



RISE

Retrofit information,
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Engaging Young People in Retrofit

Case study

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Engaging Young People in Retrofit

Summary

Engaging young people in retrofit is often a challenge for housing providers due to its perceived complexity, limited relevance and lack of understanding. The National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) at Trafford Hall, a charity dedicated to supporting communities in addressing local issues, tackles these challenges through their 'Shaping Sustainable Futures' programme, designed to build skills and confidence in young people, connecting them to the green sector and sustainability-focused career pathways.

Introduction to The National Communities Resource Centre

The National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) at Trafford Hall, Chester, is a registered charity that works to support communities to tackle issues on a local level. The Centre facilitates a range of events whilst providing a relaxed environment for engagement that encourages collaboration and problem solving to bring about a kinder and fairer world.

NCRC takes individuals across communities on a journey of personal growth that focuses on building the skills, connections and self-belief required to support thriving communities. Impactful programmes have already been delivered to over 40,000 residents and housing professionals, and NCRC has supported over 2,500 community projects, which has generated £8m in social value.

They currently work with housing associations, the Government, anchor organisations, youth, education and community groups to find people who are connected by shared ideas or challenges. One of those challenges identified is – engaging young people in retrofit. This will be the focus of this case study.

What are the challenges of engaging young people in retrofit?

Engaging young people in retrofit projects can be quite challenging due to a number of different factors:

- **Awareness and education:** Many young people may not be fully aware of what retrofitting entails or its benefits. There's often a gap in knowledge about energy efficiency, sustainability, and the long-term advantages of retrofitting buildings
- **Interest and relevance:** Retrofitting might not seem immediately relevant or interesting to young people, especially if they don't own property or are not involved in construction or environmental fields
- **Access to information:** Finding clear, accessible information about retrofitting can be difficult
- **Perceived complexity:** Retrofitting can seem complex and technical, which might deter young people from getting involved
- **Lack of incentives:** Without clear incentives or immediate benefits, young people might not see the value in retrofitting
- **Cultural and social influences:** Social norms and cultural attitudes towards sustainability and environmental issues can influence young people's engagement

To effectively engage young people in retrofit projects, it's essential to address these challenges through targeted education, accessible information, financial support, and by making the topic relevant and interesting.

How was this challenged tackled by NCRC?

NCRC have committed to supporting young people prepare for jobs and the challenges that they may face in the future. To do so, the 'Shaping Sustainable Futures' programme was launched, with the aim of helping young people build the skills and confidence they need to support them in their future career journeys, and to help their own communities reach environmental targets.

This funded youth engagement programme also plays a crucial role in connecting housing and retrofit to young people, exploring topics such as low carbon technologies, energy efficiency and retrofit career opportunities.

The Shaping Sustainable Futures programme is designed as a residential experience for 16-24 years' old from all over the country, introducing them to the green sector, climate change, and sustainability focused career pathways. Through a number of engaging workshops, activities, team-building exercises and expert-led discussions, attendees are supported to develop practical skills, connect with other young people passionate about sustainability, and make an impact in their community. They are also able to develop their understanding of how to make environmentally conscious choices in their daily lives and beyond.

During the residential, attendees are asked to design a follow-up community project that provides a solution to what their community specifically needs. Previous examples include a community garden, or litter picking initiative which have positively benefitted all involved. This aspect of the programme also extends engagement for six months post-training which helps to amplify long-term impact.

This project proves that engaging young people in retrofit is not only possible, but can also be directly beneficial to local communities. Replicating a project of this kind within different communities across the country could further support both green skills and youth unemployment.

"[I learnt] what retrofit is....inspired to start an apprenticeship"

"I truly enjoyed the sense of community that developed during the residential"

"It has boosted my enthusiasm for the environment"

Residential attendees

NCRC's top tips for effective engagement

- **Tailor communication:** Use terminology suited to the audience
- **Encourage interactivity:** Make sessions engaging and participatory
- **Follow-up:** Encourage post-engagement project and maintain communication

Further information

- Visit NCRC's website: [Home - NCRC](#)
- Take a look at upcoming NCRC events here: [Events - NCRC](#)
- Get in touch with NCRC here: hello@the-ncrc.co.uk
- Take a look at upcoming RISE events focusing on resident engagement: [Retrofit Information, Support and Expertise \(RISE\) Events - 28 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#)



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