

Sustainable Tenancies

Information Pack



Building a new relationship between
landlords and their tenants

**citizens
advice**

South Hams

"The government is launching a consultation on barriers to longer tenancies in the private rented sector, and how we might encourage landlords to offer them to those tenants who want the extra security", Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Budget 22/11/17

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Introduction

Sustainable Tenancies....building a new relationship between landlords and their tenants

This pack has been developed to help landlords and tenants improve the energy efficiency of homes in south Devon. With support from the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS) Charitable Foundation¹, Citizens Advice South Hams can provide personalised advice appointments with ongoing support to both parties.

The South Hams district of Devon is a very beautiful rural area which includes parts of Dartmoor National Park and dramatic coastline. Being a largely protected area, many properties are old with often very energy inefficient heating systems. South Hams District Council indicate there are more than 5,000 local households in fuel poverty, at 13.2% this is much higher than the national average of 10.6%.

New legislation related to rented homes is bringing change. Tenants will be able take a more proactive approach to the energy efficiency of their homes, whilst landlords of energy inefficient properties will be required to make improvements.

This is an opportunity for both tenant and landlord to benefit from working together to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. With better quality and healthier homes that are less expensive to live in, tenants are more likely to want to extend their tenancy, providing longer term sustainable income for landlords.

“ Too often advice agencies such as Citizens Advice only see tenants when they are facing crisis. This project is designed to tackle fuel poverty and to be more pro-active in helping reduce the number of clients facing crisis.

Janie Moor, CEO
Citizens Advice South
Hams

¹ The TDS Charitable Foundation was set up by TDS, the UK's leading tenancy deposit protection scheme to improve standards in the private rented sector. To date, the Foundation has provided over £400k in funding support for organisations across England and Wales.

How can both tenants and landlords benefit from improved energy efficiency?

Benefits to Tenants

- Reduced energy costs - meaning more money for other household essentials
- Warmer, more comfortable homes
- Reduced health risks associated with damp and cold homes
- Environmental benefits such as a personal reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, reduced depletion of non-renewable resources and less pollution.

Benefits to landlords

- Increase tenant satisfaction²
- Reduced void periods²
- Reduced long-term property maintenance costs*
- Making properties more attractive and easier to let²
- Less risk of rent defaults
- Increased market value.
- Reduced environmental impact of your property

“ Landlords and letting agents should not see the energy efficiency measures as punitive. Remember, energy efficiency measures do require some initial outlay, but will save your tenants money, make their home more comfortable and add to the value of your property in the long run. Think of them as an investment in your business.

Source: <https://landlordnews.co.uk/five-ways-comply-energy-efficiency-legislation/>

² When the Regulations for minimum levels of energy efficiency for private rented property were being designed, a number of landlords associations identified these benefits.

What difference will the new legislation make?

Data shows³ that the average annual cost of energy for an EPC band G property is £2,860, and £2,180 for an F rated property. This contrasts with an average annual cost of £1,710 for an EPC band E property.

Therefore a tenant whose home is improved from EPC band G to band E could expect to see their energy costs reduced by £1,150 a year so long as there were no wider changes in how they use energy in the property.

A 2016 report by Sustainable Homes⁴ on social housing demonstrated that improving the energy efficiency of rental housing reduces both rent arrears and voids, including:

- As homes become more efficient, they are void for a shorter period of time (31% less for band B properties than E or F);
- Cold homes have an average of 2 more weeks of rent arrears each year than higher efficiency homes,
- The wider costs of tackling rent arrears and voids are significant and can be reduced. Costs related to chasing overdue rent payments (including legal and court costs) decline by 35% for more efficient homes.

It is believed that one in ten residential properties currently have an EPC rating of F or G, so would not meet the new standards.

(Source: <https://landlordnews.co.uk/>)

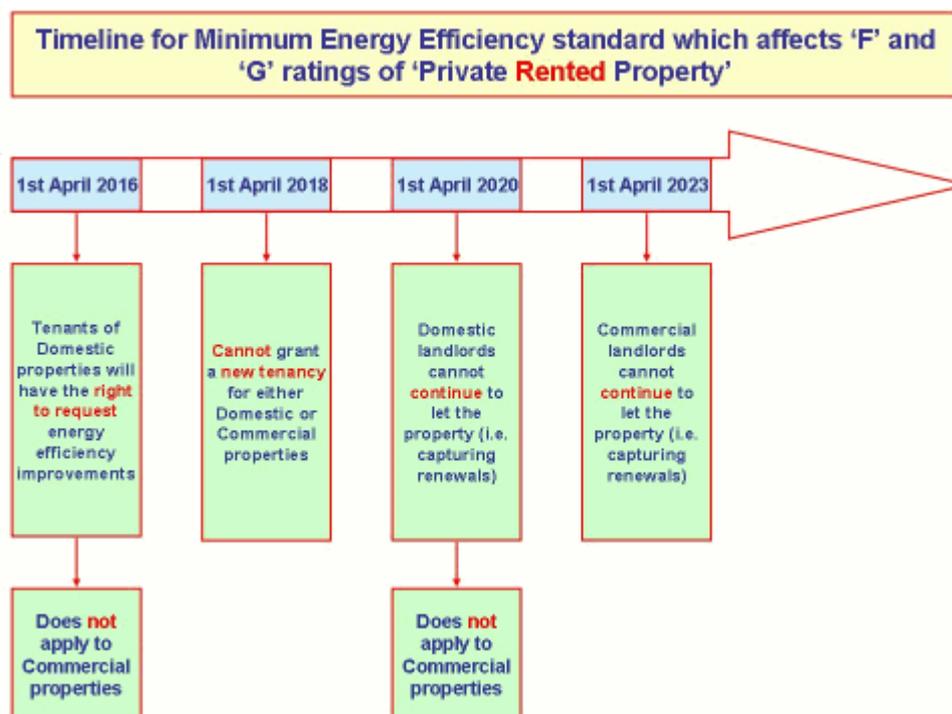
³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-private-rented-property-minimum-standard-landlord-guidance-documents>

⁴ Source: www.sustainablehomes.co.uk/research-project/rent-arrears/

How is legislation changing?

- From April 2016 tenants are able to request consent from their landlord to install energy efficiency improvements, which the landlord cannot unreasonably refuse. Tenants are protected from retaliatory evictions.
- From April 2018, landlords of privately rented domestic properties in England or Wales must ensure that properties they own reach at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E before granting a new tenancy to new or existing tenants also known as MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard).
- From 1 April 2020 all tenancies in England and Wales must have an EPC rating of E or above.

Summary timeline for new legislation (Source: <http://epcexpert.com/>)



What types of tenancies are covered by these regulations?

- An assured tenancy (including an assured short hold tenancy) defined in the Housing Act 1988.
- A regulated tenancy defined in the Rent Act 1977;
- An agricultural tenancy as set out in the Energy Efficiency (Domestic Private Rented Property) Order 2015.

