

COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAMME



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Business premises: Energy saving tips during Covid-19

Closing (or closed) your business premises?

- **Turn off!**

- Make sure all non-essential equipment has been turned off before leaving.
- Ensure heating has been fully turned off or set to frost protection so it doesn't



come on with a time clock even when the building is unoccupied.

- **Read meters:** note that most energy suppliers are not undertaking meter readings or fitting smart meters during Covid-19 disruption, so you may end up with estimated bills. If you are still on site, it's therefore **more important than ever to take regular meter readings** (at least monthly) if you don't already have smart meters.

- **Smart/half hourly meters?**

- If you haven't already got a smart meter, taking regular meter readings (monthly is advised) can save money, ensuring that you receive accurate bills based on your usage, rather than estimated by your supplier.
- If you already have smart meters, log into your energy supply information via your energy provider or energy broker's website and see where there may be energy wastage, i.e. energy being used out when the premises is closed or equipment is off or theoretically on timers.
- Alternatively, consider fitting an energy monitor if you are still waiting for a smart meter to be fitted. According to the Energy Saving Trust, using an energy monitor could reduce your energy use by 5% - 15% in just a year. They cost around £28 for a basic model: [OVO Energy energy monitors guide](#)



Reducing operating hours?

- **Take or Pay clause?** If businesses are closing or reducing opening hours on site, it might be worth speaking to your energy supplier or energy broker if you have a 'Take or Pay' clause within your energy contract. This is where you have to use a certain amount of volume; this could potentially impact your energy supply contract, so worth having a discussion to adapt this, as necessary.



- **Reduce time left on:** if staff still need to be in – does the whole site need to be on? If only a small number of staff are on site, potentially some lights or equipment could be turned off completely. This could also help with identifying **social distancing zones** at work.
- **Consider switching:** check if you could save money by switching energy supplier or tariff, with your current supplier. Please note that if you are tied into a fixed price deal, remember to check when this is due to be renewed and see if you can get a cheaper deal next time around, particularly if you are significantly changing your working hours or equipment running time, longer-term. For more advice on switching business energy rates either speak to your energy broker if you have one or see [Ofgem's Business Gas and Electricity Guide](#) or this advice from Citizens Advice Bureau: [CAB advice for small business energy switching](#)

Energy debt or financial concerns?

- **Energy supplier support:** for businesses facing financial difficulties, some energy suppliers have developed a package of measures to help. If you are seriously affected by the crisis some suppliers are offering additional help, such as payment plans; so it's worth getting in touch with yours to find out.
- **Government support:** the government has also promised support for businesses, such as grants: you can find more information on the Government's [guidance for employers and businesses](#) on how you should deal with the impact of coronavirus.
- **Business debt advice:** there is a dedicated non-profit [Business Debtline](#) who can help with all aspects of business financial advice in this crisis, with a dedicated page for coronavirus support for SME's.
- **MoneySavingExpert advice:** there is also a wealth of advice on the Martin Lewis site, including information around coronavirus scams, tax guidance and self-employment advice: [MoneySavingExpert: Coronavirus help and your rights](#)



Understand your business energy consumer rights

- **Business energy advice:** the UK's energy regulator Ofgem has a [range of business energy advice](#) and can support you to understand your business consumer rights as well as a dedicated [Business Energy Guide to Coronavirus](#) where you can also put specific queries to them directly.



- **Business impact:** Energy UK are also co-ordinating business reporting of issues such as financial support with energy bills and issues relating to the supply chain as well as the impact of staff shortages and they have set up a form [for any business to feed their issues directly into government](#)
- **Micro-business?** If you are considered a 'micro business' there may be further support available. Your business is deemed as a micro business if:
 - You use less than 100,000 kWh of electricity a year OR
 - You use less than 293,000 kWh of gas a year OR
 - You have fewer than 10 employees (or their full-time equivalent) and your yearly turnover, or yearly balance sheet, is not more than two million Euros

[The consumption threshold applies to each fuel being supplied]

Please see this Money Saving Expert guide to [Micro business energy switching](#)

- **Need help with bills?** Consider engaging with an energy broker, if you haven't already got an arrangement in place. They can negotiate energy tariffs and monitor the energy market, process and manage all of your energy bills, provide advice on energy VAT, bill validation and give advice on energy management. For more information, please see [Ofgem's Third Party Intermediaries advice](#)
- **Energy supplier confidence:** if your energy supplier goes out of business, there are clear protections put in place, to ensure that your energy supply is not disrupted and there is a smooth handover to an alternative supplier; please see [Ofgem's safety net for business](#) explanatory guide.

Working from home: Energy saving!

