



## Introduction

We all use energy to keep our homes warm, lit, and for a variety of other purposes to make our homes as healthy and comfortable to live in as possible. None of us wants to spend more on our energy than we need to, especially in current circumstances.

Orkney Housing Association Ltd can provide advice and support around energy issues experienced by tenants, although achieving affordable warmth in a property is perhaps best seen as a partnership between the association and tenants, with shared responsibilities.

## Fabric

Association role	Tenant role
Ensure that the building insulation is intact, that insulation qualities are up to standard, and meet at a minimum the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. Verify by visual checks and inspect regularly.	Respect the insulation layers in loft spaces and avoid compromising its value through disturbance or compression. Quickly report any breach or damage in the building fabric and report to your landlord any concerns about cold spots or dampness.

## Ventilation

Association role	Tenant role
Ensure floors, doors and windows are draught-free, eaves are well insulated, and that ventilation provided is appropriate to local conditions. Ensure mechanical ventilation systems, where present, are working.	Do not over-ventilate the building by leaving doors and windows open in cold weather. Close all doors and windows correctly, ensuring they are fully locked tight within the building frame. Use mechanical ventilation devices such as extractor fans to clear condensation, rather than opening windows for prolonged periods.  Do not dry clothes on radiators or other heaters.

## Heating

Association role	Tenant role
Ensure that a functional and responsive heating system is provided – capable of heating the property to meet standard target temperatures. Ensure that adequate documentation and guidance has been provided to help the tenant to select settings and heat outputs. The tenant must have sufficient guidance to operate heating systems, including most cost-effective operation.	Heat the property to match desired comfort levels, in line with your household budget. Consciously try to avoid overheating or underheating.

## Households

Association role	Tenant role
Support the household to make the best decisions on heating and ventilation by providing accurate and clear information and advice	The overall way that a household uses its energy is the choice and responsibility of tenants. It is key to make good informed choices when choosing how to use energy in your home, whether for heating, using appliances, or lighting.

## Tariff

Association role	Tenant role
While tariff switching in the current energy market situation ( Sept 2022) is extremely limited, any choice of energy supplier and tariff is down to tenants. However, the association can, where possible, support tenants to find any suitable alternative tariffs.	Be aware of seasonal patterns of higher or lower usage, and the pros and cons of prepayment and credit meter choices.

## Energy efficiency of OHAL properties



OHAL properties are required to achieve the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH), as set out by the Scottish Government. The ESSH was introduced in March 2014 and set a first milestone for social landlords to meet for social rented homes by 31 December 2020. The next level, ESSH2, currently has a target date of 2032 requires that 'all social housing meets, or can be treated as meeting, EPC Band B (Energy Efficiency rating), or is as energy efficient as practically possible, by the end of December 2032 and within the limits of cost, technology and necessary consent.' In addition, no social housing below EPC Band D should be re-let from December 2025, subject to temporary specified exemptions. If you have any questions about the energy efficiency of your property please ask your Housing Officer or contact the Energy Officer.



## Energy saving tips

### Help to keep costs down

Electricity prices have increased markedly recently as a result of wholesale gas price rises, which in turn affect what we pay for the energy we use in our homes. While support exists to help with these rising costs, there are also things you can do to reduce the impact on your energy bills. While we recognise that many tenants may already be doing all this and more to cut costs, hopefully some tenants may find these tips useful:

### Optimise use of your heating system

Your home's heating system has various controls that can be used to reduce your energy usage. Turn down your room thermostat to 19oc, turn down the thermostatic radiator valves in individual rooms to further cut back on heat usage and adjust your timer clock to reduce heating and cooling times as well.

### Don't use standby mode

Unless switched off at the wall, appliances like your TV continue to use energy, costing the average UK home £35 per year. Switch off at the wall to put a stop to this wasted spend.

### Use a bowl for hand washing

Use bowl to wash dishes, rather than running them under hot tap. Rinse using cold water.

### Use the 'eco' setting

On your dishwasher or boiler, the 'eco' setting heats water more slowly, using less energy. You get the same results; it just takes a little longer.

### Careful with that kettle

When making tea or coffee, most of us fill the kettle right up. This means as a country we're wasting around £68 million worth of energy a year. By filling your kettle just to the level you need, it could save you up to a third of the energy you have been using.

### Switch to LED bulbs

Traditional bulbs are extremely inefficient. Modern LEDs are the opposite, and also last longer so are less wasteful too.

### Use your microwave more

You'll save energy because it's quicker than using the main oven or hob. It's worth considering a slow cooker too, as they're one of the most energy-efficient kitchen appliances.

### Do full laundry loads

Half-load settings save very little energy, so a full load is much more energy efficient. Do fewer (but fuller) wash loads instead. Try and avoid using a tumble dryer as well.

## Unplug all your chargers

Across the country, people are unnecessarily over-charging their mobile phones, tablets and laptops. Instead, as soon as your device is fully charged, try to get into the habit of unplugging it. Not only will this save energy, it also prolongs battery life and removes a potential fire safety hazard. It could also save you about £60 a year on your electricity bills.



## Close your curtains at night

During the day it's important to try to use as much natural - and free - heat (in the form of sunlight) as possible. But when night comes, closing your curtains will help your home retain that heat. This helps keep warmth in the room – but try not to let them cover radiators or heaters.

## Turn down the temperature of your washing machine

With today's effective washing machine detergents, there's often no need to run your washing machine any higher than 30°C – clean clothes and energy saved.

## Dress for the weather

An obvious tip is to ensure you are dressed accordingly in respect of the weather. A cosy jumper or fleece in winter keeps you warmer and reduces the need to rely on your heating system to stay warm.

## Not using it? Turn it off!

Get into the habit of turning energy using devices off when not using them - TVs, lights, games consoles are easily left on when not in use.

## Heating guides

You should have been given a guide to operating your heating system when you moved into your property. If you require a replacement then your Housing Officer will be able to help with this.

## Reduce shower times

By reducing the time taken in the shower by 1 minute can save money for every person in the household.

## Other sources of help and support

Energy Action Scotland has some great resources for households seeking to save energy, as well as links to organisations offering information and help with fuel bill problems, grants for heating and information about your supplier, including information on the Priority Services Register, and how to register to be on it.

There is a wealth of resources about home energy on the Scottish Government's Net Zero Nation website, as well as on that of the Energy Saving Trust.