



Winchester Action on Climate Change

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WinACC home energy services

Report on 1 April 2016 – 30 September 2016

1. Introduction

WinACC aims to cut the carbon footprint of Winchester District by 40% or 25,000 tonnes CO₂equivalent per year (relative to the 2004 baseline) by 2020 as the District's minimum share towards the statutory national target of 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (from a 1990 baseline).

WinACC therefore seeks to encourage people to reduce the energy they use in the home, which is mostly for heating space and water. This is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions by average household in Winchester District.

After two large and successful projects in 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 that mostly reached home-owners, WinACC decided in 2014 to have a new focus on supporting people in fuel poverty. Initial funding for this was made available from Winchester City Council (WCC) in November 2014.

The initial funding was allocated for the part-year 2014/2015 and a full year 2015/2-16. Because WinACC raised more funding from another source (the Big Energy Saving Network, BESN) and take-up started slowly, WCC agreed that the underspend at the end of this period could be used to deliver a service to the same clients, with changes to reflect the findings of the evaluation carried out in the last quarter of 2015/2016.

This report summarises about WinACC's home energy activities in the first two quarters of financial year 2016/2017.

Appendix 1 to this report gives more background. Appendix 2 gives the findings of the evaluation of the first eighteen months October 2014 to March 2016, including the lessons for action in 2016/2017 which shaped the services from 1 April 2017.

In this report, "front-line advisers" is used to describe anyone, employed or volunteer, who come into contact with people in fuel poverty in situations where they can help them with their energy use.

2. Purpose

The aim of all WinACC's home energy activities is to reduce emissions in the home.

By helping people in fuel poverty save energy, we help them to reduce their energy bills, or to keep warmer while using and paying for the same amount of energy

3. Objectives

1. Increase knowledge and engagement of front-line advisers in helping people in fuel poverty
2. Provide training and support to front line advisers and providers of social housing.
3. Visit people in fuel poverty at home and assist them to save energy, save money and stay warm.
4. Provide information suitable for public and front line advisers.
5. Provide displays and gadgets to assist understanding and behaviour change.

4. Activities 1 April 2016 – 30 September 2016

This section briefly summarises the main points under project management and each objective. The table on page 5 gives outputs to date, forecast and actual.

Project management

During this period, WinACC focussed on reaching social housing tenants. (The Environment Centre (tEC) is funded to support people in private housing). To maximise the impact of its activities, WinACC prioritised tenants of Council housing.

WinACC transferred management of its home energy services to the WinACC Climate Action Co-ordinator for three reasons: her stronger marketing expertise, her lower hourly rate and to increase synergy with other WinACC activities in the community.

The service to front-line advisers was renamed "Home Energy", and a logo developed.

WinACC continued to seek additional opportunities for funding home energy work:

- a successful bid for a third year's Big Energy Saving Network £5,000 (in partnership with Citizens Advice Winchester District as in 2015/2016)
- unsuccessful applications for a small grant for LED light bulbs and other low-cost measures for disadvantaged people, and for funding linked to roll-out of smart meters.

1: Increasing knowledge and engagement of front-line advisers

This has been the top priority in the first half of this financial year.

In line with the lesson of the first eighteen months that take-up by front-line advisers is much higher when there is a relationship between WinACC and the organisation, WinACC:

- strengthened its relationship with relevant teams at WCC
- continued to work in partnership with Citizens Advice Winchester District
- set up an e-newsletter to all organisations and front-line advisers who have attended training or otherwise used the Home Energy service, to nurture a sense of partnership and mutual support
- took advantage of various networking events.

Disappointed by the lack of interest in casework support from the wider advice sector in Winchester District, WinACC played a key role (alongside Citizens Advice Winchester District and Community First) in the development of the Winchester Advice Charter, in running a “Big Advice” conference in June 2016 at which the WinACC offer was advertised and quoted as an example of good practice (<http://www.winacc.org.uk/news/2016-11-03/winchester-advice-charter-launched>). This led to a higher profile among advice agencies.

2: Training and support

The training offer has been reviewed and refined, with more involvement in delivery by the WinACC Climate Action Co-ordinator. As in previous years, take-up of training is slower over the summer. The service is predicted to reach its target output.

3: Home visits

There has been a pronounced increase in the number of clients being referred for a home visit, almost all being social housing tenants.

For the first time, it looks probable that the service will reach, or exceed, the forecast annual output.

