

Retrofit for all: a toolkit supporting greener, healthier homes

Supporting underrepresented or vulnerable households towards a just transition

The Young Foundation
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Overview

This toolkit supports the engagement of households in their journey to retrofit – particularly people with experience of protected characteristics relating to age, disability, ethnicity and gender.

This toolkit is directly informed by the Londoners who participated in [The Young Foundation's 2025 research](#), and seeks to encourage important conversations between people, businesses and government in communities across the UK.

A just transition in retrofit is essential to ensuring that green housing retrofit does not deepen existing inequalities, but instead creates a fairer, greener future for every person in every community.

To find out more about The Young Foundation's work to support a just transition and sustainability, visit our [planet hub](#).

Underlying principles

Without targeted intervention, groups already facing housing challenges – young and older people, disabled people, underrepresented ethnic communities, and non-male gender identities – risk being further disadvantaged by retrofit policies that fail to account for their specific needs.

- For young adults, who are overrepresented in poor-quality private rentals, and older people, many of whom own non-decent homes and lack financial means to retrofit, a just transition must provide accessible funding, incentives, and support.
- Disabled people, who already face a severe shortage of accessible housing, must be prioritised in retrofit efforts, to ensure that adaptations address both energy efficiency and accessibility.
- Ethnic minority households, particularly Black and Asian communities, are more likely to live in overcrowded and unsafe housing, often in the private or social rented sector. With fewer improvements made in non-decent homes occupied by these groups, retrofit policies must be proactively designed to address racial disparities in housing quality and access to funding.
- For cis women, non-binary and trans people, who experience greater housing insecurity and worse health outcomes from poor conditions, a just transition must ensure that gender-specific needs are considered, including support for single women, lone-parent households and individuals with caring responsibilities.

A just transition in retrofit means ensuring that housing improvements do not reinforce existing inequalities, but instead create safe, healthy and sustainable homes for those who need them.

Engaging households in the journey to retrofit

Retrofit has become a key practice in contemporary architecture, revitalising existing buildings without the need for demolition while offering significant social, economic and environmental benefits (see the 'monitoring' chapter of this toolkit for further information).

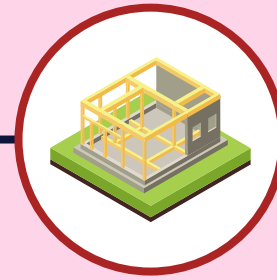
The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) serves over 44,000 members across the UK, delivering better buildings and places, stronger communities, and a sustainable environment. With a belief that good engagement is the linchpin to creating the best outcomes, they have created the Engagement Overlay to the RIBA Plan of Work (RIBA, 2024), a resource to support better outcomes for everyone involved, from procurement, design, delivery, management, maintenance and use in the built environment.

The overlay is a truly collaborative piece of work, with contributions from more than 30 organisations, offering insight, their learnings and best practice. It offers a standardised approach and baseline for architects (and other built environment professionals) to enhance participation, moving beyond traditional mechanisms of informing and consulting to facilitate early, effective and proportionate engagement throughout all work stages, while adhering to the existing RIBA Plan of Work.

RIBA's overlay can be a valuable tool to enhancing participation in the built environment, with core and advisory tasks distinguished. Informed by this guidance, The Young Foundation worked with Londoners and retrofit stakeholders as part of this project, and mapped the person-centred transition plan (The Young Foundation, 2024). Key barriers and opportunities for support are presented against a Plan of Work that will be familiar to built environment professionals. [The full research findings are available here.](#)

Person-centred transition planning responds to the complex journeys that individuals and households face when net zero measures, such as domestic retrofit, are introduced. Each stage needs to be accounted for in transition planning, recognising that this journey will look different for different people.

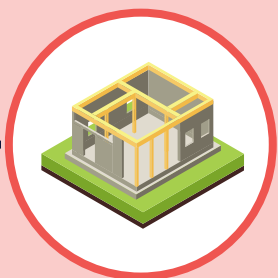
Supporting household participation on the retrofit journey



Awareness

Plan of Work Stages 0 and 1

- Understanding where individuals and households start on their journey, their attitudes towards net zero, how they navigate misinformation, and how they envision what change will look like.
- Continuously demonstrate the quality of your practice to build trust among households.
- Utilise networks and channels that are locally trusted by residents.
- Ensure that language is clear, accessible and avoids unexplained jargon.
- Make sure that communications are available in a range of formats - including brail and multiple languages.
- Share answers to questions that you commonly get asked.
- Signpost to household support - including financial support.



Accessibility

Plan of Work Stages 2 and 3

Navigating the affordability of net zero measures, and the suitability for household profiles, managing factors that affect households' vulnerability and participation - including finances, time, dependencies, and emotional energy.

