



## Energy Redress Project Coordinator

### Strategic Brief

Canopy Housing are aiming to recruit an individual or small company to help deliver a two-year project funded by the Energy Redress scheme. We have been awarded £200K, a quarter of which has been ring-fenced to pay for a Project Coordinator role. We hope to be able to appoint the successful candidate by mid-November.

#### **Who are Canopy Housing and what do we do?**

Canopy Housing are an award-winning, charitable enterprise who work with local community volunteers to retrofit empty homes. One of the volunteers on each property is usually homeless and gets to move into the property on completion. We call them our 'self-helpers'.

Canopy were established twenty-five years ago, and we now own or lease long-term more than eighty social housing properties. We acquire and retrofit 4-6 empty homes each year and are also working on the retrofit of twelve properties we already own that were not refurbished to the high standards we set today.

We will work with around 150 volunteers over the two-year project. An important part of what we do is engaging the public in community retrofit. Our volunteers come from all walks of life. Some simply want to learn DIY skills; others want careers in construction; and many just want to help homeless people, get involved in a local community project, or come along because it is beneficial for their mental health. We are particularly proud of the high numbers of women and people from ethnic minorities we engage in construction activities.

Four years ago, we started using bio-based materials to carry out our retrofits. We have been using wood fibre and lime plaster rather than PIR insulation and are hoping to start using hemp-based insulation over the next year or so. We do this because we believe vapour-permeable construction is healthier for the occupants and better for the buildings we work with, which are predominantly Victorian and Edwardian brick-built terraces.

We insulate internally for practical reasons: We prefer not to work at height with inexperienced volunteers and more of them are likely to turn up in the winter months if they are working indoors. It also gives us better quality control and oversight of our site team.

## **What is the Energy Redress project?**

Canopy Housing were successful in securing £200K in funding from the Energy Redress Scheme, which redistributes the money energy companies are fined to help fund community-based schemes that help tackle the climate crisis and fuel poverty. The grant must be spent by **30 September 2025**.

The core outputs required from Canopy's scheme are three-fold:

- To continue engaging disadvantaged, isolated people in practical climate action through our volunteering and training programmes.
- To measure the benefits of using our construction methods and materials and explore how they might be improved.
- To produce a Canopy Guide to Retrofit, documenting the way we work, allowing others to replicate our methods.

Canopy's staff, volunteers and trainees should be involved in all three. Over the course of the two-year project, we anticipate carrying out twelve retrofits, four of which will be from amongst our existing stock.

## **What will be the Project Coordinator's role?**

The Project Coordinator will report directly to the Chief Executive, who will oversee the Energy Redress project. The key responsibilities of the Project Coordinator will be to:

- Assess each of the twelve properties and propose appropriate solutions that take account of Canopy's desire to use bio-based materials and employ methods that are achievable by teams of amateur volunteers.
- Conduct pre-retrofit assessments that record the building's existing performance. This should encompass U-values (assumed and actual), airtightness, systems performance, occupant behaviour and an analysis of existing energy bills (if available).
- Visit our sites, engage with staff and volunteers, and inspect and document the as-built methods of construction.
- Identify any situations where methods or materials diverge from recommended best practice and advise accordingly.
- Test the building performance on completion, engaging volunteers, and the site team in the process.
- Conduct post-occupancy evaluations that demonstrate the improvements in building performance and benefits to the occupants. The evaluation should also identify any performance gap issues.
- Collate the information gathered through the inspections and produce a Canopy Guide to Retrofit.
- Engage fully with Canopy's staff team, attending monthly team meetings and other meetings with members of the Project Team.

## **What should the Canopy Guide to Retrofit look like?**

The guide should be designed to assist other community groups in setting up projects like that delivered by Canopy. It should cover:

- How we fund what we do and advice on setting up your own project.
- Practicalities around engaging volunteers, including health and safety, safeguarding, building effective teams, and delivering training.
- How to manage a simple construction site.
- What methods and materials we use and why.
- Practical working details
- The benefits of using bio-based materials.

We expect the illustrated guide to be in booklet format, capable of distribution at workshops, some of which we will hold towards the end of the project. It should also be available in digital format and include direct links to online videos and more in-depth technical advice.

There may be opportunities to work with other organisations, such as Community Led Homes or Action on Empty Homes to avoid duplication.

## **What resources are available to the Project Coordinator?**

The grant includes £53,000 to pay for the Project Coordinator. There are several ways to interpret this:

- If the Project Coordinator were taken on as a part-time, temporary member of staff, it would mean we could pay them for three days per week over a period of 21 months at a full-time equivalent salary of around £40,000 plus expenses.
- If the Project Coordinator were taken on as a consultant, it would allow them to work 244 days at a daily rate of £190.
- If the Project Coordinator role were taken on by a limited company, it would allow us to pay them £53,000 in fees.

In addition to the grant set aside for paying the Project Coordinator, the budget includes:

- Up to 48 days of support from Tilly, one of our Properties Workers who has reduced her hours to allow her to complete a Green Building course at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales. She can help you with testing, organising volunteers and site practicalities.
- Up to 36 days of support from Gary, our Marketing and Communications Officer. He can help produce videos and work on the Canopy Guide to Retrofit.
- Up to 36 days of support from Laura, our Housing Support Officer, who can assist with post-occupancy evaluations and engaging tenants.

- Regular meetings and support from David, our Chief Executive, who will oversee the project and can assist with producing text for the guide.
- A £3,000 budget for testing equipment
- A £1,500 budget for producing the guide (software, printing, etc)

You would, of course, have access to our office in Leeds, including its WiFi, kitchen, tea, coffee, workspaces, copying facilities, etc.

### **What qualifications and experience should the Project Coordinator possess?**

We would expect the Project Coordinator to be qualified as a Retrofit Coordinator, but this is not essential if you have other similar or better qualifications.

We expect the successful applicant to be able to write in plain English and be capable of producing accessible working drawings and be able to edit videos for online use.

The candidate must be capable of working to tight deadlines; able to carry out assessments promptly; and enjoy managing complex projects.

Everybody that works for Canopy is expected to sign up to our Cornerstones: valuing our tenants and volunteers, treating colleagues with respect, promoting Canopy's values, and taking responsibility for continually improving their own performance.

### **What is the application process?**

Please submit your CV for consideration along with a covering letter explaining why you believe you would be ideal for the role, how you would like to be employed, and how much you would expect to be paid.

Subject to candidates demands being within our budget, we expect to assess candidates based on:

- Their qualifications and demonstrable ability to deliver the project (60)
- Their approach to working in partnership with Canopy (20)
- Their approach to working with tenants and volunteers (10)
- Their commitment to sustainable practices (10)

**Applications should be emailed to [info@canopyhousing.org](mailto:info@canopyhousing.org) on or before 10.00am on Tuesday 24 October 2023.**

Suitable candidates will be invited for interview, at which they will be expected to make a presentation.

If you would like to discuss matters informally before submission, please speak to our Chief Executive, David Nugent.

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**[www.canopyhousing.org](http://www.canopyhousing.org)**