



Heat Pumps Vs Gas Boilers

Description

A BBC report in January 2026 indicated that while heat pumps are 3-4 times more efficient and much greener than gas boilers, high upfront costs (£10k-£15k), installation complexities in older Edinburgh homes and higher electricity prices relative to gas are significant adoption barriers. New planning rule changes in 2025 aim to make installations easier but there are many barriers for Edinburgh home owners looking to invest in renewable energy for heating their property.

While traditional, individual air source heat pumps face significant logistical, spatial, and structural challenges in Edinburgh's tenement flats, they are not universally unsuitable. Successful retrofits occur, but often require communal solutions, such as shared heat pumps, or specific, non-obstructive installations on, or in, the property.

Key Takeaways from BBC Coverage

- **Cost and Efficiency:** Heat pumps are far more efficient, but electricity costs often make them more expensive to run than gas, despite lower carbon emissions.
- **Installation & Planning:** Recent changes allow for easier installation of units within one metre of a boundary, addressing previous planning permission bottlenecks.
- **Suitability:** They are ideal for well-insulated, modern homes but can be challenging to install in some older, smaller terraced houses and tenement flats.
- **Government Targets & Grants:** The government aims to increase uptake, with grants (like the Boiler Upgrade Scheme) available to help bridge the cost gap, though, as of early 2024, adoption remains below targets.
- **Benefits:** Longer lifespan (approx. 20 years) compared to boilers (10-15 years) and, when combined with solar panels, can lead to significant annual savings.

Category

- 1. Renewable Energy

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