



THE PROBLEM WITH HEAT PUMPS

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Uptake of heat pumps is still far below what the government had hoped for. There are a number of reasons for this. One of the biggest is just the general unwillingness to embrace change. It's easy to laugh at people's reluctance to embrace change, but it's perfectly understandable.

Until very, very, recently, change happened at a multi-generational pace. These days, we expect change. In many ways, that is fantastic, but it is not natural and it's certainly not "normal" as far as the human psyche is concerned.

Sadly, corporations and politicians exploit this natural reluctance, but that still doesn't explain the low take up of heat pumps. The frequently stated problem, invariably from people with no knowledge on the subject, is that they don't work. Of course they work! It's very simple technology, that's been around for donkey's years. You don't view

your fridge as a frightening vision of the future, but at a fundamental level, that's all a heat pump is!

Beyond, fear and a lack of understanding, are the more practicable reasons, the main one being that you can't just swap a boiler out and fit a heat pump. There are hurdles to jump, boxes to tick, paperwork to complete, ancillary work to be undertaken – more insulation, bigger radiators etc.

In other words, you need to plan. This isn't a decision to be made 15 minutes after realising that your gas boiler has died. It's a decision that needs forward planning, which sadly is not how most

people view their heating. As a heating chap, it does annoy me how people treat their heating. If a car was a boiler, most people would not get it serviced. They would not wash or polish it. In fact, they would only look at changing their car when the bonnet was emitting steam, smoke was billowing out the back, and they were drifting powerless into the nearest layby.

Sadly, this lack of planning is the main reason heat pump take up is still low, despite a £9000 grant, a 75% lower carbon footprint, and a cheaper heating future... and I'm not sure how we change that.