

The Environment and Greener Living

Everyone needs to get involved in tackling climate change environmental problems and reducing our carbon emissions. This is a quick guide with ideas how you can make a greener living whether it be your home or the contents of your shopping basket.

SAVE ENERGY AND WATER AT HOME



80 per cent of the energy used at home goes on heating and hot water and would be the first port of call for savings.

Turn down your thermostat - If you turn down your thermostat by one degree it could reduce carbon emissions and cut your fuel bills by up to 10 per cent.

Look at the labels - when buying energy products anything from light bulbs to household appliances ie Fridge Freezers. Look out for Energy Saving recommended labels or European energy label rating of A or higher. The European energy label also tells you how much water appliances use, so you can choose a more efficient model.

Improve your insulation – It's been reported that more than half the heat lost in your home is through the walls and roof. This can be rectified and reduce your bills by installing loft and cavity wall insulation. You may qualify for a Warm Front Grant from the government to improve the insulation and heating systems in your home. For more information on whether you qualify or to apply, contact the Eaga Partnership, the Warm Front Scheme Manager on freephone 0800 316 2805, textphone 0800 072 0156 (from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday).

Warm Front Grants are available in England only. In Wales the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme in Wales (HEES Wales) provides a grant to make your home warmer, more energy efficient, safer and more secure.

Water efficient products - Installing low flush volume toilets, as well as water efficient showerheads and fixing dripping taps will help to reduce your water use. Another suggestion would be collecting rainwater in butts and using it for watering your garden instead of a hose.

RECYCLING AND CUTTING WASTE



Reducing, reusing and recycling waste saves on the raw materials and energy which are needed to make new paper, metal, glass and other items.

Avoid waster re-use and repair – re using and repairing items is the most efficient way to reduce waste. Buying items that can be re-used and passing things on for others to use when you've finished with them is another example.

Recycle more - Most councils in the UK run doorstep-recycling collections of usual house hold items including, paper, glass, plastics and kitchen & garden waste. Some councils also provide local amenity sites accepting items including, shoes, clothes and electrical items. You can check with your local councils website or call your council for more information on the services they provide.

GETTING AROUND



Personal travel accounts for around a quarter of all the damage individuals do to the environment, including climate change effects. Having a fuel efficient new car could save you the equivalent of three months' worth of fuel in a year

Choose an efficient car – Buying a more efficient car will cut your carbon emissions and save you money on fuel and Vehicle tax. If you are looking to buy a new car, look for the fuel efficiency label to choose a more efficient model.

Try and reduce your car use – Try to reduce the number of trips you make in your car especially short trips. Taking the bus or train, walking or cycling your journey will help reduce the local air pollution.

The environmental impact of flying and how to tackle it – Do you really need to fly? Is there any alternative and offset your CO₂? You could consider reducing your travel, ie taking fewer, longer breaks if possible instead of several short ones. Maybe you can find a holiday closer to home and take a holiday in the UK or travel to nearby countries by train or sea. Please also consider alternatives when travelling for business.

EATING & DRINKING



The producing, transporting and consuming of food can account for up to a third of our contribution to climate change.

Look for the labels and reducing food waste – Supermarkets are now helping to label their food that has been produced with the aim of reducing the negative impact on the environment.

Unfortunately the average UK household spends £424 a year on food that goes in the bin which then ends up in a landfill site producing greenhouse gasses. To discourage this - watch your labels and use food before the use by date. When shopping take a bag! A lot of supermarkets now charge you for carrier bags to reduce the huge impact plastic bags have on our environment.

Buy fresh food and in season – Purchasing food and drink locally, in season and unprocessed or lightly processed is likely to mean that less energy has been used in its production. Choosing food that has travelled a shorter distance will help to reduce transport emissions that contribute to climate change.

Buy Recycled – look out for recycled products. Recycled paper, kitchen rolls and toilet tissue are among the products now widely available.