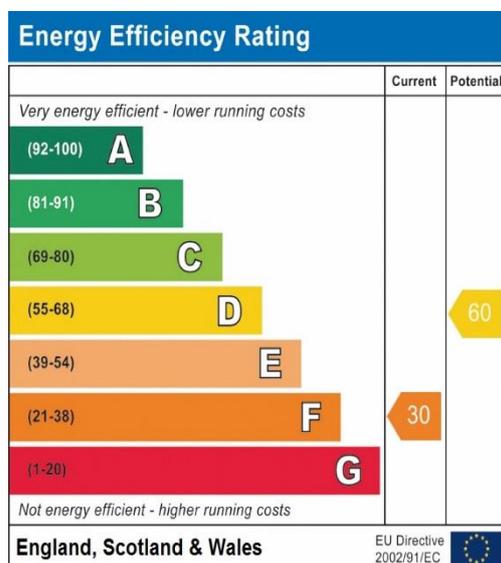
If a property is let on a relevant tenancy type but is not legally required to have an EPC, or if it is required to have an EPC but is not let on a relevant tenancy, that property will not be required to comply with the requirements of the Regulations.

The minimum standards do not apply in the social housing sector. A property will also be excluded if the landlord is a body registered as a social landlord.

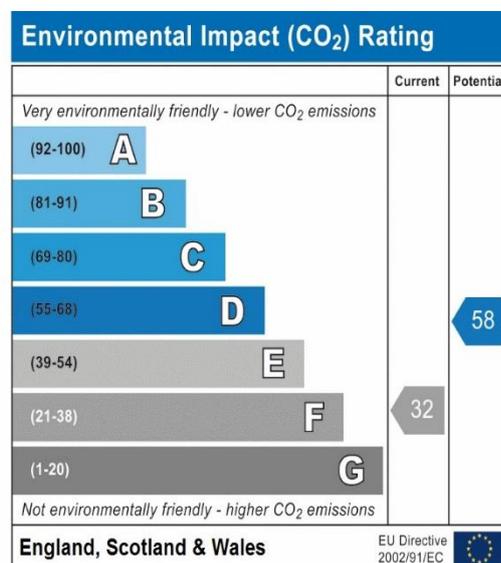
What is an EPC for a domestic building?

An EPC:

- Gives the property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient)
- Contains information about a property's energy use and typical energy costs
- Makes recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money
- Is valid for ten years.
- Relates to the property rather than to the owner - therefore an EPC obtained by a previous owner of the property will remain valid even after a property is sold on, so long as it is less than ten years old.



Address:
EXAMPLE EPC



Enforcement and Penalties (MEES)

Local authorities will enforce compliance with the domestic minimum level of energy efficiency. They may check whether a property meets the minimum level of energy efficiency, and may issue a compliance notice requesting information where it appears to them that a property has been let in breach of the Regulations (or an invalid exemption has been registered in respect of it). Where a local authority is satisfied that a property has been let in breach of the Regulations it may serve a notice on the landlord imposing financial penalties. The authority may also publish details of the breach on the national PRS Exemptions Register. There is an appeals process involving 'First-tier Tribunals'.

Where the Local Authority decides to impose a financial penalty, they have the discretion to decide on the amount of the penalty, up to maximum limits set by the Regulations. The maximum penalties are as follows:

- Where the landlord has let a sub-standard property in breach of the Regulations for a period of less than 3 months, the Local Authority may impose a financial penalty of up to £2,000 and may impose the publication penalty.
- Where the landlord has let a sub-standard property in breach of the regulations for 3 months or more, the Local Authority may impose a financial penalty of up to £4,000 and may impose the publication penalty.
- Where the landlord has registered false or misleading information on the PRS Exemptions Register, the Local Authority may impose a financial penalty of up to £1,000 and may impose the publication penalty.
- Where the landlord has failed to comply with compliance notice, the Local Authority may impose a financial penalty of up to £2,000 and may impose the publication penalty.

A local authority may not impose a financial penalty under both paragraphs (a) and (b) above in relation to the same breach of the Regulations. But they may impose a financial penalty under either paragraph (a) or paragraph (b), together with financial penalties under paragraphs (c) and (d), in relation to the same breach. Where penalties are imposed under more than one of these paragraphs, the total amount of the financial penalty may not be more than £5,000.

It is important to note that this maximum amount of £5,000 applies per property, and per breach of the Regulation. Given this, it means that, if after having been previously fined up to £5,000 for having failed to satisfy the requirements of the regulations, a landlord proceeds to unlawfully let a substandard property on a new tenancy; the local enforcement authority may again levy financial penalties up to £5,000 in relation to that new tenancy.

BOX: Penalty summary (Source: Residential Landlords Association – See <https://www.rla.org.uk/landlord/guides/minimum-energy-efficiency-standards.shtml>)

Infringement	Penalty
Providing false or misleading information to the PRS Exemptions Register	£1,000 Publication of non-compliance
Failure to comply with a compliance notice from a local authority	£2,000 Publication of non-compliance
Renting out a non-compliant property (Less than 3 months non-compliance)	£2,000 fixed penalty Publication of non-compliance
Renting out a non-compliant property (3 months or more of non-compliance)	£4,000 fixed penalty Publication of non-compliance

Landlord responsibilities

Requirements for a new tenancy

On 1 October 2015 a number of provisions in **Retaliatory Eviction and the Deregulation Act 2015** came into force meaning that at the start of a new assured or short assured tenancy, landlords must provide tenants with:

- A copy of the **How to rent guide** if you live in England. This can be provided in electronic format as a pdf if the tenant has notified the landlord, or a person acting on behalf of the landlord, of an e-mail address at which the tenant is content to accept service of notices and other documents given under or in connection with the tenancy. Otherwise, the guide should be supplied in paper copy.
- A **Gas safety certificate** - The landlord must arrange an annual gas safety check by a Gas Safe engineer (where there are any gas appliances).
- The **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)**. This will affect your energy bills and the landlord must provide one.

As a landlord entering a short-term tenancy, you risk losing your right to issue an eviction notice under Section 21 if you have not complied with all your legal obligations, including the provision of an EPC. *(Source: <https://landlordnews.co.uk/>)*

Meeting MEES

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 established a minimum level of energy efficiency for privately rented property in England and Wales.

- From **April 2018**, landlords of privately rented domestic and non-domestic properties in England or Wales must ensure that they reach **at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E** before granting a new tenancy to new or existing tenants.
- These requirements will then apply to **all** private rented properties in England and Wales – even where there has been no change in tenancy arrangements – from **1 April 2020** for domestic properties, and from 1 April 2023 for non-domestic properties.
- There are a number of means of obtaining an **exemption**, which need to be officially registered.

- Local authorities will enforce compliance. Where the Local Authority decides to impose a **financial penalty**, they have the discretion to decide on the amount of the penalty, up to maximum limits set by the Regulations of £5,000 per property, and per breach.

For most landlords this will mean that they will no longer be able to rent out a property with a rating of F or G after April 1st 2018 and therefore will have to immediately take it off the rental market. As such landlords with properties in this EPC bracket should begin preparing now as any improvements must be implemented before April 2018 in order for you to grant a new lease on the property.

What should I do if my rental property has an EPC of F or G?

If your last EPC rating was below an E, you may wish to first consider getting an up-to-date assessment carried out. EPC calculations are changing all the time and it is possible that you will receive a different rating to the one you got several years ago, particularly if you have made any energy efficiency improvements in the meantime.

To find an accredited domestic energy assessor see:

<https://www.epcregister.com/searchAssessor.html>

If the property's new EPC rating is still below an E, then you will need to make efficiency improvements to increase your rating before you let it out or renew your contract if after April 2018.

Your EPC report will have a list of recommended measures for improving your property's energy efficiency performance. You will need to carry out enough of these measures to improve your score to above an E rating.

