

Efficiency makeover



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A Bristol couple are watching a green makeover transform their house after winning a competition run by TV's *Grand Designs*.

Will Homoky and Catherine Beswick were chosen from 8,000 applicants to win energy improvements worth more than £20,000.

The measures include solar panels for electricity, hi-spec double glazing and airtight doors.

Work on the three-bedroom Victorian semi started earlier this month – and the results will be revealed in a ceremony next week.

The competition is part of the Great British Refurb Campaign – run by *Grand Designs* and backed by its presenter Kevin McCloud – aiming to improve energy use in the UK's houses, which cause 27 per cent of total carbon emissions.

Better energy efficiency will not only lower the country's carbon footprint, but can also save billions of pounds every year.

Will and Catherine's house will serve as an example of how different measures – some simple, some complicated – can cut bills and energy usage.

"We were chosen because our home is representative of UK housing stock.

"It is good to have a template to show how cost-effective these



What a win: Will Homoky's Bristol house is being transformed after he was chosen out of 8,000 applicants for the *Grand Designs* prize

measures can be," Will said.

The couple only moved into the house four months ago. They installed low-energy lights and a modern combi-boiler, but there was still plenty of room for improvement when they heard they had won the competition.

Loft insulation was below building regulations level of 250mm, but will be increased to 400mm in the makeover.

The house cannot have insulation in the walls which are solid. So several inches of

glass wool insulation is being fixed on the inside of the building, held in place by new wooden frames and covered with plaster. Living area is reduced but it is a price worth paying, said Will.

"We have lost six inches on the inside but we're happy with the change," said Will. "The cost and benefits of the energy savings easily outweigh the loss of space."

According to the Energy Savings Trust, standard energy efficiency measures –

insulation, low energy lightbulbs and switching appliances off – can save the average household £300 per year.

The transformation of Will and Catherine's house cost more than £20,000. While the savings will eventually pay that investment back, the initial cost is out of the reach of most households.

The Government launched a pilot Pay As You Save scheme last year to fund home energy improvements in 10 locations

around the UK, including Stroud in Gloucester. Householders are loaned the money for renewables and energy efficiency kit, and they pay back the loan from the monthly savings on bills.

Green campaigners are calling for the scheme to be rolled out all around the country quickly – to give householders relief from rising energy bills and bring a reduction in carbon emissions so desperately needed to ease climate change.



Debate: Juliet D.

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