4: Information

WinACC website pages on all aspects of home energy were completed and processes developed to keep them up-to-date.

Partly as a result of the shortcomings this revealed in WinACC’s content management system, WinACC took the decision to review its website and potentially create a new site using another content management system. A report was commissioned from a suitable volunteer, and is expected in December 2016.

5: Displays and gadgets

The home energy displays, light bulb display, energy monitor loan scheme and thermal camera have been maintained and used as appropriate.

In line with the conclusions of the April 2016 evaluation, no resources have been allocated to marketing energy monitor loans.

5. Income and expenditure

Summary table

Income	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
	received	received	received	Available not rec’d
Big Energy Saving Network	8,000	5,000	5,000	
WCC grant for fuel poverty	5,102	12,148		15,000
Total Income	13,102	17,148	5,000	15,000

History of use of WCC grant

2014/2015

In 2014/2015, WinACC received 50% (£5,102) from WCC agreed fuel poverty grant.

Because activities got off to a slower start than expected, WCC agreed to carry forward the remaining 50% (rounded down to £5,000) into 2015/2016.

WinACC was to draw down funding in arrears, providing a six-month update on outputs and expenditure and an annual project report.

2015/2016

The underspend combined with the £22,148 allocated for 2015/2016 gave a total of £27,148 for continuing the Home Energy service.

WinACC did not need to draw down the full allocation in 2015/2016 for two reasons:

1. Because the service was delivered by a contractor instead of an employee, no costs were incurred unless the contractor was required. So expenditure was slower than forecast reflecting slower take-up of some elements of the service.
2. WinACC brought in an additional £5,000 from BESN which was not in the original budget for 2015/2016.

WinACC spent, claimed and received £12,148 in 2015/2016, leaving an underspend of £15,000 against the original allocation (rounded down).

WCC agreed that the total £15,000 underspend would be carried forward into 2016/2017 to be used to deliver a continued Home Energy service in line with the findings of the evaluation of April 2015/2016 (see the appendix).

Added to this is £5,000 from the Big Energy Saving Network, totalling £20,000.

2016/2017

Expenditure in the first half of 2016/2017 has totalled £8,563, with a forecast by year end totalling £19,750.

This means that funding will run out by 31 March 2017.

WinACC will not be able to continue the service without further funding.

Chris Holloway
14 November 2016

6. Outputs – forecast and actual

	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	<i>Forecast in 2014 bid</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Forecast in 2014 bid</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Forecast (12 month)</i>	<i>Actual (6 months)</i>
Website pages and texts for incorporation into WCC and RSL sites	10	Approx. 20	10	Approx. 40	40	Approx. 40
Text and illustrations for the equivalent of at least 10 short leaflet/handouts (approx. total 2000 words) for use by WCC and RSLs	10	10	10	Over 20	10	20
Home visits to WCC or RSL tenants	10	0	25	9	30	9
Home visits other	10	0	20	1	5	2
Outreach session to public – number of sessions	0	20	0	8	14	2
Public – number of people reached via outreach or self-referral	0	165	0	146 plus 178 via partnership with CAB	240	24
Training/briefing/refresher sessions for 6-12 front-line advisers each – number of sessions	10	12	10	5 plus sessions with CAB advisers	8	3
Training/briefing/refresher sessions – number of people	90	76	90	93 (including CAB advisers)	80	49
Casework support for front-line advisers – number of cases	25	1	50	1	0	0
Energy monitor loans	20	2	50	?2	4	0

Appendix 1: Background

WCC ISG

In July 2014, WinACC presented its thinking on fuel poverty to the City Council Fuel Poverty Reduction Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG).

WinACC's thinking was based on experience in previous WinACC projects:

- 2012 – free energy reports on your home (LEAF)
- 2013 – Green Deal Winchester: pop-up shop, triaged helpline
- 2013-2014 – ECO take-up scheme Warm Up Winchester

and on projects elsewhere, including the government-funded National Homelessness Advice Service (<http://www.nhas.org.uk/>) which supports advisers.

WinACC's proposal

In August 2014, WinACC bid for funding from the fuel poverty fund for a Home Energy Advice Resource and Training (HEART) in Winchester District with these strands:

1. support for front-line advisers who are in contact with members of the public in fuel poverty in situations where they can help them with their energy use
2. support for tenants of social or private housing
3. resources such as energy monitor loans

HEART would complement the services for home-owners and people in private rented housing provided by Hitting the Cold Spots, the county-wide initiative, funded by Hampshire County Council Adult Services and Public Health and run under contract by tEC. WinACC would ensure that anyone who uses its website or phone lines direct was linked to appropriate services from Hitting the Cold Spots.