The recommendations in the table are cumulative. In other words, the rating in the '**Rating After Improvement**' column shows you what the rating would be if you carried out that improvement and all the improvements above it in the table.

Speak to your EPC assessor if you are unsure about how to proceed with improvements. After the energy efficiency changes have been made to the property, you will then need to get another EPC to show the new energy rating.

Exemptions

Landlords must not let any sub-standard domestic property to new tenants within timings indicated above, or renew or extend an existing tenancy agreement with existing tenants, unless either:

- The landlord has made all the relevant energy efficiency improvements that can be made to the property (or that there are none that can be made) and the property's energy performance indicator is still below an EPC E, and this exception has been registered on the national Private Rented Sector (PRS) Exemptions Register; or
- No improvements have been made but a valid exemption applies which has been registered on the Exemptions Register.

The new MEES is likely not to apply to the following (Source: <https://landlordnews.co.uk/>):

- Buildings that are not required to have an EPC, such as certain listed buildings
- Temporary properties and holiday lets
- Buildings let on tenancies of over 99 years or less than six months (where such tenancy does not contain a right of renewal)
- Where an independent surveyor determines that the relevant energy efficiency improvements would reduce the value of the property by more than 5%
- If the landlord is unable to get consent from a third party to carry out the energy improvements, for example, from the local authority of an incumbent tenant
- A building that is due to be demolished by the seller or landlord, and has all of the relevant planning and conservation consent.

Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are not excluded from the Regulations. The Regulations apply to all privately rented properties that are legally required to have an EPC, and where rooms are let on one of the qualifying types (most likely assured tenancies). An HMO will be in scope where it meets these criteria. However, individual rooms within HMOs are not required to have their own EPC, so a property which is an HMO will only have an EPC if one is required for the property as a whole (typically this will be if the property has been built, sold or rented as a single unit at any time in the past 10 years). If an HMO is legally required to have an EPC, and if it is let on one of the qualifying tenancy types, then it will be required to comply with the minimum level of energy efficiency.

Housing health and safety rating system

While not directly related to the minimum level of energy efficiency, landlords will wish to be aware of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

The HHSRS does not deal with a property being inefficient from an energy point of view; rather, action can be taken if there is **excess cold or damp** at the property, for example, but these two hazards can overlap in a situation where a property needs improvement from an energy efficiency perspective. Typically, local authorities will aim to deal with problems informally at first, but if this is unsuccessful the council may serve an improvement notice on a landlord requiring them to carry out improvements to the property; for example, by installing central heating and/or insulation to improve cold properties.

Where an HHSRS notice is served, **the landlord will have to meet the cost of the required work**. While some landlords of F and G rated rental properties may be able to claim valid exemptions from the requirement to improve a property to EPC E, this exemption will not excuse them from the existing obligation to maintain that property in a safe and 'healthy' state. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action regardless of the fact that the property may be exempt from the minimum level of energy efficiency.

Landlord with multiple properties with 'F' or 'G' EPC ratings

All properties in scope of the Regulations will need to comply and there is no limit on the number of properties a multi-property owning landlord would be required to ensure are compliant.

The Regulations are clear that landlords only need to undertake improvements which can be made without incurring a cost. So if suitable 'no cost' finance cannot be obtained for a particular property, the landlord would need to register an exemption for that property rather than improve it to E. But, assuming that the no cost principle can be satisfied, there is no limit to the number of substandard properties a landlord is required to improve.

However, landlords should note that between 1 April 2018 and 1 April 2020, properties only need to be improved to meet the standard when a new tenancy is signed with a new or existing tenant. If a new tenancy has not been signed in that period then a property may still be lawfully let below EPC E. Therefore landlords with multiple properties would not necessarily need to improve all of their substandard properties at the same time, and can phase improvement work over this two year period as and when new tenancies are signed.

Tenants' rights and responsibilities

Part two of the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 established a new right for domestic private rented sector tenants:

- Tenants can request consent from their landlord to install energy efficiency improvements in the property they rent, and the **landlord cannot unreasonably refuse**
- Subject to the tenant securing suitable **funding** for the requested improvements.
- These new rights took effect from **April 2016**

Until the introduction of the new regulations, tenants incurring high energy bills had no rights to seek improvements and were at risk of retaliatory eviction

General questions to consider

1. Does it pay to invest in energy saving?

In addition to improved comfort and health benefits, there are potentially financial advantages in energy efficiency improvements. There are a wide range of options to reduce energy use from minimal cost simple lifestyle changes, to more serious financial investments such as installing double glazing. Clearly, zero to low cost options makes financial sense and their implementation is more about awareness and motivation of the house occupants.

Payback time!

Payback (number of years) = Capital cost (£) / Annual energy savings (£)

This means that higher energy prices or reduced installation costs (e.g. through obtaining a grant or loan) will decrease the payback period, making any investment more worthwhile. There are also a number of ways of obtaining 'green' loans that are repaid as part of a customer's energy bill, which will normally be reduced by the energy savings generated from the measure the loan has financed.

For more information about grants and loans, see section, 'Funding energy efficiency improvements'.

As with any financial investment, the decision to spend a significant sum of money on an energy saving feature (such as double glazing) needs to involve an assessment of the rate

of return on that investment – this is often referred to as **payback**, and is a measure of how long it will take to recoup the initial capital cost through the energy savings.

For a general guide on the wide range of energy saving options, see section, 'Quick guide to improving domestic energy efficiency'.

2. Who is responsible for funding energy efficiency improvements?

Landlords are **not** required to contribute funding for any measures requested through the tenants' energy efficiency provisions. The organizing of funding for measures is the sole responsibility of the tenant making the request, and tenants should ensure that suitable funding is available before making a request.

3. Should a tenant seek professional advice?

As part of the tenants' request provisions, a tenant is not required to obtain any additional expert advice on the measures which might be suitable for their property; however it is recommended that they do consider obtaining advice from an accredited energy efficiency assessor before proceeding where they feel that may be helpful. This will provide additional assistance in determining the most suitable measures for the property and will provide evidence to support any request to the landlord. If a tenant does not obtain professional advice on improvements then the landlord is entitled to obtain their own evidence, and this may delay decision making.

Help!

South Hams Citizens Advice can provide a free initial energy assessment. It may be worthwhile to use this service first to check if the householder is making the most energy efficient use of their current heating systems and are making use of zero/low cost options to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

4. Who owns the improvements?

Tenants should note that, while the Regulations do not require landlords to contribute financially towards the cost of buying or installing any energy efficiency improvements requested, once installed the measure will, with few exceptions, become part of the fixtures and fittings of the property, and so would typically come within the landlord's ownership.

Therefore **a tenant would not be entitled to remove them at the end of the tenancy**, even where this was technically feasible, unless this had been agreed with the landlord at the time the consent was granted. In the case of solar panels, micro combined heat and power, and other technologies which may attract a feed-in-tariff, tenants and landlords are advised to agree in advance of installation whom the tariff will be paid to and who holds the maintenance and repairing obligation on the equipment.

5. Substandard properties?

A tenant who considers that their property may be particularly substandard in terms of energy efficiency, may be well advised to consult first with their local environmental health department, if the landlord is unwilling to carry out improvement works, rather than trying to obtain landlord's consent to the carrying out of works themselves. Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) there are powers for the local authority to take action where a property is affected by "**excess cold**". Likewise, there is power to address the issue of dampness.

