

## £557 million for public buildings to switch to cleaner heating and save on energy bills

2 years ago



More public buildings and businesses will benefit from over half a billion pounds in funding to help reduce their energy bills and carbon emissions.

Schools, pools, and hospitals will be supported to make energy efficient upgrades, with over £557 million government investment. The new projects will help reduce emissions and cut bills, as part of the government's plan to reach its world-leading net zero targets in a sustainable, pragmatic way.

Heat pumps, solar panels, insulation and low-energy lighting will be rolled out to reduce the use of fossil fuels across the public sector and strengthen the UK's energy independence, helping save taxpayers hundreds of millions of pounds.

This follows significant progress already made towards reaching net zero – with the UK becoming the first major economy to halve emissions. Decarbonising the public sector is expected to save an estimated £650 million per year on average to 2037.

Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance Lord Callanan said: “From school corridors to the businesses that power up our economy, we want to make sure buildings of all shapes and sizes are supported to deliver net zero.

“By allocating over £557 million today, we are standing steadfast behind our public sector and local businesses, providing the help they need to make the switch to cleaner, homegrown energy.

“This will not only help cut bills in the long term, but ensure we keep reducing our emissions – having already led the world by halving them since 1990.”

Over 1,000 projects have now received funding since 2020 to upgrade thousands of buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. New projects receiving funding in this phase include:

- Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded over £21 million to decarbonise 3 buildings by installing new heat pumps alongside other measures including wall, loft and roof insulation, double glazing and LED lighting
- Loughborough University has been awarded over £2 million to decarbonise their Olympic size swimming pool by replacing old gas-fired boilers with more efficient, cleaner heat pumps
- Surrey County Council has been awarded over £5 million to cut emissions across 19 sites including 6 libraries, 4 nursing homes, 2 community centres, Guildford Fire Station, 5 schools and the council’s own headquarters in Reigate

The government has also announced the award of £27.5 million from the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund to support businesses with high energy use to reduce their bills and carbon emissions, with new projects including:

- Pilkington UK will relocate its glass manufacturing line to a single facility in St Helens, helping to reduce their carbon emissions by producing glass from one, upgraded furnace, rather than running two
- Sofidel plans to replace their current natural gas steam boiler with one that can run on green hydrogen at their Leicester paper mill, helping to transform their energy intensive manufacturing process
- Plastipak UK will upgrade 13 drying systems at their Wrexham plant to help save energy during the production of preforms and containers for food, drink and dairy products

Today’s announcements demonstrate further progress towards the government’s commitment to spend more than £12 billion on energy efficiency by 2028, helping even more organisations and businesses to benefit from cleaner, more secure energy.

Salix Chief Executive Emma Clancy said: “The climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our time. It requires all of us, including governments and businesses, to make change and reduce our carbon footprint.

“The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme enables the public sector to tap into a fund which can transform our public buildings. These are the sites we use every day; our schools, universities, leisure centres and others will become more energy efficient as well as being comfortable places to use thanks to this funding.

“Every day our teams at Salix work with the public sector to achieve ambitious net zero goals and we’re looking forward to working with the latest successful Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant recipients.

“Together we will continue to take positive action to address our impact on the climate.”

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive Cara Charles-Barks said: “We are beginning to make great strides to reduce our emissions, through initiatives such as decommissioning our

entire nitrous oxide manifold and a sustainable travel plan.

“This grant is therefore invaluable. It will enable us to make these essential changes in the coming years and will have a positive impact on the environment and the experience of being in hospital. We know that getting this right will be better for the health and wellbeing of the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.”

Managing Director of Pilkington UK Neil Syder said: “This project represents one of the single biggest investments we’ve made in our UK manufacturing facilities in decades, and will ultimately secure the future of rolled glass manufacturing in the UK.

“Working out of one furnace will enable us to make a permanent and significant saving in CO2 emissions. It’s a radical shift in the way we operate, but we know that if we are to achieve our net zero ambitions, we need to make change across all areas of our business.

“The Watson Street site has been operating since the 1800s and forms a key piece of our history. Throughout the years, the site has been instrumental in the development of different products, paving the way for a rich history of innovation in glass solutions.

“Yet this move marks a new chapter in our story that allows us to embrace more sustainable ways of making glass and continue to drive forward our vision for change in partnership with the industry.”