

Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme

Frequently asked questions

What is the Renewable Heat Premium Payment?

The Renewable Heat Premium Payment is a scheme to support people who want to install renewable heat technologies, which will also help us learn more about how these technologies work in practice, prior to the expansion of the Renewable Heat Incentive to the household sector.

1. How will the scheme work?

Individuals will be able to apply for a voucher which will be issued once they fill in the form. Once one of the qualifying technologies has been installed the voucher can be exchanged for grant money. If you are issued with a voucher you are not required to then install equipment but if you do, the voucher is a promise that you will receive the appropriate grant once your equipment has been installed and as long as the relevant conditions of the voucher are met. If you decide you will not use the voucher please inform the Energy Saving Trust as soon as possible.

2. How do I apply for a Renewable Heat Premium Payment?

The scheme will open to applications on 1st August 2011.

You can apply online by going to the Energy Saving Trust website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/RHPP. Please read the eligibility criteria listed on the Energy Saving Trust website to make sure you are eligible for the scheme before making an application. It is very important that those with vouchers check they have met all the conditions on that voucher, as we reserve the right not to pay claims if the scheme terms and conditions and the terms on the **voucher** have not been met. Receiving a voucher is not sufficient evidence that you are entitled to a grant.

If you don't have access to the internet you will be able to apply by calling an advisor on 0800 512 012.

3. Who can apply for a grant?

Individuals who own their own property and reside within England, Wales or Scotland can apply for installations at their primary residence. Please note that this scheme does not apply to residents of Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. If you rent your property privately, approach your landlord as you may need to work with them to apply for the scheme.

4. What are the eligibility criteria?

The main criteria are as follows:

- Applicants must be the owners of or reside in the property for which the grant is applied (alternatively applicants who have leasehold ownership or tenancy occupation must have permission from the property freeholder) and it must be their primary residence.
- For heating systems other than solar thermal, this must be the main heating system in the house.
- The installation address must be situated in England, Scotland or Wales (the scheme is not available to addresses in Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) and must be the applicant's primary residence or a property occupied for the majority of the year.
- Eligible technologies are Solar Thermal Hot Water, Air to water source Heat Pumps, Ground Source Heat Pumps, water to water heat pumps and biomass fuelled boilers (eg wood or wood pellet). Air to air heat pumps, wood fuelled stoves (unless they are part of a system with a back boiler) and bioliquid fuelled systems are not eligible for this scheme.
- Solar Thermal Hot Water systems will be available to all householders.
- For other technologies applicants must not currently use mains gas supply for their heating system.
- Applicants must use a Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certificated installer and product or equivalent. Please see www.microgenerationcertification.org for more details.
- Renewable heating systems must supply a permanent residential building (mobile homes, caravans, house boats and systems heating swimming pools only are not eligible).
- Basic energy efficiency measures must have been installed at the installation address (loft insulation up to 250mm where appropriate, cavity wall insulation where practicable). More information can be found on the Energy Saving Trust's website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/RHPP or call your local Energy Saving Trust advice centre on 0800 512 012.
- Applicants must have received all relevant permissions for the installation including planning permission where required. If in doubt, please confirm with your local authority whether planning permission is required.

5. Can I install the heating system before applying for a voucher?

You can, at your own risk. Installations made from the announcement of full details of the scheme on 21st July 2011, but before the application for the voucher, will be eligible, including installations made between 21st July and 1st August 2011. If you as a householder do commission or carry out an installation before receiving a voucher, please make sure that you have read the terms and conditions of the scheme carefully, including all the information on the EST website. While we can give no guarantee that you will receive a voucher if you apply after having installed the system, if you have met the terms and conditions of the scheme, then you are eligible to receive a voucher.

The Government or Energy Saving Trust will not be liable for any costs in relation to decisions you have taken on this basis. You may find as a result that you have committed to paying the full cost of the installation yourself. We would in general recommend not entering into any binding contractual commitment or otherwise pay out any money (including any deposit) for a renewable heating system before receiving a voucher.

6. Will I need to pay for any monitoring that is carried out?

- A significant proportion of applicants will be approached by Energy Saving Trust to have additional meters attached to their installation which will monitor the performance of the heating system. They will not have to pay for these or take readings themselves. Everyone has to agree to let a meter be installed as part of the terms and conditions of the scheme.
- For everyone else, any meters and controls which come with the product already will be sufficient. You will be asked through surveys information about these meters and the bills that you get; and in particular how easy it is to understand the meters and the controls, as well as general feedback on your satisfaction with the system installation and its performance.

7. What is the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)?

The RHI will provide payments over a set period of time to generators of renewable heat. It starts in September 2011 for industrial, commercial and public sector installations and Government has announced its intention to make support under the scheme available to households in Autumn 2012.

8. If I receive a Renewable Heat Premium Payment, will I be eligible for the Renewable Heat Incentive when it is introduced?

