



How to Use the Cosy Home Advisor

A Complete Guide to Improving Your Home's Comfort, Efficiency and Planning Success.

Make your home warmer, greener and cheaper to run. Get clear step-by-step advice on everything from quick energy-saving wins to major home upgrades.

Your AI home energy and planning companion. Ask questions, upload photos or videos, share thermal images and get personalised guidance whenever you need it.

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This guide is designed for general advice. Always consult qualified professionals for major works, safety-critical issues or formal planning submissions.

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Introduction

Welcome to the **Cosy Home Advisor Guide**.

Cosy Home Advisor is an AI assistant designed to help you understand your home, improve energy efficiency, cut carbon, plan upgrades and navigate UK planning rules. You can talk to it naturally, upload photos, take a video walkthrough, share maps or drawings and even send thermal images. The more context you provide, the better the guidance becomes.

You do not need technical knowledge, and you do not need a paid ChatGPT plan.

Just explain your goal, tell the advisor what you are working on and it will guide you step by step, just like a friendly expert sitting beside you.

This guide covers

- How to start a conversation using text, voice or video
- How to upload photos, thermal images, plans and maps
- How to get advice on insulation, heating, ventilation and renewable energy
- How to understand planning permission, conservation areas and listed buildings
- How to use grants and funding schemes
- How to interpret EPCs, surveys and installer quotes
- Example conversations you can copy and adapt
- Checklists and appendices to make everything simple

Whether you are a homeowner improving comfort, a landlord meeting legal standards, a tenant dealing with mould, a council officer helping residents or a heritage building owner looking for low-impact upgrades, this guide will show you exactly how to use the Cosy Home Advisor effectively.

[Click here to access.](#)

Quick Start Summary

What Cosy Home Advisor Can Do

Cosy Home Advisor helps you improve your home's energy efficiency, comfort and sustainability. You can ask about insulation, heating systems, solar panels, batteries, grants, planning permission, extensions, and more. It works with text, voice, photos, videos and thermal images.

How to Start a Chat

On a web browser: Open ChatGPT, select Cosy Home Advisor, and start typing. [Click here to access.](#)

On the mobile app: Open ChatGPT, choose Cosy Home Advisor, and either type or tap the voice icon to speak.

Using voice mode: Tap the voice icon and talk as if you're speaking to a knowledgeable adviser.

Using video mode: When in voice mode, tap the video icon to show me your home, problem area or surroundings. Move slowly so I can understand what I'm seeing.

The Five Most Common Ways People Use the Advisor

1. Get quick energy-saving tips.
2. Complete a full virtual home energy assessment.
3. Check what permissions are needed for retrofits.
4. Plan upgrades such as solar, heat pumps, batteries and smart controls.
5. Understand thermal images, quotes or reports.

What You Should Not Upload

Please avoid uploading images that include people, addresses, documents, or anything that reveals your identity. Stick to photos of your home, systems or surroundings.

Using Cosy Home Advisor Without a Paid Account

You do not need a paid ChatGPT subscription to use Cosy Home Advisor. The free version works perfectly well for most people. You may occasionally hit

usage limits during or long conversations. If that happens, just wait a little while and come back later, your chat will still be there.

A 30-Second Cheat Sheet: Getting the Best Answers

- Treat Cosy Home Advisor like a real person. Natural conversations work best.
- The more information and context you provide, the better the guidance.
- If something sounds wrong or I misunderstand, tell me and I'll correct it.
- If you want the latest information, ask me to research it and I will search the internet for updates.
- Get professional advice before making major decisions or spending money.

Part 1 — Getting Started

What Cosy Home Advisor Is

Cosy Home Advisor is a friendly, knowledgeable guide that helps you improve your home's energy efficiency, comfort and sustainability. It can also help you understand planning rules, building regulations, heritage constraints and retrofit options from small fixes to major renovations.

Think of it like talking to a helpful professional. You can ask questions, share photos or videos, or talk through your plans step by step.

Who This Guide Is For

This guide is written mainly for homeowners, but it is also useful for:

- Landlords
- Tenants
- Self-builders and renovators
- People planning an extension
- Owners of listed or historic buildings
- Council officers supporting residents
- Anyone using thermal imaging

How to Start a Conversation

On a web browser

Open ChatGPT, select Cosy Home Advisor, and begin typing. You don't need a paid account.

On the mobile app

Open ChatGPT on your phone and choose Cosy Home Advisor. You can type, speak or upload photos and videos.

Using voice mode

Tap the voice icon and talk naturally. You can walk around your home and explain things as you go.

Using video mode

Tap the video icon, when in voice mode, and show me the problem area, heating system or part of the house you want help with. Move slowly so I can clearly see what you're showing.

Uploading Photos, Plans and Thermal Images

You can upload:

- Photos of walls, lofts, boilers, radiators, windows and meters
- Floorplans, sketches or drawings
- Roof layouts or garden photos for solar
- Maps or screenshots from Google Maps to show location, orientation or access
- Planning documents such as conservation area guidance, design statements or policy extracts
- Quotations or estimates from installers (with personal details removed)
- Thermal imaging pictures from any brand of camera
- Screenshots of reports or surveys (again, without personal details)

Tips for uploading

- If you upload several photos or files, describe each one briefly. This helps me understand what I'm looking at.
- You can upload up to 10 files in a single prompt.
- If you have more than 10 files, upload them in batches.
- Tell me when there are more to come by saying something like: *"More photos coming next."*
- When you've finished uploading everything, say: *"That's all the files uploaded."*

Why you should avoid personal details

Cosy Home Advisor doesn't need your identity to give accurate advice. Keeping personal details out of your uploads protects your privacy and helps ensure your data stays safe. By avoiding things like addresses, documents,

people in photos or anything that could identify you, you reduce the risk of sharing information accidentally.

This is especially important if you are doing this on behalf of someone else. Data protection laws place stronger responsibilities on handling other people's personal information. Uploading their data without permission can breach privacy rules, including GDPR, even if your intentions are good. It's always safer to keep anything identifiable out of the conversation and focus only on the home, the building fabric, the plans or the technical issue.

Avoid uploading:

- Photos of people
- Addresses, documents or anything that could identify you

How to Ask Questions Effectively

You don't need to use special wording. Just talk normally.

Here are some tips:

- Explain your goal (for example, to cut bills, fix cold rooms or plan an extension)
- Give as much context as you can
- Upload photos if possible
- If you don't know something, say so
- Tell me your budget or timescales if relevant

If Something Seems Wrong

If I misunderstand something or give an answer that doesn't look right, just say so. I can correct myself or ask extra questions.

Getting Up-To-Date Information

If you want the latest guidance on grants, planning rules or technology, ask me to research it. I will check the most recent information online.

When to Get Professional Help

I can give clear step-by-step guidance, but for major decisions or work involving safety, structure, electrics or heating systems you should speak to a qualified professional before spending money or starting work.

Where Cosy Home Advisor Gets Its Knowledge

Cosy Home Advisor is a **custom version of ChatGPT** designed specifically for home energy efficiency, planning permission and low-carbon upgrades. It combines two types of knowledge:

1. Built-in AI knowledge

This includes general understanding of:

- how homes lose heat
- insulation, ventilation and heating systems
- solar, batteries and heat pumps
- UK planning rules and common retrofit approaches

This helps the advisor reason, explain concepts and interpret photos or diagrams.

2. A specialist knowledge base added for this guide

The advisor has access to a curated set of official documents covering:

- UK planning policy
- building regulations
- heritage and conservation guidance
- retrofit standards (PAS 2035)
- renewable energy standards (MCS)
- energy grant rules (ECO4, GBIS, BUS)
- local guidance such as National Landscape policies and management plans

These documents help the advisor give accurate, UK-specific explanations in plain English.

3. What this *doesn't* mean

The advisor does **not** automatically know everything inside these documents word-for-word. Instead, the documents guide how it explains topics and how it reasons about planning or retrofit questions.

4. Live internet search when needed

If you say something like:

“Please check the latest information on this”

the advisor can search the web and provide up-to-date details.

5. Why this matters

You get clear, practical guidance based on:

- official sources
- best-practice retrofit standards
- UK planning principles
- and your own photos, videos and documents

But it's still general guidance, not a substitute for a qualified professional.

Part 2 — Using Cosy Home Advisor for Home Energy Efficiency

Cosy Home Advisor can help you understand your home's energy performance and create a personalised plan to improve comfort, cut bills and reduce carbon emissions. This section explains how to use the advisor for quick wins, full assessments and in-depth guidance on insulation, heating, ventilation and renewable energy.

A. Quick Assessments

Quick Wins

If you want immediate, low-cost improvements, simply start by saying something like:

"Can you give me quick wins for improving the energy efficiency of my home?"

I'll ask a few basic questions about your home and suggest simple actions such as draught-proofing, adjusting controls or checking insulation levels.

Full Virtual Home Assessment

For a detailed review, you can request a full assessment at any time. A simple way to start is by typing something like:

"Can you give me a full virtual home energy assessment and help me build an action plan?"

I will guide you step by step through each part of your home:

- Basic home details
- Walls, roof and floors
- Windows and doors
- Heating system and controls
- Ventilation and moisture
- Hot water system
- Renewables (if any)

- Energy use and behaviour
- Budget and priorities

You can answer with as much or as little detail as you know. Saying *"I'm not sure"* or *"I don't know"* is completely fine — I'll help work it out.

Information you may want to gather first (optional)

You don't need to prepare anything in advance, but it can speed things up if you have:

- The age of the home (roughly)
- Wall type (cavity, solid, stone, timber frame) — if unsure, I can help identify it
- Roof type (loft, flat roof, room-in-roof) and rough insulation depth
- Photos of key areas: loft, walls, windows, boiler, radiators, control panel
- Your EPC (with personal details covered)
- Any quotes or surveys you already have
- Recent energy bills (usage only, no personal details)
- Thermal images, if you have a thermal camera

If you don't know where to start

Just say something like:

"Can you walk me through gathering the information you need?"

I'll guide you room by room, or system by system, at whatever pace you like.

If you have photos or thermal images, upload them at any stage and describe what they show.

B. Fabric (The Building Shell)

Fabric upgrades often give the biggest long-term savings. I can help you understand what's suitable for your home, especially if it's older or has solid walls.

Insulation Advice

You can ask about:

- Loft insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Solid wall insulation (internal or external)
- Room-in-roof insulation
- Flat roofs
- Suspended timber floors
- Concrete floors

If you upload photos of lofts, walls or floors, I can help identify likely construction types and what options may work.

Draught-Proofing

Small gaps in floors, windows or doors can cause major heat loss. Show me photos or tell me where cold draughts are felt, and I'll help you identify safe, effective ways to reduce air leakage.

Windows and Doors

Ask me about upgrading single glazing, adding secondary glazing or improving airtightness. If you're in a conservation area or a listed building, I can explain what options are more acceptable to planners.

Moisture, Mould and Ventilation

If you upload photos of condensation or mould, I can explain likely causes and suggest ways to manage moisture safely. For retrofit works, I can help you think about ventilation before sealing up the home.

C. Heating, Hot Water and Controls

Heating Systems

Ask me to review your boiler, radiators or pipework. You can upload photos of:

- The boiler

- Radiator valves
- The cylinder and controls
- The heating timer or thermostat

I can help you find efficiency improvements such as flow temperature adjustments, balancing radiators or adding smart controls.

Heat Pumps

You can ask about air source or ground source heat pumps, what size you might need and whether your radiators are suitable.

Upload:

- Photo of your outdoor space
- Radiators
- Existing cylinder
- Your EPC (without personal details)

I can explain how to plan a heat pump installation and how to avoid common pitfalls.

Smart Controls

If you tell me your heating habits, I can help design heating schedules or suggest ways to zone the home for comfort and efficiency.

Hot Water

I can help you understand cylinders, tank sizes, heat pump cylinders and immersion optimisation.

D. Renewables and Low-Carbon Technology

Solar PV

Upload a roof photo or a map screenshot and I can help estimate suitability, orientation and shading.

Battery Storage

I can help you understand how batteries work, where they could be installed and how they pair with solar or time-of-use tariffs.

EV Chargers

I can explain charger types, cable requirements and planning considerations.

Solar Thermal and Hybrid Systems

If you have existing systems or quotes, upload them and I can review the details.

E. Behaviour and Monitoring

Understanding Energy Use

You can share your energy bills or usage patterns (without personal details). I can help interpret consumption and spot ways to reduce waste.

Smart Meters and Monitoring

If you have half-hourly data or screenshots, I can help explain your patterns and opportunities.

Using Thermal Imaging

Upload thermal images one by one or in batches. Tell me what each shows, and I'll highlight:

- Heat loss
- Cold bridges
- Draught paths
- Insulation gaps
- Radiator performance

If temperatures look odd, I can help you understand why.

Part 3 — Using Cosy Home Advisor for Planning and Permissions

Cosy Home Advisor can help you understand what permissions you may need for home improvements, extensions or retrofit measures. This includes support with planning applications, permitted development rights, heritage considerations and advice tailored to conservation areas or national landscapes (AONBs). The goal is to make planning less confusing and help you approach it confidently.

A. Planning Basics

What Planning Permission Is

Planning permission is the approval you need from your local council before making certain changes to your home or land. It focuses on how the building looks, how it affects neighbours and how it fits within local planning policies.

What Planning Permission Is Not

Planning permission does not cover:

- Structural safety
- Energy performance
- Electrical or gas safety
- Quality of installation
- Building Regulations compliance

These are handled separately through Building Regulations or professional surveys.

Permitted Development Rights

Some work can be done without applying for full planning permission. This is called "permitted development".

