

How we can move to low carbon homes via a just transition

21.05.2025
Royal Society

Prof Mari Martiskainen
Director, EDRC
University of Sussex



Photo by [Geoffroy Hauwen](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Climate change means that homes need to become more resilient



Photo: Screenshot from BBC News

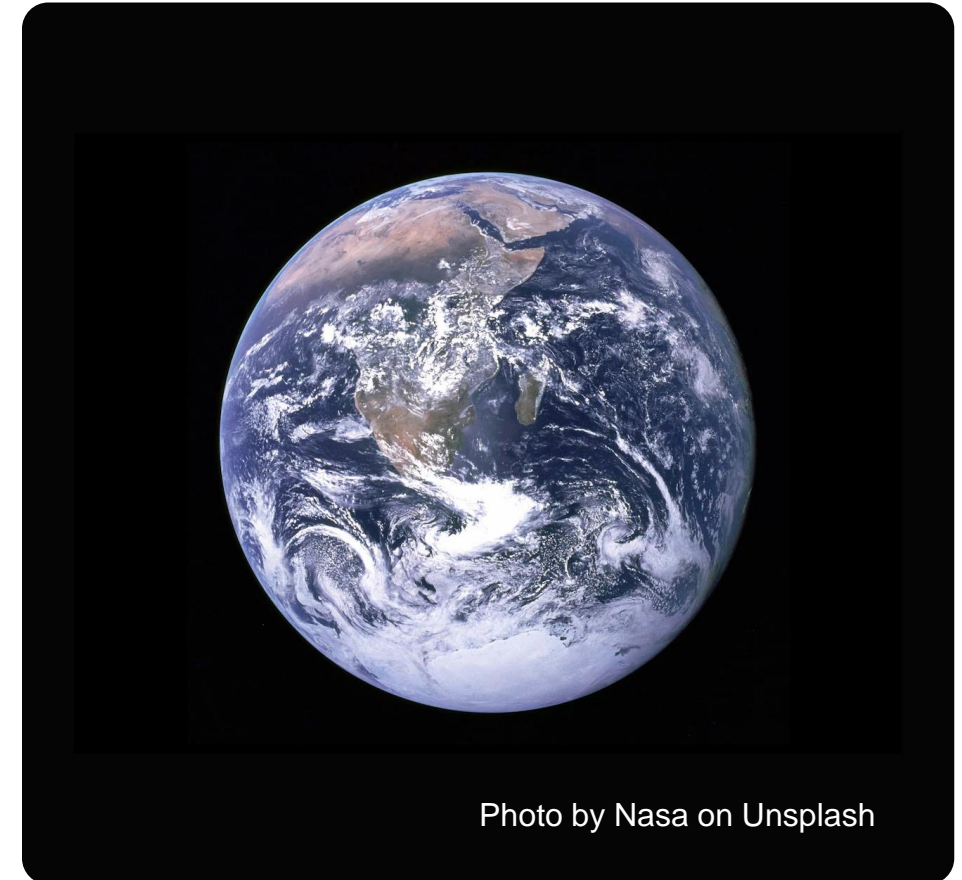
World Meteorological Association:

“The past ten years 2015-2024 are the ten warmest years on record 2024”

“Long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement not yet dead but in grave danger”

People support action on climate change

- World's largest standalone survey on climate change by UNDP (<https://peoplesclimate.vote/>):
 - 80% of people globally want their country to do more on climate change
 - 72% want their country to move away from fossil fuels to clean energy quickly
- Survey of 125 countries by Andre et al.:
 - 69% of the global population expresses a willingness to contribute 1% of their personal income
 - 86% endorse pro-climate social norms
 - 89% demand intensified political action
- Need to make a clear link between low carbon homes and climate change



Homes as places with connecting behaviours and lifestyles



Not just about bricks & mortar

Also about behaviour inside & out

A just transition in the context of homes

- Just transitions: simultaneously address inequalities, are low-carbon and could be implemented through interventions that prioritize restoration, reconstruction and redistributive justice.” Köhler et al. 2019
- Different ways to distinguish justice in the context of energy transitions:
 - Instrumental: concerning of ‘just transitions’ in the labour movement, for example
 - Perceptive: justice is not simply an objective construct—it is also a matter of perception



Photo by Tania Malréchauffé on Unsplash

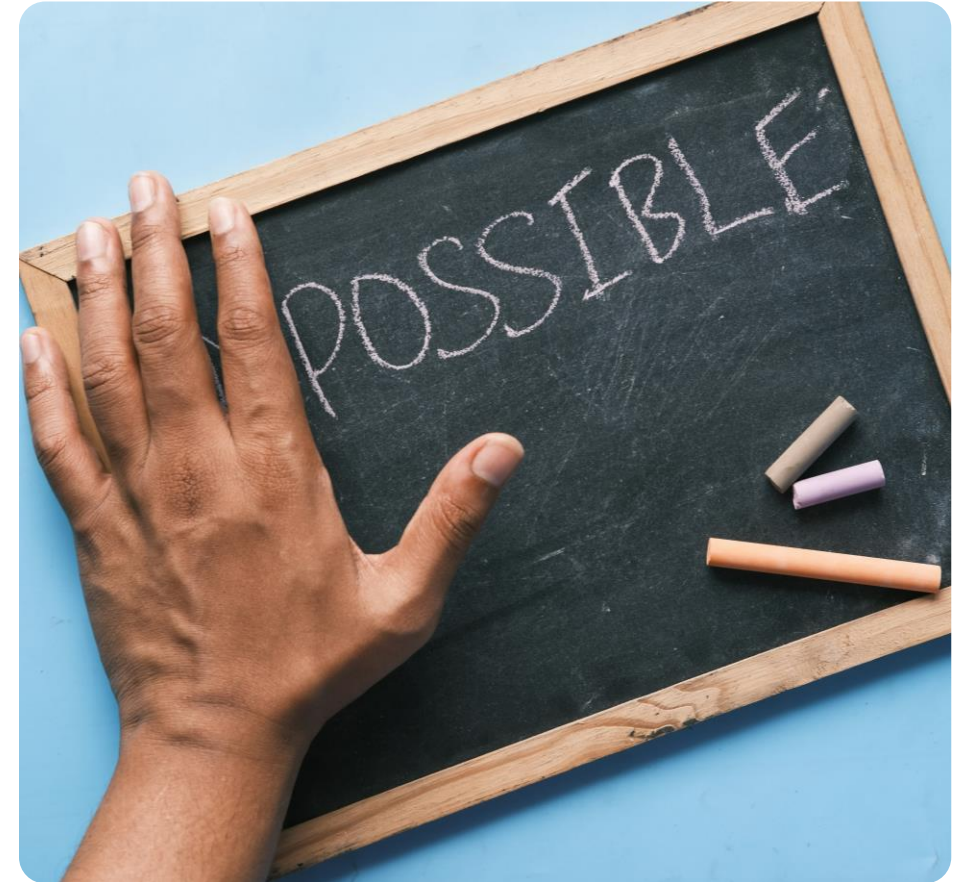
Thinking of homes and just transitions

- Who's homes are we considering?
 - Homeowners, tenants, landlords...?
- What is expected?
 - Who needs to take action
- What are people's different starting points?
 - Awareness, willingness, capacity
- Trusted relationships have a key part to play
 - 98% of UK population trust people they know personally (Kings College London)
 - Compared to 39% of UK population trust NGOs, businesses, governments and media (2024 Edelman Trust Barometer)



Creating better confidence in low carbon homes

- Make benefits of low carbon homes clear
 - Warm & cool homes, cleaner air, better wellbeing, reduced energy bills, energy security
- Communicate in clear terms
 - Forget terms like kWhs, retrofit, even net zero
 - Homes have a lot of emotional links, and also irrational aspects
- Consider fairness and inclusion
 - Who pays, who benefits

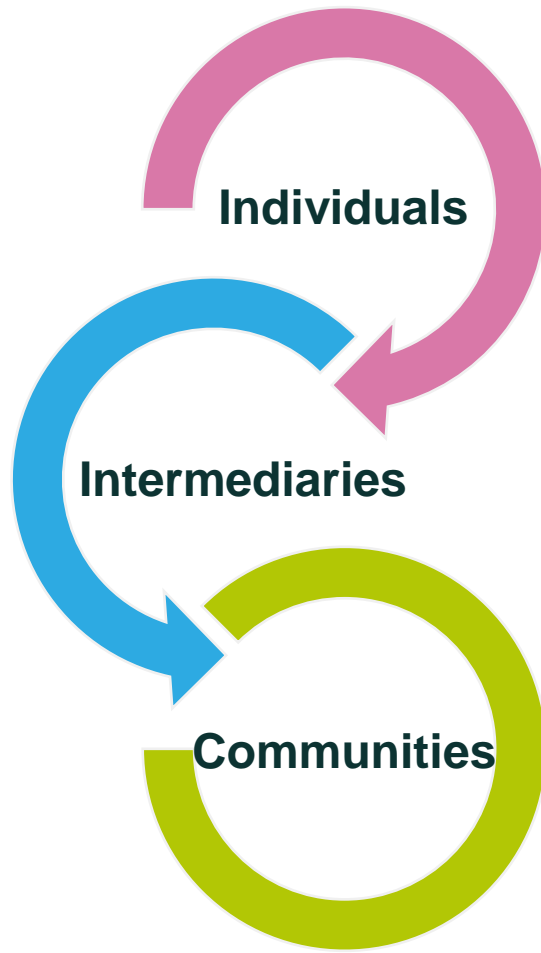


Can place-based action help just transitions?

