongside this technical rigour, REvision 2010 engaged key stakeholders – local planners, politicians, economic development officers, environmental and public interest groups – in extensive consultation about the nature and need for local targets. Because of this, the project has achieved a breakthrough in the extent to which renewable energy is seen as a strategically important issue for local politicians and officials.

Ignoring the importance of getting the process right and focusing only on technical and economic factors can lead to suspicion, conflict and rejection. Yet time and again

we see both private companies and public sector agencies missing this point and ending up with:

- technically robust projects which fail to win support and take-up
- strategy development which results in reports for filling shelves, rather than active programmes for delivery.

Engaging householders with the technology being installed in their home is just as important. For example, new heating controls will only be 'efficient' if the household is empowered to use them with appropriate advice and support.

Developing effective processes for engaging people and communities in technical projects right from the start can feel like 'the long and bumpy way round'.

But it's a route which ends up

more likely to reach the destination in one piece while picking up more fellow travellers on the way.

“Developing effective processes for engaging people and communities can feel like ‘the long and bumpy way round’, but it picks up more fellow travellers on the way”

To find out more, read profiles of REvision 2010, A South West Protocol on Public Engagement in Wind Energy Developments, and Renewable Energy Workshops for Councillors and Planners at www.cse.org.uk/projects

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Project managers: Engage early in dialogue with people and/or communities affected by projects (positively or negatively). Consider building capacity within communities to understand and explain the project or technology, thus creating a genuine sense of ownership and maximising the potential for it to deliver genuine benefits.

Programme funders: Look beyond the funding of technology 'fixes' to assess whether sufficient effort is being placed on ensuring that users, host communities and other stakeholders are being systematically and meaningfully engaged. The scale of the project (large or small) is likely to be less important to its success than its intention and ability to get this engagement right. Consider funding to build and sustain capacity for the long-term.

Policy-makers: Ensure that policies, strategies and action plans are built on firm foundations of meaningful stakeholder consultation, with attention paid both to developing ownership of the outcomes and to establishing capacity and processes to deliver at the local level where most projects are realised.

Lesson 2

Don't assume people are as interested in and motivated about sustainable energy as we are.

Many in the sustainable energy field will know the feeling: you design a really neat energy-saving project, only to find that the people who are meant to rush to take up such a winning offer are conspicuous by their absence.

CSE made this mistake in the mid 1990s when its then trading company developed the Energy Club, the UK's first large-scale domestic energy services company (ESCO). It offered energy advice, discounted prices, low-cost finance and quality-controlled contractors with local authority endorsement – everything that the market research showed that people required to overcome the barriers to taking up energy efficiency measures. Except that it clearly wasn't everything they needed. While energy advice was welcomed by many, very few showed any interest in actually saving a few pounds on their bills. Above all, they found no reason to take immediate action.

At the heart of this problem is a failure to recognise that the sustainable energy sector talks its own language and forgets that the vast majority of people just don't 'get' what seems obvious to us. Or, if they do get it, they're simply not

“The vast majority of people just don't 'get' what seems obvious to us. Or, if they do get it, they're simply not that interested”

that interested. This is still a problem which dogs current efforts to establish ESCOs and increase the take-up of energy-saving measures.

For example, energy experts see a simple economic calculation showing that the cost of energy-saving measures is more than paid for by the money saved on fuel

bills. Yet, for most householders, spending a few hundred pounds on cavity wall insulation does not seem like a high-return investment. It's money that could otherwise be spent on a new DVD recorder, a deposit for a holiday or fixing the car. True, cavity wall insulation would save them the cost of half a pint of beer a week on their fuel bills. But that's small beer.

So, shouldn't we give the public more of a reason to act and create a greater sense of urgency?

The response of most energy experts would be to turn to their own motivations and the underlying policy drivers – like climate change. If only we could get the public more concerned about climate change, the argument goes. Yet the surveys indicate that most people are already concerned about climate change; but they still don't act. →



Reaching people means starting from where they are 'at'

Lesson 2

continued

It doesn't follow that just because there is a clear and concerning reason why society and policy-makers need to act (e.g. to curb climate change), that the same reason will necessarily also provide the motivation for individual action – particularly when that individual action involves changing basic habits, investing in largely invisible 'home improvements' and engaging with an energy supplier and contractor market which has done its best through dodgy sales tactics to undermine public trust and confidence.

Part of the solution lies in how we try to reach people (see Lesson 3). But it also means starting from where people are already 'at' rather than trying to get them to think like us or assuming they share our motivations.

Recent focus group research we have undertaken for Ofgem sheds some light on real consumer attitudes. Aside from demonstrating that energy consumption is not that big a deal for householders (and that climate change is not a strong motivator for action), it also found:

- sound knowledge of energy-saving techniques for their homes
- deep cynicism about energy suppliers promoting energy saving (even though suppliers are now the main purveyors of energy-saving measures)
- no awareness of the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) and the energy-saving obligations it places on suppliers.



Householders generally don't need more information about what to do to save energy (they already know). What they are interested in is better consumption feedback on their bills (so they can easily see the impact of their actions) and reassurance that the energy-saving deals on offer are genuine and robust. And their distrust of energy suppliers as purveyors of energy saving needs to be dispelled through direct official information about the energy efficiency obligations that suppliers have to consumers.

To find out more, visit www.cse.org.uk. The research for Ofgem is described in the profile and report, [Consumer Preferences for Improving Feedback on Energy Consumption](#).

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Project managers: Stop thinking like energy experts and start thinking like 'normal people' (or at least like your target audience/client group), looking for motivations which work for 'them' rather than 'us'. Work on the basis that you'll have to chivy and pursue householders to secure interest and, above all, action to improve energy efficiency and adopt energy-saving behaviour as habit (and apply Lesson 3). Focus on reinforcing the

authenticity and robustness of suitable energy-saving deals on offer and explain why energy suppliers are offering them.

Programme funders: Aim to fund projects which reflect an understanding of how consumers think about energy rather than how energy experts would like them to think.

Policy-makers: Don't assume that increasing public understanding of climate change (however important in its own right) will automatically

convert into greater action on energy saving and stronger support for renewable energy. Make explicit the obligations being placed on energy suppliers to save energy so that consumers understand why the suppliers are offering them deals and are encouraged to get 'their slice' of the action. Ensure energy suppliers provide more comprehensible feedback to consumers on their historical energy consumption on or with their fuel bills.

Lesson 3

Go with the grain of people's lives. Don't expect them to come to you or share your priorities.



CSE's founders wanted to set up an exciting visitor centre "so fascinating, involving and informing for people that they will take positive action themselves". But we would have waited a long time for the trickle of visitors to the Low-Energy Demonstration House to turn into the flood necessary to secure significant change.

So our approach quickly changed from waiting for people to engage with us to one of engaging with them by:

- developing capacity and knowledge among those already working with householders directly (e.g. housing officers and health visitors) and among school children
- reaching out to both community groups and decision-makers to show how energy efficiency could help them meet their own priorities (e.g. poverty relief, better housing, economic development).

As we've seen in Lesson 2, sustainable energy is not at the front of people's minds or central to their lives. To get that vital initial awareness-raising opportunity, we have to go with the grain of people's lives – visit them in their existing community groups, reach them through their existing networks of contacts and services, and build understanding and capacity by training professionals and community representatives with whom they already engage.

This approach is at the heart of the national Community Action for Energy (CAfE) programme, which we helped develop through our involvement in the Energy Efficiency Partnership for

"CSE's founders wanted to set up an exciting visitor centre 'so fascinating, involving and informing for people that they will take positive action themselves'"

Homes and which we now manage for the Energy Saving Trust. By improving engagement between energy professionals and community activists, the programme creates a potentially fertile environment for the development of shared priorities and the take-up of future sustainable energy initiatives.

Two of our local projects also demonstrate this approach, building networks and partnerships to reach

thousands of people in need of our services we could never find on our own. Bristol Energy Action Network works with more than 50 community organisations across Bristol, providing training to their staff to help them identify opportunities for energy advice and referrals, giving advice surgeries and talks at community events and meetings, and engaging these organisations in the distribution of low-energy light bulbs to vulnerable households.

Warming Mendip operates in a more rural setting and – with its slogan 'Are You as Snug as a Bug?' – has reached out through village halls and other community buildings to engage the voluntary groups which meet there with games, talks, one-to-one advice and help with grant claims. Professionals in health and social services and Care & Repair agencies have also been trained to spot need among their clients – linking cold-related illnesses to the affordability of warmth in the home – and to refer them on to our specialist energy advice experts.

To find out more about these and other projects, visit www.cse.org.uk/community

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Project managers: Think about your target audience: what networks they have (who they talk to or meet with), where they meet, who is already providing services to them, what priorities they have and how your priorities relate to them. Don't assume that doing something once will leave a lasting imprint – think about how habits are formed and develop programmes to keep 'chipping away'.

