

Community Energy GO

Voluntary Sector
North West 

Briefing for VCFSE sector organisations

Community energy planning just got easier – free guidance for local groups setting up renewable energy projects.

What is Community Energy GO?

Community Energy GO connects community groups across England with expert advice, practical tools and hands-on support to help turn renewable energy and low-carbon ideas into real projects.

It offers free, tailored support to groups that are just starting out, recently formed, or developing an innovative project for the first time – including groups preparing applications for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Great British Energy Community Energy Fund.

Support is designed to help groups:

- Shape early-stage ideas
- Build confidence and knowledge
- Develop viable projects
- Access expert guidance to move from concept to a fundable project

Status: After a pilot phase (soft-launched October 2025), the service opened for applications from all eligible groups on 11 May 2026

Visit the home page at communityenergygo.org.uk

Who's behind it (the partnership)

Community Energy GO is delivered by three partner organisations, funded by the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme (administered by the Energy Savings Trust):

Partner	Role
Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)	Lead partner – national charity (no. 298740); brings community energy, capacity-building and advice expertise
Ashden Climate Solutions	Supports practical climate/energy innovation and growth of community energy initiatives
Community Energy England (CEE)	Represents community energy organisations across England; sector expertise and reach

What support looks like

Two tiers of support are offered, depending on need:

- **Light Touch Support** – Short, focused input: reviewing a project idea, answering key questions, or pointing to useful resources. Good for groups that just need a steer or reassurance.
- **Deep Dive Support** – Tailored, hands-on help for groups with more complex needs or higher-impact potential: multiple 1:1 sessions, expert referrals, and help developing funding applications or project plans.

Note: this is explicitly not a capital funding programme or an open-ended mentoring service – it's expert guidance, referrals and signposting.

Visit the about page at communityenergygo.org.uk/about

Who's eligible

Eligible organisation types

Community-based, non-profit groups, including:

- Parish or town councils
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs)
- Registered charities (incl. eligible faith groups and sports clubs)
- Community Benefit Societies (Bencoms)
- Co-operative Societies
- Development Trusts
- Registered social housing providers delivering a community-led project
- Faith or environmental/social community groups with formal governance

Groups not yet formally set up but working towards this are still encouraged to make contact. Shared-ownership models involving private companies may qualify if the community retains meaningful control and a substantial share of benefits.

Not eligible: private companies, informal networks, and individuals without a governance framework.

Eligible project types

Community-led renewable/low-carbon energy initiatives that deliver tangible local benefit and promote long-term community ownership, e.g.:

- Solar panels
- Wind energy
- Battery storage
- Microgrids
- Rural heat networks
- EV charging infrastructure
- Building decarbonisation (where physical measures are involved – general energy bill/debt advice is out of scope)

Fuel-poverty only projects are generally out of scope unless delivered through renewable/low-carbon solutions.

Development stage

Support is for early-stage projects only – conceptual/scoping ideas, initial community engagement, viability exploration, or preparing a GB Energy Community Fund Stage 1/2 application.

Projects already funded or in delivery (procurement, installation, operation) are not eligible.

How support is prioritised (relevant for VCFSE targeting)

Where demand exceeds capacity, priority goes to groups that:

- Are located in England
- Are based in areas with little existing community energy activity
- Operate in areas of higher deprivation (using the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#))
- Increase diversity of participation – e.g. ethnically diverse communities, low-income households, young people, disabled people, migrant/refugee communities, older people vulnerable to fuel poverty
- Widen local participation in their community energy project
- This makes it a strong fit for VCFSE organisations working in deprived or under-represented communities, particularly those who could pivot toward or add a community energy/renewables angle to existing work.

There's also a [Community Energy England projects map](#) showing where activity is currently concentrated (and, by extension, where support is under-served).

What groups will be asked to do: complete a baseline assessment, take part in structured 1:1 sessions/workshops, and share feedback via short surveys/interviews.

[Visit the eligibility criteria page at communityenergygo.org.uk/eligibility-criteria/](https://communityenergygo.org.uk/eligibility-criteria/)

Webinars & resources

A monthly webinar series is running, covering topics such as equity, diversity and inclusion in community energy, finance and business models, governance, planning, grid connections, community engagement, and shared ownership. Past sessions are recorded and available to watch back.

[Visit Webinars & Resources at communityenergygo.org.uk/webinars-and-resources/](https://communityenergygo.org.uk/webinars-and-resources/)

How to get involved

Interested groups can register directly via the online form (name, email, message, and consent to be added to the mailing list)

Register your interest at communityenergygo.org.uk/register-your-interest/

For general queries visit communityenergygo.org.uk/contact-us/

Quick links

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Briefing compiled from communityenergygo.org.uk, September 2026. Check the live site for the most current eligibility and webinar details before sharing.

Further support and information

This briefing focuses on Community Energy GO, but there is also wider support and information available for VCFSE organisations exploring community-led energy.

For the official details of the Government's recently announced People's Power programme and North West support, visit our website. The webpage also brings together additional Greater Manchester support and resources and Liverpool City Region contacts.

Visit www.vsnw.org.uk/publication/community-energy-support