



External Wall Insulation

External wall insulation is a type of insulation that is added to the outside of many types of walls, including solid, non-traditional and, in some cases, cavity wall.

Most properties in the UK that were built before the 1930s are solid wall – which means there is no gap between the internal and external wall.

If you have solid walls, then your options for wall insulation are either external or internal.

Heat loss through the walls can make up to 35% of all heat loss in the home, so insulating them will help reduce your heating bill.

If you have any damp inside your home, then the cause will need to be resolved before the insulation is installed, otherwise you could increase your damp problem.



Always use a qualified installer. SWIGA (Solid Wall Insulation Guarantee Agency) guarantee external wall insulation for 25 years, but only through registered installers.

Things to consider

If you are unsure if you have solid walls, you can check the brick pattern of your property.

If your wall has alternating rows of full-sized bricks in one line, then what looks like half sized bricks along the next row, then you probably have solid walls.

If you can't see your bricks, then you could measure the wall depth around the edge of your window. If your wall is less than 260mm thick, then you likely have a solid wall.

If you still aren't sure, then you can ask a surveyor or contractor to check the type of wall.

Installing external wall insulation can be a big project that will require the outside of your walls to be free from debris and defects.

You may require planning permission to change the outside appearance of your home, but you can add materials on top of the insulation to help match the previous appearance, such as brick slips.

You could face issues if your property is built close to your boundary wall, as the insulation could encroach on your neighbour's space.

What does it involve?

You will require scaffolding for the installation. If you can, coincide it with other external works, e.g. gutter replacement, to save on the cost of scaffolding and because many external features will need to be altered after the insulation is installed anyway.

After completion, the outside of the wall will be thicker so things like windowsills, fascias, soffits, existing ventilation and roof verges, will need to be extended.

Materials can vary massively due to the number of layers that are involved. Generally, the insulation is made from either polystyrene or mineral wool, which are both light weight and provide good insulation.

The installer will use an adhesive to fix the insulation to the wall, then attach mechanical fixings and a reinforcement mesh on top.

There are different types of mesh: you can discuss options with a contractor if your walls require something particularly heavy duty.

Lastly (unless a decorative layer is added), the contractor will apply a render. There are a variety of options depending on your need for flexibility, low maintenance, water resistance, and overall look.



Cost vs Savings

The cost of installation varies depending on the size of the property as this will affect the amount of materials needed.

It also varies depending on type of property, e.g. a terraced house will need less walls insulated than a detached property.

Prices can range from around £8000 to £25,000, but could be more if it is a particularly large house.

Savings will again vary depending on the number of external walls the property has, but could be around £200 - £550 per year.

You could recuperate your costs within 15 years of installation, depending on heating type and current energy prices.

If you have any walls that are not insulated, e.g. conservatories, then you will still experience heat loss in this room, so it is recommended to keep that room isolated from the rest of the house when using your heating system.