

# Going greener at home

## Time for an eco-makeover?

Whether you rent or own your home, sustainable home improvements can save you money as well as reduce your environmental impact. And as fuel bills increase it's a good time to think about changes, especially if you are ...

**Renting** Your landlord has to provide an Energy Performance Certificate with a new lease. This gives you an indication of likely running costs and helps your landlord identify energy-saving improvements.

**Moving** You will need to provide an Energy Performance Certificate when selling. A better rating could make your house more attractive to potential buyers.

**Buying** Carefully check the Energy Performance Certificate, and if you are buying a new home find out whether it has a good Code for Sustainable Homes rating. Some online estate agents specialise in greener homes.

**Improving** Many measures are most cost-effective when undertaken as part of other works. Do it now if you are:

- Converting your loft – take the opportunity to put in lots of insulation
- Building an extension – maximise insulation of the walls and floor
- Adding a conservatory – remember that a door to the living space is essential and a conservatory should never have its own fitted heating
- Refurbishing a room – could you dry-line a solid wall or insulate the floor? What sustainable materials could you use elsewhere?



A water butt is a great way to save water – and you're never too young to start.

## Key principles

- **Save energy** by insulating and choosing efficient appliances
- **Choose materials** that don't use much energy to manufacture and transport
- **Minimise waste and water use**
- Encourage **nature and biodiversity**

Don't forget that climate change is likely to lead to more extreme weather conditions. Measures such as increased insulation can help make your home more comfortable in both the heat and the cold.

## Quick links

**Find out the size of your carbon footprint and how to reduce it:**  
<http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk>

**Grab a free energy report:**  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home\\_improvements](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home_improvements)

**Get advice:**  
Energy Saving Trust  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)  
T: 0800 512012  
Bristol City Council greener living  
[www.bristol.gov.uk/greenerliving](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/greenerliving)

# Information and advice

## General



On these pages you'll find key sources of information and advice on greener building. Many products are available from high street shops. For others you may need to visit a specialist 'eco' supplier: to find one search online, see advertisements in publications such as *Green Building* magazine, or visit the CREATE Ecohome (details overleaf).

**AECB – The Sustainable Building Association**  
[www.aecb.net](http://www.aecb.net)  
T: 0845 456 9773  
Information about sustainable building; list of green building professionals and suppliers.

## Energy saving & renewables



You can buy energy-saving products such as insulation, radiator panels and low-energy lighting in DIY stores or online. Natural insulation (such as sheep's wool, Warmcel/cellulose and hemp) is available from specialist suppliers. The Energy Saving Trust gives advice on insulating solid walls and other topics.

**Centre for Alternative Technology**  
[www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)  
T: 01654 705950  
Free telephone information service answering queries on variety of topics. Visitor centre in Wales with online shop.

**Climate Change and your Home**  
[www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk](http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk)  
Advice from English Heritage on energy saving in older housing.

**Ecos Trust**  
[www.ecostrust.org.uk](http://www.ecostrust.org.uk)  
T: 01458 259400  
Promotes sustainable building in the South West; website includes directory of suppliers and organisations.

**Green Building Forum**  
[www.newbuilder.com](http://www.newbuilder.com)  
Discussion forum linked to *Green Building* magazine, covering wide range of topics.

**The Green Register**  
[www.greenregister.org.uk](http://www.greenregister.org.uk)  
T: 0117 377 3490  
List of green building professionals; training events.

**Energy Saving Trust**  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)  
T: 0800 512012  
Advice on all aspects of energy saving from loft insulation to renewable energy. Wide range of publications to download. Free advice line for householders, including local grants information.

**Green Electricity Marketplace**  
[www.greenelectricity.org](http://www.greenelectricity.org)  
Comparison of 'green tariffs' on offer to UK domestic customers.



**Green Street**  
[www.greenstreet.org.uk](http://www.greenstreet.org.uk)  
Tailored advice for different ages and styles of housing.

**London Climate Change**  
[www.londonclimatechange.co.uk/greenhomes/home](http://www.londonclimatechange.co.uk/greenhomes/home)  
Advice for tenants, homeowners and landlords. Includes case studies and videos.

**Low Impact Living Initiative**  
[www.lowimpact.org](http://www.lowimpact.org)  
T: 01296 714184  
Downloadable factsheets on variety of topics; also training events.

**National Self-Build Association**  
[www.nasba.org.uk](http://www.nasba.org.uk)  
T: 01506 409456  
Membership organisation. Building your own home is one way to achieve higher sustainability standards.

**Which? Online**  
[www.which.co.uk/advice](http://www.which.co.uk/advice)  
Green consumer advice on wide variety of topics, with supplier links.

See also books and magazines overleaf.

**The Log Pile**  
[www.nef.org.uk/logpile](http://www.nef.org.uk/logpile)  
Information on wood fuel and wood pellets, including suppliers and equipment.

