Project Officer – Affordable Warmth (Community Outreach)

Department: Affordable Warmth | **Reports to:** Project Manager – Poverty | **Direct reports:** None | **Salary:** £24,785 – £26,546 (depending on experience) | **Hours:** 37.5 hours per week | **Contract length:** 2-year fixed term | **Location:** Sandy Flatts Lane, and community venues across Middlesbrough, with Tees Valley-wide travel.

About Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC)

MEC is a charity driven by the belief that thriving people and a thriving planet go hand in hand. We bring communities, partners and decision makers together to create practical, lasting change, building greener places, fairer opportunities and healthier futures across Tees Valley.

About the role

This is an exciting opportunity to make a real difference for people facing cold homes, rising energy costs and financial pressure. At the heart of MEC's affordable warmth work, you will help people across Middlesbrough and the wider Tees Valley access the advice, practical support and confidence they need to stay warm, well and in control of their energy costs.

You will provide friendly, tailored support to residents, helping them understand their energy use, explore ways to reduce bills and improve home comfort, and access relevant financial support, energy efficiency measures and referral services. Just as importantly, you will take time to listen, build trust and make information that can often feel complex or overwhelming clear and manageable.

Much of the role will be based in the community. You will deliver accessible advice sessions through the Eco Shop Network and other trusted local venues, reaching people where they already go for support. You will work closely with the Eco Shop Network Co-ordinator to connect residents with specialist affordable warmth advice and practical help, while strengthening the role Eco Shops play in supporting local people and communities.

You will also work alongside the Project Officer – Affordable Warmth (Advice & Engagement), as part of a wider team providing joined-up support. Together, you will build strong links with frontline staff, volunteers and community organisations; promote clear referral routes; and contribute to awareness sessions and practical training.

Full training and ongoing support will be provided. We are looking for someone who is compassionate, organised and confident communicating with a wide range of people - someone who understands that a warm home can be the foundation for better health, security and opportunity.

Key Responsibilities

Community Outreach and Affordable Warmth Advice

- Deliver friendly, practical affordable warmth advice to residents through the Eco Shop Network, other community venues and, where appropriate, remote or home-based support.
- Provide tailored guidance on reducing energy costs, improving home comfort, energy efficiency measures and available financial support.
- Support residents to understand their options and take practical next steps, responding sensitively to individual circumstances.
- Work closely with the Eco Shop Network Co-ordinator to make specialist affordable warmth support available through trusted local spaces.
- Identify when residents may need more specialist help and ensure they are connected to the appropriate service.

Referrals and Partnership Working

- Build positive working relationships with Eco Shop volunteers, community organisations, frontline services, local authorities, housing providers and other relevant partners.
- Manage referrals and make onward referrals to partner agencies, ensuring residents receive timely and appropriate support.
- Promote clear, accessible referral routes and help partners understand the affordable warmth support available through MEC.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to provide joined-up support for people experiencing poverty, fuel insecurity and related challenges.

Awareness, Training and Engagement

- Deliver or support awareness sessions, briefings and practical training for volunteers, frontline staff and community groups.
- Help others to recognise when someone may be experiencing fuel poverty and know how to respond or refer appropriately.
- Contribute ideas and support the development of clear, accessible promotional materials and resources.
- Attend community events and activities to raise awareness of affordable warmth support and encourage engagement.

Monitoring, Records and Service Improvement

- Maintain accurate, confidential records of advice, support, referrals and outcomes using MEC's systems.

- Collect monitoring information and contribute to reports for funders, partners and the Project Manager – Poverty.
- Use feedback, local insight and learning from outreach activity to identify gaps and help improve the service.
- Follow relevant policies and procedures, including data protection, safeguarding, health and safety and equality.

Team Working and Additional Expectations

- Work as an active member of the Affordable Warmth team, contributing to shared learning and a positive, supportive culture.
- Take part in relevant training and professional development, including energy-advice qualifications where required.
- Demonstrate MEC's THRIVE values: Tenacious, Holistic, Responsible, Inclusive, Visionary and Empowering.
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the role and organisational priorities.

What We Offer

You will join MEC at an exciting point in our journey, helping people across Middlesbrough access practical support to keep their homes warmer, healthier and more affordable. You will be part of a supportive, collaborative team creating lasting change for people, places and the planet across Tees Valley.

Core Benefits

Flexible working, where the role allows | 26 days holiday plus bank holidays (pro rata) | Additional 4 days company leave over Christmas | 4% employer pension contribution | Paid voluntary leave (up to 3 days) | Cycle to Work scheme | Simply Health cash back plan | Support for continuing professional development, learning and training

Working Pattern

The postholder will be based at the MEC office, with regular sessions being held in community settings across Tees Valley. Due to the nature of this role, home working will not be permitted unless exceptional circumstances and must be agreed in advance.

Working hours will normally fall within standard office hours, although some flexibility can be agreed to accommodate personal commitments, provided core partnership and organisational needs are met.

Occasional evening attendance at partnership or stakeholder events may be required, with reasonable notice.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Knowledge and understanding

- Understanding of fuel poverty, cold homes, high energy costs or the financial pressures faced by households.
- Awareness of the links between affordable warmth, health, housing, poverty and wellbeing.
- Understanding of the importance of confidentiality, safeguarding, equality and respectful, person-centred support.

Experience

- Working directly with people in a community, advice, support, customer service, health, housing or similar setting.
- Responding sensitively to people's individual circumstances and providing clear, practical information or support.
- Working with community organisations, volunteers or partner agencies.
- Maintaining accurate records and handling information sensitively.
- Signposting or referring people to appropriate services, or the ability to develop this knowledge quickly.

Skills and approach

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trust with people from different backgrounds.
- Ability to explain information clearly, sensitively and without judgement.
- Good organisational skills, with the ability to manage appointments, follow-up actions and competing priorities.
- Ability to work independently in community settings while contributing positively to a wider team.
- Confidence using basic digital systems to record activity, communicate with colleagues and access information.
- Willingness to undertake relevant training in affordable warmth and energy advice.
- Commitment to MEC's THRIVE values: Tenacious, Holistic, Responsible, Inclusive, Visionary and Empowering.
- **Full UK driving licence and access to a vehicle, or the ability to travel independently and reliably across Middlesbrough and the wider Tees Valley when required.**

Desirable Criteria

Qualifications and knowledge

- A recognised qualification in energy awareness, domestic energy advice, customer advice, housing, health, community development or a related field, or willingness to complete the required training within 12 months of taking up the post.
- Knowledge of local services, referral pathways and support available to people experiencing poverty, fuel insecurity or financial hardship.
- Understanding of energy efficiency measures, fuel voucher schemes, benefits or debt support.

Experience

- Delivering affordable warmth, energy advice, welfare, housing or poverty related support.
- Working in community venues, including schools, community centres, food projects or Eco Shops.
- Delivering short awareness sessions, briefings or training for volunteers, frontline staff or community groups.
- Supporting people who may be vulnerable or experiencing multiple challenges.
- Working with monitoring data and contributing to reports for funders or partners.