

Warmer winter CHECKLIST

low
carbon
hub

Worried about fuel bills and keeping warm? Here are no- and low-cost tips and where to find further help.



Don't pay more than you need to for your energy

Check how you pay your bill, it can make a big difference

- Paying by direct debit is usually cheaper than paying by cheque or cash.
- Paying by monthly direct debit can be cheaper than quarterly payments.
- Pre-payment meters can be the most expensive way to pay for your power. If you think a standard meter would be better for you, talk to your supplier. Most will swap them free of charge.
- Some suppliers charge for paper billing – getting bills by email may be cheaper, and more environmentally friendly.

Check your tariff

Comparison websites can help you check if you are on the best tariff. The website moneysavingexpert.com has advice on whether to stick, switch or fix your energy tariff.

Struggling with your bills?

Get help with your energy bills – grants, benefits, and affordable payment plans are available. If you're on a pre-payment meter and can't top up, ask your supplier for emergency credit. Reach out to your energy supplier, [Better Housing Better Health](https://www.betterhousingbetterhealth.org.uk), and [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) for more details.

Get the support you are entitled to

Sign up to the Priority Services Register

If you are over 60, have young children or use electrically powered medical equipment, register with your energy company and get extra help – and support if there is a power cut.

Visit the Help for Households website

The Help for Households website explains all the different support that's available for energy and also sets out national schemes that can help with the cost of living.

Contact Better Housing Better Health

A free service helping all Oxfordshire residents to keep warm, stay healthy, and live well. Call free on **0800 107 0044** or visit [bhbh.org.uk](https://www.bhbh.org.uk).



Find out more advice and information on lowcarbonhub.org/energy-saving-advice



Get the most out of your heating

Learn how your heating controls work

Sit down with a cup of tea and read your boiler manual. Alternatively, there are lots of 'how-to videos and guides' on the internet for every heating system type, from combination boilers to storage heaters, which can help you get to grips with the basics.

Set your controls so your heating is only on when you need it

Set your heating so it is only on when you will benefit from it. Remembering to put on a cosy jumper ahead of the heating can help you save money. It's basic, but it should allow you to maintain the same comfort level. You can try:

Setting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature, usually in the 18-21°C range. Turning down by just 1°C could save around £120 a year. This is the [Energy Saving Trust's](#) current headline figure, but estimates from other sources vary depending on the home and current price cap, so treat it as indicative rather than precise.

- Setting the programme so the heating comes on just before you get up in the morning and get home for the day.
- Switch off the heating before you go out for the day, or go to bed, as your home will stay warm for some time.

Turn down heating in rooms you aren't using

- Radiators and heaters can be turned down room by room, and storage heaters set to only heat when needed.
- Radiators can be made controllable by adding Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs). Standard manual TRVs typically cost £10-30 each; smart/connected TRVs cost around £40-60+ each (installation is extra). Digital TVRs are more expensive but can be programmed to adjust the heating in each room. Take care to protect rooms from damp and avoid frozen pipes by using frost-free settings.

Get your heating system running at its most efficient

- Move furniture away from radiators so hot air can circulate.
- Bleed your radiators to remove trapped air.
- If your radiators are hot at the top but cold at the bottom, the system might have sludge in it, and benefit from being professionally cleaned.
- Check to see if your heating system is suitable for running at a lower flow temperature. You may be able to save 5-10% on your heating costs.



Create energy-wise routines

Every day

- Open your curtains in the morning, to make the most of winter sunshine.
- At dusk close your curtains. If they cover a radiator, tuck them behind so the heat stays in the room.
- Close internal doors to trap the heat in the room.
- Try a different energy saving hack from our 'no-cost/low-cost' energy saving ideas each day and see which work for you.

Every month

Check Check your heating programme and tweak it as routine/daylight hours change.

Every year

- Turn your heating off entirely for summer, so it doesn't use fuel unnecessarily.
- Pack a power-cut kit: torch, water, a battery or wind-up radio, spare batteries, key medicines, and contact numbers.
- Twice a year, adjust timers for daylight saving.



