



# EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION

## HOUSEHOLDER INFORMATION PACK



HOMEENERGYSCOTLAND.ORG  
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FUNDED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

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Houses having installation installed (foreground).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**WE HAVE PRODUCED THIS INFORMATION PACK TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED FROM START TO FINISH WHEN ARRANGING THE INSTALLATION OF YOUR EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION.**

## 1. HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH INSTALLER TO USE?

You may have been approached by a number of companies with external wall insulation offers. We would recommend:

- Get quotes from at least three different installers to make sure that you are getting the best offer for you
- If you are applying for funding, ensure that your chosen installer meets the criteria specified in the terms and conditions. For example, in some cases the installer needs to be Green Deal certified, you can check this at <http://gdorb.decc.gov.uk/installers>
- If possible, check previous installations and ask the home owner's opinion, have any of your neighbours had external wall insulation installed?
- Ask installers about finish choices. The new insulation will change the external appearance of your home so it is important that you are happy with the choice of finishes.

## 2. WHAT IS EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION?

External wall insulation is a layer of insulation material put on to the outer surface of the wall and then covered by a weatherproof layer. The thickness of the insulation is usually between 80mm and 140mm.

## 3. WHY INSULATE?

Once it's done, it's done. Insulation is one of the most effective ways to keep your home warm and cosy, cut your heating bills and it's better for the environment too, because

it reduces the amount of energy needed to keep your home warm. External wall insulation could save you around £255 a year. The average saving is based on a typical three bedroom semi-detached house with gas central heating and an average gas price of 3.80p/kWh – savings vary depending on the size of your house, the amount of external walls you have and what type of heating you have.

## 4. WHAT WILL THE INSULATION LOOK LIKE?

Your home won't look very different – just 'refreshed' as the insulation will be covered with new render or rough-cast. The more households in your area that get the work done, the more uniform the houses will appear. Discuss the choice of finishes with your installer as the new insulation will change the external appearance of your house.



Installing insulation boards

*“If someone told me they were thinking about having external wall insulation, I’d have no hesitation, I’d say go ahead. You help the environment and save money, too.”*

**Mrs Golder, Edinburgh,  
had her insulation installed in 2013**

## **5. WHAT’S INVOLVED IN DOING THE WORK – WILL WE NEED TO LEAVE THE PROPERTY?**

Although the work is very straightforward it can cause a bit of upheaval. The installer will need to erect scaffolding (see 8 below). You won’t need to move out but during working hours you will experience some noise as the contractors go about preparing the walls and fixing the insulation materials to the existing surface. The installers will aim to keep any disruption to a minimum. When they carry out the survey, they’ll discuss any arrangements that need to be made, like removal of items on the outside of the house (eg. hanging baskets).

## **6. HOW LONG WILL THE WORK TAKE?**

The work should take three to six weeks, unless any structural work needs to be carried out. This would be identified at the survey stage and discussed with you before any work begins.

## **7. WHAT IF THE WEATHER IS BAD?**

Work should be ongoing throughout the winter but very bad weather can cause delays. The installers will keep you up to date on what is happening and why.

## **8. WILL THERE BE SCAFFOLDING ON MY HOUSE?**

Yes, scaffolding will be necessary to ensure the installers can access the whole surface of your external walls. The scaffolding should not prevent any access to the property, and should be put up in accordance with health and safety legislation. All access needs (eg. wheelchair access or car parking) should be discussed prior to the scaffolding going up. If you have any questions about this, ask your installer for more information.

You should tell your Buildings and Contents insurers of the date the scaffolding is going up, and for how long. If you do not do this and a claim occurs, you may find you are not covered.

## **9. HOW LONG WILL THE SCAFFOLDING BE UP?**

The scaffolding is likely to be in place for up to six weeks. If the work is delayed due to bad weather, the scaffolding may have to be there for a bit longer.

***Please note:*** Children must be supervised when scaffolding is present. No-one should climb on or tamper with scaffolding as doing so can put them, you and our contractors at risk. If you see anyone climbing on or tampering with scaffolding please report this to the site manager: you will be given their contact details at the start of the project.

