

LEADERS ROMANS

GROUP

Webinar

Reducing the environmental
impact of your rental property

Q&A



What are your opinions on heat pump vs gas boilers?

Rob:

This is a big question in the industry as there are a number of factors which can influence this debate, such as: how much space do you have? House size? What is your existing heating situation? Heat pumps and gas boilers both have their pros and cons, for example a heat pump can be costly to install retrospectively but can limit the carbon footprint of your home and will also last longer than the average boiler. A boiler can be the more cost-effective, and familiar, heating solution but the carbon output is significantly higher. When choosing your heating system, it is important to evaluate the needs of your home and what is practical, both in terms of space and expenditure. There are several [useful comparison guides](#) online which are a suitable place to start.

I am considering installing car infrared heater panels to replace wet central heating system. Can anyone offer drawbacks in doing this?

LRG (general research):

This type of heating, although expensive to install, will save you money on bills and is a more cost-effective option long-term, with very few drawbacks. The potential drawbacks would be that infrared heating panels can be up to twice the price of convection space heaters, take longer to heat a space, and to get the most out of an infrared heating the panel should be obstacle-free which is often not possible.

What are your thoughts on scrapping or modifying EPC?

Kate:

I think scrapping the EPC system will be difficult. We have a system people are used to and to introduce another will take years to both implement and to understand. It is not perfect, but better to improve how it works rather than scrapping altogether.

I understand the conversation is around getting to EPC, in 2025 but I have also seen a target of B being debated for 2030.

This is a significant issue to achieve are there thoughts around this? I ask as it is now impacting my view on new investments.

Kate:

Yes, I have seen this and think it is incredibly confusing from the government. They need to set the EPC rating now and stick to it, then can look again in the future! I plan to raise this with [DLUCH/BEIS](#) as I think it is unreasonable to have these two EPC ratings 'proposed' or 'being thought about'. They need to make up their mind before making any announcement so that landlords are clear on their actions.

I am currently refurbishing a Victorian property, but all of these green measures are so expensive e.g., triple glazing and electric boilers that it really isn't worth the 'investment'. At what stage will we be getting cost-effective green choices?

Kate:

At the moment you are only required to spend up to £3,500. Have a look at your EPC and see what the cheaper methods of improving it are such as changing light bulbs and installing insulation. An ordinary, great energy saving boiler at this stage would be the most cost effective. Speak to a retro fit expert and this might help: <https://www.nrla.org.uk/news/how-improve-EPC-C-or-above-and-reduce-energy-costs>.

When will EPCs catch up with all of these changes? Currently they penalise electric boilers and they seem really inconsistent. That's a barrier to buying an electric boiler in addition to cost.

Kate:

This is currently being looked into, but it is possible to improve your rating now based on the information we have. Any changes will hopefully improve existing ratings that have not been considered. And, when there is a consultation - and there will be several to come I expect, it is definitely worth giving your feedback when you have the opportunity.

If you don't have a gas supply to a property, what is the most efficient form of electric heating?

LRG (general research):

Infrared panels are efficient and can be cost saving after the initial installation spend. They do not lose their heat due to air movement, and while they have few drawbacks, they do take longer than traditional electric radiators to warm up a room and should be kept in a space where there is no obstruction which can be challenging in some properties.

As a landlord that rents out a property in a large block of flats, which is old and has communal heating, there is little an individual owner can do to improve energy efficiency, as we are limited by our headlease.

The freeholder (a company owned by leaseholders) simply does not have the money to upgrade the energy efficiency of the block, as the figures involved are so huge and will result in such substantial, one-off charges for flat owners. What are the plans to assist so many homeowners and landlords who must be in a similar position?

Kate:

This is a really tricky one and an issue I've seen a few times recently. Here are some write ups that might be useful and have some practical advice:

- <https://deacon.co.uk/2018/08/28/who-pays-for-energy-efficiency-improvements-in-blocks-of-flats/>
- <https://www.flatsdirect-uk.com/managing-a-block-of-flats-blog/improving-energy-efficiency-in-your-block-of-flats/>
- This is a more detailed report which recognises the issue across Europe
<https://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/improving-energy%20efficiency-of%20apartment-blocks-LEAF-final-report.pdf>

Cavity wall insulation in roofs voids?

LRG (general research):

Cavity wall insulation is completely different to roof void insulating as there are different considerations to be made when insulating your loft/roof area. Roof insulation is a good idea to limit heat loss from your home, installed correctly and it should pay for itself many times over with energy savings over its 40-year lifetime. The energy saving trust has a [great guide](#) on the different things to consider when fulfilling roof insulation.