- Support households to access financial support - grants, funding or discounts.
- Conduct a household assessment to inform what works are required, taking time to understand what other adaptation requirements that the household might have.
- Seek trusted support where you can at this stage in the process - which may include carers, social workers, family or friends.
- Bring all stakeholders together early in the process, including residents, landlords, or housing associations.



Acceptance

Plan of Work Stages 4

Agreeing what measures can be adopted, managing expectations, navigating decision-maker roles, acknowledging trade-offs, negotiating fair responsibility of the burden, trusting the technology, financing, and leadership of the change.

- Provide a detailed plan of necessary works, with realistic timelines so that households can prepare themselves.
- Signpost to testimonials from those who have undergone similar works.
- Consider what requirements you have for the contractor - including Equality Impact and Social Value Assessments, or membership of the Considerate Constructors Scheme.
- Consider how translators can play a supportive role in acceptance, particularly around signing contracts.
- Underrepresented or vulnerable households might still be sceptical, allow for more time in the acceptance stage.



Adoption

Plan of Work Stages 5

Adopting times and processes, navigating disruption to the home or community, managing ongoing expectations of individuals or household.

- Provide a clear point of contact during the construction process.
- Regularly track progress of the works against the agreed timelines, regularly updating households.
- Explore suitable opportunities for training and skills development to better understand the new home.
- Anticipate what the barriers might be - if deep retrofit is required and people have to temporary relocate, think about how you might support this.



Adaptation

Plan of Work Stages 6 and 7

Acclimatising to different energy, home, lifestyle, and work practices, supporting household budget fluctuations, responding to climate impacts, and recognising that net zero technologies can shift.

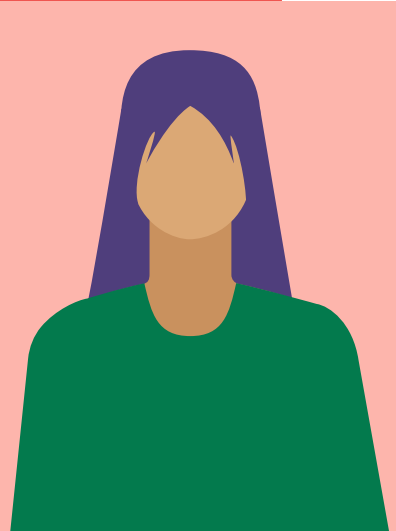
- Implement a structured feedback mechanism that can inform future engagement.
- Conduct a 'lessons learnt' evaluation with key stakeholders, including households and contractors.
- Establish ongoing communication and support mechanisms, including a key point of contact to ensure accountability.
- Now that households have undertaken the retrofit journey, capitalise on the springboard effect by signposting to measures to continue on the path to low carbon living.

Personas to consider the different needs of residents

Through our research, we engaged a total of 89 London residents whose lived experiences is reflective of the protected characteristics that this project seeks to understand. We connected with these people through our peer researchers, their interviewees, and participants in collaborative workshops.

The personas below reflect different lived experiences of London residents with protected characteristics. These personas are based on real experiences but are not intended to reflect the experience of any one person – instead telling stories that retrofit providers might encounter undertaking community engagement of underrepresented or vulnerable groups.

Kai



Age: 19
Gender: Female
Ethnicity: Asian British
Health: Neurodivergent
Tenure: Living with parents
House type: Semi-detached
Energy bills: £150pm
Employment: Student
Superpower: Researching
Resistance: Lack of funds

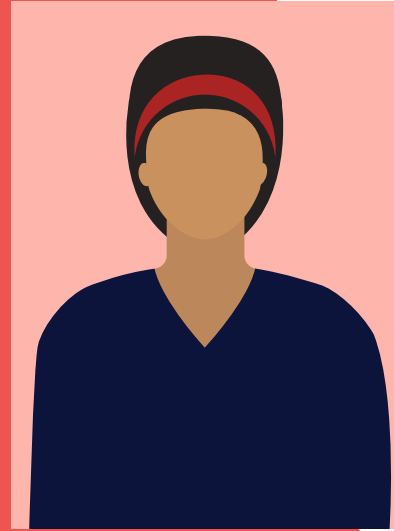
About Kai's Home

Kai lives in a semi-detached house that is owned by her parents, and currently lives rent free while she is studying. When Kai was younger, her parents got solar panels installed and converted the loft into a bedroom - which Kai now lives in.

Kai found this disruption very stressful, so had to go and live with her grandparents while these works were taking place. The loft is now cold and draughty in the winter, and warm and stuffy in the summer.

Kai has done some research to help her family to explore what would make their home more energy efficient, but they do not qualify for available grants and do not have the funds to make these changes. She doesn't know what to do now.

