

New grant scheme to cut home fuel bills

Annex – Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme Further Details

1. Who is the scheme for? • The voucher scheme is open to owner occupiers (freehold/leasehold), park homeowners and landlords who let privately or through the social rented sector in England. It is not open to non-domestic properties or to new build homes which have not yet been occupied. • Homeowners can apply for a voucher that funds up to two thirds of the cost of hiring trades people to upgrade the energy performance of their homes – up to a maximum contribution of £5,000. Low income and vulnerable homeowners, including park homeowners and those on certain benefits, will be eligible for a voucher covering up to 100% of the cost, up to £10,000. • The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery element will focus on owner occupiers, those in the private and social rented sector, with a household income of under £30,000. Local Authorities will set out detailed eligibility criteria in due course.
2. What are the specific benefits of the Green Homes Grant to the consumer?
 - The Green Homes Grant scheme will deliver energy efficiency improvements to over 600,000 homes, supporting over 100,000 jobs if all vouchers are claimed. It could help save families up to £600 a year on their energy bills. • It will make people's homes warmer and more environmentally friendly. It will deliver average savings of nearly £300, and significantly more per year for those living off the gas grid in the low-income and vulnerable households' scheme.
3. What can the voucher be spent on? • Vouchers will contribute towards the cost of specific home insulation and/or low carbon heating measures. Homeowners and social and private landlords will be required to install at least one of the following, using a voucher which they will receive before works commence:

Primary Measures 1. Solid wall, under-floor, cavity wall, loft, flat roof, room in roof or park home insulation; or 2. Where the home is suitably insulated, air source or ground source heat pump, solar thermal, biomass boiler or hybrid installation.

- A voucher may be used to help meet the costs of installing top-up insulation (for instance top-up loft insulation) but may not be used to cover the costs of removing and replacing existing insulation.
- In addition, households can use their voucher for further energy saving measures. These include one or more of the following:

Secondary Measures 1. Draught proofing: draught-proofing your home (for example around windows and doors) can block up unwanted gaps that let cold air in and warm air out.

1. Windows and doors: Double/triple glazing (where replacing single glazing), secondary glazing (in addition to single glazing), upgrading to energy efficient replacement doors (where replacing single glazed or solid doors installed prior to 2002).
 3. Hot water tank thermostats and insulation
 4. Heating controls: e.g. appliance thermostats, smart heating controls, zone controls, delayed start thermostat, thermostatic radiator valves
- The total amount households get towards the cost of secondary measures cannot exceed the total amount they get for primary measures.

Consumers can check their eligibility for the voucher and receive tailored advice at the Simple Energy Advice website and make applications at the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-green-homes-grant>

1. How can I participate in the scheme as a business/tradesperson?

To carry out work under the scheme, all tradespeople and businesses will need to be certified to install energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures to relevant standards and to register their certification with TrustMark. Registered businesses can sign up to take part in the scheme at <https://www.gov.uk/register-as-green-homes-grant-installer>.

What will the future railway look like?

60% of the passenger use of the railway was commuter traffic into our main cities and towns prior to the pandemic.

Today commuter traffic is massively down. There are many businesses talking of adopting a new model even after the pandemic has gone, with more working from home and flexible working.

The railway needs to research and assess these trends. It will need new fare offers, as we have discussed before, to encourage part time office goers to use the train, allowing them flexibility over when they travel. It might, for example, be necessary to offer a system of rebates or free tickets when people reach certain totals of tickets purchased for the same journeys.

The railway has a leisure business. This often relies on heavily discounted tickets. If the base load of commuters are going to spread their journeys out over different times of day there may not be the same amount of empty capacity to offer. What is a realistic target for leisure travel? What kind of financial contribution should it make to cover costs?

There is business travel. Currently this is down by a huge amount, as people hold their meetings, customer contacts, exhibitions and conferences on line.

How much will return to physical meetings, and how much of the train travel will return?

Trying to determine how much train travel there will be in 2021 and 2022 is difficult, but becoming a necessary task. The government has nationalised the losses and taken control of the whole railway. We now need from it a vision of what a modern railway looks like and who it will serve. It is going to take some brilliant marketing, new fares structures and compelling offers to fill the trains again.

