

The Green Deal

and consumer protection – a guide for domestic consumers



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

What is the Green Deal?

The Green Deal is designed to help householders and businesses increase the energy efficiency of properties and therefore reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the UK.



The Green Deal will be offered by the private sector to enable homeowners and businesses to implement energy efficiency improvements. The scheme lets customers pay for some or all of the improvements over time through their energy bills. The Green Deal Plan will be a new type of unsecured loan, and interest will be charged on the loan. You will be liable for the loan whilst you are the electricity bill payer at the property.

It is likely that savings will mainly be made on your heating bills (e.g. gas, oil or electricity). Your Green Deal repayments will all be added to your electricity bill (because everyone has one of these). There may be an upfront charge for the assessment, which must be carried out before the Green Deal Plan is agreed.

Get help with the Green Deal

The Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS) provides free and impartial advice about the Green Deal. It can help with information about:

- Getting a Green Deal
- Paying off your Green Deal through your electricity bill
- Moving into or out of a property with a Green Deal
- Complaints procedures, if things go wrong
- Identifying Green Deal Approved Assessors, Providers and Installers

Assessment

A Green Deal Assessor will visit your home, talk to you about your property and your energy use and help decide if you could benefit from Green Deal improvements.

To help ensure they provide an accurate assessment, your Assessor may ask:

- How many people live in your home
- The types of appliances and heating used
- How often the heating system is used
- If you have any current energy-saving measures installed
- Whether you own or rent the property
- Whether your home is in a conservation area, built before 1900 or constructed in a non-traditional way.

They will recommend improvements and indicate whether they are expected to pay for themselves through reduced energy costs. The actual energy savings will depend on how much energy you use and the future costs of energy, and the actual cost of the improvements will depend on the price quoted by Green Deal Providers. All of this information will be provided to you in a Green Deal Advice Report.

Post-assessment

Your Assessor should have now provided you with an understanding of the types of improvements you could make to your home. They should have also given you:

- An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) showing the energy use of a typical household of your type, plus suggestions for improvements.
- An Occupancy Assessment (OA) showing how your household uses energy, plus some recommendations for reducing your energy use and the savings you can expect from the improvements.

Now you're ready to get some quotes from any Green Deal Provider. During the assessment, the Green Deal Assessor will not be able to recommend specific products or providers, or offer other goods/services, unless you agree to this.

Choosing a Green Deal Provider

You are free to take the Green Deal Advice Report to any Green Deal Provider to obtain quotes for a Green Deal Plan, which will include interest on the loan. In general, you are encouraged to obtain quotes from a few Green Deal Providers to decide which (if any) is best suited to your individual needs and circumstances.

Only Green Deal Providers can offer you a Green Deal Plan. The improvements will have to be recommended by a Green Deal Assessor and installed by a Green Deal Installer. Look out for the Green Deal Quality Mark. Only Green Deal Assessors, Providers and Installers can use it. This shows they meet Green Deal standards and are authorised to operate under the Green Deal.



Some ways you could improve your home

LOFT INSULATION

Heat rises and it may be leaking into your loft. Insulating your loft, or topping up your existing insulation, will keep heat inside your living spaces for longer.

CREATE YOUR OWN ENERGY

Technologies like wind turbines and solar panels can capture energy and turn it into electricity or heat for your home.

WINDOWS

Homes leak heat through their windows. By replacing your windows with double or triple glazed windows, or installing secondary glazing to your existing windows, you'll keep your home warmer and reduce outside noise.

BOILERS

Older boilers tend to lose a lot of heat so they use a lot of energy.

High efficiency condensing boilers and air or ground source heat pumps recover a lot of heat so they use less energy.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SOLID WALL INSULATION

Older homes usually have solid walls. Installing insulation on the inside or outside of the wall can dramatically reduce the heat that escapes your home.

CAVITY WALL INSULATION

Some homes have walls with a hollow space in the middle. Putting insulation in this space is quick and makes no mess because the work can be done from outside your home.

DRAUGHT PROOFING

Gaps around doors, windows, loft hatches, fittings and pipework are common sources of draughts. Sealing up the gaps will stop heat escaping your home.





Entering into a Green Deal Plan

A Green Deal Provider will give you a quote for the cost of the work, and provide key terms such as the rate of interest and the repayment amounts. Once you're happy with a quote from a Green Deal Provider, they will write up a Green Deal Plan. This is a contract between you and the provider – it outlines the repayments, including the fixed interest charges.

