

Our Air source heat pump experience

By Kath Tunnicliffe, Kinver. 2025

It's definitely not for everybody, and probably not a financial saving in the short term. It's certainly quite a major disruption to your home and decorative finishes.

Having started with that kind of a statement you'd wonder, why would you ever do it? In the right circumstances with the right motivation it's absolutely right!

In an ideal world every new build (and possibly major house renovation) would include an air heat source or equivalent in its plans) It makes complete sense to include an efficient and cost effective heating system integrated within the build. It's doing it later which creates disruption.

BUT WE'RE GLAD WE DID IT!

From our experience I think it's suited for reasonably modern properties (1960's plus) by owners who have the desire to be as eco sensitive as possible.

Our home is late 60's early 70's and we were certainly interested in doing everything we could do to make it as insulated as possible. I think you need a really well insulated home and may have previously added solar. After that it's a fairly natural place to go.

Financially it's going to probably cost £10,000-£11,000. But you actually pay £7,500 less with the government incentive. In our case the company did all the paperwork to process the grant.

The actual experience of installation is massive. It's a week of your life. In our case my partner moved out with the dog It's certainly not a job to be done in the winter. The whole house was literally turned inside out and back to front. You need a really good company one you personally trust and come with excellent credentials. Most importantly they need to communicate well at every stage.

We've always maintained our property well and completely refurbished it over time, but we still needed every radiator except three replaced. I was bleeding inside with the thought of all those quality radiators having to be replaced. They are all recycled, but it's still not a very good eco story. We had previously had a gas combi-boiler so needed to include a hot water cylinder in the new Configuration.

The installation procedure itself is like trying to thread an octopus through your home, the tentacles go through the whole build. You also need room for the systems, the hot water cylinder* and system controls need an inside space of about 2m x 2m, with the the heat pump itself fitting an outside space of 2m x 1m (all dimensions approx.) The company we used were quite good at trying to match the size of new radiators with those they replaced, to ensure decorative order was maintained. I was perturbed about potentially losing a particular designer radiator in our dining room. I persuaded the company to accept an alternative solution to removing it. (The replacement would not have been aesthetically pleasing).

I realise this is a warts and all account but I really think there's no alternative 'best advice' on this subject.

Here are some positives.

Having spent our first winter in the new heating environment we've unlearnt all the energy saving

central heating advice we previously lived by and replaced it by....

- *luxuriating in a whole new lifestyle concept (the house is much warmer)
- *we keep all our radiators on, we don't section off unused parts of the house,
- *we use no daytime time switches
- *we adopted 17 degrees at night 19 throughout the day
- *we come into a cuddly house whatever the weather outside does
- *the system is great for any circumstances (such as ours) where the house is occupied throughout the day
- *we love it, it's brought a relaxation and enjoyment within our home throughout winter months
- *this is made possible through excellent insulation and a heating system which is four times more efficient per kWh than our previous gas central heating
- *if we pay slightly higher more for energy bills (and I'm not sure we do) it's worth with every penny, our home is warmer and cosier

WOULD WE DO IT AGAIN....YES!