

Buying domestic heating oil

The domestic heating oil market is complex, and many people find it hard to get a competitive price ...

Finding a cheaper supplier

There are independent websites that allow you to track the price of heating oil and find a better price: examples of these are [BoilerJuice](#) and [Fuel Tool](#). As in the gas and electricity market, new heating oil customers tend to get a better price than long-standing ones. So, if you've been with the same supplier for ages, it's worth having a look around for a better deal.

Another option is joining an oil buying club. These are groups of households who join up to negotiate a better price through bulk purchasing. The [Oil Club](#) is a good place to start. They claim to save their members "£100's on the cost of heating oil each year", though we can't verify this.

If you live in Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset, Bristol or South Glos, then you could become a member of the West of England Rural Network's [community oil buying club](#). Membership is free to people aged over 70 at the time of writing.

See also the Community Council for Somerset's [oil buying scheme](#). In this initiative, households in Somerset with an income of less than £35,000 per year can apply for an interest-free council funded loan to buy domestic heating oil, enabling them to spread the cost across a number of months rather than paying out one or two large lump sums.

If you can afford to - and have suitable and secure storage, then you can also save money by buying your heating oil in bulk during the summer months when prices are lower. Note that this will leave you with a valuable commodity at the end of your garden that may attract thieves; you may find these tips on [how to protect your oil tank](#) useful.



If you can afford to bulk buy domestic heating oil in the summer when demand is lower, you may save money

Alternatives to oil

Have you ever considered moving off oil altogether? The Boiler Upgrade Scheme is a government initiative aimed at increasing the take up of non-fossil fuel heating systems and offers significant incentives to householders:

- £5,000 off the cost and installation of an air source heat pump.
- £5,000 off the cost and installation of a biomass boiler (only for properties in rural locations not connected to the gas grid).
- £6,000 off the cost and installation of a ground source heat pump.

You can read more about the renewable technologies that are part of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme on CSE's website:

[Biomass](#)
[Ground source heat pumps](#)
[Air source heat pumps](#)



Domestic heating oil is expensive. Could you switch to a cheaper alternative?

Or how about getting some of your water heating needs taken care of by the sun? If your roof is south facing and unshaded, a solar hot water system (also known as solar thermal) can help you offset as much as half of your domestic water heating costs. You could also get a solar diverter to store excess energy from your solar PV panels as hot water.

You can read about both these technologies on our website:

[Solar hot water](#)

[Solar PV](#)



Is solar thermal a possibility for your home?

Alternatively, have you investigated whether you could get connected to mains gas? A modern high-efficiency gas condensing boiler is significantly cheaper to run than its oil-fired equivalent, though connecting your home to the gas network will cost you money. To switch, you need to contact the local distribution network operator for your area. You can find this [here](#). In the past, some network operators have offered grants to vulnerable households.



Some homes currently heated by oil could become connected to main gas

Finally, don't forget that the best way to reduce your heating costs is to reduce the amount of fuel you use. If your oil-fired boiler is old or unreliable, then you'll reduce your running costs significantly by replacing it with a more efficient condensing oil boiler that'll give you more heat for less oil. And you should also ensure that your home is well insulated.

For lots more information about saving energy in your home, see our website, in particular the following pages:

[Loft insulation](#)

[Cavity wall insulation](#)

[Solid wall insulation \(internal\)](#)

[Solid wall insulation \(external\)](#)

[Floor insulation](#)

[Secondary glazing](#)

[Energy efficient glazing & external doors](#)



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Charity 298740

We're a charity supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol, Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Dorset.

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