



RISE

Retrofit information,
support & expertise

Lessons learned from ECO and GBIS

Supply chain advice pack

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Summary of ECO and GBIS

An overview

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) have driven the installation of millions of energy efficiency measures across Great Britain, creating a substantial body of experience throughout the retrofit supply chain.

While both schemes have successfully improved energy efficiency and reduced fuel poverty for many households, delivery has highlighted recurring challenges around compliance, evidence collection, quality assurance, consumer engagement, workforce capacity and programme administration.

This advice pack brings together **key lessons learned** from industry experience to help retrofit organisations strengthen future delivery. By adopting proven approaches and avoiding common pitfalls, businesses can improve operational efficiency, reduce compliance risk and achieve better outcomes for residents.

Why lessons learned matter

Retrofit programmes are becoming increasingly sophisticated, with greater expectations around quality, data management, consumer protection and evidencing outcomes.

For installers, retrofit coordinators, managing agents, local authorities, energy suppliers and other delivery partners, the ability to learn from previous schemes is critical to achieving:

- Consistent compliance
- High-quality installations
- Positive customer experiences
- Reduced rework and remediation costs
- Stronger supply chain resilience
- Improved delivery performance

As future retrofit programmes continue to evolve, organisations that embed lessons learned into their operating models will be best placed to succeed.

Key delivery challenges

While ECO and GBIS have supported the delivery of energy efficiency measures at scale, their implementation has not been without challenges. Retrofit projects often involve multiple stakeholders, complex compliance requirements, large volumes of property data and demanding reporting obligations. For supply chain organisations, success depends not only on technical delivery but also on effective coordination, information management, quality assurance and communication across the delivery chain.

The experiences of organisations delivering ECO and GBIS-funded projects highlight a number of recurring challenges that can affect programme performance, compliance and customer outcomes. Understanding these challenges and the lessons learned can help contractors, installers and retrofit professionals avoid common pitfalls and improve future delivery.

Lessons learned

Lesson 1: Evidence collection must be built into delivery

Incomplete and incorrect evidence

One of the most common causes of delays, rejected submissions and compliance issues under ECO and GBIS has been incomplete or incorrect evidence.

In many cases, evidence requirements were viewed as an administrative task completed after installation rather than a core part of the delivery process.

What worked well	Practical advice
Clear evidence requirements were defined before works started.	Establish evidence requirements at project mobilisation, not after installation has begun.
Standardised evidence checklists reduced errors and omissions.	Develop simple checklists for surveyors, coordinators and installers.
Installers and surveyors received scheme-specific evidence training.	Ensure all delivery partners understand what evidence is required and why.

Digital tools enabled real-time evidence capture and validation.	Invest in systems that capture evidence at source and minimise manual processing.
Pre-submission quality checks reduced rejected claims.	Introduce quality assurance reviews before evidence is submitted.

Lesson 2: Quality assurance is more effective when embedded early

Maintaining quality throughout delivery

One of the most significant lessons learned from ECO and GBIS delivery is that quality cannot be treated as a standalone installation activity. Successful retrofit outcomes depend on quality being embedded throughout the entire delivery process, from initial assessments and retrofit design through to installation, handover and ongoing quality assurance. Where quality controls were weak or inconsistent, issues often emerged later in the project, resulting in remedial works, increased costs, compliance concerns and reduced confidence amongst residents and funders.

This can lead to:

- Unnecessary remedial work
- Additional costs
- Resident dissatisfaction
- Compliance concerns

What worked well	Practical advice
Robust pre-installation assessments identified risks early.	Focus quality controls at the assessment and design stages, not just after installation.
Risk-based quality assurance targeted higher-risk projects.	Prioritise inspection resources where the greatest risks exist.

Regular installer audits reinforced standards.	Conduct routine audits and share findings across delivery teams.
Feedback loops enabled continuous improvement.	Use lessons learned from inspections and remediation activities to improve future performance.
Quality responsibilities were shared across project teams.	Embed quality ownership throughout the customer journey.

Lesson 3: Good resident engagement results in better experiences for residents

Technical compliance alone does not guarantee a successful retrofit project.

Many delivery teams found that customers:

- Did not fully understand proposed works
- Had unrealistic expectations
- Required additional support during installation

What worked well	Practical advice
Customers received clear explanations of proposed measures.	Use plain language and avoid technical jargon when communicating with residents.
Regular communication kept customers informed throughout delivery.	Maintain regular contact before, during and after installation.
Accessible complaints and escalation processes built trust.	Ensure customers know where to seek support if issues arise.
Post-installation support improved satisfaction levels.	Follow up with households to address concerns and encourage measure use.

Delivery teams managed customer expectations effectively.	Be transparent about timescales, disruption and expected outcomes.
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Lesson 4: Supply chain relationships matter

Relationship management

ECO and GBIS delivery often involved multiple organisations working together, including:

- Lead contractors
- Installers
- Retrofit coordinators
- Assessors
- Energy suppliers
- Managing agents

Weak communication between delivery partners frequently created delays and inconsistencies.

What worked well	Practical advice
Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined.	Document responsibilities and accountability across all delivery partners.
Regular performance reviews improved coordination.	Hold structured reviews to identify issues and opportunities for improvement.
Shared objectives aligned organisations around delivery outcomes.	Focus on collaborative delivery rather than transactional relationships.