Gabriella



Age: 58
Gender: Female
Ethnicity: Colombian
Health: Mental health, hearing loss and chronic fatigue
Tenure: Leaseholders
House type: Flat
Energy bills: N/A - heating and hot water needs repair
Employment: Not economically active
Superpower: Motivated
Resistance: Disruption

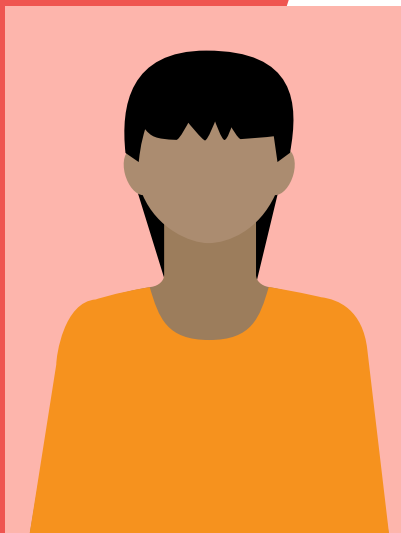
About Gabriella's Home

Gabriella lives in a flat in a listed building, which she has called her home for many years. Her health means that she is no longer able to work, and her primary source of income is now benefits - Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Her home is extremely cold and draughty, and her heating and hot water has been in disrepair for some months. She is very motivated to make her home more energy efficient, but is worried about letting people into her home. Gabriella doesn't have a support network in the area, and she is navigating these potential changes by herself.

Gabriella thinks she might qualify for funding support, but as the building is listed she is limited in what changes can be made - and everyone in the building would need to agree.

Kasey



Age: 28
Gender: Prefer not to say
Ethnicity: Mixed White and Black African
Health: Generally good
Tenure: HMO
House type: Detached
Energy bills: Unsure, included in the rent - which is £1,250pm
Employment: Freelance
Superpower: Flexibility
Resistance: Getting everyone to agree

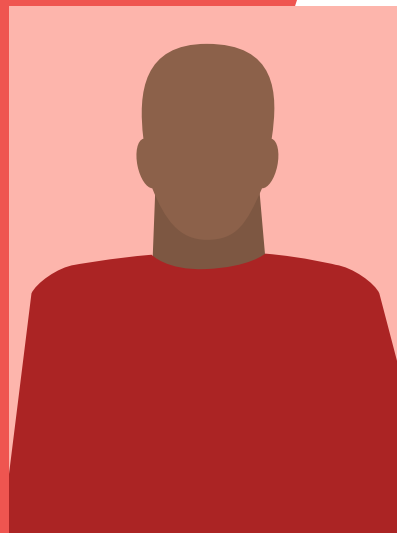
About Kasey's Home

Kasey lives in a detached house that has been turned into a HMO, sharing communal spaces with seven other people. Kasey works from home mostly, but often goes into the City or to co-working spaces as a freelancer. The house is always freezing, even when the heating is on. They think it's easier to just go out, or stay in bed with a hot water bottle.

Kasey has seen some works to houses in their area, such as solar panels or heat pumps, and thinks it would be great if the shared spaces could be more comfortable for everyone to use.

Kasey is thinking about having a house meeting, and then speaking to the landlord. But, they can barely get everyone in the house to recycle properly - getting everyone to agree to these changes is going to be hard.

Jaden



Age: 45
Gender: Male
Ethnicity: Caribbean
Health: Asthma
Tenure: Homeowner
House type: Bungalow
Energy bills: £190pm
Employment: Full-time
Superpower: Finding great deals
Resistance: Limited time

About Jaden's Home

Jaden lives with his wife and kids in an ex-council house that he now owns, after living there for several years. Jaden has tried to make his house more energy efficient over the years, but he found the council's process quite confusing.

Now that his family own the house, they are eager to make changes that will save them money in the long run. He has also noticed that his asthma is getting worse, as there is damp and mould in the home.

Jaden is looking at his options, but he hasn't had much time because he's always busy working or spending time with his family. His wife also works full time, so it is difficult to sit down and talk about these things with everything else in life. Jaden is also worried about how disruptive the process might be, as he needs to keep a routine for the kids.

Rebecca



Age: 32
Gender: Female
Ethnicity: White British
Health: Crohn's Disease
Tenure: Private tenant
House type: Flat
Energy bills: Fluctuates - £230 most recently
Employment: Currently on maternity leave
Superpower: Motivated to be greener
Resistance: Disruption

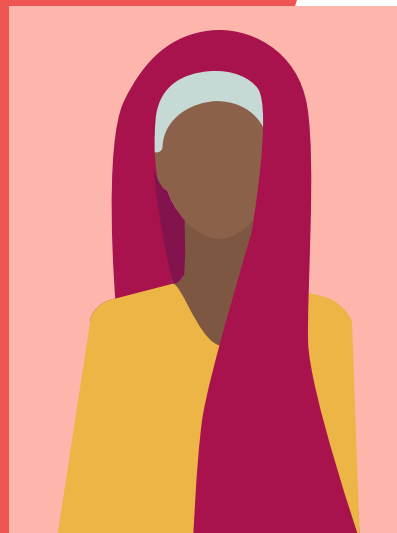
About Rebecca's Home

Rebecca lives in a high-rise flat that has hundreds of other tenants. In the summer, Rebecca is boiling hot as she has huge windows and the heat rises up. In the winter, it is freezing and she runs up her energy bills with an electric heater. She is currently on maternity leave, and spends a lot of time at home.

