

Energy saving advice

Evidence shows that making small lifestyle changes around your home can make a big difference to the amount of energy you consume. The information below will give you some useful information on how you can keep your home energy efficient and save money on your bills.

How to reduce energy consumption and save money

Turn your devices off instead of leaving them on standby

Leaving electrical devices on standby amounts to around 8% of the average electricity bill. This could save you £30 per person per year.

Don't fill the kettle fully if only making one or two cups of tea

Boiling a kettle half full instead of full four times a day can save enough energy to run a TV for four hours, so just boil what you need instead of filling up the kettle.

Draw your curtains and blinds in the evening

This keeps warmth in the room and reduces the amount of heat lost through windows. Opening your curtains to let the sun in during the day will also help to heat rooms naturally. Make sure that long curtains do not cover the radiator as this will direct heat to the windows. Instead tuck the curtain behind the radiator.

Don't heat the rooms you aren't using

If there are rooms in your home that aren't in use, turn off the radiator and close the door to keep the warmth in the rest of the house.

Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly

Keeping your fridge and freezer free of frost will boost their efficiency and use less energy. Keeping your fridge at least three quarters full will also boost its efficiency. You can also keep your fridge cool by defrosting food in the fridge instead of at room temperature.

Check that your thermostat settings are appropriate

The Energy Saving Trust recommends setting your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature, typically between 18—21 degrees, although you may find you can comfortably keep it lower. Turn down your thermostat by one or two degrees and put on an extra layer of clothing, which can save between £5 and £10 per month on your energy bill. However, if you are elderly or suffer from respiratory problems, make sure that you don't drop below the recommended 18 degrees.

Put a lid on your saucepan

Cover saucepans and use a ring on the cooker that is the same size of the pan. This will use up to 90% less energy when cooking.

Dry clothes on a line or clothes horse

Tumble dryers use a lot of energy, emitting up to 1.8kg of carbon per cycle and costing around fifty pence an hour to run. Drying clothes outdoors or on a clothes horse where possible is free.

What extra measures you can invest in to save money:

Some of the best energy saving methods may require a small outlay to achieve the best results. However, in most circumstances these expenditures will have immediate results and will often pay for themselves within around two years.

The suggestions here can be a great option for reducing your energy consumption without the large expenditure of installing measures such as wall insulation or investing in a new boiler.

Install radiator foils

Up to 70% of the heat produced by a radiator can be lost to uninsulated external walls and windows. Foil radiator panels placed behind the radiator can be purchased for as little as under £10 and can help to reduce heat loss by up to 45%.

Draught proof your home

Unless your home is very new you are likely to be losing some heat through draughts in windows, doors and other small gaps around the house. DIY draught proofing will cost around £115 but could save as much as £55 a year and pay for itself in just over two years.

Get a water efficient shower head

A water efficient shower head can reduce your water usage and the energy required to heat the water whilst still maintaining the sensation of a power shower. For as little as £15, this could save £70 per person a year on water and gas bills. Your water company may even provide this for free.

Change your light bulbs for energy efficient or LED bulbs

Energy saving light bulbs last up to 10 times longer than traditional bulbs and use up to 80% less energy. Over the lifetime of an energy saving bulb they can save up to £60. LED light bulbs which, whilst more expensive initially, have a lifetime of around 10,000 hours compared to 1,000 hours for a halogen bulb and use around 60% less energy.

Use a smart meter at home

Although this will not save energy directly, an electricity monitor will help to increase awareness of bad habits and which devices in your home are the least energy efficient. By displaying costs per hour and how much CO₂ is being emitted you can pinpoint ways towards more energy efficient behaviours.

Buy a halogen oven

A halogen oven uses around 75% less energy than a conventional electric oven and has a 50% lower cooking time, which can lead to a big reduction in your electricity bill. They are available for approximately £50—£100.

Investigate other gadgets and monitoring devices

There are lots of gadgets on the market, many for around £20 which can help to reduce your energy and water use by encouraging you to make small behavioural changes.

Home energy saving improvements to save you money:

If you have a larger amount of money to invest in making energy saving changes to your home, you can explore measures such as wall and loft insulation or installing a new boiler.

Check your home's Energy Performance Certificate if you are unsure of what measures have already been carried out and to find out what else you could do.

Cavity wall insulation

Many eligible homes have already had cavity wall insulation installed as this is one of the easier and cheaper measures to complete. However, if your property has not already been done, the cost is around £330—£725 depending on the type of house and could save up £255 a year.

Solid wall insulation

If your home was built before 1920 its external walls are probably solid rather than cavity. Unfortunately, the cost of solid wall insulation is high at around £7500 for internal wall insulation or £13,000 for external wall insulation but the payback could be up to £500 per year. It will also increase the value of your property and make it more attractive to prospective buyers in the future.

Loft insulation

If your loft is not insulated at all, insulation could cost as little as £300 and save around £180 per year. Topping up your level of insulation from 100mm to the recommended 270mm will cost around £300 and save approximately £25 per year.

New boiler

Depending on how old and inefficient your boiler is, installing a new A-rated condensing boiler and full set of heating controls will save between £100—£300 per year, at a cost of approximately £2,300.

Who to contact:

Warm Homes for Kent and Medway:

The Warm Homes Scheme is a partnership project between Kent County Council and district councils to support residents in Kent and Medway to save energy on their energy bills by providing funding towards the cost of energy saving measures. These include insulation, and new boilers.

To find out if you are eligible, visit kent.gov.uk/warmhomes or call **0800 170 1174**.

For free and impartial advice and more energy saving tips, contact the Simple Energy Advice. If you are not sure about the details of your home's Energy Performance Certificate, they may be able to look this up for you and provide you with tailored advice. SimpleEnergyAdvice.org.uk or **0800 444 202**.

To find out who your gas supplier is, contact the Gas Network Identity line at energynetworks.org or **0870 6081524**.

You can find out who your electricity supplier is by contacting your local electricity distribution company, which in the South East is EDF Distribution: edfenergy.com or **0800 7838866**.

You can find out who your water supplier is on water.org.uk.