Programme funders: Look for evidence in energy projects of real engagement with people's existing lives and expect to fund on a long-term basis to sustain initial impact. Acknowledge the role sustainable energy initiatives can play in meeting other priorities (e.g. better health and well-being, improved housing, economic development) and in breaking down barriers between service providers.

Policy-makers: Build sustainable energy objectives and priorities explicitly into other relevant policy and funding frameworks such as regeneration, planning, economic development and health improvement, so that the objectives start to become part of the grain of people's lives.

Lesson 4

Energy education can hit home (now!). Children are a proven route to securing immediate and lasting energy-saving behaviour at home.

Education is often considered to be a long-term way to change attitudes, understanding and behaviour by reaching out to the 'citizens of tomorrow'. It is seen as making only a 'soft' contribution to sustainable energy objectives, delivering intangible benefits some time in the future.

Our experience is that this perspective could not be further from the truth.

With effective and supported curriculum-linked energy education programmes, children as young as eight or nine years old can become effective energy advisers for their own families. Our Energy Matters programme has been delivered to some 18,000 pupils across 500 schools. Independent evaluation in 2003 found that energy-saving behaviour improved in 76% of the families of pupils in classes where the programme was taught. That's better than results achieved by professional energy advisers – and, unlike people getting professional energy advice, these pupils had not chosen to participate in the programme.

There is real potency in high-quality energy education as a means to influence energy-saving behaviour in the home on an extensive scale. And on that basis it should be considered alongside energy advice and energy efficiency marketing activity when considering programme and funding priorities.

We offer a note of caution. Such impact – and an associated impact on energy use in the school – will not be achieved without up-to-date curriculum-linked resources, training and ongoing support for teachers. The success of



Energy Matters and our other education programmes has been, according to the teachers delivering them, largely down to the fact that teachers felt trained and supported in the delivery of high-quality resources.

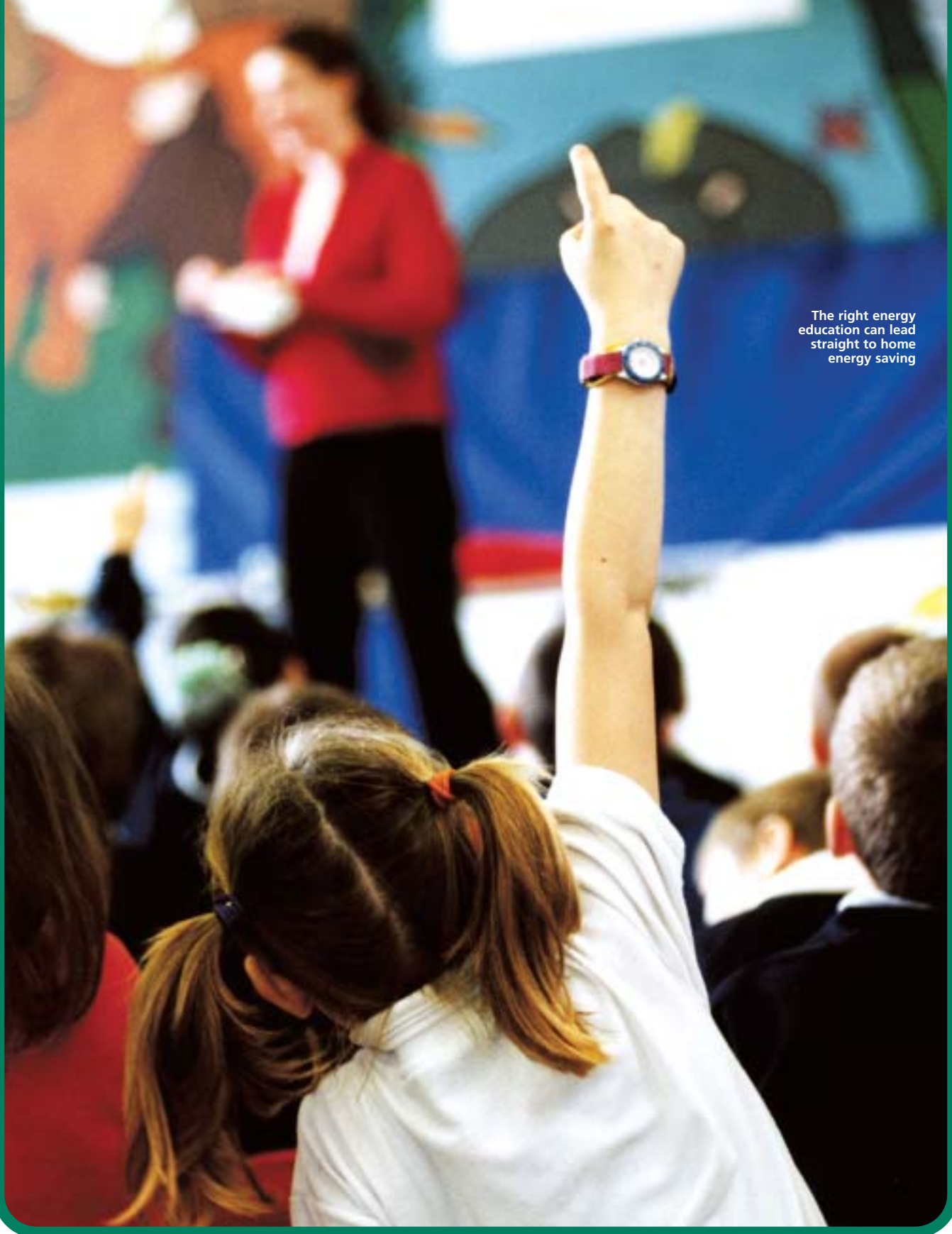
This impact will also not be achieved if the children are treated as the passive recipients of an energy-saving message communicated through a quick talk at an assembly or tutor group. Time and again we have found that energy education is most effective (and gains most support from teachers) when it treats children as environmental decision-makers in their own right, able to assess information, weigh up evidence, draw conclusions and identify appropriate actions. That way, the children genuinely relate to the issues, build their own understanding and engage with others.

