



# THE GOOD GUIDE TO GOING GREEN AT HOME

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MORE MONEY, FEWER PROBLEMS

In partnership with

 **Ecology**  
Building Society







## Go green at home - how to save money AND the planet

Only a few months ago, going green at home seemed a very nice idea indeed. Many of us had become used to a WFH set up, and interest in making our home environments as comfortable as possible had never been greater.

Then Russia invaded Ukraine, gas and energy prices shot up - along with the price of everything else - and rather than comfort, cost has become the driving motivation behind every part of our lives.

As we come to the end of a British summer like never before, with thermostat-breaking days, widespread drought, fires, soaring food costs and sky high energy bills looming large in everyone's thoughts, it's time to turn to our homes once again, lest they become a freezing prison for us this winter.

The good news is that applying money-saving principles in our home lives can also help to mitigate climate change.

A win for your pocket and a win for the planet.

This guide provides a one-stop-shop summary on the individual steps we can take to save money at home while helping save the planet. Featuring an article from sponsor, pioneering ethical property lender [Ecology Building Society](#), the Guide also covers:

- How to save money on your home heating and water heating bills
- Renewable energy options
- How to reduce home energy usage and reduce heat loss at home
- Other ways to go green at home - including your finances!





## Saving money and the planet starts at home

*By Lisa Stanley*

*Co-founder, Good With Money*

With inflation potentially hitting new highs this Autumn, and a significant increase in the average home energy bill, we're all focused on squeezing every last penny out of our pay packets and scrutinising each element of our essential spending, from transport, to electric, to food and so on.

The measures proposed by the country's new prime minister and her cabinet will of course go some way to ease our pain, but are unlikely to stretch very far when the price of everything else is also sky-rocketing.

Of course, the consequences of the rise in the energy price cap and the cost of living in general will be devastating for many, with people forced to choose between heating or eating.

It may all seem too much to think about, but making a few changes now could really pay dividends - both in the short term to get through the winter, and in the longer term, for you and the planet.

A study by home improvement site [Rated People](#) revealed 57 per cent of people want to be more eco friendly at home.

This is good news for the planet, with the [Energy Saving Trust](#) revealing 21 per cent of the country's carbon emissions come from the UK's residential homes. Not surprising when 85 per cent of British homes are run on gas central heating and the average household generated





2690kg of carbon dioxide from home and hot water heating in 2020.

Over the next 30 years, we need to reduce that number to just 140kg per household - this is in order to meet the Government's net zero target and reduce household carbon emissions by 95 per cent by 2050.

Further data from [Count us In](#), a global movement of people and organisations taking high impact steps to address climate change, reveals that individual lifestyles make up more than 65 per cent of total carbon pollution globally.

So, since household energy changes are likely to bring the biggest benefits for both our pockets and the planet, let's begin by looking at some ideas to tighten up on energy at home and potential home energy-saving upgrades - both to get us through this winter and benefit the planet for years to come.

## Home and water heating

Over half of our fuel bills go towards heating our homes and water. Some ways to make our home heating more efficient:

- 1** Turn down the thermostat! A one degree reduction can save around 10 per cent on your annual heating bill.
- 2** Turn down your boiler temperature and programme your thermostat to heat your home only when you need it. A smart thermostat can do this remotely for you and costs around £150 - £300 but can save around 14 per cent on energy bills according to Scottish Power.
- 3** If you can afford it, consider a new boiler. A-rated condensing boilers are around 60 per cent more efficient, meaning you could save between £350 and £800 against an older, D-rated boiler.
- 4** Or, get an (air source) heat pump. Homes need to be well insulated for heat pumps to be effective, and costs beyond installing the pump itself could apply, such as new radiators, hot water storage tanks and additional insulation. However, you may well be considering some of these measures anyway. As part of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, the Government is offering households in England and Wales grants of £5,000 against a purchase and installation cost of between £7,000-£13,000 to switch from a boiler to a heat pump. While less environmentally friendly, a modern A-rated gas boiler will cost less per year to run than a heat pump. Ground source heat pumps are also an option although less suitable for most UK households.





