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Almost half of consumers want to improve their homes' energy efficiency, AIB survey finds

- **Affordability seen as a barrier with many not availing of generous government grants**
- **46% of people installing heat pumps, and 27% installing solar panels didn't apply for grants**
- **New AIB report highlights available retrofit options, grants and lower cost bank loans**

In a further sign of its commitment to helping customers transition to a low carbon economy, sustainability leader AIB has today published a report highlighting the retrofit options, generous grants and competitively priced loans available to consumers wishing to improve their homes' energy efficiency. The move comes after a consumer survey carried out for AIB found that while 45% of consumers would like to do more to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, many saw affordability as a barrier and were not always aware of the scale of government grants and lower cost bank loans available.

Where consumers had taken measures to improve the energy efficiency of their home, almost 60% were doing so to save costs and improve home comfort. Most consumers reported having double glazing and at least some internal insulation. However, only 30% have external insulation, and figures for heat pumps and solar panels were also considerably lower at 16% and 12% respectively.

Many consumers are considering future energy efficiency options, with 24% considering solar panels and 10% considering heat pumps. Despite their interest in improving their home energy efficiency, most consumers (62%) say they are not able to do more now with affordability understandably cited as the main reason.

Leaving free or cheap money on the table

Yet AIB's survey also found that only two thirds of customers applied for a grant from the Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) when installing their Solar Panel System, while just three in ten applied for the grant when installing their Heat Pump, with a further proportion of people unable to remember if they applied or not. This could suggest that further education on available grants and their terms would be helpful. Today's *Home Retrofitting Report* seeks to inform people about the costs and benefits of retrofitting and the wide range of supports available.

AIB Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer Mary Whitelaw said: "AIB's purpose is empowering people to build a sustainable future and that is what this report is intended to do. Recognising that retrofitting comes with upfront costs that can be substantial, depending on the extent of the work, we wish to highlight the generous government grants, lender incentives and other helpful information and services available to people wishing to retrofit their homes. While the financial savings and enhanced home comforts are important benefits, retrofitting also supports the national and European drive to lower carbon emissions helping protect our people, our planet and prosperity for generations to come."

Grants and lower cost loans can make a big difference

The report details how SEAI grants can make a huge difference to the cost of upgrading a home from a low E building energy rating (BER) to a high A rating. For example, the median cost of retrofitting a mid-terrace house is €52,383, which is a significant undertaking for any household. However, a household could avail of SEAI grants, which for a mid-terrace house would total €19,800. This brings the overall median cost to the household down to c.€32,048, a saving of 38%.

Recognising the upfront costs people face when retrofitting homes, earlier this year the government in partnership with the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) launched a low cost 'Home Energy Upgrade' loan scheme for homeowners. This €500m scheme, which is available from participating banks is aimed at helping homeowners to invest in energy upgrades, making their homes warmer, healthier, and cheaper to run. With the support of the government, the Irish banks can provide loans that are approximately 2% cheaper. The lending terms are very attractive, which can make significant differences in repayment terms to consumers.

AIB's Managing Director Retail Banking, Geraldine Casey said: "In order to support our customers to make greener choices, we have significantly expanded our green offering for our customers this year. In addition to low cost loans for home retrofits, customers can also avail of competitive green mortgage rates if, following a home upgrade, they now meet the energy efficiency criteria to switch to a cheaper green mortgage. We also launched new AIB green fixed rate mortgages from as low as 3%. Switcher customers who meet the criteria and wish to avail of one of these fixed rates will also benefit from AIB's €3,000 switcher cash offer. Along with these new rates, AIB has this year also extended its Approval in Principle period from six to 12 months, giving customers more time to find and buy their new home."

Other helpful retrofitting tips

The report has a wide range of helpful retrofitting tips ranging from small changes that can make a big difference to larger energy efficiency projects including estimated payback times for various types of improvements. For example, it notes that on average, a home loses 20-30% of its heat through its roof. Attic/rafter insulation is generally the most cost effective of any home energy efficiency upgrade, considering the potential cost savings that can be achieved on the monthly heating bills.

The report also advises on the importance of sizing your retrofitting appropriately noting that some people purchase too many solar panels or may not be aware of the importance of insulating their home properly before fitting heat pumps if they want to achieve maximum energy savings. The report also noted that some piecemeal upgrades will preclude you from other grants. For example, people may be unaware that while installing solar panels alone will improve the BER rating of your home, it may preclude you from applying for other grants in the future because homes rated B2 and above are not eligible for one-stop shop grants.

In addition, the report highlights that fully funded energy upgrades are available to homeowners who receive certain social welfare payments. Eligibility for the scheme can be checked with the SEAI.

Notes to Editors:

- Amárach conducted a consumer survey in the third quarter of 2024 for AIB on a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults, setting quotas on gender, age, social class and region to align with the Irish overall population. The survey included several questions around retrofitting. Full details are contained the [report published today](#).

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