

# GREEN DOCTOR: ON THE FRONT LINES OF FUEL POVERTY

GROUNDWORK  
2025



## ABOUT GROUNDWORK

Groundwork supports practical action to create a fair and green future in which people, places and nature thrive.

We support local communities and businesses to build capacity and resilience as this is vital if we are to tackle hardship, achieve a just transition to net-zero and help nature recover in a way that reduces inequality and leads to better work and healthier, happier lives.



## ABOUT GREEN DOCTOR

Groundwork's Green Doctors are local energy advisors who specialise in helping vulnerable people at risk of fuel poverty and social isolation. They visit homes to offer more in-depth advice and support than can be provided over the telephone or online. Because they are part of the community and seen as neutral, they can have open conversations about people's living situations, making it easier to provide tailored, lasting solutions.

Green Doctors give advice on saving energy and encourage sustainable habits. They can fit small energy-saving items like draught-proofing and LED bulbs and explain how to use heating systems efficiently. Crucially, they offer emergency support and refer people to specialist partners for help with things like benefits, debt, and food. They also help people understand complex energy schemes and deal with issues caused by poor communication from suppliers, which often leads to debt. Many Green Doctors are also qualified retrofit advisors, meaning they can offer even more comprehensive advice on home improvements.



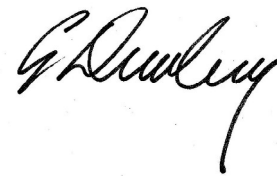
## INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Although we're talking less about a cost of living crisis as inflation gradually falls from its high a couple of years ago, this shouldn't blind us to the fact that millions of people are still suffering. Energy prices are going up less fast, but they haven't come down. Alongside this we've seen historic jumps in water bills and, with benefit cuts on the horizon, the outlook for those who have been struggling is no less bleak.

Groundwork's Green Doctors continue to bring relief to people at the sharp end of these volatile national and global forces, helping people to maximise warmth, supplement their income and ensure their homes are not doing them harm. What began as a pilot project in Leicester more than 15 years ago has now grown to become the single biggest service Groundwork offers, core to our strategic goal of helping more people overcome hardship and isolation.

We're hugely grateful to the funders and partners who support our work and who, in recent years, have been helping us to increase the scale and coverage of our offer so that we can help more people but also to innovate, testing new approaches to reach those who may be overlooked and to ensure the immediate changes we help people to make become lasting behaviours.

As we look ahead, we're pleased to see politicians making commitments to warm homes, and we look forward to working with national and local government and our business partners to ensure those who most need their homes upgraded are able to benefit from schemes being rolled out. However, we also know that the ongoing squeeze on public funding, changes to the benefit regime and an unpredictable global economy will mean this winter, and the next and the next, will be just as hard for many. If you think you can help us in any way, please do get in touch.



**Graham Duxbury**  
Chief Executive, Groundwork UK

# OUR IMPACT LAST YEAR

**19,000**

Households supported.

**14,000**

Households who received in-home support through direct visits.

**£4.2M**

Total financial savings generated for households receiving Green Doctor support.

**8.2M kg**

Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

**74,000**

Small-scale energy efficiency measures installed.

**£1.1M**

Fuel vouchers distributed to vulnerable households.

**3,000**

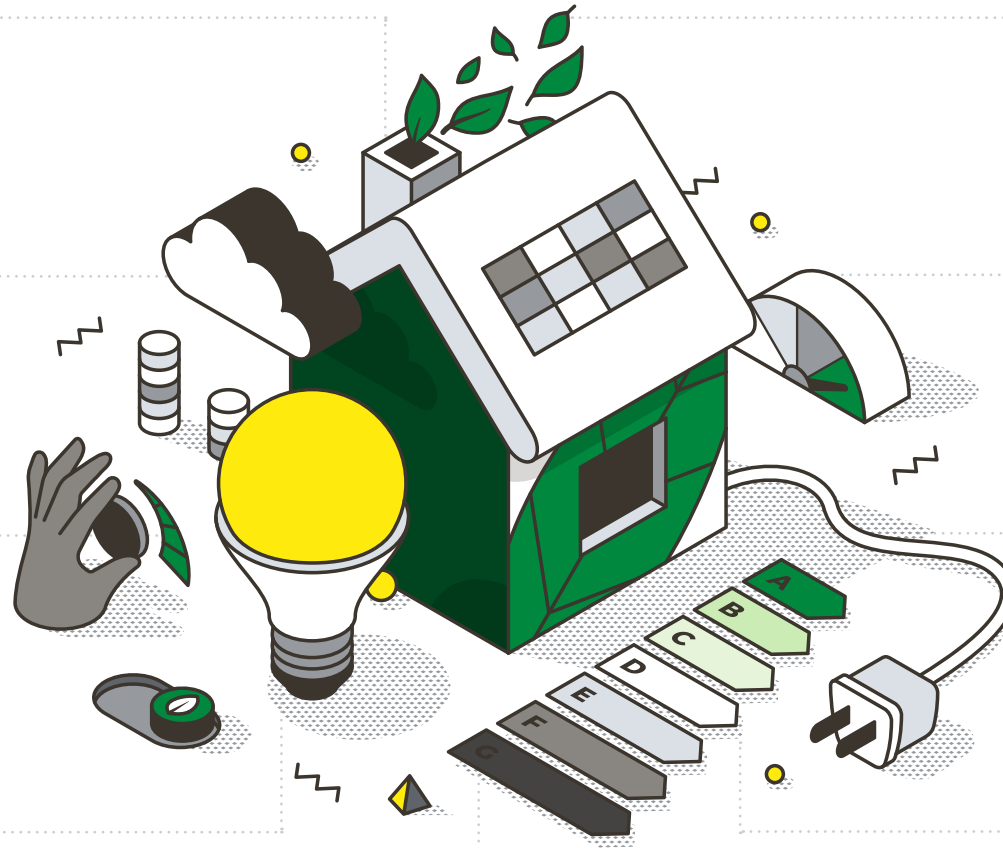
Customers supported with registration on the Priority Services Register.