Examples include:

- Many types of rear extensions

- Loft conversions
- Roof-mounted solar panels
- EV chargers
- Heat pumps
- Certain outbuildings

Rules vary by location and property type, so Cosy Home Advisor can help you check what applies in your case.

When Planning Permission Is Usually Needed

- External wall insulation
- Solar panels in conservation areas
- Heat pumps in certain locations
- Changes to façades or roofs visible from the street
- Extensions that exceed permitted development limits

If you describe your proposal, I can help identify the likelihood of needing permission.

Building Regulations (Overview)

Building Regulations ensure safety and performance. Even if planning permission isn't needed, Building Regulations approval often is.

Examples include:

- Heat pumps
- Boilers
- Loft conversions
- Insulation upgrades
- Electrical work

If you're not sure, I can explain the basic requirements and direct you to the official guidance.

What Photos and Information to Provide

To give accurate planning advice, it helps if you upload:

- Photos of the front, side and rear of the property
- Photos of the area where the work is planned
- A screenshot from Google Maps or Street View
- Any sketches, drawings, plans or supplier quotes and proposals
- Conservation area documents or design guides

Tell me the location (general area only), the house type and what you want to build or install.

B. Sensitive Buildings and Locations

Some homes have extra protections or rules. Cosy Home Advisor can explain what is typically allowed and how to approach the council.

Listed Buildings

If your home is listed, many works require Listed Building Consent. Even small changes can affect historic fabric.

To give the best guidance, visit the National Heritage List for England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> and copy/paste your listing description into Cosy Home Advisor. This helps me understand the special interest of your building.

I can help you:

- Understand what typically needs consent
- Identify historic significance
- Describe reversibility (important for listed buildings)
- Prepare heritage-led justifications
- Suggest low-impact, reversible solutions

Visibility from the public highway, footpaths and nearby listed buildings is important. Upload photos showing these viewpoints.

Conservation Areas

If your home is in a conservation area, appearance and materials matter more. Always download the conservation area appraisal or guidance from your local council's website. Upload that document to Cosy Home Advisor so I can tailor advice to your specific area.

I can help you understand:

- What changes are more likely to be accepted
- Restrictions on windows, doors and solar panels
- How to minimise visual impact
- How to prepare supporting statements

Clear photos help. Mark on images where proposed works will go, such as highlighting the exact roof area for solar panels.

National Landscapes / AONBs

Homes in a National Landscape (formerly AONB) usually have stricter controls to protect landscape character. Download your area's official guidance from your council or National Landscape board and upload it for context.

I can assist with:

- Assessing visual impact
- Locating installations to minimise visibility
- Understanding what your local authority typically approves
- Preparing landscape-sensitive justifications

AONB / National Landscapes

Homes in an AONB may have stricter controls to protect landscape character.

I can help you with:

- Assessing visual impact
- Understanding what the council tends to approve
- Choosing locations and designs more likely to pass

Article 4 Areas

Article 4 Directions remove permitted development rights, meaning more changes need planning permission.

Upload:

- A copy of the Article 4 notice
- Photos of the areas affected
- A short description of your plans

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Some properties are historic without being formally listed. I can help you:

- Identify features worth protecting
- Understand local policies
- Frame applications in a heritage-friendly way

C. Retrofit and Planning

Supplier information is often extremely useful. If you have quotes, drawings, or proposal PDFs from installers (for example solar layouts, heat pump site plans or wiring diagrams), upload them and describe what they show.

Planning rules vary by measure. Cosy Home Advisor can help you understand what applies to your home.

Solar Panels

I can help you check:

- Whether solar is permitted development
- Placement on roofs, outbuildings or the ground
- Requirements in conservation areas or National Landscapes
- How to minimise visual impact using colour, finish and positioning

If possible, upload a Google Maps screenshot and highlight the exact roof area where panels will sit. Describe whether the panels are black, matt, framed or frameless.

Heat Pumps

Planning rules depend on noise, visibility and placement.

Upload:

- Photos of the proposed outdoor unit location
- A marked-up map or photo showing the exact spot
- Proposed colour or finish if known

I can help you check noise limits and visibility constraints and suggest better locations if needed.

Planning rules for heat pumps depend on the location of the unit and noise impact. Upload photos or a site plan and I can help you:

- Check permitted development noise limits
- Find suitable locations
- Understand rules for flats, terraces and heritage settings

External / Internal Wall Insulation

External insulation often needs planning permission. Internal insulation usually does not, but can affect heritage fabric.

Upload photos of your walls and I can help you assess the likely requirements.

New Windows, Doors and Rooflights

In conservation areas or listed buildings, changes to openings are more sensitive.

I can explain:

- What types of windows are often accepted
- Which materials suit your heritage or conservation context
- How to describe reversibility for listed buildings
- What evidence or photos support an application

Upload photos from the street and any public viewpoints to show visibility.

Extensions and Alterations

If you're planning an extension, I can help you:

- Check permitted development limits
- Prepare pre-application questions
- Understand visibility from public highways and footpaths
- Improve sustainability and minimise visual impact

Upload drawings and mark on photos exactly where the extension will go.

EV Chargers

I can help you understand:

- When an EV charger is permitted development
- Where it can be placed
- The rules for conservation areas and listed buildings

D. Pre-Planning Advice

Before submitting a planning application, many councils offer pre-application advice. I can help you:

- Prepare questions
- Draft or review supporting planning statements
- Draft or review heritage statements for listed buildings
- Ensure key issues like visibility, reversibility and materials are covered

Professional planning or heritage advice is recommended for complex cases, but I can help you draft and refine clear documents.

Sharing Drawings or Plans

Before submitting a planning application, many councils offer pre-application advice. I can help you:

- Prepare questions
- Identify the strongest points in your proposal

- Highlight parts that may need adjusting

Sharing Drawings or Plans

You can upload:

- Floor plans
- Elevations
- Sections
- Sketches
- Supplier proposals such as solar layouts, heat pump site plans or wiring routes

I can help interpret them, spot potential concerns, and help you prepare planning-friendly explanations.

Sustainability and Net Zero Design Principles

- Elevations
- Sections
- Sketches

I can help interpret them, spot potential concerns and suggest improvements.

Sustainability and Net Zero Design Principles

For extensions or major renovations, I can help you:

- Apply fabric-first principles
- Integrate solar, heat pumps and batteries
- Improve airtightness and ventilation
- Align your design with local climate policies

About Images Inside Documents

I can usually understand images inside PDFs or documents, such as maps, diagrams and drawings. However, quality can vary. For critical images, it's

best to copy and paste the image directly into the chat and describe what it shows.

This section aims to make the planning process easier and help you prepare well-supported proposals.

Part 4 — Using Cosy Home Advisor With Photos, Video and Thermal Imaging

Cosy Home Advisor can understand photos, videos, maps, diagrams and thermal images to give more accurate and practical guidance. This section explains how to get the best results, what to upload, and how to present information clearly.

1. What Types of Photos Help Most

Clear, well-lit photos make a big difference. Useful images include:

- Front, rear and side elevations of your home
- Close-ups of problem areas (damp, cracks, insulation, cold spots)
- Loft spaces, including insulation depth
- Boiler, heat pump or cylinder installations
- Radiators and valves
- Walls, windows and door frames
- Garden, driveway or external areas where equipment may be installed
- Roof areas (from ground level or Google Maps)

Tips for taking good photos

- Take photos in daylight if possible.
 - Hold the camera steady and avoid extreme angles.
 - Take one photo of the whole area, then a close-up.
 - If showing measurements, include a tape measure in the frame.
-

2. Using Annotations and Mark-Ups

Adding simple markings makes your intention much clearer.

Examples:

- On a Google Maps screenshot, highlight the exact roof area where solar panels will be installed.
- On a photo of your wall or garden, draw a circle showing where the heat pump is proposed.
- On a floorplan, outline the area affected by insulation or an extension.

If you cannot mark up images yourself, just upload them and describe what goes where. I can work from your description.

3. Using Video Mode

Video mode is ideal for walkthroughs or situations where a single photo can't show everything. It lets you talk to me while showing me your home in real time.

How to start video mode

To use video mode, you must first enter **voice mode**.

On the ChatGPT mobile app:

- You will see two icons: a **microphone icon** and a **voice icon**.
- **Tap the voice icon**, not the microphone. The microphone is only for speech-to-text dictation.
- Once voice mode starts, you can talk to me naturally.
- You will then see a **camera icon** appear on screen.
- Tap the **camera icon** to begin video mode.

How to use video mode effectively

- Move slowly so the camera can capture details.
- Talk naturally and describe what you are showing.
- Point at key features such as boilers, radiators, insulation, cold areas or proposed installation locations.
- If something needs closer inspection, hold the camera steady for a moment.

When video is especially helpful

- Whole-house walkthroughs
- Identifying insulation or draught issues
- Viewing loft spaces, roof details or hard-to-reach areas
- Showing external spaces for solar, heat pumps or extensions
- Explaining layouts for planning proposals

I will describe what I'm seeing, ask questions and guide you step by step.

4. Uploading Thermal Images

Thermal images are extremely useful for identifying heat loss and hidden problems.

What to upload

- Wide views of whole walls or roofs
- Close-ups of cold bridges, gaps or overheating spots
- Multiple angles if possible
- A normal photo of the same area for comparison

Tips for thermal images

- Tell me the ambient temperature if you know it.
- Mention whether heating was on or off.
- Upload thermal images in batches of up to 10 photos.
- Describe each image briefly.

I can help you interpret:

- Insulation gaps
- Cold bridges
- Draught paths
- Radiator performance

- Underfloor heating issues
-

5. Uploading Maps and Plans

I can interpret most diagrams, plans and maps, whether standalone or inside PDFs.

Useful uploads include:

- Google Maps screenshots
- Roof plans or site plans
- Conservation area boundary maps
- Elevations and architectural drawings
- Shading diagrams

If an image inside a PDF is low-quality, paste it separately into the chat.

6. How to Upload Files Effectively

You can upload up to 10 files at a time.

If you have more than 10 files:

- Upload them in batches
- Tell me “More files coming next”
- When finished, say “That’s everything uploaded”

Describe your files

To help me understand what I’m looking at:

- Give each file a short description
- Mention the location or angle
- Explain what you want me to focus on

This saves time and avoids misunderstandings.

7. Using Supplier Documents

If an installer or architect has given you drawings, quotes or proposals, upload them.

Useful examples:

- Solar PV layouts
- Heat pump site plans and noise calculations
- Wiring diagrams
- Battery storage location plans
- Window and door schedules
- Extension drawings

If diagrams are embedded in PDFs, consider extracting key ones and uploading them separately.

8. Limitations and When to Seek a Professional

I can give detailed guidance based on your images, but there are limits.

You should seek professional advice when:

- Structural issues are suspected
- Timber decay, rot or major damp is visible
- Electrical or gas systems need work
- Planning or heritage cases are complex
- A full heat loss calculation or system design is needed

Cosy Home Advisor can help draft planning statements, heritage statements and supporting documents, but a heritage consultant, architect or planner may be needed for formal submissions.

9. Summary

Photos, videos, plans and thermal images help me give far more accurate advice. The clearer your uploads and descriptions, the better the guidance I can provide.

Part 5 — Using Cosy Home Advisor for Grants, Funding and EPCs

Cosy Home Advisor can help you understand which UK energy grants you may be eligible for, how they work, and what information you need to apply. It can also explain how EPCs (Energy Performance Certificates) work and what they do — and don't — tell you about your home.

This section guides you through using the advisor to navigate grants, improve your EPC rating and prepare information for installers or councils.

1. How UK Energy Grants Work (Simple Overview)

Most UK home energy grants fall into two categories:

1. Grants for insulation and heating upgrades

These are usually delivered through energy suppliers or local authorities.

2. Grants for renewable energy

These support low-carbon technologies such as heat pumps.

Grants change over time, so if you want the latest information, ask:

“Can you research the most up-to-date UK energy grants available for my situation?”

I will check current sources and provide updated details.

2. Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS)

GBIS funds basic insulation measures for eligible households.

I can help you understand:

- Eligibility based on your home type and council area
- What measures are funded (loft, cavity wall, etc.)
- How to check if your home is in the target group
- What documents you need

You can upload EPCs or installer quotes (with personal details removed) for review.

3. ECO4

ECO4 focuses on improving low-efficiency homes, especially those with low-income residents.

I can help you:

- Understand eligibility criteria
- Check income rules or council flexibility schemes
- Review ECO4 proposals or retrofit plans
- Interpret technical language from installers

If you have a quote, upload it and I can explain: costs, measures, ventilation requirements and whether it looks reasonable.

4. Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS)

BUS offers grants toward heat pump and heat battery installations. It has recently been expanded to support additional technologies.

I can help you:

- Check whether your home is suitable for a heat pump or alternative system
- Understand the BUS application process (usually handled by your installer)
- Review installer proposals
- Assess radiator sizing, cylinder requirements and installation locations

Recent BUS expansions

The scheme now includes:

Air-to-Air Heat Pumps

- These work like a split air conditioning system, providing space heating via fans rather than radiators.
- They can be easier and less disruptive to install, especially in small or well-insulated homes.
- They do not typically provide hot water, so you may keep your existing hot water system.

Heat Batteries

- These are compact thermal stores that hold heat in a phase-change material or similar storage medium.
- They can replace or supplement traditional hot water cylinders.
- They work well in smaller homes where space is limited.
- They can pair with solar PV or off-peak electricity.

5. Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2)

HUG2 supports low-income, off-gas homes that need whole-house improvements.

I can help you:

- Understand what measures may be included
- Review council or installer documentation
- Interpret plans or retrofit assessments

Upload any council letters or installer proposals (again, with personal data removed) for clearer guidance.

