



## Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales proudly present 2017 Community Energy Saving Award Winner - South East London Community Energy (SELCE)

In 2014 a group of people living in South-East London came together with a common vision of a greener future. Their aim was to generate electricity that was not only renewable but owned and controlled by the people who use it. In just three years, the directors and volunteers behind the South East London Community Energy co-operative have made considerable strides towards making their



*SELCE tackling fuel poverty*

Since its inception, SELCE has proactively combated climate change and accelerated the transition to a low carbon energy system by bringing together the community of South East London to develop renewable energy projects, improve energy efficiency and alleviate fuel poverty, while increasing knowledge and awareness of energy issues in general. In addition to being part of a strong investor community with £350,000-worth of community financed solar arrays, SELCE has developed a range of inspiring and creative energy saving initiatives. Eradicating fuel poverty is at the heart of the SELCE vision. We cannot move towards a sustainable future if some people are left behind. About 10 per cent of households in the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich are currently affected by fuel poverty.

For the three winters, SELCE has helped over 1,236 vulnerable people to avoid having to make the choice between heating and eating. Our friendly pop-up [energy cafes](#) provide clients with a better understanding of how to reduce their bills and keep warm and well in winter. Our sessions have helped clients save an average of £201 on their energy costs. Our work has been supported by research carried out by SELCE and the University of Sussex which found that the 'café' model is a highly effective way of targeting the most vulnerable. 60 training workshops have up-skilled over 300 frontline workers with an understanding of fuel poverty.

SELCE has ensured benefits genuinely extend to the whole community. In partnership with AQA, SELCE has developed a [Community Energy Saving Champion programme](#) based on participatory, hands-on learning

approaches. More than 450 residents are now equipped with knowledge and consultation techniques to counsel fellow residents on switching suppliers, coping with fuel debt and accessing discounts and grants. The programme does not only up-skill volunteers and community members, but it also helps SELCE in getting to the hard-to-reach residents.

This winter we teamed up with staff from a group of children's centres to [train a team of parents and carers](#) to make energy advice visits to the homes of friends and neighbours. So far, our new advisors have helped 145 households to make CO2 emission reductions of 29,221 kgs and cost savings of £35,800. The project has great potential to be replicated across the country.

SELCE is now helping households to make their homes more energy efficient thanks to a new partnership with Lewisham Council and the RetrofitWorks co-operative. The ECO project will bring [free energy efficiency improvements](#) including loft and cavity wall insulation and draught-proofing to fuel-poor households.

SELCE's '[Watt's About You?](#)' energy information roadshow and portable solar sound system have toured community fetes and carnivals over the last two summers, raising awareness of climate change and energy transition, as well as engaging people of all ages and backgrounds in conversations and games about renewable energy.

SELCE has acted as a vehicle to achieve social justice not only by working in a creative, strategic, reflective way but also by creating partnerships across the community energy sector and beyond. Much of its work is delivered on a voluntary basis, by people in the community who truly believe in SELCE's mission to save energy, reduce fuel poverty, and encourage community cohesion.



*Alex Hartley of SELCE*

[www.selce.org.uk](http://www.selce.org.uk)

Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales teamed up to deliver the Community Energy Awards 2017 to honour the organisations and individuals that have done the most to advance the sector over the last year and to celebrate their achievements. The ceremony took place on 1<sup>st</sup> November At City Hall in London.

### **About Community Energy England**

Community Energy England (CEE) was established in 2014 to provide a voice for the community energy sector primarily in England. Membership totals over 200 organisations. The majority of the member organisations are from the community energy sector but the membership extends across a wide range of organisations which works with and supports the community energy sector.

Further details can be found on the CEE website [www.communityenergyengland.org](http://www.communityenergyengland.org)

### **About Community Energy Wales**

Community Energy Wales (CEW) wants to put sustainable energy schemes at the heart of communities in Wales. Communities can become stronger, more resilient, and self-reliant by generating their own energy, using it efficiently, and directing the net income to regenerate their communities. CEW help to bring about this change by inspiring, empowering, and influencing people, policies and practices across Wales. They bring together a network of practitioners who work with and within the communities of Wales to develop renewable energy generation and energy efficiency schemes.

Further details can be found on the CEW website [www.communityenergywales.org.uk](http://www.communityenergywales.org.uk)