



Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive: Changes to Eligibility

The domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) launched on the 9th April 2014. Based on experiences and feedback so far, we have now amended the regulations to make the following small changes to the policy. These changes came in on 5 February 2015.

Registered Social Landlords and Green Deal Assessments

Currently we require applicants to the domestic RHI to have a Green Deal Assessment. This is to provide them with information about efficiency measures that are suitable for their homes.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), however, tend to be well informed about their properties and are often already engaged in energy efficiency to help reduce their tenants' bills. Over their larger numbers of properties, the requirement for a Green Deal Assessment acts as a barrier to the take up of renewable heat.

We therefore have changed the regulations to allow RSLs to apply for the domestic RHI without a Green Deal Assessment. They still need to have an Energy Performance Certificate that is less than two years old so that RHI payments can be calculated.

This change does not affect the deadline for applications from those RSLs that installed renewable heating systems before the 9th April 2014, who still have to apply by the 8th April 2015.

Installations carried out on or after 9th April 2014 will continue to have one year from

being fully installed and tested to apply for the RHI, with the exemption applying to any application received after the regulations come into force.

Cooker stoves

“Cooker stoves” are biomass stoves with a back boiler that are predominantly designed for space and hot water heating but can also be used for cooking. In these products the heat generated for cooking is incidental to, and cannot be controlled separately from, heat generated for space heating or hot water heating.

The regulations came into force on 5 February making “cooker stoves” eligible for the domestic RHI, as long as the product and installation meets all other scheme requirements¹.

This change does not affect range cookers more widely; products designed for cooking will still be ineligible for the domestic RHI scheme, except where they meet the criteria of a “cooker stove”.

If you have a “cooker stove” that was installed before the amending regulations came into force, including installations before the 9th April 2014, you will have until 31st July 2015 or 12 months after the date your heating system was fully installed and tested (whichever is later), to apply for the RHI.

¹ Further detail about other scheme requirements can be found in Ofgem's Essential Guide for Applicants - <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem-publications/87121/driessentialguideforapplicantsseptembe2014webv12.pdf>

High Temperature Heat Pumps

High temperature heat pumps are a development of existing air source heat pump technology. High temperature heat pumps operate at higher temperatures and can be suitable for use in properties where it is not appropriate to change the radiators or use under-floor heating.

The regulations came into force on 5 February 2015 making high temperature heat pumps eligible for the domestic RHI, as long as the product and installation meet all other scheme requirements¹, including the minimum efficiency levels represented by a Seasonal Performance Factor of 2.5.

Changes to the MCS Heat Emitter Guide mean that high temperature heat pumps installed from 21 November 2014 may now be eligible for the Domestic RHI. You may only have a short window to apply for the RHI, as the deadline for application will still be 12 months from your systems commissioning date, there will be no extension for “legacy” installations.

Microgeneration Certification Scheme Standards

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) have published updated installation standards for heat pumps (MIS 3005) and solar thermal (MIS 3001) and an updated Heat Emitter Guide (MCS 021). These standards are referenced in the RHI regulations and we have updated the regulations to refer to the new standards.

There is a transition period for the MCS standards and if your heating system is

installed in that period it can be certified to either the old or the updated standard.

You still have 12 months from commissioning of your heating system to apply for the scheme.

Properties made up of multiple buildings

We have clarified the regulations to make it clear that heating systems that provide heat to properties with more than one building can be eligible for the domestic RHI.

Examples of systems providing heat to multiple buildings that would be eligible include:

- A dwelling plus swimming pool in annex
- A dwelling plus garage or outbuilding
- A dwelling plus shed
- A dwelling plus a commercially used building e.g. an office annex or stables

RHI payments continue to be based on the heat demand on the dwelling's Energy Performance Certificate, as heat going to the ancillary buildings is not eligible for RHI payments.

This payment method means that in the final example, where the other building has a commercial use and the system is therefore also eligible for the non-domestic RHI, the owner might find it better to apply for the non-domestic RHI.

If the heating system provides heating for multiple dwellings (i.e. a district or community heating system) the system is eligible for the non-domestic RHI rather than the domestic RHI.