

Starting a National Conversation on the Heat Transition in Scotland:

**Introducing a Strategic Framework for Public
Engagement 2023 - 2026**

December 2023

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Ministerial Foreword

Like many people, my preference is to live in a well-insulated, energy efficient home heated using a clean heating system, like a heat pump or a heat network.

Thousands of households and organisations across the country already benefit from modern, clean heating systems but we recognise that many are either unaware of the benefits or are unsure how to make the change. Changing the way, we heat our homes and places of work will be a national endeavour and we all have a role.

This is why I am publishing a Heat in Buildings Public Engagement Strategy. This will guide our engagement work over the remainder of this Parliament and act as a blueprint for how we work and collaborate with partners, stakeholders and other trusted messengers to raise awareness of both energy efficiency and clean heat. A new Strategic Public Engagement Delivery Partnership will be established to coordinate and ensure collaboration between all those involved in public engagement activity around energy efficiency and clean heat.

Public engagement is more than just one-way communication. It is a conversation. And I want us to all be active participants in how we heat our homes in the future. We are consulting on proposals for new legal powers to ban the use of polluting heating by 2045. As we firm up these proposals it will be imperative that people right across the country can shape them to ensure that they are just, fair and work for all of Scotland.

This strategy also commits to a range of shorter-term interventions to help build a stronger foundation of public awareness. These activities will be delivered incrementally over the lifetime of this strategy and include continued and expanded marketing and communications activity; exploring options for extending the reach of platforms like the Greener Homes Network so that people can share experiences and learn from each other; and streamlining customer journeys and ensuring people and organisations know where and how to access advice and support available.

Changing the way, we heat our homes and buildings will have many benefits, including helping to tackle fuel poverty and reduce emissions, as well as helping to support jobs right across Scotland. Strong and effective public engagement will lay the foundations for success. I look forward to working together to support the heat transition.



Patrick Harvie MSP

Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Right

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This Strategy sets out a Strategic Framework to guide how we will work with others to deliver a people-centred programme of public awareness raising, education and participation around clean heat and energy efficiency. Its purpose is to inform our activity as well as help shape and guide the activity of key players in the heat in buildings transition.

It will act as a blueprint for how we engage with homeowners, tenants and landlords over the next decade. It will also shape our engagement with the public sector, registered social landlords and private and third sector organisations. Whilst these groups have varying needs, they all share interests and will be asking the same questions:

- What is it I am being asked to do?
- Why do I need to do this?
- When do I need to do this by?
- What will it mean for me in practice?
- How will I be supported?
- What steps do I need to take, and how?

Structure

The Framework is structured around three delivery pillars:

- Understand: people and organisations are aware of and understand the changes we need to make and know how to access support.
- Participate: people and organisations can actively participate in shaping Scottish Government policy, legislation and delivery schemes and have opportunities to learn from each other.
- Act: people and organisations take action to install clean heating systems and upgrade energy efficiency, which are becoming normalised across society.

These delivery pillars and associated actions will be guided by the following principles:

- Partnership Led: we will work collaboratively with partners and trusted messengers to design, develop and implement actions to strengthen public engagement.
- People Centred: we will design and deliver engagement activities that take account, and are tailored to, the needs of our diverse population.
Place Based: we will ensure messaging and engagement activities are relevant to local contexts and circumstances as informed by Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies.

Strategic Public Engagement Delivery Partnership

We will establish a new Strategic Public Engagement Delivery Partnership to provide leadership and coordination across public engagement for heat and energy efficiency to ensure consistent messaging. This new partnership will be designed with stakeholders and partners and will be set up during 2024.

Our Approach

Whilst guiding our longer-term approach, this strategy also commits to a range of shorter-term actions to help build a stronger foundation of public awareness. These will be delivered incrementally over the lifetime of this strategy and will include:

- Continued and expanded marketing and communications activity.
- Exploring options for extending the reach of platforms like the Greener Homes Network so that people can share experiences and learn from each other.
- Streamlining customer journeys and ensuring people and organisations know where and how to access advice and support available.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate progress toward our strategic objectives, making use of existing primary data. The monitoring and evaluation of public engagement activity will be closely aligned with the wider Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Heat in Buildings¹. We will publish baseline statistics in the first year following publication and then re-evaluate these statistics in year three. Delivery activities outlined will run to 2026. At the end of this period, we will undertake a review and evaluate the impact of this strategic framework.

¹ Scottish Government (2023) [Heat in Buildings Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#)

Summary of Actions

Strategic

- We will establish a new Strategic Public Engagement Delivery Partnership to provide leadership and coordination across public engagement for heat and energy efficiency. This new partnership will be designed with stakeholders and partners and will be set up during 2024.
- We will work collaboratively with key partners and trusted messengers to design, develop and implement actions to strengthen and expand public engagement.
- We will design and deliver engagement activities that consider, and are tailored to, the needs of different audiences and will enable people to share and learn from each other's experiences.
- We will ensure our messaging and engagement activities are relevant to local contexts and circumstances – as informed by Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies and Delivery Plans.

Delivery Pillars

Understand

- Inform the public on what changes are required, why they are important, and the potential benefits.
- Increase public awareness of progress being made in Scotland towards our clean heat targets.
- Help the public understand what they need to do as part of the heat transition.
- Ensure people are familiar with the technological options available and the choices they can make.
- Promote access to appropriate resources, impartial advice and support to help the public transition their properties to clean heating and improved energy efficiency.

