Better Retrofits, Together

Citizen-led renovation



Frequently asked questions for householders

Thinking about joining the Buying Club? Here's everything you need to know before you register your interest.

1 What is the Better Retrofits, Together scheme?

Better Retrofits, Together is a community-led initiative that helps you and your neighbours navigate home energy upgrades together, through a Buying Club model - from your first expression of interest right through to signing with a Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)-registered contractor.

2 What is a Buying Club, exactly?

A buying club is how we bring your interest together with your neighbours', so we can approach SEAI-registered contractors with real, collective demand - instead of everyone navigating this alone. This gives contractors better-quality leads and gives you transparent guide pricing.

3 Where is this scheme being piloted?

Better Retrofits, Together is currently being piloted in the following nine neighbourhoods within the Greater Dublin Area, in partnership with SEAI and local Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs): Laytown / Bettystown, Balbriggan, Skerries, Cabra / Phibsboro, Ringsend / Sandymount, Clondalkin, Dún Laoghaire / Blackrock, Greystones / Delgany, and members of Capital Credit Union.

4 Does it cost anything to join?

No. Registering your interest and attending the workshops are both completely free. The only money that ever changes hands is between you and the chosen contractor and only if you decide to go ahead.

5 Can I join if I live outside the areas listed above?

Not at the moment, unfortunately. The initiative is currently in the pilot phase, but we do hope to expand into other communities across the Greater Dublin Area over time.

6 What is a Sustainable Energy Community (SEC)?

A SEC is a group where people from all sectors of a community work together to plan and deliver a sustainable energy future for their area, reducing energy use, switching to renewable sources and using smart energy technologies for the benefit of the whole community.

7 Do I need to be a member of my local SEC to take part?

Not at all. The SECs listed in Question 3 are helping to raise awareness of the Better Retrofits, Together pilot initiative within their communities.
That said, if you'd like to join your local SEC as well, we'd be happy to put you in touch with them.

8 Am I committing to anything by registering my interest?

No. Filling out the Expression of Interest form is free and commits you to nothing. It simply tells us that you're interested and it helps us find out what you and your neighbours' homes need.

9 How do I register my interest?

Visit codema.ie/BetterRetrofits. It takes less than five minutes to fill out the Expression of Interest form.

10 Can I leave the process later if I change my mind?

Yes. You're free to step away at any point before signing a contract with a contractor, with no penalty at all.

11 What happens after I express interest?

You'll be invited to our free workshops to help you understand what upgrades suit your home, along with the grants and financing available. From there, the work you want to get done on your home is pooled with your neighbours' and you'll then receive a technical survey and a site-specific proposal tailored to your home from the contractor that's selected.

12 Do I have to do a full retrofit?

Not at all. You choose what's right for you - from a single measure like attic insulation or solar panels, right up to a full deep retrofit. It's fully flexible to best suit your home and budget.

13 What if I'm not ready to commit this time round?

That's fine. The Buying Club runs on a rolling six-month cycle, so there's always a next opportunity to join when the time is right for you.

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14 Who's running this - can I trust it?

Better Retrofits, Together is co-delivered by Codema, Dublin's Energy Agency (under the CLR3 EU project) and the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) programme. It's independent and free from any commercial interest in which contractor you choose.

15 What's an SEAI-registered contractor?

It's a contractor who has met SEAI's standards to carry out grant-supported energy upgrade works. All contractors put forward through the Buying Club are SEAI-registered.

16 How is the contractor selected?

Codema will approach SEAI-registered contractors participating in the Buying Club process with anonymised information on the group of interested homes and ask them to provide indicative pricing and details of any group benefits they can offer.

17 Will joining the Buying Club as a group guarantee a discount on the cost of work?

While cost may factor into the overall value of some groups experience, it isn't something we can promise as an outcome of the service. The real benefit of the group approach lies elsewhere - it gives you the opportunity to go through the retrofit process alongside your neighbours and it builds your confidence and understanding of what's involved along the way.

18 What protections exist to ensure the standard of work carried out is up to scratch?

The Buying Club will rely on the existing SEAI quality assurance process that already applies to grant-supported works. Any warranties or guarantees relating to the work will also sit with the contractor under the homeowner's contract.

19 What if something goes wrong?

Before you sign a contract, you're free to step away from the Buying Club at any time. If you go ahead with the work, the chosen contractor is responsible for delivering the work agreed with you and addressing anything that arises under your contract. Codema, your SEC and SEC mentor will continue to help you understand the process and direct you to the appropriate support if needed.

20 This is described as a pilot - what does that mean for me?

This is a brand-new, first-of-its-kind pilot. By joining early, you're helping shape how it works for every community that follows. As with any new pilot, we're learning and improving the process as we go and we appreciate your feedback along the way.

21 Who sees my information?

Your details are used by Codema to understand what your home needs and to group similar homes together for the Buying Club. During the contractor comparison stage, information shared with contractors will be anonymised so they cannot identify individual homeowners.

22 I receive a welfare payment and qualify for the Warmer Homes scheme. Can I take part?

Anyone potentially eligible for the Warmer Homes Scheme is more than welcome to join our free workshops and to learn with the community like anyone else. The householder should still fill out the Expression of Interest form, as they may be eligible for additional funding.

23 Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

Email *BetterRetrofits@codema.ie* or visit codema.ie/BetterRetrofits

Ready to get started?

Joining is free, easy and doesn't commit you to anything.

Scan to register your interest or visit:
codema.ie/BetterRetrofits

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Codema Dublin's Energy Agency

seai Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland