



Project **Solar UK**

The **2021** Guide to Home Improvement



Now is the time to make home improvements...

We've spent more time than ever at home in the last year, and while it may have been a novelty to begin with, you wouldn't be to blame for finding the same walls a little tiring by now. So what better time than to give your home a refresh? It could be as small as a fresh lick of paint in the living room, or maybe you're looking for ways to add value to your home. From making extra space to improving your home's energy efficiency, we've put together the guide to home improvement in 2021:

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Getting started

✓ Make a plan of action

Making changes can be daunting, so getting a list together of the jobs you want to tackle around your home can make it seem more manageable. Start with the obvious and small problems first like leaky taps or squeaky door handles.

✓ Maintenance is key

Check your gutters, loft and drains regularly as these can all cause water to enter your home. Don't forget to look for signs of damp and mould in each room too, as this can be a pain to remove later down the line.



✓ Get things right the first time

Cutting corners is likely to be more costly in the long run, so research trusted traders for any jobs you need professional help with, and source quality materials where you're able to.

✓ Getting planning permission

If extending your home is part of your plan, make sure to contact your local council before undertaking any changes. Find out here whether your alterations will require permission.



✓ **Check your insurance policy**

Undertaking drastic changes to a home can mean your home insurance is out of date, or even invalid if you need to make a claim. Let your insurer know of your plans and they should be able to tell you whether your policy needs to change.

✓ **Let your neighbours know**

It's good etiquette to tell your neighbours of your plans, and even more important if you share a wall or garden space. [Gov.uk has some advice](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-to-tell-neighbours-about-planned-work) on how to handle shared property if this affects you.

✓ **Check how the value of your home will be affected**

Will the changes you plan to make increase the value of your home if you choose to sell? Research local property values for your house type to see if the renovation costs are worth the increase in market value.

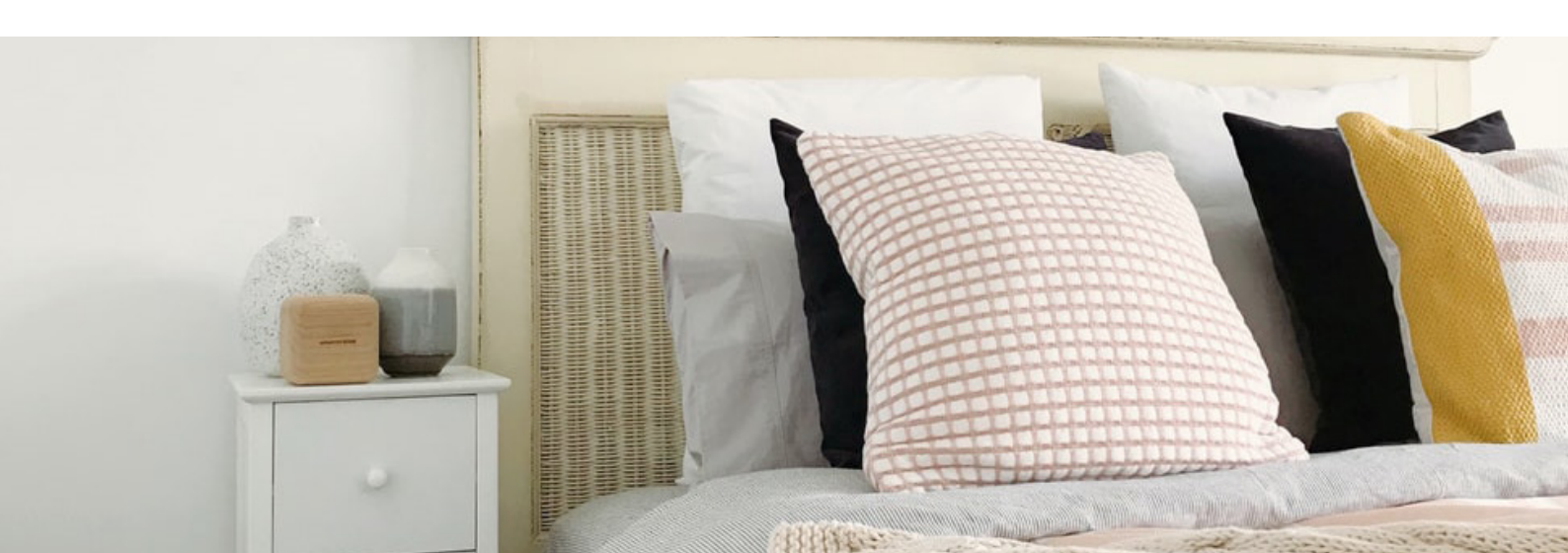


Improving the space around your home

Whether you're aiming to improve your home to make it more attractive to prospective buyers, or just want to give it a new lease of life, making changes room by room can be a manageable way to achieve your goals. Here are some of our tips for improving the space around you.

Living Room

- Great flooring can be the difference between shabby and chic, and replacing tired carpet with wooden floors or giving existing flooring a coat of varnish will make the world of difference. If you can't replace them, getting your carpets deep cleaned or scrubbing your laminate floors will make them look as good as new.
- Optimise the space. Knocking through walls to make an open plan living area can increase the value of your home, and it is a lot easier to do than you might initially think
- New or upcycled furnishings. Think new sofa cushions or an upcycled coffee table to transform the room.





Kitchen

- Do you need to replace everything in the kitchen? Or could new cupboard doors and a lick of paint do the trick? Updating taps and door handles can also be a good option if you want to stick to a budget.
- Upgrade your appliances; add an American Style fridge or an induction hob. Alternatively, give your current appliances a deep clean, a fresher look can make a world of difference.

