



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

Follow-Up Information Requests

Public Accounts Committee 9 November 2023

Submitted 15 December 2023

1. A note on the progress in availing of SEAI schemes in multi-unit developments (MUD), including the number of applications or inquiries the SEAI is receiving for MUDs and listed buildings (pg. 24).

Multi-Unit Developments (MUDs)

The energy upgrade of Multi-Unit Developments (MUDs) is an important issue to address to support the decarbonisation of our housing stock. Such buildings are a significant part of the housing stock in Ireland, and they can present additional challenges in terms of typical home energy upgrades. These include the potential for diverse multiple owners, tenants, and stakeholders in such projects; owner-occupiers, individual investors, institutional or commercial investors, and social or public owners, such as Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHB).

Energy upgrades in these buildings can be supported through our schemes either by a whole building approach via the Community Energy Grant scheme or One Stop Shop scheme, or through Individual Energy Upgrades (Better Energy Homes scheme). In 2022 and 2023 the Community Energy Grant scheme has supported 140 apartment upgrades, of which 48 were AHB-owned and the balance privately owned. There have been applications from 40 MUD building complexes with a total 547 apartments supported through the One Stop Shop service and its development call. The ownership of the MUDs within this number are primarily AHB (36 complexes) with 4 complexes under private ownership. Additionally, SEAI's Individual Energy Upgrades scheme supported 79 applications from Owner Management Companies in 2022-2023.

SEAI is continuing to work with interested parties on energy upgrade projects for these types of buildings, both in the social housing sector with AHBs, and in private and social sectors where the homes in the building are owned by diverse groups. We are examining the barriers and potential solutions which can be addressed through our schemes, and we are continually open to and seeking input from any stakeholders.

SEAI is also supporting the Housing Agency in their European project to analyse these factors in detail to support member states improve the capacity to design, deliver and implement upgrades and policy for these types of buildings.

Protected structures and single-leaf constructed buildings

Grants for listed buildings are available in certain circumstances subject to the scheme eligibility criteria and terms and conditions being met. Listed buildings are generally a subset of traditional buildings. Detailed information on grants is available at www.seai.ie.

For homes constructed before 1940, homeowners may wish to consult a conservation architect for advice. These dwellings may require special consideration and modern insulation methods may not be appropriate. Alternative insulation methods should be discussed carefully with the contractor as they may not qualify for grant support. Central policy responsibility for listed buildings is a matter for the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). To support the proper upgrade of traditional buildings a new Guidance Document "*Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings*" is being developed by DHLGH and is expected to be published in Q4 2023 by DHLGH. SEAI has been involved in the drafting of the new guidance and participated in the steering group overseeing the project.

The "*Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings*" document provides useful guidance on the insulation of older homes. Traditionally built buildings tend to be stone or brick buildings which were designed to be vapour permeable (generally pre-1940). It is important that the materials and techniques used in energy efficiency upgrades of traditional buildings are suitable for the buildings in question, including for use with vapor permeable construction where applicable.

The number of applications for homes built pre-1940 is 302 to the One Stop Shop service and One Stop Shop development scheme. The Domestic Solar PV scheme has paid 2,560 grants to homes that have a construction date of pre-1940. There are a further 880 applications at various stages of the grant process, including new applications, that show a construction date of pre-1940.

Since launching in 2009, 22,747 homes built pre-1940 have received grants for 31,287 upgrades under the Individual Energy Upgrade scheme (Better Energy Homes).

2. Whether the SEAI has a policy of changing single-glazed windows to double-glazed windows, and if it ever leaves single-glazed windows in place (pg. 37).

Free Energy Upgrades (Warmer Homes Scheme)

SEAI delivers fully funded energy upgrades to homeowners who receive the following welfare payments:

- Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme.
- Job Seekers Allowance for over six months and have a child under seven years of age
- Working Family Payment
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- Carers Allowance and live with the person you are caring for
- Disability Allowance for over six months and have a child under seven years of age

The homeowner must also own and live in their own home, and the home must have been built and occupied before 2006. If a homeowner is eligible, an SEAI surveyor will survey the home and recommend upgrades that are suitable for the property. These will be based on factors such as its age, size, existing heating system and condition. Upgrades offered under the scheme include:

- Attic insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- External wall insulation
- Internal wall insulation
- Secondary work such as lagging jackets, draught proofing and energy efficient lighting
- New heating systems and windows are occasionally recommended

SEAI's Fully Funded Energy Upgrades Scheme replaces all single-glazed windows subject to the home receiving any wall insulation measure as part of the works, or where the homeowner has had their walls insulated previously of over 20% of the total wall area. Single glazing would not be recommended for replacement if these conditions are not met. Additionally, the scheme does not replace windows as a stand-alone upgrade measure.

If a home has concrete or cavity walls with no insulation present, we would likely recommend a wall insulation measure. We do not recommend replacement windows for uninsulated walls if we are not insulating these walls as part of the upgrade works. Therefore, as we do not insulate stone, single-leaf, or random rubble walls as per Standard Recommendation 54:2014/A1:2019: Code of practice for the energy efficient retrofit of dwellings¹, we would not appraise for windows in these walls. Replacing windows in such a scenario, leaving walls like this uninsulated, will present significant risks of mould and condensation.

Further information on the Fully Funded Energy Upgrades Scheme offered, eligibility criteria, frequently asked questions, revisits under the scheme, and how to apply, is available on our website: [Fully Funded Energy Upgrades | Home Energy Grants | SEAI](#)

Individual Energy Upgrade Grants (Better Energy Homes)

This programme provides flexibility to allow homeowners and landlords to take a step-by-step approach to upgrading their homes, by carrying out different upgrades over time and to suit their budgets. With this grant route, homeowners select an SEAI-registered contractor and apply for a grant through our easy-to-use online application system². The grant is paid either directly to the homeowner, or to the registered contractor, once works have been completed and are compliant. There is a menu-based list of upgrades and applications can be made for up to seven different types of upgrades including insulation and heat pump systems.

Grants for windows and doors as a single measure are not available under the Individual Energy Upgrades option. Government policy favours the investment of public funds in upgrades that bring the highest carbon savings such as insulation and heat pumps. Grants for windows are available under the One Stop Shop Service.

There is no grant funding for replacement oil or gas boilers within the individual energy upgrade grants.

Further details on all measures offered within the Individual Energy Upgrade Grants can be found on our website: [Individual Energy Upgrade Grants | Home Energy Grants | SEAI](#)

¹ NSAI: [S.R. 54:2014/A1:2019 Code of practice for the energy efficient re \(standards.ie\)](#)

² [SEAI BEH - Apply for Grant](#)

One Stop Shops

One Stop Shops offer homeowners all the services required for a complete home energy upgrade. These registered private operators will manage the entire process for the homeowner, from the initial assessment of a home, through to the final BER.

- Fully managed solution
- Wider range of grants
- Grant values deducted from the cost of works upfront
- Less disruption

Windows are included as part of a complete One Stop Shop home upgrade, with grant amounts available as follows:

- Apartment (any) - €1500
- Mid-Terrace - €1,800
- Semi-detached or end of terrace - €3,000
- Detached house - €4,000

Approved Housing Bodies are also eligible for the scheme; however, grant amounts available are different.

For further information on the services and grants available, please visit our website: [One Stop Shop Services](#) | [Home Energy Grants](#) | [SEAI](#)

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