

UFU WATCH

ARTICLE

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UFU Welcome Launch of the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme

The Ulster Farmers' Union has welcomed the launch of the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme (NIRHPPS) by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

UFU President Harry Sinclair said; "The aim of the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme is to help domestic householders afford alternative renewable technologies that can heat their home. The new scheme will allow consumers to apply for financial support towards installing biomass boilers, heat pumps and thermal solar panels in place of their existing fossil fuelled heating systems.

"Since the launch of the scheme in May 2012 the UFU have received clarification from DETI that they will also accept applications for domestic farm dwellings. DETI have stressed that this is a short term measure prior to the possible introduction of a Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive for the domestic sector. In the meantime the UFU will continue to call for the introduction of a Renewable Heat Incentive for small-medium businesses in Northern Ireland similar to that in place in Great Britain".

The Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme (NIRHPPS) is open to new applications from 24th May 2012. The scheme provides financial support for air source heat pumps, biomass boilers, ground source or water source heat pumps and solar thermal. Successful applicants will receive a voucher to claim a premium payment from DETI. The voucher can only be claimed if installation is complete and the voucher is redeemed within the time given.

For more information about the scheme or to apply visit the DETI website at <http://www.deti.gov.uk/deti-energy-index.htm> or alternatively contact 028 9052 9219.



Department of
**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**
www.detini.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme

Information and Guidance - Fact sheet

What is it all about?

The Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment (NIRHPP) is a government designed scheme to help domestic householders afford renewable technologies that can heat their home. This is a short term measure prior to the possible introduction of a Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive for the domestic sector.

Who can apply?

The Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme is for all householders in Northern Ireland. The scheme is also open to private landlords.

All successful applicants will need to adhere to certain conditions and standards.

What are the conditions?

Technologies must be installed in primary places of residence, not second homes or holiday homes, and you must have basic energy efficiency measures in place. This means you must confirm that you have loft insulation to 250mm and cavity wall insulation, where these measures are practical.

Where you require advice on choosing a renewable heating technology or on the insulation of your house Bryson Energy's local, independent energy advice line may be able to help and can be contacted at Tel: 0800 1422 865, Web: www.brysonenergy.org.

The renewable heat product you are installing must be listed under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) or Solar Keymark and be installed by someone registered under the MCS scheme. Please visit the MCS website <http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/> or Solar Keymark website <http://www.estif.org/solarkeymark/> for more details.

Many domestic renewable heating installations are now classed as permitted development which means planning permission is not needed, but this will depend on the technology you are installing and where you live. Please check with your Local Planning office (<http://www.planningni.gov.uk/>) or Building Control Department of your local Council (<http://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com/>) before proceeding, to ensure you have all of the correct permissions required.

Once the equipment is installed you will be asked to complete a brief customer survey. You will also be asked to complete a follow up survey 12 months after the technology is installed so we can learn about how the technology has been used, the fuel that has been used (if applicable) and your satisfaction with the product. You may also be chosen at random to have a heat meter installed to your equipment (free of charge). It is a condition of the scheme that you are content to complete the necessary surveys and for a heat meter to be installed.

The scheme is open to new installations from 24 May 2012. If you apply and meet the terms and conditions you will be eligible to receive a voucher which will entitle you to claim a premium payment from DETI. You will only have a set period of time to complete your installation and redeem your voucher.

How much are the grants worth?

Technology	Support per unit (£) in a dwelling
Air Source Heat Pump	1700
Biomass boiler	2500
Ground Source or Water Source Heat Pump	3500
Solar Thermal	320

How do I apply?

Complete the included application form and return to:

NIRHPP, Energy Division
 Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
 Room 44, Netherleigh
 Massey Avenue
 BELFAST, BT4 2JP

Email: NI.RHI@detini.gov.uk
 Tel: 028 9052 9219

www.detini.gov.uk/deti-energy-index.htm

Will I get the Renewable Heat Incentive too when it is extended to the domestic market?

Householders who install renewable heat technologies with the support of a premium payment will remain eligible for any longer term Northern Ireland RHI, should it be introduced to the domestic sector and provided they meet any criteria set by the N Ireland RHI. However, at that time, for those receiving premium payments the amount payable under the RHI will be reduced to take account of the RHPP.

Final checklist

Before you install a renewable heat technology and seek to redeem your premium payment voucher you should;

- Check the technology is suited to your home.
- Ensure you have the basic energy efficiency measures installed in your home (cavity and loft installation).
- Get a minimum of three quotes from MCS certified installers
- Check planning permission issues (especially for Air Source Heat Pumps)
- Be able to complete by the date specified on your voucher



Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme

Terms and Conditions

1. Application for a voucher

1.1 The issue of vouchers, to eligible applications, is subject to the availability of funds.

2. Issue of vouchers

2.1 If you are issued with a voucher under this scheme, this will mean you are entitled to claim a "Renewable Heat Premium Payment" (i.e. a government funded grant towards the cost, inclusive of non-recoverable VAT, of a new renewable heating system) as long as you comply with the terms and conditions set out in this document and in the covering letter issued by DETI with your voucher. The voucher is personal to you (the person that applies for and is issued with the voucher) and cannot be transferred to anyone else or to any other installation address.

2.2 You are only entitled to apply for a voucher, if you meet certain eligibility requirements, as detailed at www.detini.gov.uk and in the covering letter issued by DETI with your voucher.

2.3 You must ensure that information given to DETI as part of your application for the voucher is accurate. If any of this information changes prior to you receiving the voucher or claiming payment, you must notify DETI without delay as it may affect your right to the payment.

2.4 Being issued with a voucher or payment under the Renewable Heat Premium Payment is not a guarantee of future payments under the Renewable Heat Incentive.

3. Claiming the premium payment

3.1 You are only entitled to redeem your voucher and claim your premium payment when the installation of your renewable heating system in your property has been completed.

3.2 To claim the payment, you must provide the following documents to DETI by no later than the "Voucher Expiry Date" set out in your voucher:-

3.2.1 the completed voucher, including payment details and a completed "Customer Declaration";

3.2.2 a copy of the invoice(s) from your installer for the supply and installation of the renewable heat system;

3.2.3 a copy of your Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) commissioning certificate as issued by your installer;

3.2.4 any other documents that DETI may request if it has any queries about your claim.

4. Record keeping, inspections & monitoring requirements

4.1 You must keep a record of all relevant documentation that you obtain in relation to your renewable heating system and its installation, including the original of any quotation(s) and invoice(s) from your installer. You must keep these records for 6 years following payment of the voucher and, if asked do so at any time, you must allow authorised representatives of DETI to inspect and take copies of these records.

4.2 If asked to do so at any time, you must also allow authorised representatives of DETI to have access to your property in order to inspect your installation and verify that you have complied with these terms and conditions.

4.3 Following installation of your new renewable heating system, you must comply with certain ongoing monitoring requirements, as described in the Frequently asked Questions and the covering letter issued by DETI with your voucher.

4.4 It is a condition of the voucher being paid that the technology will remain installed and in use at the property, and will not be modified in such a way as might adversely affect its performance, for a period of at least 24 months following payment of the voucher. You will be responsible for ensuring that this condition is met.

5. Withholding and repayment of grant

5.1 DETI has the right to reduce or withhold payment of the voucher or (once paid) require that some or all of it be repaid, if this is required by law (including rules relating to "state aid") and/or if any one or more of the following events occurs:-

5.1.1 any information that you provided to DETI is subsequently found to be untrue, inaccurate or incomplete;

5.1.2 you were never eligible, or prior to claiming it you ceased to be eligible, to receive the payment;

5.1.3 you fail to comply with these terms and conditions.

6. Defective renewable heat equipment/Installation work

6.1 DETI cannot, and do not, guarantee the quality or performance of your new renewable heating system and/or the work carried out by your installer. You should ensure that the installer you contract with provides you with all necessary information about the warranty cover it will be providing and the insurance cover it has in place.

7. DETI is entitled at any time to vary these terms and conditions and will give notice to successful applicants in the event of such variation.



Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Premium Payment Scheme

Frequently asked Questions

1. What is the RHPP scheme?

The Northern Ireland, Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme is a government support scheme to help domestic householders install renewable heating and hot water systems in their homes.

2. How will the scheme work?

Individuals will be able to apply for a voucher which will be issued if their application is successful. When the qualifying technology has been installed the voucher can be exchanged for grant money. If you are issued with a voucher you are not required to then install equipment but if you do, the voucher is a promise that you will receive the appropriate grant once your equipment has been installed and as long as the relevant conditions of the voucher are met. If you decide you will not use the voucher please inform DETI as soon as possible.

3. How do I apply for a Renewable Heat Premium Payment?

The scheme will open to applications on 24 May 2012. Please read the eligibility criteria listed on the DETI website to make sure you are eligible for the scheme before making an application. It is very important that those with vouchers check they have met all the conditions on that voucher, as we reserve the right not to pay claims if the scheme terms and conditions and the terms on the voucher have not been met. Receiving a voucher is not sufficient evidence that you are entitled to a grant. If you don't have access to the internet you will be able to apply by calling an advisor on 028 9052 9219.

4. Who can apply for a grant?

Individuals who own their own property and reside within Northern Ireland can apply for installations at their primary residence. If you rent your property privately, approach your landlord as you may need to work with them to apply for the scheme.

5. What are the eligibility criteria?

The main criteria are as follows:

- The installation address must be situated in Northern Ireland, and must be the applicant's primary residence or a property occupied for the majority of the year
- Applicants must be the owners of or reside in the property for which the grant is applied (alternatively applicants who have leasehold ownership or tenancy occupation must have permission from the property freeholder) and it must be their primary residence.
- For heating systems other than solar thermal, this must be the main heating system in the house.
- Eligible technologies are Solar Thermal Hot Water, Air to water source Heat Pumps, Ground Source Heat Pumps, water to water heat pumps and biomass fuelled boilers (eg wood or wood pellet). Air to air heat pumps, wood fuelled stoves (unless they are part of a system with a back boiler) and bioliquid fuelled systems are not eligible for this scheme.
- Applicants must use a Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certificated installer and product or a Solar Keymark product. Please see <http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/> or <http://www.estif.org/solarkeymark/> for more details.
- Renewable heating systems must supply a permanent residential building (mobile homes, caravans, house boats and systems heating swimming pools only are not eligible).
- Basic energy efficiency measures must have been installed at the installation address (loft insulation up to 250mm where appropriate, cavity wall insulation where practicable). Where you require advice on the insulation

of your house Bryson Energy's local, independent energy advice line may be able to help and can be contacted; Tel: 0800 1422 865, Web: www.brysonenergy.org .

- Applicants must have received all relevant permissions for the installation including planning permission where required. If in doubt, please confirm with your local planning office whether planning permission is required.

6. Can I install the heating system before applying for a voucher?

Whilst installations made after the announcement of the scheme on 24 May 2012 will be eligible we do not recommend entering into any binding contractual commitment or otherwise paying out any money (including any deposit) for a renewable heating system before receiving a voucher. If you as a householder proceed to installation before receiving a voucher, please ensure that you have read the terms and conditions of the scheme carefully, including all the information on the DETI website.

In these circumstances DETI will not be liable for any costs in relation to decisions you have taken on this basis. You may find as a result that you have committed to paying the full cost of the installation yourself.

7. What is the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)?

The N Ireland RHI will provide payments over a set period of time to generators of renewable heat. It is expected to start in summer 2012 for the non-domestic sector and DETI has announced its intention to make support under the scheme available to households in 2013.

8. If I receive a Renewable Heat Premium Payment, will I be eligible for the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive when it is introduced?

DETI has confirmed that renewable heat installations installed in homes since 1 September 2010 will get the Renewable Heat Incentive once it comes in, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. They have also confirmed that this will include those who receive support under the N Ireland RHPP scheme, though the term of the incentive will be reduced by two years.

9. Which technology is right for me?

It depends on the location of your house and what you require from the system. For general information on each microgeneration technology and their suitability please contact Bryson Energy's local, independent energy advice line may be able to help and can be contacted at 0800 1422 865 or online www.brysonenergy.org or approach heating specialists or other experts for a range of opinions.

10. How much are the Renewable Heat Premium Payments?

It depends which technology you are applying for. The voucher values for each of the technologies are listed below.

Technology	Voucher Value
Air Source Heat Pump	£1,700
Biomass boiler	£2,500
Ground Source or Water Source Heat Pump	£3,500
Solar Thermal Hot Water	£320

11. Can I apply for more than one technology?

Yes compatible technologies are eligible, although you must complete a separate application form for each technology. You cannot apply twice for the same technology at the same installation address.

12. I received a grant under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme/Clear Skies or Reconnect programme; can I apply for a voucher for a new different installation under this scheme?

Yes, although in these cases you cannot apply for funding for your existing installation and the new system must be used instead of an existing fossil fuel or electric heating system.

13. What if I can't install the required basic energy efficiency measures?

You must install the **appropriate** energy efficiency measures to be eligible for a voucher - so this is a requirement only where it is possible to install the measures. So, for example, if you live in a solid wall property that does not have cavities then you do not need to install cavity wall insulation. If in doubt, please contact DETI on 028 9052 9219.

14. Will I need to pay for any monitoring that is carried out?

- A number of applicants may be approached by DETI to have additional meters attached to their installation which will monitor the performance of the heating system. They will not have to pay for these or take readings themselves. Everyone has to agree to let a meter be installed as part of the terms and conditions of the scheme.
- For everyone else, any meters and controls which come with the product already will be sufficient. You will be asked through surveys information about these meters and the bills that you get; and in particular how easy it is to understand the meters and the controls, as well as general feedback on your satisfaction with the system installation and its performance.

15. How can I find an MCS certificated installer and product or a Solar Keymark product?

You can check whether an installer or product is MCS certificated or find a local installer by going to the MCS website (www.microgenerationcertification.org) or with Solar Keymark (www.estif.org/solarkeymark/) for more details or by calling an advisor on 028 9052 9219.

16. Why do I have to use an MCS installer and product?

Installers and products used for the Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme are certified by MCS which is an independent certification scheme designed to certify microgeneration products and installers in accordance with consistent standards. The primary aim of the MCS is to provide consumers with confidence and protection by guaranteeing that microgeneration products and installers who carry the mark meet, and will continue to meet, these robust quality standards.

17. Is there any guarantee should my technology not work to expectations?

If you use an MCS installer and product for your installation you should receive a warranty for both the equipment and workmanship of your installation. Ask your installer about this – it is always a good idea to seek more than one quotation and you may wish to consider the type of warranty on offer alongside other considerations such as price.

18. Can I still receive a grant if a non-certified installer performs the installation?

Only if an MCS certificated installer commissions the system after the non-certified installer has finished the installation. In this case, the certificated installer must fill out the completion certificate, and you must provide a suitable chain of invoices showing all of the costs of the installation.

19. Can I still receive a grant if someone is using my installation as the first job on which they will be assessed for the MCS?

Yes. However, it will still be necessary to get a MCS certificate or equivalent assessing that the job was in accordance with the rules of the scheme and return this with the completed voucher and the invoice to DETI within the deadlines on the face of the voucher. It can take several weeks or even months to assess whether the job is in accordance, which would need to be factored into the project timetable. The absence of a certificate, or a delay waiting for a certificate, on the grounds that the installer was in the process of gaining MCS certification or equivalent, is not a sufficient reason to grant an extension to the deadline on the voucher, so there is an increased risk that your claim will not be honoured. There is also a risk that the installer is not certified at the end of the process – and again, in those circumstances, the claim would not be met. So you need to be aware of this risk if agreeing to use somebody going through the process of certifying under the MCS or equivalent.

20. How long will it take to receive my voucher?

If the information you have given in your application satisfies the eligibility criteria of the scheme then you will usually be awarded a voucher. We will endeavour to have this emailed to your nominated email address or posted within 2 weeks. Occasionally applications will be referred for further checking. You will be alerted to this once your application has been submitted and you will receive notification of whether it has been successful, usually within 3 weeks. Incomplete or incorrect applications will significantly delay your application being processed.

21. If I make a successful application to the scheme and receive a voucher, how long is it valid for?

This depends on the technology you have applied for. The voucher validity periods for each of the technologies are listed below.