**89%**

Customers who reported an improvement in their well-being following Green Doctor support.

**380**

Retrofit assessments completed.



## FIGHTING FUEL POVERTY

Groundwork's Green Doctor service provides vital support to households struggling with fuel poverty across the UK by offering practical advice and solutions in people's homes, over the phone, or through workshops.

Our Green Doctors work closely with housing associations and local authorities nationwide to ensure their services reach those most in need, providing ongoing support and referrals to local services. Their support includes helping residents tackle heat loss, find affordable energy providers, and access schemes to manage energy debt.

Additionally, Green Doctors are trained to identify issues such as damp, mould, health conditions, and loneliness, referring residents to appropriate support services. They can also advise on water efficiency and how to retrofit homes with low-carbon technologies, which helps to reduce both energy bills and carbon footprints.



## RETROFIT WITH CONFIDENCE

Green Doctors have expanded their expertise to address the urgent need for home retrofit across the UK, undertaking advanced training to become qualified retrofit advisors, assessors, and coordinators. This allows us to offer a more comprehensive and long-term solution for vulnerable households, guiding them through the complexities of insulation upgrades, low-carbon heating installations, and other essential home improvements.

Our retrofit service provides a holistic approach to creating warmer, healthier, and more energy-efficient homes. We offer clear, accessible guidance on improving insulation, exploring renewable energy options, and accessing available grants and funding. Our Green Doctors will act as a consistent point of contact, supporting residents through every stage of the retrofit journey, from a PAS 2035 retrofit assessment to project coordination and evaluation. By expanding our services to include comprehensive retrofit support, we are empowering vulnerable communities to achieve long-term reductions in energy bills, improve their well-being, and make a tangible contribution to a more sustainable future.



# KEY FEATURES OF THE SERVICE

## Home Visits



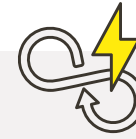
We visit customers in their homes. This allows us to support more vulnerable individuals, directly spot issues, and address behaviours more effectively.

## Our People



While technical competence is vital, we find the ability to engage with and support vulnerable people is paramount. We recruit staff for these crucial people skills, then provide comprehensive technical training, including the City & Guilds Level 3 in Energy Awareness.

## Ongoing Support



Whenever possible, we follow up with customers more than once to check our advice is making a difference and ensure they get the help they need.

## Driving Behaviour Change



Our staff are trained in behavioural science techniques. By engaging with customers over time, we help them change their habits to keep warm, save money, and stay healthy.

## Strong Partnerships



We work closely with local organisations. This ensures we reach the most vulnerable customers and can refer them to other essential services, like mental health support or food banks, making every contact count.

## Installing Small Measures



Our team is hands-on and can directly install practical energy-saving measures in customers' homes, such as draught-proofing and LED bulbs.

## Development and Innovation



We're continuously developing the Green Doctor service and welcome new partnerships and collaborations. Our expanding areas of focus include tackling mould, damp, and condensation and their links to health, supporting a fair shift to low-carbon homes, and exploring solutions for summer cooling.

## Access to larger measures



Our team ensures that we seek out grants and support that allows eligible households to benefit from larger energy saving measures. We provide Energy Performance Certificates and Retrofit Assessments and can help households access insulation schemes or new low carbon technology to help them save money and reduce their environmental impact.