Participate

- Support opportunities for the public to inform and help shape policy and delivery decision making as the heat transition progresses.
- Encourage and support ongoing public dialogue on key issues of concern relating to the heat transition.
- Increase transparency in the operation of the Heat in Buildings programme.

Act

- Improve the existing consumer journey to support an increase in the rate of transition to clean heat and improved energy efficiency standards.

Chapter 2: Wider Context

Background

In October 2021 we published a new Heat in Buildings Strategy. This sets out our vision and actions we will take to deliver warmer, greener and more efficient homes and buildings across Scotland. Our efforts focus on two key priorities:

1. Improving energy efficiency
2. Switching to clean heating systems

Upgrading energy efficiency and switching to a clean heating system is a huge challenge. It will eventually affect almost all households and businesses in Scotland. Some households and businesses are already taking action to improve energy efficiency and making the switch to a clean heating system – but we need to increase the pace of change over the coming decade.

We have already successfully introduced a New Build Heat Standard prohibiting the installation of polluting heating from 1 April 2024. We are now consulting on proposals to improve energy efficiency and drive the clean heat agenda in existing buildings. These will form the basis of our proposed Heat in Buildings Bill.

We are currently consulting on requirements which will mean we all need to upgrade the energy efficiency of our homes by 2033 and switch to clean heating in all buildings by 2045. Our Heat in Buildings Strategy², published in 2021, outlines the full set of actions we will take to help the whole of Scotland make this transition.

Role of Public Engagement

Almost everyone and every organisation in Scotland will be involved in upgrading the energy efficiency of our buildings and switching to clean heating systems like heat pumps and heat networks. As such, people and organisations must be at the centre of this transition. Effective and sustained public engagement will help to overcome barriers, change attitudes and ensure people and organisations have the right information at the right time.

At present, understanding and interest in clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures differ across people and organisations. Overall, we know tackling climate change is important to people, but a significant proportion of the population are not familiar with clean heating systems and therefore are not currently inclined to act in the coming years. We have to increase people's understanding of the reasons why they need to make changes and how they make that happen, ensuring a just and fair transition.

² Scottish Government (2021) [Heat in Buildings Strategy](#)

That is why, we are putting people and organisations at the centre of the transition – ensuring they:

- Understand the need to upgrade their properties.
- Have a clear idea of what clean heating systems are suitable for where they are located.
- Know where to get advice and support.
- Take action to upgrade energy efficiency and switch to clean heating systems.

There has been an increase in public discussion and the promotion of clean heating systems, meaning action has already been taken by some to upgrade the energy efficiency of their buildings and make the switch to clean heating systems. People and organisations are already contributing to this debate including central and local government, energy retail companies, heating system manufacturers and installers. We need to harness this activity so that it is better coordinated and joined up to maximise its impact and reach.

We want to ensure that people and organisations have a role in helping to shape decision making and can effectively shape new Scottish Government policy, legislation, and delivery schemes. Public engagement will be critical to realising these aims and the wider ambitions of our Heat in Buildings Strategy.

Public engagement can take many forms. It can be traditional marketing and communications such as adverts on TV or social media. Other forms can include sharing lived experience of using a heat pump or being connected to a heat network. It can also be involvement in policy and decision making, for example by taking part in focus groups or responding to consultations.

There are several barriers to overcome to encourage and motivate people and organisations to take action to improve energy efficiency and switch to clean heating systems as set out in Table 1. Public engagement can help to overcome a number of these, notably, it can help:

- Set out why changing how we heat and use energy in our homes and buildings matters.
- Develop knowledge about energy efficiency upgrades and clean heating systems and explain the benefits of switching.
- Guide people and organisations toward trusted advice and information, as well as the support available.
- Demonstrate that people and organisations are not alone and that others are already making the switch to clean heating systems and upgrading energy efficiency.
- Demystify the consumer journey and set out the steps people and organisations need to follow.

Table 1: Key influencing factors on individual's decisions about whether to adopt clean heating, based on ISM behaviours model

Individual	Social	Material
Do not know who to trust	No one in social circle has one	Electrical networks lack sufficient capacity to support the use of clean heating
Concerns about affordability	Advised against by tradespeople	Electricity is currently more expensive than gas
Lack of time	Negative stories in the media	The consumer journey is unclear
Disruption of installation	Social circle does not discuss clean heating	Regulatory pathway is unclear
Lack of understanding of the available options	Possible negative perception of neighbours	Divergence of Scottish and UK Government policy
Lack of interest in climate change		
Unaware of the potential personal benefits		

Chapter 3: Our Strategic Approach to 2045

Context

The approach set out in this chapter builds on our overarching Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change, which was published in 2021³. It has been developed using the insights and contributions provided through different consultations and through our earlier Call for Evidence on Public Engagement. It has also been influenced by the findings of the Climate Assembly.

Consumer research into the experiences and attitudes of different groups have also been undertaken, with findings helping to further inform the development of this strategic framework.

Strategic Engagement Framework

As already noted, public engagement will be critical to realising our ambitions to upgrade the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes by 2033 and switch all our buildings to clean heating systems by 2045. Here we set out in more detail our strategic engagement framework:

It is structured around three delivery pillars and ten associated objectives/actions:

- **Understand:** people and organisations are aware of and understand the changes we need to make and know how to access support.
- **Participate:** people and organisations can actively participate in shaping Scottish Government policy, legislation and delivery schemes and have opportunities to learn from each other.
- **Act:** people and organisations take action to install clean heating systems and upgrade energy efficiency, which are becoming normalised across society.

