



Organisations who can help

Local authorities

- Most local authorities have someone who advises on **home energy** and available grants. Depending on your local authority, this advice may be available to council tenants, home owners, community groups and landlords. Look out for someone with a title like 'Energy Officer', 'Energy Efficiency Officer' or 'Home Energy Advisor'. They may be based in Housing Advice Centres, Neighbourhood Offices or Energy Advice Centres.
- The **planning department** is usually a district or city organisation (it is sometimes called 'Development Control'). This is where you find out about 'permitted development', and whether you need permission for a solar panel or wind turbine.
- The **Building Control Office** oversees implementation of building regulations and can advise on the standards currently in force for projects you are planning.

Energy Saving Trust

This government-funded organisation promotes energy conservation to householders. It has an online home-energy survey, a telephone helpline and information about grants. It also publishes best-practice guides for the building industry. There is a network of local offices that can be reached via <http://www.est.org.uk/> or 0800 512012.

Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP)

This programme offers grants for installing micro-generation technologies (mainly solar panels) in households and community buildings. Householders can apply for grants of up to £2,500 per property towards the cost of installing a certified product by a certified installer. At times the programme has had problems with over-subscription, leading to delays in getting approval. See <http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk>

Organisations with useful information

Association for Environment Conscious Building (AECB)

This promotes sustainable construction, particularly for small builders and designers, and offers an online database of members and services. They also publish a set of standards for environmental construction. PO Box 32, Llandysul, SA44 5ZA. Tel. 0845 4569773. <http://www.aecb.net/energystandards.php>

British Fenestration Ratings Council (BFRC)

This provides a standard for the energy rating of windows and a list of manufacturers. 44–48 Borough High St, London SE1 1XB. Tel. 020 7403 9200. www.bfrc.org

Building Research Establishment (BRE)

Formerly a government research laboratory, this is still the major research organisation for the construction industry. It is responsible for both the SAP and the ECO homes standard. Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, WD25 9XX. Tel. 01923 664500. <http://www.breeam.org/ecohomes.html>

Centre for Alternative Technology

This demonstration and education centre also offers a valuable helpline. Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ. Tel. 01654 705950. www.cat.org.uk

Environmental Change Institute

This research organisation produced the *40% house* and *Home Truths* reports and case studies. Oxford University Centre for the Environment, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3QY. Tel. 01865 275848. <http://www.40percent.org.uk/40-percent-exemplars/>

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

An international network that promotes responsible management of the world's forests, providing certification that timber used in building products comes from sustainable sources. <http://www.fsc.org>

HM Revenue and Customs

There is now a reduced rate of VAT (5%) on energy-saving materials for VAT-registered builders. This covers both the cost of materials (everything from draught excluders to solar panels) and installation. Unfortunately, this reduced rate cannot be claimed by householders – but your builder should pass on the price saving to you.

The Landlords Energy Saving Allowance (LESA) allows private landlords to offset the cost – up to £1,500 – of energy-efficiency improvements against rental income. <http://hmrc.gov.uk>

National Energy Foundation

This promotes renewable energy and administers some 'Energy for Good' schemes for local authorities, helping people access grants for domestic renewable energy projects. Davy Avenue, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, MK5 8NG. <http://www.nef.org.uk>

Books, magazines and websites

Our top recommendations have stars (★).

DIY and home improvements

Clean Slate. www.cat.org.uk.

Quarterly magazine from the Centre for Alternative Technology which often carries news and comment on housing and energy issues.

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★ Griffiths, Nigel (2007). *Eco-house manual*. Haynes Publishing.

Excellent guide to sorting out your home, with both design and practical information; if you're only buying one book, buy this one.

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Laughton, Chris (2006). *Home heating with wood*. Centre for Alternative Technology Publications.

Excellent guide to planning a wood-fired heating system.

Laughton, Chris (2006). *Tapping the sun: a guide to solar water heating*. Centre for Alternative Technology Publications.

Exactly what it says on the cover.

Lawrence, Mike (2001). *Roofing and insulation*. The Crowood Press.