At the same time, Hitting the Cold Spots also put forward a proposal for funding.

Support for advisers

HEART would offer training so that front-line advisers could give basic information and help on:

1. how people can reduce their energy use at low or zero cost
2. how people can reduce the price of their energy
3. the type of measures which could make their home more energy-efficient
4. how to pay for measures that cost money.

Advisers would also be offered support on individual cases:

- referral to Hitting the Cold Spots to take over the case
- casework support via a telephone/email helpline
- joint home visits.

WinACC would give priority to housing management and tenant support staff, and would work in close collaboration with the agencies that formed the Winchester Advice Partnership.

Support for members of the public

WinACC would add to its existing services for all local residents additional support to tenants of social or private housing

- information and support to help social tenants reduce their energy use at low or zero cost
- liaison with their landlords to encourage them to remedy problems.

Independent professional advice on the specific energy problems of their home would continue to be available to all, but chargeable to people who are neither social housing tenants nor in fuel poverty.

Resources

Anyone in Winchester District, whether in private or social housing, would be able to access:

1. light bulb “library”
2. energy monitor loan
3. thermal imager loan
4. referral to Solent Green Deal [now defunct]
5. dedicated pages on the WinACC website addressing the most commonly asked questions, with links
6. detailed factsheets.

The WinACC proposal gave the following income forecast:

Income	note s	2014-15	2015-16
		£	£
Big Energy Saving Network (applied for)	1	10,000	0
WCC Active Communities grant for website refresh (applied for)	2	3,000	0
WCC grant for fuel poverty		10,204	22,148
Total Income		23,204	22,148

WCC funding decision

The ISG agreed to recommend that both WinACC and Hitting the Cold Spots proposals be supported and allocated the requested funding, subject to the following additions which WinACC agreed:

“Feedback: This needs to be discussed further and agreed with both parties but may include:

- a 6 month update and annual project report
- In the case where social tenants are signposted to a service, there needs to be a mechanism for ensuring the outcome of the referral feedbacks to the landlord (this may be the Council or other registered social landlords)

Publicity: Publicising the schemes within the district will be essential to ensure maximum uptake of the two services; both organisations need to outline further how they will coordinate their efforts to engage with residents.

Future Funding: A commitment from both organisations to keep the Council updated with relevant schemes and funding streams as they become available. (This should include the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations, which can offer more substantial funding towards the installation of insulation / upgrades / green technologies)

Other: Outline the set of criteria that residents must meet in order to qualify for emergency financial and practical support [*This was applicable only to Hitting the Cold Spots*].

Portfolio-holder decision PHD601 of 12 November 2014 agreed the final recommendations of the Fuel Poverty Reduction ISG for implementation, including:

“1. That funds be deployed to support the delivery of Hampshire County Council’s ‘Hitting the Cold Spots’ and WinACC’s ‘Home Energy Advice Resource’ - complementary schemes that signpost, support and offer emergency assistance to residents living in fuel poverty. This includes the deployment of £55,204 in 2014-15 and £59,148 in 2015-16 for both schemes. “

The funding was allocated as requested: £10,204 in 2014-2015, and £22,148 for 2015-2016.

Appendix 2:

Home Energy Advice Resource and Training: Evaluation of 18 months to 31 March 2016

Overview

1. This evaluation is based on quantitative outputs and customer feedback on training. It is impossible to measure outcomes of this service because it aims to embed energy-saving knowledge and advice into the daily works of frontline advisers with all their clients in fuel poverty.
2. WCC (Winchester City Council) funding for fuel poverty enabled WinACC to set up the planned infrastructure: information (digital and paper), displays, materials to lend, training courses and marketing.
3. WinACC and tEC services work in a complementary way to signpost, support and offer emergency assistance to residents living in fuel poverty. 'Hitting the Cold Spots' helps home-owners and private tenants, whilst the WinACC scheme is focussed on social housing tenants, primarily by providing a training and casework support service to people - ranging from housing officers to Age UK volunteers - who would be able to spot and support people to reduce their energy bills (described as "front-line advisers").
4. The service got off to a slow start. It was launched towards the end of the 2014/2015 financial year. There were several reasons for this including delays in confirming the grant and the service level agreement, the need to recruit to the post of adviser, and personnel changes in some of the main voluntary sector agencies. This impacted on both expenditure and outputs in 2014/2015.
5. Following a transparent recruitment process, Andy Smale was appointed to provide the technical advice to both public and frontline advisers on a freelance basis, paid by the hour. Although his hourly fee was higher than the hourly salary for an employee, he is paid only when his services are used.
6. This has given WinACC much greater flexibility than would have been possible with an employee. In particular, where take-up was low, funding could be re-allocated to other elements of the service, and to be spread over a much longer period. The WCC-funded Home Energy service was planned to end by 31 March 2016. Underspend should be enough to fund the service for 2016/2017 at forecast take-up levels.
7. WinACC was able to increase the total funding pot because the WCC funding provided the platform for successful funding applications to Big Energy Saving Network (BESN) in 2014/2015 (£9,000) and 2015/2016 (£5,000, plus £5,000 for partner Citizens Advice Winchester District).

