

RETROFITTING

Support available in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

WHAT IS RETROFITTING AND WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

Retrofitting is the process of making changes to existing buildings which help reduce energy consumption and therefore reduce carbon emissions. It makes homes and buildings more energy efficient and so more comfortable and cheaper to run.

Examples of retrofitting include **draught-proofing, improving ventilation, insulation, air source heat pumps and solar panels.**



Our councils have set ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions:
South Oxfordshire district to reach net zero* by 2030
Vale of White Horse district to reach net zero* by 2045, with a 75% reduction by 2030.

Extensive retrofitting is needed to reach these targets. The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy recommends that 4,000 whole house retrofits need to take place each year in Oxfordshire to halve emissions by 2030.

*Net zero means cutting greenhouse gas (including carbon) emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance. Source: [UN](#)

APPROACH TO RETROFITTING

It is widely agreed that people should take a “fabric first” approach to retrofitting their homes – this means prioritising repairs, insulation, draught-proofing and ventilation before add-ons such as solar panels.

Retrofitting measures should be installed by skilled and trusted contractors:

- Installers of heat pumps and solar panels should be [MCS certified](#).
- Installers of loft and cavity wall insulation should be on the [Installation Assurance Authority Installer List](#).

RETROFITTING RENTED PROPERTIES

Landlords are responsible for making home energy improvements and the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) requires all private rented properties to be at least EPC E (listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas may be eligible for an exemption certificate). Cosy Homes Oxfordshire offers information and support for tenants who would like to engage with their landlord to improve the energy efficiency of their home. The MEES are set to tighten further, requiring a minimum EPC requirement of B by 2030, and an interim milestone of EPC C by 2027.

SUPPORT FROM THE COUNCILS

South Oxfordshire District Council

General advice on retrofitting

Home improvement grants and loans

Community groups can borrow a thermal imaging camera from South Oxfordshire District Council (October to March only). Thermal imaging cameras can visually show heat is leaking out of homes. To borrow a thermal imaging camera contact the Climate and Biodiversity team.

Vale of White Horse District Council

General advice on retrofitting

Home improvement grants and loans

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USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

<u>Low Carbon Hub</u>	An Oxfordshire-based organisation working towards low carbon energy for Oxfordshire which offers advice and support on saving energy at home.
<u>Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)</u>	An independent national charity which helps households understand their energy use, improve the energy performance of their homes and develop more sustainable behaviours.
<u>Energy Saving Trust</u>	The Energy Saving Trust is an independent organisation which provides advice on energy efficiency and clean energy solutions.
<u>Help for Households</u>	The UK government has set up a website with energy saving tips and information on the support available for households.

LOCAL SUPPORT SERVICES

FOR HOMES

Better Housing Better Health offers free and impartial advice on energy bill discounts, grants and funding for energy saving home improvements. Oxfordshire residents living in fuel poverty or who are vulnerable to the cold or live in a home with poor energy efficiency can also access the Better Housing Better Health + service which offers free home energy visits. A trained energy advisor can visit the home to provide personalised advice on energy usage and available grants. The telephone number is 0800 107 0044.

Cosy Homes Oxfordshire offers a full, one-stop-shop retrofit service to increase the energy efficiency of homes for people who are able to pay.

FOR COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

Energy Solutions Oxfordshire supports businesses and community groups in Oxfordshire to save energy in their buildings.

Community First Oxfordshire's Community Hall Affiliation Scheme offers advice to community halls on a wide range of topics including refurbishment and energy efficiency through their Community Hall Affiliation Scheme.

GRANTS AND LOANS FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS

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FLEXIBLE HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN

A low-interest loan for improvements to make a home safer, warmer, healthier or more comfortable for the occupants. The loan can, amongst other things, cover the costs associated with the installation of insulation and renewable energy generation technologies such as solar panels and heat pumps. Details of repayment terms are available on request.

Awarding organisation: South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Who is eligible? Homeowners aged 60 or over

To apply: Please contact the [Private Sector Housing Team](#)



BOILER UPGRADE SCHEME

A government grant to cover part of the cost of replacing a fossil fuel heating system (including oil, gas or electric) with a heat pump or biomass boiler. The homeowner must appoint an MCS certified installer who will then apply for the grant.

Awarding organisation: UK government

Who is eligible? All homeowners with valid EPC and no outstanding recommendations for loft or cavity wall insulation

To apply: The application process is [explained on the government's website](#). The appointed [MCS certified installer](#) will apply on the household's behalf



ESSENTIAL HOUSING REPAIR GRANT

A scheme which provides small grants to eligible homeowners for improving the warmth, comfort, condition, safety or security of homes. These grants can be used for:

- Minor repairs and improvements to assist someone to stay in their own home.
- Significant works to repair the property to a safe and weatherproof condition.
- Energy measures, except where an alternative grant is available.

