

NHBC Guidance for homeowners

Top tips to keep heating costs down

As the autumn sets in and external temperatures begin to fall, homeowners should consider things they can and should do to keep their homes warm.

With the cost of energy bills a big concern for UK households, there are lots of simple things you can do to reduce your gas and electric usage. NHBC, the leading standard-setting body and warranty provider for new homes, offers the following advice to keep your home snug for the winter:

- **Service your heating system** - all central heating boilers should be serviced and safety checked at least once a year by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. If your boiler is old, then consider an upgrade - according to the Energy Saving Trust, a new A-rated condensing boiler can save up to £305 a year on heating bills, which is great news if you're in a new-build home.
- **Check your radiators** - if a radiator is warm at the bottom but cool at the top, this could mean there is air in the system, which may require bleeding to ensure maximum efficiency of the heating system.
- **Loft insulation** - insulating your loft is a simple, inexpensive and effective way to reduce energy waste and lower your heating bills. All new homes are fitted with loft insulation that meets the latest building regulations of 270mm (11"), but if you are in an older property you may want to think about a top-up.
- **Letterboxes** - check to see if your letterbox is draughty, which can lead to cold hallways and a potential increase in fuel bills. Installing a letter box draught excluder that fits onto the inside of your front door is an inexpensive easy DIY job.
- **Room temperature controls** - your thermostat should typically be set between 18°C and 21°C, but by installing thermostatic radiator valves you can set different temperatures in different rooms, according to individual preference. These will be standard in new homes, but are easily fitted to existing radiators.



- **Floorboards and skirting boards** - an important job as winter approaches is to make sure that your house is free of draughts. Floorboards and skirtings usually go ignored but cold air can easily filter through, so check for gaps and fill them in.



- **Windows** - energy-efficient glazing keeps your home warmer, allowing less heat to be lost. Double glazing is fitted as standard to a new-build home, but if your house is older replacing windows could be a good investment as they help to keep warmth in, and reduce external noise.
- **Use curtains to retain heat** - it's important to try to get as much sunlight into your home during the day as possible. But as soon as dusk falls, remember to close curtains to retain heat within your home and reduce the need for additional heating.