The Government has confirmed that renewable heat installations installed in homes since 15 July 2009 will get the Renewable Heat Incentive once it comes in, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. They have also confirmed that this will include those who receive support under the RHPP scheme. However, the Government has not yet published its proposals for how the RHI will work in the domestic sector, so we cannot at this stage provide more information on this. In particular we cannot *guarantee* that those eligible for an RHPP grant will also be eligible for the RHI.

9. Which technology is right for me?

It depends on the location of your house and what you require from the system. For information on each microgeneration technology and their suitability please visit the Energy Saving Trust website (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk), call your local Energy Saving Trust advice centre on 0800 512 012 or approach heating specialists or other experts for a range of opinions.

10. How much are the Renewable Heat Premium Payments?

It depends which technology you are applying for. The voucher values for each of the technologies is listed below.

| Technology | Voucher Value |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Solar Thermal Hot Water | £300 |
| Air Source Heat Pump | £850 |
| Ground Source Heat Pump | £1250 |
| Biomass boiler | £950 |

11. Can I apply for more than one technology?

Yes, although you must complete a separate application form for each technology. You cannot apply twice for the same technology at the same installation address.

12. I received a grant under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme/Clear Skies programme, can I apply for a voucher for a new different installation under this scheme?

Yes although in these cases you cannot apply for funding for your existing installation and the new system must be used instead of an existing fossil fuel or electric heating system.

13. What if I can't install the required basic energy efficiency measures?

You must install the **appropriate** energy efficiency measures to be eligible for a voucher - so this is a requirement only where it is possible to install the measures. So, for example, if you live in a solid wall property that does not have cavities then you do not need to install cavity wall insulation. . If in doubt, please contact an Energy Saving Trust advisor on 0800 512 012.

14. I haven't got internet access, how can I make an application?

If you don't have access to the internet you can apply by calling an advisor on 0800 512 012. The scheme will open to applications on 1st August 2011.

15. How can I find an MCS certificated installer and product or an equivalent?

You can check whether an installer or product is MCS certificated or find a local installer by going to the MCS website (www.microgenerationcertification.org) or by calling an Energy Saving Trust advisor on 0800 512 012.

16. Why do I have to use an MCS installer and product or equivalent?

Installers and products used for the Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme are certified by MCS (or an equivalent) which is an independent certification scheme designed to certify microgeneration products and installers in accordance with consistent standards. The primary aim of the MCS is to provide consumers with confidence and protection by guaranteeing that microgeneration products and installers who carry the mark meet, and will continue to meet, these robust quality standards.

17. Is there any guarantee should my technology not work to expectations?

If you use an MCS installer and product (or equivalent) for your installation you should receive a warranty for both the equipment and workmanship of your installation. Ask your installer about this – it is always a good idea to seek more than one quotation and you may wish to consider the type of warranty on offer alongside other considerations such as price.

18. Can I still receive a grant if a non-certified installer performs the installation?

Only if an MCS certificated installer commissions the system after the non-certified installer has finished the installation. In this case, the certificated installer must fill out the completion certificate, and you must provide a suitable chain of invoices showing all of the costs of the installation.

19. How long will it take to receive my voucher?

If the information you have given in your application satisfies the eligibility criteria of the scheme then you will usually receive immediate confirmation of whether your application has been successful. If you have been awarded a voucher, this will be emailed to your nominated email address within 24 hours. Occasionally applications will be referred to our administration team for further checking. You will be alerted to this once your application has been submitted and you will receive notification of whether it has been successful within 5 working days.

20. If I make a successful application to the scheme and receive a voucher, how long is it valid for?

This depends on the technology you have applied for. The voucher validity periods for each of the technologies are listed below.

| Technology | Validity Period |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Solar Thermal Hot Water | 3 months |
| Air Source Heat Pump | 5 months |
| Ground Source Heat Pump | 6 months |
| Biomass boiler | 6 months |

The date on the voucher refers to the date that the valid claim is **received** by the Energy Saving Trust. In any case, no voucher will be valid beyond 31st March 2012 and no extensions will be given. The completed voucher claim together with the invoice and the Microgeneration Certification Scheme certificate should be sent to the address indicated on the voucher. It is recommended that this is sent by recorded delivery.

21. I live in a house owned by my Local Authority/Housing Association, can I apply for a voucher?

You must own (or privately rent) the property where you are applying for an installation. However, there is a part of the scheme that your Local Authority/Housing Association may be able to apply for if they wish. Please see information on the Social Housing stream.

22. Can I pay a deposit before I apply for my voucher?

Please note that any payment you make to your installer is done at your own risk. Making an application does not automatically guarantee that you will receive a voucher.