Awarding organisation: South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Who is eligible? Owner-occupiers with three-years residency who receive certain benefits or who are not required to make a financial contribution following a Disabled Facilities Grant means test.

To apply: Please contact the [Private Sector Housing Team](#)



GRANTS AND LOANS FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS

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FUEL POVERTY GRANT AND WARM HOMES GRANT

The councils support a Fuel Poverty Grant scheme, administered by the National Energy Foundation, to provide grants of up to £1,000 for essential energy saving repairs and improvements to homes with a specific focus upon energy efficiency and energy saving measures. This grant is available to eligible homeowners and tenants. An additional £1,000 may be available through the Warm Homes Grant scheme where the costs of energy efficiency, energy saving measures or essential energy saving repairs exceed the amount available through the Fuel Poverty Grant.

Awarding organisation: South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Who is eligible? Homeowners and private tenants who receive qualifying benefits, are in fuel poverty or meet the Energy Company Obligation criteria (see below).

To apply: Please contact [Better Housing Better Health](#) or call 0800 107 0044.



ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION – ECO4, ECO4 FLEX AND ECO+

The Energy Company Obligation was set up by government and obligates energy suppliers to improve low-income households' capacity to heat their houses and reduce carbon emissions through measures such as replacing old heating systems or insulating homes.

Awarding organisation: Participating energy companies

Who is eligible? ECO4: Homeowners or private tenants who claim certain benefits, and social housing tenants. ECO4 Flex: eligibility criteria are set out in the councils ECO4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent (for [South Oxfordshire](#) and [Vale of White Horse](#)).

To apply: Please contact [Better Housing Better Health](#) or call 0800 107 0044.



HOME UPGRADE GRANT

Oxfordshire County Council has funding from the government to provide a range of energy efficiency improvements to homes, which are not primarily heated by gas. Measures such as insulation, air source heat pumps and solar panels can be installed by Oxfordshire County Council's delivery partners, Welcome the Warmth.

Awarding organisation: Oxfordshire County Council

Who is eligible: Owner-occupiers and private tenants living in homes rated D, E, F or G and with an annual household income of less than £30,000 or are a recipient of a means-tested benefit.

To apply: Visit the [Welcome the Warmth website](#) and click 'apply'



GRANTS AND LOANS FOR COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

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VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CLIMATE ACTION FUND

This scheme offers grants between £250 and £5,000 to projects across the Vale which support communities to take action on climate change with a total of £10,000 available. Energy efficiency improvements to community buildings are eligible for the grant, where they are combined with activities to engage and inspire the local community to protect our planet. This scheme is open for applications from May to July 2023.

Awarding organisation: Vale of White Horse District Council

Who is eligible? Non-profit community organisations and town and parish councils in the Vale of White Horse only

To apply: Visit the [Vale grants page](#)



SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S COUNCILLOR GRANT SCHEME

Each South Oxfordshire district councillor has £5,000 to award to projects or services that offer community benefits in their ward area, budget permitting. These grants could be for carrying out energy audits of community buildings or investing in energy efficiency improvements. This scheme is expected to open for applications in July 2023.

Awarding organisation: South Oxfordshire District Council

Who is eligible? Non-profit community organisations and town and parish councils in South Oxfordshire only

To apply: Visit [South Oxfordshire's community grants page](#)



SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME

This provides funding to voluntary and community organisations to help build thriving communities and improve the quality of life for the residents in the district through capital projects which:

- improve economic and community well-being
- provide infrastructure that meets local need
- that protect and restore our natural world
- take action on the climate emergency.

This scheme is expected to open for applications in September 2023.

Awarding organisation: South Oxfordshire District Council

Who is eligible? Non-profit community organisations and town and parish councils in South Oxfordshire only

To apply: Visit [South Oxfordshire District Council's capital grants page](#)



GRANTS AND LOANS FOR COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

RURAL COMMUNITY BUILDINGS LOAN FUND

This provides loans of up to £20,000 to village hall management committees to improve facilities for their communities. This can include measures that increase the energy efficiency of community buildings.

Awarding organisation: Defra via ACRE

Who is eligible? Community groups

To apply: Visit the [Rural Community Buildings Loan Fund](#) website

PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY GRANT

Community groups can apply for a grant to fund energy efficiency measures, under the theme of improving biodiversity and responding to the climate emergency.

Awarding organisation: People's Postcode Lottery

Who is eligible? Not-for-profit organisations. Please note town and parish council cannot apply for this grant.

To apply: Visit [the Postcode Lottery grant page](#)

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