



SE² Project Profile: North Fulham New Deal for Communities Energy Efficiency for Privately Renting Residents

Background

From December 2007 to March 2008, SE² worked with the North Fulham New Deal for Communities (NDC) team to promote energy efficiency amongst the estimated 800 privately renting tenants in the area.

North Fulham NDC had identified the private rented sector (PRS) as being of particular concern with regards to energy efficiency and general stock condition, and had climate change and sustainability targets to meet on improving housing stock and increasing energy efficiency.

Project Objectives

The desired outcomes of the project were to increase energy efficiency and awareness amongst residents and gather information on the condition of the privately rented stock in the area.

The aim of this was to improve the quality of the PRS stock through increasing energy efficiency, resulting in positive knock-on effects on the health of local residents, reduced fuel poverty and increased desirability of the privately rented properties in the area.

The information gathered would also feed into future improvement programmes, and advice, information and products would be given to residents to enable them to reduce their energy use and the resulting carbon emissions.

Methodology/Activities

The greatest challenge in this project was identifying the privately rented stock in the area. This was undertaken in collaboration with the local authority, local estate agents and other community resources, and through use of purchased data and online resources. This was supplemented with visits to North Fulham to gain a better understanding of the area. The research resulted in a list of 85 addresses which were certainly privately rented, and an additional 1,687 which had a high likelihood of being privately rented.

Based on this information, a baseline 'level zero' stock condition survey was carried out in the form of a walk-by assessment of the properties, with the aim of helping to inform what energy efficiency measures would be most beneficial to them. Following on from this, a campaign was designed, taking into account the types of properties in the area and resident profiles (identified in collaboration with the Energy Saving Trust).

A two week campaign was run, consisting of a combination of advice stands in prominent places (for example the local gym and the market), publicity posters and leaflets in shops, doctors' surgeries, libraries, restaurants and churches, and contact with local community groups. A Home Energy Visit was carried out on a local Councillor's house, which received local press coverage.

In addition, a specially adapted version of the Energy Saving Trust's (EST) Home Energy Check questionnaire was developed and mailed to nearly 1,800 homes identified as likely to be rented. Residents who returned this were sent a tailored home energy report by EST, and were further incentivised by the NDC through the offer of an Energy Saving Pack (worth around £100) to help tenants save energy in their homes. This contained items such as an eco-kettle, draft excluding strips and a standby buster. Further packs were distributed by a local estate agent to new tenants moving into the area. The data collected by the questionnaire was also fed into the stock condition survey of the area.



Project Team/Partners

This project received input from the NDC team, Energy Saving Trust, Craig Sheehan Estate Agents, North End Road Market management, Fit Rooms Gym, CEN and SEA. This was coordinated by SE².

Achievements and Successes

The combination of approaches taken resulted in a good level of data being collected about the area - detailed information was gathered on over 100 properties. This covered the age, size and construction of the dwellings, as well as the types of energy saving measures taken already, fuel type used and satisfaction levels. For example, the survey indicated that nearly a third of residents said that they were unhappy with their heating system as their homes were often cold in winter, and they couldn't afford to use as much heat as they'd like.

There are difficulties in reaching the private rented sector and in motivating residents to take action as they do not have much control over the properties they live in, so we created a pack of energy saving items that empowered tenants to think about their behaviour and change what they can. We also were successful in reaching over 300 residents through the advice stands, which were targeted at locations and times where the young professionals we were seeking to engage with would see them.

Throughout the project, SE² took a flexible approach and worked with many partners to reach as many residents as possible. Working with landlords was not within the scope of this project, but the project has delivered useful information on the condition of the privately rented stock in the area, and there is a great deal of scope for building on this in the future.

Jo Higgs, Project and Commissioning Manager, North Fulham NDC:

"SE² have been very good to work with"

Emily Browne, Project Manager, SE2:

"This project has illustrated the difficulties and also the great potential of working with the private rented sector - high levels of dissatisfaction with the efficiency of homes appear to exist amongst tenants, so engagement with them has the scope to result in significant improvements. Identifying which properties are privately rented presents a challenge, but one which can be overcome through collaborative working with local organisations and authorities."

Further Information

For more information on SE²'s involvement with Energy Efficiency for Privately Renting Residents of the North Fulham NDC area, please contact:

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