Parliament needs more control over lock downs

I supported the Brady amendment by co sponsoring it on the Order paper. I apologise to readers for a rare mistake of a bad forecast in thinking the Speaker would accept it for debate and decision as a majority of the House clearly supported it.

The important thing is that nonetheless the amendment served its purpose. It did result in the Speaker warning the government they needed to change and to allow debates and votes in government time on the controls, just as we had argued. He had legal advice against taking the amendment which I do not question. The government agreed to come to Parliament over these powers. As an early demonstration of good faith, there will be a proper debate on 2 Statutory Instruments imposing controls, with a vote on each next week.

Many of the Statutory Instruments which have imposed the restrictions on our freedom of movement were not debated or voted on in the past but will now need to be to comply with the Speaker's ruling. Many of them were not put into effect by the government under powers in the Coronavirus Act but under other emergency powers legislation, so trying to vote down the Coronavirus Act would not have dealt with the issues many people are raising. The Coronavirus Act is the source of authority to assist public bodies manage the crisis, which I and others did not wish to stop all the time the restrictions are in place. We want to get at the freedom removing SIs which are mainly issued under the 1984 Public Health (Control of Disease) Act. That will become clearer next week.

The UK government needs to uphold UK sovereignty and interests

A petulant EU has refused over many months to simply discuss a Free Trade Agreement which they agreed would be at the core of our future relationship. Now in a tantrum they propose to take us to their court to tell us they think we are wrong! Meanwhile, a rattled EU nonetheless rejigs the talks and is at last prepared to discuss a Free Trade Agreement.

The UK government should reply to their incoming letter with a short and courteous reply. It should say

Dear EU

Thank you for your letter. We have left the EU and do not accept the future jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice . We made clear in the legislation that put into effect the Withdrawal Agreement that we reserved the right to follow UK interests, with our clear sovereignty clause in the legislation. We will use this power which expressly overrides the Agreement to guarantee the UK interests set out in the Withdrawal documents should you not negotiate a simple Free Trade Agreement in good faith as you promised.

We will not of course participate in ECJ proceedings , which would be a silly political stunt. We note that you are now willing to negotiate, and trust you will respond favourably to the draft Free Trade Agreement we submitted for your approval or modification some time ago. The EU's interpretation of the Withdrawal Agreement is not international law, it is an unhelpful negotiating ploy.

Yours etc

We need an exit plan from CV 19 restrictions

In the world of the government advisers the UK has to carry on with major restrictions on our freedoms to contain and reduce the incidence of the virus. They want us to do this until a vaccine is available that works well and is accepted by the bulk of the population.

They do have to tell us that of course the present vaccines in trials may turn out not to be effective, or may show side effects that are unacceptable. There may be long delays in developing a successful vaccine. Even when one is available it will take time to produce enough of it and vaccinate enough

people with it to allow removal of the controls.

That is why I have been urging Ministers to have a Plan B, a plan for relaxing controls when there is no generally available effective vaccine. Some scientists think Sweden shows that the virus stabilises or wanes after a period of time, as more people have immune systems capable of warding it off without vaccine intervention. Others have a number of proposals to improve treatments, help containment and protect the vulnerable better, so more people can resume a normal life.

We now seem to know the most vulnerable groups are the elderly and those with other conditions like diabetes and obesity. It is possible to devise ways to offer all those most at risk better safeguarding whilst allowing the rest of the population to behave more normally. All those who wish to shield themselves should have access to support to make this possible for them.

Many of the deaths we experienced in the spring came in Care Homes. There could be stronger rules preventing the return of patients from hospital with CV 19, tests for new residents and regular tests for Care Home staff. It would be best if people can keep in touch with their families through on line systems and the phone. Of course people will also want some face to face meetings. These can be organised in gardens, with suitable ways of keeping warm on colder days, or in large meeting rooms with a good circulation of air designed to avoid contamination.

It is important to ensure good infection control in hospitals, preferably by having designated CV 19 hospitals with other hospitals virus free. I await progress reports on a range of possible treatments that some doctors claim can make a difference.

We need a message of hope. There does have to be plan to get us out of lock down whilst avoiding deaths and helping people take sensible precautions to control the disease. We must not allow a large number of good businesses to be written off because they are not allowed to trade at all or under such constraints that they are not commercial.

I am trying to persuade Ministers they need a new plan to restore our liberties.