

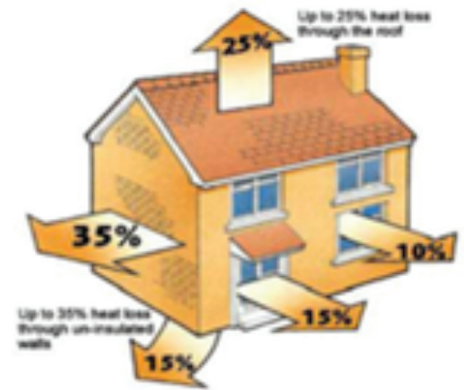


Home Energy Solutions

Cut Costs, Cut Cold, Cut Carbon

Our homes are responsible for nearly a **third of the energy** used in the UK. Heating them (mostly with gas) accounts for about two thirds of this, while the rest is electricity for appliances and lighting. So the first thing to do is find out where heat is being wasted in your home. We give our top suggestions, together with a rough idea of cost and how long it will take to save the money you have spent. Please click on the headings and other links for more information, and see the **Centre for Sustainable Energy** for lots more advice leaflets.

Heat Losses & Insulation



1 Insulate cavity walls **£££**

This is not something you can DIY, but you should **save the money spent** in about five years. There may also be grants available. If your walls have already been insulated, you can usually see the regular small holes outside where it was blown in. The installer will check further and identify any possible problems. New insulation materials, such as expanded polystyrene beads, should avoid problems with damp, unless your house is very exposed.

2. Insulate the loft **££ (DIY) to £££ (installer)**

The recommended thickness of insulation is 270mm, nearly a foot. However, there are **diminishing returns** if you already have more than 150mm (6 inches) of insulation. If you need to use your loft for storage, then you can use 'loft legs' to raise the level of the rafters so you can fit more insulation under the boarding. Loft insulation and fitting loft legs and boarding are both fairly easy to DIY, and there are now less scratchy insulation materials available.

Did You Know?

- In England, about a quarter of homes with cavity walls suitable for insulation are still uninsulated.
- Nearly a third of lofts have less than 125mm of insulation.

3. Banish draughts **£**

Check for draughts just using your hand, or try using a candle and see where the flame flickers. Doors and windows can be easily DIY draughtproofed with door brushes and insulation seals. Don't forget the chimney and letter box. Get good thick curtains, often available at charity shops, and draw them at dusk. If you have single glazed windows, then installing **DIY secondary glazing (££)** is straightforward and much cheaper than new double glazing, so long as you can measure accurately!

4. Take back control! **Free**

Make sure you understand your heating controls (timer/ programmer, room thermostat, and thermostatic radiator valves) and that they are set to suit your lifestyle. This includes the timer, the room thermostat and the thermostatic valves on each radiator. **£**

KEY: Approximate costs

£ – cost £0-£50 | **££** – cost £50-250 | **£££** – cost over £250 | These will vary according to house size, DIY, grants etc.



5. How old is your boiler? £££

Boilers are much more efficient than they used to be. If your boiler is more than 15 years old, you may well need to spend money on replacement parts, and could **save money** by replacing it with a more efficient A rated one.

6. Confused by LEDs? £

There's no need to mourn incandescent or halogen lightbulbs, which have now been phased out. LEDs, usually costing £5-10 to buy, can cost as little as £2 a year to run, and last for 15 years or more. Cut initial costs by replacing your old bulbs as they fail, making sure you buy a **reputable make**, with a guarantee. It can be hard to choose from the vast choice of LEDs, though, with all their colour and brightness options. Check out the **Which?** guide, and perhaps order from an online specialist with plenty of choice.

7. Tame those vampire appliances ££

The easiest way to find out **how much your electrical appliances are using** is to use a plug in energy monitor, costing £10 or so. Start with the big four: fridges, freezers, washing machines and tumble driers.

Warning!

Using an energy monitor can put you off using a tumble drier for life!

Fridges and freezers, in particular, seem to last forever, but old ones are inefficient and you should save the money you spend on a new one in just a couple of years. When you buy a new appliance, check the energy rating. Confusingly, A*** is now often the top rating, as standards have risen.

8. Change to a green energy supplier

Make sure all your electricity comes from a renewable source, such as wind or solar. Most energy comparison sites allow you to compare renewable options, and there are some **specialist sites** too. A few companies offer some green gas (biomethane made through anaerobic digestion of organic matter), up to around 15% of the total.

Did You Know?

Laptops use far less electricity than a desktop computer.

9. Spread the energy saving message!

Tell others what you've done, involve friends and family (loft clearance party anyone?), and write to your MP to ask for more support for energy efficiency. 85% of the population is now **'concerned' about climate change** and cutting down home energy use is one of the most practical things people can do. And here's a few tips on how to approach those occasionally tricky **climate conversations**.

10. Invest in Bath and West Community Energy

Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) has been at the forefront of community-led renewable energy since 2010. If you have a little money to spare, please support us by becoming a member and investing in locally owned and managed clean energy projects: the minimum share is £100, with a target interest rate of 4%. And if you have time to spare, join us in working for a low carbon future.

For free home energy advice, including grants and loans available, contact the following advice lines run by the Centre for Sustainable Energy with support from local councils:

- **Energy at Home 0800 038 5680 (Bath & North East Somerset)**
- **Warm and Safe 0800 038 5722 (Wiltshire)**
- **Warm and Well 0800 500 3076 (Gloucestershire).**

If you're reading a paper copy you can see all the links at

<https://www.bwce.coop/bwce-briefings/>

KEY: Approximate costs

£ – cost £0-£50 | ££ – cost £50-250 | £££ – cost over £250 | These will vary according to house size, DIY, grants etc.