

Homes Fit for the Future

Action Plan 2023-2025

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is twofold:

- to present a summary of the findings from engagement activities undertaken across the county which set out to understand how homeowners could be supported by community and council activities to make their homes more energy efficient and fit for the future.
- to set out an action plan which can be co-delivered by residents, local authorities and other stakeholders.

2.0 Background

According to the UK's Climate Change Committee, the UK's legally-binding climate change targets will not be met without the near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from UK buildings. Emissions from UK homes accounts for around a fifth of total UK emissions. Direct emissions from UK's 29 million homes reduced by 39% from 2005 to 2021, although this has not been a steady reduction. Emissions reductions have recently started to stall with energy use in homes actually increasing by 3% between 2020 and 2021.

As well as reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, improving the energy efficiency of poorly heated homes can support good physical and mental health and have benefits for children's educational attainment.

There is increasing support from the UK government for this agenda both through policy and regulation and through funding, such as the recent announcement of the extension of grants for energy efficiency measures in homes until March 2026. However, long-term governmental support is less certain.

The recent independent review of Net Zero: Mission Zero¹ highlights the opportunities and challenges to achieve net zero with a number of recommendations relating directly to housing. The report recommends that Government should expand its energy efficiency advice service in 2023, ensuring that it helps consumers to access qualified traders and providers in local areas and that Government should support establishing retrofit hubs by 2025 to bridge the gap between households and suppliers. These could enable installers to seek training and impartial advice and could connect households to suitable installers. The report goes further in suggesting that a local approach should be taken to achieving this with local authorities taking a leading role in the drive to net zero.

Since 2020, local authorities in Derbyshire have been successful in gaining funding through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme and the Sustainable Warmth Competition to retrofit homes in the social and private rented sector and homeowners on low incomes and in fuel poverty who cannot afford to heat their homes. In addition, support is

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128689/mission-zero-independent-review.pdf

available through the Derbyshire Healthy Home Project to improve the heating systems and thermal performance of privately owned homes where the homeowner is on low income and has an existing health condition made worse by the cold. The Warmer Derby and Derbyshire service, delivered by charity Marches Energy Agency, provides advice to residents on energy bills, energy efficiency and grant applications for insulation and energy efficient heating systems.

Private homeowners make up 63% of households in England. Across Derbyshire little work is being done with homeowners who are not in fuel poverty, many of whom would like to improve the energy efficiency of their home but are unsure of the steps to take for their property and personal situation.

Around 60% of Derbyshire's 350,000 homes are EPC rated D or below indicating that they are poorly performing and also demonstrating the scale of the housing decarbonisation issue in Derbyshire. Data² shows annual emissions from gas consumption in homes in the county are above the England average, except South Derbyshire which is comparable with the England average. Almost a fifth of homes in Derbyshire are not on the gas grid and are often heated using less efficient oil or LPG.

Overall, households in areas with less deprivation emit more greenhouse gas emissions and arguably should be a focus for a housing decarbonisation initiative in order to have the biggest impact on emissions reduction.

Research³ shows there is a shortage of labour and skills in the retrofit sector, suggesting a current market failure. This follows cycles of 'boom and bust' in national policy interest and support leading to low confidence across the sector. This is further compounded by examples of low-quality work, high prices and poor reputation; disparate uncoordinated measures; a culture of sub-contracting and low householder demand. Consequently, the supply chain is fragmented and unprepared for delivery of the high levels of retrofit needed.

Experience from borough and district councils implementing retrofit schemes for social housing and private homes in fuel poverty has highlighted existing contractors are struggling to meet current demand, and that there is a need to develop the supply chain. Many of the jobs in the retrofit supply chain are highly skilled and the technologies implemented are evolving all the time suggesting that there is capacity in the green economy for further development, providing an opportunity for the East Midlands region.