Green Deal Plans are regulated under the Consumer Credit Act 1974. This provides you with important rights and protections, including cooling off periods and rules around exit arrangements and early repayments.

How repayments are calculated

Repayments will be fixed at the outset and will include costs associated with the administration and provision of credit for the Green Deal Plan.

Repayment levels will be based on what a typical household like yours is expected to save on energy bills. The Green Deal is designed to try to save you at least as much money as you will have to repay. However the actual level of your savings will depend on how much energy you use (e.g. to heat your home) and the future cost of energy.

Caution: If you use less energy than a typical household you can, if you want, take out a Green Deal Plan based on the typical savings shown on the Energy Performance Certificate. However, if you do this, your repayments are likely to be higher than your savings and therefore your energy bills are likely to go up overall. Alternatively, you can discuss with your Green Deal Provider whether your repayments should be reduced, so that they are in line with the savings that your household is likely to make. Your Green Deal Provider will discuss this with you and obtain a written acknowledgement from you if you decide to go ahead with repayments based on a typical household's estimated savings.

Repayment

Your Green Deal repayments will be collected by your electricity supplier via your electricity bill and passed on to your Green Deal Provider. The bills will separately identify Green Deal instalments.

At least once per year, your Green Deal Provider will send you statements of your account, showing how much you have paid off and how much you have left to pay. You can also request a statement of account and a copy of the Green Deal Plan at any time from your Green Deal Provider.

You have the right to pay your Green Deal off early. Your Green Deal Provider may charge early repayment fees – you should check with them.

Moving on

Green Deal repayments are part of the electricity bill for the property. So the person responsible for paying the electricity bill – usually the occupier – is responsible for making repayments for the improvements. If they move, the next electricity bill payer will take on the repayments.

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (for England and Wales), or the Recommendations Report attached to the EPC (for Scotland) will show if there is a Green Deal on a home. If there is, the certificate or report will show the improvements made, the repayment amounts and how long you will need to make repayments for. If you own the property or are the landlord, you will have to provide a copy of these documents to the next occupier and get their written acknowledgement of the Green Deal.

New bill payer of a property with an existing Green Deal Plan

If you are the new bill payer and believe the Green Deal Plan was not disclosed to you, you should dispute the charges with your Green Deal Provider within 90 days of first being notified. After 90 days you will not be able to dispute the charges and will be liable to make Green Deal repayments while occupying the property.

Switching electricity supply for a property with an existing Green Deal Plan

You will be able to switch electricity suppliers and continue with payment of the Green Deal Plan via your new electricity supplier, provided that the new supplier is participating in the Green Deal payment collection system. You should contact your electricity supplier for further information.

Green Deal sales – cold calling

If you display a “No Cold Caller” sticker at your home, or if you are approached by a salesperson and indicate that you do not wish to be contacted anymore, you can expect the caller to stop contacting you. This applies to face-to-face, phone and electronic communications. You can report complaints to the Oversight and Registration Body.

Salespeople who offer a Green Deal Assessment are required to:

- Allow at least one day before they can conduct the assessment, unless you provide written consent to a same day assessment
- Explain cooling-off periods, if they apply
- Tell you what products and services they intend to provide, including marketing of products not related to the Green Deal
- Tell you who they work for and if they have commercial links with other Green Deal participants and third parties
- Tell you if they receive commission from others.



Useful contacts and information:

Energy Saving Advice Service

ESAS telephone: 0300 123 1234
www.Direct.gov.uk/GreenDeal

Oversight and Registration Body

ORB telephone: 0 207 090 1031
Complaints: GDORBComplaints@gemserv.com
Enquiries about the Oversight and Registration Body: GDORBhelpdesk@gemserv.com

Complaint handling procedures:

If a complaint or enquiry about the Green Deal cannot be resolved by the Green Deal Provider, or supplier, consumers may have recourse to the relevant Ombudsman, depending on the complaint.

Energy Ombudsman Service/Green Deal Ombudsman and Investigation Service on 0330 440 1624 or 01925 530 263, visit: www.ombudsman-services.org or email: enquiries@os-energy.org

Financial Ombudsman Service on 0800 023 4567 or 0300 123 9 123, visit: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk or email: complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk