



Blenheim Gardens RMO Guidance Leaflet

Energy tips for your home

in partnership with



Blenheim Gardens RMO is committed to promoting energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty on the estate and has developed this guidance leaflet to provide you with information and advice that can save energy and money at the same time. Improving energy efficiency is about enhancing the quality of life for people today and for future generations. It can help to reduce fuel bills, prevent health problems related to cold and damp housing and reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

Boilers

If your boiler is more than 15 years old, it will be less efficient than a modern one. Replacing a fifteen-year-old boiler could save you a fifth or more on your fuel bills. Fit the right heating controls as well, and you could bump the saving up to 40%. (These savings are based on an un-insulated 3-bedroom semi-detached house.)

There are several things to consider when choosing a boiler, so it's better to plan ahead rather than hurry things when the cold weather arrives or your old boiler finally packs up.

Boiler types

Condensing boilers are the most efficient sort, typically converting 88% of fuel into heat compared with the 76% that standard boilers can manage. That means you could save at least 12% on your fuel bills, or even more if you have an older boiler. (Energy Saving Trust)

Combination (combi) boilers. These are popular in flats and small houses where space is limited. As their name suggests, combi boilers do two jobs in one, acting as a central heating boiler and a hot water cylinder. Because they are compact they can be wall-mounted in the kitchen. This kind of boiler can be more economical as you only heat the water you use. However, there is a short delay between turning on the tap and the water running hot. Since there's no separate hot water cylinder, you'll have a bit more space in your home as you won't need an airing cupboard.

Non-condensing boilers. If a condensing boiler isn't right for you, the next best thing is a modern fan-assisted boiler. Compared with old-fashioned boilers, these models are lighter, warm up and cool down more quickly and therefore waste less heat. All of which can add up to a saving of 20p in the pound compared with boilers over 15 years old.

Heating Controls

Heating controls are well worth what you pay for them. They can control heat levels in different rooms, the temperature of your hot water and on-off times for appliances.

Types of Control

A room thermostat keeps your home close to your chosen temperature by switching the heating system on and off as the temperature fluctuates. Most people get by with just one thermostat, usually in the living room or hall. By using extra thermostats, you can create different 'heating zones' for, say, upstairs and downstairs, which need heating at different times of the day.

A time switch or programmer automatically turns heating and hot water on and off at the times you set. You save money because you only use energy when you need it. There are many types of programmers available, from simple automatic timers through to advanced models with settings for weekdays, weekends and holidays.

A hot water cylinder thermostat allows the temperature of stored hot water to be controlled separately from the temperature of the central heating.

Please turn over...

Draught Proofing

Draughts enter your home in gaps around doors, windows and floors, accounting for up to 20% of lost heat. Wherever you can feel cold air coming in, warm air is going out.

Most draught proofing materials are cheap and widely available from any DIY store. The quality of the material will affect its performance and durability, so try to choose products which meet the standard BS 7386. This may be indicated on the product label.

Ventilation

Adequate ventilation is just as important as draught proofing. Without it your house will become stale and stuffy and prone to condensation. Ventilation is essential if you have solid fuel fires, gas fires or a boiler with an open flue. So have your chimneys swept regularly and check your airbricks for any blockages.

Lighting

Ordinary light bulbs use much more electricity and need replacing much more often than modern alternatives. Energy saving light bulbs can use up to 80% less energy than an ordinary bulb. They last up to eight times as long. They go on saving you money year after year. The Government recently announced that it plans to phase out the sale of old style light bulbs by 2012.

Types of energy saving bulbs

Energy saving light bulbs are available in the usual bayonet and screw fixings, so they should fit in any socket around your home. They also come in a variety of shapes and sizes so you can choose one that works well with your lampshade. Just like ordinary bulbs, energy efficient bulbs are available in a choice of wattages. Since

they only use a quarter of the energy, their wattages are correspondingly lower. Unlike ordinary bulbs, energy saving bulbs may take a moment or two to reach their full brightness. The estate office may have a supply of energy saving light bulbs available free of charge. Please contact us.

Where to fit them

Energy saving light bulbs are best used in the places where you have the lights on most often and for longest, as it's in these places that the bulbs will save you the most money. For example, if you have outside security lighting which is left on for several hours each night, an energy saving light bulb will be much more cost effective.

Check before fitting

Special dimmer switches are required for use with energy saving light bulbs. Certain electronic switching devices and timers are incompatible, so check your manufacturer's instructions first.

Appliances

If you run old electrical appliances at home, you are most probably paying way over the odds when it comes to bills. Energy efficient appliances use less power and cost less to run. An energy efficient washing machine uses less than half the energy of an old, inefficient model and cuts water consumption considerably. An efficient fridge freezer needs as little as a third of the energy to do the same job as an old appliance.

Look for the logo

The best way to spot the energy efficient from the inefficient is to look out for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo. This makes choosing energy efficient products easier than ever.

Please turn over...

Look for the logo on new fridges, washing machines, dishwashers, tumble dryers and light bulbs. The distinctive blue and orange logo is only displayed on products that have passed rigorous energy efficiency tests, authorised by the Energy Saving Trust and backed by the Government. It is a sure sign that the appliance you are buying is one of the most efficient in its category. Energy Efficiency Recommended appears alongside the European Union's Energy label, which shows how much energy an appliance uses on a scale of A-G.

Using your appliances efficiently

There are ways to maximise the efficiency of your appliances. Just by using a 40°C wash cycle rather than 60°C means you use a third less electricity. Reduce it to a 30°C cycle and the amount you save will be even more. Modern washing powders and detergents work just as effectively at lower temperatures, so unless you have very dirty washing try to use a low temperature programme.

When using your dishwasher or washing machine, it is better to wait for a full load, or use the economy cycle if your machine has one. To save energy when using a tumble dryer, avoid drying really wet clothes - wring or spin-dry them first. The clothes will dry faster and you will save money.

Cheap and simple ways to save energy and money that you can do today:

- To eliminate draughts and wasted heat use an easy-to-fix brush or PVC seal on your exterior doors.
- Stop draughts and heat escaping through floorboards and skirting boards by filling gaps with newspaper, beading or sealant.
- Make sure your windows are draught proofed.
- If your heating is too warm, turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10%.

- Your hot water should be hot, but it doesn't need to be scalding. For most people, setting the cylinder thermostat at 60°C/140°F is fine for bathing and washing.
- Always put the plug in your basin or sink. Leaving hot water running straight down the drain really is throwing money away.
- Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
- Don't obstruct radiators; allow the heat to circulate.
- Turn lights off when you leave a room and adjust your curtains or blinds to let in as much light as possible during the day.
- To cut down on wasted energy, avoid leaving televisions, videos, stereos, and computers on standby and remember not to leave cordless phones on charge unnecessarily. But please check the user manual first.
- Use only the water you need in the kettle.
- Don't leave the fridge door open for longer than necessary, cold air escapes. Avoid putting hot or warm food straight into the fridge by allowing it to cool down first. Defrost your freezer regularly to keep it running efficiently and cheaply. If it tends to frost up quickly, check the door seal. And if you have your fridge next to a cooker or boiler, leave a good gap between them.
- Washing machines and tumble dryers: Always wash a full load and if you can't use a half-load or economy programme. Always use the low temperature programme bearing in mind that modern washing powders will be just as effective at lower temperatures. Wring out or spin-drying really wet clothes before putting them into a tumble dryer will save you money, and they dry faster.
- Dishwashers: Try and use the low temperature programme, and ensure you wash a full load.
- Install a water saving device in your cistern. Either a bottle of water (with a small hole in the side) or contact your water company to request one.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) are being introduced to help improve the energy efficiency of buildings.

Please turn over...

If you are buying or selling a home you now need a certificate by law. From October 2008 EPCs will be required whenever a building is built, sold or rented out. The certificate provides 'A' to 'G' ratings for the building, with 'A' being the most energy efficient and 'G' being the least, with the average up to now being 'D'.

What else does the certificate do?

EPCs are measured using the same calculations for all homes, so you can compare the energy efficiency of different properties. Part of the EPC is a report which will list the potential rating that your home could achieve, if you made the recommended changes. The report lists:

- suggested improvements (such as fitting loft insulation)
- the approximate cost
- possible cost savings per year if the improvements are made
- how this would change the energy and carbon emission rating

You can use this information to:

- cut your fuel bills
- improve energy performance in your home
- help cut carbon emissions
- help you choose a more energy efficient home to rent or buy

You do not have to act on the recommendations contained in the recommendation report. However, if you decide to do so, then it could make your property more attractive for sale or rent by making it more energy efficient.

