



Using energy in your home

www.tworivershousing.org.uk

You're Home Now.



Your upgraded home

Thank you for being part of our warmer homes programme, we hope that you are happy with the changes we've made. The way you use appliances and electricity in your home can really make a difference to your energy bills, so we've created this leaflet to help you get the most out of the improvements we've made.

In this leaflet, you'll find lots of hints and tips on what you can do to make the most of the changes to your home and use energy most efficiently to help lower your energy bills. It will look at:

- Smart meters
- Becoming energy-use aware
- Using your appliances efficiently
- Solar panels
- Air-source heat pumps, and;
- Energy plans



Did you know you can ask for a smart meter to be installed? Visit Smart Energy GB:

www.smartenergygb.org/about-smart-meters/get-a-smart-meter

or search “get a smart meter” and look for Smart Energy GB

Quick Wins

Smart meters



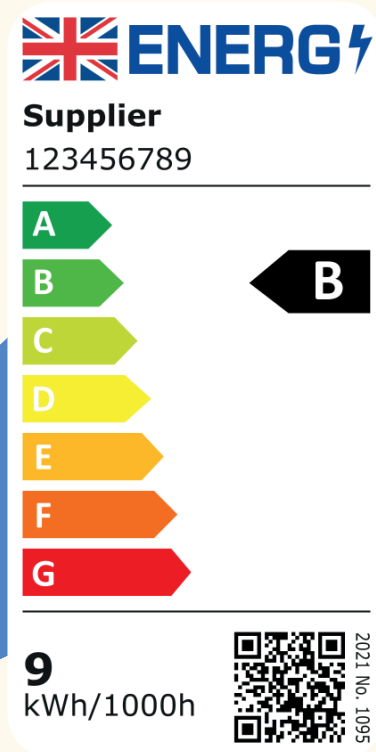
If you don't have a smart meter, it's a really good idea to get one. They have lots of benefits including:

- Sending out automatic readings to your energy supplier to show how much energy you are using in your home. This takes a job off your plate and means your bills will be more accurate and reduce the chance of an unexpectedly large bill when your meter is checked by your supplier after a long time.
- Keeping an eye on how much energy you use in real-time. You can check the display on your smart meter to see how much energy has been used that day or that month so far. This can help you see which appliances in your home are using the most energy and can help you to budget better.
- Allowing you to get special energy tariffs that cost less money, especially if you have technology like an air source heat pump.

Becoming energy-use aware

If you don't know already, it's a good idea to learn how much electricity the different appliances in your home use...

- Everything in your home uses energy differently. If you know what uses the most energy, it will be easier to take more control of how much energy you're using and save money.
- The energy efficiency of your TV as well as the way you use it, will make a difference to how much energy it uses. This is the same for washing machines, dish washers, fridges, air fryers, microwaves, kettles and electric ovens.
- We recommend trying to choose the most energy efficient model that you can when you get a new appliance. This will help reduce the energy needed to run it.



Using your appliances smartly

We know that buying very energy efficient products can be expensive, so it's also important to know how to use these items in an efficient way:

- Turn off TVs, washing machines, dish washers, air fryers, microwaves, kettles, electric showers and electric ovens at the wall when you're not using them.
- You can use "timer plugs" to switch things on and off at certain times of the day. This can be helpful when plugs are harder to reach, for example a washing machine plug can be blocked by the machine.
- If you want to go a step further, you can also get "smart plugs". These are the same as timer plugs but you can control them with your smart phone, tablet or computer. Some smart plugs can even link to your energy tariff and only turn on when you have cheaper periods of electricity.
- Chose the "ECO" mode or a setting like that on appliances that have the option.
- Set washing machines to lower temperatures (as long as it's suitable to wash the clothes properly).
- Replace any old light bulbs with LED bulbs and turn off lights when you're out of the room.



Solar panels

To make the most out of your solar PV panels, you should try to use as much of the electricity that is generated by them as possible.

During the day, when the sun is shining, they generate free electricity that can help power your home. This includes any appliances in your home that are switched on and any electrical heating you may have, such as an air-source heat pump. This means it's best to use higher power appliances like washing machines and tumble driers during the day.

It's also good to use higher power appliances one after the other, so you don't have more than one running at the same time. If too many high-power appliances are used at the same time, you can use up all of your available solar power and start using electricity from the grid.



If you have any issues with your Solar PV system, contact us on **0800 316 0897** or **customerservices@2rh.org.uk**

Top Tip

If you have a heat pump or a solar diverter connected to your hot water tank, a simple way to use more of your solar energy is to set your water heating times to the middle of the day, when there is likely to be the most sunshine. However, you will also need to think about when your household uses the most hot water. If lots of people need to take hot showers in the morning, it may make sense to have some extra water heating at this time, so you don't run out of hot water.





Air-source heat pumps

If you've had a heat pump installed, there's some useful information for using this system in our separate heating advice leaflet. There's also some of the key advice here:

Making the most of your heat pump

Heat pumps are cheapest and most efficient to run when they are set to be on all the time.