**Low Carbon Buildings Programme**  
[www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk](http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk)  
T: 0800 915 0990  
Information on government grants for solar, wind and other 'microgeneration technologies', including list of accredited installers.

**Solar Trade Association**  
[www.solar-trade.org.uk](http://www.solar-trade.org.uk)  
T: 01908 442290  
Avoid rogue traders by using an Association member, all of whom adhere to a Code of Practice.

## Materials, fittings and furnishings

FSC-certified wood and wood products are widely available in DIY stores. Most door manufacturers sell wooden window frames in standard sizes, and good joinery businesses can make them to measure. A wide variety of natural paints and finishes is available from specialist 'eco' suppliers.

**Bristol Wood Recycling Project**  
[www.bwrp.org.uk](http://www.bwrp.org.uk)  
T: 0117 972 3219  
Social enterprise near Bristol Temple Meads station selling wide variety of recycled wood.

**GreenSpec**  
[www.greenspec.co.uk](http://www.greenspec.co.uk)  
Online directory of sustainable construction products, including supplier details and green ratings.

**Energy Saving Trust**  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/compare-and-buy-products](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/compare-and-buy-products)  
Lists and compares different products including appliances and lighting.

## Gardens

Ask in your local garden centre for natural gardening products, or search online for specialist suppliers. The Which? Advice website (see General) has an overview of permeable paving options with supplier links.

**Bristol City Council – composting**  
[www.bristol.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/recycling)  
T: 0117 922 2100  
Special offer compost bins, and composting advice.

**Garden Organic**  
[www.gardenorganic.co.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.co.uk)  
T: 02476 303517  
Advice on organic growing, including natural pest control.



**Ethical Consumer**  
[www.ethicalconsumer.org/FreeBuyersGuides.aspx](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/FreeBuyersGuides.aspx)  
Buyers guides to range of products including paint, flooring and furniture.

**FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)**  
[www.fsc-uk.org](http://www.fsc-uk.org)  
T: 01686 413916  
Wood certification scheme and products database.

**Salvo**  
[www.salvo.co.uk](http://www.salvo.co.uk)  
Online directory of reclaimed materials suppliers, and items for sale.



**Interpave**  
[www.paving.org.uk](http://www.paving.org.uk)  
Advice on paving, including permeable options.

**Permaculture Association**  
[www.permaculture.org.uk](http://www.permaculture.org.uk)  
T: 0845 458 1805  
Information and resources about permaculture, a 'holistic' design approach that learns from nature's systems.

**Wild about Gardens**  
[www.wildaboutgardens.org](http://www.wildaboutgardens.org)  
Advice and information about wildlife gardening.

## Water

Dual flush is now standard for new WCs; you can adapt an older model with a variable flush device available from specialist 'eco' shops. Save water if you have a large, old cistern (9 litres+) by inserting a save-a-flush device, usually available from your water supplier. Plumbing suppliers sell water-saving taps and other products.

**The Water Guide**  
[www.water-guide.org.uk](http://www.water-guide.org.uk)  
Includes information about water meters and rainwater harvesting.

**Waterwise**  
[www.waterwise.org.uk](http://www.waterwise.org.uk)  
T: 020 7344 1882

Water-saving advice and product information sheets, including taps, showers, toilet devices and greywater recycling products.

**Environment Agency**  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater)  
Comprehensive information on meters and water-saving measures.



## Waste

Aim to reduce waste by buying long-lasting products and repairing where necessary. Donate good quality unwanted goods to charity shops or specialist re-use projects; see Bristol City Council's recycling A-Z for contacts.

**Bristol City Council**  
[www.bristol.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/recycling)  
T: 0117 922 2100

Guide to waste reduction and recycling in Bristol including A-Z household guide.

**Freecycle Network**  
[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)  
Donate (and receive) items through your local group. Free to join.

**Recycle more**  
[www.recycle-more.co.uk](http://www.recycle-more.co.uk)  
Comprehensive list of what you can recycle, with section on labelling.



By considering eco-improvements to your home you could save money and do your bit for the environment too.

# Top tips for a greener home

## Appliances



- Choose A-rated items (A++ for fridges) to reduce energy and water consumption
- Turn off TVs, computers and other electrical devices rather than leave on stand-by
- Smaller TVs use less energy than larger models and plasma screens

## Energy



- For free advice and an energy check phone 0800 512012
- Switch to an electricity supplier that uses renewable sources
- Investigate solar heating for water or photovoltaic panels for electricity
- Install radiator heat reflectors

## Flooring



- Choose natural materials such as linoleum, coir, jute, seagrass, cork, bamboo or rubber
- Avoid petroleum-based flooring and glues that emit toxic vapours
- Reclamation yards often stock antique and used flooring

## Furnishings



- Choose wood – it is long-lasting and renewable
- Ensure wood is FSC-certified, or buy local / reclaimed
- Avoid plastics, metals and formaldehyde-emitting chipboard and MDF
- Buy second hand furnishings

