

Vip Patel on using a house consumption meter

I first got a simple energy monitor in 2010, a free one from nPower. It has a transmitter that clips over the power cable by the electricity meter and a receiver that gives a few simple ways of watching your usage (by cost, Kg CO₂, and kWh energy usage). The receiver still sits on my desk, clearly visible, and it makes an enormous difference to my behaviour. Whenever I catch sight of higher than usual consumption, it alerts me to something left on.

The effect of having this is that it helped me very quickly identify the devices that were burning through power. Halogen spotlights were immediately replaced with LEDs, saving £70 per year in the kitchen and bathroom alone (even though the bulbs then cost £11 each – bigger savings to be had now they're just £3...).

I also run my office from home and installing an energy saving power strip (£18 then) that turns off all the other devices when I shut down or put my computer to sleep saved a huge £240 a year. This is mainly because it stops all the other devices going into standby but also because it changed my habits, and now I rarely forget to power down the computer.

I thoroughly recommend getting one of these simple meters, they're very cheap on gumtree and eBay, or you can just borrow one – you might be surprised or shocked, as I was with a particularly energy hungry Sony DVD player that gobbled up power even when on standby.



Nikki's use of an appliance monitor

A friend recently lent me an Energenie appliance monitor so that I could test the efficiency of my fridge and freezer. Both are a few years old and from the grumblings, I was beginning to suspect they might be consuming too much electricity to stay at the correct temperature.

I've tried appliance monitors before and found them really badly designed – screens too small to see, and appalling instructions. But this one was pretty clear and like Vip's, I could measure the consumption in kWh, kg of CO₂ or in pounds and pence.

Both fridge and freezer seem to have held their A+ standard, which was a relief, so I then went on and worked out my kettle use over a week... Apparently all my cups of tea cost me 34p / week, and clock up 1.8 kWh and 1.81 kg CO₂. That last is quite a lot when you think about it – made me glad that my electricity is 100% renewable...

CHEESE project – using thermal imaging to identify your heat loss

Would you like a **Warmer Home this winter for the same or less cost in heating?**

From the end of October, a unique local scheme can show you - for free - where expensive heat is escaping. The award-winning C.H.E.E.S.E. Project - Cold Homes Energy Efficiency Survey Experts - will be working with community groups to carry out internal surveys of homes using low-cost thermal imaging. They can show you how draughts may be wasting a

third of the heating you buy, where insulation is missing, and where there are construction faults, etc.

It works like this: a large fan is put in an outside doorway to reduce the internal pressure slightly. Then the surveyor videos the inside of the house with a thermal camera that shows up cold areas. You follow the survey on a tablet computer as the surveyor discusses the findings with you. A video and sound recording on a memory stick is then given to you. This shows exactly where remedial action can be taken - and that can cost as little as £50 in DIY-type remedies. The survey is also evidence that can be shown to landlords. Already the council have improved properties as a result of our surveys. Contact: <https://cheeseproject.co.uk/apply-for-a-survey>
Surveys are free to low-income households, and otherwise cost from £75 for up to five rooms.

