



Energy Efficiency Top Tips

Many community centres and village halls have had to close or drastically reduce their opening hours due to the coronavirus crisis, this means that income is significantly reduced if not dried up completely for some organisations where the majority of their funding came from hiring out rooms for community activities.

In light of this, the team at Durham County Council's Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) have kindly provided us with some helpful steps so that community buildings can save energy as lockdown eases.

- 1. Make sure you take meter readings even if you have a smart meter. To avoid an estimated bill and make sure you don't pay more than used. This may also be a good time to book a future appointment with your supplier to get a smart meter installed.**
- 2. Turn heating down/off. With the speed businesses were shut down, and the temperature at the time of shutdown, heating may have been left on inadvertently.**
- 3. Adjust timers. In the middle of all this, the clocks changed. Make sure any timers used (i.e. lighting, heating etc) in the business have been adjusted.**
- 4. Equipment and Machinery. If you can safely follow the Government guidelines on social distancing measures, now could be a good time to carry out essential maintenance checks and work, making sure they'll work efficiently when turned on again.**
- 5. Turn off hot water heaters. Keeping a tank of water at 60°C uses energy, and depending on how well insulated yours is, it may be better to switch off your hot water tank until the business is back in operation. Please check Health and Safety advice on Legionella when restarting hot water systems.**
- 6. Don't leave on standby setting. Remember, leaving appliances or equipment (computers, printers, microwaves etc) on standby instead of switching them off at the wall, will continue to have a running cost.**
- 7. Turn your fridge off or adjust temp. Instead of having a fridge sitting empty switch them off at the plug. Or if you have items that are long life needing refrigerating adjust the temperature settings to use less energy.**
- 8. Check your utility tariffs. This may be a good time to explore whether you're on the right tariff for you.**
- 9. Develop an Energy Policy – write a business Energy Policy or, if needing help, contact BEEP [here](#) and they will draft something for you.**

Funding

Should your organisation be struggling to pay running costs we would advise those who have grant funding to talk to your funders about your current situation to see if you can reallocate some of the funds from activities that have had to be put on hold. If you don't have any grant funding there may be emergency funds available to cover running costs, however many community buildings are also eligible for the £10,000 Retail, Leisure and Hospitality grant from Durham County Council; more information can be found on our website [here](#).

Energy Policy and Audits



While many organisations are busy dealing with the current situation, for some it may be the right time to think about long term energy saving. The BEEP team can provide an outline Energy Policy for community buildings; and for those organisations that would like an energy audit, they would be able to customise the policy as part of the Energy Audit Report. This is available to all and is free of charge, please contact BEEP for more information [here](#).

Developing Rural Community Led Renewable Energy Projects

For community organisations looking to develop rural community led renewable energy projects, grants are available through the Rural Community Energy Fund. More details can be found on the North East Local Enterprise Partnership [here](#)

Contact Us

Our friendly staff at Durham Community Action are currently remotely working from home but we are still here to provide information, advice and guidance so don't hesitate to get in touch

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