23. Will I need planning permission for my installation or to notify my Local Authority?

Most installations are now classed as permitted development which means planning permission is not needed, but this will depend on the technology you are installing and where you live. Please check with your Local Authority before proceeding to ensure you have all of the correct permissions required or refer to the Planning Portal - <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission>. To satisfy building regulations please make sure that your installer is a member of the relevant competent person scheme. Please see the Department of Communities and Local Government website for more information - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/buildingregulations/competentpersonsschemes>

24. Can I claim the RHPP for a new build property?

Only householders occupying a house can apply for a voucher. So, for example where a householder applies for a voucher in respect of a main heating system in their newly completed house, or in the case of individual self-build at point of completion, this is eligible. However, neither householders applying in relation to an offplan development, nor installers or building developers in any case are in a position to apply – they would not be eligible.

25. Will I need an environmental permit for my installation?

For biomass boilers and some ground source heat pumps (“open loop”, or “closed loop” systems which are also near a river or body of water), an environmental permit will be needed. Contact the Environment Agency for more details – see <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/128133.aspx>

26. Are air to air heat pumps eligible?

No.

27. Are bioliquid heating systems eligible?

No.

28. Are exhaust air heat pumps supported?

No.

29. Are biomass hot air systems or wood burning stoves eligible?

No, only biomass systems which heat water to provide space heating are eligible. However, if your wood burning stove provides the main heating source through a back boiler, it will be eligible. Please be aware that Government is currently considering whether biomass stoves, even where they are the main heating source through a back boiler, will be supported under the long-term Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). At this stage, we cannot guarantee that they will be. DECC will be consulting on support for domestic participants in due course.

30. What information will you gather for the monitoring and what will you do with all the information you collect?

It is important to make sure you are comfortable with the idea that you may have to complete a survey on aspects of your heating system such as its performance. It is possible that this information may become public (but not your name, your full address, your date of birth or any other information which would allow the comments to be attributed to you) .

The surveys could capture other information such as how much you used to pay for your heating and electricity, and how much you pay after installation. We are also interested in your broader views such as, what you think of the kit, how easy was it to arrange instalment etc. This type of information will enable Government, manufacturers, installers and consumers to better understand how to maximise performance of the various technologies, to help ensure it reflects what people want. The questions that form the survey will be published when the scheme launches in August 2011.

In addition, the Government will pay for a percentage of houses to have additional meters put in them, to monitor energy use from the new equipment. These meters are likely to send information about energy use automatically back to us so this will not require any additional work from the householder.

31. Will you support second hand kit or renewable energy systems replacing existing renewable systems?

No, the kit has to be new and the system should normally replace a fossil fuel or electric heating system (except for self build new-build).

32. I am proposing to install a new biomass boiler system/heat pump which will serve lots of houses. Can I apply for RHPP?

No, because such systems are eligible under Phase I of the main RHI you should apply under that.

33. Who do I contact if my heating system does not work?

Start by contacting the person who installed the system.

34. Who do I contact if I am unhappy about the administration of the scheme, or my application is rejected?

If there is a problem with the administration or handling of the scheme as opposed to the quality of the installation or performance of the product, in the first place write to Energy Saving Trust. If you are not satisfied with the response, and think that the rules of the scheme have not been followed, write to the Department of Energy and Climate Change. If you are still not satisfied, write to the Parliamentary Ombudsman whose details can be found at <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/>.

35. What happens if I am very disappointed with the performance of my chosen technologies or it fails to work? Do I have to return the grant if I remove the system – say after 4 months?

Yes. If you get a refund from the installer, you have to return the grant. Contact the Energy Saving Trust for details of how to do this.

36. Where do I send the results of the customer survey? How often is it required to be sent?

Our current plan is for two surveys about six months apart. Details of where to send the survey will be provided nearer that time.

37. Is there a penalty for missing the survey deadlines?

DECC reserves the right to withhold access to the Renewable Heat Incentive if the terms and conditions of the RHPP are subsequently discovered not to have been met after the payment of the grant. If you have been asked to fill in a survey, those administering the RHI will check to see if it was completed, and may contact you when you apply.

38. Are the vouchers allocated, restricted and spread across the different technologies? Or is the system just based on customer demand?

Some money has been put aside for a competition between social housing providers. Otherwise the vouchers at this stage are spread between the technologies. We have £15m funding available for the whole scheme (including the competition for social housing providers) (with a review after £10m has been allocated). We may have to restrict money to some technologies in later months to ensure a fair spread of technologies. We do have indicative scenarios which mean that we will, for example, review monies going to solar thermal once it has been allocated money for more than 10,000 installations.

39. The boiler scrappage scheme prompted industry to introduce further special offers, will this happen with heat technologies?

We don't know at this stage. We would certainly encourage installers and manufacturers to work with the Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme to make the offers available as attractive as possible to customers.

40. EST research showed that there are lots of heat pumps not performing to expectations. Why are these technologies being supported?

Government sees heat pumps as an important heating system for the future and is therefore keen to learn more about them in the context of delivering on our renewable energy targets. The information we get from people who have put in an installation under the RHPP will be an important addition to what we are learning from the field trials.