

Westward Housing Group Energy Deal Helps Make Electricity More Affordable For 540 Homes South West

Further to the Feed in Tariff controversy and scheme closure this week, Westward Housing Group managed to achieve installations of photovoltaic solar panels on 540 of our customer households roofs.

It is disappointing compared with the thousands we had planned, but we are just pleased to have achieved some benefit despite the early cut off date and other legal and financial delays.

We have had to spend a lot of time explaining to customers why the process has been confusing and disappointing in many cases.

Westward Housing Group member, Westcountry Housing, and Anesco, did deliver a 'first of its kind' deal to provide free low carbon electricity to those identified as suitable for photovoltaic (PV) electric solar panels across Devon and Cornwall and then had to re-plan for the new tight timescales.

It was the first 'rent a roof' project for a housing association, funded by Anesco South West Ltd, which in turn received the government Feed-in Tariff. The Anesco / Westcountry Housing deal was the first and we think only such deal to have been approved by the banks which are the housing association funders.

The scheme will provide much needed cheaper energy to those who most need it, with a projected saving of at least



£120* per year per household.

The project saw the first installations happening in the second week of November and was shut down this week on 12th December. Staff were drafted in by Anesco from all possible sources to work round the clock since the announcement by the government of an early end to scheme funding on 12th December 2011, rather than on 31st March 2012 as previously planned.

Nigel Barnard, a Director of Westward Housing Group who lead on the project, said *“Being the first project of this kind has meant we have had many hurdles to cross including getting the banks’ approval. However our tenants’ thanks go out to all involved in securing this project which will help many out of fuel poverty.”*

“The recent Feed in Tariff announcement from government regarding the huge cuts to the photovoltaic project will have a considerable impact on our ability to help alleviate fuel poverty for many of our customers though we are continuing to work hard to find positive solutions.”

Tenants will benefit with savings on their bills from the electricity generated during the daytime when the sun is shining on the panels. Excess energy generated is fed back into the national grid as part of the government’s Feed-in Tariff, which rewards electricity produced from renewable or low carbon sources.

It was intended to help raise as many households as possible out of fuel poverty, as well as affirming Westward’s commitment to the environment.

Anesco installed and will manage solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roofs of the 540 suitable Westcountry Housing properties, which include sheltered housing schemes, domestic properties and blocks of flats.

Westcountry Housing is a member of Westward Housing Group which provides more than 6,500 homes in the region. 5,600 homes are managed by Westcountry Housing in Devon and Cornwall and 1,800 homes are managed by Tarka Housing in Torridge, Devon.

Karen Ayling, Managing Director at Westcountry Housing, added: *“We are delighted to launch this innovative project to improve customers’ lives whilst reducing environmental impact.”*

Anesco Ltd operate a unique 25 year installation and maintenance package to ensure the scheme continues to operate at its optimum efficiency. The unique service, AnescoMeter, operates remotely, meaning minimum disruption to tenants. It provides real-time monitoring of the condition and output of the panels, to enable instant identification of any changes in efficiency.

* Based on the installation of a 1.88kW to 2.35kW solar photovoltaic system fitted to a south-facing roof exposed to average UK weather conditions on an assumed tariff rate of 13.3p/kWh.

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Notes to editors:

Westcountry Housing and Tarka Housing are members of Westward Housing Group, which provides more than 6,500 good quality, affordable homes for rent and sale throughout Devon and Cornwall, as well as a number of support services and social enterprise projects. Westward provides New Horizon Homes, a private development company. Westcountry Housing also jointly manages the HomeBuy agency, South West Homes, with Sovereign Housing. Sustainability lies at the core of everything we do. Short-term solutions may provide temporary help, but effective long-term strategies are essential for future growth and prosperity.

For further information please contact Vanessa Gray at Westward Housing Group as above. www.westcountryha.org.uk, www.tarkahousing.org.uk and www.westwardhousing.org.uk

About Anesco

Anesco is a national company dedicated to helping homeowners, local authorities and businesses reduce carbon emissions.

The Anesco model examines current energy usage, before calculating the financial savings that could be made through the implementation of a range of key energy efficiency measures, including renewable technologies, insulation, voltage optimisation and home controls. The expert team can provide everything from tailored solutions to micro generation design, installation and maintenance.

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