These delivery pillars and associated actions will be guided by the following principles:

- **Partnership Led:** we will work collaboratively with partners and trusted messengers to design, develop and implement actions to strengthen public engagement.
- **People Centred:** we will design and deliver engagement activities that take into account and are tailored to, the needs of our diverse population.
- **Place Based:** we will ensure messaging and engagement activities are relevant to local contexts and circumstances as informed by Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies.

³ Scottish Government (2021) [Climate change - Net Zero Nation: public engagement strategy - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategy-for-climate-change-2021/summary/sections/2-2-1-public-engagement-strategy-2021/)

Delivery Pillars

We will use these three delivery pillars (Understand, Participate, Act) to structure and guide delivery under this strategic framework. We have identified proposed actions to meet the outcome for each delivery pillar. These are all set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Three delivery pillars underpinning our strategic framework, their outcomes and our proposed actions

Pillar 1: Understand	Pillar 2: Participate	Pillar 3: Act
Outcomes		
People are aware of and understand the changes we all need to make in how we heat our homes and buildings and how to access support	People can actively participate in the heat transition through dialogue and shaping of fair and inclusive policies and delivery activities	Renewable heating systems and improved energy efficiency standards and behaviours are normalised and encouraged across society
Actions		
Inform the public on what changes are required, why they are important, and the potential benefits.	Support opportunities for the public to inform and help shape policy and delivery decision making as the heat transition progresses.	Improve the existing consumer journey to support an increase in the rate of transition to clean heat and improved energy efficiency standards.
Help the public understand what they need to do as part of the heat transition and where they can go to seek support and advice.	Encourage and support ongoing public dialogue on key issues of concern relating to the heat transition.	
Ensure people are familiar with the technological options available and the choices they can make.	Increase transparency in the operation of the Heat in Buildings programme.	

Applying the Guiding Principles

Here we outline how the three principles will be applied in practice:

- Partnership-led
- People-centred
- Place Based

Partnership-led

We will work collaboratively with key partners and trusted messengers to design, develop and implement actions to strengthen and expand public engagement.

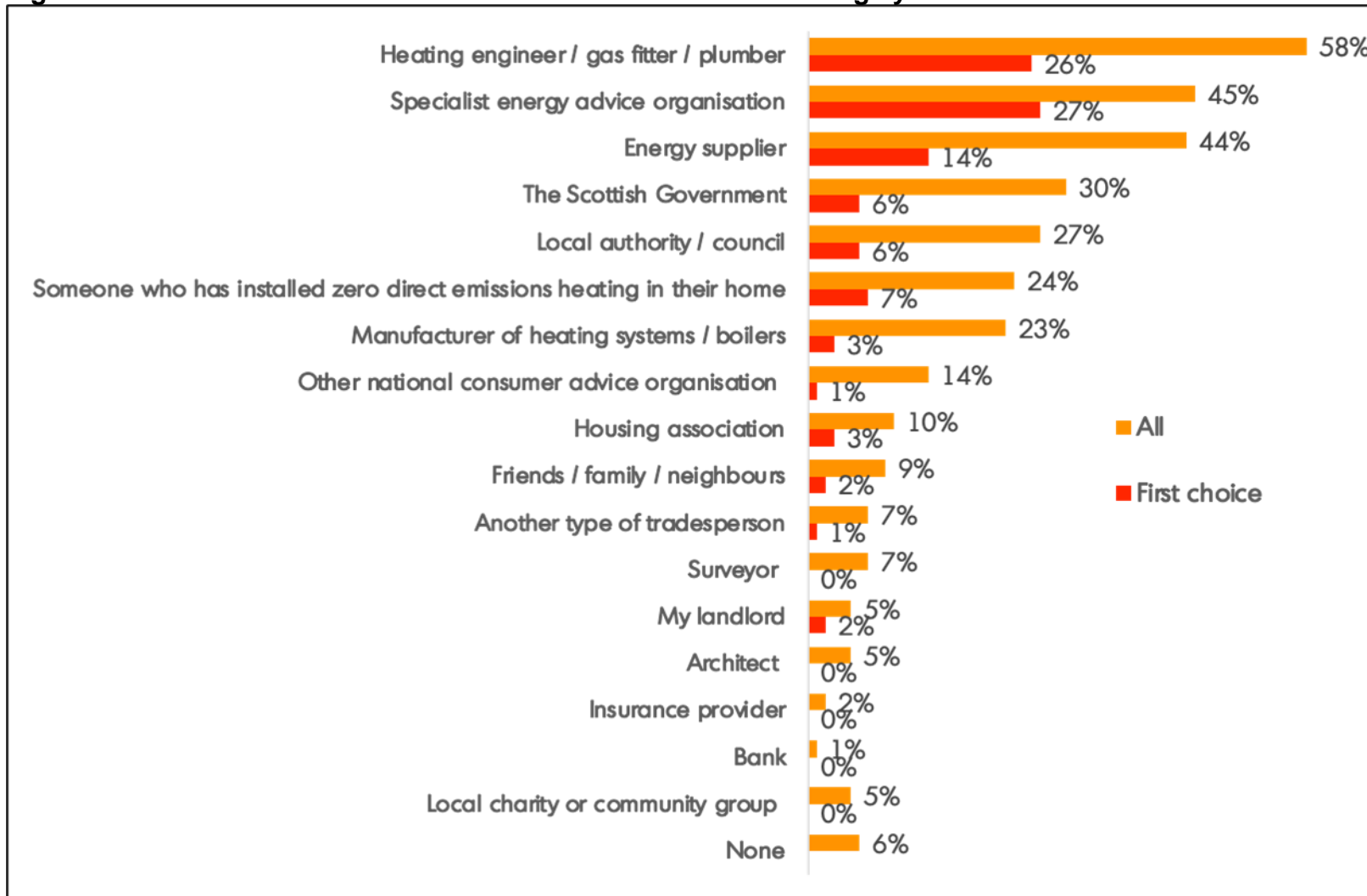
The lone voice of the Scottish Government, or any other single organisation, is not enough to change and shape public opinion, awareness and attitudes on energy efficiency and clean heating systems.