"One of the primary objectives of Environmental Health is to remedy hazards such as excess cold due to lack of heating and insulation,"

Dave Sexton, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, South Hams District Council

6. Are there any exemptions for tenants?

If you are a tenant who rents the property on an assured, regulated, or agricultural tenancy, you may not make a tenant's request where:

- You have given notice to your landlord ending your tenancy;
- You have a fixed term tenancy which is due to expire in less than three months and you have given notice to your landlord that you will vacate the property at the end of the term;
- Your landlord has given you notice ending your tenancy, including a notice seeking possession under section 8 or section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, or a notice to quit, and possession proceedings may be brought in reliance on that notice;
- Your landlord has started proceedings against you for possession of the property, or for a breach of your tenancy agreement, and the proceedings have not been resolved, or the court has made an order for possession of the property;
- You have arranged for an energy efficiency improvement to be made to the property in the last six months using a Green Deal plan;
- You have submitted a tenant's request in relation to the property in the last six months, and the request was refused by the landlord because an exemption applied.

7. Can social housing properties be considered?

A property is excluded from being in scope if it is social housing or is let by a social housing landlord. However where a property is let by a registered provider of social housing but is rented at full local market rate (i.e. it is not low cost rental accommodation) then the property will be in scope of the Regulations.

How to proceed

The following provides a summary of the process that a tenant may need to consider when requesting consent to make energy efficiency improvements:

Key steps: tenant	Key steps: landlord
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your tenancy type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether there are any grounds under which you could reasonably refuse consent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide which energy efficiency improvements you wish to make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether you need to obtain additional advice or evidence before making a decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure appropriate funding, and compile the necessary evidence and prepare the written request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check whether you require third party consent before consenting to the tenant's request, and decide whether you wish to make a counter proposal

For full details, see **Tenants' energy efficiency improvements provisions - guidance for domestic landlords and tenants**: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenants-energy-efficiency-improvements-provisions-guidance-for-domestic-landlords-and-tenants>. The guide provides an overview of the steps a tenant must take when preparing a consent request for their landlord, the steps a landlord must take when considering a tenant's request (including details of the situations where a consent request may be declined), and the process a tenant should follow to appeal a landlord's decision.

Does the process have to be formal?

While the provisions described in the legislative guidance document are designed to ensure that a clear process exists for tenants' who wish to request consent to make energy efficiency improvements to their accommodation, tenants and landlords remain free to make more **informal energy efficiency arrangements** if they choose.

For example, some landlords and tenants have worked together informally in the past to organize installation of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funded heating and insulation improvements. Such arrangements between landlords and tenants will be able to continue in the future, if mutually agreed, outside of the tenants' energy efficiency improvements provisions described in the Regulations.

In all cases, it is advisable that tenants discuss their energy efficiency improvement plans with their landlord before submitting a formal consent request. This will help them determine whether a formal request for consent is required, or whether a more informal route would be appropriate.

Formal tenant request

There is no set form which you must use to make a tenant's request but it is important that the request be in writing and includes certain information as discussed below. If it does not, it will not be a valid request and your landlord does not have to consider it.

You may want to ask for help in writing the request and collecting all the required information, for example from Citizens Advice, a residents association or a local tenants' rights group

Where you rent your property jointly with another tenant (or tenants) it is important that you all agree to the contents of the tenant's request before you send it because it must be from all of you. If you live in a building where there is more than one property in scope of the Regulations and those properties have the same landlord, it is possible for the tenants of those properties to join together and make one request which covers all the improvements they want to make to their respective properties. Again, all the tenants whose properties are affected by a request must agree to its contents.

The information required:

- A list of relevant energy efficiency measures you want to install;
- What works you will carry out, if any, to 'make good' the property so it is returned to its original condition following the installation of the proposed improvements, for example redecoration, and confirmation that you will cover the cost (or that costs will be covered by ECO or grants etc.);
- If the improvement you are requesting was recommended in an EPC recommendation report, a Green Deal advice report or a report prepared by a surveyor, you must provide a copy of it with the request. (*If a tenant's request to is sent to their landlord without any report, the landlord may decide to commission a survey or report themselves before they respond to your request*);
- Evidence of the funding you have secured to cover the cost of installing the energy efficiency improvements, such as a grant offer letter (*the offer of funding may be conditional on the landlord giving consent to the improvements*);
- Evidence where the improvements may be installed and funded (either fully or partially funded) under a supplier obligation such as the Energy Company Obligation;
- Where applicable, written confirmation that you propose to fully or partially fund the energy efficiency improvements yourself;
- Where applicable, confirmation of the Green Deal Plan that will be used to fund the proposed measures; and
- Where you do not intend to use a Green Deal Plan to fund the proposed improvements, a copy of the quotation for the cost of installing the measures from a Green Deal installer or another installer that meets relevant installer standards.

Formal landlord response

A landlord must provide an initial response no later than one month after the date they receive the tenant's request that states:

- They are seeking expert advice about the suitability of measures in the tenant's request,
- Whether they intend to serve a counter proposal,
- They will serve a full response to the tenant in the required timescales.

The Regulations state that a landlord who is served with a tenant's request "must not unreasonably refuse consent" to the tenant making the energy efficiency improvements which they have requested. This means that, as a landlord, you are under a statutory duty not to unreasonably refuse the tenant's request.

No later than three months after the date the landlord receives the tenant's request they must serve a full response to the tenant.

Please note that, where a landlord chooses to seek additional evidence or advice to support the decision making process, any costs incurred in procuring that advice are for the landlord to meet and cannot be recovered from the tenant. Likewise, if third party consent is required before the landlord can provide consent to the tenant's request, and where that consent incurs a cost (for example local authority planning consent fees), the costs will fall to the landlord and cannot be passed to the tenant.

Key exemptions

Depending on circumstances, certain energy efficiency measures may require **third party consent** before they can be installed. Such measures can include external wall insulation or solar panels which can require local authority planning consent in certain instances, or consent from mortgage lenders. Where third party consent is required, you, the landlord, must identify this need and seek consent.

Landlords and superior landlords can refuse consent to a tenant's request where it is a request for consent to make an energy efficiency improvement (or a combination of energy efficiency improvements) which will result in a **reduction of the market value** of the property of more than 5%. In order to rely on this exemption, the landlord must produce a report from an independent surveyor which confirms that the measures would result in the market value of the property, or the building it is in, being reduced by more than 5%

Funding energy efficiency improvements

These could apply to both tenants who wish to initiate energy efficiency improvements or landlords who are required to do so to meet the minimum regulations on EPC ratings (E). However it could also apply to a landlord who simply wishes to make energy efficiency improvements to their property at any time, where there is no regulatory requirement or tenant request.