6. Local Authority Flex and Other Local Funding

Many councils operate their own **“flex schemes”**, allowing some households to qualify even if they don't meet standard national eligibility.

I can help you:

- Identify whether your council participates
- Interpret local eligibility rules
- Review supporting documents

Upload any council website information or letters for context.

7. What Information to Provide for Grant Advice

To help you quickly understand eligibility, you can provide:

- Home type (detached, terrace, flat, etc.)
- Approximate age of the property
- EPC rating, if known
- Heating type (gas boiler, oil, electric, heat pump)
- Whether you receive any benefits
- Whether you are off the gas grid
- **Household income**, as many grant schemes have income thresholds or flexibility rules

If you're unsure, just say so — I can help work through it — I can help work through it.

8. Understanding Your EPC

An Energy Performance Certificate provides a **modelled estimate**, not a full survey. It shows:

- Current rating (A to G)
- Estimated running costs
- Recommended upgrades

What an EPC does *not* show

- Actual insulation thickness

- Heat loss pathways
- Draughts or ventilation issues
- Damp or mould
- Accurate system sizing

Uploading your EPC

You can upload your EPC (with personal details covered). I can help you:

- Interpret recommended measures
- Understand what will have the biggest impact
- Improve your rating for future sales or rentals

9. Improving Your EPC Rating with Cosy Home Advisor

You can ask:

“Can you help me plan improvements to raise my EPC rating from D to C?”

I can help you:

- Prioritise high-impact measures
- Compare insulation, system upgrades and glazing options
- Understand how EPC modelling works

If landlords need guidance on legal minimums, I can explain the current and upcoming MEES standards.

10. Reviewing Installer Quotes and Proposals

Grant-funded work often comes with technical documents, quotes and specifications.

Upload them and I can help you:

- Spot missing information
- Understand technical jargon

- Identify ventilation requirements
- Compare proposals from different installers

If diagrams are inside documents, copy critical images separately for clarity.

11. Summary

Cosy Home Advisor can guide you through funding schemes, EPC ratings and installer proposals. Grants can change frequently, so asking me to research up-to-date information helps ensure accuracy.

If you want, I can also create a tailored action plan based on your budget, your goals and the grants available to you.

Part 6 — Homeowner How-To Guides (Step-by-Step Templates)

This section provides clear templates you can copy, paste and customise when speaking to Cosy Home Advisor. These examples help you start conversations in the most effective way and ensure you get detailed, tailored advice.

Each guide explains what to say, what to upload and how I can help you work through your project.

1. How to Ask for a Full Energy Assessment

Example prompt:

“Can you give me a full virtual home energy assessment? I want to improve comfort and reduce my energy bills. I’ll upload some photos, but please tell me what you need to know step by step.”

What to upload

- Front, rear and side photos of the house
- Photos of the loft, boiler, radiators and windows
- EPC (with personal details removed)
- Thermal images (optional)

What I will do

- Guide you section by section
 - Help you identify insulation and heating options
 - Flag any ventilation or moisture risks
 - Build a prioritised action plan and budget options
-

2. How to Ask for Renovation or Extension Advice

Example prompt:

"I am planning a renovation/extension. Can you help me review my ideas, identify energy efficiency improvements I should do at the same time, and explain what planning or building regulations might apply?"

What to upload

- Floor plans or sketches
- Photos of the area to be altered
- Google Maps screenshot marked with the proposed change
- Any architect or supplier drawings

What I will do

- Check permitted development limits
 - Suggest fabric-first improvements
 - Assess solar, heat pump or battery integration
 - Help you prepare for pre-application advice
-

3. How to Ask for Help Reviewing Builder or Installer Quotes

Example prompt:

"I have a quote for insulation/solar/heat pump work. Can you review it, explain the jargon, and tell me if anything important is missing?"

What to upload

- Quote PDFs or screenshots (with personal details removed)
- Any installer drawings or proposals
- Photos of the area where work will happen

What I will do

- Explain technical language
- Check if specifications appear complete

- Flag missing ventilation, safety or building regs items
 - Suggest follow-up questions for the installer
-

4. How to Use Cosy Home Advisor During an Extension Project

Example prompt:

“I’m mid-way through designing an extension. Can you help me choose energy-efficient options, avoid common mistakes, and check if my plans raise any planning or building regulations issues?”

What to upload

- Current and proposed plans
- Marked-up images showing where the extension will sit
- Photos of existing windows, walls or roof junctions
- Any sustainability or design notes

What I will do

- Suggest insulation, airtightness and ventilation improvements
 - Review solar or battery opportunities
 - Identify possible planning sensitivities
 - Help you phrase questions for your architect or builder
-

5. How to Plan a Heat Pump Upgrade

Example prompt:

“I’m thinking about replacing my boiler with a heat pump. Can you help me check if my home is suitable, what upgrades might be needed, and whether I could get BUS funding?”

What to upload

- Photos of your boiler, cylinder and radiators
- Garden or external space photos

- A rough floorplan (if available)
- Any installer quotes
- **Your recent energy bills (usage only, no personal details)** so I can understand current consumption and running costs

What I will do

- Estimate heat pump suitability
- Flag radiator or pipework upgrades
- Explain cylinder requirements
- Help assess BUS grant eligibility
- Provide rough running cost comparisons (based on your usage)
- Estimate heat pump suitability
- Flag radiator or pipework upgrades
- Explain cylinder requirements
- Help assess BUS grant eligibility

6. How to Plan Solar + Battery Systems

Example prompt:

“Can you help me design a solar and battery system for my home, including where panels could go, what size might be sensible, and any planning rules I should be aware of?”

What to upload

- Google Maps screenshot marked with proposed panel area
- Roof photos
- **Estimated roof space dimensions** (or upload photos and I can estimate)
- **Roof orientation** (south, east, west, etc.)

- **Photos or description of shading** from chimneys, trees or nearby buildings
- Any supplier proposals
- **Your electricity bills (usage only)** to understand how much energy you use

Additional options

If you have a large garden or land:

- Upload photos or a map and I can help assess areas suitable for **ground-mounted solar**.

What I will do

- Estimate suitable system sizes
 - Suggest panel and battery options
 - Flag shading or structural concerns
 - Explain planning considerations (especially in conservation areas or National Landscapes)
 - Provide rough estimates of solar generation and potential savings
 - Note where a professional installer will be able to give more accurate modelling
 - Estimate suitable system sizes
 - Suggest panel and battery options
 - Flag shading or structural concerns
 - Explain planning considerations (especially in conservation areas or National Landscapes)
-

7. How to Prepare for a Planning Application

Example prompt:

“Can you help me prepare a planning application for my project, including structuring the supporting statement and identifying what evidence to include?”

What to upload

- Site photos from public viewpoints
- Plans, elevations and sections
- Conservation area or heritage documents
- Marked-up maps showing proposed works

What I will do

- Draft or refine planning statements
- Help identify supportive policies
- Explain necessary documents and drawings
- Flag local sensitivities (visibility, materials, reversibility)

8. How to Improve an EPC Rating

Example prompt:

“My EPC is rated D. Can you help me identify what measures would most effectively raise it to a C or B, and what the likely costs might be?”

