

Home Upgrade Grant Helps Retirees Update Property



Client situation

Having moved into their home thirty-three years previously, Paul and Sandra knew their property needed a lot of updating. They began to get quotes for all the work, realising they needed to replace the windows, refresh the kitchen and make better use of the double garage. Although their children were all grown adults, they were often hosting them with their grandchildren too. So they needed all the space of four bedrooms upstairs and more flexible space downstairs. However, they knew the boiler also needed replacing and they wanted to remove the oil system because of government announcements to stop using oil.

The house is at the corner end of a cul-de-sac and if they wanted to join the mains gas network, they would have had to pay to have it piped from the road, under the neighbour's driveway and the additional distance up their drive. Cost was definitely a factor because the quotes for all the work were mounting. They were delighted and relieved to hear from the West of England Rural Network about the home upgrade grants available in the region. The West of England Rural Network is involved in

helping people improve their quality of life in rural communities; Paul and Sandra had joined because they offered a community buying scheme to help residents get cheaper oil prices. Once they began their research into the availability of funding and the renewable technologies, it seemed more cost-effective and environmentally-beneficial to consider an air source heat pump.

Reassurance of a site visit

Once the council representative had visited to do the initial survey to confirm the funding, Paul and Sandra were introduced to Gregor Heating to talk about their specific needs, survey the space and agree what type of pump and radiators would best fit their home. The survey was really comprehensive and Gregor Heating explained every detail, as well as checking the costs of what was previously being spent on electricity and oil. One of Paul and Sandra's main concerns about installing an air source heat pump was the potential noise and visual aesthetic in their garden. They had had a conservatory added onto the downstairs as part of their renovations and they didn't want a heat pump to

ruin their 'outside in' living space. Sandra was delighted that they were given the opportunity to see one in situ.

She says, "My fear was that we had a full width glass room opening onto the garden and I didn't want to be looking at a heat pump out there. It was absolutely brilliant that they arranged for us to see a heat pump and we were very impressed that it was whisper-quiet. Ross also talked to us about the options to order a screen to obscure the pump from direct view, so once ours was installed, we ordered a louvre-style screen that won't impede the effectiveness of the pump."

Ross from Gregor Heating calculated the sizes of each radiator, agreeing that the main bathroom radiator would be too small, so changed it for a 5 foot tall vertical radiator instead.

Paul says, "Their customer service was superb. The communication was brilliant at every stage and they made it as painless as possible. The guys doing the survey were very thoughtful, it felt like they looked upon it as if it were their own home. They even worked with the builder to get them to lay a concrete plinth as part of the patio work, ready for the air source heat pump."

Gregor Heating came in to survey the heating system. Jennifer recalls, "We did have to be patient while Gregor liaised with the council, agreed what was within the budget and then the council got back in touch to book in the work."

Seamless installation process

Before the installation, Gregor Heating's team told the Abrahams exactly what would happen, day by day. Paul explains, "We were expecting complete disruption, but they were a cut above. It really didn't impact on us too much and they handled everything seamlessly, getting the electricians in at exactly the right time."

Sandra continues, "The installers were an absolute credit to Gregor Heating. They were easy to talk to and treated our home with respect. Craig did a thorough handover after testing everything once the installation was complete."

Afterwards, Ross returned to check whether anything had changed and whether the system was warm enough for them. The Abrahams were very happy that their home is comfortably warm, with a uniform heat throughout the house, compared with the old system where the kitchen was never quite warm enough and the utility room was freezing. The new heating system means that the Abrahams hardly ever use the log fire in their lounge anymore - except for really cold snaps or special occasions.

Straight away, it was a lot cleaner too and the continuous smell of oil had gone. They had a leak fixed five years previously, and upon emptying the tank to have it removed, they noticed that litres of oil had leaked into the bund cavity below the tank. The Abrahams were thankful that the council helped arrange the removal of the oil tank from alongside the house, leaving them room to extend the patio and install a bike store. Having the home upgrade grant meant their funds could stretch further to complete the modernisation work on their house.

For more information about the home upgrade grants, visit [Bristol City Leap](#) or [Bath & North East Somerset Council's Energy at Home website](#).



TESTIMONIAL

The people from Gregor Heating are streaks ahead in understanding renewable technologies and that gave us the confidence to go ahead. Their knowledge is second to none, they answered every question and reassured us about all of our worries. We'd wholly recommend the system but feel it's essential to get the right installers because Gregor's paid so much attention to the detail. They asked how we use our heating, what times of day and helped us with the settings after the install.

Paul Abrahams,
Homeowner

