Specification and guidance for completion of application form

Big Energy Saving Network

Energy Champions

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## Background

Big Energy Saving Network is an outreach focussed energy advice programme delivered across England and Wales. It is delivered by a network of Champions and Regional Energy Leads, based in local organisations across England and Wales. This is the guidance document if you are interested in hosting a BESN Champion or Champions during 2021/22.

**Champions** offer advice on energy saving in the home, switching energy suppliers, and guidance on how to access schemes that help vulnerable households stay warm and lower energy bills. BESN should be delivered in an outreach setting by engaging with existing community groups. Consumers can be reached via group sessions, though all attendees should be offered one-to-one support if they would like it.

Advisers should deliver ‘assisted action’ support, which means helping consumers take action to reduce their energy bills or access assistance they otherwise would not have done without BESN.

**Regional Leads** aim to cascade energy advice by training 300 frontline workers, so that they can go on to provide energy advice to the consumers, or make referrals to someone else who can. They are also responsible for local coordination, facilitating the sharing of best practice between Champions.

BESN is funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and managed by National Citizens Advice.

If you have any questions about BESN, or would like to clarify anything about how the project is delivered then please contact us at:[**besn@citizensadvice.org.uk**](mailto:besn@citizensadvice.org.uk). We will aim to get back to you within 24 hours.

You can find a link to the[**application form here.**](https://forms.gle/pqUQWYsYXRFt4qRP8)

## Eligibility

This portion of the Big Energy Saving Network project funding is only available to partners who are not local Citizens Advice.

Applications for grants can be made by the following eligible organisations located anywhere in England and Wales:

1. Charities
2. Parish Councils
3. Community Interest Companies
4. Community Co-operatives and Community Benefit Societies (Industrial and Provident Societies)
5. Voluntary Associations
6. Development Trusts
7. Faith Groups
8. Registered Social Landlords
9. Local Authorities

Funding will not be available for commercial activity and applicant organisations should check with Citizens Advice if they are in any doubt as to their eligibility to apply for grant funding.

Organisations are invited to apply for both the BESN Champion, and BESN Regional Energy Lead roles - provided that the roles are for different people within the organisation. Both applications will be assessed independently, and awards will be made separately. Organisations may be successful in neither, one or both applications.

For more information about applying to be a BESN Regional Energy Lead, please click [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uX-1Wz5II3Hdo1s78VdOEF74alo7Q7ywhIgA26hCsQA/edit#).

If you are based in a local Citizens Advice you are invited to apply to deliver Big Energy Saving Network via this [link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeciI1IeZ1vQ-1B-dp3mFKl25hjepW-lp3aolroF_1cgTU1XQ/viewform?usp=sf_link) - more information about both programmes is available [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ca8wIjvxJ1PanQR9MESuEKgXhydkLp8HNWwGlrah7FU/edit#). This year BESN will be delivered in partnership with the Energy Advice Programme (EAP) as a combined project, designed to help consumers from their entry into the service until all of their problems have been resolved.

## BESN Energy Champions Project Description

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Big Energy Saving Network is an energy advice project designed to reach out into communities and help the people who are most in need. The project is delivered by a network of Energy Champions who will deliver energy advice targeted at vulnerable consumers in their local communities.

**Champions**

In 2021/22 each Energy Champion will be expected to offer advice to 100 consumers. This advice may be delivered in a one-to-one or a group setting. As outreach is a key focus of the BESN project, we expect that the vast majority of the 100 consumers seen by each Champion should be consumers who have not already received advice from your organisation. Building links and partnerships with other organisations, and delivering BESN in the community in which our target audience live their lives is vital to ensuring BESN works as intended.

BESN is an action oriented advice programme. This means that for a consumer to count towards your overall BESN target the Champion delivering the work must know that the consumer has taken an action to improve their energy situation, or must be reasonably sure that the consumer will do this following their interaction.

Information and awareness does not constitute BESN. Signposting consumers to other services, handing out leaflets, and delivering group sessions without the option of one-to-one follow up, are all examples of delivery methods which fall below the threshold expected for BESN.

**Topics**

BESN appointments and group sessions should focus on providing energy advice. The four key topics that your advice should focus on are:

* Switching
  + Helping consumers to switch energy providers, so that they are getting the best possible deal for their needs.
  + Helping consumers to switch payment method, ensuring that they are getting the best possible deal from their supplier.
* Warm Home Discount
  + Checking whether a consumer is eligible for the Warm Home Discount.
  + Where possible helping consumers to sign up to WHD, so that they are able to claim the £140 discount.
* Priority Service Register
  + Helping consumers who are eligible for the PSR to register if they have not done so already.
* Energy efficiency
  + Helping consumers to change their behaviour to reduce their energy costs.
  + This may also include helping consumers to access schemes which will improve the energy efficiency of their home.

