

Watchdog slams Government's residential efficiency programmes

Parliament's official watchdog, the Committee on Climate Change, has issued its strongest criticism yet of the inadequacies of the government's residential sector energy efficiency programme.

It used its annual report to call for an "early review of the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation", and urges the government yet again to adopt "further incentives to encourage uptake of measures, especially lofts and cavity wall insulation."

The CCC set out in 2011 how the UK should meet its climate change obligations "in the most cost-optimal way." To do so required a regular rate of installations of residential sector insulation. The table displays in green the equivalent four-monthly rate of installations required to meet the "carbon budgets".

According to the CCC report, to meet these budgets a consistent rate

The equivalent four-monthly rate of installations required to meet the "carbon budgets"

	cavity wall insulation	loft insulation	solid wall insulation
CERT/CESP (Jan-Apr 2012)	229,390	406,176	13,573
ECO/GD (Jan-Apr 2013)	26,574	45,406	1,647
Average four-monthly rate needed to meet carbon budgets	494,444	555,556	244,444

needs to be maintained for lofts and cavity installations until the end of 2015. For solid wall insulation, the rate needs to continue until 2022.

Installations of all three insulation measures are down by over 80 per cent compared with the first four months of last year. Around 6,000 people (or 1 in 4 of those employed in the insulation industry in 2012) have subsequently lost their jobs.

Noting that even in 2012 emissions from buildings increased by 10

per cent, the CCC says "we have repeatedly pointed to the delivery risks, due to insufficient incentives for insulation, associated with the new policy approach of Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation." The official watchdog concludes: "There is no evidence from the schemes' first few months of operation that these risks have subsided." Therefore "concerns remain about potentially low levels of delivery."