## **10. WILL I NEED TO REMOVE MY SATELLITE DISH OR TV AERIAL?**

There is no need for you to do this yourself; the contractor will arrange it all for you. As you might expect, items fastened to the external wall surfaces of your home will need to be removed before the insulation is fitted and this includes satellite dishes and aerials.

Satellite dishes will be removed during the works and temporarily attached to the scaffolding, where they will continue to work. There is likely to be a day or two when you won’t have access to your TV service in between the scaffolding work and someone from your TV provider coming out to make the temporary adjustment.

*“I believe I can save carbon and make my house warmer while saving on my energy bills.”*

**Mr Wallace,  
Dunfermline, 2014**

*“The house looks brand new and it’s holding on to the heat much better. Since the insulation went in three months ago, my gas payments have been reduced by £25 per month and my electricity by £20.”*

**Mr Faulks,  
Kirkcaldy, 2015**

### **11. WILL I NEED TO DO ANY PREPARATION WORK?**

Garden furniture/plants/ornaments will have to be moved before the work can go ahead. You might also need to move any vehicle(s) including caravans from your driveway, and might be asked to cut back any bushes/trees within 4 feet of the walls. This will be discussed with you by the installer at the survey stage.

If you are asked to do any preparation and it is not done, contractors cannot be held responsible should any damage occur if they need to do it themselves.

### **12. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO PIPES ETC. THAT ARE ATTACHED TO MY OUTSIDE WALLS?**

Essential items should be extended to accommodate your new insulation. It is important to discuss this with your installer. This includes:

- down pipes
- other pipework
- flues
- window and door sills
- roof verges
- garden taps

If the standard extension option is unsuitable for any essential item attached to your home then the surveyor will discuss alternative solutions with you and will ensure these meet safety requirements.

All air vents and gas combustion vents will be maintained.

Decorative fixtures and fittings, such as hanging baskets or door canopies can be accommodated but this may involve a surcharge. In order to replace such items, fixings must be installed under the new wall covering before they can be re-attached.

**IMPORTANT: You must not attach items to the new insulation as it is not designed to bear the weight of fixtures and this could invalidate your guarantee.**

If you have plans to attach anything new to the outside of your walls or specifically want certain items to be reattached please be sure to discuss this with the surveyor before work starts.

### **13. WILL IT BE MESSY?**

The pebble dash process involves stone chips rather than pebbles. There will be a lot of chips on the ground at this stage. The installers will put protective film covering over windows and try their best to keep the area clean and tidy. Once the installation is complete everything will be cleaned including windows, sills and down pipes. Any off-cuts will be removed and stone chips will be cleared away as much as possible.

Take care in your garden while the work is being carried out, as installers may have to leave tools and materials there while the work is in progress.

While work is ongoing, to avoid dust getting into your property, please keep doors and windows closed and avoid hanging out any washing.

### **14. WILL IT BE NOISY?**

Installation involves drilling, attaching insulation boards and pebble-dashing, so unfortunately there will be a lot of noise at these times. The work will only take place during daylight hours.

Pets may find the noise distressing, so please be aware, and keep them supervised at all times.

### **15. WILL I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?**

Yes - the installer will organise this on your behalf. Your local council will write to you to confirm that a building warrant has been approved for your house.

You must ensure that work does not begin until you have this confirmation. The building warrant is required to ensure that works are completed safely and according to building regulations.

*“It’s a good move to insulate the house. We can now sit in the living room in relative comfort. The difference it has made to us is brilliant”*

**Mr McColl,  
Dalkeith, 2014**

## **16. WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE FESTIVE PERIOD?**

Contractors may close for the holidays. At these times, nobody will be on site. This may cause delays.

You should not place any decorative items on the scaffolding including Christmas lights etc.

## **17. WILL THE WORK BE GUARANTEED?**

Yes, the work should be guaranteed, speak to your installer about what the guarantee will cover and ensure you receive your insurance certificate once the installation is complete. Guarantees usually specify that the insulation system used is one that is approved by the BBA (British Board of Agrément).

## **18. WHAT IS THE BBA?**

The BBA is the UK’s major authority offering approval and certification services to manufacturers and installers supplying the construction industry.