Simple, low-cost energy efficiency measures such as draught proofing, LED lights or radiator valves, should continue to be promoted across all households. However, deep retrofit measures comprising internal or external wall insulation, underfloor insulation and switching to low carbon heating systems such as heat pumps can have a much large impact on energy use and emission reduction, but can be expensive and their installation can cause temporary disruption. Therefore, fewer households are currently willing and motivated to undertake these measures compared to more simple and low-cost measures.

² [LA Reports | PBCC \(carbon.place\)](#)

³ West Yorkshire Combined Authority Scaling Up: Better Homes Yorkshire? LGA programme resource

Research from the latest Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) Public Attitudes Tracker found that 22% of homeowners were either fairly likely or very likely to consider installing solar thermal panels and 17% to consider air source heat pumps, the next time they needed to change their heating system. This is a significant proportion of the population and given the current capacity of the supply chain, it is recommended that any initiatives should be carefully targeted at a receptive audience.

Across Derbyshire local authority officers report an increasing number of requests for support and advice on retrofit measures and recommendations for installers which is being provided informally at the moment. Some community groups, for instance Hope Valley Climate Action Group, Sustainable Hayfield and Wirksworth Transition Community Land Trust, are providing advice and information informally.

3.0 Response of Derbyshire local authorities

There is a shared commitment across Derbyshire's county, district and borough councils, to strategically collaborate to improve outcomes for people and places, speak with one voice as a county, and coordinate our resources better and more sustainably. Under the workstream 'Live and Work Sustainably of Vision Derbyshire, the partnership developed the Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy in 2022, which included a priority focused on retrofitting existing homes:

Supporting the acceleration of the retrofitting of homes across the county, including working with partners, communities and residents to understand priorities and co-deliver solutions, and the development and delivery of a pipeline of retrofitting activities across the county, making effective use of funding streams and opportunities.

Furthermore, the Derbyshire County Council's Climate Change Strategy: Achieving Net Zero (2021-2025) has a series of targets and actions relating to decarbonising Derbyshire's homes, as follows:

Targets:

- All existing owner occupier domestic properties EPC rating C by 2035
- All owner occupiers and renters to have access to education and training programmes to decarbonise their homes by 2025
- At least 20% of domestic buildings to have rooftop solar photovoltaics (PV) installed by 2030

Actions:

- Coordinated Action: Through the Vision Derbyshire process, agree the approach to supporting the decarbonising of homes recognising the specific

opportunities and challenges faced by renters and homeowners and reflecting the need to particularly support those in fuel poverty.

- Skills and Training: Work with local authority and wider government partners to develop a Regional Skills Strategy that identify areas of upskilling within the house building and retrofit sectors, and creates investor-ready training programmes to receive support from the proposed National Skills Fund.
- Education and Empowerment: Develop an information sharing campaign to educate homeowners and renters on how to improve the energy efficiency of their property.

Recognising these commitments and the role of councils in increasing the rate of domestic retrofitting activities across the county, an engagement plan was agreed by Derbyshire's councils with the aims to understand:

- the extent of energy efficiency measures undertaken to date
- the level of interest in undertaking further energy efficiency measures
- what barriers exist to undertaking the desired energy efficiency measures
- what ideas and suggestions householders have to support the promotion of undertaking energy efficiency work

The engagement activities undertaken included:

- Three on-line surveys (Derbyshire-wide; targeting residents in South Derbyshire; and targeting residents in Derbyshire Dales)
- Face-to-face and on-line meetings with 'environmental' community groups
- Face-to-face and on-line meetings with 'non-environmental' community groups
- One-to-one discussions (on-line or face-to-face) with volunteers
- One-to-one 'street' interviews at events such as local markets

4.0 Engagement Outcomes

A summary of the outcomes from all engagement activities undertaken by the partnership during late 2022 and early 2023 is provided below with further detail of the Derbyshire County Council on-line survey provided at Appendix A. These echo the findings of similar research⁴ carried out elsewhere in the country and should be considered alongside the need for supportive national policies and frameworks.