## Garden



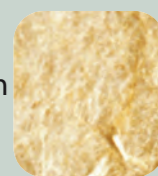
- Garden without chemicals
- Grow fruit and veg
- Plant trees for shade / windbreaks
- Choose grass or plants rather than concrete
- If creating a parking space, use gravel, grasscrete or permeable paving to reduce water runoff

## Heating



- Fit zoned and programmable heating controls
- Fit thermostatic valves on radiators
- Wood burning stoves can be a good option, but choose a clean-air approved and highly efficient model

## Insulation



- Install at least 250mm of insulation in your loft. Ideally, use natural or low-impact materials
- Install cavity wall insulation, or for solid walls use insulated plasterboard or an external insulation system
- Draught proof doors and gaps in skirtings / floorboards

## Lighting



- Use low energy light bulbs – many new styles are available
- Look for the Energy Saving Recommended label
- LED lighting is a low-energy alternative to spotlights and halogens
- Consider sunpipes to light dark areas

## Paints



- Choose paints with low VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds)
- Use natural or water-based rather than petroleum-based paints
- Select paints with the Ecolabel
- Recycle unused paints at Household Waste Recycling Centres

## Waste



- Offer unwanted household goods on Freecycle
- Recycle everything you can – visit [www.bristol.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/recycling) for an A-Z guide
- Donate waste wood to Bristol Wood Recycling Project
- Install a compost bin if you have a garden

## Water



- Install a free-to-fit water meter – ask your water supplier
- Install a water butt in the garden
- Use water efficient appliances and avoid power showers
- Fit a variable flush device to your WC
- Plant drought-tolerant garden plants

## Windows



- Draught-proof old or single-glazed panels, or use shutters or heavy curtains
- Avoid PVC, which has a much greater environmental impact than timber
- For maximum efficiency choose low-E coated, gas-filled double glazing or even triple glazing

# Taking it further

## Eco-building in action



### CREATE Ecohome

Smeaton Road, BS1 6XN  
[www.bristol.gov.uk/create](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/create)  
 T: 0117 925 0505

Discover practical solutions for greener living at Bristol's sustainable show home, next door to the CREATE Centre in Cumberland Basin. The house includes a resource room with information on a range of green topics, including other sustainable homes. Listed here are some key examples.

### BedZED

[www.bioregional.com/bedzed](http://www.bioregional.com/bedzed)  
 'Zero energy' housing scheme.

### Bristol Streets

[www.bristolstreets.co.uk](http://www.bristolstreets.co.uk)  
 Find out what people are doing to make Bristol greener; add your own location or comment on the map.

### Hockerton Housing Project

[www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk](http://www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk)  
 Pioneering eco-housing development in Nottinghamshire.

### Nottingham Ecohouse

[www.msarch.co.uk/ecohome](http://www.msarch.co.uk/ecohome)  
 Refurbished Edwardian house.

### Old Home Superhome

[www.sustainable-energyacademy.org.uk](http://www.sustainable-energyacademy.org.uk)  
 Network of older homes updated for energy efficiency.

### The Yellow House

<http://theyellowhouse.org.uk>  
 Refurbished 1930s house.

## Labels to look for

### Code for Sustainable Homes



Government standard which uses a 1 to 6 star rating to indicate the overall sustainability of a new home. Replaces the former EcoHomes standard.

### EU Energy label



Displayed on light bulbs and most 'white goods'; rates products from A (most efficient) to G. For refrigeration the label goes up to A++.

### Energy Performance Certificate



Gives an A–G rating for a home's energy efficiency based on factors such as construction, heating, lighting and insulation. Required by law when you rent or sell a home.

### Energy Saving Recommended



Energy Saving Trust scheme to endorse the most energy efficient products, including glazing and boilers as well as appliances.

### European Ecolabel



Europe-wide symbol covering a product's whole life cycle. Products are independently checked as complying with strict ecological and performance criteria.

### FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)



Denotes timber products from responsibly managed forests under the internationally recognised certification scheme.

## Books and magazines

Reference copies of the following (and many other publications) are available in the Ecohome resource room.

### Eco-renovation Manual

Nigel Griffiths  
 Haynes Publishing  
 Clearly set-out manual covering all aspects of home eco-renovation.

### Green Building magazine

Green Building Press  
[www.greenbuildingmagazine.co.uk](http://www.greenbuildingmagazine.co.uk)  
 Quarterly magazine with a wide range of articles on green building.

### Green Building Bible

Green Building Press  
 Comprehensive and practical introduction to green building.

### Green Up!

Will Anderson  
 Green Books  
 A-Z of environmentally friendly home improvements.

If you would like this information in a different format, for example braille, audiotape, large print or computer disk or community languages, please contact:  
 T: 0117 925 0505

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# The Sustainable Home

Advice on how to make your home greener