After an awful winter and a high energy bill to follow, Rebecca has decided to approach her landlord about what changes might be possible.

She's worried about how any works might impact her routine with a new baby, and she needs to be able to manage her health condition alongside these works.

Salma



Age: 70
Gender: Female
Ethnicity: Bangladeshi
Health: Arthritis and Diabetes
Tenure: Living with family
House type: Ground floor flat
Energy bills: £170pm
Employment: Retired
Superpower: Supportive family
Resistance: Not confident speaking English

About Salma's Home

Salma lives in the ground floor of a terraced house with her son and her grandchildren, who all work full-time. Salma spends a lot of time at home, and enjoys cooking and spending time in her garden.

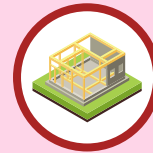
The house is very cold and draughty - the windows are not doubled glazed, and cold air rises up from her basement. The grandchildren have heard about a home improvement scheme in the area.

They live on the ground floor, and have adapted the space so Salma can get around easier. If they could make any changes that wouldn't impact her accessibility, they would also need to get the family upstairs to agree. This is quite scary for Salma, she is very comfortable and quite shy.

Salma's journey to green home adaptations

Salma faces a lot of challenges at each stage of adapting her home to make it more energy efficient. Taking a person-centred, place-sensitive approach to green home adaptations recognises Salma's existing vulnerabilities, offering solutions to achieve a just transition in retrofit. As retrofit is undertaken, it is important to consider the individual characteristics and household circumstances that might create challenges in this journey, and identify supportive solutions to help overcome them.

Our presentation of Salma's person-centred journey is intended to create an entry point for deeper thought and conversation about how other personas - and residents across London - might experience retrofit.



Awareness

Salma's family have noticed that her arthritis is getting much worse, and are worried about her being home all day in the cold.

When they mentioned retrofit, she was confused - it reminded her of the 1960s.

They explain more, but she is sceptical, she does not like new people coming into her home.

Salma agrees to look for some more information. When she logs into her local council's website, she is comforted to see information in English and Bangladeshi.

There is a drop-in session at a local community space next week that she marks on her calendar.



Accessibility

Salma attended the drop-in session, and was happy to hear that she qualifies for funding to help with the costs.

She met a retrofit assessor at the community centre, and they have arranged an initial assessment on a day that all of the family will be home.

Salma shows the assessor around the house, and points out where support bars have been put in to help her get around.

She is still worried about how the retrofit works might disrupt her home.

Salma mentioned a contractor that her neighbours used for some works recently, he lives in the area.



Acceptance

As agreed, the assessor provides a detailed plan of works and an estimated timeline.

Salma, her family, the assessor and the contractor her neighbour used sit down together.

Salma isn't confident speaking English, so she is happy her family are there to help translate.

They explain that they are taking a fabric-first approach, meaning that some of Salma's support bars will be temporarily taken out.

This is very scary for Salma, she would like time to think about it, and they still need to discuss this with the family upstairs.



Adoption

Salma's family and her upstairs neighbours have agreed to the plan of works, which is moving forward as agreed.

Salma's family have set up measures to support Salma to get around during the works, particularly in the living room where the most extensive work is needed.

The contractor has sat down with Salma at the end of each day to review the plan of works, providing regular updates that have been very comforting while they are taking place.

Salma has learnt a lot about retrofit, and is looking into different ways that she can share her learnings to support others.



Adaptation

The work in Salma's home has been completed, and the home is now more comfortable for everyone.

Salma has noticed that a draught no longer comes from the basement, and the damp is no longer coming through the walls.

The family took this opportunity to make the home work smarter, and now have a smart meter that allows them to track their energy usage.

Salma is proud of what she has learnt on this journey, and is sharing her experience with neighbours.

She is now thinking about what other low carbon living measures she can adopt.

Questions to help understand the needs of households

This conversation question guide aims to support engagement with residents with protected characteristics in housing adaptation initiatives. It can nurture constructive conversations between the people leading and delivering housing adaptation initiatives and residents with protected characteristics. The underlying hypothesis is that better conversations will lead to an understanding of the needs of residents, leading to a better tailored process with reasonable adjustments to their needs. This in turn should support a better end-to-end experience of housing adaptation, maximising the potential positive impact on the homes and lives of residents. Additionally, better conversations can support greater acceptance of housing adaptation amongst residents by opening channels of communication and building relationships of mutual understanding.

The question guide is arranged by stages of person-centred transition planning, a framework for conceptualising the journey of residents engaging with housing adaptation. The guide is based on the direct input of community research, as well as the views shared by participants of our participatory research process.

Ask these questions to explore household needs

Awareness

The starting point of the journey, where residents find out about potential green adaptations to the home.

Ask these questions to get a full picture:

1. Where do you live?
2. How long have you lived there?
3. Can you tell me a bit about your home?
4. What is the building like?
5. Do you own your home or rent? From whom?
6. How many people live in your home and what is their relation to you?
7. How long do you intend to stay in your home?
8. What are your energy bills like?
9. What kind of energy do you use?
10. Is your home generally warm or cold?

Accessibility

Navigating the affordability of net zero measures, and the suitability for household profiles, managing factors that affect households' vulnerability and participation - including time, dependencies, and emotional energy.

Start by asking: "Have you heard about making changes to your home to help reduce energy bills? This is sometimes called home adaptation or retrofit"

1. If they say 'yes' ask:

- » Where did you learn about this?
- » Are there any changes you've already made to your home?
- » Are there any changes you've considered or are considering making?

2. If they say 'no': Briefly explain

- » There's a range of changes that can be made to homes to reduce energy bills. Changes can be small, like adding draft excluders to doors and windows, or bigger, like adding insulation to walls to help regulate temperature. Some changes can happen right away and don't cost a lot, while other changes may require some construction works and may be more expensive. Each home is unique and will likely need a combination of changes.

3. Then ask:

- » Thinking of everything from smaller to bigger changes: are there any changes you would consider making to your home?
- » Why or why not?
- » What information would you need to make the decision to adapt your home?

Acceptance

Agreeing what measures can be adopted, managing expectations, navigating decision-maker roles, acknowledging trade-offs, negotiating fair responsibility of the burden, and trusting the technology, financing and leadership of the change.

Ask these questions to guide the discussion:

1. Who do you live with?
2. What do they think about home adaptation? (if anything)
3. If you decided you want to go ahead with adapting your home, who else needs to be bought in?
4. What information would they need to make the decision to adapt your home?
5. What worries you about the home adaptation process? (If applicable) What worries the people you live with?
6. What are the non-negotiables for your home? (eg, what is so important that you're not willing to compromise)

Adoption

Adopting times and processes, navigating disruption to the home or community, managing ongoing expectations of individuals or household.

Ask these questions to help residents prepare for the changes:

1. What might you need to feel comfortable during the works required for adapting your home?
2. What information and/or support do you need to feel as comfortable as possible? What else would be helpful?
3. What would you like us to know about you and the people you live with? (eg, about your habits, needs, beliefs)
4. What would you like to know about us?

Adaptation

Acclimatising to different energy, home, lifestyle, and work practices, supporting household budget fluctuations, responding to climate impacts, and recognising that net zero technologies can shift.

Ask these questions to support the adaptation process:

1. What do you imagine your home might look and feel like at the end of the adaptation process?
2. How do you want to feel at the end of this process?
3. What would be the ideal outcome for you and your home?
4. What might you or people in your household need support with? (eg, learning to use new technologies)
5. What information and/or support might be helpful?

Communicating home retrofit

The aim of this toolkit is to provide practical insights and tools to support the successful communication of housing adaptation initiatives to residents, in ways that are both accessible and attractive. It is based on the insights of our community researchers and workshop participants. Therefore, this toolkit forefronts the needs of residents with protected characteristics, highlighting particular barriers they might face in accessing or understanding information. However, we assume that communications that are accessible to those with the most acute barriers will likely work for those who face less acute barriers (residents without protected characteristics).

This toolkit is intended for use as a starting point to design resident communications around housing adaptation initiatives. Below are key messages, followed by suggested formats, supporting materials and channels.

i. Key messages

How might we best communicate housing adaptation to residents of London, especially those with protected characteristics?

Communications materials should provide a concise explanation of the housing adaptation offer, with specific requirements, timeframes and a concrete portrayal of what participation might look like for residents. Although materials should highlight responsibilities and requirements that may fall to the resident, they should forefront benefit to the household to motivate participation. Below are some suggestions to support the development of key messages.

Paint a picture and make it as relatable as possible.

Residents are motivated by imagining what changes to their home might look and feel like. Because of the relative rarity of housing adaptation, especially for some cultural and socioeconomic groups, it may be a challenge to imagine an adapted home. Focus on communicating expected changes to the home environment, such as less humidity and mould, and better temperature regulation. There is an opportunity to support this with pop-up demonstrator homes that residents can visit to experience the look and feel of adaptation.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics:

- » Create visual representations for individuals who might struggle with written text, such as people with learning disabilities or lower literacy.
- » Offer analogue formats (eg, printed materials) for individuals with lower digital literacy, particularly older people or those without internet access.

Forefront expected benefits to the household.

