

Green Homes Grant Available for Energy Improvements

The £ 2 billion Green Homes Grant announced by the Chancellor in July means that eligible owner occupiers and landlords will soon be able to claim vouchers from the Government that cover two-thirds of the cost of qualifying environmentally friendly improvements to residential properties in England.

Although final details are yet to be released, the scheme is planned to open from 30th September and will be available for eligible works undertaken by Trustmark approved contractors and completed by 31 March 2021. Details of the scheme known to date are as follows:

The maximum voucher value per property will be £ 5,000, although for households that are on a low income and receive certain benefits the maximum voucher spend will be £10,000 (landlords cannot apply for the low-income part of the scheme).

If each claimant applies for the maximum voucher value the funding is anticipated to provide grants for up to 600,000 homes but it is understood that the vouchers will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The energy efficiency measures permitted under the scheme are divided into two categories: 'primary' and 'secondary'. In order to qualify for funding to cover secondary measures, claimants must first carry out at least one of the primary measures.

The grant for secondary measures is capped at the value of the grant claimed for the primary measures. For example, if you receive £ 1,000 towards primary upgrades, the grant for any secondary measures will be capped at £ 1,000.

The primary measures are solid wall, cavity wall, under-floor, loft, flat roof, room-in-roof and park home insulation, air source and ground source heat pumps, solar thermal and biomass pellet boilers and low carbon heating where the home is suitably insulated.

The secondary measures are draught proofing, double /triple glazing, secondary glazing, energy efficient doors, hot water tank thermostats as well as insulation and heating controls.

If the property is not eligible for any primary measures you will not be able to access the grants for secondary measures.

An online questionnaire at the Government's Simple Energy Advice website will establish what potential works are available for a particular property and will provide more details about how the measures can be implemented using the scheme or provide signposting to other financial support that may be available.

You can only complete the online tool if the property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) registered on the online database and at present it remains unclear whether you can apply for a voucher without using the online tool.

The Government suggests getting three quotes for each measure to ensure that claimants are getting the best value for money, but it is not yet known whether getting three quotes is mandatory to then apply for a voucher, nor whether claimants must select the cheapest quote.

Once eligibility is confirmed, claimants can instruct their chosen Trustmark accredited installer who will apply the voucher to the cost of the works. The homeowner /landlord pays the contractor the net cost of the works and the contractor will claim the value of the voucher from the Government and be paid directly by them.

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