



South Gloucestershire Renewable Energy Advice Service & Grants

GUIDANCE NOTES

Outline

South Gloucestershire Council is committed to tackling climate change and has developed a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan which sets out plans to deliver significant cuts in carbon emissions in South Gloucestershire. As part of this commitment the Council supports energy efficiency and renewable energy development to reduce carbon emissions. See www.southglos.gov.uk/climatechange for more details of the Climate Change Strategy.

SG Futureenergy is a partnership between South Gloucestershire Council and Severn Wye Energy Agency (a registered charity). It is designed to help householders to find out if domestic renewable energy is a good option for them, decide on the most suitable technology and offer grant support to make installation more cost effective.

The scheme offers;

- Free and independent renewable energy advice.
- A grant of £500 towards the cost of the technology and installation
- A contact list of local installers who are accredited under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme, have public liability insurance and are signed up to the Renewable Energy Association (REAL) customer code of conduct.
- Ongoing support to help you through all stages of installing a renewable energy system.

Please note that this document is intended to provide general guidance only. The legal basis on which grants will be offered and paid is set out in the SG Futureenergy Terms & Conditions.

The Process

- Complete the energy efficiency measures required by the programme
- Contact the SG Futureenergy Advisors to help you decide which technology is most suitable for you.
- Obtain quote(s) from your chosen installer(s) and clarify planning requirements. All installers must be accredited under the Government's Low Carbon Buildings Programme Phase 1 Householder Scheme (Microgeneration Certification Scheme accredited). Include a photocopy of the quote from your chosen installer with your application.
- If required, apply for planning permission, listed building consent or conservation area consent. Most types of solar panels are now permitted development except in conservation areas or on listed buildings.
- Complete an application form and return it to the programme administrators.
- After receiving a grant offer letter, order the equipment and the installation can begin.
- After the installation is complete and the installer has been paid, submit claim documents to the programme.
- If the grant claim documents are in order your grant will be issued within 15 working days of receipt of all the documentation.

First things First

The most effective way to reduce your energy bills and home carbon emissions is to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Before thinking about renewable energy all householders should make sure their home is as energy efficiency as possible.

Severn Wye Energy Agency can provide SG Futureenergy callers with independent advice on energy efficiency measures through the SG Futureenergy helpline 01452 835087

Renewable Energy Advice

Once you have decided that you are interested in installing a domestic renewable energy system speak to the SG Futureenergy advisors on 01452 835087 or email them at renewables@swea.co.uk

Advisors will be able to discuss the viability, cost and potential payback of different technologies. They can send you information on the technologies you're interested in and run through the steps you need to go through to access a grant.

Any advice given is based on the information provided by the householder and any costs, energy outputs or payback periods are indicative only and should be confirmed with an installer before entering into any contractual arrangement.

Finding an Installer

Once you have chosen the most suitable technology for you, we can provide you with a list of local installers for the technology you are interested in.

The Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire sustainable energy installer list has been compiled as a direct response from an invitation sent out in November 2007 to all local contractors who are suitably qualified (Low Carbon Buildings Programme accredited).

It is not an approved list but a list of local Low Carbon Buildings Programme accredited contractors that replied to the invitation and have produced evidence of public liability insurance and membership of the Renewable Energy Association Listed (REAL) quality assurance consumer code for supplying micro heat and power generators to domestic customers. The REAL consumer code sets out various requirements for a good quality customer service including ensuring sales staff don't give false or misleading information and quotes are clearly set out and itemised. For a full copy of the code please see www.realassurance.org.uk.

Membership of the contractor list does not imply that South Gloucestershire Council in any way recommends either the technical solution or the installer.

The installer list aims to make it easier to find a local installer from the longer national Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP) list. However householders can employ an installer not on the local list so long as the chosen contractor is suitably qualified i.e. LCBP approved.

We recommend that householders obtain quotes from at least 2 accredited installers, but only a copy of the quotation from your selected installer is required with the SG Futureenergy grant application form. Please note many installers will be able to supply you with an initial estimate based on details you provide about your property (e.g. via an application form on the installer's website)

Grants are available for professionally installed systems only. Grants are not available for DIY installations.

Choosing a Technology

Installers must use certified products. Your certified installer will know what products are approved for funding; however, it is your responsibility to ensure that approved products are used. A list of approved products for each technology can be found at www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/info/installers.

SG Futureenergy can offer you advice on the general suitability of each technology but you are advised to ask your installer (or the product manufacturer) what reassurances they can provide you in support of any performance claims they make.

Planning Permission

The works may require Building Regulations, planning approval or listed building consent. We suggest that you clarify what consents are necessary before applying for a grant (as grants are only valid for 3 months).

On 6th April 2008 the law was changed to extend Permitted Development Rights to installations of solar thermal, photovoltaic, biomass boiler/stove and ground source heat pump technologies. This means that planning permission is not required for these technologies unless the installation is on a Listed Building, in a Conservation Area or the installation exceeds other size criteria. Full details of the criteria are available from http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20080675_en_1 or on request Severn Wye Energy Agency can post you a paper copy of the permitted development legislation.

If you are unclear as to whether your installation requires planning permission the Council's Development Control Service can provide you with a free informal assessment as to whether your proposal needs planning permission. Please submit your enquiry on a Householder Enquiry Form, which are available from the council website ([click here](#)) or from council offices. Your enquiry will be dealt with within three weeks.

Domestic micro-renewable installations are exempt from planning enquiry fees in South Gloucestershire (normally £54). However if planning permission is required you will need to pay the national planning fee of £135.

PLEASE NOTE – stricter planning controls apply in designated areas such as Conservation Areas. You should therefore check with the Council's Planning Department before carrying out any works. If you live in a listed building, or one that is curtilage listed, a Listed Building Consent Application will always be required. This is a separate consent to planning consent but there is no fee.

For more information please call 01454 868004 or email PlanningApplications@southglos.gov.uk.

Completing the application form

Once you have decided which technology is most suitable for you, received a satisfactory quote and clarified any Building Regulations, planning approval or listed building consent required you are ready to apply for a grant of £500 towards the cost of the technology and installation.

The grant application form requires you to complete details of the installation address and technology and requires confirmation that programme Terms & Conditions of Grant have been complied with. It also acts as a check list for you to ensure that all the requirements have been or will be met. Please refer to SG Futureenergy – Terms & Conditions of Grant for full terms and conditions.

Your application will be assessed to make sure all the information supplied meets the grant requirements. If there's a problem your application will be rejected and returned to you with an explanation why. We would welcome a new application.

Once your application meets all the criteria and is approved, we will send you a Grant Offer Letter and. This will confirm that the grant amount has been set aside. We will aim to do this within 5 working days of receipt of your application.

Grants are valid for **3 or 6 months** from the date of the offer letter (depending on the technology)

Grant funds are limited so there is no guarantee that applications will be successful, even if all eligibility requirements are met.

The grant will be allocated at a flat rate of £500 across all eligible technologies. Householders are entitled to receive a maximum of two grants (for different technologies) for a property.

Claiming your grant

The grant will only be paid once the installation has been completed and before the expiry date of your grant, which is clearly stated on your Grant Offer Letter. The Grant Claim Form must be sent in with the following documentation:

- a copy of your certified installer's full invoice(s) receipted as paid;
- a completed Grant Claim Form, which will be issued with any Grant Offer Letter;
- an installation Completion Certificate which your certified installer will complete on system commissioning. Your certified installer will have this form or it can be downloaded from www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/info/installers.

The programme managers will then check your claim documentation and if everything is in order your grant will then be paid.

We aim to process all grant claims within 15 working days of receipt of the correct documentation.

Extra grant funding – the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

The Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP) is a central Government funded renewable energy grant scheme which offers grants towards domestic renewable energy generation systems. Note that some of these grants will expire in March 2010 – please visit the website for full details - www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/about/hfaqs/

The SG Futureenergy programme aims to support this programme locally by offering independent advice, additional grant support and access to a local contractor list.

For full details of the Low Carbon Building Programme please see www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk We recommend that applicants to the SG Futureenergy grant scheme also apply for an additional LCBP grant. Futureenergy advisors can offer you advice on the LCBP grant scheme but any application will need to be undertaken independently of your SG Futureenergy application.

The LCBP only offers grants for Microgeneration Certification Scheme accredited products and installers, as listed on their website. In order to offer greater assurance for consumers the Low Carbon Buildings Programme has accredited products and installers after evaluating them against robust criteria for each of the microgeneration technologies.

In line with the Government's scheme, SG Futureenergy grant scheme only offers grants for Low Carbon Building Programme (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) accredited technologies and installers. All the installers listed on the South Gloucestershire & Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Installer Network are LCBP accredited.