- 5 Consider a targeted approach if it suits your household, and only heat one or two rooms at a time, using electric heating
- 6 Solar water heating - installing solar panels costs around £5,000 and households with solar panels are set to save around £900 on next year's energy bill compared to a household relying fully on an energy provider charging the price cap, according to [The Eco Experts](#). Households with solar panels can also make money selling their unused energy back to the grid.
- 7 [Ecology Building Society](#) offers C-Change discounts on mortgages of up to 1.50 per cent on its standard variable rate, rewarding customers for creating and energy-efficient home, allowing them to enjoy reduced energy bills while shrinking their carbon footprint.

## Insulation, insulation, insulation

Reducing home heat loss is equally important. According to energy saving advice portal [The Greenage](#), around 25 per cent of the heat in an average home will escape through the roof, 35 per cent through gaps, windows, doors and walls and roughly 10 per cent through the floor.

Some measures to consider:

- 1 Simple steps such as fitting your hot water cylinder with an insulating jacket can save up to 115kg of carbon emissions as well as saving water heating costs.
- 2 Insulate radiators.
- 3 Wall insulation - insulating cavity walls costs around £1,200 for an average home and could save around half that amount on energy bills. However, solid wall insulation can be much more costly - around £12,000 for a three-bedroom semi.
- 4 Roof insulation. It would cost around £500 for roof insulation in the average-sized home and again, savings can be up to half of that amount.
- 5 Double glazing - making windows more energy efficient and replacing single-glazed windows with double glazing can be costly but savings can add up. Fitting a hot water cylinder with an insulating jacket can save 115kg carbon emissions as well as saving on heat costs.







## Reduce energy usage

There are a number of small changes you can make at home to save on your energy bills, without a noticeable impact on comfort. For example:

- 1 Washing your clothes on 30 degrees rather than 40 degrees uses around 40 per cent less energy. Opting for a quick wash rather than the full two hour cycle will also save power - and water.
- 2 Tumble dryers use roughly 4.5 kWh of electricity per cycle From October. The average cost per kWh will be 34p. Try to avoid using dryers while the outside temperatures are still warm.
- 3 Don't waste hot water and the energy required to heat it - try using a simple washing up bowl instead. However, if you must use an energy-hungry dishwasher, make sure it's on the Eco mode and is only used when full.
- 4 Take your parents' / grandparents' approach and make sure you turn the lights off when leaving a room - this can save around £40 per year.
- 5 Make sure you have a smart meter, regularly submit readings, check each bill carefully and pay by Direct Debit to get the biggest discount possible.



## Switch up to newer home appliances

While it may cost more in the short-term, it's worth replacing outdated home appliances with new ones that are as energy efficient as possible. For example:

- 1 An energy-efficient washing machine will save both energy and water. A new A-rated machine could cost around £800 to buy, but could shave between £50-£100 per year off your energy bill.
- 2 Other appliances such as tumble dryers and fridges are also worth replacing to save up to £100 a year on energy bills.
- 3 Lastly, switching to LED light bulbs only in the home can save around £30 per year on bills.





## Renewable energy

As many as one million homes in the UK are already generating renewable energy.

In addition to domestic renewable energy schemes, if you have money to invest that you don't want going to a fossil fuel-funding bank or investment fund, it is possible to invest directly in renewable energy projects through organisations like the Good Egg company [Thrive Renewables](#), which has been building and operating renewable energy systems in the UK for more than 30 years. Platforms such as [Abundance Investment](#), [Triodos Crowdfunding](#) or [Ethex](#) are also worth checking out.



## Other ways to go green at home

There are many other ways to go green at home. A brilliant resource for this is the [Sustainable-ish](#) website community. Blogger Jen Gale looks at:

- The benefits of electric vehicles (EVs) and low carbon travel more generally.
- How to create a more wildlife-friendly garden at home to better attract bees, butterflies and birds; plant more trees whether directly or via a central scheme.
- Reduce and recycle always. With a particular focus on reducing your food waste
- Eat more vegetables, consider a plant-based or flexitarian diet.
- Embrace the staycation and fly less.
- Talk about the issues with anyone who'll listen - and hold politicians accountable
- And last, but not least, make your money count. Explore and challenge the environmental record of your bank, savings provider, pension provider. Research from campaign group [Make My Money Matter](#) last year revealed that switching to a 'green' pension can reduce an individual's carbon 21 times more than going vegetarian, giving up flying and switching to a green energy provider combined.