Bedrooms

- Subtle changes to bedding, curtains and pillows can revamp your interior look without costing the earth.
- Is there room to add an en-suite? Increasing room count can add property value, but also practical benefits to your home.
- Add some luxury to your bedroom by adding a seating area or a freestanding bath. This is a great way to make your home feel like you're living in a luxury hotel!

Bathroom

- Upgrade your suite. Classic white and creams are recommended for selling, but bright colours can give your bathroom a unique and quirky twist. If you can't brave the avocado bath, brighten it up with colourful towels and accessories.
- Get cosy by installing underfloor heating. It'll save space by removing clunky radiators and you can enjoy more evenly distributed heat.

Curb appeal

Now the inside of your home is in top condition, it's time to make sure the outside matches.

- ✓ Think about parking spaces, can the driveway be extended to make more room for additional cars or a new pathway installed to your home?
- ✓ Spruce up your front garden. Add some plants to attract wildlife, or even a bird feeder if you're particularly green fingered.
- ✓ Replace your front door. Not only will this improve the look of your home, but it will also increase security.
- ✓ Refresh the paint on your garage or gates, make sure it matches or compliments the brickwork, front door and windows.



Making extra space

Once you've decluttered your home, you'll be able to see whether you still need space.

Garage Conversions

Removing a garage to make way for an extra living space or kitchen can be a great way to expand your home without a costly extension. However, there are a few things you need to consider before making the change:

- Is there enough parking space for your household and guests. Make sure you're able to park on the drive or street before completing the conversion.
- Are the foundations strong enough? Garage structures are often built to be lightweight, so you'll need to check your new space will be strong and safe.
- Consider insulating the walls and ceiling to ensure the room is warm enough to live in. This will add costs to your budget, so bear this in mind before starting the work.
- No one wants a leaky conversion so fitting new damp and water proof flooring will be a must.



Add an Extension

- Check before beginning work whether you require planning permission to make the changes. Is your home a listed building or will you require a warrant to extend the property?
- Speak to a building professional about your plans, you'll get a realistic estimate and be able to budget accordingly.
- Have you thought about the size of the extension? Make sure you will still have enough garden space once the build is complete.



Convert your Loft

A loft conversion is a great way to add value to your home, and get that extra bedroom or living space you're after. The conversion will need to be checked by a registered builder to ensure your home passes safety requirements before the build is undertaken. Amongst other things, you will need to think about:

- Whether the foundations are strong enough for the building to withstand a conversion. If not, support beams or reinforced flooring may need to be installed which could increase your building costs.
- Fire safety is important, is there ease of access out of your home if the loft is converted?
- If there is enough headroom to stand. If you find it's a little tight, the roof may need to be raised or the floor lowered.
- Whether additional windows or dormers will be needed in the loft space to let in more light and achieve a brighter finish.

Energy efficiency

Becoming more energy efficient should be at the top of the list for any home improvement project. Changing the way your household consumes energy can have a major impact on your energy efficiency rating, as well as reducing your bills and your carbon footprint!

There are lots of things you can do to make your household more energy efficient, but solar energy is one of the leading ways you can become greener and have a positive impact on your home at the same time.



Why choose solar?

Changing the way you use energy for your home can be a big decision, but there are huge benefits to installing solar panels for a house of any size.

Cost: Solar energy will save you money on electricity bills, and also protects against rising prices imposed by large utility companies.

Saving the planet: Solar is green renewable energy and so it doesn't emit any carbon dioxide or harmful emissions.

Daylight is free: Whether you live in sunny Sussex or rainy Rochdale, if your roof has access to daylight, you can use solar panels. Solar PV panels work even more efficiently in cooler temperatures.

Improve your homes energy performance certificate (EPC): Whether you're staying put or selling your home, improving your energy efficiency will benefit you long term. Solar panel installation can increase your homes' value by up to 4%.

Low maintenance and long term: Once your solar panels are fitted, you can forget about them. Many solar panels have lifetime warranties included.

Receive a green bonus: You can help support the national grid by storing surplus energy and exporting it back to the grid when it's needed. Plus, you'll receive a payment for any energy you send back to the grid!

Your home's energy consumption at your fingertips with the Social Energy app

Keeping an eye on the energy your home uses can feel like an impossible task, but with the Social Energy app which is available to solar users, your energy use is accessible to you at all times.

Revolutionise the way you save: You can trade surplus power with other members of the community, and even sell back any extra energy your solar panels produce to the national grid.

Fit and forget: The biggest benefit of the app (other than the savings) is that you can forget about it! It'll provide you with a complete overview of your energy usage, selling & trading of energy and live data touch points helping you maximise your investment and savings.





Home Energy Solutions

Solar power batteries allow for surplus energy to be stored in your home to be used at a later date, or sold back to the grid. If you choose to invest in solar panels, buying a battery to go with it ensures you get the most out of using solar energy:

How do solar batteries work?: Solar power batteries work by storing excess energy generated and making it available to use at night and during storms. If you're out during the day, this means you can still use the solar power your system has generated, rather than letting it go to waste.

Save it up, then sell it: The ability to store unused solar energy, then sell it when it would otherwise go to waste is revolutionary. Not only could solar power save you money, it can also make it too.

Do your bit for the planet too: The battery is one of the greenest home energy storage products on the market. Switching to solar energy is a massive step towards becoming completely energy self-sufficient.

If you're considering solar panels as part of your home improvement project, [get in touch](#) with our friendly team at Project Solar UK today.



Want to learn more about Project Solar?

Call us today on 0800 112 3110 or visit

www.projectsolar.com