

# THE GREEN HOMES GRANT

**H**istorically, some government supported energy measures have been introduced prior to the public interest really being there to support them. I am sure I am not alone in confessing that I only began to seriously consider solar panels on my properties after the feed in tariff had been significantly reduced!

Accordingly, I think it is important that landlords are aware of the new Green Homes Grant which is being introduced.

Announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in July this year, it is offering grants of up to £5,000 towards the introduction of energy efficient measures. It will form part of the government's current commitment to reach net-zero in respect of carbon emissions by the year 2050, along with the rather ambitious target of increasing the EPC score of all homes in England and Wales to a Band C by 2035 (Scotland by 2040).

The measures that the grant can fund include primary measures such as loft, wall and floor insulation, as well as secondary measures such as double glazing, heating controls and air-source heat pumps.

The guidance states that the onus should be placed on the building fabric and, in particular, its insulation before other measures are considered. This seems a sensible idea given that walls and roofs are significant areas of heat loss. There is also a requirement to pay particular attention to workmanship, as poor quality installation can lead to underperformance by cold bridging.

Accordingly, you will need to have insulation as a primary measure installed before you can receive the grant for a secondary measure such as double glazing or heating controls.

The new scheme appears more structured than those that have gone before. It requires a qualified Retrofit Advisor to provide advice to the property owner, and a qualified Assessor to inspect the property. Once the proposed works have been considered and agreed, a qualified contractor will undertake the work. Further protection is provided in that a Retrofit Co-ordinator will be appointed for each project, either by the contractor wanting to undertake the work or directly by the property owner. The Co-ordinator will be responsible for oversight of the whole project.

These new roles have been created through a new scheme called PAS 2035, whilst the certification will be by way of an expansion to the Government TrustMark scheme.

**The process is divided into a number of stages:**

- 1 The Retrofit Advisor will meet with the property owner to discuss the various options for improving the energy performance of the building. This will include physical measures as well as changes to occupant behaviour.**
- 2 Assuming the owner wishes to move ahead, the Retrofit Co-ordinator will undertake an assessment followed by a site survey by the Retrofit Assessor. This includes considering the dwelling's age, construction, condition and any relevant planning restrictions.**
- 3 Based on the reports provided, a Retrofit Designer will create a package of measures to detail the cost and carbon savings that could be achieved.**
- 4 Once the design proposals are signed off by the property owner, the contractors can attend and implement the measures selected.**
- 5 The Co-ordinator then arranges for handover with the owner and provide guidance on operation and maintenance of any installed measures. Where necessary, they will undertake an updated EPC for the premises to reflect its new energy**

Previous government initiatives such as the Green Deal scheme suffered criticisms about poor quality installations and workmanship, and this contributed to a performance gap between the actual and anticipated energy savings. In addition, criticism was levied due to a one-size-fits-all approach.

The new scheme assesses each property separately, paying attention to the building construction details and how any proposed measures will interact with each other. Furthermore, to ensure expected performance improvements are obtained, an evaluation will be undertaken within the



first three months after the works have been completed. It is therefore hoped that the TrustMark registration and the provision of qualified Assessors will mean that landlords get good advice and quality workmanship at their properties.

Now is the time to review your current EPCs and the energy use at your properties and see whether you could take advantage of the grant scheme. Research suggests that energy improvements can improve the longevity of a tenancy. Regardless, the resultant reduction in carbon emissions and lower energy bills for your tenants are surely worthwhile goals to pursue.

Bear in mind the scheme only runs until March 2021 and so you will need to act quickly. You can apply online and will need to get a quote from an Approved Installer in order to access your Grant Voucher.



**As always I am happy to assist readers of YPN and can be contacted on 01843 583000 or [graham@grahamkinnear.com](mailto:graham@grahamkinnear.com)**

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