8. This extra income from BESN was payable if WinACC trained a specific number of front-line advisers and reach a specific number of disadvantaged members of the public, giving them information about how to save money on energy, including both energy-saving and switching to a cheaper provider or tariff.
9. BESN funding enabled WinACC to reach disadvantaged people through outreach sessions, which were not in the original proposal to WCC.

Key findings

1. Cases came via email and the dedicated landline and, to a much smaller extent, via the WinACC office. No phone calls or texts were received on the mobile number.
2. Overall, much more marketing to agencies was required than was predicted. The Winchester Advice Partnership was a less valuable entry point to advice agencies than expected.
3. Take-up of all the services offered was highest where WinACC developed a relationship with the advisers' organisations, in particular Citizens Advice Winchester District and WCC housing staff.
4. Take-up of training for frontline advisers was lower than expected at first. Where agencies asked for a training session, they were sometimes unable to get many advisers to attend. Nevertheless, demand has grown and the service is delivering its forecast outputs.
5. Take-up of casework support has been extremely low. There seems to be no demand from frontline advisers for information or advice they can pass to their clients. It is impossible for the service to meet its hoped-for outputs. As casework support incurs no cost unless it is delivered, the forecast expenditure can be re-allocated.
6. Numbers of home visits have steadily grown since WinACC amended its policy and now visits unaccompanied by an adviser. (The home visiting service was originally intended to be one aspect of casework support but front-line advisers proved reluctant to visit their clients jointly with the WinACC Home Energy Adviser.)
7. Referrals from social landlords of social housing tenants have been the most valuable part of the service and are steadily increasing. Referral from other public bodies including health and social care services are increasing.
8. Customer feedback on training was consistently positive. Organisations particularly welcomed the flexibility of length and content.
9. It seems that continuity plays an important role in increasing take-up by front-line advisers. This may be partly because it takes time for news about the service to reach them; partly because they need confidence that a service will continue before they embed its use in their daily work.

Achievements of 18 months to 31 March 2016 and lessons for 2016/2017

1. Infrastructure

Achievements	Lessons for action in 2016/2017
1. A Home Energy Adviser was recruited on a freelance basis and WinACC office staff and volunteers trained in handling calls. WinACC and tEC made agreements about areas of responsibility, mutual referrals, information-sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain training of office staff • Re-allocate roles to make best use of technical expertise of Home Energy Adviser, and marketing expertise in WinACC • a higher proportion of the budget can be allocated to services and marketing starting in financial year 2016/2017
2. Systems were set up for access to the service by telephone and text as well as email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If and when the WinACC website is revised, people will also be able to ask for the service us via the website
3. Advice agencies and others who meet people in fuel poverty were informed about the services provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing will be increased and targeted more precisely at different audiences and about different services.
4. WinACC website includes basic and more detailed information on main home energy aspects from appliances to wood fuel in digital and downloadable form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain – small cost to monitor developments and implement changes • WinACC website content management system proved cumbersome; resources permitting, WinACC will seek to migrate to a new system which works better for information-giving
5. It was hard to keep abreast of changes in financial support to public because of shifts in ECO (the Energy Company Obligation) etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen information-sharing between WinACC and tEC (most financial support is not available to social tenants)
6. WinACC created a portable display of simple energy-saving measures to take to talks and community events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain • Publicise availability for use or loan
7. WinACC has a supply of energy monitors for use or loan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain
8. WCC funding provided the platform for successful funding applications to Big Energy Saving Network in both 2014 and 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply again in 2016
9. Three WinACC volunteers assisted in service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to make use of volunteers who already have appropriate skills