Keep your heat!

Once you have your heating working efficiently, consider which of the following DIY projects you could try to cut down draughts and retain your heat. If you rent, talk to your landlord first. How-to guides are available on our website.

Doors

- Add insulating tape around the door frames.
- Add a door brush to the bottom of the door.
- Add a keyhole cover.
- Draughtproof your letterbox or consider replacing it with a tightly closing model.
- Make or buy a draught excluder.

Floorboards

- Use floor board draught excluder that expands to fill gaps.
- Fill gaps between your skirting board and the floor.
- Rugs can help prevent heat loss through cold spots in floors.

Chimneys

An open fireplace can lose lots of heat. If you aren't using your fireplace, buy a 'chimney balloon' or 'chimney sheep' to prevent heat going up the chimney, or make your own.

Windows

4 in 10% of heat lost in a typical home is from the windows.

- Install thermal blinds/add thermal material to existing curtains to help trap in heat.
- Temporary 'secondary glazing film' can be put over single glazed windows, trapping an insulating layer of air. Cost £4-15 per window kit – note this is different from full secondary glazing installations, which run £180-600+ per window professionally fitted.

Lofts

- Up to a quarter of a home's heat can be lost through an uninsulated loft
- Add more insulation to your loft. It's recommended for homes to have 270-300mm of insulation laid on the loft floor.
- Add draughtproofing tape around your loft hatch and put insulation on the hatch too.

Hot water

- 15% of heat loss is due to draughts
- Get an insulating jacket for your hot water tank and add lagging to pipes.
- Gaps around pipe outlets etc. can also be a source of draughts that can be filled.

Radiators

Add radiator panels behind radiators that are on external walls. There are lots of different types you can buy, or make your own with card and foil. Cost: around £7-12 per radiator.



Long-term improvements

From cavity wall insulation to solar panels, there are bigger changes that can make your home more efficient, cut costs, and reduce carbon emissions.

A good place to start is our [Home Retrofit Guide](#) on the Low Carbon Hub website, where there's plenty more inspiration from heat pumps to insulation and beyond, kept up to date as schemes change.

If you have the budget for major work rather than relying on grants, retrofit specialists like [Cosy Homes Oxfordshire](#) offer a paid, whole-house retrofit service.

Find out more advice and information on lowcarbonhub.org/energy-saving-advice

Where to go for further support

Low Carbon Hub

For more energy saving advice and how to sign up to the Priority Services Register.
lowcarbonhub.org/energy-saving-advice

Oxfordshire County Council

The latest energy efficiency grant news for Oxfordshire residents.

oxfordshire.gov.uk/retrofit

Better Housing Better Health

Call **0800 107 0044 for free** and impartial energy advice for all Oxfordshire residents. From understanding your bills to accessing grants and support.

bhbh.org.uk

Housewarming guides

Low Carbon Oxford North's free home improvement guides are available.

lcon.org.uk

Help for Households

Government website with key financial support available to help with household costs.

helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk

TrustMark

Find government-endorsed, certified retrofit and insulation installers.

trustmark.org.uk

LEAP

The Energy & Money Saving Service. Freephone 0800 060 7567.

applyforleap.org.uk

Energy Saving Trust

Independent advice on cutting energy use, water, and waste, plus help finding the right grants for insulation, heating, and renewables.

energysavingtrust.org.uk

Centre for Sustainable Energy

A national charity offering a free energy advice line for anyone struggling with high bills or a cold home, plus practical help accessing grants and benefits.

cse.org.uk

Struggling with it all?

Your local Citizens Advice can help with financial support and emergency fuel vouchers.

Can't afford your energy bill? Contact your energy supplier. They may be able to spread out payments, or even reduce your bills.

If it's all getting too much, the Samaritans are waiting for your call. Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Call free on 116 123.

About us



Low Carbon Hub is a social enterprise that's out to prove we can meet our energy needs in a way that's good for people and good for the planet. Because we are run for the benefit of the community, we use all of our profits to fund community-led action on climate change.



In partnership with

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