Residents need to understand the benefits to their household and home in order to be motivated to participate. Participation in housing adaptation initiatives is perceived as burdensome for households due to potential disruption and costs. Therefore, residents need to see benefits to feel motivated, including economic benefits, an improved living environment, health benefits and potential benefits to property value. Environmental benefits are valued, but only when they are paired with benefits to the household and home.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics:

- » Disruption related to housing adaptation may be more burdensome for intergenerational households, individuals with caring responsibilities, and those with long term health conditions, illnesses and/or limited mobility. Make sure the benefits being communicated speak to the target residents and outweigh the potential burden.
- » Potential health benefits are particularly motivating for older people and those with long-term health conditions
- » Consider the tenure of the residents and make sure the benefits are relevant to them. For instance, potential benefits to property value may not be relevant to private and social renters, and potential changes to bills may not be relevant to households with multiple occupants (HMOs) who may pay a flat rate.

Focus on the outcome, but don't ignore the process.

Communications about housing adaptation can be overly focused on changes to the home and green technologies, which residents can struggle to connect with. The key message should be an overall vision of how residents' lives will be improved through housing adaptation. However, residents still need to know the requirements of their participation, including likely timeframes, and what responsibilities might fall on them. Communications about the process of housing adaptation need to be as simple and concrete as possible, avoiding the use of technical language and jargon, which the resident might not need to know.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics:

- » Jargon should be avoided, as it may be particularly difficult to understand for speakers of English as a second or other language.
- » Information about green technologies may be particularly tricky for older people and/or those with limited digital literacy.

Personalise communications as much as possible.

Residents need to see their own circumstances reflected in communications materials in order for it to feel relevant. Otherwise, there is a risk that individuals will think that housing adaptation is not for them and may not engage with the information at all. Name the target locations, groups of individuals, and types of homes. Where possible, provide a personalised assessment, including likely costs and timeframes for different types of homes and tenures. Additionally, there is an opportunity to showcase adaptation that has already happened locally, showing the range of homes and profiles that can participate and the benefits they've seen.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics:

- » Individuals who are not homeowners, particularly private renters, are susceptible to assuming that housing adaptation is not for them. Make it clear who is being targeted and who is eligible.
- » Older people and young people may assume that housing adaptation is not for them. For older people, this is because they assume the timeframes for seeing benefits are too long-term. Young people have a lower proportion of home ownership and may therefore assume that adaptation is not for them.

Include relevant testimonials and success stories.

To make housing adaptation feel relevant and attractive to the target audience, include testimonials and examples of people who have participated. These should be selected to reflect the audience, for instance by including local examples and/or people from their socio-demographic group. Testimonials and stories should forefront the outcomes and benefits, but should also include as much detail as possible on the type of housing, the works required and results. This may support potential participants to imagine what end-to-end participation might look like for them, and help set expectations.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics:

- » Include examples of households with a range of protected characteristics to ensure that individuals see themselves reflected in the initiative
- » If an initiative includes accessibility considerations and accommodations, make sure these are reflected in testimonials (ie, examples of working with residents with protected characteristics to accommodate their needs).

Include a clear and easy call to action to capture interest

Our research identified that most potential participants 'drop out' in the earliest stages of the housing adaptation journey. To avoid losing potential participants, make sure there is a clear and easy step to take to express interest. For instance, invite individuals to register for a personalised assessment or to receive more information. Reduce the perceived complexity of housing adaptation by breaking it down to small steps that individuals can take right away.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics:

- » People with disabilities, long-term illness or limited mobility are particularly susceptible to assuming that housing adaptation may not work for them. Capturing accessibility requirements at the expression-of-interest stage reassures participants that their needs are considered. Where available, forefront any accessibility accommodations on offer.

ii.Format

What format might best communicate the information to residents while supporting clarity and accessibility?

The format in which information is communicated to residents will impact who engages with the information, impacting who will ultimately participate in retrofit initiatives. Below are some suggestions to reach a broader range of residents, followed by adjustments to increase accessibility and supporting materials.

Visually distinguish from other local communications.

Residents may disengage if information is confused with other local communications, particularly with council notices. Information that uses council branding may be confused for planning permission letters or notices. A unique visual identity helps distinguish.

Capture people's attention.

To increase the reach of communications, capture people's attention through visually attractive mediums including social media posts, short videos and physical posters. Initial communications don't need to include all the information about the housing adaptation initiative, but rather pique interest and signpost interested individuals towards a call to action or further information

Include visual information and examples.

Residents may be put off by information that is perceived as complex or jargony. However, it's important that residents grasp the initiative you are communicating and the implications of participation. Where possible, communicate information visually and include concrete examples

Avoid information overload.

Residents need enough information to make a decision, but may feel overloaded by overly technical information. Focus on the parts of housing adaptation that will have direct interface with the resident and the impact they might see/feel. For instance, when talking about green technologies, emphasise the user interface and the impacts to the individual over technical aspects of the technology (eg,. talk about smart meters and changes to bills rather than focusing on how heat pumps work).

