

# Energy Saving Advice

## For tenants in the private rented sector

www.oxford.gov.uk



Switching off lights and appliances when not needed, using your heating controls more effectively, washing at lower temperatures and monitoring your energy use can all help you save money without needing to involve your landlord.

You may also be able to save money by checking if your existing company has a cheaper tariff option for you. If they don't, it may be worth shopping around to compare different tariffs. For advice try the **Which? Switch** service: [www.which.co.uk/switch/energy-advice](http://www.which.co.uk/switch/energy-advice) or 01992 822 867 or **Energy Best Deal Campaign** from Citizens Advice [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/fsfl\\_projects\\_energybestdeal](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/fsfl_projects_energybestdeal)

## Getting your landlord to make energy improvements

Insulating and increasing the energy efficiency of your home can save money on energy bills and can also help reduce condensation and mould. The most effective measures are loft and cavity wall insulation, an energy efficient condensing gas boiler, and installing double glazing. Other effective measures include draught proofing, jackets for hot water cylinders, insulating pipes, using reflective radiator panels, and installing individual thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) on radiators.

**Many energy improvements are the landlord's responsibility so you will need to ask your landlord to do them, or get their written permission to do them yourself.** The first step is to talk amicably to him/her. Landlords may be reluctant to make energy efficiency improvements if they think they have to bear the cost as they will not reap the financial benefit from reduced energy bills. However, you may be able to persuade them that it is in their interest to do so by informing them of the financial incentives available to them (see leaflet '**Energy Saving Advice for Landlords**' and to tenants, alerting them to their existing and future legal responsibilities and mentioning that energy efficiency improvements usually help preserve the fabric of the property. You can download a template letter to your landlord from [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Take-action/Improve-your-home/Persuading-your-landlord-to-install-energy-saving-measures](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Take-action/Improve-your-home/Persuading-your-landlord-to-install-energy-saving-measures)

## Getting help from Oxford City Council

If your landlord is unhelpful, Oxford City Council's HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupation) Enforcement Team or Private Sector Safety Teams can give you general advice and support on ways to keep your home warmer on **01865 249811**. If required they can also assess your home for 'Excess Cold'; one of the hazards dealt with under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and can compel your landlord to carry out certain energy efficiency measures, which are considered to be reasonable e.g. install loft and cavity wall insulation, install central heating, draft proof or replace windows, in order to make your home warmer and more energy efficient.

# What are your rights as a tenant?

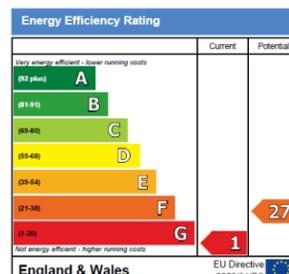
## The Government's Energy Act 2011

**From April 2016** landlords will not be able to refuse reasonable requests from tenants, or local authorities acting on behalf of tenants, to improve their property;

**From April 2018** the government will make it unlawful to rent out a house or business premise which has less than an "E" energy efficiency rating so landlords will be **legally obliged** to make energy efficiency improvements from this date.

## Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

EPCs are required whenever a building is built, sold or rented out. The certificate provides 'A' to 'G' ratings for the building, with 'A' being the most energy efficient and 'G' being the least, with the average rating 'D'. You should look at EPCs to decide whether or not to rent a property as it indicates how high energy bills are likely to be. An EPC with an F or G rating may indicate an excessively cold home.



## Cold houses

Local Authorities have a duty to take action against landlords under Housing Act 2004 if the condition of a property affects the health of the most vulnerable occupier. Health and safety issues relating to household energy efficiency include excess cold, damp and mould, excess heat, carbon monoxide, uncombusted fuel gas from faulty appliances and faulty appliance wiring.

If a landlord fails to give permission to have grant-funded energy efficiency measures installed tenants can complain to the Environmental Health Department of the local authority. They must investigate and, if appropriate, give landlords a notice instructing them to carry out the necessary repairs. If landlords do not comply, they can be prosecuted and the local authority can carry out the repair work itself. **The number for Environmental Health in Oxford is 01865 249811.**

***For more information or advice on anything covered in this leaflet please contact Debbie Haynes, Energy Efficiency Projects Officer on 01865 252566 or email [dhaynes@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:dhaynes@oxford.gov.uk). All information contained in this leaflet is correct as of November 2013.***