

***Bristol Community Energy Fund case study:***

**Bristol Playbus**



***About the group***

Bristol Playbus was established in 1974 and aims to provide resources in communities that are lacking provision. Their mobile vehicles are able to deliver play and sensory sessions where ever they go, providing a mobile sensory room to disabled children and those with a life-limiting illnesses.

***About the project***

The Bristol Community Energy Fund awarded £900 to Bristol Playbus in February 2016 to install solar panels to their Sensory Truck. The solar panels means the equipment on the truck can work without the use of diesel generators. The equipment inside can be quite power-hungry so they now have a way of ensuring that the batteries are topped up regularly so that the equipment is fully operational when they need it.

Nearly 400 children and young disabled people are benefiting from this newly kitted-out vehicle. The new system has made a significant amount of difference to the disabled children using the Playbus, particularly during colder weather. In the winter months there are often expensive call-outs for auto-electricians with reports of the electrics not working. The heating system and lift for wheelchair users and other disabled children require a lot of energy and there is often a lack of enough power or batteries not being topped up regularly enough. But finally, after six years of dealing

with this problem, a solution seems to have been found. The panels are topping up the system with a ready supply of useable power, keeping the batteries topped up and in a useable condition and most importantly ensuring that disabled children with limited mobility can not only access the Truck via the lift but also are comfortable in the environment and able to maintain an ideal body temperature with a limited circulatory system.



Katie Hanchard-Goodwin of Bristol Playbus said:

*“It was only by the award of this grant that we have gained the confidence to look at further renewable energy projects to make our charity greener and more sustainable. This grant has also allowed us to provide a more reliable service and saved us a lot of money as we longer have to replace our batteries”.*

### **Next steps**

As a result of this funding, Bristol Playbus have also decided to install solar panels on the roof of their office, helping them to offset the organisation’s carbon emissions even further.

<http://bristolplaybus.org>  
[www.bristolcommunityenergy.co.uk](http://www.bristolcommunityenergy.co.uk)