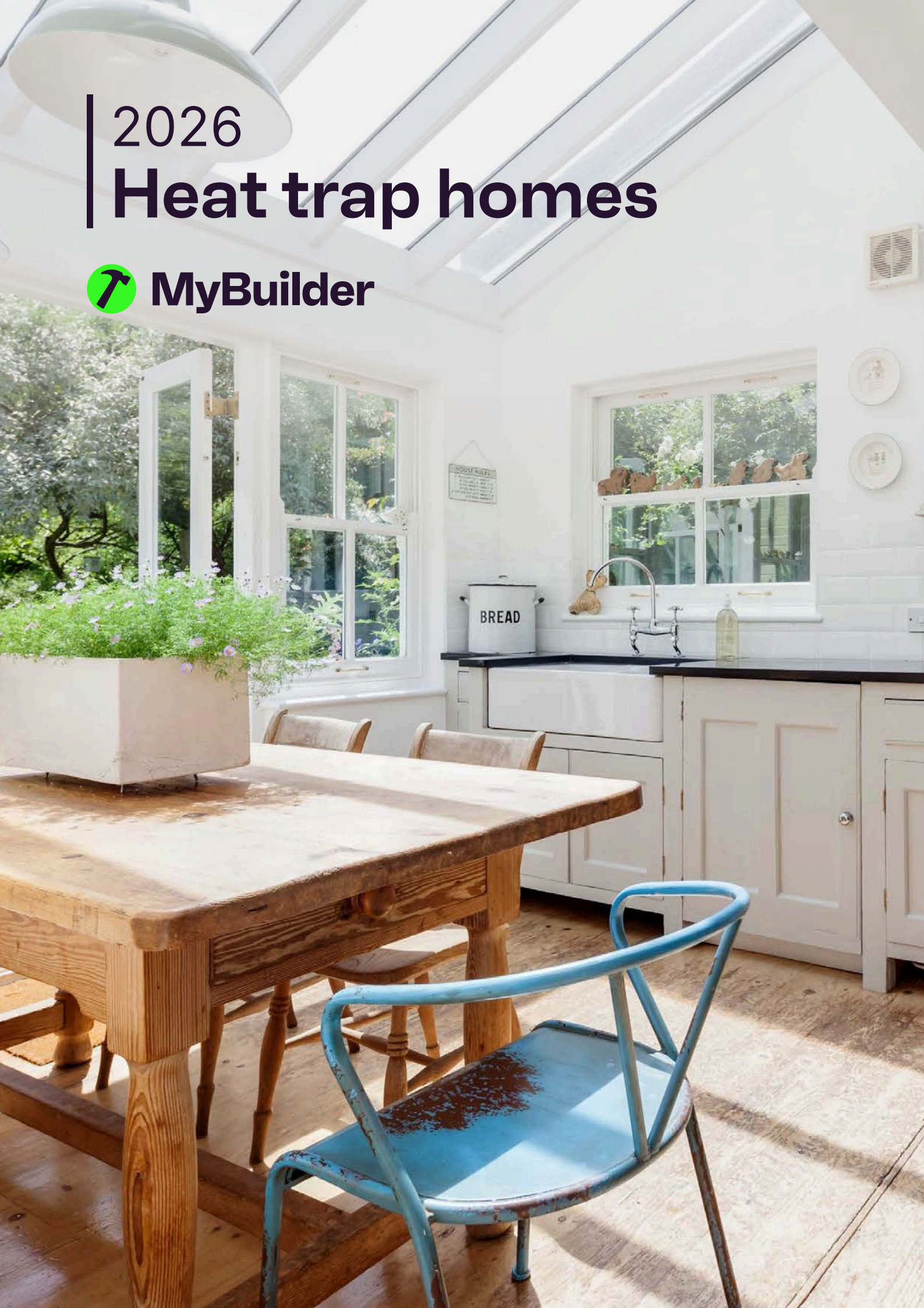


2026

Heat trap homes

 **MyBuilder**



Introduction

As temperatures climb higher every summer, UK homeowners are feeling a growing urgency to adapt their homes to maximize comfort

Our homes have never been hotter. The relentless heat of summer 2026 was record-breaking, with Kew Gardens hitting 38.1°C on 13 August and spending 40 days over 30°C nationwide (beating the previous record of 34 days set back in 1995).

The UK's hottest summer on record exposed a major problem: UK homes are unequipped for a fast-warming climate. The Heat Trap Homes report from MyBuilder brings together research that examines the everyday impact of this worsening structural issue and homeowner priorities to stay comfortable in their homes.

Based on a survey of 2,000 Britons, the report offers a comprehensive look at how heat-trap homes affect people's well-being, the knowledge gaps that prevent homeowners from making home adaptations, and consumer sentiment on British workplace temperature regulations.

