

ADEPT President's Awards 2023

Entry form

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Award category Shaping Places for People

Project Title Warm Homes Suffolk

Local authority entrant Suffolk County Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

Suffolk Warm Homes is a new approach to tackle fuel poverty that targets a hard to reach audience, to deliver financial, health and carbon benefits.

Shaping places for people: How was this project an innovative response to a significant concern? (150 words max.)

Fuel poverty has dramatically increased in Suffolk over the last few years, currently affecting well over 30% of households, impacting their finances, health and carbon footprint.

Identifying and engaging eligible households (income of <£30,000 with poor EPCs) is a considerable challenge. Prior to this campaign, the Council had been directly mailing these households with limited take up, and so needed a new strategy.

The new Warm Homes Suffolk campaign used positive, aspirational communication, avoiding too much focus on eligibility criteria. Designed to feel like a consumer brand rather than a council campaign, a bold visual identity was used to stand out in social media feeds. Applicants were then sensitively triaged for the right support by a trained team once they made contact. Follow up visits were carried out by council officers before passing the residents on to a group of vetted, local contractors. www.warmhomessuffolk.org

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

The campaign was phenomenally successful with every target exceeded:

- 42,929 website visits
- 158,410 social media reach
- 4.54% engagement rate
- 0.95% click-through rate
- 14 pieces of media including regional TV, radio and newspaper coverage:
 - BBC Look East, BBC Radio Suffolk, Gen X Radio, East Anglian Daily Times, Ipswich Star, Bury Mercury, Beccles and Bungay Journal, Thetford and Brandon Times, Hadleigh and Felixstowe news hubs.
- 176 stakeholders reached, with 30 using our communications toolkit in their channels, including Suffolk Mind, Rural Coffee Caravan, The Suffolk East Federation of Women's Institute, The Bus Shelter Ipswich, Art Family Hub Lowestoft and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- 2,000 leaflets distributed at outreach events
- 400+ households helped with energy efficiency upgrades

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)

The campaign was led by Suffolk County Council with the consortium of District and Borough Councils. It used a team of housing, environmental, social care, public health and communications professionals across the different organisations to deliver the campaign. Marketing specialists Spring worked alongside the council to deliver the creative and digital elements.

Central heating and environmental retrofit work was undertaken by a group of accredited contractors including Aran Group, CMC East Anglia, Cornerstone East Anglia and Insulation and Heating Installations. All private sector partners are based in Suffolk.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care and external organisations. (150 words max.)

Campaign assets were included in a communications toolkit which was distributed to District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils, MPs, GPs and hospitals and other relevant organisations and charities. Over 30 partners used the toolkit in their communication channels including Suffolk Mind, Rural Coffee Caravan, The Suffolk East Federation of Women's Institute, The Bus Shelter Ipswich, Art Family Hub Lowestoft and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

Happy beneficiary Laura from Ipswich said:

"The six weeks Romain and his team of installers were with us have changed my life, given me hope for the future, and has made me proud of our country's welfare system. The work has been fantastic, I would encourage anyone that is struggling with a cold or damp home to get in touch with Warm Homes Suffolk."

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)

Warm Homes Suffolk was created as a consistent brand to reach and engage residents eligible for the multiple and often confusing sources of funding.

Suffolk local authorities have a highly successful track record of taking a collaborative approach to bidding for competitive funding made available by energy companies (e.g. via ECO, Warm Homes Fund) or government (e.g. LAD, HUG etc).

This approach has been recognised by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group who have made funding available to to underwrite the expansion of staff resources to maximise the benefit for Suffolk residents.

Our ability to deliver was recognised in the latest HUG allocation, Suffolk was awarded £8m with the option to expand to £16m to support further energy efficiency improvements for our residents.