Different types of funding will be applicable under different circumstances. The main current sources of funding are:

- **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** - help from your energy company to improve your home if you're on certain benefits or a low income, or for certain hard-to-treat properties – *See more details below.*
- **Green Deal Finance** – A pay-as-you-save scheme - The loans are repaid as part of a customer's energy bill, which will normally be reduced by the energy savings generated from the measure the loan has financed – *See more details below.*
- **Wessex Resolutions CIC** – A Community Interest Company providing Council supported loans including South Hams District Council - – *See more details below.*
- **Local Authorities** home energy efficiency grants (*none currently*)
- **Feed-in Tariffs - (FITs)** is a UK Government scheme designed to encourage uptake of a range of small-scale renewable and low-carbon electricity generation technologies. Under FITs, you could be paid for the electricity you generate if you install or have installed an eligible system like solar PV, a wind turbine, hydro or micro CHP technology. For further information, see <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/fit/>
- **Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)** - The Domestic RHI is a government financial incentive to promote the use of renewable heat from technologies including; Solar thermal, ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps and biomass systems. People who join the scheme and stick to its rules receive quarterly payments for seven years for the amount of clean, green renewable heat it's estimated their system produces. For more information, see <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/domestic-rhi/>

Funding when requested by tenant

A measure will only be a “relevant energy efficiency improvement” for a property and may only be included in a valid tenant's request where funding is available from one or a combination of the sources listed below to fully cover the cost of the improvements (including any make-good costs, or redecoration costs (if any), which may be necessary following the installation of the improvements). Relevant funding options are:

- Energy Company Obligation (ECO) (or successor supplier obligation scheme),
- Central Government or local authority funding, or third party funding, such as a grant,
- Green Deal Finance Plan (or future equivalent) or

- Tenant funding where they will pay the cost of the improvement themselves (either wholly, or in combination with another source of funding on this list)

However, following receipt of a formal tenant's request a landlord may also choose to fund, or part-fund, the requested energy efficiency improvements themselves, but this will be entirely at the discretion of the landlord and must not be relied upon. In order for the tenant request to be valid, funding must be available via one or more of the routes listed above, even if it is not ultimately used.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty.

Under ECO, larger energy suppliers fund the installation of energy efficiency measures in British households. Each obligated supplier has an overall target based on its share of the domestic energy market in Britain. The obligated energy suppliers work with installers to introduce certain efficiency measures into your home, such as loft or wall insulation or heating measures. There are two main obligations:

1) The Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO).

For the HHCRO, suppliers must deliver energy efficiency measures that reduce home heating costs for low income, fuel poor and vulnerable people. HHCRO measures can be delivered to:

- Private domestic premises occupied by someone in receipt of specific benefits (the help to heat group*)
- Private domestic premises where they are referred to ECO through a local authority declaration
- Social housing where the premises has an EPC energy efficiency rating of E, F or G. Only insulation and first time central heating measures can be delivered to these premises.

* You might be eligible for help if you live in private housing and get one of the following benefits:

- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Pension Guarantee Credit - you won't be eligible if you only claim Pension Savings Credit
- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

NB: If you claim Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit your eligibility will depend on your income.

2) The Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO). Suppliers are obliged to reduce carbon emissions by promoting the installation of wall and roof insulation and connections to district heating systems. Other insulation measures can also be installed, as long as they meet certain conditions. At least 15% of the target must be achieved in rural areas.

How to find out if you can benefit from ECO

If you live in England and Wales, your first point of contact should be the Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS) (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>), an independent helpline set up by the Energy Saving Trust (EST). This service provides free, impartial energy-saving advice for homes and businesses in England and Wales. You can contact the ESAS helpline on 0300 123 1234 or email energy-advice@est.org.uk.

HELP: You may wish to contact South Hams Citizens Advice for assistance with ECO grants – we may be able to make a referral on your behalf.

You can make further enquiries about accessing ECO measures by contacting any one of the obligated suppliers (<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/eco/contacts-guidance-and-resources/supplier-contact-details>) - it doesn't have to be your energy provider.

SAFETY CHECK

If the company claims to be an installer, always ask to see their credentials. For most measures, installers under ECO must be PAS 2030 (Publicly Available Specification) accredited, and will have a registration number. If they are installing microgeneration measures (eg measures that produce heat) they need to be Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accredited and will be registered on the MCS website (<http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/>). All companies repairing or replacing a gas boiler must be registered with Gas Safe. You can check this on Gas Safe's website (<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>).

You may also be approached by a Green Deal Provider or a Green Deal Assessor who still operate under ECO. These companies are able to determine what measures could be installed in your property and what your finance options are.

You could also use the government's energy grants calculator (<https://www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator>) to check if you are eligible for help with your energy bills.

Will I have to pay to have an energy efficiency measure installed?

It's up to suppliers to decide which measures they fund, how much they spend, and which installer they work with.

The level of funding will depend on the measure type and a number of other factors. In some cases you may be asked to contribute to the cost of the installation. If so, you may want to 'shop around' for the best deal.

NB: Since 1 April 2017 there has been a limit to the number of boilers that can be installed under the scheme.

Green Deal Finance

Green Deal financing has the potential to help landlords and letting agents requested by tenants to install energy efficiency improvements or, as of April 2018, landlords who own properties that fall below the new minimum energy efficiency (EPC) rating of E.

The loans are more easily managed, as they are repaid as part of a customer's energy bill, which will normally be reduced by the energy savings generated from the measure the loan has financed – a pay-as-you-save scheme. Furthermore, the loan remains with the property and is

paid by the energy bill payer, ensuring the payments are made by the person who benefits from the energy saving.

The improvements that could save you the most energy depend on your home, but typical examples include:

- insulation, such as solid wall, cavity wall or loft insulation
- heating
- draught-proofing
- double glazing
- renewable energy generation, such as solar panels or heat pumps

Further advice on considering energy efficiency improvements under Green Deal finance could be obtained from:

- A Green Deal assessor or provider (See <http://gdorb.decc.gov.uk/>)
- The energy grants calculator at <https://www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator>
- Energy Savings Advice Service (EAS) – contact 0300 123 1234 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm)
- The Green Deal Finance Company – see <https://www.gdfc.co.uk/>

Wessex Resolutions

Wessex Resolutions is a Community Interest Company providing Council supported loans including South Hams District Council.

Energy Loans are available to improve the energy efficiency of properties or to install renewable energy measures.

Please note, depending on your Local Authority Policy a Home Energy Loan may not be available. Each Local Authority has its own policy regarding works and loan eligibility. Please contact your Local Authority to discuss whether the energy improvements you would like to make are covered.

Why a Home Energy Loan?

- Typical 4.2% APR
- No early repayment charges
- Flexibility to make lump sum reductions of £100 or more at any time
- Your loans adviser visits you in the comfort of your own home
- Assessment of your circumstances to find a loan product to suit your needs and means
- Ethical lender working in partnership with your Local Authority

Works typically covered under a Home Energy Loan include:

- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Solid Wall Insulation
- Other steps to make your home more energy efficient

Landlord and Empty Home Loans

Landlord Loans enable the improvement of private rental sector housing and ensure tenants are living in homes which are warm, safe and suitable for their needs. Empty Property Loans enable homes which are lying empty to return to the market for sale or rent.

In addition to the benefits listed above for Home Loans, landlords are also offered the potential for deferred repayment period to enable you to rent or sell your empty property before repayments begin.

Works typically covered under a Landlord/Empty Property Loan include:

- Roof repairs
- Damp remedy
- Boiler replacement/installation
- Replacement of rotten window frames
- Electrical and plumbing work
- Updating unsafe kitchens/bathrooms
- Any other work assessed as essential by a Technical Officer from your Local Authority

Further information

If you wish to discuss a Home Energy Loan/Landlord Loan or would like to start the application process, contact Wessex Resolutions on 01823 461099 or email enquiries@wrcic.org.uk. See also website <http://www.wrcic.org.uk> for further information.

