

Clampdown on landlords with funding boost for councils

- New support for councils to raise awareness and enforce rules banning landlords renting homes with worst performing energy efficiency ratings
- campaign to fund local radio ads, landlord workshops, free property surveys and a thermal imaging drone for inspections in bid to save low-income families £180 on their energy bills
- £10 million also invested to pioneer research and development into energy efficient appliances and green finance services to support homeowners move to low-carbon heating

Over 40,000 families living in cold and draughty rented properties across 59 local authorities in England and Wales can expect warmer homes thanks to a new campaign to help councils clamp down on errant landlords.

Since April last year privately rented homes must meet a minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E, making it illegal to rent out homes below that unless landlords have a limited exemption. Landlords caught failing to fulfil their obligations can be fined of up to £5,000 per property and per breach.

Badly insulated properties often leave those renting their homes struggling to keep warm and with higher energy bills. The rule change is expected to see energy efficiency upgrades such as loft insulation, double glazing and cavity wall insulation being installed by landlords in around 290,000 properties – with an estimated average bill saving of £180 a year for each home. This move forms part of the government's actions to protect consumers, particularly those on lower incomes, as we manage the impact of global gas price rises.

The £4.3 million of extra funding from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to councils across the country is designed to support them make an extra 100,000 engagements with the most difficult to reach landlords with the worst performing properties.

The money will support innovative measures including local radio ads, roadshows and workshops with landlords to raise awareness of the rules, free property surveys, as well as enhanced and targeted mail reminders and translation services to reach those not currently complying. One council will even invest in a drone with thermal imaging capacity to help with on the ground inspections.

Business and Energy Minister, Lord Callanan, said:

This funding will help councils to support landlords with these important energy efficiency changes, but also enforce these standards, helping tackle fuel poverty and ensuring everyone can live in a warm home with fair energy bills.

Heating our homes and buildings makes up almost a third of all carbon emissions, meaning raising the energy efficiency of our properties is something we all have to contribute to help us build back greener and reach our world leading climate ambitions.

Deputy Council Leader of Darlington Council, Jonathan Dulston, said:

We know that the vast majority of private landlords stick to the rules and provide good accommodation, but we are determined to crack down on rogue landlords who do not care about their tenants or the standard of their properties.

These new powers will improve the energy efficiency standards of private rented homes both here in Darlington and across the country, which will in turn improve residents' health, ensuring people do not live in homes that are cold and damp.

To further support private landlords, as well as the overall UK property market, the government has also announced today a new £10 million innovation programme, dedicated to developing world-class energy efficiency products and green finance services – equipping homeowners with new options to decarbonise their homes in a more cost-effective way.

The new Green Home Finance programme, part of the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, will support high-street lenders, financial technology businesses, energy suppliers and others to pioneer world-class innovation into new products which will make it easier and more affordable for homeowners to switch to low carbon heating. This is likely to include piloting cutting-edge heat pumps, glazing and insulation, as well green finance services such as green mortgages and green equity releases.

The investment comes as ministers this week unveiled the government's [Heat and Buildings Strategy](#), which commits to all new heating appliances installed in homes and workplaces to be low-carbon technologies to help ensure the nation's buildings are fuelled by clean energy by 2035, as well as bringing down the costs of clean alternatives so they are no more expensive than gas boilers by 2030.

Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth, Greg Hands, said:

Ensuring our buildings and homes are powered by clean energy is an essential step we need to take in order to meet our target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

The UK government is stepping up to the challenge with a new Green Home Finance programme to help drive forward the development of cutting-edge green finance products and services for homeowners that will not only transform the nation's green property landscape, but also help create more green jobs, as we build back greener.

The government has set 2035 as the target for all homes across the UK to reach EPC C by 2035 and is currently spending £1.3 billion on improving the energy efficiency of 50,000 low-income local authority homes, through the successful Local Authority Delivery Scheme. Measures include cavity wall, underfloor and loft insulation, and replacing gas boilers with low carbon alternatives like heat pumps.

To help consumers further, BEIS has announced plans to trial automatic switching for customers on expensive default tariffs to cheaper deals, and are extending the Warm Home Discount so an extra 750,000 households get £150 knocked off their bill each year.

- The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) competition closed on 2 July 2021, with 117 local authorities entering. 59 local authorities were successful and have been allocated funding
- [view the full list of the local authorities to receive the funding](#) to support councils with raising awareness and enforcing the private rented sector rules on properties meeting EPC E
- the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, which came into force on 1 April 2018, introduced a minimum energy efficiency standard of EPC E for the private rented sector. From April 2018, private rented homes in scope of the Regulations were required to meet the minimum standard (EPC E) before they could be let on a new tenancy. Since April 2020, the requirement applies to all properties in scope, even when there has been no change in tenancy
- the [Green Home Finance Accelerator programme](#) is funded under the [£1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio \(NZIP\)](#), announced as part of the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan. The programme will launch in spring 2022. It will support lenders to research, develop and pilot a diverse range of green finance products which will make it easier and more cost-effective for homeowners (owner-occupiers and private landlords) to improve the thermal efficiency of their properties