

HOW CAN YOU SPEAK TO YOUR MP ABOUT HOME INSULATION AND RETROFITTING?



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Home Insulation and Retrofitting: Why does it matter?

The UK housing stock is currently the worst insulated in Europe. This means that significant amounts of energy used to heat our homes in the colder months is “wasted”, leaking out through single glazed windows, old and porous external walls and roofs, and poor quality insulation in attics. In an average UK home, £1 of every three spent on heating is wasted.

With the vast majority of homes in the UK still using gas boilers, and even those with heat pumps often relying on burning of some fossil fuels for electricity production, this has a massive environmental impact. 20% of the UK’s emissions are from heating homes, meaning nearly 7% of UK emissions are spent on lost heat; insulating homes and retrofitting will have a significant impact on this. Better insulated homes will require less gas being burned to heat and, as we transition to electric heat pumps, it will decrease strain on a growing renewable energy system.

The Background to Home Insulation and Retrofitting

Across the world, homes have been built in accordance to their environment, built in warm climates to keep rooms cool, and those in colder climates designed to keep the heat in and the cold out. As new homes have been built, and old ones replaced, new technologies and approaches, as well as pressure from government through incentive programmes for development, or penalties for lagging behind, have allowed similar nations to heat and cool their homes very efficiently.

However, the UK has been much slower than others, in part as a result of our older housing stock. 38% of houses in the UK were built before 1946, which is a higher proportion than any other country in Europe. Many of these older homes, including all built before 1925, have solid external walls, as opposed to more standard external cavity walls we have today. This makes insulating such walls difficult and expensive. In addition, tight regulation on listed buildings, which make up a proportion of British buildings, has made some of the simplest and most affordable approaches such as installing double or triple glazing, much more costly and complicated. It is not just our old housing stock however, 5 million homes with cavity walls do not have cavity wall insulation, and nearly 8 million homes with lofts have less than 125 mm of loft insulation. There is so much more that the UK, and its government, can be doing to heat our homes and, though this, fight climate change





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Co-Benefits: Alternative Approaches

Your MP may already be a avid campaigner on retrofitting, or better insulation, and care deeply about environmental issues. If so, great! You might want to focus on encouraging them to go further and faster. If this isn't the case, you could discuss adjacent or linked topics with them that create similar solutions. These topics, Co-Benefits, are the perfect lens through which to discuss topics with politicians in a way that matters to them

Addressing poverty and inequality

With the dramatic rises in energy costs since 2022, many people have found keeping their homes warm unaffordable, having to make incredibly difficult decisions between heating and eating. Living in a cold home has significant impacts on peoples life outcomes, including worse physical and mental health, difficulty in work or education, and shorter life expectancies. People living with disabilities, people who are house bound, and elderly people (who have recently lost their winter fuel credit) all spend more on heating than the average, meaning they are disproportionately impacted by high energy costs, and poor heat retention. If your MP is a keen advocate for reducing poverty and inequality, speaking to them about insulation and retrofitting through this lens might be the most effective.

Providing good, green jobs.

Many MPs' top priority is bringing good employment opportunities to their local area and helping the local economy. A holistic retrofitting approach to the entire British housing stock would be a huge task, and would need thousands of workers involved over a long period of time. This work provides an opportunity for employment across countless professions, including manual labour, architecture, project management, logistics and transport, research and community engagement. Expressing the opportunities for the local area may persuade your MP to get on board.

These are just two examples of co-benefits - there are lots more so don't be afraid to get creative! You should always try to research your MP beforehand and then tailor your approach to them. Approaching your MP through the issues they care about is the best way to have a constructive conversation about the issues you care about and create common ground. Additionally, it can help to think about what your MP's concerns with retrofitting might be - are they concerned about the cost of such a programme, or perhaps they want to protect historic housing, for example



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What can we do now?

Fixing up our current housing stock, and ensuring our new homes are better insulated is a key element of decreasing the UK's carbon emissions, and moving to a renewable energy future. Westminster can sometimes feel a world away from the experience of the people living in the UK, including those facing the worst effects of poor home quality. You can do your part by showing your MP, and therefore the government, how much communities across the UK care about how we heat our homes.

You could ask to meet with your MP to discuss how much you and your community care about this issue and how your community, want further and faster action.

In the Labour Manifesto, there was a commitment to spend 6.6 billion to upgrade 5 million homes over this parliamentary term. This is a great commitment, and the public funding will help start getting the countries housing stock up to scratch. But when governments make strong commitments, this isn't the end of the story, plans change and political focuses move on as different stories get more attention. If activists across the country keep speaking to their MP about home insulation, and those MPs keep raising the issue in parliament,, its impossible for the government to ignore, delay, or water down their promises.

You could ask your MP to keep raising this issue in parliament, asking ministers when firm plans will be released and asking them to recommit to this manifesto promise.

If you live outside of England, your devolved administration will have control over most areas of retrofitting policy. The Welsh Senedd, Scottish Parliament, and Northern Irish Assembly control standards for home efficiency and have their own incentive and grant programmes. You can find out more information about meeting your MSP, MS, or MA on the [TCC resource hub](#), as well as information on which topics its best to speak to your different representatives about.





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What can we do now?

Many campaigners and different parties have focused on a shortage of good quality housing in the UK, a topic we touch on briefly in this guide. The government has already committed to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 5 years. Just like we're still dealing with the decisions on housing standards set almost 100 years, the decisions made when we're rapidly building housing today might be with us for decades to come. The homes built need to be of a high environmental standard, be prepared to use heat pumps rather than utilities we want to phase out, and built to work in British winters as well as summers that keep getting hotter.

You could ask your MP to bring this issue into parliament, calling on ministers to clarify that these 1.5 million new homes will be built to high environmental standards and will be built with the heating technology and climate of tomorrow in mind.

We've experienced record breaking summers year-on-year over the last decade, a trend that won't be leaving us any time soon. The government is implementing legislation that will mandate that all rental properties should be EPC C by 2030; whilst this is a great step, it will do nothing to tackle the rising problem of overheating.

You could ask your MP put this issue to ministers, calling on them and other parliamentarians to integrate measures to tackle overheating into this legislation on rental homes.



Through connected action across the UK, we can build a community that champions tougher government action on issues that matter most for people and the planet. If you want to get involved, reach out to the [Climate Coalition](#) and [Hope for the Future](#) today.