2. Support to advisors

<p>10. Use by advisers of all aspects of service was slower than predicted. For example, in the period April to July 2015 WinACC emailed 50 organisations to market the service to advisers, including RSLs, health providers such as foundation trusts, and relevant voluntary organisations such as Meon Valley Carers. Fewer than 20 responded at all, most of them asking for a training session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue service because continuity is important in increasing take-up by front-line advisers – both because it takes time for people to hear about it, partly because they need confidence that a service will continue before they embed its use in their daily work. • Increase marketing, transferring staff lead to Climate Action Co-ordinator • Improve brand awareness by changing name (the acronym HEART was found to confuse people), simplifying publicity materials and creating a logo.
<p>11. Voluntary sector advice agencies were expected to be the main users of the service, which proved not to be true.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WinACC to work with Citizens Advice Winchester District and Community First Winchester to try to achieve a change in culture among advisers so they feel responsible for tackling all aspects of client's problems
<p>12. Use by advisers was much higher when encouraged by management and seen as part of an on-going relationship with WinACC (e.g. Citizens Advice Winchester District, WCC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with advice providers and build on-going relationship with front-line advisers • Issue a Home Energy e-newsletter
<p>13. Take-up of advisor casework support was very low.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer • Market by email to social landlords twice a year but do not follow-up non-responders
<p>14. Few agencies with advisers took up offer of training; some that asked for it then failed to set it up; training that was delivered was well received (see "Customer feedback" above for more on this.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer (there are no overheads in providing this service – cost is only for actual time spent on cases plus marketing) • Market by email to advice agencies twice a year but do not follow-up non-responders

3. Support to public

Achievements	Future action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone and email enquiries: the number of self-referred enquiries, mostly from owner-occupiers, steadily decreased, from over 50 in 2013/2014 to 10 in 2014/2015. This was predicted reasons because WinACC had high profile home energy campaigns in previous years, the “low hanging fruit” were largely implemented and there was better public understanding of energy-saving measures. This was aggravated by poor publicity around Green Deal and some supplier sales tactics, and fewer grants and loans being available for energy efficiency Improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls to WinACC needing only simple facts can be absorbed within WinACC core office costs, no need for dedicated funding • Calls to WinACC from owner-occupiers or people in private rented housing that need advice can be referred to tEC • Publicity for WinACC offers (e.g. information, advice, talks, loans) will be more integrated with other projects in communities e.g. SAVE
<p>15. Talks and outreach: Thanks to funding from BESN, WinACC offered talks to public as well as help to individuals in winters 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.</p> <p>Attendance was higher where the talk was part of another event, and hosted by a local / trusted organisation such as the parish council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer as resources permit (either using BESN funding or volunteer speakers) • Apply to BESN again • Build relations with organisations who can host as part of another event with appropriate participants
<p>16. Home visits. The home visiting service was planned as a way to support advisers but they proved reluctant to do joint visits. As a result, WinACC amended plans and agreed to visit unaccompanied by an adviser.</p> <p>Case study: A had to control her heating by switching individual radiators on and off because no-one had told her how to use the controls. It took our adviser two hours to discover that of the 4 buttons on her household heating control, one controlled upstairs heating, one downstairs, and the other two nothing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer to visit without advisers • Accept but do not market self-referral • Market by email to registered social landlords but do not follow-up non-responders
<p>17. WinACC can be flexible about criteria, giving free visits to people in social housing and to disadvantaged people in private housing where</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue flexible approach to eligibility: WinACC will accept referrals for home at no charge visits to people in private housing where tEC is unable

<p>tEC cannot visit.</p> <p>Case study: B is an owner-occupier of over 80 whose neighbour contacted us about her insulation. Inspection showed low quality in appropriate works by a private contractor. We are assisting her to get redress.</p>	<p>to visit if client is in fuel poverty or disadvantaged by age or disability</p>
<p>18. Visits identified remedial action that needed intervention by social landlords, who responded positively to being informed. This has the potential to benefit others in the same housing.</p> <p>Case study: C was suffering damp, as were others in the same development. Our adviser found that the heat recovery units had broken down, and tenants were all following instructions and keeping their windows closed. The solution was to replace the batteries in the units in all flats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build positive relationships with social landlords, including both City Council and RSLs
<p>19. Visits identified need for low cost actions e.g. LED light bulbs, pipe insulation, chimney balloons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WinACC to seek funding to give free to people in need, will supply at cost to other clients
<p>20. Very few people borrowed energy monitors; and even when they did, they did not always make effective use of them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer this service because there is zero cost in continuing Seek volunteers to help borrowers set them up