Practical guide to home improvements with lots about insulation.

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★ Marshall, George (2003). *The yellow house guide to eco-renovation*. Climate Outreach and Information Network.

http://coinet.org.uk/materials/the_yellow_house_cd

This CD-Rom presents a useful case study of mainly DIY renovation of a 1930s terrace.

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Permaculture, www.permaculture.co.uk

Magazine with a mix of articles on sustainable living including some on housing.

Piggott, Hugh (2006). *Choosing windpower*. Centre for Alternative Technology Publications.

Excellent guide to the practicalities and pitfalls.

Readers Digest (2007). *Energy-efficient home manual*. The Readers' Digest Association.

Well-illustrated and practical.

Salomon, Thierry & Bedel, Stephane (2007).

The energy saving house. Centre for Alternative Technology Publications.

A practical design guide for people renovating older properties.

Sydenham, Mark (1996). *The green home handbook*, FOE Scotland.

One of the better 'top ten tips' books.

Townsend, Phil & Colesby, John (1976). *Keeping warm for half the cost: complete guide to home insulation*. Prism Press.

Out-of-print but available used from online booksellers via Amazon. The classic DIY guide to weekend jobs.

Trimby, Paul (2006). *Solar water heating: a DIY guide*. Centre for Alternative Technology Publications.

A good guide for the DIY enthusiast.

White, Nick (2008). *Saving energy in the home*. Teach Yourself Books.

An up-to-date and practical guide.

Advice for professionals and self-builders

Anderson, Jane, & Shiers, David (2002). *The green guide to specification*. Blackwell.

A technical book primarily for architects and designers, including information about the environmental impacts of a range of building materials. Make sure your architect or builder has it on his/her shelves.

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★ *Best Practice Guides*. The Energy Saving Trust. <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housing/buildings/professionals/>

Advice to architects, developers and builders, providing background information, design advice, case studies and construction details.

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Brinkley, Mark (2006). *The housebuilder's bible: an insider's guide to the construction jungle*, 6th Edition. Ovolo Publishing.

Aimed primarily at self-builders, this has lots of how-to-do-it information and guidance on low-energy construction.

Green Building. Green Building Press.

Quarterly magazine from the AECB with news and both practical and theoretical articles.

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★ Hall, Keith (2006). *The green building bible: essential information to help you make your home & buildings less harmful to the environment, the community & your family*. The Green Building Press. An invaluable reference book for professionals (useful for householders too). Another one your architect should have on his/her shelf.

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Harland, Edward (1999). *Eco-renovation*. Resurgence Books.

A practical guide aimed at self-builders renovating existing properties.

Harris, Cindy & Borer, Pat (2007). *The whole house book: ecological building design and materials*, 2nd edition. Centre for Alternative Technology Publications.

Comprehensive guide to new ecological building, focused primarily on timber construction.

Hymers, Paul (2006). *Converting to an eco-friendly home*. New Holland.

Design-oriented guide, concerned primarily with the technologies.

Renew

An industry magazine for the renewable technology industry which sometimes has interesting news and comment.

Roaf, Susan; Fuentes, Manuel & Thomas, Stephanie (2003). *Ecohouse 2*. Architectural Press.

Design guide with 24 case studies.

Vale, Brenda & Vale, Robert (2006). *The new autonomous house: design and planning for sustainability*. Thames and Hudson.

Says it all in the title!

Policy

Boardman, Brenda et al. (2005). *40% house*. Environmental Change Institute.

Research report demonstrating how the UK can meet its carbon-reduction commitments for housing.

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★ Boardman, Brenda (2008). *Home truths: a low-carbon strategy to reduce UK housing emissions by 80% by 2050*. Environmental Change Institute.

Important policy proposals updating the 40% House report.

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Department for Communities and Local Government. 2008. *Greener homes for the future*.

Guide to the code for sustainable homes.

Yates, Tim (2006). *Sustainable refurbishment of victorian housing*. IHS BRE Press.

Theoretical and policy based; useful for local authorities, housing officers and project designers.