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Project managers: Treat children as environmental decision-makers and influencers in their own right – so don't preach 'a message' but provide resources which enable them to assess information, weigh up evidence, draw conclusions and identify appropriate actions. Provide training and support to teachers which is relevant to their needs and accessible.

Programme funders: Recognise the immediate positive environmental benefit of energy education and reflect on the need for effective programmes to be up to date and supported. Do not assume that quality delivery will result simply from some generic curriculum commitment to education for sustainable development.

Policy-makers: Give cross-curricular themes like sustainable energy and, more broadly, sustainable development much stronger emphasis in the National Curriculum. Acknowledge the potency of high-quality energy education as a means to influence energy-saving behaviour in the home on an extensive scale. Evaluate it alongside energy advice and energy efficiency marketing activity when considering programme and funding priorities.



The right energy education can lead straight to home energy saving

PHOTO: PAUL BOX

“Children as young as eight or nine years old can become effective energy advisers for their own families”

To find out more about our education projects and programmes, visit www.cse.org.uk/education and www.cse.org.uk/energymattersresources and see the profiles for Energy Matters, Young People as Environmental Decision-Makers, Plan It Cool and Bright Sparks.

Lesson 5

Energy advice needs to get smarter.

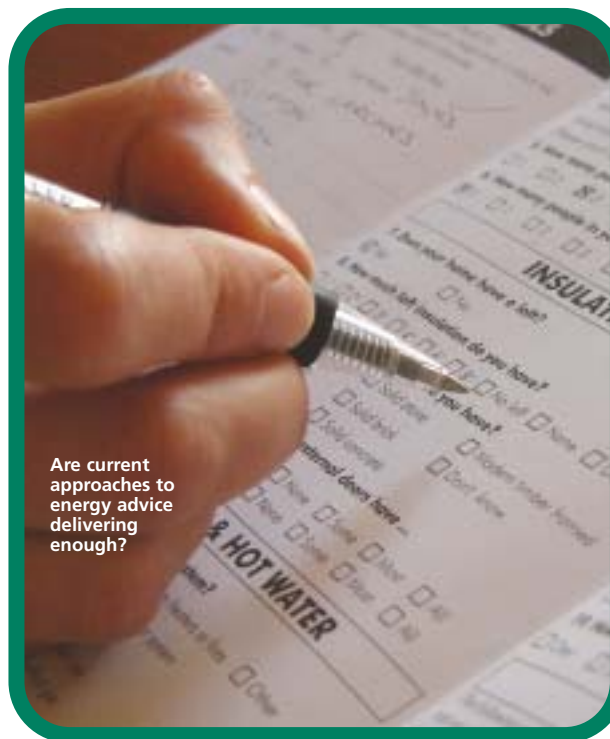
Effective energy advice is about empowering people to take control of their energy use so that they can keep warm more affordably with less environmental damage. Providing energy advice to householders has been a central focus of CSE's activities since we started and we've been influential in the development of new approaches and techniques over the years. We think it is now time for a new approach.