Advice delivered via BESN is not necessarily limited to the topics above, for example, you could also cover fuel debt and smart meters. However the focus of the project is to help consumers take action to improve their energy situation, and the points above have been identified as the areas which will help our consumers most.

**Method**

One of the key objectives of BESN is to reach consumers who are not otherwise engaged in the energy topic, or other advice services. BESN should be delivered in the community, as a proactive outreach service.

Generally speaking, the best method for ensuring success has been to build links with existing community groups and partnerships with other agencies. Once those relationships have been established it should then be possible to access the consumers linked with those partners, to reach a diverse audience that we are not already engaging, via a trusted intermediary.

In a pre-COVID world, that meant that BESN was delivered almost entirely out of the office - in the community itself. Whilst it is difficult to predict exactly what the delivery environment will look like in 2021/22, if restrictions have been lifted then we will expect that at least some of your BESN work is delivered in a face-to-face setting. This is important as a large portion of our target audience are digitally excluded.

Delivering via alternative channels is acceptable, and has helped the project reach a more diverse audience. If you choose to deliver this way then time should be taken to build partnership links in your local area, so that you can ensure that most of the consumers that you reach are new consumers. BESN is designed as an entry point service, meaning that delivery should focus on finding new consumers.

**Training**

It will be compulsory for all Champions, and other staff delivering BESN, to complete the BESN elearning module. The BESN course will contain two modules:

Module 1 - What is Energy?

Completion of the module provides an overview of the following topics:

* The role energy plays in our daily lives
* Energy industry structures
* Regulation of the energy industry
* Arrangements for representing and protecting energy consumers
* What is energy advice and how to approach giving energy advice

Module 2 - Helping consumers with key energy issues

Completion of this module will enable you to give basic energy advice on important energy topics to consumers, particularly those in fuel poverty and on low incomes. Topics will include;

* Fuel poverty
* Warm Home Discount
* Switching energy suppliers
* Priority Services Register
* Energy efficiency
* Smart meters
* Energy debt

Each module will take between 1-2 hours to complete, depending on learning styles. There are built in assessments for each module which will help providers and learners to monitor outcomes.

In addition to this, Citizens Advice will host a project start-up meeting, to cover the project’s KPIs and operational objectives of the project. The dates for these meetings, which will be hosted digitally, will be shared once the successful applicants have been notified.

**Regional Energy Leads**

All Champions will be expected to collaborate on BESN at a regional level. This will happen most formally through our network of Regional Leads. Regional Leads will host a minimum of two local networking meetings throughout the delivery window, as well as making sure that they contact each Champion on a monthly basis. They will be able to offer training support, expert input for complex cases, guidance on how to deliver BESN and will also pick up ad hoc queries/issues related to their area.

To help Regional Leads provide support to those who need it, we plan to give them access to the headline data for organisations delivering the service in their region.

**Referrals and Casework**

Whilst BESN is an advice project, it is important to clarify that we are not expecting you to deliver casework (casework includes: undertaking a significant amount of work on behalf of the consumers, multiple repeat appointments to solve a consumers issues, providing holistic support on other topics outside of the scope of BESN). In cases where the consumer needs casework support they should be referred on for this help. This may be to a service delivered by your organisation or to a partner that is able to offer this support.

In 2021/22, we will work to partner organisations that are not able to offer casework support with an organisation in their area delivering the Energy Advice Programme. The Energy Advice Programme is a casework level advice project, funded to provide holistic support to vulnerable consumers, to resolve any energy issues they have, as well as helping them with wider issues.

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## KPIs and Performance

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| **Performance indicators for BESN** | |
|  | * For each BESN Champion an organisation is allocated they will be required to deliver advice to 100 consumers. * Delivery will commence on 01 August 2021 and funded activity must end on or before 31 March 2022. * Champions will report on a monthly basis to Citizens Advice (reporting templates will be shared at a later date). * Champions will attend a networking day in September 2021.. * Champions must engage with Regional Energy Leads in their area |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KPI** | **Volume** | **Reporting Method** | **Reporting Frequency** |
| Advise consumers | 100 per Champion | Google Form submitted to National Citizens Advice | Monthly |
| Consumer outcomes | 1 report per consumer | Google Form submitted to National Citizens Advice | Monthly |
| Consumer consent | 30 per Champion | Google Form submitted to National Citizens Advice | Monthly |
| Champion survey | Various throughout the delivery period | Google Form shared by National Citizens Advice | Various throughout the delivery period |
| Case studies | 1 report per Champion | Google Form shared by National Citizens Advice | 1 per delivery period |
| Attend local networking meetings | 2 per delivery window | N/A | N/A |
| Engage with RELs | Various throughout the delivery period | N/A | N/A |
| Training | Complete digital modules and attend project start meeting | Tracked digitally | N/A |