Technology	Validity Period
Solar Thermal Hot Water	3 months
Air Source Heat Pump	5 months
Ground Source Heat Pump	6 months
Biomass boiler	6 months

The date on the voucher refers to the date that the valid claim is received by DETI and **no extensions** will be given. The completed voucher claim together with the invoice and the Microgeneration Certification Scheme certificate should be sent to the address indicated on the voucher. It is recommended that this is sent by recorded delivery.

22. I live in a house owned by NIHE/Housing Association, can I apply for a voucher?

You must own (or privately rent) the property where you are applying for an installation.

23. Can I pay a deposit before I apply for my voucher?

Please note that any payment you make to your installer is done at your own risk. Making an application does not automatically guarantee that you will receive a voucher.

24. Will I need planning permission or building control for my installation?

Most installations are now classed as permitted development which means planning permission is not needed, but this will depend on the technology you are installing and where you live. Please check with your Local Planning office (<http://www.planningni.gov.uk/>) or Building Control Department of your local Council (<http://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com/>) before proceeding to ensure you have all of the correct permissions required.

25. Can I claim the RHPP for a new build property?

Only householders occupying a house can apply for a voucher. So, for example where a householder applies for a voucher in respect of a main heating system in their newly completed house, or in the case of individual self-build at point of completion, this is eligible. However, neither householders applying in relation to an offplan development, nor installers or building developers in any case are in a position to apply – they would not be eligible.

26. Will I need an environmental permit for my installation?

For some ground source and water source heat pumps ("open loop", or "closed loop") where river or groundwater is used and then discharged back to the environment, a discharge and water abstraction licence may be needed. Contact the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) for more details and guidance – <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water.htm> (follow the links under Regulation of Discharges and Water Resources.)

27. Are air to air heat pumps eligible?

No.

28. Are bioliquid heating systems eligible?

No.

29. Are exhaust air heat pumps supported?

No.

30. Are biomass hot air systems or wood burning stoves eligible?

No, only biomass systems which heat water to provide space heating are eligible.

31. What information will you gather for the monitoring and what will you do with all the information you collect?

It is important to make sure you are comfortable with the idea that you may have to complete a survey on aspects of your heating system such as its performance. The surveys could capture other information such as how much you used to pay for your heating and electricity, and how much you pay after installation. We are also interested in your broader views such as, what you think of the kit, how easy was it to arrange instalment etc.

32. Will you support second hand renewable energy systems or replacing existing renewable systems?

No, the system has to be new and should replace a fossil fuel or electric heating system (except for self build new-build).

- 33. I am proposing to install a new biomass boiler system/heat pump which will serve lots of houses. Can I apply for RHPP?**

No, because such systems are eligible under Phase I of the main RHI you should apply under that.

- 34. Who do I contact if my heating system does not work?**

Start by contacting the person who installed the system.

- 35. Who do I contact if I am unhappy about the administration of the scheme, or my application is rejected?**

If there is a problem with the administration or handling of the scheme, as opposed to the quality of the installation or performance of the product, and think that the rules of the scheme have not been followed, write to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. If you are still not satisfied, write to the NI Ombudsman whose details can be found at www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk/.

- 36. What happens if I am very disappointed with the performance of my chosen technologies or it fails to work? Do I have to return the grant if I remove the system – say after 4 months?**

Yes. If you get a refund from the installer, you have to return the grant. Contact DETI for details of how to do this.

RHPP requires MCS installations. MCS installers must offer consumers written estimates of the likely energy outputs from an installation. Please refer to the REAL Assurance Code website (<http://www.realassurance.org.uk>) to see what you should expect from MCS installer companies.

Complaints - Within MCS and its consumer Code, there are various routes for complaints. If a consumer is dissatisfied, they should complain, in the first instance, to the installer company and ask them to put right anything that may be wrong. If a complaint is not resolved by the MCS company, is a complaint relating to technical issues or to a faulty product, the complaint should pass to the MCS certification body (for that installer company, or product) to investigate the complaint further. Please refer to www.microgenerationcertification.org for detailed information. If not resolved by the company, any complaint related to consumer issues, should be passed to the REAL Assurance Code <http://www.realassurance.org.uk>.