

Selling a new low energy home

Hints & tips for sales negotiators & estate agents



The essential guide for sales negotiators and estate agents

There are many compelling reasons for your customers to buy a new home instead of an older property. One of the key benefits is that new homes are much more energy efficient.

New homes come with higher levels of insulation and high-performance glazing, designed ventilation, comprehensive heating controls, solar panels and other energy-saving benefits.

Of course, energy efficiency is gaining popularity in existing homes too. There are over 1.5 million UK homes now with solar panels and there were more than 84,000 heat pumps installed in 2024.

Below are examples of some of the features that may be found in new low energy, all-electric homes

- 1 Raised loft storage area
- 2 Well insulated building fabric
- 3 Trickle vents
- 4 Low energy extract fans
- 5 Aerated shower
- 6 Aerated taps
- 7 Low flush toilet
- 8 Hot water store
- 9 Air source heat pump
- 10 Underfloor heating
- 11 Room thermostat or smart heating controls
- 12 Internal door undercuts
- 13 Solar panels
- 14 LED lighting
- 15 Warm (rather than hot) radiators
- 16 Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs)
- 17 Electric car charging point
- 18 High performance double or triple glazing
- 19 Airtight and insulated external doors
- 20 Comfortable room temperatures
- 21 Waste Water Heat Recovery



But new homes are still ahead of the game. In particular, homebuilders are increasingly moving to all-electric fossil-fuel free heating systems, before changes in building regulations effectively make this mandatory for all new homes commenced from 2028. Consequently, many new homes now include a heat pump instead of a gas or oil boiler. This is a significant change for many customers.

This guide aims to help you sell such homes with greater clarity and confidence.

There will be differences between living in these new low energy, all-electric homes and the homes that your buyers have previously experienced.

This guide will help you ensure that the homebuyer is aware of these differences, and is able to get the very best from their home when they move in.

Consumer codes and laws covering the sale of new homes require all developers and their agents to be honest, accurate, fair and complete in the information provided to buyers.

For example, details of known or anticipated costs, or charges for regular maintenance of integral plant and equipment (including, for example, air source heat pumps), should go to the buyer's legal adviser during the purchase process. You should check which consumer code applies to the property you are selling and its specific requirements.

Read our companion guide: Buying a new low energy home

This brochure from the Future Homes Hub and MCS has been written for your customers to explain the benefits of buying a new low energy, all-electric home, what they can expect and how to get the best from their energy efficient appliances.

There are three versions of the brochure available for you to give to customers, depending on which one best suits the property you're selling:

Version A – The full guide to living with heat pumps and related low energy technologies

Version B – No reference to batteries or MVHR

Version C – No reference to batteries, MVHR or underfloor heating

Each version is available in 'read on screen', 'print at home', and 'professional print' formats.



We hope that the answers to your customers' queries are covered in this important guide. For further advice, speak to your customer service or technical team or use the resources offered in the brochure.



Find the brochures in 'Householder Guidance' on the Future Homes Hub website:
<https://knowledge.futurehomes.org.uk/resource/wek/buying-low-energy>

The journey to net zero

What's driving all this change in the way we build new homes?

The UK government has committed to moving away from fossil fuels, improving energy security and has a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The Future Homes Standard, the new building regulations for heat and power in England is expected to be published in early 2026 and come into force in 2028. The Scottish and Welsh governments are also introducing similar regulations. This means new build homes will be future-proofed with low-carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency.

All new homes will then be 'zero carbon ready', meaning they will be zero carbon once the electricity grid has been decarbonised.

Most homebuilders are already preparing for the introduction of these new regulations and the Future Homes Standard. That's why we're seeing so many changes in the way new homes are being designed and built.

There is likely to be a range of features, some large and some small, that combine to make a low energy home. Many of these are illustrated on pages 6 and 7 of the Householder Guide.



Introduction of heat pumps

One of the most obvious aspects is likely to be the way homes will be heated. It is expected that the installation of heat pumps in new homes will gather pace over the coming years. This is the focus of this guide.

Heat pumps take the heat energy from outside air (even on a cold day) or from the ground and concentrate it into usable heat for a home, warming radiators or underfloor heating systems. Heat pump systems require a cylinder to store hot water.

While there are similarities with gas boilers – they produce hot water and space heating for homes – in some regards, they are very different:

Clearly, customers will take time to get used to the combination of low energy technologies. But there's nothing to be worried about. Homes heated by heat pumps are warm and comfortable and when combined with smart time-of-use energy tariffs can benefit from low running costs.

Remember how strange the idea of an electric car sounded when the first few rolled off the production line? Think of the new homes you are selling as one of thousands of electric houses – they are the UK's energy-efficient future.

Consumer Codes

Under Government rules, every homebuilder must be signed up to a code of practice which sets mandatory requirements in the marketing and selling of new homes and after-sales customer service. This aims to drive up the quality of new build homes and strengthen protections for customers. It starts from the moment a customer walks into a sales office.

A homebuilder may choose to use the code provided by its warranty provider, or by an independent body such as the New Homes Quality Board.

Make sure you are familiar with your Consumer Code and how its requirements would apply to the sale of new low energy homes.



Existing home with a gas or oil boiler

Work by burning fossil fuels, creating carbon emissions.

Energy efficiency of the heating and hot water system is approximately 1 : 0.9 (or 90% efficiency).

Usually located inside the property, for example in a kitchen or utility cupboard.

Generally considered 'high power' heating systems that heat up fast, but in an under-insulated home also cool down fast. Think of a gas boiler as stop-start, sprint technology.

When the heating is on, radiators can be very hot to the touch.

Generally installed with a central thermostat 'on/off' control together with TRVs (thermostatic radiator valves), often with a timed schedule to rapidly heat the home and maintain temperature as and when needed.

