



## From plug-in heaters to renewable energy: Zoe's complete home retrofit

When Zoe purchased her prefabricated chalet-style property in July 2023, she knew she faced significant challenges.

The one-bedroom 1970s chalet located near Bideford in North Devon came with no proper heating system and only standalone plug-in heaters to combat the cold.

With winter approaching, Zoe needed to transform her new house into a comfortable, energy-efficient home.

### A HELPING HAND WHEN NEEDED

Zoe wasn't alone in her struggles. Asking around her neighbourhood, she discovered that other chalet residents had improved their homes with grant-funded heating systems.

Her first attempt to follow their lead hit a roadblock when a contractor who had helped her neighbour proved unreliable. Not willing to give up, Zoe contacted her local council, who pointed her toward community energy organisation 361 Energy.

Soon after, Jorgi, an energy advisor from 361 Energy, visited her home, bringing a calm, methodical approach to her situation.



**“I knew I had to do something because it was really damp.**

**You could feel the moisture in the atmosphere, and I knew it was going to be cold because it wasn't insulated.”**



**“Jorgi was nice, and very clear about what 361 Energy could do to help. His advice gave me a great starting point – I was able to find out what grants were available and exactly what kind of improvements would really work for my property.”**

## FIRST THINGS FIRST: TACKLING THE LEAKY ROOF

During his visit, the advisor thoroughly surveyed the property and spotted issues Zoe hadn't noticed, identifying both immediate issues and long-term solutions.

He found a significant problem in Zoe's loft that needed immediate attention. Water had been seeping through the roof, creating damp conditions throughout the space.



**“It was absolutely saturated... if I had gone ahead with loft insulation without knowing about the leak, it would have been a waste of time.”**

The community energy organisation took a practical step-by-step approach to addressing the issues identified in the survey – first fixing the roof leak, then installing proper loft insulation, creating a foundation for the more extensive work needed.

The team then guided Zoe toward a Government grant programme; a pathway to fund the major upgrades their survey had recommended – including a heat pump, internal wall insulation, and solar panels.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN: THE COMPLETE HOME UPGRADE



With the community energy organisation's recommendation, Zoe connected with Switch Energy to complete a remarkable transformation of her home.

The work directly targeted her home's biggest weakness – its poorly insulated single-skin walls that let heat escape rapidly.

With new internal wall insulation, a complete air-source heat pump system (including properly sized radiators), and solar panels on the roof, the property underwent a complete energy makeover.

Switch Energy's team worked efficiently and with consideration for Zoe's concern about disruption, particularly during the internal wall insulation process.



**“The internal wall insulation was the messiest bit, but the team covered everything in sheets. I went off for the day or two, and when I got back everything was finished. It was really quite clean – which was amazing, because I hate mess.”**

## GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

The new heating system was initially unfamiliar territory for Zoe.

“I was really scared to start with because of the technology,” she admits. “The team came and explained exactly how it worked. They set it all up, programmed it, and showed me how to keep it functioning properly and how to use it most effectively.”

Armed with this knowledge, Zoe quickly mastered her new systems.

“It’s quite straightforward really, now I know how to do things like check the boiler pressure and how to check if the solar is generating power. It’s not as scary as it first seemed.”



## A TRANSFORMED LIVING EXPERIENCE

For a property that once relied solely on plug-in electric heaters, and was losing most of its heat through its walls and roof, the transformation has been remarkable.

The cold, damp atmosphere that once permeated the property has been replaced by consistent, comfortable warmth. For Zoe, the difference between her home’s previous EPC rating of F and its current performance is something she experiences every day.



**“The heat pump system creates a consistent warmth that surrounds you.**

**And once the radiators are warm, they hold their heat so much longer.**

**It’s the best thing I could have done.”**

**INSPIRED BY ZOE’S STORY?**

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