

Winter warmer

Cut home improvement costs by up to two thirds



Whether it's cutting down on plastic bottles or considering an eco-friendly car, we are all trying to be greener at home. But our homes themselves are where we can make a real difference.

With the Green Homes Grant, homeowners and private landlords in England can apply for part funding to install energy-efficient improvements and move towards a greener future. The grant is a key part of the government's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

It's good for our bank balances too. With the right improvements installed, we can cut our energy bills by up to £300 a year.



The scheme pays two thirds of the bill for eligible improvements up to £5,000 – or for those on a low income, 100 per cent of the costs up to £10,000. You can find the full details at gov.uk/greenhomesgrant.

Once you have installed a primary measure through the scheme, you can apply for further vouchers towards secondary measures.

Property expert Kunle Barker (left) is evangelical about making our homes warmer and greener. Having delivered more than 8,000 construction projects, as well as appearing on TV alongside

Alan Titchmarsh, he is an expert in home renovation.

Kunle lives in a terrace in London where he is on a mission to reduce his family's energy use. He has installed double glazing in the windows and, for his next project, he's looking at exterior wall insulation.

So where do you start? "We tend to think about generating heat, but we need to think about how to retain it."

He advises taking a tour of your home. "Lift the loft hatch – is there insulation up there? Run your hand along the window frames – are there leaks or draughts?"

If your house was built before the 1920s, then it is a likely candidate for solid wall insulation which will

prevent heat loss, saving energy and therefore reducing CO2 emissions. A layer of insulation is fixed onto the walls inside the house or to the external walls, depending on what suits the property best.

To avoid wasting energy, Kunle says it's a good idea to attach smart app-controlled thermostats to individual radiators to create instant zones. That way you won't be heating the entire house just to keep your home office warm.

If you want to insulate your home beyond a few DIY fixes, now is a good time to do so – and with the grant extended until the end of March 2022, you'll have plenty of breathing space.

If being cosier, greener and less wasteful is not encouragement enough, think about this. Analysis by MoneySuperMarket suggests that homes that have top-class green credentials – an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) A rating – are worth up to 14 per cent more than their draughty G-rated neighbours. Time to wrap the walls in a duvet, insulate that loft and finally get round to tackling those draughty windows.

HOW TO APPLY

Go to the website to see if your home is eligible, what improvements you can make and where to find a TrustMark installer. Both homeowners and residential landlords in England can apply and work must be completed by 31 March, 2022. gov.uk/greenhomesgrant



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy