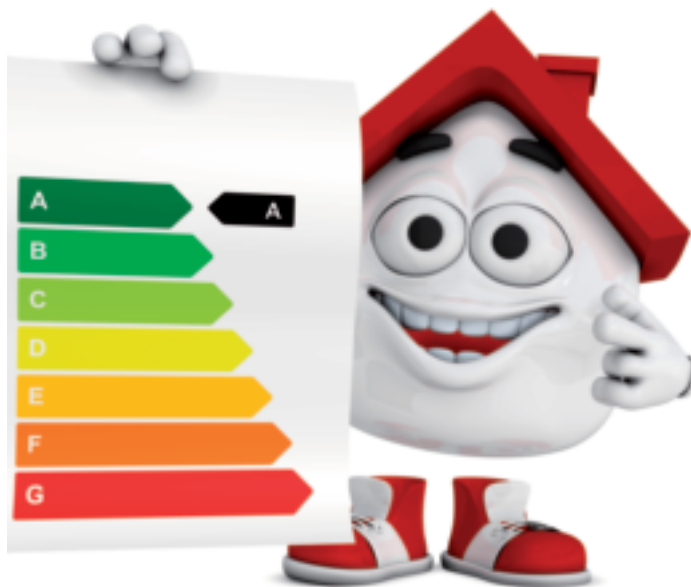


# Take control of your heating

## CENTRAL HEATING



It is useful to understand how to use your heating system, as heating and hot water can account for over 60% of your energy bill. It is therefore important to have the most efficient system as possible.

*If you live in a 3 bed semi-detached property and your system is more than 15 years old you could save over £215 a year by upgrading your heating system.*

Central heating is designed to keep the house warm from a single, central point of heat, such as a boiler.

A boiler heats the water using a variety of fuels including solid fuel, oil, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) or natural gas carried around the home through the pipes. The heat is then emitted into the room usually through radiators.

It is important that central heating is controlled as much as possible to ensure you have heat when you need it. This will help keep your fuel costs down.

This leaflet aims to advise you on the different heating systems and the controls to help to use your heating more efficiently.

## THE BOILER

Most central heating systems provide heat for radiators and hot water, modern boilers are more efficient, which help to keep your fuel costs down.

Building Regulations specify that if you are replacing an old boiler, the new one must be A-rated for energy efficiency. This means it must be at least 90% efficient (most new boilers score over 90%) and to reach this level it will be a condensing boiler.

Condensing boilers are more efficient because they extract more heat than other boilers from the exhaust gases (or 'flue gases').



Condensing boilers come in both combination and standard models. A combination (or 'combi') boiler will provide your central heating and produce hot water on demand, firing up when you turn on a hot tap. A standard boiler provides central heating but rather than produce hot water as and when needed, it will heat a quantity of water which is held in a hot water cylinder until required.

## GAS SAFETY CHECKS

All gas appliances in your home should be safety checked annually by a Gas Safe engineer and serviced according to manufacturer's instructions. If you are a landlord you are also required to provide a Gas Safety Certificate annually. Any appliance left unchecked could leave you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

### The main signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are:

- headaches
- dizziness
- nausea
- breathlessness
- collapse
- loss of consciousness

### Other signs that could point to carbon monoxide poisoning:

- your symptoms only occur when you are at home
- your symptoms disappear or get better when you leave home and come back when you return
- others in your household are experiencing symptoms (including your pets) and they appear at a similar time



## BOILER CONTROLS AND WHAT THEY DO

**BOILER THERMOSTAT:** The temperature of water supplied to the radiators is set by a boiler thermostat. This should be set to a fairly high position and left, it is best not to keep adjusting it.



**A ROOM THERMOSTAT:** controls the overall temperature of your heating system and is usually located in a hall. The room thermostat should be set to the lowest comfortable temperature, typically between 18°C and

21°C. You can reduce your heating bills by nearly 10% by turning your room thermostat down by 1°C.

**THERMOSTATIC RADIATOR VALVES:** These control the radiators. The normal setting is 3 on a 1-5 scale, this is equivalent to about 21C. For background heating in a room turn it down to 1. you should never need to use 5.



**TIMER/PROGRAMMER:** This turns your heating system on and off at times to suit you, they can be wall mounted, portable or part of the boiler. In a well insulated home set the time to come on half an hour before you get up in the morning and go off one hour



before you go to bed at night. It should only need resetting when the clocks change.

If you want to check how long it takes for your home to warm up and cool down, choose a cold evening and time

how long it takes for your home to warm up to a comfortable temperature - this is the warm up time. Then turn the heating off completely and time how long it takes for the house to get uncomfortably cold - this is the cool down time.

It is important to remember that if you have a standard system the programmer will also control your hot water.

### What do all the different settings mean?

**'Auto' or 'Twice'** means the heating goes on and off during the day at the times it has been programmed to do so.

**'24hrs' or 'On'** means the heating stays on all the time.

**'Off'** means the heating will remain off all the time.

**'All day' or 'Once'**, means the heating will switch on at the first 'on' setting you have programmed and then remain on until the last 'off' setting of the day.

**'Boost' or '+1hr'** switches the heating on for a one hour 'boost' of heat.

**'Advance'** moves the programmer to the next 'on' or 'off' setting in the daily cycle.

## ELECTRIC STORAGE HEATERS



These are particularly suitable if you are at home all day but can be quite expensive and can run out of heat in the evenings, if not used properly.

You may also need to leave doors open for heat to spread around the house.

They work by heating up the heavy blocks inside the heater overnight when electricity is cheaper. The heat then trickles out during the day to keep the house warm.



There are two dials on most storage heaters, one dial says 'input' or 'charge' and the other says 'output' or 'room'.

The 'input' dial controls how much electricity is used to store the heat overnight. When it is very cold set it at or near maximum. When it is warmer set it to minimum.

Keep the 'output' dial at minimum unless you are in the room, in which case set it to the lowest setting that feels comfortable. When you go to bed at night or go out during the day, turn this control back to the minimum setting. If you do this you should not run out of heat in the evenings and your bills will stay low.

Night storage heaters run on an Economy 7 or Economy 10 tariff.

For more information on these tariffs see our **Take control of your energy bills** leaflet.

## ELECTRIC IMMERSION HEATER



Hot water may come from a tank in your airing cupboard. This should be connected to a timer so that it only comes on when cheaper off-peak electricity is available. If there is not enough hot water during the day, you can press the 'boost' button on the programmer to get more, but this uses expensive on-peak electricity.

It is cheaper and more efficient to switch things off if you do not need them. Leaving the electric immersion heater on permanently wastes a lot of energy and money.

If you have a standard boiler check that you have good insulation on your hot water cylinder to ensure the water stays hot until you want to use it. Fitting a new cylinder jacket is cheap and easy. The jacket should be at least 80mm thick and approved to British Standard BS5615: 1985. New cylinders will already be foam insulated.

## UPGRADING YOUR BOILER

*If your boiler is 10 years or more old it may be worth thinking of replacing it for a new high efficiency model. They can heat water more efficiently, meaning they use less fuel to do the same job.*

## HEATING AND YOUR HEALTH

A warm home is crucial to prevent cold related illnesses. A poorly heated home can cause poor health including an increase in blood pressure and more common colds and diseases such as heart attacks and pneumonia. Cold related illnesses can result in absence from work, social isolation and sleep deprivation. It can lead to mental or stress related illnesses, with a negative impact on friends and family.

Government health advice is that living rooms should be heated to temperatures of 21C and the rest of the house to 18C to stay safe and well.



## COLD WEATHER BENEFITS

### WARM HOME DISCOUNT

A £140 discount on the household electricity bill for winter, usually available between September and March, subject to eligibility and application deadlines.

### WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

Between £100-£300 is available to help pay your heating bills. This is paid between November and December. This is usually paid automatically if you get State Pension or benefits.

### COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS

Paid when your local temperature is either recorded as or forecast to be an average of 0°C or below over seven consecutive days. You will be entitled to a payment of £25 for each 7 day period.

### LOCAL GRANTS

Please call the freephone advice line for details. Data is correct at time of printing but may be subject to change.

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## OUR AIM

Act on Energy is engaging with householders to support them through their energy journey offering a Full Home Energy Support Service with the householder at the centre. This includes everything from energy bill advice, fuel switching, referrals for physical measures and grant availability as well as onward referrals to other agencies.

We ensure that we handhold the most vulnerable but empower others to make ongoing energy decisions that will provide better health and economic outcomes for residents of Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Coventry, Solihull and surrounding areas.

### SUPPORTED BY



## GET IN TOUCH



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