Quantitative data from the survey carried out by Derbyshire County Council is considered representative of all engagement activities carried out across the county and is outlined below. The emerging themes set out at the end of this section reflect feedback from all engagement activities.

Figures from Derbyshire County Council's on-line consultation show that:

⁴ [Findings of a Citizens' Panel on home energy decarbonisation \(University of Lancaster\) - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/research-and-consultation/citizens-panel-on-home-energy-decarbonisation/)

- 47% of homeowners have **not** undertaken energy efficiency improvements to their home in the last five years
- **98%** of homeowners are interested in adding energy efficiency measures into their homes
- there is considerable confusion surrounding the cost, effectiveness and disruption caused by energy efficiency improvements.

There are a number of barriers preventing residents from improving the energy efficiency of their home. The top five barriers reported are:

1. 67% believe energy efficiency work is too expensive
2. 38% are worried about getting it wrong and making expensive mistakes
3. 35% do not know where to start and need advice on how to make their homes more energy efficient
4. 18% believe there is a lack of qualified and experienced tradespeople to do the works required
5. 16% believe they might not live in the house long enough to get the benefit of the investment

Across all engagement activities, residents were asked to suggest how councils and communities can work together to improve Derbyshire's existing homes so that they are more energy efficient and fit for the future, with a number of key themes and issues identified:

- **Support with funding is needed** either in the form of grants, low-cost loans, free bespoke advice or through discount on materials
- **Derbyshire-specific advice and information** as general UK-wide advice available does not seem relevant particularly in rural areas or where buildings are older or off the gas grid
- **Sharing of local experiences** through community events, local case studies or Eco-Homes events
- **Bespoke house-specific advice** as many people have visited national websites or received advice through an EPC which they consider to be too generic
- **Home energy assessments and guidance from a trusted and impartial provider** either through a local authority or one recommended by a local authority. Many responses suggested this could be free with others saying they would be happy to pay for a trusted, reliable service
- **Advice for homes in protected areas** as the general perception is that most energy efficiency measures are not allowed. More information and a change in the rules were requested to enable energy efficiency work to be undertaken in listed buildings; conservation and other protected areas including the national park and World Heritage Site
- **Finding reputable traders with availability to do the work** was an issue as there is a lack of confidence in the suitability and quality of work. There was a lack of knowledge of **quality assurance schemes** which needs to be addressed.

By distilling the key themes, the following key goals have been established with actions identified to achieve each goal in the action plan below:

1. Provide advice and support services for householders seeking to improve the energy efficiency of their homes to make them fit for the future
2. Provide an on-line information service using the Everybody's Talking About Climate Change website to sign-post householders to national and location-specific information
3. Support adoption of low carbon technologies (such as low carbon heating) and the adoption of micro-energy generation on homes
4. Provide opportunities for householders to visit homes which have been retrofitted
5. Work together to support the development and implementation of relevant training courses, and create skilled green jobs in Derbyshire to enable growth of the local retrofit supply chain
6. Increase awareness of relevant accreditation and quality assurance schemes
7. Support the development of community energy generation and efficiency schemes

5.0 Action Plan

Goal				
Provide advice and support services for householders seeking to improve the energy efficiency of their homes to make them fit for the future				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success Measures
Explore options for delivering an impartial energy advice and support service ranging from a simple advice service to a service managing and co-ordinating homeowners retrofit	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Local Authority Energy Partnership, district and borough councils	Jan 2023	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred option for delivering energy advice and support service identified Bespoke advice and support for householders Householders confident to undertake energy efficiency measures
Provide thermal imaging equipment and training for community groups to use locally	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Community groups	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups provide home thermal imaging service Householders aware of levels of thermal insulation of their home
Deliver workshops for householders who want to DIY energy efficiency measures	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Local Authority Energy Partnership, community groups	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops delivered
Deliver drop-in sessions for householders who want to undertake energy efficiency measures themselves	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: District and borough councils	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop-in sessions delivered with expert advice and signposting provided