Top energy saving tips from the Green Business Team

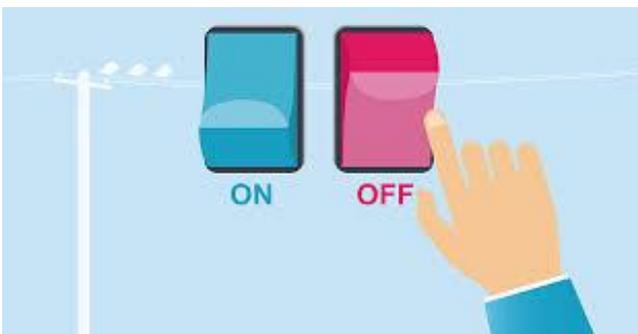
Lighting

- **Let natural light in:** don't rely on artificial lighting unless you have no other option – natural light will not only save energy costs but is also much better for your eyes when focussing on a screen for long time periods.
- **Switch to LED bulbs:** where possible and only switch on lights in rooms you are working in. Also remember to switch off when you leave the room! You could **save around £35** from your annual electricity bill if you switched to LEDs at home. For more advice on switching to LED see here: [EST blog: Getting the best out of LEDs](#)
- **Need a distraction?!** try this [Energy efficient lighting quiz](#)



Energy

- **Avoid longer working hours:** it is very easy to get caught up in work for longer, more intense time – so don't forget to take scheduled breaks and stick to regular hours – this also helps to create a routine which is essential for health and wellbeing.
- **Switch to a better energy deal:** if you're not already a regular energy switcher, it is really important to consider your energy tariff, particularly when working longer hours from home. According to the Carbon Trust, working from home can increase your daily domestic energy consumption up to 20%!



➤ This is really easy to do by using cost comparison sites such as [Which? consumer site](#) and [Martin Lewis' MoneySavingExpert site](#) - these two also have simple effective advice on how to switch and information about energy suppliers other than price, i.e. consumer satisfaction, Ofgem investigations, green tariffs - all so you can make a more informed decision.

- **Turning off:** rather than leaving appliances on standby; for example laptops and PCs - can save up to 30% of your consumption by simply powering down at the end of your day or during your lunchbreak.

- **Read your meters:** if you haven't already got a smart meter, taking regular meter readings (monthly is advised) can save money, ensuring that you receive accurate bills based on your usage, rather than estimated by your supplier.
 - If you have a smart meter, log into your energy supply information via your energy provider's website and see where there may be energy wastage, i.e. gaming or other electrical devices left on overnight.
 - Alternatively, consider fitting an energy monitor if you are still waiting for a smart meter to be fitted. According to the Energy Saving Trust, using an energy monitor could reduce your energy use by 5% - 15% in just a year. They cost around £28 for a basic model: [OVO Energy energy monitors guide](#)
- **More info:**
 - [How much energy could you save? - infogram](#)
 - [CSE energy-advice-leaflet: What uses Watt?](#)

Heating

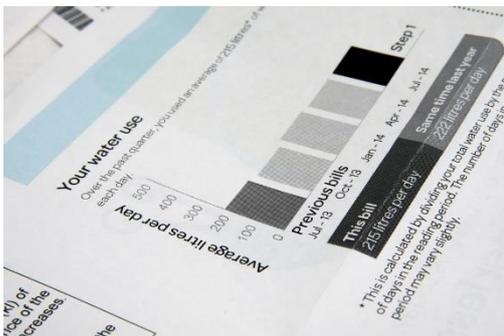
- **Turning down:** consider turning your heating temperature down, for example to between 18°C and 21°C maximum as per the Energy Saving Trust's (EST) advice for occupied rooms; *'You can **save £80 and 320kg of carbon emissions** a year by turning a room thermostat down by one degree.'*
 - Also, bear in mind that room thermostats need a free flow of air to sense the temperature so they should not be blocked by curtains or furniture or put near to a heat source.
 - Consider turning down heat in rooms you are not using, via individual thermostatic radiator valves.
- **Add controls:** if you haven't already got heating controls in place, consider ordering some online (if they are easy to fit options), as according to the Energy Saving Trust; *'Installing and correctly using a programmer room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves could **save you £75 a year.***
 - See this [EST video: How to use your room and radiator thermostats efficiently](#) for advice.
- **DIY draught proofing:** can save around **£20 a year** on energy bills. Installing a chimney draught excluder could save around **£15 a year** as well. Simple actions such as covering draughts from doors, windows and letterboxes, can make a big difference to how warm you and your household feel. Time on your hands?! You could even make your own draught excluder from items around the home! Please see these handy guides for more information:
 - [Which? consumer site - guide to draught-proofing](#)
 - [EnergySavingTrust - home insulation and draught-proofing](#)



Water

Water use represents a significant part of your monthly bills. The average person in the UK uses 145 litres of water a day (almost enough to fill two baths). You can save around **£36 a year** from your energy bill just by using your kitchen and bathroom more carefully:

- **Fill 'em up!:** only turn on washing machines and dishwashers when they are full. It is much more cost-effective to do a full wash once every two days, than a half-full wash every day.
 - If the appliance has an economy setting this will use less water and less electricity as well.