Combi-boilers usually heat water on demand so don't need a hot water cylinder and effectively provide continuous hot water.

Other boilers, typically found in larger homes, might have a hot water cylinder (in an airing cupboard, for example) which may run cold if very large quantities of hot water are used. Relatively quick reheating time for the hot water tank.

There is an intermittent internal noise from the boiler when in use – more in the winter when space heating is required or hot water is running continuously for a shower or bath.

New boilers will usually last for 10-15 years before needing to be replaced.

Needs servicing every year to make sure it is safe and performing at its best. See manufacturer's guidance.

Existing homes with fossil fuel boilers will be expected to progressively switch to low carbon heat sources.

New home with a heat pump

Work by using electricity, which increasingly comes from renewable and low carbon sources.

Energy efficiency of the heating and hot water system is approximately 1 : 3+ (or over 300% efficiency).

Depends on the technology. Air source heat pumps are usually located outside a property, for example next to an external wall. Ground source, exhaust air and hot water-only heat pump units are usually located within the home.

Generally considered 'warm', rather than 'hot' heating that performs very efficiently and effectively. Think of a heat pump as gentle jog technology.

When the heating is on, radiators are warm to the touch.

Similar controls, but can take a different approach to warming the home:

When householders are home more of the day, maintaining a constant temperature is likely to give the lowest energy bills. Simply set the temperature and come and go as you please.

Where householders are out and about for long periods most days, it may be best to set warming periods as you would with a gas boiler, except rather than switching the heating off set two temperatures: the 'daytime at home' temperature and a lower 'setback' temperature (a few degrees below the normal running temperature) scheduled for when everyone is out and for use during the night, rather than switching the heat pump off.

When on holiday, householders should set 'holiday mode', as they would with a boiler, to provide heating system protection. This provides frost protection and intermittently runs the pumps and switches valves to ensure all heating system components remain in the best working order. Setting the heating to come back on a few hours before expected return giving time for the home to get back up to a comfortable temperature.

All homes will typically have quite a large hot water cylinder to service most or all of the hot water demand. Expect longer re-heat times, which may be supplemented by immersion heater only for times when a rapid top-up is required.

A more continuous external fan noise from an air source heat pump's outside unit – more in the winter when space heating is required and a little more noticeable during defrost cycles and during very cold weather.

A heat pump should last as long or longer than a typical boiler.

Needs servicing every year, just the same as you would do with a gas boiler. See manufacturer's guidance.

The new home and heating system is designed to be net zero-ready, avoiding future retrofitting cost to homeowners.

Top Tips for Sales Negotiators and Estate Agents

TIP 1

Know the difference between a boiler and a heat pump heated home.

A great source of information is page 7 of this guide, which gives a comparison between them.

TIP 2

Know how and why a heat pump heating system is installed and operates differently to a gas or oil boiler system.

A great source of information are pages 14-15 of our 'Buying a new low energy home' heat pump edition guides.

TIP 3

Be able to confidently explain the features and benefits of a new low energy, all-electric home, and be able to provide appropriate information to help address any concerns or negative perceptions raised by buyers.

A great source of information are pages 7-13 of our 'Buying a new low energy home' heat pump edition guides.

TIP 4

Know why new homes are integrating low-energy, all-electric, future-ready technologies and eliminating fossil fuel boilers.

A great source of information is page 18 of our 'Buying a new low energy home' heat pump edition guides.

TIP 5

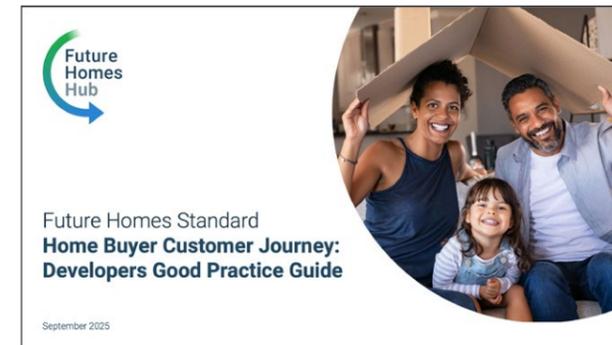
Familiarise yourself with the answers to the FAQs section on pages 16-17 in our 'Buying a new low energy home' heat pump edition guides.

TIP 6

If a buyer wants to know more, point them to the Further Information section on page 19 of our 'Buying a new low energy home' heat pump edition guides.

Find out more about how leading homebuilders are refining their marketing and sales processes to help customers understand and benefit from the new features in low energy, future-ready homes in our [Home Buyer Customer Journey: Developers Good Practice Guide](#).

Insights ranging from initial development marketing and first customer contact, to pre-handover home demonstrations and aftercare follow-ups.



Download the Home Buyer Customer Journey: Developers Good Practice Guide.

<https://knowledge.futurehomes.org.uk/resource/home-buyer-customer-journey-guide>

Home User Guides

The Future Homes Hub has also issued guidance on Home User Guides. Developers must provide homeowners with information to help them use their new homes in a healthy and energy-efficient way.

You must make sure any information you provide is:

- Easy to read and understand
- Specific to the home
- Durable
- In an accessible format

You must also give homeowners a user guide about how to operate and maintain the services and systems included in their new home.

The guide must cover the following areas:

- Heating and domestic hot water
- Renewable energy - for example, on-site electricity generation
- Staying cool in hot weather
- Ventilation

It also must refer to each of the services and systems and explain:

- What they are
- What they do
- Their location - including a floorplan
- How they operate - including the location and operation of timers and sensors (noting this is different with a heat pump)
- How they are maintained
- Where to go for further information



Future Homes Hub guidance on Home User Guides:
<https://knowledge.futurehomes.org.uk/resource/building-regulations-and-the-new-home-user-guide>

