

## SELF IMPOSED GREEN LOCKDOWN: 3 MILLION PLANNING TO WFH TO SAVE THE PLANET

- Almost a third of the UK workforce plans to continue to work from home after lockdown, with three in 10 saying they will do so purely for environmental reasons.
- The pandemic has acted as a green 'wake up' call with most Britons not expecting things to ever get back to normal.
- Despite cutting carbon by avoiding commuting to and from work, eco conscious workers could actually use more energy at home, impacting both the environment and bank balances.
- Financial incentives could empower the public to tackle their energy emissions as a third say they would make green home improvements if there was a grant to do so.

### **3 million UK workers plan to hold a self-imposed 'green lockdown' after Covid restrictions have finally lifted by continuing to work from home to help save the planet.\***

The sudden change in lifestyle due to the coronavirus lockdown has been an environmental wake-up call for much of the UK, as new research from Halifax reveals four in 10 (41%) adults said it had made them more aware of climate change.

It highlights just how deeply the pandemic has impacted people's outlook, with the majority (58%) not expecting things to ever go back to 'normal'.

In fact, many are looking at the recovery response as inspiration to making long-term changes to be more sustainable. Over half of consumers (57%) say that the response to the lockdown has made them hopeful that the world can make real changes to tackle the climate emergency.

This is especially true of eco-conscious younger generations, with three-quarters (73%) of 18-34 year olds reporting that the lockdown has shown them that it is possible to live in a way that has less of an impact on the environment.

### **Greening the planet from home**

Despite the coronavirus lockdown measures beginning to ease, almost a third of workers (31%) say they will continue to work from home even after lockdown is lifted.

As well as doing this to reduce the risk of coronavirus spreading, three in 10 (29%) of those choosing to continue a self-imposed lockdown will do so to reduce their environmental impact – such as cutting down on their carbon emissions.

Most (81%) believe remote working to be a solution to reducing emissions, according to the study. However, this may do more harm than good in homes with low energy efficiency rates.

### **Saving money still a top priority**

The climate emergency remains one of the biggest concerns amongst the public, with 80% citing this as a worry. However, as the long-term impact of the pandemic becomes clear, these concerns are being matched by the immediate fears of a second wave of coronavirus (87%) and a potential recession (86%).

These changing priorities mean that many people will be looking to cut costs where they can, especially as over half of UK adults (54%) have seen an increase in their energy usage over the lockdown, at an average of £17.40 a month. As spending more time at home during lockdown has meant greater energy usage – as well as carbon emissions – a large chunk of the population (62%) has already taken measures to reduce their household's emissions, most commonly keeping the lights and heating off as much as possible.

Despite these efforts, just 4% have reviewed their home's energy performance certificate, even though it will guide them as to how they could save money on their bills each month.

### **Environmentally savvy renters demanding more from their landlords**

Making home improvements – big or small – will be a way for remote workers to not only lower their emissions, but also reduce their monthly bills. This could spark a new chapter in the UK making its homes more environmentally friendly.

It is a concern for many, with more than half of private renters (53%) worried about the financial cost of their home not being energy efficient.

A new generation of environmental savvy renters are demanding more from their landlords with three in 10 (27%) requesting they improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The same proportion would welcome government action to regulate this (35%).

More people could be empowered to tackle energy emissions themselves if they had better advice and financial incentives, as indicated by a third (32%) saying they would be encouraged to make green home improvements if there was a grant to do so.

### **Andy Mason, Halifax Mortgage Director, said:**

“It's clear that for many going back to 'business as usual' isn't going to be an option and instead they will continue to spend more time at home, believing it to be better for the environment. However, without taking steps to ensure homes are as efficient as they can be, these good intentions could be clouded by rising energy usage and monthly bills – at a time when many are concerned about their financial security as well as the planet.

“We know how much of a concern the environmental and financial impact of energy efficiency is for home owners and renters alike, which is why we welcome the announcement which highlights the benefits of making homes more energy efficient and will offer practical support for homeowners to make more positive changes.