CSE piloted the first telephone-based energy efficiency advice service in the early 1990s, providing tailored advice based on computer-based assessments of basic household characteristics. 'Enfoline' became the model for the Energy Saving Trust's first Energy Efficiency Advice Centres (EEACs).

We have been providing energy advice to householders ever since, principally through the Bristol and Somerset EEAC. From this wealth of experience, we are now convinced of the inadequacy of the currently-funded model of domestic energy advice – questionnaire-based reports with limited personal contact and little, if any, follow-up or feedback.

Clearly, this model has some impact (and there is some great work happening in spite of its constraints). But it is difficult to believe that it is having as much effect on cutting energy demand as it could have, or as it needs to have. For people to act on energy advice they need a combination of:

- better feedback about their own energy use
- direct personal contact with a trustworthy individual who is then available for further support and feedback



Are current approaches to energy advice delivering enough?

“We are now convinced of the inadequacy of the currently-funded model of domestic energy advice”

■ details about energy efficiency deals specifically suited to their home, with reassurance that they are genuine (and really that cheap).

It has been assumed that proactively providing this personal contact and sustained support and feedback is expensive and should therefore only be reserved for the most needy or most demanding. Everyone

else should just get a questionnaire-based report – a ‘one-night stand’ rather than an ongoing relationship of feedback and support. But perhaps, in Enfoline and subsequently the EEACs, we haven't got the model quite right.

CSE is currently developing a new approach to delivering energy advice that we hope to test in 2005. Using techniques developed with social research experts and tested in relation to both reducing car use and cutting water consumption, we believe it has the potential to deliver, on a cost-effective basis, rapid and sustained energy savings of at least 10% across a population.

To find out more, visit www.cse.org.uk

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Project managers: Think beyond the current model of energy advice provision to examine ways to reach more people with an improved advice package, feedback and proactive ‘chivving’ to stimulate behavioural change and take-up of energy-saving measures. Apply Lessons 2 and 3.

Programme funders: Support greater innovation in the delivery of energy advice, looking for new techniques and proactive initiatives (which also reflect other lessons here, particularly Lessons 2 and 3). Establish targets for energy advice schemes based on energy-saving outcomes rather than numbers of energy advice reports.

Policy-makers: Provide adequate funding to enable energy advice services to test new models, expand services on the basis of successful developments, and thus achieve the ‘step change’ in energy saving required to meet sustainable energy policy objectives.

Lesson 6

Existing programmes to alleviate fuel poverty are poorly targeted and are wasting opportunities to make a lasting difference.

The ability to find and target those suffering fuel poverty is vital to meet the Government's objective to eliminate the problem. And it is essential that, when the fuel poor are identified, the programmes to improve the energy performance of their homes are good enough to ensure the affordability of warmth in the future. Otherwise, we'll have to find them all over again, which is inefficient and resource-intensive.

CSE has been involved in national evaluation research of nearly all of the major fuel poverty alleviation programmes of the last decade. All of the programmes make some difference, but not one of them is delivering sufficient improvements in energy performance and income to guarantee affordable

