

Looking into home improvements? Why not look at your windows?

Over the last twenty years there has been a revolution in the appearance of buildings across the UK. Windows have been replaced at break neck speed and now the look of towns and villages across the country has dramatically changed as double glazing has become de rigeur.

This has mainly been due to the British government's attempts to cut energy use in homes. They seem to have decided that windows are the big bad wolf and so they have been singled out windows for destruction. In fact now all new and replacement windows have to be double glazed in order to cut heat loss.

Double glazing does indeed cut heat loss and will save the householder money but not enough to compensate for the cost of the windows themselves. On another tack however replacing your draughty single glazed windows will indeed make your home a nicer warmer place to live in and will also contribute towards saving the planet in the long term.

The change across the country is especially noticeable when you see incongruous double glazed windows in older houses. Most wooden window frames have given way to PVC framed double glazing, which is cheaper to buy and install than double glazed timber frames [wooden frames can cost as much as three times the price as their PVC alternatives]. However it does not have the same look as wood and people are now starting to look for properties with a more traditional wood look when they are changing where they live.

Although it is recognised by experts in the environmental field that double glazing does indeed cut energy use they also argue that PVC is an damaging substance that when in the sun deteriorates causing chlorine to evaporate from the material. This often makes the PVC go brittle and discoloured running the appearance of the window and also it can mean that the entire window can break off in time.

So what about at the end of your window's life, how easy is it to recycle the material? Is it really as environmentally friendly as wood?

This is where the government's attempt to cut energy loss really comes into question. The windows are not that easily recycled and in fact very few are actually recycled in the UK. So instead they are all sent to landfill sites which rather devalues the government's idea of waste management.

However the environmentalists have problems with wooden windows too – these need painting to keep them in good condition and of course paint is also a problem as it releases harmful chemicals into the atmosphere making it not that great an alternative to PVC.

So what is the answer to this double glazing conundrum? Probably to get double glazed windows and to hang onto them for as long as possible. This will negate the necessity to send them to landfill sites and still save you some money in the long term.

About the Author

To read more about [double glazing](#), or to read reviews of double glazing companies, such as reviews of Anglian Windows, or [Zenith Windows reviews](#), visit the UK's double glazing forum, which is free to join and offers regularly updated news.

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