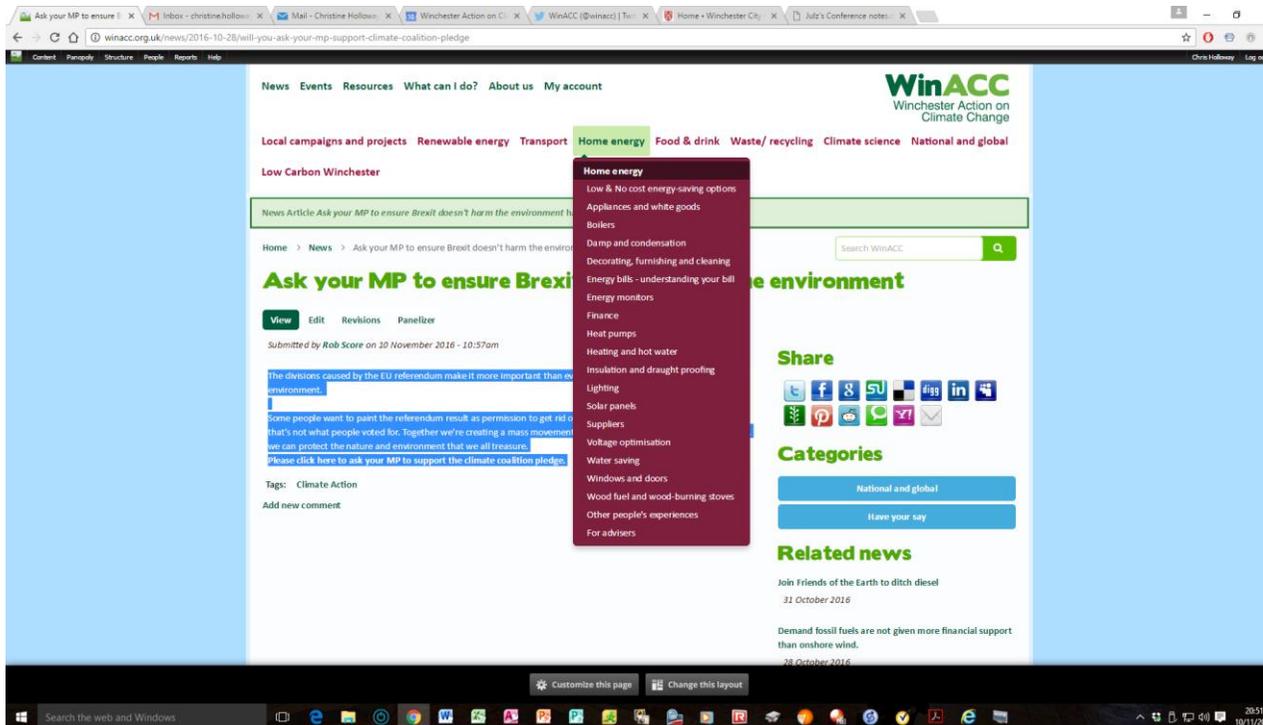
Customer feedback

- A standard feedback form was used for frontline adviser training. All completed forms have been saved and are available for view.
- The first two questions were:
 - What was your level of knowledge of the subject matter **before** the session?
 - What was your level of knowledge **after** the session?
- In 2014/2015, answers showed

Before:	Very Poor: 2	Poor:5	Fair:18	Good: 5	Very Good 2
After:	Very Poor: 0	Poor:0	Fair:2	Good: 22	Very Good 10
- The feedback form went on to ask:

- Overall, how would you rate the content of the session?
5. The average response was above 4; very few scored 3.
6. The remaining questions were:
- Do you now feel equipped to advise your clients on energy provision?
 - What information did you find most useful?
 - What information did you find least useful?
 - Is there anything that you would have liked to have seen that wasn't covered or could be covered in greater detail?
 - Would you like to make any other comments?
7. The answers were used to refine the content of the training, as were ideas from the project team.

Web information



WinACC website front page listing 20 different home energy topics.

Each topic has a basic summary, and pages which are also available as downloadable pdfs at one level (basic), two levels, or three, depending on the complexity of the topic.