What to upload

- Your EPC (with personal details removed)
- Photos of insulation, windows and heating
- Any quotes or surveys

What I will do

- Interpret EPC recommendations
- Identify high-impact changes

- Explain grant options
 - Develop a tailored improvement plan
-

Summary

These templates are here to help you start productive conversations with Cosy Home Advisor. You can customise them to your needs, upload photos or documents at any stage and ask for step-by-step guidance whenever you need it.

I can provide rough estimates for solar, heat pumps and energy usage, but a professional installer will always be able to give more accurate calculations during a full survey.

These templates are here to help you start productive conversations with Cosy Home Advisor. You can customise them to your needs, upload photos or documents at any stage, and ask for step-by-step guidance whenever you need it.

Part 7 — Extra Sections for Other Users

Cosy Home Advisor is designed primarily for homeowners, but it can also support several other groups who have slightly different needs. This section outlines how landlords, tenants, councils, professionals and heritage property owners can make the most of the service.

1. For Landlords

Landlords often need to balance legal compliance, tenant comfort and long-term property value.

How Cosy Home Advisor can help

- Explain Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)
- Identify EPC improvements to reach Band E, D or C
- Review quotes for insulation, heating upgrades or renewables
- Suggest low-disruption improvements suitable for rental properties
- Help you plan upgrades between tenancies

What to upload

- EPC (with personal details removed)
- Photos of key building elements (loft, boiler, windows)
- Any quotes or surveys

You can ask:

“Can you help me plan cost-effective improvements to raise my rental property’s EPC rating while keeping disruption low?”

2. For Tenants

Tenants may not be able to make major changes but can still benefit from energy advice.

How Cosy Home Advisor can help

- Identify quick wins for comfort and efficiency

- Suggest draught-proofing options that don't damage the property
- Help you understand heating controls and reduce bills
- Explain what improvements your landlord may be responsible for

What to upload

- Photos of cold spots, mould or ventilation problems
- Images of heating controls or radiators

You can ask:

"I rent my home. Can you suggest improvements I can make without damaging anything, and help me talk to my landlord about bigger issues?"

3. For Councils

Local authorities can use Cosy Home Advisor to support residents, review retrofit proposals or gather insight.

How Cosy Home Advisor can help

- Help residents understand grant eligibility
- Explain retrofit options during renovation or extensions
- Support climate action or home-improvement schemes
- Provide clarity on insulation, heat pumps or solar
- Help signpost residents to official guidance

For council staff

You can upload:

- Conservation area guidance
- Local retrofit policies
- Solar/heat pump FAQs for your district
- Maps or diagrams

Ask:

“Help me provide clear guidance to residents on insulation and low-carbon technologies for my district.”

4. For Architects, Builders and Retrofit Coordinators

Professionals can use Cosy Home Advisor to:

- Get a structured, fabric-first review of a proposed design
- Sense-check retrofit specifications
- Review solar or heat pump proposals
- Explore planning sensitivities
- Translate technical content into plain English for clients

What to upload

- Plans, elevations and sections
- Energy modelling summaries
- Retrofit assessments
- Window, insulation or HVAC schedules

You can ask:

“Can you review this proposal and help me explain the key points to my client in a clear, non-technical way?”

5. For Heritage Building Owners

Owners of listed, historic or traditional buildings face unique retrofit challenges.

How Cosy Home Advisor can help

- Explain heritage-sensitive retrofit options
- Discuss moisture behaviour in traditional buildings
- Suggest reversible, low-impact improvements

- Help you prepare heritage statements
- Advise on planning considerations

What to upload

- Photos showing the historic fabric
- The listing text from the National Heritage List (copied/pasted)
- Conservation area documents
- Plans or diagrams of proposed works

You can ask:

“My building is listed. Can you help me design a reversible, low-impact retrofit plan and understand what planning or listed building consent I might need?”

Summary

Cosy Home Advisor can support a wider audience beyond homeowners. Whether you own a rental, manage a council service, design buildings or look after a heritage property, you can upload documents, photos and plans to receive tailored, accessible guidance.

Part 8 — Safety, Ethics and Privacy

Cosy Home Advisor is designed to give clear, practical guidance while keeping your privacy and safety at the centre of everything. This section explains what I can and cannot help with, how your data is handled, and when to ask a qualified professional for support.

1. What You Should Not Upload

To protect your privacy and stay safe online, avoid uploading:

- Photos of people (including yourself)
- Full addresses or anything with your house number
- Bills, letters or documents showing personal details
- Legal documents, certificates or IDs
- Anything belonging to someone else without their permission

I don't need personal information to give accurate advice.

Why this matters

If you upload identifying details by mistake, they become part of the chat. Keeping them out protects your privacy and avoids issues around data protection, especially if you are acting on behalf of someone else.

2. Privacy Expectations

Cosy Home Advisor works within ChatGPT. Conversations are saved to your ChatGPT account unless you delete them manually.

I do not store your data outside the chat. Everything stays inside your conversation, and you control it.

If you ever want to remove a conversation, simply delete it from your chat history.

3. My Limitations and Boundaries

There are things I cannot safely or legally advise on.

I cannot:

- Approve or deny planning applications
- Act as a substitute for Building Control
- Provide structural engineering decisions
- Diagnose dangerous electrical or gas faults
- Confirm grant eligibility with certainty
- Replace the role of a heritage consultant for listed buildings
- Guarantee costs, savings or system performance

I can:

- Interpret photos and documents you upload
- Explain planning rules and building regulations in plain English
- Help you prepare drafts for planning or listed building applications
- Suggest sensible retrofit options
- Interpret thermal images and photos
- Offer step-by-step guidance for surveys and assessments

I will always tell you when something needs a qualified professional.

4. When to Seek a Qualified Professional

You should always speak to a professional when:

- Structural changes are planned
- There is visible damp, rot, subsidence or cracking
- Rewiring, gas work or heating system installation is required
- You are submitting a planning or listed building consent application
- You need precise heat loss calculations or system designs

- You're considering major insulation changes to a traditional or historic building

Cosy Home Advisor can help you prepare the right questions to ask and understand professional advice.

5. Common Misunderstandings and How to Avoid Them

“ChatGPT will submit my planning application for me.”

I can help draft it, but you must submit the application yourself through your council.

“If the GPT says something is allowed, the council must approve it.”

Planning approval always depends on your local authority. I can help you understand the rules and improve your chances, but I cannot guarantee outcomes.

“I can upload anything.”

Please avoid personal data, other people's documents and anything unrelated to your home or project.

"AI knowledge is always up to date."

Grant rules and planning policies change. If you need the latest info, ask me to research it and I will search online for the most current information.