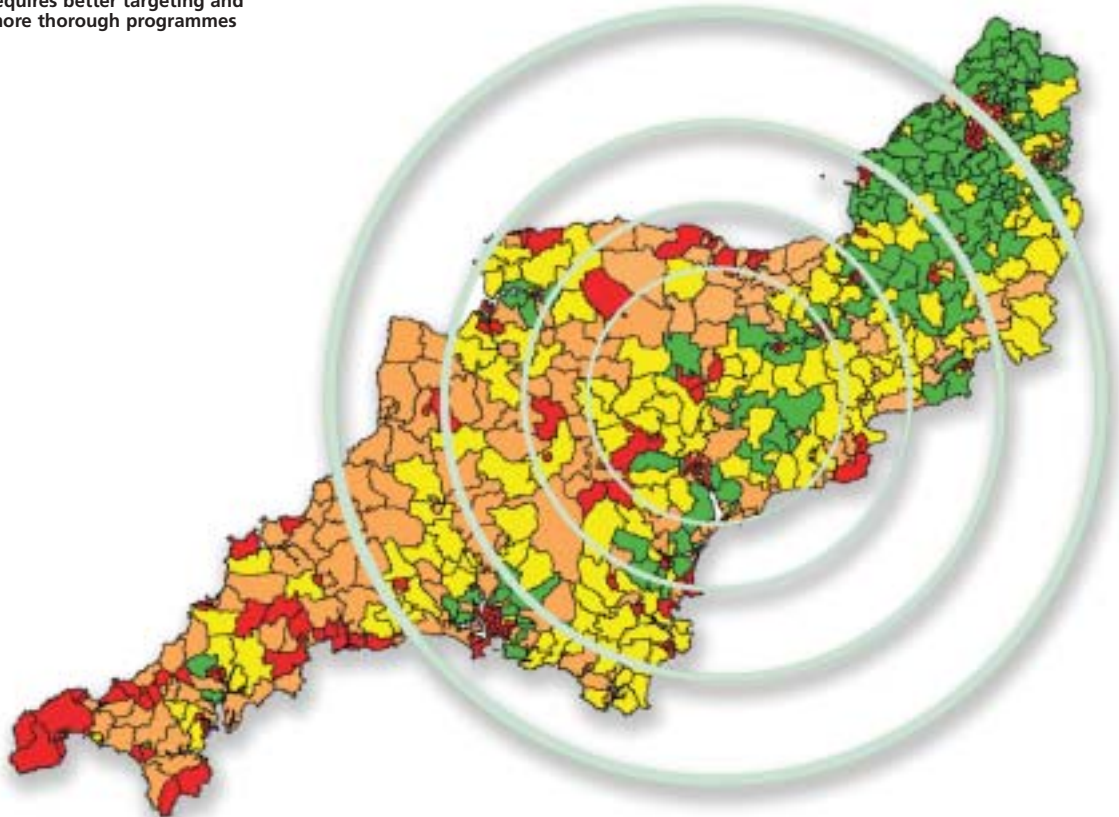
“It is essential that programmes are good enough to ensure the affordability of warmth in the future”

warmth in the future. Eliminating fuel poverty requires more resources, a wider range of eligible measures (particularly for solid wall housing and homes without access to gas), better integration between schemes and, above all, explicit scheme

targets for reducing fuel poverty (rather than simply installing measures).

In addition, many programmes are poorly targeted, relying on specific benefit entitlement or general deprivation indices, both of which are known to be fairly imprecise indicators of fuel poverty. That's why CSE worked with the University of Bristol to develop a fuel poverty indicator (FPI) for predicting the incidence of fuel poverty at a ward and sub-ward level throughout England. →

Securing affordable warmth requires better targeting and more thorough programmes



Lesson 6

continued

The FPI (www.cse.org.uk/fuelpovertyindicator) is designed to reflect more accurately than general deprivation indicators those aspects of income, household status, housing conditions and fuel costs which combine to create fuel poverty. It has distinct advantages over other measures of deprivation because:

- the FPI does not assume that the fuel poor are on benefits (since many are not), and
- it ignores other variables such as homelessness and overcrowding, which feature in general deprivation indicators but which are unrelated or even inversely related to fuel poverty.

Instead, the FPI uses statistical modeling techniques to match data from the English House Condition Survey with Census information. The research identified a weighted set of Census indicators which, in combination, provide a reasonable proxy for fuel poverty.

Since it was published in 2003, the FPI has become a widely used and powerful tool for informing affordable warmth policies and targeting fuel poverty programmes at local level to reduce the ill-health and misery caused by cold homes.

To find out more about the Fuel Poverty Indicator and our work on fuel poverty, from evaluation of national programmes like Warm Zones and detailing links between fuel poverty and health, to research into the specific characteristics of rural fuel poverty, visit www.cse.org.uk/fuelpoverty



■ **Fuel poverty occurs when a household needs to spend 10% or more of its income on fuel to maintain satisfactory heating and other energy services. The Government estimates that, on this current definition, there were three million households in fuel poverty in the UK in 2001. They suffer the poor health and low well-being associated with living in cold, damp homes, risking debt if they try to stay warm.**

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Project managers: Use available tools to target resources effectively at the fuel poor and design your programmes to remove households from fuel poverty, rather than install certain pre-defined measures.

Programme funders: Move away from targets based on installing 'measures' to targets based on reducing fuel poverty and delivering affordable warmth. Support the development of tools and assessment techniques to improve targeting of resources at local level.

