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Overcoming barriers to green home improvements

As the rising cost of living continues to be felt by homeowners, it's understandable that many may not currently be prioritising green improvements to their homes. However, while upgrades are important in helping to reduce carbon emissions, they can also ease the pressures of higher energy costs by reducing usage, bringing down the price of energy bills. According to our report 'Beyond the Bricks: What Does a Green Housing Market Really Look Like?', 40% of all homeowners are motivated to make eco-friendly changes if it means helping to reduce their energy bills¹.

However, the journey to making green improvements isn't always a straightforward process and homeowners often need guidance when met with barriers to making these changes. Brokers have a great opportunity to help their clients understand the financing options available to them to reduce costs and the green home improvements which have the most impact.

Green home improvement options

Even though 90% of homeowners in our survey reported energy efficiency was important to them, uncertainty around the options available can act as a barrier to making changes². Brokers can help clients discover a range of green improvements, from small, gradual changes to larger installation projects.

Using our [Home Energy Efficiency Tool](#), brokers can help clients create a sustainable action plan, showing them the current and potential EPC ratings of their properties and which home improvements will have the biggest impact according to clients' budgets. For example, for homeowners with smaller budgets, simple changes like fitting their hot water cylinder with an insulating jacket only costs around £20³ and will lower annual carbon emissions by 155kg and save £40 each year⁴.

The long-term benefits of going green

Often, the rewards for making green changes are unclear to clients so the cost can seem unjustified. However, green measures can provide sizeable savings in the long run. The Energy Saving Trust estimates that installing A-rated double glazing in a semi-detached property could save £135 in energy

¹ <https://www.coventryforintermediaries.co.uk/content/dam/cbs/intermediaries/pdfs/knowledge-centre/green-housing-report.pdf>

² <https://www.coventryforintermediaries.co.uk/content/dam/cbs/intermediaries/pdfs/knowledge-centre/green-housing-report.pdf>

³ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-efficient-diy-projects/>

⁴ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/reducing-home-heat-loss/>

bills each year⁵, while those installing solar panels could save anywhere between £150 and £630 depending on their electricity usage and the arrangement they have set up⁶.

Homeowners will also be interested in the value-add of energy efficiency improvements when they look to sell their property. According to Rightmove, an EPC rating change from F to C could see an average increase of 15% in a home's value⁷.

Communicating the long-term financial advantages of retrofitting projects will help clients better understand why making green changes are worth the initial upfront costs.

Bringing down the costs

The installation of energy efficiency improvements such as double glazing, solar panels and heat pumps can be expensive. However, the market for green financing options is growing, providing brokers with solutions for their clients to make retrofitting projects more affordable.

Our [Green Further Advance](#), for example, rewards clients who retrofit their property with eco-friendly features, offering a lower interest rate if they put at least 50% of their borrowing towards energy-efficiency improvements.

Brokers are the crucial link in helping clients overcome these barriers and are best placed to provide homeowners with the right information and helpful lending products. With the help of brokers, clients can make their homes better for the environment and save money in the long-term.

Ends

⁵ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/top-energy-saving-ideas-for-your-home-improvement-project/>

⁶ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/solar-panels/>

⁷ <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/news/articles/property-news/green-premium-epc-ratings/>