<p>Deliver collaborative campaigns and messaging to help support households in changing behaviours that lead to a reduction in energy and water use</p>	<p>Lead: Derbyshire County Council</p> <p>Support: Local Authority Energy Partnership, district and borough councils, Local Authority Energy Partnership, community groups</p>	<p>Aug 2023</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns delivered • Energy and water use across Derbyshire reduced
<p>Promote the benefits of solar shading e.g. external window shutters and awnings</p>	<p>Lead: Derbyshire County Council</p> <p>Support: District and borough councils, community groups</p>	<p>Aug 2023</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents aware of the need to improve solar shading due to changing climate

Goal				
Provide a web-based information service using the Everybody's Talking About Climate Change website to sign-post householders to national and location-specific information				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success measures
Sign-post householders to trusted national information sources setting out typical retrofit measures, costs and pay-back periods	Lead: Local Authority Energy Partnership Support: County, district and borough councils	May 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derbyshire / Nottinghamshire location-specific information and signposting provided and updated on website
Provide detailed case studies of local homes which have been retrofitted	Lead: Local Authority Energy Partnership Support: householders	May 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies of Derbyshire housing archetypes which have been retrofitted provided in both video and document format
Provide Derbyshire-specific information for householders wanting to retrofit a listed building or home in a conservation or other protected area	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Local Authority Energy Partnership, district and borough councils	Aug 2023	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Householders are provided with relevant information enabling them to improve the energy efficiency of their home
Provide up to date information about finance and grants available for energy efficiency measures	Lead: Local Authority Energy Partnership Support: County, district and borough councils	Aug 2023	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is provided enabling householders to find information about grants and finance

Goal				
Support adoption of low carbon technologies (such as low carbon heating) and the adoption of micro-energy generation on homes				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success measures
Explore options for bulk buying of solar panels	Lead: County, district and borough councils Support: external partner	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeowners able to take advantage of reduced cost of solar panels
Explore options for bulk buy of insulation materials	Lead: County, district and borough councils Support: external partner	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeowners able to take advantage of reduced cost of insulation materials

Goal				
Provide opportunities for householders to visit homes which have been retrofitted				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success measures
Plan and deliver a programme of Eco Homes Open Days representing a range of Derbyshire home archetypes	Lead: County, district and borough councils Support: Local Authority Energy Partnership, householders	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents able to visit retrofitted home of relevant architype

Goal				
Work together to support the development and implementation of relevant training courses, and create skilled green jobs to enable growth of the local retrofit supply chain				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success measures
Hold an expo event for local retrofit companies to showcase their work and technologies	Lead: Local Authority Energy Partnership Support: County, district and borough councils, community groups	Aug 2023	Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event delivered with support from at least twenty companies
Work with Midlands Net Zero Hub to promote training and skills delivery on retrofit	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Midlands Net Zero Hub	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of training opportunities Increased number of people qualified across the retrofit sector
Continue to support training and innovation through delivery of the Green Entrepreneur Scheme	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: University of Derby	-	March 2025	<p>Demonstrator Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 projects contracted and supported to delivery 6 new FTE jobs <p>Small Grants Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 businesses contracted (6 of which to be new start businesses) <p>Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67 individuals supported to access accredited training opportunities

Goal				
Increase awareness of relevant accreditation and quality assurance schemes				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success measures
Ensure retrofit measures can be identified on Derbyshire Trusted Trader	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Vision Derbyshire partners	Aug 2023	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents can find suitably qualified traders with testimonials
Provide detailed information on relevant accreditation schemes	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: Local Authority Energy Partnership	Aug 2023	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents are able to quickly find what experience and accreditation a trader should have

Goal				
Support the development of community energy generation and area-based retrofit schemes				
Action steps	Delivery partner(s)	Start	End	Success measures
Explore options for targeting homeowners on an area-by-area basis to benefit from efficiencies of scale when retrofitting	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: District and borough councils, community groups	Aug 2024	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility of targeting homeowners on an area-by-area basis explored
Increase community renewable energy generation schemes	Lead: Derbyshire County Council Support: District and borough councils,	Aug 2023	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups generating renewable energy

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	community groups			
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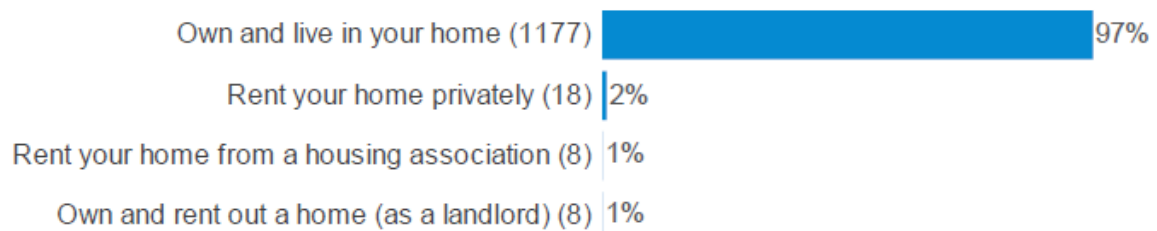
Appendix A

Homes fit for the future - Derbyshire's home energy efficiency

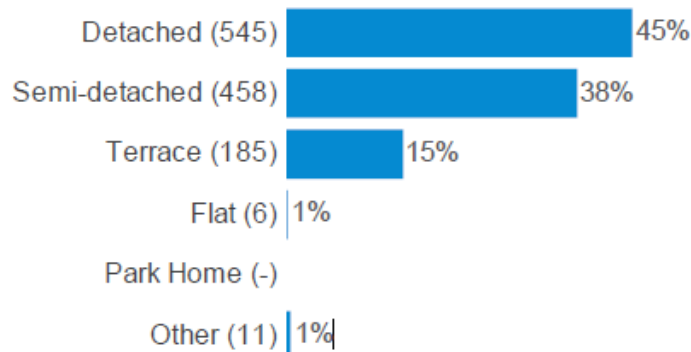
This report was generated on 23/02/23. Overall, 1216 respondents completed this questionnaire.

The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'. The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

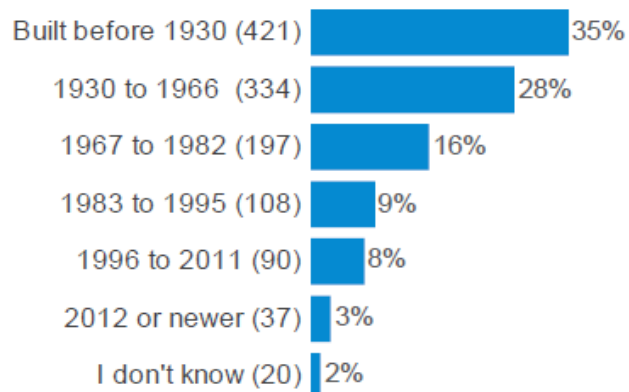
Do you ...?



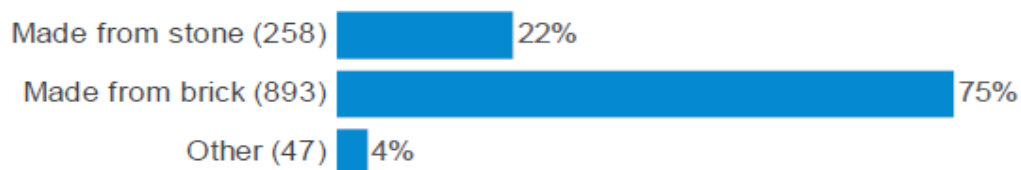
How would you describe your home?



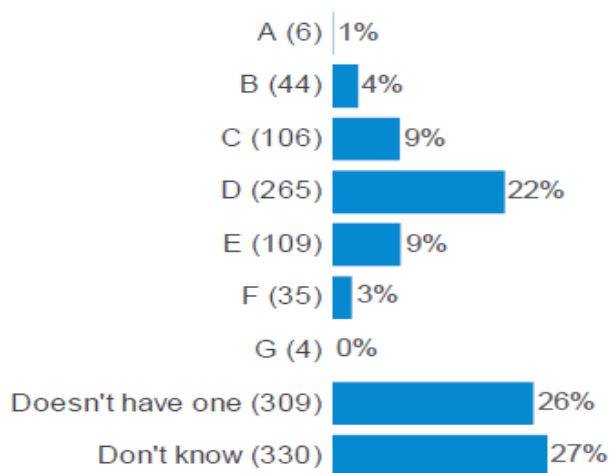
When was your house built?



What is your house built from?



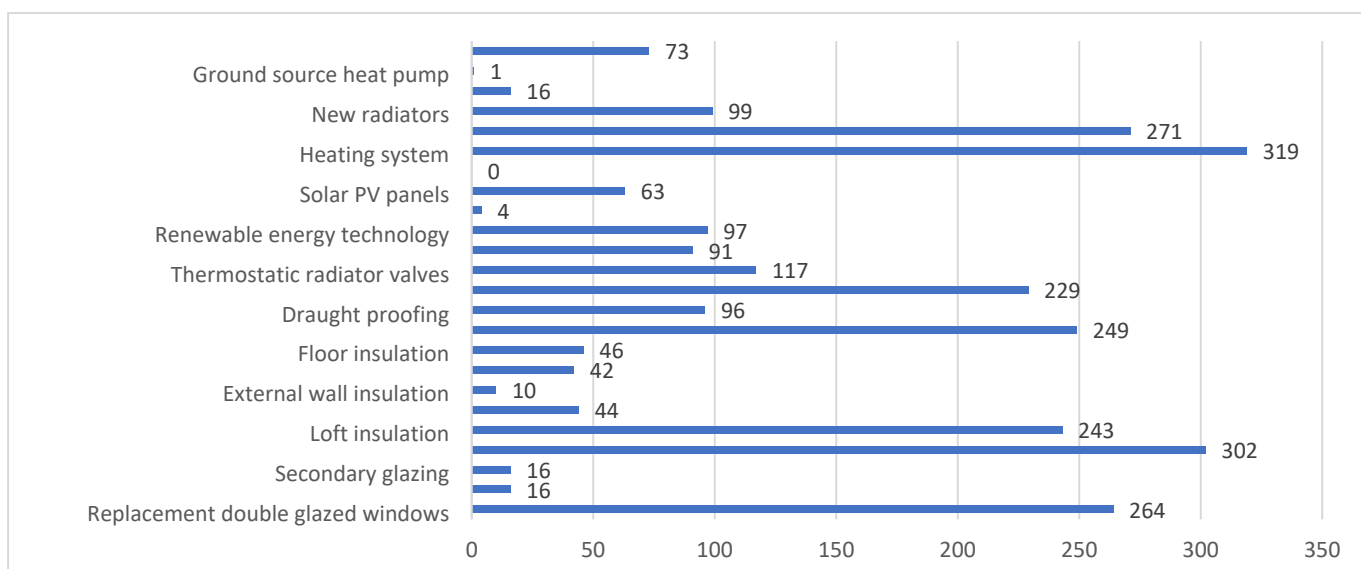
What is the Energy Performance rating of your home? (To find out if your home has an 'Energy Performance Certificate visit www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate)



Have you made any energy efficiency improvements to your home in the last five years?



