

A RACE TO NET ZERO – Part 5

A guide to funding a greener home

Have you ever thought about altering aspects of your home because it could be more energy efficient but you aren't able to fund it yourself? There are a variety of different funding options out there that will help you make your home a greener space.

However, many of these schemes will only help with funding if you fall under various categories, which we'll explain here.

Firstly, there is a scheme called Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which aims to tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions. This scheme consists of the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) which ensures energy suppliers promote the reduction of energy bills through their specific measures such as the installation of insulation, heating measures. The energy companies that work with the ECO may fit appliances for free or they may require you to contribute to the total cost.

In order to be eligible for ECO, you must live in social housing with an EPC rating (a review of the property's energy efficiency) of E, F or G, or receive at least one of the benefits listed below. You must also receive permission from the individual or company that owns the property.

- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit (on the condition that the household's relevant income does not exceed the amount set out in Chapter 3 of our scheme guidance)
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income Support
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Mobility Supplement
- Personal Independence Payment
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Tax Credits (Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits)
- Universal Credit

As this scheme isn't a government grant, you cannot reclaim money for appliances you have already installed. If you would to see if your home needs improvements you can use this tool <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/energy-efficiency/reduce-bills>. You can also use this link <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/eco-suppliers> to see which companies are available and offering improvements.

Another scheme that is very beneficial, especially when considering improving your home so that it's more energy efficient, is the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG). This scheme essentially allows households to get paid for the extra, unused energy they have and they can then send it back to the grid. The amount of money they give you is dependent on the amount of energy the solar panels on your home produce, which means your house must be fitted with a smart meter to measure the levels.

The electricity can be produced through the renewable technologies stated below:

- Solar panels
- Hydro
- Anaerobic digestion
- Wind
- Micro combined heat and power

And these technologies must all fit the following:

- The installation must be MCS-certified
- It must be 5MW capacity or less (50kW for micro-CHP)
- You must have a meter that can provide 30 minute readings for the electricity exported by the technology.

In order to receive the payments, you must sign up to a SEG tariff. However, you must be producing surplus energy which can be sent back to the National Grid, otherwise you won't be eligible. You won't be able to make money from SEG due to the fact that SEG pays for the excess electricity sent to the grid, rather than the entirety of electricity generated. However, if you decide to get a SEG tariff, shopping around to find the best prices from companies will prove that the money you can get paid does differ. According to Which, 'in November 2020, we found companies paying between 1p/kWh and 5.5p/kWh (or even as much as 11p/kWh if you choose a tariff that requires you to have a specific battery).'

The Warm Home Discount scheme is a scheme that allows you to receive a one off discount from your electricity bill, of £140. The scheme will begin on the 18th October 2021 and will discount your bill between the months of September through to March.

To qualify, you must be on a low income, meeting your energy suppliers criteria for the scheme. Or you receive the Guarantee credit element of pension credit. You can also apply even if you are on a pay-as-you-go meter. All you need to do is discuss your contract with your supplier, where they may be able to give you a voucher.

Another scheme which is worth applying for is the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). It is a scheme that allows you to claim for heating systems. If the heating system that you have installed meets the criteria of the RHI, you could be paid for the renewable heat you produce for a number of years.



The RHI can support five technologies:

- Wood boilers
- Solar water heating
- Ground source heat pumps
- Air source heat pumps
- Wood pellet stoves with back boiler

You can use this calculator to find an estimate of how much money you could receive through the RHI <https://renewable-heat-calculator.service.gov.uk>.

The RHI scheme ensures that the owner of the renewable heating system has support for seven years and you must also apply to the RHI scheme within one year of the installation of the heating system in your home in order to claim. The scheme will remain open until 31st March 2022.

There are a variety of different schemes available that will support you on your journey to becoming greener and more energy efficient. Dependent on specific criteria, such as your income, there will be certain schemes and grants that will be more suited to you. However, they are designed to support you and help fund these greener measures, so if you're eligible, take advantage of them.