6. How to Keep Yourself Safe During DIY Work

If you plan to carry out DIY improvements:

- Never interfere with gas appliances or electrics
- Avoid disturbing asbestos or unknown materials
- Use proper protective equipment
- Stop if you feel unsure and ask for professional help

You can always ask me to explain what is safe to do yourself and what is not.

Summary

Safety and privacy come first. Cosy Home Advisor can provide clear, practical advice, but it is not a replacement for qualified professionals where expertise or legal responsibility is required. Avoid sharing personal details, ask for research when needed and use this guidance to support safe, confident decision-making.

Part 9 — Example Conversations

These examples show how you can interact naturally with Cosy Home Advisor. They demonstrate the kinds of questions you can ask, how to provide context, and how I respond with clear, tailored guidance.

You can use these as templates or just speak in your own words — natural conversation works best.

1. Energy Efficiency Example

You:

“Hi, my home feels cold in winter and the heating bills are high. Can you suggest what I should check first? I can upload photos if needed.”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Of course. Let’s start with quick wins and then look at bigger improvements. First, can you tell me roughly the age of your home and whether you have loft insulation? If you can, upload a photo of the loft, the boiler and one or two radiators. If you’re not sure, that’s fine — I’ll guide you.”

2. Planning Advice Example

You:

“I want to install solar panels on my roof. I’m in a conservation area. What should I do?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Solar panels in conservation areas can be more sensitive. Please upload a photo of the roof from the street, plus a Google Maps screenshot. Also, go to your council’s website and download the conservation area appraisal and upload it here — that gives helpful context. Once I have those, I can explain whether this is likely to be permitted development or require planning permission and how to improve your chances of approval.”

3. Thermal Imaging Example

You:

“I’ve taken some thermal images of my living room wall. Can you help me understand the cold patches?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Yes — please upload up to 10 images at a time. When you upload them, write a short description of each one, like ‘north wall behind sofa’ or ‘corner near window’. If possible, also upload a normal photo of the same wall. I’ll explain what the cold areas mean and whether they suggest insulation gaps, draughts or moisture issues.”

4. Renovation / Extension Example

You:

“I’m planning a rear extension and want to make sure it’s energy efficient. Can you review my sketches and suggest what to think about?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Absolutely. Upload your sketches, floor plans or drawings. If you can, mark where the extension will sit on a photo or map. I’ll review the design, highlight energy-saving opportunities and explain any planning or building regulations considerations.”

5. Grants and Funding Example

You:

“I’m wondering if I qualify for any grants. My home is off gas and I’m in an EPC E. What should I check?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“I can help with that. Please upload your EPC (with personal details covered) and tell me your approximate household income and heating system. I’ll check potential eligibility for ECO4, HUG2 or other schemes, and I can research the latest updates if needed.”

6. Landlord Example

You:

“I’m a landlord and my rental property is an EPC F. What’s the simplest way to get to an E or D?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Upload the EPC and any photos of the loft, walls and boiler. I can suggest measures with minimal disruption, explain landlord responsibilities and help you prioritise the quickest improvements.”

7. Listed Building Example

You:

“My property is Grade II listed. I want to improve insulation and maybe add a heat pump. What should I know?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Listed buildings require careful, reversible, low-impact upgrades. Please copy and paste your listing text from the National Heritage List for England and upload photos of the relevant areas. I’ll help you identify sensitive options, explain consent requirements and suggest how to present your plans to the council.”

8. Solar and Battery Design Example

You:

“I’d like to install solar panels and a battery. Can you estimate the system size I might need?”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Upload a Google Maps screenshot of your roof, marking the proposed area for panels. Also share your recent electricity bills (usage only). I’ll estimate a suitable system size, highlight planning constraints and explain what to expect from installer quotes.”

9. Heat Pump Suitability Example

You:

“Is my home suitable for a heat pump? I don’t know where the outdoor unit would go.”

Cosy Home Advisor:

“Upload photos of your boiler, cylinder and a few outdoor locations where the unit might fit. If you’re unsure, upload a photo of the whole garden or side alley. I’ll help identify options, explain BUS funding and outline any noise or planning considerations.”

Summary

These examples show the natural, conversational style that works best. You don’t need special wording — simply explain your goal, upload helpful images or documents and I’ll guide you step by step.

Part 10 — Glossary & Resources

This section explains common terms in plain English and provides links to trusted official resources. You don't need to memorise anything — this is simply here for reference.

Glossary (Plain English)

A

Airtightness – How well your home stops unintended air leaks through gaps and cracks.

Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) – A low-carbon heating system that extracts heat from the outside air and uses it to warm your home and hot water.

Air-to-Air Heat Pump – Works like a reversible air-conditioning system, providing warm air through indoor units. Good for small or open-plan homes.

AONB / National Landscape – A protected landscape valued for natural beauty. Certain planning rules may be stricter.

B

Battery Storage – A rechargeable home battery used to store solar energy or cheap off-peak electricity for later use.

Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) – A UK grant offering money towards heat pumps and heat batteries.

Building Regulations – Rules that ensure buildings are safe, healthy and energy efficient.

C

Cavity Wall – A wall with two layers and a gap in the middle. Often suitable for insulation.

Conservation Area – An area with special architectural or historical interest where planning controls are tighter.

Cold Bridge (Thermal Bridge) – A point where heat escapes more easily, often seen as a cold patch in thermal images.

D

Draught-proofing – Blocking unwanted gaps that let in cold air.

Dampproof Course (DPC) – A barrier to stop rising damp. Important to consider in older homes.

E

EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) – A modelled assessment of a home's energy efficiency.

External Wall Insulation (EWI) – Insulation fixed to the outside of a building, usually finished with render or cladding.

EV Charger – A device for charging electric vehicles at home.

F

Fabric-first – Improving the building itself (insulation, draught-proofing, windows) before adding technologies.

Flat Roof – A roof with minimal slope; sometimes suitable for insulation upgrades.

G

GBIS (Great British Insulation Scheme) – A UK grant that funds basic insulation measures.

Ground-mount Solar – Solar panels installed on frames in a garden or field.

H

HUG2 (Home Upgrade Grant) – A grant for low-income, off-gas homes needing whole-house improvements.

Heat Battery – A compact thermal store used to replace or support a hot water cylinder.

Heat Loss – How much warmth your home loses through walls, windows, floors and roofs.

I

Internal Wall Insulation (IWI) – Insulation fitted inside external walls.

Installer Proposal – A quote or document from a contractor outlining recommended works.

M

MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) – Rules that set the minimum EPC rating for rental properties.

Moisture Risk – The chance of condensation or damp problems, especially when upgrading insulation.

P

Permitted Development – Certain work that can be done without needing a full planning application.

PV (Photovoltaics) – Solar panels that generate electricity.

R

Retrofit – Upgrading an existing building for energy efficiency, comfort and carbon reduction.

Reversibility – The ability to undo a change without harming historic fabric (important for listed buildings).

S

Shading – Trees, chimneys or buildings that block sunlight from solar panels.

Smart Controls – Heating controls that can learn your schedule and optimise energy use.

