

# Improving energy efficiency in your community space

## A' Leasachadh Èifeachdas Lùtha san Àrainn Choimhearsnachd Agad

A 'how to' Guide  
Stiùir 'ciamar a'



Photo by Ewen Weatherman

**Resilient Communities**

**Coimhearsnachdan Làidir**

# Introduction

## Ro-ràdh

This guide is to help community groups improve energy efficiency in their community buildings. Improving efficiency reduces bills and is more carbon conscious, as well as making spaces warmer and more comfortable for your community to use.



Photos by The Highland Council



## Who to involve?

Early discussions around improving energy efficiency will likely involve your committee or members of your group. You could consult the wider community or people frequently using your space. Some groups will also involve those with expert knowledge, such as builders or local retailers, who can help with costs estimates. There are also organisations who can advise on this process. These include **Home Energy Scotland; Changeworks; Local Energy Scotland.**

# What type of improvements to make?

## Behavioural

Large groups of people using a community facility may not be as careful with their energy use as they are in their own home. There is a lot a potential for reducing your energy costs by encouraging more energy efficient behaviour.

It's a good idea to ask those using your building to use less energy. This could include shutting doors or windows, not leaving taps running, or switching off appliances when not using them.

This solution is generally low cost, or even free. You can achieve this with signs or extra training for those frequently using your building. You could hold an energy awareness day about using less.

## Physical Improvements

Improving your physical space is important, though costs can vary depending on how energy efficient the building already is. Some community spaces are old and require extensive upgrades, and measures to improve this can be expensive. However, most physical improvements pay for themselves through energy bill savings.

You can find a list of common physical improvements below. Keep in mind that some may need planning permission from your local council.

**Insulation:** Roof insulation; wall insulation; sealing gaps around windows; double glazing; floor insulation; plugging draughty gaps

**Heating (Space and Water):** New boiler or heating system; New heating controls (timers, programmers); point-of-use water heaters; air source or ground source heat pumps

**Lighting:** Energy efficient bulbs; timers or motion sensors

**Electrical appliances:** Upgrade old appliances to new efficient ones (A rating or higher); timers

**Water Use:** aerated taps, dual flush toilets, fix leaking taps.

## Renewables

There is the option to install renewable energy sources to service your community space, although you should first try to lower costs by reducing energy consumption and increasing efficiency. Renewable energy sources would mean less reliance on importing energy. They can be large projects with considerable costs that require close management, so consider if this is suitable for you.

You can consider technologies like wind turbines, solar power, or a biomass boiler.



Photos by Ewen Weatherspoon

# Completing an Energy Audit

## Reviewing previous usage

Get a good picture of what you are currently using and what is causing the biggest energy demands in your building. You can do this by monitoring your current energy consumption and comparing this with when the building is used and for what kind of activities; you can also review your previous energy bills or meter readings.



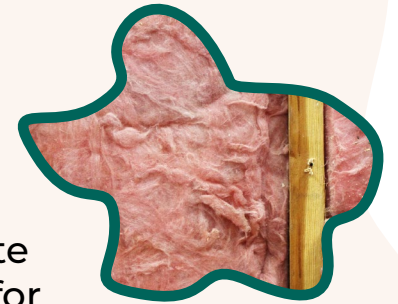
## Assess options

Identify potential improvements or changes. There will likely be a mix of free, low and high-cost options, all with their own benefits and drawbacks.



## Walkabout audit

Walk around the building and note where most energy is being lost, for example inefficient lighting or heating, or poor insulation.



## Action Plan

How you will implement any changes, what priority they should take, how changes will be funded and what timescales you will complete these in.



## Funding

There are various ways to fund energy efficiency improvements. This could all depend on what legal structure your group is, so make sure you're aware of this before you look into funding options.

### Building owner

If you lease your building, then check with the building owner to see if there is an allocated budget for maintenance or improvements that you could use.

### Loans

If you are a business rather than a charity, then you may consider a loan. You can find low interest loans available for the purpose of energy efficiency improvements. There are also lots of loans available for social enterprises. See:

[www.socialinvestmentscotland.com](http://www.socialinvestmentscotland.com)

### Grants

There are various funding databases available online. One is the SCVO funding site [www.funding.scot](http://www.funding.scot) or the Scottish Rural Network funding search:

[www.ruralnetwork.scot/funding/srn-funding-search](http://www.ruralnetwork.scot/funding/srn-funding-search)

### Support Agencies

Though they might not always have funding attached, you can get extra resources and advice from a number of third sector charities. This includes **Home Energy Scotland**, the Scottish Government's **Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES)**, **Community Energy Scotland** (if you are considering installing renewable technology).

### Crowdfunding

Online donations are becoming more and more popular, and one way of raising funds for a variety of projects.

### Specialist Funding

You may be eligible for specialised funding depending on what kind of group you are, what building you have, or where you are located.

Churches are often eligible for additional support.

[www.nationalchurchestrust.org](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org)

If you are in an area with wind farms, fish farms, or near a landfill, you could be eligible for community benefit funding. This is often administered through your Community Council.