Support from Citizens Advice

- Energy Efficiency Assessment
- Switching energy tariff
- Warm Home Discount
- Priority Services Register
- Income maximisation
- Debt advice
- Facilitation

Energy efficiency assessment

Free energy efficiency assessments are available for tenant(s) or landlord, but ideally with both present. These are provided by the Sustainable Tenancy Advisor, Citizens Advice South Hams, who has a City & Guilds Level 3 Award in Energy Awareness.

The assessment can be flexible dependent on tenant/landlord interests and time availability but can include any of the following:

- Checking understanding of meter reading and energy bills.
- Check for cheaper energy tariffs, alternative payment methods and options for dealing with related debts.
- Check for eligibility and receipt of energy supply related benefits and services, including Warm Home Discount.
- Check for any issues with heating/hot water systems and advise on optimisation of use.
- Check provision of insulation against heat loss and advise on potential improvement options.
- Check for any dampness related issues and advise options for remedial action.
- Provide guidance on new legislative changes affecting energy efficiency of privately rented properties.
- Advise on funding options for energy efficiency improvements, and make referrals where appropriate.

In the meantime, see the table below with some suggestions for 'no cost actions' and 'low cost/investment actions'.

No cost actions (in approximate order of highest savings)

Action	To be considered	Next steps
Reduce the temperature of your home by 3-4°C		
Switch off five 60 W lights		
Dry clothes naturally instead of using a tumble dryer		
Programme the thermostat of your home to set the temperature low at night or when you're out of the house (3°C for 12hrs/day)		
Reduce the temperature of your home by 1°C		
Turn off standby on multiple appliances (also includes power supply type plugs)		
Place fridge in a cool environment		
Put your washing on at 40 degrees, not 60		
Only use the washing machine when it's full		
Unplug chargers not in use		
Replacing an old television with an eco-labelled television		
Boil just enough water for your hot drink		
Turn off or fix dripping taps		
Let hot food cool down to room temperature before putting it in the fridge		

Low cost and investment actions

(Sorted approximately by installation cost from least expensive to most expensive)

Action	To be considered	Next steps
Insulation for hot water pipes - DIY		
Fit radiator foil/panels		
NEW hot water cylinder jacket (80mm) - DIY		
Replace five 100Watt bulbs with low energy bulbs (20Watt)		
Replace five 60Watt bulbs with low energy bulbs (15Watt)		
Install a low-flow showerhead		
Filling gaps between floor and skirting board (DIY)		
Floor insulation (DIY& only insulation)		
Draft proofing (DIY)		
Upgrade fridge		
Adding 270mm loft insulation (no insulation to start with) -DIY		
Upgrade dishwasher		
Heating controls upgrade		
Upgrade upright/chest freezer		
Draft proofing (contractor)		
Upgrade washing machine		
Upgrade fridge/freezer		
Cavity wall insulation		
Adding loft insulation (topping up to 270mm from 50mm) (DIY)		
Upgrade to a high efficiency condensing boiler		
Adding 270mm loft insulation (no insulation to start with) - Installed		
Adding loft insulation (topping up to 270mm from 50mm)		
Internal wall insulation		
External wall insulation (during wall repair)		
Installing double glazing		
Solar hot water (4m2) - retrofit gas heated property		
Biofuels (pellet boiler) -15kW		
Ground source heat pump (9kW system)-off gas		
Photovoltaics (2.5kWp) + ROCs		
Photovoltaics (2.5kWp)		
Small wind - mast mounted (5-6kW)		

Switching energy tariff

You can usually still change energy supplier if you rent your home. The exception is if your landlord pays your supplier for the energy you use. If you're not sure whether you're responsible for paying for your energy, check your tenancy agreement.

HELP TO SWITCH

You'll probably save money on your gas and electricity bills by switching to a new supplier or tariff. **Citizens Advice South Hams** can help with this process, including checking for cheaper tariffs.

If you pay your energy supplier

You have the right to switch supplier if you pay your energy supplier directly for your gas or electricity. This includes if you have a prepayment meter.

You should check your tenancy agreement to see if the landlord has a 'preferred supplier'. This won't stop you from switching supplier, but you should tell your landlord or letting agent.

You may have to return the account to the original supplier at the end of your tenancy.

If your landlord pays your energy supplier

You don't have the right to switch supplier if your landlord pays the energy company directly and then charges you.

If you want to change supplier, you'll need to ask your landlord to do it - but they don't have to.

Your landlord can only charge you for:

- the units of energy you've used (for example, the kilowatt hours you've used for electricity)
- your share of the standing charge (a flat fee charged on every energy contract)
- the VAT owed (5% for energy)

This is called the 'maximum resale price' - your landlord can't charge you more than this.

Having prepayment meters removed or installed

Your landlord can't stop you replacing a prepayment meter with a normal meter that lets you pay after using energy rather than in advance. You don't need your landlord's permission to do this.

If you get behind on your gas or electricity bills, your energy supplier might want to install a prepayment meter. Your landlord can't stop this, and you don't need their permission.

Returning the original meters at the end of your tenancy

If you install or remove prepayment meters, you might have to put the original meters back at the end of your tenancy. This is because the change will count as an alteration to the property. You'll have to pay any fee your energy supplier charges for changing the meters back.

Most people's suppliers don't charge a fee for installing or removing meters. If yours does, think about switching supplier. Or tell your current supplier you'll switch to another one - they might remove the fee if you stay with them.

Before you decide to switch

You should start by:

- checking which type of meter you have
- finding out if your contract has an 'exit fee' for leaving early - it's usually on your bill
- looking at your current suppliers tariffs

Choosing the right tariff

It's worth thinking about the type of tariff you need before you switch - for example, you might want:

- a flexible tariff that you can get out of at any time
- an environmentally-friendly tariff
- the cheapest tariff available

You should also check whether you need a specific tariff for the type of electricity meter you have - for example, if you have a prepayment meter or an 'Economy 7' meter.

If you have a smart meter, you'll need to check your new supplier supports smart meters before you switch.

If you get the Warm Home Discount, check whether your new supplier offers the Warm Home Discount before you switch - you'll lose it if they don't.

If you've applied for the Warm Home Discount but not yet got it, you'll have to apply again if you switch supplier - check if your new supplier has different rules about who gets it.

How to switch supplier or tariff

Follow these steps to switch:

1. Compare tariffs from different suppliers (make sure you use a comparison site that is approved by OFGEM, such as <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/>)
2. Once you've found one, call the supplier - they'll set up the switch and tell your old supplier. Alternatively, you can switch online.
3. Take a meter reading on the day of the transfer to give to your new supplier - this means they won't charge you for energy used before the switch.
4. Pay your old supplier's final bill or get a refund if you're in credit.

Once the switch has started, you'll also need to give the new supplier your energy meter reference numbers, known as 'MPRN' or 'MPAN' numbers. This will make sure they switch your energy supply and not someone else's. You can find these numbers on your energy bill.

Warm Home Discount

This is an annual £140 off a customer's electricity bill. The money is usually applied as a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March. You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out.

There are 2 ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme:

- **Core group** - You get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- **Broader group** - You're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme (such as receiving means-tested benefits). Your electricity supplier decides who can get the discount - check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply. Check with your supplier as early as possible. The number of discounts suppliers can give are limited.

You can still qualify for the discount if you use a **pre-pay** or **pay-as-you-go** electricity meter. Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible, for example a voucher you can use to top up your meter.

