

Octopus energy agile review

I thought some people considering a heat pump might be interested in our experiences of getting one installed, so I wanted to share what we went through. Feel free to ask any questions which I haven't already answered.

We moved into a house with an oil boiler at the start of 2023. The house is about 100 years old (built in around 1920s) but had reasonably good insulation (double glazing everywhere, and some loft insulation). When we bought it, the EPC was rated D(54).

We wanted to replace the oil boiler for several reasons (in approximate order of importance to us):

Initially we looked at a couple of local installers, who quoted us £18k and £13k respectively - these prices are before the BUS (boiler upgrade scheme) was applied. Both installers were going to charge additionally for any radiators that needed to be upgraded, or other remedial work (which could have added another £2k to the quotes). At least one of the installers didn't include the heat pump base/plinth in the price - meaning I'd have had to get a builder in to create a concrete slab or other suitable base, at my own cost.

In April I spoke to Octopus, who were just starting up doing heat pumps, and they said our house would be suitable for them to install. They quoted £11.5k - and this was a fixed price quote, so included everything. HP base, radiator upgrades, and any other work to the heating system was all covered, so significantly cheaper than the local installers. At the time the BUS grant was £5k, so this would have left me with £6.5k to pay. So we paid the £500 deposit to kick off the process.

Boiler Upgrade Scheme/Insulation Requirements

In April Octopus came to survey the property, and after doing all sorts of heat requirement calculations confirmed that it would be suitable for a heat pump. They recommended a 9kW Daikin pump and a replacement hot water tank. They confirmed that 4 radiators would need to be upgraded, and a consumer-unit extension would need to be added to provide the two mains connection ways for the heat pump - but all of that this was all included in the original £11.5k quote.

The conditions of the installation were that I needed to:

Get planning permission (because we are in a conservation area).

The requirement for the heating source in the bathroom was removed about 2 weeks before install, so it turned out it was unnecessary - but it's still useful to have a heated towel rail.

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Planning took a while; we applied for pre-planning (because our Council wasn't actually sure if we needed full planning permission...). This was supposed to take 28 days, but actually took 9 weeks! The outcome was that we needed full planning, so we put in the application in late May. The application was very simple; the most tedious part was having to spend an evening creating elevation drawings (I used Powerpoint) but it wasn't difficult.

Planning took 3 months to be approved. During this time Octopus sent us a bouquet of flowers to apologise for it taking so long to get our installation booked in - despite it not being their fault at all!

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