

Delivering a sustainable heating solution

Managing Director of Heat Electric, David Garrity, looks at the benefits of specifying an electric heating system for housing providers, tenants and the environment

THE GOVERNMENT'S CLIMATE CHANGE BILL UNDERLINES ITS COMMITMENT TO REDUCING UK CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS BY AT LEAST 26% BY 2020 AND AT LEAST 60% BY 2050. WITH HEAT ACCOUNTING FOR AROUND 47% OF EMISSIONS, THE SEARCH FOR A PRACTICAL, COST EFFECTIVE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL HEATING SYSTEMS IS GATHERING MOMENTUM. **BUT WHICH SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?**

To date, A-rated gas boilers, heat pumps and biomass systems have all been touted as THE solution but, as the energy crisis deepens and we move to ever tighter building regulations, a new contender is coming to the fore - electric heating.

Paving the way for this latest development are the proposed revisions to SAP and Part L - which mean that many homes will no longer need space heating for much of the year due to improved HLP values - and the increased availability of clean, green electricity, whether generated on or off site.

In contrast to traditional plumbed heating systems where the heat is either 'on' or 'off' with radiators and rooms often hotter or colder than desired, systems such as ours enable the creation of a heating schedule that is tailored to the exact needs of a property's occupants reflecting not only when and where they want heat - thereby eliminating cold spots, overheating and energy wastage - but also the specific temperature they want each room to be.

The superior controllability of this latest generation of electric heating systems and



their ability to turn every £1 spent into usable heat is just one of the many reasons that housing providers are turning to them as solution to the current heating debate. Other benefits include:

- Lower purchase and installation costs
- Ability to run on the low cost Economy 10 tariff
- Maintenance free - electric radiators do not need to be bled, topped up or serviced - the system also eliminates the need to obtain access to properties to conduct an annual inspection
- Ease and speed of installation
- Reliability - if a boiler fails in a plumbed central heating system the entire system goes down, leaving a home without heating or hot water and potentially costing hundreds to repair or thousands to replace. In contrast, if an individual electric radiator fails, the others will continue to operate as normal
- Safety - A malfunctioning boiler in a gas central heating system can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. An electric system completely eliminates this risk

Ultimately, the success of any new heating initiative will be determined by the end user who wants a system that is not only proven, but that they're comfortable with. Our unique range of electric water filled radiators overcomes this issue by providing an innovative system in a familiar guise. While each unit might look like a conventional radiator, a built in boiler, pump and thermostat transforms each into a self contained central heating system. Wall mounted on brackets and plugged into any 13 amp socket, the system requires no pipework, immediately eliminating this form of energy wastage.



The role of electric heating was recently examined by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) against current and proposed building regulations along with the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The calculations were based on the use of grid electricity and a predicted reduction in its carbon content through initiatives such as the Government's Renewable Energy Strategy - due to be published this spring - which seeks a 30% cut in CO₂ emissions from grid electricity by 2020.

Unveiled in November 2008, the technical report concluded that, in the short term, direct acting electrical heating can be specified subject to excellent HLP values and, where required, the installation of solar hot water heating while emissions can be further reduced by the use of micro generation systems such as photovoltaics.

Post 2020, the report states that dwellings with direct acting heating will be able to achieve similar CO₂ emissions to those served by an A-rated gas boiler while, in 2050 and beyond, they will have lower CO₂ emissions than those with either A-rated gas boilers or biomass systems.

One housing provider already embracing the benefits of the system is Fife Housing Association.

CLERK OF WORKS, JIM BETT, EXPLAINS: "We'd had complaints from tenants who found their storage heaters' restrictive heat output inconvenient and expensive so I set about finding an alternative. Results from an energy monitor in a pilot house fitted with Heat Electric radiators showed a saving of over £5 a week on heating costs while the tenant reported controllability as a huge benefit.

"A saving of anywhere up to £15 a week would be possible if the tenant switched to the Economy 10 tariff and we are therefore encouraging all our tenants to switch suppliers to receive maximum benefit from their new Heat Electric radiators."

The future of electric heating systems has therefore never looked brighter. When combined with low and zero carbon electricity their ability to deliver heat in highly focused areas of a property at specific times of day means they offer a 100% efficient, 100% effective and sustainable heating solution.



Tel: 01422 231943
Website: www.smarterheating.com

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