Remove the onus on residents as much as possible

The first step should be as frictionless as possible to avoid disengagement. For instance, residents participating in our research suggested an expression-of-interest form in multiple formats (paper, online, telephone) that can be completed in a few simple steps. Additionally, access to further information should be simple and clear, and a point of contact should be included.

Collect and publish FAQs.

To address the information needs of each target audience, collect questions that are asked frequently and publish them alongside clear answers. This demonstrates transparency and may increase clarity as well as the relatability of the initiative.

Considerations for people with protected characteristics

- » **Visuals or short videos for people with learning disabilities or limited literacy.** This might include an illustration of the end-to-end experience of participation, highlighting the key steps and including an initial call to action.
- » **Translation for speakers of English as a second or other language.** The languages for translation should be tailored to the needs of each target neighbourhood. Consider supporting with a direct point of contact that can provide additional information and clarification in the necessary language.
- » **Human point of contact for people with learning disabilities or limited literacy.** Provide a telephone number, drop-in sessions and/or a place where residents can receive information from a person. This may also support trust in your initiative.
- » **Easy-read versions for people with limited literacy, or vision impairments.** These should be available online and in printed formats. Signpost to the availability of easy-read formats in your communications, and make the materials available in key locations as well as online.
- » **Paper communications for older people or those with lower digital literacy.** Some residents may struggle to access information online and might benefit from paper communications and channels like telephone lines.

Other ways of supporting your messaging

- » **Provide a single point of contact** for the provision of information, clarification and registration of interest. This builds trust and supports residents to engage in a friendly, human way.
- » **Consider hiring community ambassadors.** Consider recruiting and training members of the target audience as ambassadors, able to promote the initiative, answer questions, and signpost other residents. This supports trust in the initiative and helps meet the needs of each target audience.
- » **Echo your key messages** in visuals such as posters, notices on bulleting boards and community centres, as well as on official websites. Residents may be wary of scams. It's vital they believe the initiative is credible.
- » **Signpost to a demonstrator home** that residents can visit in a central location. Alternatively, pop-up demonstrators could be brought to neighbourhoods and set up in accessible places, like community centres. The aim is to demonstrate the look and feel of adaptation and green technologies.
- » **Hold information sessions** to engage each target audience. Where possible, incentivise participation in information sessions, for instance by providing lunch, paying for participant travel and/or offering small incentive payments. Where possible, work with existing community infrastructure (eg, local community centres and/or regular local events)

ii.Channels

What might be the best ways of reaching residents and ensuring information is trusted?

Use a range of channels to communicate and echo your key messages. Residents are more likely to find and trust information in the formats they are accustomed to accessing. 'Light touch' research can build understanding of the channels and formats a target audience accesses regularly. Below are some channels that might help reach residents.

WhatsApp groups:

Some neighbourhoods communicate with each other through groups or direct chats on WhatsApp. Consider creating images and short texts that are easily shareable through WhatsApp, and can be forwarded between neighbours.

Social media:

Some residents, particularly younger people and those with high digital literacy and internet access, may find information through social media channels including Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. Consider paid advertisement on a range of social media platforms, with content tailored to the needs and audiences of each platform. Where possible, identify and reach out to local social media pages and groups that can support promotion.

Website:

To boost credibility and trust, set up a website that hosts all relevant information and includes a clear point of contact for questions or further information. The website can be signposted to in promotional material.

Promotional posters and flyers:

To promote the initiative to individuals with limited digital literacy, no internet access and/or those with limited literacy. Posters and flyers can be distributed on bulletin boards, in community centres and local business and, where possible, public buildings. These should include top-line messages and signpost residents to both online and offline sources of further information and/or contact.

Information in newsletters:

Where possible, identify local mailing lists and newsletters that can be used to promote the initiative. Include clear information on eligibility to help reach target audiences.

Canvassing:

Door-to-door promotion may be appropriate for some audiences, particularly people with limited mobility and/or limited digital literacy, internet access or literacy.

Monitoring the outcomes of home retrofit

This section presents a selection of suggested indicators, tools and approaches, intended for those assessing the outcomes of home adaptation initiatives, including commissioners, funders and providers. The underpinning hypothesis is that monitoring and assessing proposed outcomes can lead to a better understanding of the participation of people with protected characteristics in retrofit initiatives, what is working for them, and what adjustments could be made to better support their participation.

The proposed monitoring outcomes, indicators and approaches combine quantitative and qualitative measures, embedded throughout the different stages of retrofit initiatives. This is crucial because the success of a retrofit initiative is not just in its outcomes, but also in the process of delivery and the experiences of participants with protected characteristics throughout. Early indicators provide an opportunity to adjust approaches to accommodating people with protected characteristics, implementing improvements and learning in real time.