- **Re-set the temp:** wash clothes at 30°C degrees wherever possible, most detergents work perfectly well at this temperature.
 - **Use a bowl:** to wash up rather than a running tap and save **£25 a year** in energy bills.
 - **One less wash:** cutback your washing machine use by just one cycle per week and save **£5 a year** on energy.
- **Don't fill up:** only fill the kettle with the amount of water that you need and save around **£6 a year**.
 - **New shower head:** consider replacing your showerhead for an energy efficient version (costs start from £20). These will either aerate the water or reduce the flow, but shouldn't compromise on pressure. They typically cut the flow of water by a third (N.B. these showerheads are not usually compatible with electric showers). According to the EST: *'A water efficient shower head could save a four person household (e.g. a family of four or even a shared student flat) around **£70 a year** on gas for water heating, as well as a further **£120 a year** on water bills if using a water meter.'*
 - **Shorter showers:** spending one minute less in the shower each day will save up to **£7 a year** off your energy bills, per person. With a water meter this could save a further **£12** off annual water and sewerage bills. If everyone in a four-person household did this it would lead to a total saving of **£75 a year**.
 - Use a timer to monitor how long you spend in the shower (4 minute timers are often free from your water company).

Working from home: The Environmental Benefits!

Carbon

- Transport is one of the most carbon-intensive sectors in the UK. More than 90% of the work-related carbon footprint of the average employee is accounted for by commuting; transport reduction improves Scope 3 (indirect) emissions.
- **Case study (EDIE):** Dell recorded a **6,700-tonne reduction** in its carbon footprint since launching a 'telecommuting' scheme. The scheme equips staff with the conference calling and video calling software and training needed to conduct the majority of their meetings remotely.
- The Green Business Team can help you to measure the benefits of your workforce temporarily moving to remote working; carbon and energy reduction – get in touch if you would like some support with this, contact us at: greenbusiness@coventry.gov.uk



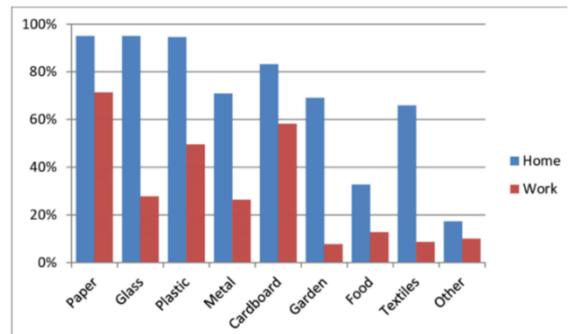
Energy

- Staff are more likely to be energy aware within their own homes than in the workplace; when in charge of their own energy bills. A OnePoll survey commissioned by Rexel revealed that only 43% of British workers are concerned about wasting energy in the office, compared to 70% at home and 93% of people take an active approach to making sure lights are switched off when at home, whilst only 60% are likely to do so at work.
 - According to the Carbon Trust, working from home will increase an employee's daily domestic energy consumption up to 20%, however closing an office even for one day results in significant energy cost savings, as offices are larger and contain more energy-intensive equipment.
- If businesses are closing or reducing opening hours on site, it might be worth speaking to your energy supplier or energy broker if you have a 'Take or Pay' clause within your energy contract. This is where you have to use a certain amount of volume; this could potentially impact your energy supply contract, so worth having a discussion to adapt this, as necessary.



Waste

- According to Edie three in ten people throw their plastics into general bins when they are at work or out in public and recycling rates for all waste streams are generally higher at home than at work (see infographic: Robert Gordon University).
- WRAP states that staff working from home are more likely to make their own lunch and breakfast than to grab an on-the-go option in plastic packaging, and to eat food in their homes which may otherwise have ended up as food waste.
- Coffee and tea are less likely to be consumed in paper cups, while employees will be less likely to print long documents on their personal printer than at the office.



Additional benefits

- Increased productivity amongst workers
- Childcare availability during Covid-19 school closures
- Health and wellbeing improvements
 - increased exercise time
 - commuting stress eliminated
 - reduced exposure to air pollution
 - healthy eating
 - travel time eliminated
- Cost savings:
 - (employees) commuting/lunch/childcare
 - (employer) office/site running costs (energy/waste/transport)

Top tips for working from home

[Coronavirus: Five ways to work well from home](#)

[Coronavirus: How to work from home, the right way](#)

[Air pollution reduction](#)

[Longer-term environmental improvements](#)

[Carbon reduction](#)

Contact Details – Coventry & Warwickshire Green Business Programme

Please note that for any queries on the above or to register your interest for an energy audit or energy efficiency funding, please contact the Green Business Team.

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