BESN Champions are required to provide proactive energy advice to 100 vulnerable consumers by 31 March 2022. Provided advice should result in consumers taking energy action - which can include, but is not limited to, the following four actions.

* Switching to a cheaper tariff or supplier
* Accessing the Warm Home Discount scheme
* Making home energy efficiency improvements
* Enrolling onto the Priority Services Register

A core objective of BESN is that Champions run or attend outreach events - as such events offer key opportunities to engage vulnerable consumers. At outreach events, advice can then be provided at the time or followed up with a one-to-one session. Outreach at large scale public events, where advice is not personalised to the consumer, will not count towards the BESN targets. Outreach events must be held in a suitable location, and be well advertised - via established contacts, press or social media, for example. BESN outreach sessions are able to be scheduled as part of existing events, provided these events are attended by vulnerable consumers.

Although BESN is designed as a predominantly face-to-face programme, we understand that there is a reasonable chance that COVID restrictions may impact Champions’ ability to engage this way effectively. One-to-one personalised interactions via other means (such as Zoom, Google Meet and Telephone) are therefore also eligible to be counted towards BESN targets - provided they are in line with the key aim of engaging new consumers. Face-to-face interactions should be prioritised where restrictions allow, however, to ensure inclusion of digitally excluded vulnerable consumers.

BESN Champions are required to receive consumer consent throughout the delivery window. Each consumer is to be asked for their consent to participate in the service evaluation - with a minimum of 30 consumers registered per Champion.

As part of the evaluation process, each BESN Champion is required to submit a case study - an example of an effective BESN outreach engagement which has led to clear benefits for the consumer. Further details and guidance around the case study reporting process will be provided.

Each BESN Champion will be partnered with a BESN Regional Energy Lead (REL). One of the roles of the RELs is to offer support, guidance and sector knowledge to BESN Champions - achieved by an active partnership with frequent and regular catch-up sessions throughout the delivery window. Champions are expected to engage with RELs on a frequent basis as a main source of information and support - as well as consult RELs on issues relating to the BESN project.

It is expected that BESN Champions will maintain accurate and up-to-date records in compliance with GDPR regulations. These records can include, but are not limited to, sign-in sheets, details of one-to-one advice appointments, and group session feedback forms.

Monthly reporting is to be completed by Champions using the Google Form provided. The form will be live throughout the delivery period, and each month’s data is due to be submitted by the fifth working day of the following month.

## Funding and Grant Payments

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Successful BESN applicants will be awarded £3500 per Champion. This is made up of two separate payments - an initial payment of £2500 at the beginning of the delivery window, and a further payment of £1000 if the agreed objectives are met in full by the end of the delivery window.

For organisations applying for more than one Champion the total funding will increase by £3,500 per Champion you are awarded. For example, organisations awarded three Champions will receive £10,500.

Citizens Advice may seek to recover all or part of the initial payment if there is insufficient evidence that the objectives of the grant have been met.

The grant can be used to cover expenses such as staff costs, travel, venue hire, printing, IT, translation costs and other associated expenses.

By applying for the grant, the applicant organisation agrees to ensure the Champion’s attendance at organised Citizens Advice meetings.

Each organisation can either apply for a single Champion, or for multiple Champions. Each champion applied for must be a different member of staff or volunteer - however, they may lead and deliver on their own independent programme of outreach, or work together to deliver a collective programme. Multiple Champions from the same organisation must deliver an aggregate total; for example, an organisation with three Champions would have a combined total of 300 consumers to deliver to - individual breakdowns will not be evaluated.

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## Application process

### **Timetable**

Set out below is the proposed timetable. This is intended as a guide. We reserve the right to amend the timescale if necessary at any stage.

