



An experience of... External solid wall insulation

Bristol Home Energy Upgrade helped fund energy saving improvements for homeowners across the city. The spotlight is on **external solid wall insulation**.

The householder

This mid-terraced house is home to Stephen and Lucy Jackson, a married couple living in Eastville, Bristol. After moving into their home a few years ago, Stephen and Lucy were looking for ways to make their home warmer and cut down on the cost of their energy bills.

“We moved from a small ground floor flat to a larger and older 1930s mid terrace. In the first few months after buying the property (during the winter) we found that it took a more concerted effort to keep the house warm and comfortable. This was not only costing us more money but we also wanted to cut down [on fuel] as much as possible. After some initial research, we found that the solid walls needed some focus to assist with improvements,” explained Stephen.

The property

Built 1930s	3 bed mid terrace
Gas central heating	Solid stone
Top recommendations	Internal or external wall insulation
	Floor insulation
	Solar water heating

After hearing about a new initiative called the Green Deal Stephen arranged for a Green Deal Advice Organisation to produce an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for his home to determine which energy saving improvements could be made. Stephen explained, “the assessor informed me of the Bristol Home Energy Upgrade project and how it could help with solid wall insulation. I contacted the Centre for Sustainable Energy’s (CSE’s) Home Energy Team to find out more and make an application to the project.”

Finance

Following the assessment, Stephen started researching more about solid wall insulation. He explained, “I understood from the Green Deal assessment that [solid wall insulation] would be an expensive improvement to make, but it would also be long lasting. I discussed it with



Photo: Stephen Jackson

the Green Deal assessor who explained that this was an option to consider if it was affordable. The Green Deal assessment is very useful, providing the cost of the improvement(s) is not prohibitive to put the energy efficiency improvement(s) in place.”

What the EPC told us

Approx energy efficiency rating before	D (64)
Approx energy efficiency rating after	C (72)
Estimated fuel bill savings from solid wall insulation	£129 per year
Estimated carbon savings from solid wall insulation	727kg per year

The savings figures above are discounted to try and reflect the difference between predicted and actual fuel bill and carbon savings.

Stephen and Lucy were not in a position to do the work without financial assistance. Stephen explained, “we would not have been able to complete the work if it was not for the grant. External wall insulation is costly and would have meant saving up for quite some time or taking a long term commitment with finance. The grant allowed us to focus on a problem area of heat loss in the property without worrying about the cost.”

On this occasion Stephen and Lucy did not proceed with the project’s pay-as-you-save finance option and decided to fund the shortfall themselves. Had this been a Green Deal Plan the maximum finance available would have been £1,535.37 (6.96% per annum over 25 years).



Read more about external solid wall insulation at www.cse.org.uk/ewi

Installation

Stephen describes the relationship he had with the installer, "there were constant minor issues throughout the installation but some were due to the age of the property or unforeseen circumstances such as rotten lintels, broken pipes, old fence panels against the property and unfortunate weather conditions. We kept in contact throughout the process to ensure that the installation went as smoothly as possible. I did have a few concerns early on but that was probably due to the knee jerk reaction of seeing the extensive work that was taking place. The quick but high quality work completed by the installer is the reason why we are where we are now with a fully completed job. For a few days the house looked very unsightly but I had constant reassurances from the installer and in the end there was nothing to worry about."



For more on the Green Deal see www.cse.org.uk/greendeal

Energy use

Since moving into their current home Stephen and Lucy had noticed the significant difference a larger, inefficient property can make to their energy bills. Stephen explained, "We were spending approximately 25% more on gas following our move from a small but more energy efficient property. We wanted to try and reduce this and the solid wall insulation should help."

Customer journey

The Home Energy Team was there for support if the householder needed it but the premise was to encourage Stephen and Lucy to project manage their installation. Stephen explains, "due to the large cost of external wall insulation, I always felt under pressure to keep on top of this project. Timescales were tight but I felt I was fortunate that we had an installer who knew that this date was vitally important to me and worked constantly to meet this deadline without skimping on quality."

Stephen describes his experience of the project, "I would say that this was a tremendous project and the end result can have great outcomes. However, due to the many unknown factors such as how much can be provided as a grant, how much finance is available and how much of our own savings we would need to draw on creates a huge uncertainty about going through with energy saving improvements. As long as you are happy to pay for a Green Deal assessment, understand what improvements can be made, the costs are right for your situation and the installer can commit to the timescales of any future project then, yes I would fully recommend it."

Bristol Home Energy Upgrade At a glance



Photo: Tim Weisberg

- A scheme to deliver grants for energy saving improvements and test the principles behind Green Deal, with a focus on heating and solid wall insulation.
- Funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change and Scottish and Southern Energy and managed in partnership with Bristol City Council, the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Wessex Home Improvement Loans.
- The Bristol Home Energy Upgrade adopted an innovative approach to delivery, engaging with the local supply chain and giving the householder flexibility and choice in the Green Deal Assessor and Green Deal Installer they used. This 'customer led' approach was supported by CSE's Home Energy Team and a comprehensive brochure.
- Active between December 2012 and May 2013, grants and loans were calculated using the data recorded in Green Deal Advice Reports, reflecting Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation policy.



Read more about Bristol Home Energy Upgrade at www.cse.org.uk/bheu



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Charity: 298740
Founded: 1979

The **Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)** is a national charity that helps people change the way they think and act on energy.

Our **Home Energy Team** offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol and Somerset (including the unitary authorities of North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset).



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