# GREEN DOCTOR IN ACTION

## Winifred

Winifred, a 79-year-old from Nottingham, struggled with high energy bills and a cold home due to rising damp. Her chronic lung condition made warmth essential. Referred by the council, a Green Doctor visited her home and identified mould and rising damp, making heating inefficient. An urgent referral was made to her housing association.

The Green Doctor also educated Winifred on using her new solar panels and heat pump system effectively. They advised her on reducing whole house temperature to focus energy usage strategically, installed LED light bulbs, and provided an electric blanket, which Winifred loved.

Following the visit, Winifred's landlord replaced her old door and began addressing the damp issue, significantly improving her comfort and reducing energy costs. Winifred expressed immense satisfaction, noting her legs were finally warm, sometimes even "too warm."

The Green Doctor service not only improved Winifred's comfort and health but also provided sustainable solutions to reduce her energy costs, showcasing the impactful support offered by Green Doctor.



## Sue

Sue, a 67-year-old from Norwich, contacted Green Doctor when her home became dangerously cold, posing a risk to her husband's health. Despite their efforts, one part of the house remained particularly cold. Sue initially reached out to book an energy advice talk for a community group she chairs and requested a home visit for her own needs.

During the visit, the Green Doctor identified a draught entering from a door and installed draughtproofing to limit heat loss. They also installed radiator foils to reflect heat back into the home and helped Sue program her thermostat. A follow-up call revealed that Sue was already feeling the benefits, with a warmer home and reduced energy costs.

Sue praised the Green Doctor service, saying, "The visit highlighted things I had missed. It was a pleasure to have a Green Doctor come to my home. I am already saving money and feel that we are now doing the best we can."

The Green Doctor service not only improved Sue's comfort and her husband's health but also provided sustainable solutions to reduce their energy costs, showcasing the impactful support offered by Green Doctor.

**"The visit highlighted things I had missed. It was a pleasure to have a Green Doctor come to my home. I am already saving money and feel that we are now doing the best we can."**

## Ahmed

Green Doctor's energy saving guidance and understanding has helped Ahmed, a young 25 year old refugee from Blackpool, living alone to gain confidence in managing his energy bills.

Ahmed first met one of our Green Doctors at a local community centre. Despite receiving assistance with food and other essentials, Ahmed was still finding it more and more challenging each month to repay his energy bills. Living by himself meant that there was no one to share this burden with and he felt had no one to turn to.

A Green Doctor visited Ahmed at his home and advised him on ways to reduce his energy bills. Wanting to learn a new skill, Ahmed asked to be involved and was guided in installing three radiator panels, a draught excluder for a window and door, and four energy-saving light bulbs.

After the visit, Ahmed felt much more confident and in control of his energy bills. He said, "Before I received support from the Green Doctors, I was alone. I was cold. I had no one to help me with my problems. When he visited my home, James was kind and understanding of my situation. Now I feel much happier, and I know where to go if I need help in the future." The Green Doctor service improved Ahmed's comfort and financial situation, providing him with the tools and confidence he needed to become much more energy efficient - which will put more money back in his pockets for other living essentials.

## Jade

Jade, a 30-year-old from Wigan, faced a nightmare when her boiler broke down, leading to cold showers and high energy bills. Living in a chilly flat with her two children, she struggled with the cost-of-living crisis. Groundwork's Green Doctor service visited her home, identified draughty windows, and installed draught excluders and radiator foil to improve insulation.

The Green Doctor provided financial support, including a pre-paid card for energy bills, LED light bulbs, and an Aldi food voucher. They also gave Jade a heated blanket and a Winter Warmer Pack. Jade's flat is now warmer and more energy-efficient.

Jade expressed her gratitude, saying, "Before my Green Doctor helped me, I was feeling stressed and overwhelmed. The visit was simple, informative, and uplifting. I'm so grateful for the information and support I received."

The Green Doctor service improved Jade's comfort and financial situation, providing the tools and support needed to keep her family warm and safe.

**"Before my Green Doctor helped me, I was feeling stressed and overwhelmed. The visit was simple, informative, and uplifting. I'm so grateful for the information and support I received."**



## Support our work

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As a charity we rely on support from a variety of sources to ensure we can deliver our mission.

We are proud of the impact we have achieved in the last 12 months but, with your support, we know we can achieve even more in the year ahead. There are many ways to get involved. Whether you're looking to partner with us or a looking for a good cause to donate to, we'd love to hear from you.

Find out more at [www.groundwork.org.uk/greendocor](http://www.groundwork.org.uk/greendocor)

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TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GROUNDWORK,  
**PLEASE GET IN TOUCH:**

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CHANGING PLACES  
CHANGING LIVES