## Mortgages for energy-efficient home renovations

*By Ian Rigarsford,  
External Affairs Manager, Ecology Building Society*

With energy prices continuing to rise, many households are facing a difficult winter ahead. During summer and early autumn, we can often get away with running the heating less and keeping lights switched off, but this picture changes as the colder months arrive. Even at the beginning of 2022 – before the energy price hikes in April – more than a third (37%) of Britons reported that they cannot afford to heat their home to a level where they are comfortably warm when it is very cold outside, with one in 50 saying that they are unable to afford to heat their home at all.

A persistently cold, damp living environment can have serious consequences for both a building and its inhabitants. It also has a collective impact on the UK: £1.3bn is spent each year on health services in England to treat illnesses caused by cold homes and ONS figures indicate that mortalities resulting from the effects of fuel poverty are on the rise. So, how do we go about reversing this devastating trend to ensure that everyone can afford to keep warm and healthy at home?

## Better homes through energy-efficient renovations

At Ecology, we have long supported people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes so that they can achieve a more comfortable, affordable, and sustainable living environment.



The UK's homes are notoriously leaky when it comes to heat, with many properties losing vast amounts of warmth through windows, doors, floors, walls and roofs; our mortgage customers frequently cite this as a leading motivation in their decision to undertake an energy-efficient renovation.

To enable this, we provide specialist mortgages that help them to cover the initial costs of energy improvements – like putting in insulation or installing a renewable energy system – and to support people to make their homes energy efficient and affordable in the long term. We do this through our range of award-winning 'C-Change' mortgages, which incentivise energy efficiency through mortgage pricing based on a property's final energy performance or environmental impact.

We are now beginning to see our approach replicated by some of the high street lenders. As an organisation that exists to deliver positive change, we consider it our responsibility to keep innovating so that we can develop finance that meets the needs of today's homeowners and supports the UK's journey to net zero. With this in mind, we have recently enhanced our C-Change range, developing new categories for homes that are built to the highest energy efficiency ratings.

## Energy efficiency for every home – old or new

The idea of an energy-efficient home is often associated with slick high-end new builds that have been designed around sustainability principles from the outset. This can be discouraging for those of us who want a low-energy home but live in an older property built before present-day energy-efficiency considerations or in a newer building with a poor EPC rating. Many of our borrowers stand as inspiring examples for those facing such a situation, having achieved superb levels of energy efficiency by carrying out a renovation on their existing home.

Jan and Stuart are two such people, having used an Ecology mortgage to transform their Victorian terraced home in Lancaster from an EPC level D (the England and Wales average) to a level B. Internal wall insulation, an air source heat pump, integrated roof-top solar photovoltaic panels and battery storage, combined with the installation of new radiators and pipework, allow the couple to enjoy a comfortable indoor temperature throughout their home.

Additionally, any surplus electricity generated via the solar panels is stored by a battery, helping to reduce their overall energy bill. Over time, Jan and Stuart expect that they will reap the benefits of the cost savings resulting from the improved energy efficiency of their home.







## Expanding the support for home renovators

Jan and Stuart's inspiring project shows that with research and imagination it is possible to navigate the challenges of improving and upgrading a traditional older property to create a comfortable, energy-efficient and sustainable home.

There is progress being made in supporting more homeowners to follow this example, with some mainstream lenders beginning to wake up to the need to recognise and support energy-efficient living and the Government offering VAT relief on energy-saving home improvements and certain renewable heating technologies until 2027.

At Ecology, we are continuing to push for a national retrofit strategy to support all homeowners – including those on the lowest incomes – to make their homes more efficient and are working with networks across the finance sector so that we can share our expertise on lending for sustainable properties. We believe that everyone has the right to a warm, comfortable home and hope that stories from people like Jan and Stuart can inspire others to see that energy-efficient living can become a reality, whatever type of home you have.



## About Good With Money

Good With Money is a money website with a difference: it is all about how your money can do more good for people and planet, as well as line your pocket.

It created the Good Egg mark, a licence for financial services companies which make a positive impact.

Sign up to the weekly newsletter for the latest reviews and deals here.

## Contact details

Want to get in touch with us?

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