The measures and approaches in the table below are meant as a starting point to help those assessing retrofit initiatives to integrate meaningful indicators of the participation and experiences of people with protected characteristics. Outcomes and measures should be tailored to the specific aims of the programme, for instance reflecting a particular focus on individuals with selected characteristics. Particularly, the assessment of outcomes from participation of the programme should be tailored to the expected impacts of the retrofit initiative on individuals and their homes. Additionally, the integration of these and other indicators is crucial to understanding the experience and outcomes of a retrofit initiative in the round.

Outcomes	Indicators	Suggested methods, approaches and/or tools
Participation in the end-to-end retrofit journey	Number of people with one or more protected characteristics who begin participation in retrofit initiative	Collection of self-identified protected characteristics in expression of interest form/ sign up process. The number of participants with protected characteristics can be set as a standalone goal, or in proportion to the demographic characteristics and prevalence of protected characteristics in the target population
	Proportion of people with protected characteristics 'dropping off' at different stages of the journey	Logging instances of 'drop off' during different stages of the journey (eg, by keeping a record of participants reaching different milestones and mapping against protected characteristics)
	Proportion and/or number of people with one or more protected characteristics who successfully complete the journey	Rate of completion/ end-to-end participation in retrofit initiative by people with protected characteristics
Positive experiences of retrofit initiatives by people with protected characteristics	High levels of satisfaction from participants with protected characteristics	Satisfaction survey and/or exit interviews with people with protected characteristics at 'drop off' or completion of home adaptation works to assess the success of the process.
	Low instances of issues faced by participants with protected characteristics and/or evidence of actions/adjustments in response to logged issues	Setting up a process to log issues or concerns faced by participants with protected characteristics. Recording actions against each logged concern or issue. Integrating learning to improve the end-to-end journey for others with similar needs
	Positive outcomes from participation in retrofit initiatives for people with protected characteristics.	Follow-up interview or survey with participants with protected characteristics one or two years after participation in retrofit initiative to assess the impact of participation on individuals and their homes.
Reasonable adjustments for people with one or more protected characteristics	Instances of accommodations made for people with one or more protected characteristics	Log/registration of instances of reasonable adjustments/accommodations made for people with protected characteristics. Mapping of reasonable adjustments/accommodations against participation outcomes (eg, completion rates).
	Positive experiences and/or outcomes from accommodations/adjustments for people with protected characteristics	Testimonials from participants with protected characteristics in receipt of reasonable adjustments/accommodations

Glossary

Awareness is the first stage on the person-centred transition journey, with a lack of information that is trusted and accessible identified as a key barrier on this journey. Below are suggestions to support better understanding between retrofit providers and residents with protected characteristics:

Retrofit is not widely understood as a term, with participants associating the word with a return to a previous state (due to the suffix of retro). The preferred term is **green home adaptations**, understood as *any improvement to your home to improve its energy efficiency, making it easier to heat and cool, able to retain a comfortable temperature for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with low carbon alternatives.*

Healthy homes, future-proofed homes and calls to support *a better future for local areas* (for example, a better future for Haringey) are all highly motivating when engaging Londoners in domestic retrofit, making them more resilient to the weather, and less susceptible to fluctuations in energy bills.

Climate change is a widely understood and accepted term, but feels abstract and unrelatable to some, reaching a comfortable definition of *a lot of what happens in society, from how we heat our homes, to how we produce food, produces a pollutant called carbon. High levels of this in the atmosphere cause many problems, including extreme weather, air pollution and global warming.*

Net Zero has associations with programmes for better air quality in shared public spaces, with many feeling it is not relevant to their home. The phrase is also associated with Ultra Low Emissions Zones (ULEZ), which introduces unnecessary controversy. **Low-carbon living** was more widely accepted, recognised as *a movement to the state where the amount of carbon we put into the environment is no more than we take out. Analogies make this term more approachable, such as it's like a bank account, if the amount taken out is the same as what you put in, you get a sum of zero.*

Jargon or technical language surrounding retrofit should be avoided when initially engaging Londoners in retrofit. Where it must be used, households should be directed to supportive materials such as [Changework's A to Z of retrofit](#) or [What Does Retrofit Actually Mean?](#) This empowers households to understand the kind of changes they might expect to see when undergoing retrofit.

- **Protected characteristics** refer to [nine characteristics that protect individuals from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010](#). It's against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic. This includes age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- **Intersectionality** is a critical concept that recognises how individuals hold multiple identities and face unique challenges at the intersections of those identities, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.
- **Sunflower** is a symbol that represents hidden, invisible or non-visible disabilities – people might wear it to show they need extra help or patience. These disabilities are not immediately apparent, but they significantly impact the day to day lives of individuals.
- **Spoons theory** is used in the chronic illness and disability world, a metaphor to describe the amount of physical or mental energy that a person has available for daily activities and tasks, and how it can become limited.



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