Core group

You qualify for the discount if on 9 July of a particular year, all of the following applied:

- your energy supplier was part of the scheme (see <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers> to check)
- your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
- you were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)

You'll receive a letter by the end of November in a qualifying year telling you how to get the discount if you qualify. Your letter will say if you need to call a helpline by 31 January 2018 to confirm your details. Your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill by the end of March 2018.

If you don't get a letter, Contact the Warm Home Discount Team if you didn't get the letter and you think you're eligible for the 'core group' - Telephone: 0345 603 9439.

Priority Services Register

If you find it hard to deal with your energy supply, you might be able to sign up to the Priority Services Register (PSR). This gets you extra support from your energy supplier.

You'll need to contact your energy network and fill in a signup form. Your energy network is the company that manages the electricity meters in your area, not the company you get bills from.

Check if you can sign up

You can register for priority services if your energy network considers you 'vulnerable'. This can apply to lots of different situations - for example if you:

- are disabled or seriously ill
- are recovering from an injury
- have mental health problems

- don't speak or read English well
- have children under 5 or are pregnant
- have reached your State Pension age

If your situation isn't listed, you might still be able to sign up for priority services if you find it hard to deal with your energy supply.

Help provided

Each energy network offers different support. The help you can get depends on your circumstances. You can call your energy network before you apply if you want to check exactly which priority services you could get.

Power cuts and interruptions - Make sure your energy network knows you'd be more at risk during a power cut or an interruption to your supply - for example if you rely on electrical medical equipment. You can ask your energy network to:

- warn you about supply interruptions
- automatically compensate you if your supply is interrupted
- give you cooking appliances or hot meals during a power cut

Your meter and supply - If you're registered, you can ask your energy network to:

- move your meter so it's easier for you to access
- send someone to read your meter every 3 months

Your bills and communications- If you struggle to read bills or aren't confident contacting your supplier, you can ask for:

- accessible bills - e.g. braille or type talk
- an interpreter if your first language isn't English
- your network to say a passphrase when they contact you

Fill in the priority services form

To find the right form, the first thing you'll need to do is find out which energy network covers your area. Your energy network is the company that supplies energy in your area - this is different to the company that sends your bills. Once you know your energy network, you can fill in the form on their website to apply for priority services.

To find which energy network covers your area – use this website to find out <http://www.powercut105.com/FindOperator#form>

For South Hams the energy network is **Western Power Distribution** - You'll need to give your contact details and answer a few questions about your requirements.

You can call instead if you'd prefer to speak to someone.

Telephone: 0800 096 3080
Textphone: 0800 096 3080
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Calls are free from landlines and mobiles.

Find the right form

Each network has their own application form. For Western Power, see <https://www.westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Priority-Services/Priority-Services-Register.aspx>

After you've signed up

Depending on your energy network, they might not contact you after you've signed up, so it's a good idea to call your energy network if you don't hear anything within 2 weeks. Ask them:

- if you're on the register
- what support options they can offer you
- if they've given your details to the energy supplier who deals with your bills - they should do this

If you move house, your new home might be covered by a different energy network - this means you'll need to sign up again. Use the tool on this page to check which energy network covers your new home.

Income maximisation

As part of a general assessment of tenants, the advisor can also look at **Income Maximisation** to check if they are receiving all the benefits that they meet the necessary eligibility, and also support them with any related issues.

The advisor can if necessary make a referral for the tenant with specialist benefit advisers based at Citizens Advice South Hams. Appointments can then be made either at Follaton House or via a telephone call.

Tenants may wish to check their own benefit entitlement via Turn2us: turn2us.org.uk, tel 0808 802 2000 (Mon–Fri 09.00–20.00)

Benefits quick guide

- **Means-tested**
 - Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance - looking for work
 - Income-Based Employment and Support Allowance - unable to work (illness or disability)
 - Income Support — various categories of people not expected to look for work, e.g. single parents of infants
 - Working Tax Credit — in low-paid work
 - Child Tax Credit — have a child
 - Housing Benefit (incorporating Local Housing Allowance) — help with rent

- Council Tax Reduction/Support — help with council tax
- Local welfare assistance (hardship and resettlement payments) and discretionary housing payments
- Universal Credit — replacement for various working-age means-tested benefits and tax credits, being introduced gradually
- Pension Credit — pensioners
- **Contributory**
 - Contribution-Based Jobseeker's Allowance — looking for work
 - Contribution-Based Employment and Support Allowance — unable to work due to illness or disability
 - Bereavement Benefit, Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Allowance — widowed before pensionable age
 - State Retirement Pension — pensioners
- **Non-contributory**
 - Personal Independence Payment — working age with a disability
 - Attendance Allowance — pensioners with care needs
 - Disability Living Allowance - < 16 with a disability (or adult and not yet transitioned to PIP)
 - Industrial injuries benefits — disabled through work
 - Carer's Allowance — providing care for someone severely disabled
 - Child Benefit — have a child (means-tested for high earners)
 - Guardian's Allowance — responsible for an orphan
 - Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay, Statutory Adoption Pay, Statutory Shared Parental Pay — away from work due to a new baby
 - Maternity Allowance — pregnant and not entitled to SMP
 - Statutory Sick Pay — away from work temporarily due to illness

Debt advice

As part of a general assessment of tenants, the advisor can if appropriate look at **debt** related issues to see if any support would be helpful.

The advisor can then if necessary make a referral for an appointment with advisers based at Citizens Advice South Hams at Follaton House for further debt support.

Tenants can also seek advice from any of the following:

- **Money Advice Service:** 0300 500 5000, moneyadviceservice.org.uk
- **Stepchange** - 0800 138 1111
- **National Debtline:** 0808 808 4000, nationaldebtline.org

As part of an initial assessment, consideration will be given to:

- Priority vs non-priority debts. The following are considered as priority debts:
 - Rent arrears
 - Gas and electricity arrears
 - Court fines
 - Council tax arrears

- Child support arrears
- Stage of any recovery proceedings, and any deadlines, emergencies or key dates
- Overall level of debt
- Tenants household circumstances and sources of income

Looking into the Future

In Oct 2017 the Government published a policy paper, '**The Clean Growth Strategy - Leading the way to a low carbon future**'. The paper sets out our proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy through the 2020s. It explains how the whole country can benefit from low carbon opportunities, while meeting national and international commitments to tackle climate change.

Considering the energy efficiency of our homes, the paper sets out the following proposals:

- Support around £3.6 billion of investment to upgrade around a million homes through the **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**, and extend support for home energy efficiency improvements until 2028 at the current level of ECO funding.
- We want all fuel poor homes to be upgraded to **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) B and C by 2030** and our aspiration is for as many homes as possible to be EPC B and C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable.
- Phase out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating in new and existing homes currently off the gas grid during the 2020s, starting with new homes.
- Improve standards on the 1.2 million new **boilers** installed every year in England and require installations of control devices to help people save energy.
- Invest in low carbon heating by reforming the **Renewable Heat Incentive**, spending £4.5 billion to support innovative low carbon heat technologies in homes and businesses between 2016 and 2021.
- Innovation: Invest around £184 million of public funds, including two new £10 million innovation programmes to develop new energy efficiency and heating technologies to enable lower cost low carbon homes.

"It is clear from these proposals that the current and impending regulations are only going in one direction, i.e. to make UK homes increasingly energy efficient."