Research published in 2023 by ClimateXChange⁴ showed that multiple different sources of information and advice will be relied upon by people as they move through the consumer journey towards the adoption of clean heating systems. Figure 1 below shows these findings in more detail and illustrates the wide range of trusted messengers people will turn to for advice on installing clean heating systems.

There is a wide range of sources of advice that people are likely to turn to when seeking advice on clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures. It shows that people have a particular preference for information from energy industry organisations. As such, each step to strengthen public engagement will need to be a joint endeavour between the public, private and third sectors.

⁴ [ClimateXChange \(2023\), Communicating on the Heat Transition.](#)

Figure 1: Trusted sources of advice on installation of clean heating systems



People-Centred

We will design and deliver engagement activities that take into account and are tailored to, the needs of our diverse population

Upgrading the energy efficiency of our homes and switching to clean heating systems will touch all our lives. It will therefore be imperative that we place people at the centre of this transition.

We will continue to conduct research to understand how switching to clean heating systems and improving energy efficiency will affect different groups of people. We will prioritise and target those likely to be most affected by the changes and ensure our messaging is tailored to different audiences and available in accessible formats and across multiple channels.

We will promote opportunities for people and organisations to become actively involved in shaping the policy, legislation, delivery plans and schemes to ensure they deliver real-world benefits for individuals and communities, tackling inequality and injustice along the way.

Switching to clean heating systems and improving energy efficiency is something that people and organisations are already doing. These early adopters can be advocates helping to change opinions and attitudes by sharing their stories and experiences.

We will take steps to enable people and organisations to learn from each other to explore the feasibility and benefits of switching to a clean heating system. We will do this by increasing access to case studies and peer-to-peer communication and learning.

Place Based

We will ensure our messaging and engagement activities are relevant to local contexts and circumstances – as informed by Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies and Delivery Plans.

Clean heat, and to an extent energy efficiency, are inherently local. The technologies and deployment pathways will differ between buildings and between areas influenced by a range of factors including a property's age, whether it has repair or condition issues, the type of building, e.g., flat, detached house, etc., and density of the neighbourhood.

Local Authorities are currently developing Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies, which will identify suitable areas suitable for heat networks as well as areas where individual heat pumps and energy efficiency measures should be deployed. In time these strategies will begin to guide delivery activities and have an important role to play in decisions on what type of clean heating system to switch to. These plans, once adopted, will help us and the local government better design and target our collective engagement activities to address the needs and concerns of different audiences.

We will continue to work with local authorities and with our national network of local community action hubs to explore what can be done to strengthen local action and grassroots activity.

Strategic Public Engagement Delivery Partnership

People and organisations are already taking action to upgrade energy efficiency and switch to clean heating systems. In recent years we have seen more public discussion and promotion of clean heating systems, including heat pumps and heat networks. Several different stakeholders are contributing to this debate, including central and local government, energy retail companies, manufacturers of clean heating and fossil fuel heating systems, installers, etc.

Alongside this discussion is a wide range of engagement activities, being taken forward by several different organisations, at both a national and local level. It will be important that we build on, strengthen and expand existing engagement activities, at both a national and local level. Feedback to our earlier Call for Evidence recommended that public engagement and messaging should be better coordinated and done collaboratively.

As indicated previously, we will establish a Strategic Public Engagement Delivery Partnership. It will provide leadership and coordination of public engagement on the heat transition in Scotland across stakeholders and partners.

The Partnership will support planning and the rollout of engagement activities on the ground, as well as developing and coordinating messaging and outreach. It will support learning and the development of good practice and members will be able to leverage each other's expertise, experience, and skills. Members will actively contribute and share in the delivery of engagement activities, helping to ensure that people and organisations can interact with the organisations they trust most.

We will co-design the Partnership with stakeholders during 2024 to ensure shared ownership. We will build the Partnership, including its structure, functions and membership on the existing good work being driven by several organisations across sectors.

Given the scale and scope of impact of the heat transition across both domestic and non-domestic buildings to 2045, the Partnership will need to expand and evolve over time. This will mean ensuring that its membership evolves so that it continues to reflect the diversity of building owners who will need to be engaged.

The Partnership will initially prioritise owner-occupiers and private sector landlords, reflecting the proposed sequencing of regulatory backstop dates for energy efficiency and clean heat and the need to quickly raise awareness of the need to act.

Chapter 4: Building Readiness for Change 2023-26

This section sets out our priorities over the next 3 years. Our priority will be to lay strong foundations for the rollout of clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures and to develop early public understanding ahead of proposed regulations coming into force.

Current Awareness and Understanding

Levels of understanding of and interest in clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures vary across different audiences. For these reasons, it will be important that we ensure our engagement activities have a broad reach but allow for tailoring to ensure people receive the right messaging at the right time.

The factors influencing current attitudes to clean heating systems and energy efficiency are complex and varied. Some overarching trends can be drawn from the existing evidence base, summarised in Annex A, on the attitudes towards and understanding of clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures. We know that:

- People place a lot of importance on the need to tackle climate change.
- There is a degree of understanding that this means changing how we heat and use energy in our homes and buildings.
- Many people remain unclear about the contribution that existing fossil fuel heating systems make to climate change.
- A reasonable number of people have some level of awareness of clean heating systems, such as heat pumps, but a significant proportion lack any familiarity; and
- A significant proportion of the public is currently not inclined to take action to switch to clean heating systems in the coming years.

Our planned early engagement activities are informed by these general insights as well as wider stakeholder feedback gathered during the development of this strategic framework.

Applying the Framework

Informed by our baseline understanding and stakeholder feedback, we have developed a package of engagement interventions structured around our three delivery pillars.

Delivery Pillar: Understand

Marketing and Communications

We need to build a strong foundation of public understanding of the importance of switching to clean heating systems and upgrading energy efficiency measures, including the benefits they can deliver. We must also support people to access accurate and up to date information on clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures. And we need to promote awareness of our funding and advice that is available to building and property owners.

For a number of years, we have run an annual Home Energy Scotland⁵ marketing campaign promoting the support that is on offer and calling on people to contact Home Energy Scotland for further advice. Each year this has successfully helped to increase awareness of Home Energy Scotland and boosted enquiries.

We are running a series of campaigns to raise awareness of and promote switching to, clean heating systems. Our approach is focused on three campaign strands:

1. **Building climate literacy** across the general public through increasing awareness of the link between fossil fuel heating and climate change – we will achieve this through our established Let's Do Net Zero Campaign, encouraging people to find out more about the heat transition by accessing the Net Zero Nation website.
2. **Promoting the adoption of clean heating systems** and energy efficiency measures amongst potential early adopters – we will achieve this through a new hyper-targeted campaign that seeks to position heat pumps as aspirational and encourages people to contact our frontline energy advice service, Home Energy Scotland.
3. **Supporting people in fuel poverty** to access free and impartial advice and support through contacting our frontline energy advice service, Home Energy Scotland

It is our aspiration to run a multi-stranded campaign on a regular basis and will do so, subject to budget availability. To ensure that we build on learning as we go, we will continue to evaluate all campaign activities to understand their effectiveness and feed insights into future campaigns to optimise their reach and impact.

Build on and improve existing engagement activities

Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland,⁶ funded by the Scottish Government, have been operational for a number of years, offering households and qualifying organisations free and impartial advice and support.

⁵ Home Energy Scotland provides free and impartial advice and support to people across Scotland on clean heat, energy efficiency and other issues to help create warmer homes, lower energy bills and reduce carbon footprints. They are funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Energy Saving Trust.

⁶ Business Energy Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government to provide free, impartial support and access to funding to help small and medium-sized enterprises save energy, carbon and money.

Both organisations have active roles in raising awareness and already undertake a range of engagement activities across Scotland. For example, Home Energy Scotland delivers a programme of employee engagement for large employers offering:

- Interactive online and in-person workshops on a variety of topics including saving energy at home.
- Advice stalls in the workplace
- E-learning modules which inform the user on ways to save energy at home and encourage them to contact HES for advice and support.
- Resources for employers to share with staff include links to video presentations, posters with QR codes to link to energy saving advice and the home energy check and energy efficiency tips and other content for corporate newsletters.

Over the lifetime of this Strategic Framework, we will work with Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland to build on existing engagement activities and consider where new activity can be introduced.

Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland are not the only organisations that arrange, and host engagement activity related to clean heating systems and energy efficiency.

There are a range of third sector organisations and community groups that activity contributes. We will continue to integrate clean heating systems and energy efficiency content in the on-going review and development of resources to support local group discussions on net zero and the actions that individuals can take to reduce their personal carbon emissions.

We will continue to work with local authorities and with our national network of local community action hubs to explore what can be done to strengthen local action and grassroots activity.

Myth Busting

The transition to clean heating systems and improved energy efficiency is at risk of disinformation and false assumptions. The lack of general familiarity with clean heating systems, like heat pumps and heat networks, makes this hard to tackle and misinformation and falsehoods about technologies can quickly take hold.

This can dampen people's motivation and willingness to adopt these technologies. This is despite the reality that technologies such as heat pumps and heat networks are well-established and proven technologies, both in Scotland and internationally.

Over the next 3 years, we will prioritise increasing public access to reliable, accurate and trustworthy sources of information on clean heating systems and energy efficiency to help increase understanding.

This will help in building consumer confidence around the different technologies available and appropriateness to different property types. This will in turn support people and organisations in making more informed decisions when planning improvements.

We will work collaboratively with partners to ensure they have access to the latest research and data concerning clean heating systems and their operation.

We will work with partners to translate this evidence into meaningful and consumer-friendly messaging for wider dissemination. This messaging, and the evidence we collate and share with stakeholders, will also be reflected in our own national communications and marketing.

Supporting Industry Workforce as Communicators

An effective and existing route to reach a wide range of different building owners is through frontline heating system installers and associated tradespeople. There is evidence to suggest that there is a strong preference across the general public to turn to heating engineers, gas fitters and plumbers as a first port of call when looking to find out about clean heating systems.

The more we can do to support these frontline workers to be able to talk confidently with their customer base about clean heat systems and energy efficiency, the more likely we will be able to encourage a diverse range of potential early adopters to find out more and act.

There is already a wealth of material developed for use. For example, the Energy System Catapult has produced a communications guide at a UK level for use by heating system installers⁷. The guide sets out example questions and answers likely to be raised by consumers as they move through the journey towards the adoption of a heat pump.

As some elements of the consumer journey for different building owners are different in Scotland, we will work with consumers, industry and wider partners to develop bespoke communications materials to support industry frontline workers. These will also take account of the Scottish policy and support landscape for clean heating systems and energy efficiency.

Supporting Young People to Engage in the Heat Transition

Children and young people have a positive role to play in advocating for societal change. At a local level, young people can help instil change within their families where they bring into the home new ideas and knowledge.

⁷ See [Energy specialist launches 'Heat pump talk' guide for installers - Energy Systems Catapult](#)

The Climate Action Schools programme⁸, funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Keep Scotland Beautiful⁹, now includes learning materials to support teachers helping them discuss clean heating systems and energy efficiency.

We will continue to work with Keep Scotland Beautiful to build on and further develop these materials, enabling us to increase the number of young people who are able to actively participate in energy and heat discussions with their peers. The newly launched *Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023 – 2030*¹⁰ supports the development of a “whole setting approach” to the promotion of sustainability practices in education. This includes ensuring schools are greener and more sustainable in line with the principles set out in Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy. Our £1 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme¹¹ is helping drive improvements and has ambitious energy efficiency targets. By transforming the school estate, we will bring clean heating systems and improved energy efficiency much closer to young people, helping them engage first hand.

Continue to Convene Wider Domestic and Non-Domestic Sectors

Social and private landlords as well as the public sector have a critical role to play in helping to normalise clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures, helping give confidence to the wider public, build trust and capacity to make home and property improvements.

Social housing landlords have already taken steps to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, and many are now starting to install clean heating systems, which are helping tenants cut bills and stay warm in the colder months. Similarly, managers across the public sector estate are considering how best to retrofit clean heating systems, including opportunities for connecting to heat networks.

We will work with the social housing sector, private rented landlords and the non-domestic sector via existing forums to raise awareness of clean heating systems and energy efficiency upgrades. We will look to share learning across these sectors to further normalise the use of clean heating technologies.

⁸ The Climate Action Schools programme is a framework of education initiatives to support Scotland's educators, young people and children to progress Learning for Sustainability and climate change education.

⁹ Keep Scotland Beautiful is a charity that seeks to inspire changes in behaviour to improve our environment, the quality of people's lives, their wellbeing and the places that they care for.

¹⁰ Scottish Government (2023) Learning for sustainability: action plan 2023 to 2023

¹¹ Scottish Government (2019) Learning estate strategy - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Understand: Summary of actions

- Run a multi-stranded campaign on a regular basis (subject to budget availability) to raise awareness and promote switching to clean heating systems
- Work with Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland to build on existing engagement activities and consider where new activity can be introduced.
- Work with local authorities and local community action hubs to explore what can be done to strengthen local action and grassroots activity
- Work collaboratively with partners to ensure they have access to the latest research and data concerning clean heating systems and their operation
- Work with partners to create meaningful and consumer-friendly messaging
- Work with Keep Scotland Beautiful to build on and further develop materials, enabling us to increase the number of young people who are able to actively participate in energy and heat discussions with their peers.
- Work with the social housing sector, private rented landlords and the non-domestic sector via existing forums to raise awareness of clean heating systems and energy efficiency upgrades.

Delivery Pillar: Participate

Clean Heating Demonstrators and Peer to Peer Learning

Whilst many clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures are well established and deployed at scale in other countries, they do not have the same mass market awareness in Scotland and the UK. This lack of familiarity for most people acts as a drag on take up slowing the rollout of clean heat technologies and energy efficiency measures.

As shown in half of those surveyed had heard of heat pumps only 41% reported having a good understanding of them¹². We also know that people look to those around them to gauge what action they should be taking to reduce emissions.

Around 70% of people believe that others are either doing about the same, or less than them¹³. Therefore, we need to increase opportunities for people to learn about clean heating systems, see them in action and hear directly from those who have already installed them.

The Green Homes Network¹⁴, managed by the Energy Saving Trust, allows people to access case studies about how people similar to them have successfully adopted a clean heating system and made improvements to their home's energy efficiency.

¹² [Home Energy Scotland - More than half of Scots are aware of heat pumps](#)

¹³ [Scottish Government \(2022\) Climate Change - Public Engagement: survey results 2022](#)

¹⁴ [Green Homes Network](#)

Additionally, people can contact members of the network to ask questions about their experiences and in some cases are able to request a site visit to the property with the owner's consent. Other organisations are developing similar platforms. For example, Nesta trailed a Visit a Heat Pump service in 2023¹⁵.