For further information on how to save energy and money please visit **www.energysavingtrust.org.uk**

Energy Efficiency grants

You may be able to get energy efficiency grants and offers to help you make energy saving improvements to your home. These grants and offers come from government, your local council or your energy supplier.

Who is eligible?

If you get a disability or income-related benefit, you may be able to get a government Warm Front Grant of up to £2,700 (or up to £4,000 in some cases) to help pay for heating and insulation improvements to your home. Warm Front Grants are available in England only.

Local council grants

You may be able to get energy efficiency grants and discounts from your local council. To qualify you may need to be a pensioner and/or claiming certain benefits. To find out if you're entitled to anything, contact your local council.

Energy supplier offers

Many energy suppliers offer special offers and discounts that significantly reduce the costs of making energy saving improvements to your home.

Warm Front Scheme in England

If you need help paying for heating and insulation improvements in your privately owned or rented home, you, your partner or civil partner may be able to get money from the government's Warm Front grants scheme if, for example, you're receiving income or disability-related benefits.

Please turn over...

Who is Eligible?

You may get a Warm Front grant if any of the following apply to you:

1. You get one or more of the following benefits:
 - Working Tax Credit (with an income of less than £15,460 and which must include a disability element)
 - Child Tax Credit (with an income of less than £15,460)
 - Attendance Allowance
 - Disability Living Allowance
 - Income Support (that must include a disability premium)
 - Housing Benefit (that must include a disability premium)
 - Council Tax Benefit (that must include a disability premium)
 - War Disablement Pension (that must include a mobility supplement or a Constant Attendance Allowance)
 - Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (that must include Constant Attendance Allowance)
2. You have a child under 16 or are pregnant and have a maternity certificate MAT B1 and get any of the following:
 - Income Support
 - Council Tax benefit
 - Housing Benefit
 - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Pension Credit (Savings or Guarantee elements)
3. You're aged 60 or over and get any of the following:
 - Pension Credit (Savings or Guarantee elements)
 - Council Tax Benefit
 - Housing Benefit
 - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
4. You're not getting any benefits

You may be entitled to a Warm Front grant even if you're not yet getting any qualifying benefits. A check will be done to see if you're eligible for benefits and so a Warm Front grant.

How much will I get?

£2,700 or up to £4,000 if your home needs oil central heating.

How it works

A Warm Front appointed engineer will complete a technical survey of the work needed for the existing heating system in your property. If for example your property needs a replacement boiler, work will be carried out within six to eight months of the technical survey.

You won't have to pay anything so long as the work doesn't cost more than the grant. In some cases you might have to pay towards the work but wherever possible, the scheme will try to cover these costs.

What you can use it for

The Warm Front grant provides insulation and heating improvements depending on your needs and the property you live in. The package includes:

1. Insulation
 - loft insulation
 - draught proofing
 - cavity wall insulation
 - hot water tank insulation
2. Heating systems
 - gas room heaters with thermostat controls
 - gas, electric or oil central heating
 - converting a solid fuel open fire to a glass fronted fire
 - timer controls for electric space and water heaters
3. Other measures
 - energy advice
 - two low energy light bulbs

Please turn over...

How to apply

You can find out if you qualify for a Warm Front grant over the phone. You'll need to complete an application form before a Home Energy Adviser visits you to assess and recommend work for your property.

You can call Eaga Partnership, the Warm Front Scheme Manager on freephone 0800 316 2805, textphone 0800 072 0156 (from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday). Warm Front Grants are available in England only.

Ways to contact us:

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Phone: 020 7926 0158
Website: www.bgrmo.org.uk
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If you would like this information in large print, Braille, or in another format or language, please contact us on 020 7926 0158.

Español: *Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al 020 7926 0158.*

Français: *Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au 020 7926 0158.*

Português: *Se desejar esta informação noutra idioma é favor telefonar para 020 7926 0158.*

Twi: *Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo mu a fre 020 7926 0158.*

Yoruba: *Tí ẹ ba ẹ ìmoràn yíí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjọ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo 020 7926 0158.*