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** |
| **Applications open** | Monday 21 June 2021 |
| **Application window** | Monday 21 June 2021 - Monday 05 July 2021 |
| **Deadline for submission** | Monday 05 July 2021 - 5pm |
| **Evaluations** | Tuesday 06 July 2021 - Friday 16 July 2021 |
| **Provisional awards** | W/C Monday 19 July 2021 |
| **Appeals accepted** | Two days following provisional awards |
| **Appeals heard** | Two days following appeals window |
| **Final awards** | W/C Monday 26 July 2021 |
| **Grant agreement issues** | Monday 02 August 2021 |
| **Service commences** | Monday 02 August 2021 |
| **Training** | August 2021 |
| **Project completed** | Thursday 31 March 2022 |

**Application form**

A link to the application form can be found[**here**](https://forms.gle/pqUQWYsYXRFt4qRP8). We advise that you complete your answers on a separate document and then copy them across to this form, to avoid a situation in which any work is lost.

If you are having difficulty using this form then please contact us as soon as possible so we can arrange to receive your application in an alternative format.

**After submitting your form**

Upon completion, you will receive an email via the Google Forms service to confirm your application has been submitted. This is also confirmation that your application has been received. If you have received this confirmation, no further action from you is necessary. If you do not receive this confirmation within one hour of submission, please get in touch with us.

## Assessment and next steps

**Assessment process**

The project requires that we provide coverage of service across England and Wales. To ensure this happens, we reserve the right to amend the level of funding we award to individual applicants.

The scoring for each question will be based on the matrix set out below.

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| --- | --- |
| **Score Awarded** | **Requirement for Score** |
| **Score 0:** | Requirement not answered. |
| **Score 2:** | Limited response providing minimal evidence of whether or how the applicants will meet the requirements, including simply stating that the requirements will be met. |
| **Score 3:** | Limited response but contains some of the relevant information |
| **Score 5:** | Good response and approach demonstrating good understanding and interpretation of the requirement. |
| **Score 7:** | Good response that provides additional information beyond what is required for a score of 5 |
| **Score 9:** | Excellent and comprehensive response and approach, demonstrating complete understanding of the requirement. |

Evaluation of your application will be carried out by trained members of the Citizens Advice grant evaluation panel. All applications will be assessed by two staff members who will moderate their scores to ensure consistency. Nobody eligible for funding will be a part of this process.

The score for each section of the application will be broken down in your notification email.

**Weighting**

It is important to note that some questions on this application are weighted more strongly than others. This will mean they will contribute more to your overall score. The table below breaks down this process:

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| **Section** | **Weighting** |
| 1 | This section will not be scored, however it must be completed or your application will not be accepted. |
| 2 | This section will not be scored, though it may be used to ensure that we have a geographic spread of grants awarded. |
| 3.1 | 15% |
| 3.2 | 15% |
| 3.3 | 15% |
| 3.4 | 15% |
| 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4\* | 40% |

If you apply for more than one champion each will be scored separately and will be added to your section 2 score (i.e.) if you apply for 4 champions your application will end up with four scores which will then be ranked.

For example, if you applied for three Champions A, B & C, this would work as follows:

You will submit one application; this will include answers for section 3 - and answers in section 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 (as you have applied for three Champions). You will leave section 4.4 blank as you are not applying for four Champions.

When we score this application, we will score section 3 once. We will then score section 4.1 for Champion A, section 4.2 for Champion B, and section 4.3 for Champion C. These scores will be added to section 2, as below:

Section 3 + Section 4.1 = score for Champion A

Section 3 + Section 4.2 = score for Champion B

Section 3 + Section 4.3 = score for Champion C

**Successful applicants**

If you are successful we will provide a form for you to complete in the notification email. Successful applicants will be required to provide additional details prior to us issuing them a Grant Agreement.

Successful applicants will be offered a grant agreement, via email, prior to the project’s start date. Further participation in the delivery of the projects, including grant of funds, will be conditional on applicants agreeing to the terms and conditions applicable to the grant.

**Appeals**

If you do not receive any funding, there will be an appeals process. Appeals will only be available to those who receive no funding.

You must let us know of your intention to make an appeal within 48 hours of receiving your result. We will acknowledge your intention within 24 hours and you must then give us the reasons for your appeal within the 48 hours following our acknowledgement.

Appeals should be submitted to: **besn@citizensadvice.org.uk**

The person assigned to review your appeal will:

* Review the scores awarded to any areas highlighted in your appeal, taking account of the concerns raised in the appeal - where appropriate, revised scores will be applied
* Examine whether due process has been followed

The appeal score for your application (if the original score has been adjusted), and/or the result of the investigation into the process followed will then be communicated to you via email. If your appeal is particularly complex or detailed and the person dealing with it needs longer to complete a full investigation, we will notify you and let you know when you can expect to receive a response

The decision of the manager dealing with the appeal will be final.