Policy-makers: Provide more resources for a wider range of measures, encourage improved integration between funders and schemes and establish explicit targets for reducing fuel poverty on energy suppliers and publicly-funded grant scheme managers. Use the new Decent Homes standards to set down 'fuel poverty proof' standards so that warmth is affordable in the home for any future occupant on low income.

Lesson 7

Sustainable energy markets are about more than just price and choice.

UK energy markets and systems have changed fundamentally since CSE was founded. Competition became the touchstone, with energy markets regulated for the principal objective of lower energy prices.

Lower energy prices are meant to be good for the economy and good for the fuel poor. But the price we pay for energy is not simply the cost on our bills. It's also the future cost of an irreversibly altered climate and the unsustainability of relying on lower prices to solve a problem – fuel poverty – which is principally caused by inefficient housing.

Moreover, the fuel poor aren't necessarily the ones to gain from competition. Our Competition Monitor project tracked the experiences of a panel of low-income households as competition opened in the gas and electricity markets in the late 1990s. It showed that they are unlikely to gain their fair share of benefits of competitive energy supply markets without deliberate intervention from the regulator, particularly to ensure supplier focus on reducing the costs of prepayment options.

The concept of protecting the interest of consumers (both present and future) has recently become more central to the regulation of energy markets. But this remains narrowly defined by Government and regulator alike.

In the context of sustainable energy – with its three pillars of economic security, environmental protection and social equity – it is not enough to define consumer interests only in terms of lower prices, ease of switching supplier and higher customer service standards.

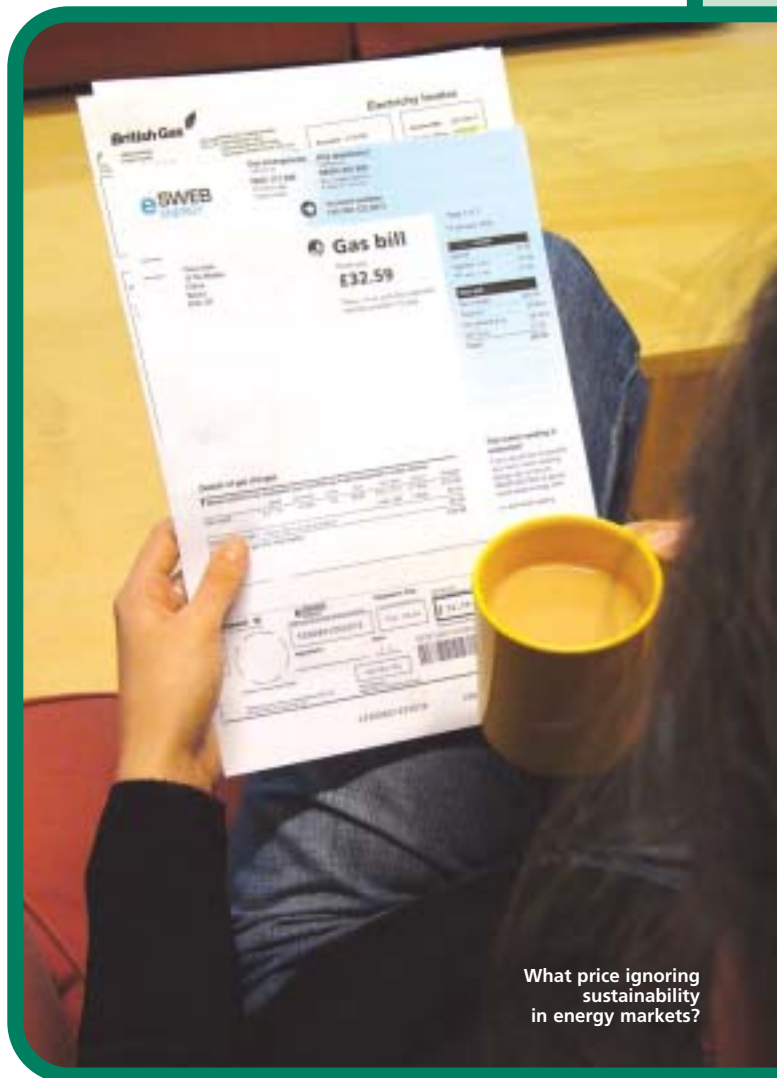
Recent work we have undertaken for consumer watchdog Energywatch has attempted to express consumer interests more comprehensively. This would include

“It is not enough to define consumer interests only in terms of lower prices, ease of switching supplier and higher customer service standards”

concepts of environmental protection, basic standards of warmth and, for future consumers, the prompt development of new and improved no-carbon and low-carbon technologies and the associated skills base.