“We've created an online tool to help people assess the changes they could make to their property to cut down their carbon emissions. Homeowners can get a personalised report and decide how best to use the vouchers/grant from the government.”

## **Tips from Halifax to improve the energy efficiency of your home**

---

### **Carry out an energy efficiency health check**

The first step to a more sustainable home is identifying the areas for improvement that will have the most impact. For a tailored action plan on the green upgrades that best suit your property, visit our online tool here: <https://home-energy-saving-tool.halifax.co.uk/>.

### **Install energy-saving lighting**

One of the quickest and simplest changes you can make that will make a huge difference to your energy bills is to replace all your home's current light bulbs with energy-saving light bulbs.

### **Upgrade your boiler**

It's important to keep your boiler in good shape to ensure you are heating your home efficiently. You should always consult a professional in a first instance, who will assess if your boiler is safe to be repaired or serviced.

Depending on how old your boiler is, it may be worth upgrading to a newer model that's more efficient and reliable. Not only could you benefit from energy savings and a warmer home during the winter months, but you could even end up saving money in the long run.

### **Use smart thermostats**

A smart thermostat helps you save money by heating your home more intelligently. It'll learn the best way to keep you warm at home while using the minimum possible energy. The more you use it, the more efficient it will become.

### **Double the heat with double glazing**

If you are living in an older house, you may not have double glazed windows. Changing this will not only be an effective way to keep your home warmer for longer, but there is the added bonus of keeping noise out.

### **For more tips, visit the Halifax Green Living Zone at**

<https://www.halifax.co.uk/mortgages/help-and-advice/homes-explained/green-living/>.

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Methodology**

Research included a survey of 3,001 UK adults, weighted to be nationally representative of the UK population. The data was collected online by Opinium on behalf of Halifax, and was in the field from 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

\* At the time of writing, the most recent ONS Labour Market Statistics (June 2020) reveal there are 32,991,000 workers in the UK. Halifax research, in partnership with Opinium, shows that 9% of workers intend to continue to work from home full time, part time or while running their business after lockdown in order to reduce their environmental impact. This equates to 3,097,914 people.

Further details on key results by age group are below:

	<b>The coronavirus pandemic has made me more aware of climate change</b>						
<b>Age group</b>	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<b>Agree</b>	48%	50%	50%	37%	33%	32%	35%

	<b>The response to the lockdown has made me hopeful that the world can make real changes to tackle the climate emergency</b>						
<b>Age group</b>	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<b>Agree</b>	60 %	67 %	61 %	55 %	50 %	48 %	53 %

	<b>The lockdown has made me want to live more sustainably</b>						
<b>Age group</b>	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<b>Agree</b>	57 %	57 %	56 %	43 %	39 %	35 %	35 %

	<b>I will continue to spend more time at home than I did before as I believe it is better for the environment</b>						
<b>Age group</b>	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
<b>Agree</b>	47 %	61 %	54 %	38 %	35 %	29 %	30 %

### Contact details

For more information, please contact:

- Sarika Thanki, 07557 661 569, [sarika.thanki@loydsbanking.com](mailto:sarika.thanki@loydsbanking.com)
- Kimberley Hamilton, 07557 257 298, [kimberley.hamilton@loydsbanking.com](mailto:kimberley.hamilton@loydsbanking.com)
- Julia Bush, 07833 285 716, [Julia.bush@cohnwolfe.com](mailto:Julia.bush@cohnwolfe.com)

### About BEIS



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

The Halifax Energy Saving Tool was developed using funding awarded by the Green Home Finance Innovation Fund; an initiative by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to promote the establishment of green lending products for green home improvements.

The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) brings together responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation, energy, and climate change. The Green Home Finance Innovation Fund (GHFIF) competition is funded by the BEIS Energy Innovation Programme and further details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-home-finance-innovation-fund-competition-successful-bids>.