BBA Approval is recognised by building control, government departments, architects, local authorities, specifiers and industry insurers like the NHBC (National House Building Council). For more information about the BBA go to [www.bbacerts.co.uk](http://www.bbacerts.co.uk)

## **19. WILL I NEED TO CARRY OUT MAINTENANCE ON THE INSULATION?**

The insulation itself will not require maintenance but the silicone seals eg. around windows and soffits will need to be maintained every six to ten years. It’s possible for someone competent at DIY and confident when working at heights to do this themselves but you can easily get a tradesperson to do it for you.

## **20. WHAT DO I DO IF I’M NOT ENTIRELY HAPPY WITH THE SURVEY OR INSTALLATION?**

In the first instance please contact the **Home Energy Scotland** advice centre by calling the free helpline on **0808 808 2282**.

## **21. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO TO BE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT/SAVE MONEY?**

Have a chat with one of our energy advisors at **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282** for advice on ways to save energy and money in your home.

They can also:

- Advise you about getting the best deal on your energy costs and eligibility for discounts from your current supplier
- Check if you qualify for any other grants or offers to help make your home more energy efficient
- Signpost or refer you to other local services (eg. from your local council or a community group) that may be able to offer you additional support

# CHECKLIST

YOU CAN USE OUR SIMPLE CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU FOLLOW PROGRESS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE INSTALLATION OF YOUR EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION

- If you are applying for funding for your insulation, make sure that your installer meets the criteria specified in the terms and conditions.
- Have you checked with your installer to see if they have applied for a building warrant? Work cannot start until the building warrant has been approved.
- Have you notified your insurance company? Scaffolding will be erected on your house and it is essential to notify your insurance company of this in case a claim occurs.
- Ask your installer about different finishes. Render is the final layer of the new insulation and it will change the external appearance of your home so it is important that you are happy with your choice.
- Have you ensured that hedges and fences are cut or moved back from the walls\* and any pot plants etc. moved to allow the contractor full access to walls?  
\*Any inaccessible parts of the walls will not be insulated and this will lead to cold spots.
- Remove any ornamental additions to the building eg hanging baskets.
- Take a photo of every exterior wall before work starts. This could highlight any electrics or plumbing extending from the building and will allow you to make sure that nothing is covered over. Discuss what will happen to pipes etc. with your installer before work begins.
- If you have decking, take a photo of this before work starts and ensure that the installer covers the decking with plastic sheeting during the installation.
- Discuss with your installer if you would like hanging baskets or other ornaments to be put back on the wall once work is complete.
- Before work starts, check that the installer cleaned the walls using a fungicide wash. Work should not start on the walls until any moss etc has been removed.
- No work should be undertaken if the temperature is below 3°C or during heavy rain.
- The first layer of insulation is called the base track and it defines the line of the insulation on your home. Are you happy that it is straight?
- The next coat is the scrim coat, this is similar to a plaster coating which makes the surface smooth to affix the insulation boards to. Have all walls been fully coated? Make sure there are no gaps.
- Are any of the installed boards damaged?
- Are the windowsills level?
- Once the work has been completed, has everything been replaced as it should be? Are all outside lights etc. working? Check that your tv signal has been restored as satellite dishes and television aerials may have been moved during installation.
- Has the area been left clean and tidy?
- Are you happy with the installation and the clean-up following the installation? Do not sign your completion form until you are satisfied with the completed work.

## FREE IMPARTIAL ENERGY ADVICE

Home Energy Scotland is the free impartial advice service funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Energy Saving Trust.

As well as working with local authorities to install external wall insulation and other energy efficiency measures through the Scottish Government's Home Energy Efficiency Programmes, we help householders to stay warm and save money in other ways. Why not get in touch?

- Our advice is free, expert and impartial.
- We can give you practical, energy saving advice.
- We can carry out a Home Energy Check over the phone to pin-point where you could save energy and money.
- We may be able to arrange for an advisor to visit you at home.
- We can tell you if you are eligible for financial support, benefits, incentives or even discounted energy rates you might not be aware of.

Call **HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND** free on **0808 808 2282**

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