**Feedback**

Unfortunately we will be unable to provide feedback to those who submit an unsuccessful application.

**Questions and clarification**

You may submit questions and ask for clarification regarding the application process by emailing: [besn@citizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:besn@citizensadvice.org.uk)**.**

We have also created a live [FAQs document](https://docs.google.com/document/d/12KHYQgTUWetIUQL6JpAR-t-7DtYeaosYGxSigMauTkY/edit) and will add any additional questions asked to this.

## Application questions and guidance

Please see the guidance below, for instructions on how to complete the application form. We advise that you complete your answers to the application in a separate document and then copy your answers into the form. This will ensure that you have a copy of your answers should anything happen to the form.

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| **3.1 - How will BESN fit into your organisation? - Word limit: 250** |
| Explain why your organisation would be good at delivering Big Energy Saving Network.   * What demographic groups of consumers does your organisation typically work with?   + E.g. Over 65s, health related, low income, families etc. * Why are your consumers considered vulnerable? * Why will your consumers benefit from advice about energy?   Within this answer, we are looking for the reasons why your organisation is well-placed to deliver BESN. We are looking for examples of how BESN will complement your organisation’s existing projects and campaigns, as well as how your existing work will enhance your ability to deliver BESN. |

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| **3.2 - How will you deliver BESN? - Word limit: 250** |
| Please provide an overview about how you will reach your BESN target (based on 100 consumers per Champion). We would like you to consider   * What is your overall plan to reach your proposed target? * How will this work be supervised and managed within your organisation? * What is your process for ensuring that you will gather permission to follow up from 30 consumers per 100 advised? * How will you ensure that reporting data is submitted to us in a timely manner?   We are looking for an understanding of how your organisation will achieve the aims and objectives for BESN. Your response should highlight how BESN will fit into your organisational structure and who will be overseeing the project, as well as where you would expect events to take place. We are also looking for detail on how you will provide energy advice, as well as key milestones in the delivery plan - including start dates and key events which BESN will engage in. |

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| **3.3 - How will you deliver energy advice in an outreach setting, and what partnerships do you have in place to support this? - Word limit: 250** |
| * What experience do you have of delivering outreach services? * How will you build and use partnerships to help you access consumers in an outreach setting? * How will you ensure that all consumers who attend a BESN group session are also given the opportunity to receive one-to-one advice? * In the event that you are unable to deliver outreach work, tell us how you will ensure that BESN is targeted at new clients?   We are looking for information around the outreach objective of BESN, specifically which organisations you already have links with. You should also describe a strategy for developing new partnerships - and how those new consumers would link in with your existing advice delivery. We would like to know your existing experience with outreach projects, and why you are well suited to take advice out of your own office and into the community. |

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| **3.4 - How will you ensure consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion to reach vulnerable and under-represented communities? - Word limit: 250** |
| This question is asking you to consider:   * How will you use this funding to specifically target under-represented groups? * How will you work with partner organisations to focus on under-represented consumer groups? * How will you support non-English speakers? * Tell us about any relevant additional work or initiatives you have carried out in relation to EDI   We are looking for an outline of how you will include a focus on EDI within your delivery of BESN. You should tell us about under-represented groups within your community, and how you currently engage with them - as well as how you will use BESN to build on this. We are looking for specific examples of how you will identify, engage with and support these groups - and how BESN will enhance the initiatives you may already have in place. |

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| **4 Details of Champion - Word limit: 400** |
| Please provide the name of your nominated Champion. They can be a member of staff or voluntary worker. You will need to complete this answer for each of the Champions you apply for.  Please provide details about:   * What type of events they have delivered and their role at those events in the past two years * What type of audiences they have reached * What support they have provided to vulnerable consumers * The outcomes consumers achieved as a result of their work * Details of any relevant experience or qualifications in giving advice on energy issues   We are looking for a profile of the person you are putting forward as an Energy Champion. We would like to know about their experience delivering advice projects, how they have been able to reach new consumer groups in the past, and what qualifications they have for the role. You should also tell us about any outcomes they have achieved as part of this work. |

**Declarations**

A signed declaration from the CEO is required (and partner(s) if applicable). The Google Form provides an ‘add file’ option and you can attach the declaration as a document, PDF or an image. A copy of the deceleration form can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wp1lKrKAFqcOJI74E_1EIMUQJsJLLnXxkraQ5S_YSNc/edit).