

Frequently asked questions

Installing an electric heat pump

Many customers are becoming interested in lowering their carbon footprint by switching from fossil fuel based heating to using an electric heat pump. If you are curious about going all electric, we've answered some frequently asked questions below.

What is a heat pump?

A heat pump is a device that uses electricity to transfer heat from one environment to the other, similar to how a fridge or an air conditioning unit works. There are many different commercially available options. These include those which use air drawn from outside your property ('air source') and those which use heat drawn from underground ('ground source'). Some heat pumps are similar to the photo at the top of this page, which blow hot air into your home like air conditioning units. Other heat pumps can be used to heat water instead, and pump that warm water through traditional household radiators. For a complete guide to heat pumps, visit the [Renewable Energy Hub](#). We've also included some helpful links below if you want to find out more.

I've decided I want to install a heat pump. What do I need to do?

The steps are outlined in our [installing a heat pump](#) webpage. First, contact a heat pump retailer or installer to assess the work involved.

Can I connect a heat pump straight into my home?

Yes, as long as your home has enough capacity. Your property has a mains fuse which determines how much power your home can import from the network. Most older homes have a fuse which allows you to draw up to 60amps from our network. That means if you buy a heat pump which uses 15amps, you would be left with 45 amps of 'spare capacity' for other appliances. If you already have a power shower or an electric vehicle charger, you may not have enough spare capacity left for a heat pump. If so, we can upgrade your fuse for free in almost all cases.

[Learn more about fuse upgrades.](#)

Will my bills increase if I get a heat pump?

Consumers rightly ask this question often. The answer is that it really depends on your specific situation. Anyone thinking about installing a heat pump should discuss the potential for bill changes with a qualified engineer who can assess your home. There are many factors which make a difference, including whether you install energy efficiency measures with a new heat pump, the age and condition of your gas boiler and what type of heat pump you purchase. Another factor which can impact costs is whether you access a government subsidy such as the [Renewable Heat Incentive \(RHI\)](#).

What if I also want to install an electric vehicle charger?

There's no reason people with an electric vehicle charger at their home can't also have a heat pump, so long as their property's electrical supply can support it. As above, you might need to a fuse upgrade first to allow you to increase your property's capacity. To find out more about installing an electric vehicle charger, [visit our website](#).

Where can I get more information about heat pumps?

View the [additional information](#) section of our heat pump webpage which has helpful links.

Who can help me assess what I need and who would do the fuse upgrade?

A qualified electrician can assess your electricity supply. If you do need a fuse upgrade, we can deliver a higher rated fuse of up to 100amps for free in almost all cases.

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What's the link between the climate crisis and electric heating?

Heating homes and business accounts for around a third of all carbon emissions in the UK. About three quarters of our customers use natural gas boilers for heating, producing significant greenhouse gas emissions. Tens of thousands more use oil or diesel, which is even more carbon intensive. Electric heat pumps don't burn fossil fuels while operating and lower your carbon footprint. Due to the rise of renewable energy, that electricity is also getting greener and greener. So far, we've connected enough renewable energy in our areas to power 3.5 million homes.

How can I upgrade now to be ready for a low carbon heating system?

You can upgrade your main electrical fuse, or take some other steps. See our dedicated [heat pump webpage](#) for more. There's also more information at our [fuse upgrade](#) page. If you're interested in low carbon technology but the time isn't right, you may consider getting a free fuse upgrade from us now. This can help to 'future ready' your home electricity supply, allowing you to more easily install low carbon technology - like electric heating or an electric vehicle charger - in the future.

What is 'Net Zero'?

'Net Zero' refers to the UK Government's Net Zero carbon emissions target by 2050. It's a target set to tackle the climate crisis by drastically reducing emissions from greenhouse gases. The goal aims that by the year 2050, the amount of carbon we emit will be offset by removing an equal amount carbon from the atmosphere.

Why are electricity networks talking about heating?

The climate crisis is one of the most significant issues of our time. As we move towards the 2050 Net Zero carbon emissions target, millions of people across the UK are more likely to switch from mainly high carbon natural gas to mainly low carbon electric heating. This creates significant technical challenges, meaning the UK's electricity network operators will play a vital role in making sure the electricity network can facilitate the transition. As outlined in our [Heat Strategy](#), we believe we will play this role in three key areas: informing government policy through provision of data and evidence, providing a great service experience for people who want to connect low carbon heating, and developing a toolbox of smart solutions that means our network will be prepared.

Almost everyone has a gas boiler. Why would people want to switch to a low carbon alternative?

Gas boilers are currently an efficient and relatively cheap way to heat your home. However, all this gas burning leads to significant carbon emissions which contribute to global warming. As a result, Government policy, changing consumer attitudes and new technologies in the future is likely to make it more and more attractive to switch to low carbon heating. The Government's '[Ten Point Plan](#) for a Green Industrial Revolution' sets out an ambition to support low carbon heating in two major ways in the coming years: driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen gas and scaling up the electric heat pump market.

Will there be any issues if my neighbours decide to get a heat pump or electric vehicle as well?

No. We are continually monitoring load growth in your area to make sure our customers have access to the electricity they need, should they wish to install an EV charger or electric heating. If we need to, we'll make targeted upgrades to our infrastructure to keep supplies reliable and efficient.