

Solid wall insulation - the key to 5 star comfort?

Homes with solid walls are often draughty and expensive to keep warm in winter. The Green Deal Home Improvement Fund has offered to pay up to 75% of the cost of installing solid wall insulation (up to £6,000). However, a common objection, aside from the cost and disruption, is that wall insulation might spoil the looks of a property.

One option is to insulate internally at the front and externally to the rear. That way your home's façade stays unchanged. 10cm of depth may be lost from your front room, but you gain deeper window sills and increased comfort.

A more breathable insulation like wood fibre or mineral wool, used internally, will reduce any risk of condensation forming inside the wall. Using polystyrene will speed up external wall insulation, being easy to cut to accommodate external pipe work, prior to rendering.

You'll probably need to make other improvements to get the full benefits. Cornices will need extending, sash windows double glazing and the front door draught-proofing. Retaining adequate ventilation is vital, so a new ventilation unit may complete the picture.

Is it all worth it? If many early adopters are to be believed, solid wall insulation is key to achieving 5 star comfort in an older home. You can quiz a private homeowner on the pros and cons at a free SuperHome Open Day in Sep/Mar. Book now at www.superhomes.org.uk



A beautiful Victorian façade, unchanged following internal wall insulation
Photo courtesy of www.superhomes.org.uk

Notes for Editors:

For more information, please phone Gordon Glass on 01908 256922 or email Gordon using firstname@superhomes.org.uk format

1. Green Deal Home Improvement Fund

You may be able to claim back money from the government if you make energy-saving home improvements. You can get back up to 75% of the cost of installing solid wall insulation, up to £6,000. Google '[Green Deal Home Improvement Fund](#)' for the latest.

2. Barriers to adoption of solid wall insulation

What are the barriers? £3k-£13k on solid wall insulation is no small investment. We've become used to super cheap cavity wall and loft insulation. Secondly there's the disruption. Not everyone can decamp whilst the work is done (even with external wall insulation you'll have scaffolding to contend with). Thirdly, there's the possible impact on the property's outward appearance, a concern which is magnified when you live in a conservation area.

3. SuperHomes

SuperHomes are older homes that have been refurbished by their owners to the highest standards of energy efficiency. This means greater comfort, significantly lower running costs and a reduction in carbon emissions of at least 60%. SuperHome Open Days let visitors see for themselves both the challenges and benefits associated with making an older home energy efficient. Over 70,000 people have already visited a SuperHome. Currently there are 184 registered SuperHomes and 85% of the population in England and Wales live within 30 miles of one. SuperHomes is now run by the National Energy Foundation.

4. Partners

SuperHomes enjoys the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, WWF, Energy Saving Trust, Megaman and SIG Energy Management.

5. The Big Picture

The UK government set a target of a 60% carbon reduction by 2050 in 2005 (this was subsequently increased to 80%). The UK's 25 million homes currently account for at least 27% of UK carbon emissions. It is estimated that as many as 80% of all homes that will be in standing in 2050 have already been built. This means that retrofitting existing homes is a priority if the government's target is to be met. The Government's Green Deal launched in January 2013 and offers loans for energy efficiency improvements.