- Place-based action at neighbourhood level:
 - Community-led home energy projects can address challenges such as relational support
 - Welcome spaces create opportunities for advice and shared learning
- Many initiatives are about more than energy
 - Think beyond heat pumps and electric vehicles
- Initial findings:
 - Many people not able to take part in energy transition
 - Programmes fail to reach the 'missing middle'
 - Disconnect between complex government policy and positive local action
 - Place-based action can provide trusted spaces but require resources, time, and specific skills



What we know: People-centred action needed



We need to recognise the **different starting points that people have** for creating low energy homes. Who can / will act?

Trusted social relations play a part when people consider changes in their homes. Who can facilitate those?

A **collective effort is** needed across society, backed by government leadership. What can empower this?

Summary

- Climate change requires urgent action
- Large potential in improving homes, with multiple benefits: jobs, skills, careers, lower energy bills, better comfort, etc.
- We are already in an energy transition – yet not everyone is taking part, need to change this

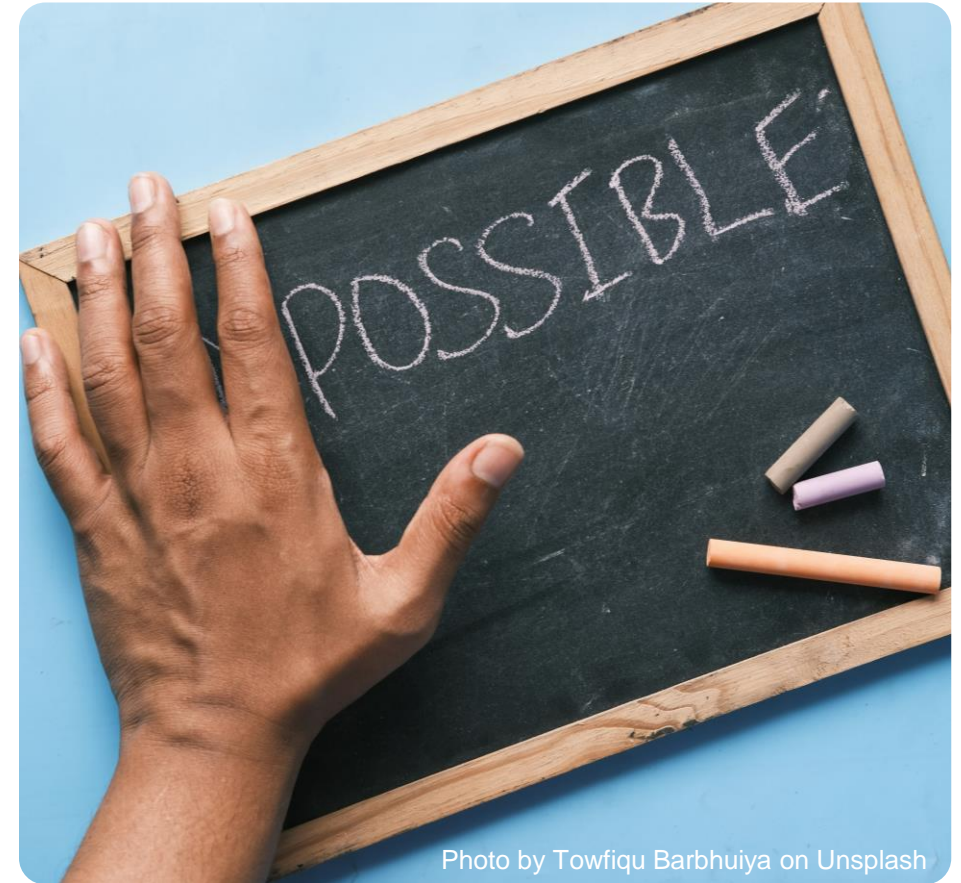


Photo by Towfiq Barbhuiya on Unsplash

Funded by:



In Partnership:



Thank you!

Director Prof Mari Martiskainen & Co-Director Prof Sara Walker

on behalf of the whole EDRC team

m.martiskainen@sussex.ac.uk / s.walker.2@bham.ac.uk