Solar Thermal – Panels that heat water rather than produce electricity.

T

Thermal Imaging – A technique using infrared images to show heat loss and cold areas.

Thermal Store – A tank or battery that stores heat for later use.

U

U-Value – A measure of how quickly heat escapes through a material. Lower is better.

V

Ventilation – How air moves through your home. Important when improving airtightness.

W

Whole-house Plan – A coordinated approach to improving a home's efficiency over time.

Resources (Trusted Official Links)

These are reputable sources of planning, retrofit and building guidance.

Planning and Heritage

- Planning Portal: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

- Historic England (including The List): <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- Find your local council: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Energy, Retrofit and Grants

- GOV.UK Grants and Schemes: <https://www.gov.uk/environment/climate-change-energy>
- Energy Saving Trust: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>
- Ofgem (ECO4, GBIS information): <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/>
- TrustMark Installer Search: <https://www.trustmark.org.uk/>
- MCS Certified Installers: <https://mcscertified.com/find-an-installer/>

Building Regulations

- Building Regulations Approved Documents: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/approved-documents>

Thermal Imaging & Monitoring

- Information on using thermal cameras: <https://warmandwell.co.uk/guides/a-guide-to-using-thermal-imaging-cameras/>

Summary

This glossary and resource list gives you quick explanations and official links to support home energy improvements, planning applications and retrofit decisions. If you ever need something interpreted or explained in plain English, just ask.

Part 11 — Appendices

These appendices provide practical tools you can use before starting a conversation with Cosy Home Advisor. They include checklists, photo guidance and a thermal imaging guide to help you gather clear, useful information.

1. Virtual Home Assessment Checklist

Use this checklist if you want a full, whole-house energy assessment.

Basic Home Information

- Approximate age of the home
- Property type (detached, semi-detached, terrace, flat)
- Number of floors
- Wall type (if known)
- Loft type (cold loft, warm loft, room-in-roof)

Photos to Collect

- Front, rear and side elevations
- Loft space and insulation depth
- Boiler, heat pump or hot water cylinder
- 2–3 radiators and thermostatic valves
- Windows and any obvious draught points
- Meter cupboard and main controls
- Any visible damp, mould or condensation
- Any recent work or problem areas

Documents

- EPC (with personal details removed)
- Any installer quotes or surveys

- Thermal images (optional but useful)

Optional Measurements

- Loft insulation depth (rough estimate)
 - Window frame types
 - Radiator sizes (a photo with a tape measure is enough)
-

2. General Checklist for Any Query

This works for planning, grants, energy upgrades or renovation help.

Useful Information to Gather

- A photo of the front of your home
- A Google Maps or Street View screenshot
- The area where work is planned
- Any plans, drawings or supplier proposals

If it's a planning query

- Conservation area appraisal (download from council)
- Listing text (copy/paste from Historic England)
- Photos of public viewpoints and boundaries
- Marked-up images showing proposed changes

If it's a grant or funding query

- EPC rating
 - Heating type
 - Household income (approximate)
 - Energy bills (usage only)
-

3. Photo & Video Upload Guidelines

Taking Good Photos

- Use daylight where possible
- Keep your phone steady
- Take a wide photo first, then close-ups
- Highlight where proposed equipment will be located
- For roofs or gardens, mark areas on maps or screenshots

Marking Up Photos

If you can, use simple annotations:

- Draw a box around the proposed solar area
- Circle where a heat pump will sit
- Highlight areas of shading or access

If you cannot annotate, describe it clearly:

“The heat pump would go in the bottom-left corner of this photo.”

Uploading Multiple Files

- Maximum 10 files per prompt
- Upload in batches: “More photos coming next”
- Final batch: “That’s everything uploaded”

4. Thermal Imaging: How to Use a Thermal Camera

Thermal imaging is one of the most useful tools for understanding heat loss, draughts and cold spots in your home. Cosy Home Advisor can interpret thermal images and explain what you’re seeing.

What a Thermal Camera Shows

A thermal imaging camera detects infrared heat. The colours show temperature differences:

- **Blue/purple** = colder areas (possible heat loss or draughts)

- **Red/yellow** = warmer areas (heat sources, pipes, warm walls)

When to Take Thermal Images

- On a cold day (ideally 5°C or below)
- When your heating has been on for at least 1–2 hours
- Morning or evening is ideal to reduce sunlight interference

What Images to Take

Take images of:

- External walls (inside and outside)
- Corners and junctions (common cold-bridge locations)
- Windows, doors and frames
- Radiators (showing performance and flow)
- Attic access, loft hatches and ceiling edges
- Suspected draught points (floor edges, skirting boards)
- Underfloor heating areas

Also take a normal photo of the same area for comparison.

How to Take Good Thermal Images

- Hold the camera steady for 2–3 seconds
- Stand 1–2 metres from the wall
- Avoid pointing at reflective surfaces (mirrors, shiny metal)
- Take both close-up and wide shots
- Note the ambient temperature if possible

If using a phone attachment:

- Make sure the phone isn't too warm (this affects accuracy)
- Close unused apps to reduce processor heat

For a detailed guide, see Warm and Well:
<https://warmandwell.co.uk/guides/a-guide-to-using-thermal-imaging-cameras/>

Additional Useful Thermal Images

Thermal imaging can also be used on **roofs**. These images help identify:

- Heat escaping through poorly insulated lofts
- Missing or disturbed insulation
- Warm patches that may indicate air leakage
- Overheating of roof areas in summer

If you can safely do so, take thermal images of the roof from ground level or from a nearby vantage point.

Using Thermal Imaging for Summer Overheating

Thermal imaging isn't just for cold weather. In hot conditions it can help identify:

- Solar gain through certain windows
- Hot external walls or roofs causing internal overheating
- Poor shading design
- Areas where ventilation or insulation upgrades could reduce summer heat

Take images:

- In the afternoon when the sun is strongest
- Of rooms that overheat most
- Of sun-facing walls and windows
- Of shading elements (awnings, trees, overhangs)

Tell me what time of day the images were taken and the outdoor temperature.

Where to Borrow or Buy a Thermal Camera

You can use:

- A plug-in phone attachment (usually the cheapest option)
- A handheld thermal camera (more accurate)
- A borrowed device from a library, community group or energy charity

If you live in **Cotswold District, Thames Head Community Energy** lend out a thermal imaging camera **for free**.

Email: info@thamesheadenergy.org

Retail purchase options include DIY thermal cameras or phone add-ons sold online or in hardware stores. Prices vary widely—ask me if you want help comparing features.

What I Can Help You Identify

- Insulation gaps and cold bridges
- Draught paths and air leakage
- Moisture or condensation risks
- Radiator flow issues
- Underfloor heating performance

Summary

These appendices give you practical tools to collect information that helps Cosy Home Advisor give accurate, tailored guidance. Whether you're preparing for a home assessment, planning an upgrade or using specialist tools like a thermal camera, you can refer back to these checklists anytime.

Legal Disclaimer

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