Ideally, your heat pump controls should be set to provide a steady internal temperature. You can do this by turning the heat pump on and setting the thermostat to the temperature

you want inside your home and then leaving it alone.

You can set your thermostat to a temperature that works for you, but it is recommended that the temperature is no lower than 18 degrees and no higher than 20 degrees (you can set the thermostat to a higher temperature but it will cost more to do so). This will help maintain a healthy living

environment in your home and reduce the risk of damp and mould.

If you're confident using the programmer function on your heat pump, you could set the heat pump to lower the temperature by one or two degrees at night. Some people find this more comfortable, and it shouldn't make a difference to the efficiency of the heat pump.

Remember, it may cost you more to run your heat pump if you turn the system on and off a lot. For example, turning your heating off during the day and then turning it on again in the evening is likely to cost you more than running the heat pump all the time. This is because the heat pump will have to work harder to increase temperatures quickly in the evening, rather than slowly heating the house all day. Heat pumps work most efficiently by warming a property slowly, with lower flow temperature water in the radiators.

It's also important to make sure that you're on an electricity tariff that is suitable for a heat pump. Being on a heat pump tariff and setting your heating to warm up your house during cheaper times of the day you could save you up to £200 a year on your energy bill.

If you used to have night storage heaters, you may still be on an Economy 7 tariff which will be expensive when you have a heat pump. If you are on Economy 7 at the moment, it's best to switch to a flat rate tariff, or a heat pump tariff (you can find out more about this later in this leaflet).



If you have any issues with your heating system, contact us on **0800 316 0897** or **customerservices@2rh.org.uk**



Energy Plans

Time-of-use tariffs

Time-of-use plans have different prices for electricity at different times of the day. They come in two categories: static and dynamic. The idea of having different prices for different times of the day isn't new, but there are lots of new types of plans available that are only possible because of the invention of smart meters. You will need to have a smart meter to be able to sign up to one of these new tariffs.

An example of a time-of-use tariff that you might have heard of is Economy 7. On these tariffs, electricity is cheaper, during 'off-peak' hours at night, and more expensive during 'peak' hours in the day.

Newer tariffs can offer cheaper

rates during the middle of the day, later in the evening, and during the night. On a lot of these plans the expensive 'peak' time is usually between 4–8pm. So, this is the time when you should avoid using too much electricity. The periods of lower cost electricity will vary between tariffs and suppliers.

If you can move some of your energy use into the off-peak hours in one of the plans available, you could save money on your energy bills. For example, instead of running your washing machine, tumble drier, or dehumidifier in the evening, set them to run in the middle of the day, or later in the evening (after peak hours). If you have any medical equipment that uses a lot of electricity, you could use this or charge it (depending on

the appliance) during periods of low-cost electricity to save money.

i Remember...

There's a risk with some time-of-use tariffs that you accidentally use energy during periods when electricity costs are higher, which will mean you get higher bills. You need to be careful not to use too much electricity during peak hours on your plan.

Heat pump tariffs

There are some electricity time-of-use plans available that are designed for homes that have heat pumps. These will have “off-peak” periods when electricity is cheaper. Any appliances you use during the off-peak period will use the cheaper rate of electricity, which could save you even more money. Not all of these tariffs are the same so it's worth shopping around for one that's right for you. Some have peak periods where electricity is more expensive. These periods can be difficult to avoid

consistently, so we recommend choosing a tariff with no peak period.

Demand shifting schemes

Another option is to try a demand shifting scheme. These schemes reward you for reducing your electricity consumption during periods when the electricity grid is under the most stress. These are generally periods in the evening when lots of people want to use electricity. Check if your electricity supplier has a demand shifting scheme.

Some companies other than electricity suppliers provide a demand shifting scheme, accessed through an app or website. A couple of examples are Equiwatt and uSwitch.

You will need a working smart meter to be able to get time-of-use tariffs, heat pump tariffs or take part in demand shifting schemes. See page 2 for more information on getting one.

Save energy and reduce your electricity bills

You can save energy in your home by:

- Using a smart meter to keep an eye on your energy use.
- Buying energy efficient appliances when they need replacing.
- Using your appliances in a smart way.
- Learning how to use your solar panels or a heat pump efficiently if you've had them installed.
- Checking if you're on the best energy tariff for your home.

The Centre for Sustainable Energy helped provide information for this leaflet, and can give you free, impartial advice on:

- Making the most of your solar panels.
- Running your heat pump more efficiently.
- Which smart tariff might be best for you, and help you switch.
- How smart meters can help you pay less for energy, and help you get one.

Contact them by calling **0800 082 2234**, emailing **home.energy@cse.org.uk**, or filling the form on this QR code:



Contact us

Telephone: **0800 316 0897**

Website: **www.tworivershousing.org.uk**

Email: **customerservices@2rh.org.uk**

If you would like this leaflet in large print or audio CD, please call us.

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