With these redrawn consumer interests coming to the fore, regulatory regimes designed to protect them would also be transformed. The focus would become creating a competitive market in which profits are made by being best at reducing emissions and supplying quality affordable energy services.

To find out more about our policy and research work, see www.cse.org.uk/policyandresearch



What price ignoring sustainability in energy markets?

Putting the Lesson into Practice

Policy-makers, regulators and consumer organisations: Redraw the objectives of the energy market and the duties of the regulator to reflect sustainable energy objectives (economic, social and environmental) with the goal of promoting and protecting the more extensive range of present and future consumer interests which are relevant in this wider context.

A Bit of History

Where We Started

In September 1979, four people – Hugh Barton, Peter Clegg, Martin Large and John Marjoram – met in Bristol to discuss the formation of an 'Urban Centre for Appropriate Technology' (UCAT). They had an ambitious aim:

"To create a visitor centre and working community, closely woven into the social, educational and economic life of the city region, which will illustrate through practical example and vivid display the interdependence of [people and the] environment, and the potential of appropriate technology, so fascinating, involving and informing for people that they will take positive action themselves."

The group decided on an initial focus on energy, with a secondary focus on education. After much fundraising, materials scrounging and volunteering, the goal of a visitor centre was realised in the mid 1980s with the Low-Energy Demonstration House. However, as detailed in Lesson 3, with changing funding regimes and a gradual realisation that the trickle of visitors was not developing into a flood, the focus moved to increasing our impact through outreach, education and training to build capacity among others to deliver sustainable energy.

Originally set up with charitable status as a member of the Society for Environmental Improvement, alongside the Centre for Alternative Technology, and later with a trading company, Bristol Energy Centre, the name Centre for Sustainable Energy was adopted in 1994.





PHOTO: BRISTOL UNITED PRESS

Some of Our Achievements

Over the last 25 years, CSE has developed several nationally significant initiatives, many of them innovative and ahead of their time.

- We established the first phone and software-based energy efficiency advice service, which became the model for the national network of 52 Energy Efficiency Advice Centres. Our own advice centre continues to reach more than 16,000 householders in the Bristol and Somerset area each year.
- Our major energy education programmes like Energy Matters have reached tens of thousands of school children and proved that children are effective energy advisers for their families.
- CSE's training modules have built awareness of energy issues and capacity, engaging with some 10,000 experts and non-experts over the years.
- Working with the University of Bristol, we developed the Fuel Poverty Indicator, a unique tool to enable local targeting to tackle fuel poverty and now widely used by local authorities and regional government.
- Our innovative processes for engaging stakeholders in the development of policy, strategies and action plans are securing new support for sustainable energy, and renewable energy in particular.
- CSE's research is improving understanding of consumer experiences of energy markets and the need for stronger protection of their interests.



A Bit of History

continued

Where We Are Now

Our mission as an independent charity is to advance sustainable energy policy and practice, engaging people and communities in meeting real needs for environmentally sound and affordable energy services.

We are still based in Bristol, now with 35 staff and volunteers, an annual turnover of £1.3 million and some 50–60 different and separately funded projects under way at any one time, each contributing to the achievement of our mission. We:

- deliver effective energy advice, education and practical projects for people in our local area of Bristol and Somerset
- develop innovative energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives and inspiring education and training programmes
- undertake original research, policy analysis and strategy development to enhance understanding and improve policy-making at local, regional and national level.

CSE is a charity entirely funded by project funding, grants and donations. Funders and clients include national, regional and local government and associated agencies, energy companies and charitable sources.

Details of all of our staff, current and recent projects, and our accounts can be found on our website at www.cse.org.uk.

If you're interested in helping CSE to continue its pioneering work, please contact Janine Michael on 0117 929 9950 or email janine.michael@cse.org.uk



Where We Will Be in the Future

Delivering a sustainable energy future requires a step change in effort to cut energy demand, end fuel poverty and deploy renewable energy.


CSE aims to be at the forefront of this effort, in particular contributing our ability to understand and engage people with appropriate technology to achieve truly effective sustainable solutions.



Thanks

The Centre for Sustainable Energy is grateful to the trustees of the JJ Charitable Trust and the Mark Leonard Trust for their support in helping us learn and disseminate the lessons of 25 years of activity to advance sustainable energy policy and practice.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our past and present staff, volunteers, trustees, funders, clients and partners who, between them and over the years, have enabled CSE to develop into the vibrant national organisation it is today. Thank you.



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