

Case study- Neil Hirst

Background

Neil Hirst spent 26 years travelling the world with the armed forces but he knows as well as anyone that there's no place like home.

During his time in the Royal Signals he had spells as a driver and a radio telegraphist, using Morse code. He served in the UK, Germany and the Middle East as well as also worked as a miner. However, since moving to a three-bedroom semi in Mayfield with wife Margaret a few years ago, he's struggled to crack one problem – how to keep energy costs down while staying warm in winter.

The 64-year-old said: “The house is fine the summer but in winter it got very cold. We were burning a lot of gas to keep it warm. In previous years, we've had the heating on all day almost as soon as summer was over.”

The process

Neil received help from an advisor from Home Energy Scotland, who carried out a free Home Energy Check. The Hirsts were referred for external wall insulation via Midlothian Council's Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland Area Based Scheme (HEEPS ABS). The measure allows heat to be retained by installing a layer of insulation material on the outer walls, which is then covered by protective cladding.

The work was carried out in autumn of 2013 and Neil and Margaret have noticed a massive difference since then.



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The results

“Now that the house is insulated, we’re able to wait until October before switching the heating on. Even then it warms up really quickly and we don’t need it on all day.”

And it’s not just the inside of the home that has benefited. As the external wall insulation was fitted, the house was re-clad. As one of many in the area to have the work done, Neil says the place looks revitalised. “The whole of Mayfield looks much smarter than it did before all the work was carried out.”

He’s also seeing a real difference somewhere else – his wallet. Neil uses pre-payment meters to heat the house, topping it up with the same amount each week. Recently, he’s noticed that the total balance keeps rising, meaning he can now use the money elsewhere.

The couple are extremely grateful for the support offered by the Scottish Government’s Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland and even say they believe it has added value to their home – although they’re more than happy to stay there for a long time to enjoy those warm winter nights.



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