Nick White, Sustainable Tenancy Advisor, Citizens Advice, South Hams

Further information and help

Tenants' energy efficiency improvements provisions - guidance for domestic landlords and tenants – See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenants-energy-efficiency-improvements-provisions-guidance-for-domestic-landlords-and-tenants>

The guide provides an overview of the steps a tenant must take when preparing a consent request for their landlord, the steps a landlord must take when considering a tenant's request (including details of the situations where a consent request may be declined), and the process a tenant should follow to appeal a landlord's decision.

The Private Rented Property minimum standard – landlord guidance documents

– see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-private-rented-property-minimum-standard-landlord-guidance-documents>

The guide provides guidance to landlords of privately rented domestic and non-domestic property on complying with the 2018 'Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency' standard (EPC band E).

How to rent: The checklist for renting in England – This guide is accessible for free on the Department's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>

Gas Safe Register – see <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

Retaliatory Eviction and the Deregulation Act 2015 – see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/465275/Retaliatory_Eviction_Guidance_Note.pdf

Domestic Energy Performance Certificate Register - <https://www.epcregister.com/> - This website will allow you to:

- Find a Domestic Energy Assessor.
- Retrieve an Energy Performance Certificate

Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS) (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>), is an independent helpline set up by the Energy Saving Trust (EST). This service provides free, impartial energy-saving advice for homes and businesses in England and Wales. If you live in England and Wales, contact the ESAS helpline on 0300 123 1234 or email energy-advice@est.org.uk.

Policy paper: **Clean Growth Strategy (12th October 2017)** - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>

HOW TO RENT GUIDE - This is a short booklet that gives tenants key details about their rights, and what they should expect from private renting. It also gives information about what to do if there is a problem during the tenancy. This guide is accessible for free on the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>

For further information on the **Retaliatory Eviction and the Deregulation Act 2015** – see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/465275/Retaliatory_Eviction_Guidance_Note.pdf

Factsheets

The following factsheets are available to download from www.cse.org.uk/advice-leaflets

Meters

- **Gas and electricity** (How to read the meters)
- **Prepayment meters** (The pay-as-you-go way of buying energy)

Heating & Hot water systems

- **Central heating controls** (Making the most of your heating system)
- **Economy 7** (For heating and hot water)
- **Room heaters** (What are the best options for extra heat?)
- **Night storage heaters** (A simple guide)
- **Fan-assisted storage heaters** (A worthwhile upgrade when your heaters need replacing)
- **Flue gas heat recovery** (Capturing the waste heat)
- **Hot water cylinders** (saving money on water heating)
- **Warm air units** (An alternative heating system)

Reducing heat loss

- **Keeping the cold air out** (Simple DIY draught-proofing)
- **Secondary glazing** (The low cost alternative to double glazing)
- **Insulate your cavity wall** (and keep the heat at home)
- **Insulate your loft** (and stop the 'great escape')
- **How to insulate your loft** (A guide for the competent DIY-er)
- **Energy efficient glazing** (Keep the heat in and the noise out)
- **Internal solid wall insulation** (Adding a thermal layer to the inside walls)
- **External solid wall insulation** (A thermal layer for outside walls)

Other

- **Tips for lower energy bills**
- **The low-energy bulb revolution**
- **Buying domestic heating oil**
- **A beginner's guide to the Renewable Heat Incentive**
- **Condensation, damp and mould**

Easy Read Guides

- **Tips on how to save energy and money at home**
- **Dealing with damp and mould in your home**

Meeting new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

The following only provides a summary of the new regulations that a landlord will need to consider to meet these new requirements – for full details, see **The Private Rented Property minimum standard – landlord guidance documents** at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-private-rented-property-minimum-standard-landlord-guidance-documents> - The guide provides guidance to landlords on the following:

- **The scope of the regulations** – the steps a landlord should take to determine whether their property is covered by the regulations, and the steps they should take to ensure that their property complies with the minimum level of energy efficiency
- **Relevant improvements** – how a landlord can identify appropriate energy efficiency improvements for their property
- **No upfront cost funding** (*domestic only*) – how a landlord can investigate availability of no-cost funding to cover the cost of improving a domestic property
- **Exemptions and exclusions** – the exemptions framework and the steps a landlord should take to register a valid exemption
- **Enforcement** – the enforcement framework and the options open to enforcement authorities when policing compliance with the MEES, including information on fines and other penalty options
- **The appeals process** – landlord appeals will be heard by the First-tier Tribunal, part of the court system administered by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service; the guidance discusses the steps a landlord will need to take to lodge an appeal and how that process will be managed

Glossary

Domestic Private Rented Property – any private rented property that is a residential dwelling not used for commercial purposes

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) - a government scheme to obligate larger energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency measures to domestic premises in Britain.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) – a report that assesses the energy efficiency of a property and recommends specific ways in which the efficiency of the property could be improved. Almost all domestic and commercial buildings available to buy or rent in the UK must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which must be produced for prospective buyers or tenants (some exemptions do apply, for example for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)).

First-tier Tribunal – part of the tribunals system administered by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service; the body which hears tenants' appeals under the Tenants' energy efficiency improvements provisions.

Freeholder - a company or a person which owns the freehold of a building.

The Green Deal – a government backed initiative designed to provide advice on the energy saving improvements you can make to your home, and identify the best way to pay for them.

Green Deal Finance - a loan to pay for some or all of the cost of installing energy improvements in your home (*please note: Green Deal Finance is not currently available*).

Green Deal Plan – a contract between a property owner or occupier and a Green Deal Provider setting out the terms of a Green Deal finance loan.

Green Deal Report – a report, prepared by a qualified advisor, listing the energy efficiency improvements that are possible in a building, and setting out which of these are likely to be cost-effective. Even though Green Deal finance is not currently available Green Deal Reports (sometimes called Assessors Reports or Advice Reports) are still available.

HHSRS - While not directly related to the minimum level of energy efficiency, landlords will wish to be aware of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). HHSRS is a method of assessing housing conditions (both rented and owner occupied) established by the Housing Act 2004. It employs a risk assessment approach to enable risks from hazards to health and safety in dwellings to be minimised. Hazards include those relating to dampness and excess heat/cold.

Improvement Notice – notice issued by a local authority following an HHSRS assessment, requiring the owner of a property to carry out work to deal with an identified hazard.

Leaseholder – a person or company who owns the lease on a property (the leaseholder owns the lease to a property but the freeholder is the ultimate legal owner). The lease gives the leaseholder the right to use of a property for a certain amount of time, e.g. 125 years. A leaseholder can in turn grant a lease or enter into a tenancy agreement with a tenant to occupy the property.

The Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency – the prescribed minimum EPC band (band E) allowed under the Regulations for domestic private rented property which is let (including renewal) from the 1 April 2018, or which continues to be let from 1 April 2020, subject to any qualifying exemptions.

Publication penalty – is where an enforcement authority takes actions to publish some details of a landlord's breach, on the publicly accessible part of the PRS Exemptions Register.

Superior Landlord – where a property is held under a lease (so that it is leasehold property) this guidance refers to the person who is the immediate landlord of the tenant who makes the tenant's request, as the "landlord". A "superior landlord" will be the person from whom the landlord leases the property, who may be the freeholder of the property. If there is a chain of leases, then the landlord under each of the leases involved will be a "superior landlord".

Supplier Obligation – an alternative name for the Energy Company Obligation (see above) or any successor scheme.

Tenancy Agreement – agreement between the private landlord who rents out a property and the tenant who is entitled to occupy the property. It can be written, or in some cases will be verbal.