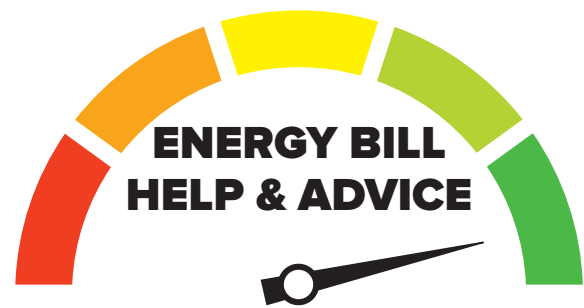
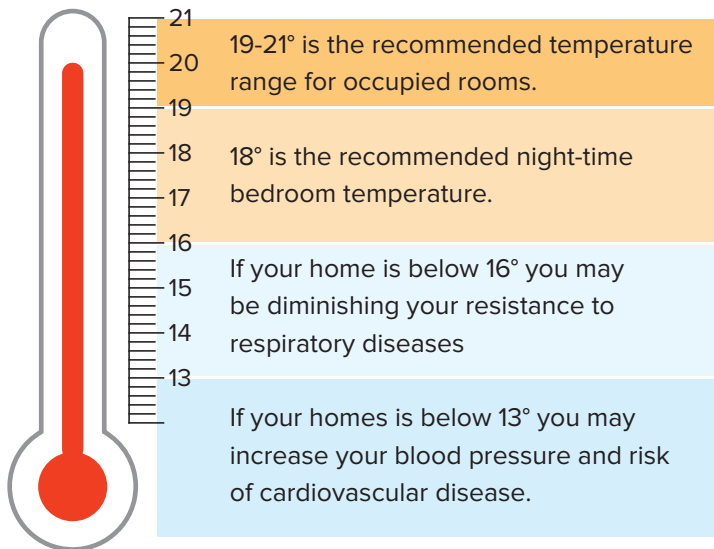


Did you know that cold homes can affect your health?



If you struggle to heat your home, you could be risking your health. Problems and diseases linked to cold include blood pressure increases, common colds through to heart attacks and pneumonia. Besides poor health, cold-related illness can cause absence from work, social isolation, and sleep deprivation.



Cold Weather Financial Support

If you're struggling to heat your home and receive any type of benefit or are on a low income, check if you can receive:

- **The Warm Home Discount:** £140 rebate on your household electricity bill. If you don't receive it automatically, you will need to apply through your electricity supplier.
- **Winter Fuel Payment** of £100-£300 is available for those aged over 65 on the qualifying date (usually in April). You should receive this automatically from the government, but you can call the helpline to confirm (0800 731 0160).
- **Cold Weather Payments** are made when the temperature where you live is an average of 0°C or below over seven consecutive days. It is based on the benefits you receive and will be paid automatically.

Tips for cold weather

- 1** Set your heating to come on just before you get up and switch off just before you go to bed. If it's very cold, set it to stay on longer, rather than turning the thermostat up.
- 2** Close the curtains when it's getting dark. Tuck them behind the radiator and shut the doors to rooms you use most to keep the heat in.
- 3** Stay warm with a hot water bottle or electric blanket – but don't use both at the same time.
- 4** Off mains gas or electricity? Keep a sufficient fuel supply to avoid running out in winter.
- 5** Have regular hot drinks; eat at least one hot meal a day if possible. Eating regularly helps keep energy levels up during winter.



Dealing with condensation, damp and mould

Some damp is caused by condensation and this causes mould. Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface like a wall, window or mirror. It also occurs in places the air is still, like the corners of rooms, behind furniture or inside wardrobes.

Reduce moisture by:

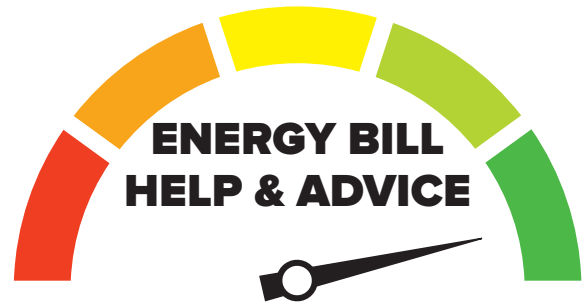
- Keeping lids on saucepans when cooking.
- Drying clothes in the fresh air, not on the radiator.
- Venting your tumble dryer to the outside.
- Avoiding paraffin heaters or flue-less bottled gas heaters – these produce a lot of moisture.

Let moist air out and fresh air in:

- Extractor fans are an effective way to get rid of moist air and steam so less condensation forms.
- When you're cooking or having a bath, keep the kitchen or bathroom door shut and open the window to let the steam out.
- Let fresh air circulate to avoid mould forming. Make sure there is a gap between furniture and walls and give wardrobes and cupboards an airing sometimes.

Warm your home:

- very cold rooms are more likely to get damp and mouldy. Turn radiators onto their lowest setting. If you don't have central heating, consider using a room heater with a timer and temperature control.
- Insulate and draught-proof your home. Loft insulation, cavity wall insulation (if your house has them) and draught-proofing on windows and doors are good places to start.



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