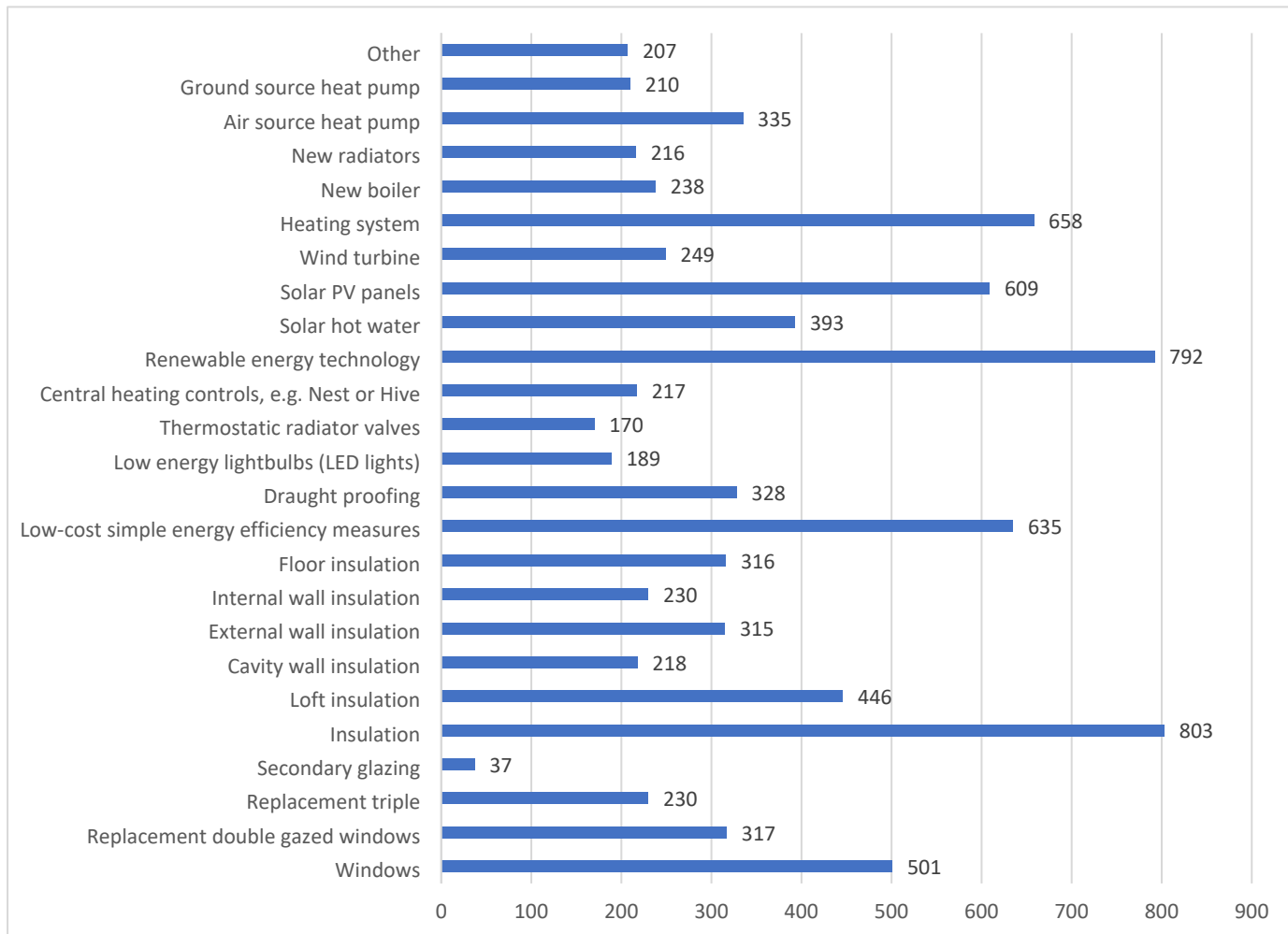
If 'Yes', what energy efficiency improvements have you made?



Would you be interested in adding efficiency measures into your home?



If 'Yes', what energy efficiency measures would you be interested in to make your home fit for the future?



From the list below, what is stopping you from making any (or further) improvements to the energy efficiency of your home? (Please select your top three reasons) (... option 1)