We will also explore:

- how to improve and extend the reach of our Green Homes Network and work with other partners who have platforms that seek to showcase and help individuals understand clean heating systems and what upgrading means for them.
- options to pilot a place-based initiative to showcase retrofitted properties, clean heating systems, and build public discussion and awareness.
- options to further embed public engagement in our capital funding programmes, for example across the public sector estate and in social housing. This will help to show clean heating systems in operation and help to normalise and improve the acceptability of the technology.

Improving Participation in Decision Making

Earlier this year we published our new Participation Framework¹⁶ aiming to improve the way in which we make decisions that affect people's lives. It recognises that better decisions are made when people are able to have a say, particularly those who are going to be directly affected.

Decisions around clean heating systems and energy efficiency will affect almost everyone in Scotland, requiring changes in our homes and places of work. There will be a range of opportunities to input and help shape decision making including on the shape of the proposed regulatory framework as well as on the shape and extent of future support schemes.

We will explore options to increase public participation across the design of Heat in Buildings policy, legislation and delivery schemes. We will continue to utilise traditional methods of engagement, for example, public consultations but will also consider where best to deploy additional complementary approaches including the use of more deliberative approaches, such as citizens assemblies, lived experience panels, user testing workshops, etc.

¹⁵ [Nesta visit a heat pump](#)

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2023) [Participation Framework](#)

Participate: Summary of actions

- Explore how to improve and extend the reach of our Green Homes Network
- Work with partners who have platforms that seek to showcase and help individuals understand clean heating systems and what upgrading means for them
- Explore options to pilot a place-based initiative to showcase retrofitted properties, clean heating systems, and build public discussion and awareness
- Explore options to further embed public engagement in our capital funding programmes
- Explore options to increase public participation across the design of Heat in Buildings policy, legislation and delivery schemes.

Delivery Pillar: Act

Continue to provide free and impartial advice

Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland are Scottish Government funded services, managed by the Energy Saving Trust. They provide free and impartial advice to households and SME organisations. This includes advice on what upgrades may be suitable as well as providing access to government grants and interest free (or low cost) loans. This includes access to the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme¹⁷.

We intend to continue to fund free and impartial advice and support to help households and organisations navigate the changes needed, subject to budgets in future years.

We are seeing a rise in the number of private and third sector retrofit agencies, which are helping households to plan and navigate the steps to install clean heating systems and energy efficiency upgrades. We will work with these organisations, including new entrants, to explore their potential role in managing and coordinating retrofit across Scotland, including how they can support referrals to national advice services.

Improving consumer journeys and signposting

Currently, the consumer landscape around clean heat and energy is fragmented and feedback to the Call for Evidence suggests that some people find it hard to navigate.

We know that more needs to be done to raise awareness of existing advice and support from providers such as Home Energy Scotland. To maximise the impact of these advice services it will be important that we continue to improve signposting and referrals between local organisations and national advice services.

¹⁷ [Warmer Homes Scotland](#)

We will work with partners to explore how best to streamline consumer signposting so that people accessing advice are efficiently and where appropriate, directed to the Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland advice services where they can be matched with available support, where eligible.

The consumer journey from entry into the advice and support landscape is a determining factor in whether people and organisations go on to install clean heating systems and upgrade their energy efficiency. Whilst our advice services have high levels of customer satisfaction, improvements can still be made to smooth journeys through accessing advice and support to installation and post-install aftercare.

To understand this further we will review existing consumer journeys to work with partners to implement changes as required to reduce barriers and improve the customer experience.

We will develop good practice guides to help different groups navigate how to go about installing clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures.

Act: Summary of Actions

- Continue to fund free and impartial advice and support to help households and organisations navigate the changes needed (subject to budgets)
- Work with private and third sector retrofit agencies to explore their potential role in managing and coordinating retrofit across Scotland
- Work with partners to explore how best to streamline consumer signposting so that people accessing advice are efficiently and where appropriate, directed to the Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland advice services where they can be matched with available support, where eligible.
- Review existing consumer journeys to work with partners to implement changes as required to reduce barriers and improve the customer experience
- Develop good practice guides to help different groups navigate how to go about installing clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures

Chapter 5: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

To ensure this Public Engagement Strategy has the desired impact, it is important that we monitor and evaluate progress towards the strategy's strategic objectives. We will take a multi-stranded approach to monitoring and evaluation, as set out below. This links closely with and feeds into our wider Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Heat in Buildings Programme.

We will use the indicators set out in Table 3 to monitor:

- a) Scottish public awareness and understanding of clean heating systems and energy efficiency measures, and of the actions people and organisations must take to reduce emissions, and
- b) public engagement in the heat transition.

We will monitor these indicators using data from the primary sources outlined below and analyse this data with data from select secondary (third-party) sources such as UK Government surveys.

