

## **SOLID WALL INSULATION – FAQs ON REGULATIONS**

These FAQ's have been produced as a guide for householders considering solid wall insulation in England and Wales. Householders who have solid wall insulation carried out through Lakehouse as part of the South Bucks District Council Green Deal Communities project can leave the application for, Building Regulation consent to Lakehouse. Other Green Deal Providers may or may not include the obtaining of this consent as part of the service they offer – householders should check this with them before going ahead with the work. Householders are responsible for making their own applications for Planning and Highways Consent, should this be required. The National Energy Foundation is able to provide some support with this.

### **1) Will I need Planning Permission?**

#### **Internal Wall Insulation**

Planning consent for internal wall insulation is not required for a building unless it is listed.

#### **External Wall Insulation**

External wall insulation is considered in planning terms to be an 'improvement' to a property rather than an enlargement, so as such does not require planning permission as it is considered 'permitted development'. However the materials used for the exterior work have to be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing house, so you may wish to contact your local planning authority for them to assess if the changes being proposed are acceptable.

As external wall insulation changes the appearance of a dwelling, there are certain situations where you will definitely require planning permission if the dwelling is:

- Listed
- Subject to an Article Four Direction
- Within a Conservation Area
- Within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

You should contact your Local Planning Authority for further information.

#### **Planning Fees**

The fee for planning permission is £172 – a standard rate applied across all English local authorities. (Please see exception for Milton Keynes area below).

#### **Milton Keynes Council:**

<b>Area of house</b>	<b>Requires planning permission</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Front/side elevation	Yes	None*
Rear elevation	Yes	£172

\* Fee is waived in an Article Four area

## 2) Does solid wall insulation need to comply with Building Regulations?

The fabric of a building consists of a number of 'thermal elements' usually the walls, roof, and floor plus any doors and windows, all of which will allow the building to lose heat at a greater or lesser extent depending on how they are constructed. The thermal performance, or measure, of any element is measured as its u-value. The lower the u-value the better that element is at preventing heat loss out of the building. The u-value is calculated from the type and thickness of all the materials that make up that element. In general the thicker the material the more it will prevent heat loss but bear in mind that doubling the thickness of any material does not halve the heat loss.

Any significant renovation to a thermal element, such as a new layer of cladding or rendering of the external surface of a wall, or dry lining the internal surface of a wall, is defined under Building Regulations as 'controllable works'. This means that before the solid insulation works can go ahead a Building Regulation application must be submitted to your Local Authority Building Control Department with the appropriate fee.

The current Building Regulation u-value standard for external walls is 0.30 W/m<sup>2</sup>K, so the insulation being fitted either externally or internally must be able to improve the thermal performance of the wall to this standard. Less provision of insulation may be appropriate where meeting the standard would result in a reduction of more than 5% in the internal floor area bounded by the wall.

Contact your Local Building Control Department for further information

### Exemption from the Building Regulations

Exceptions are made for several categories of historic buildings, including listed buildings, buildings in Conservation Areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's), buildings on local lists and buildings of traditional construction. In such cases energy efficiency should be improved as much as possible, but not beyond a point where there is a risk of unacceptable harm to the building's character, appearance or fabric. You are advised to speak to your local authority Building Control department for further advice.

### Other Regulations

#### 3) Will I need Highways consent?

If your property does not have a front garden, and is next to the pavement, you should seek advice from the highway authority, as highway consent may be required. It is important to obtain such advice to ensure the increased protrusion, beyond the walls of your property, would not obstruct the highway.

Contact your Local Highway Authority for further information

#### 4) Certificates of lawfulness (Lawful Development Certificate)

If there is any ambiguity or question over whether your proposal passes the permitted development tests, for peace of mind you may choose to apply for a **Lawful Development Certificate**. This is not the same as planning permission but is proof that your household building work is lawful.

This option is well worth considering even if you are sure your project is permitted development. If you should later want to sell your property an LDC may be helpful to answer queries raised by potential buyers or their legal representatives. As such, it is important that all paperwork and records relating to your property are clear and up to date.

You can apply to your local council for an LDC using the Planning Portal's secure online application service. You will have to pay a fee which is half of the fee for an equivalent planning application, i.e. £86.