

Council partnership launches residential retrofit

3 years ago



A partnership between Essex County Council and workforce development specialist [The Retrofit Academy](#) has been claimed to have delivered a string of improvements for the region's retrofit workforce as well as multiple industry award wins.

With over 422,000 of its homes deemed to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below, and a lack of qualified retrofit professionals across the county, the partnership was forged with the aim of delivering a number of innovative solutions.

A successful bid saw the partnership awarded £703,000 from the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund (CRF) to embark on a project called the Harlow and Tendring Retrofit Pipeline for Economic Renewal. This was designed to upgrade the energy performance of housing stock in the region and also improve socio-economic outcomes for residents in Harlow and Tendring, two of the most deprived boroughs in the country.

Through organisational development, business support, research and knowledge sharing, the formulation of new qualifications, and the establishment of a franchised training provider, the partnership has already transformed local retrofit provision.

Over 12 months, the partnership equipped 248 Essex residents with the PAS 2035 qualification, ensuring they can assess domestic properties for energy retrofit, with 17 of these residents achieving the qualification while unemployed. The partnership has projected that a total of 138 individuals will graduate with Retrofit Assessor or Retrofit Coordinator qualifications, with at least four people already recruited into retrofit-specific jobs.

A *Fit for Retrofit* organisation-wide training course was delivered to 42 individuals from 10 housing associations and local authorities., while 20 businesses were supported in gaining their PAS 2030 certification so they can install, commission, and hand over energy efficiency measures in domestic retrofit projects.

The success of the partnership was also recognised in the Collaboration of the year category of the Unlock Net Zero Live Awards, Essex County Council also landed the Delivering Clean Growth award at the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) President's Awards 2023.

Green sector growth manager Loretta Hoy said: "This collaboration has established the nature of the demand for retrofit skills across the current workforce, looking at the barriers to employment for local people, current skills gaps and key employers with whom to engage. We are continuing to work in collaboration with The Retrofit Academy to support the decarbonisation of the built environment, whilst harnessing Green Growth for the benefit of the local economy."

Retrofit Academy chief executive David Pierpoint said: "We recognise that it is only through effective partnerships that we can develop local workforces capable of delivering high-quality retrofit at scale, which was the guiding principle we applied to our work with Essex County Council. By bringing multiple local partners together to pool their ambition, expertise and passion, we've been able to achieve real change."