Table 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

Outcome	Indicators	Data source
People are aware and understand the changes we all need to make in how we heat and use energy in our homes and buildings, and how to access support to do this.	AWARENESS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's awareness of the need for heat transition. • People's awareness of changes they need to make in heat transition. • People's awareness of support available to them and how to access it. 	Scottish Household Survey HiBs/ CC joint PES survey (2024, 2026)
	UNDERSTANDING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's understanding of the need for heat transition. • People's understanding of changes they need to make in heat transition. 	
People can actively participate in the heat transition through dialogue and sharing of fair and inclusive policies and delivery activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation in the heat transition: number of opportunities available for people to engage in heat transition-related public engagement activities in Scotland (for example public consultations and related engagement events, and citizens' panels). 	TBC

<p>Clean heating systems and improved energy efficiency standards and behaviours are normalised and encouraged across society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's willingness/intention to install EE improvement measures and clean heating systems. • Actual rates of EE improvement measures and clean heating system installation. 	<p>Scottish Household Survey</p> <p>HiBs/ CC joint PES survey (2024, 2026)</p>
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We will publish baseline statistics in the first year of the strategy and then re-evaluate these statistics in year three of the strategy to provide an indication of whether a change in awareness and understanding of clean heat and energy efficiency, as well as participation in it, has occurred.

We acknowledge that many diverse factors will influence these indicators. We expect the programme of work set out in this strategic framework to make a positive contribution towards national statistics.

Over the lifetime of this strategic framework, we will also explore whether there is scope to develop and resource any additional national indicators to improve how we monitor progress.

Evaluation

It will be important that we continuously learn and improve as we take forward the actions outlined in this strategic framework. The activities and interventions identified in Chapter 3 are varied – from national advertising campaigns to place-based community-led projects. Each will require a bespoke approach to evaluation.

We will ensure that we develop evaluation strategies for all the major interventions set out within this document and will report our findings. Evaluation will help to not only track progress but also provide rich learning and development so that future activities can be improved. Delivery activities outlined in this strategy will run until 2026. At the end of this period, we will undertake a review of these activities and evaluate the strategy's impact against the indicators set out in Table 3, above.

As part of this process, we will gather feedback from key stakeholders and delivery partners on what aspects of the strategy they think are working well and what can be improved. The findings of this review will inform public engagement activities implemented under future versions of this strategy.

Annex A - Overview Of Current Insights On Public Attitudes To Net Zero and Heat Decarbonisation

Indicator	Conclusions	Evidence	Source
Concern for Climate Change and Heat Transition	High level of recognition and value placed on the need for climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% agree CC is one of the most important issues that need to be addressed 84% agree everyone will need to adopt EE and clean heating measures 	Nesta (2021) – UK survey, representative sample, 5k
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% concerned about climate change 	Ofgem (2021) – Survey of GB energy consumers, base sample 4.3k
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76% of respondents are “very” or “quite” concerned about climate change 	ClimateXChange (2023) – Scotland survey, representative sample 1.6k
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change ranked the 3rd most important policy issue to respondents 	Scottish Government (2022) – Scotland survey, representative sample, 1.7k
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% say it is “quite” or “very” important to make full transition to greener heating 	BEIS (2020) – GB survey, representative sample 2.9k; workshops 134
Understanding Fossil Fuel Heating Impacts on Climate	Low-to-Medium level Scottish population climate literacy concerning heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46% correctly identified heating/cooling as one of the three highest contributors to UK carbon emissions 28% of those using mains gas still believe their system is environmentally friendly 	BEIS (2020) – GB survey, base sample 2.9k; workshops 134
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% correctly identified having renewable heating in their homes as the third most impactful ‘green’ action they can take 	Scottish Government (2022) – Scotland survey, representative sample, 1.7k

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67% of respondent's self-report having some awareness of the need to change how we heat our homes and buildings 87% of respondents were aware of the need to change the way homes are heated to reach (UK Government) net zero targets 	<p>ClimateXChange (2023) – representative sample, Scotland 1.6k</p> <p>DESNZ (2023) – UK Summer 2023 Public Attitudes Tracker, representative sample 3.9k</p>
<p>Awareness and Understanding of clean heating Technologies</p>	<p>Medium levels of awareness and self-reported knowledge of clean heating functioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51% of respondents aware of ASHP / GSHP Of which, 41% respondents self-report having a “good understanding” of how ASHP/GSHP work 15% of respondents have not heard of any of the most common types of clean heating systems 47% of respondents aware of air source heat pumps 25% of respondents aware of heat networks 55% of respondents self-reported having only a little or hardly any knowledge of low-carbon heating systems 	<p>Energy Saving Trust (2021) – Scotland survey, base sample 1k</p> <p>ClimateXChange (2023) – Scotland survey, representative sample, 1.6k</p> <p>DESNZ (2023) – UK Summer 2023 Public Attitudes Tracker, representative sample 3.9k</p>
<p>Intention to Act / Install</p>	<p>Low levels of willingness and intent to act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23% of owner occupiers without clean heating say they will install in future 18% of owner occupier respondents “fairly” or “very likely” to install ASHP next time they need to change their heating system 34% of respondents with control over the decision are fairly or very likely to install clean heating in the next 5 years 	<p>Ofgem (2021) – Survey of GB energy consumers, base sample 4.3k</p> <p>BEIS (2022) – UK Winter 2022 Public Attitudes Tracker, representative sample 2.7k</p> <p>ClimateXChange (2023) – representative sample, Scotland 1.6k</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% of respondents with control over the decision are not very or not at all likely to install clean heating in the next 5 years 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37% of respondents plan to install a renewable heating system in their home in the future 37% of respondents do not have nor intend to install a renewable heating system in the future 	Scottish Government (2022) – Scotland survey, representative sample, 1.7k
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28% of people who are aware and understand clean heating technologies are likely to consider installing one (vs 20% for the overall sample) 	Energy Saving Trust (2021) – Scotland survey, base sample 1k



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

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Edinburgh
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