Clear escalation routes prevented delays.	Establish escalation procedures before delivery begins.
Long-term partnerships improved consistency and trust.	Invest in supplier and partner relationships that support future programmes.

Lesson 5: Skills and capacity need long-term investment

Capacity pressures

Rapid retrofit programme growth can place significant pressure on workforce availability.

Many organisations experienced challenges relating to:

- **Recruitment** particularly following the introduction of PAS 2035 requirements and increased demand for whole-house retrofit expertise.
- **Skills shortages** for specific measures, resulting in project backlogs and longer delivery times.
- **Training requirements** including updates to standards, guidance and compliance expectations.
- **Competition for skilled workers** between suppliers, contractors and delivery programmes, making staff retention more difficult

What worked well	Practical advice
Organisations invested in ongoing workforce development.	Create long-term training plans that support evolving standards and requirements.
Internal quality champions promoted best practice.	Develop subject matter experts who can mentor colleagues and drive improvement.

Cross-training reduced operational resilience risks.	Build flexibility into workforce planning by broadening skillsets.
Apprenticeships and development pathways supported recruitment.	Engage with training providers to develop future talent pipelines.
Skills planning was aligned with anticipated programme demand.	Forecast future workforce requirements rather than responding reactively.

Lesson 6: Data quality is a business-critical capability

Stock and data management

Poor stock data management created numerous downstream issues across retrofit programmes. Local authorities, housing providers and asset owners were often required to share information with contractors, installers, retrofit assessors and coordinators, including EPC data, property archetypes, condition surveys, occupancy information, retrofit histories and asset management records. Where this information was incomplete, inaccurate or held in different formats, supply chain organisations faced challenges in planning works, selecting appropriate measures and forecasting resource requirements.

This often resulted in:

- Delayed submissions due to additional surveys or data verification activities.
- Compliance failures where insufficient information was available to support PAS 2035 or scheme requirements.
- Reporting inaccuracies caused by inconsistent or incomplete asset information.
- Programme delays due to incorrect assumptions about property condition or suitability.
- Increased costs associated with repeat visits, additional assessments and redesign work.
- Reduced confidence in delivery forecasts and resource planning.

What worked well	Practical advice
Standardised data processes improved consistency.	Introduce clear data governance procedures and controls.
Defined ownership improved accountability.	Assign responsibility for data quality across key delivery stages.
Integrated systems reduced duplication and errors.	Minimise manual data handling wherever possible.
Routine data audits identified issues early.	Monitor data quality continuously rather than relying on end-stage checks.
Reliable data supported both compliance and reporting.	Treat data as a strategic operational asset, not simply an administrative requirement.

Lesson 7: Compliance and quality are operational responsibilities, not administrative tasks

Compliance and quality requirements

Under ECO and GBIS, compliance requirements extended far beyond programme administration. Delivery organisations were required to demonstrate that installations met scheme rules, quality standards, consumer protection requirements and evidence obligations.

A common challenge was treating compliance as the responsibility of a specialist team rather than embedding it across day-to-day operations. This often resulted in issues being identified late in the process, leading to additional costs, delays, rejected submissions or remedial activity.

What worked well	Practical advice
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Compliance was embedded across operational teams.	Make compliance part of everyday delivery activities rather than a standalone process.
Regular training increased awareness of scheme requirements.	Keep teams informed about changing guidance and requirements.
Internal audits identified compliance risks before external review.	Use routine audits to monitor performance and address issues proactively.
Clear procedures improved consistency.	Document processes and ensure they are understood across the organisation.
Leadership reinforced the importance of compliance culture.	Encourage accountability at all levels of the organisation.

Preparing for future retrofit programmes

Future programmes are likely to place even greater emphasis on:

- Demonstrable quality
- Robust consumer protection
- Digital evidence management
- Accurate reporting
- Skilled workforces
- Whole-house retrofit approaches

Organisations that have learned from ECO and GBIS delivery experience will be better positioned to adapt to new standards and requirements.

Key priorities should include:

- Strengthening evidence processes
- Embedding quality assurance throughout delivery
- Improving customer engagement
- Investing in workforce development

- Enhancing data management capability
- Building a culture of compliance

Conclusions

ECO and GBIS have provided the retrofit sector with invaluable practical experience. Alongside their successes in improving the energy performance of homes across Great Britain, they have highlighted important lessons around delivery management, quality assurance, compliance and customer engagement.

By applying these lessons, retrofit organisations can improve efficiency, reduce risk and strengthen outcomes for residents, creating a more resilient and effective supply chain that is prepared for the demands of future energy efficiency programmes.

These lessons are particularly relevant to Warm Homes programmes, which will require large-scale, high-quality delivery across diverse housing stock and communities. By applying the learning gained through ECO and GBIS, retrofit organisations can improve efficiency, reduce risks, strengthen compliance and deliver better outcomes for residents. This will help create a more resilient and capable supply chain that is better prepared to support the successful delivery of current and future Warm Homes initiatives.

Resources



Podcast: All RISE podcasts are available [here](#).

Podcast: “Transition from ECO to Warm Homes with InstaGroup” available [here](#).



Masterclass: All RISE masterclasses are available [here](#).

Masterclass “Policy review | Warm Homes Social Housing Fund” available [here](#).



Advice pack: All RISE advice packs available [here](#).

Advice pack: “Introduction to the RISE Direct – Supply Chain service” available [here](#)).

