

Replacing Oil with the Home Upgrades Grant for Greener Homes



Client situation

When Amelie moved into her home around eight years ago, the 1950's terrace property needed a lot of work to update it. As the house was located in a village without mains gas, there was a pre-existing oil heating system which she had to completely replace. This was before the government made clear announcements in 2020 to phase out gas and oil heating to new homes from 2025. While she was updating the house, she replaced the oil burner, had it re-plumbed with new radiators, fitted new double-glazing and had the roof insulated.

However, it was a hassle sourcing the oil for the lowest price and she continually had to monitor whether the tank was running low. Plus the tank took up space outside. With her and two children living in the 4-bedroom terrace property, she found that hot water was frequently in demand and she needed the heating on more often in winter, working from her home office. Rising energy bills were a stretch on a self-employed income.

Then she heard about possible grants from a neighbour. She decided to research

online, via the Bath & North East Somerset Council Energy At Home website, to potentially help reduce her heating and energy bills. On Bristol City Council's website, she found a consortium between several councils delivering the Bright Green Homes Project (Phase 2 until March 2025 - which may be extended depending on funds) with grants available for domestic homes.

"It was always a hassle sourcing oil, to shop around for the lowest price and monitor when it was running out. It's not the cleanest of fuels and I wanted a much more energy efficient way of running the house. When I applied for the grant, the council came back to me with an outline of measures they could implement. It's looking ahead because they are trying to phase out oil and gas eventually, but I couldn't have done it without the grant."

Home Upgrade Grant Scheme for Bright Green Homes

Amelie found the Home Upgrade Grant Scheme and started to explore whether she was eligible - the guidance explained they may be able to help homeowners,

tenants or landlords. Eligible houses have heating systems that are not gas, including:

- Electric
- Oil
- LPG
- Wood
- Coal-fired



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The people from Gregor Heating came across as professional, knowledgeable and considerate. They came round and talked through where the elements would go after looking at the radiators and the layout of the house. Their service has been the best in the whole process, and it reassures you that you're not just left without any help for the new system.

**Amelie,
Homeowner**



Having begun the application process, she discovered the criteria included needing a low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating to prove the rating was G, F, E or D with a gross combined annual household income of under £30,000.

Amelie was hoping the grant would cover solar panels for her home, as well as low carbon heating. However, when the Council project surveyors visited to check her home energy rating, they confirmed that other work would need to be covered by the grant. For Amelie's house, they agreed to cover and arrange an air source heat pump, cavity wall insulation and ventilation measures. With the cavities filled, the house needed extra ventilation - adjustments to the doors and adding trickle vents and fans to enable the heating system to work efficiently. Ameresco, the contracting partner, brought in Gregor Heating to remove and replace the oil heating system.



"I started the research online and there were different companies advertising grants but I was nervous to hand over all my details. Then I found the information on the Bristol City Council website which did cover a wider area and knew that would be legitimate and genuine. I didn't think I'd qualify, but it all proceeded from there."

The project will fund and support eligible households to install a range of insulation and low carbon technologies, including:

- External wall insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Underfloor insulation
- Air source heat pump
- Solar PV
- Double glazing and energy efficient doors

Scope of works for Gregor Heating

When Gregor Heating came out to survey Amelie's home, they checked the outside space for the air source heat pump, the specifications of the radiators and the size for the hot water cylinder. Some of the radiators needed to be larger than those already installed to ensure all rooms would be well heated and they presented clear plans back to Amelie, showing where everything would go. The water tank was to fit where the old oil-fuelled combi boiler was in the utility room, minimising the impact on space.

After the survey, Gregor Heating fed back to the council what needed to be done, and the project team then confirmed appointments with Amelie when they could start the work.

Professional service, minimising disruption

As Amelie is self-employed, her home is also her office and she needed the disruption kept to a minimum. Gregor Heating focused on getting all the new radiators installed in one day, which was the work which affected every room in the house. Then their focus was on working downstairs in the utility room to fit the air source heat pump.

Amelie says, *"They were helpful and professional, doing a good job of filling up the old flue using spare blocks to mend the hole and keeping things tidy while they worked. The new water cylinder fitted where the old boiler was, and although the heat pump needed space outside, we've regained the space from where the old oil tank was."*

To ensure there was plenty of hot water, the cylinder is large and Amelie has found there is always enough for bathing her kids and all their other needs. They do have a log-burner in the lounge for emergencies like power cuts, however, Amelie doesn't use it very often.

"Hopefully this is better for the environment and will cost me a bit less, however, I'll need to wait until next year to see whether that's the case. The after-care was brilliant. Gregor Heating did come back to help me with the settings when we had a really cold spell and check the radiators were all working correctly - because the house didn't feel quite warm enough. They sorted it out and it's been fine ever since."



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As well as its impact on the environment, oil heating is only around 90% efficient. So we recommend upgrading to an air source heat pump that's up to 465% efficient. A heat pump utilises the temperature in the outside air to start a refrigerant cycle, generating heat which is delivered to either the hot water cylinder or radiators.

For Amelie, this system will be a great addition to her home, as it's future-proofed her property and given her an up-to-date eco-friendly alternative to her old oil combination boiler system.

**Ross,
Gregor Heating**