Homes built for a different era

A third of UK Brits say their home isn't suitable for today's climate

The UK's housing stock was built to accommodate a historically mild climate. Most British homes are designed to retain heat, not expel it. Construction elements like dark roofing, heat-absorbing brick, and a lack of air-conditioning infrastructure create a greenhouse effect inside British homes during record-high temperatures.

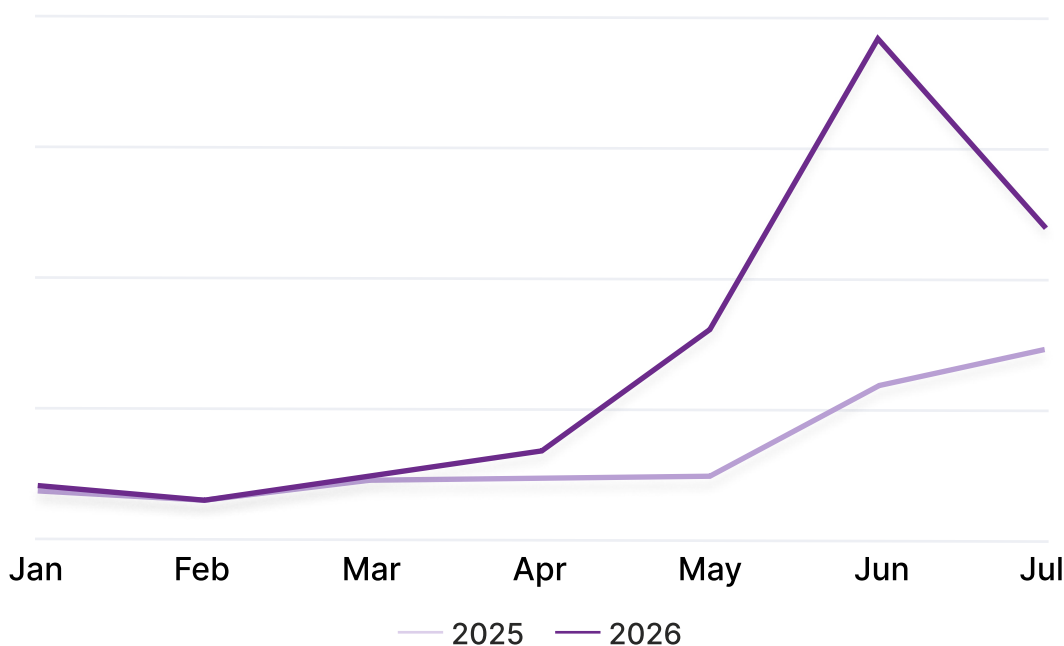
MyBuilder's data reveals that more than one-third of survey respondents believe their home is outdated. According to the research, **35% said their home isn't suitable for today's climate**. This figure rose to nearly half (45%) of 18 to 24-year-olds, and 44% of respondents who had children in their homes.

Geographically, Londoners felt the strongest on this subject, with **43% stating their homes weren't suitable for today's climate**. Renters are particularly suffering, with **43% feeling that their rented property was not sufficiently equipped** to keep them cool in a warming climate.

Additionally, **39% said air conditioning has become a necessity rather than a luxury**. In fact, 23% stated that they wouldn't buy a home without air conditioning, rising to 38% among 18 to 34-year-olds.

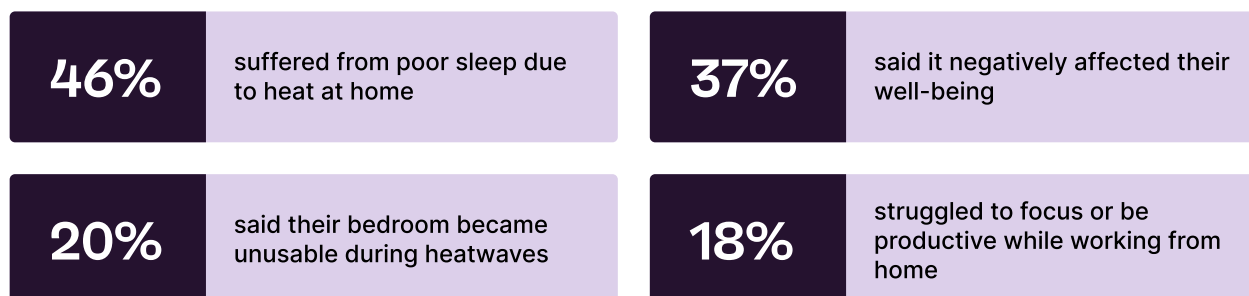
Leading property website Rightmove announced in August that searches for homes for sale with air conditioning have more than tripled in a year (+234%). That correlates with MyBuilder seeing the sharpest surge of requests for air-conditioning jobs during the peak week of the summer heatwave.

UK aircon service requests, 2025 vs 2026



Life in a heat-trap home

Half of Britons suffered from poor sleep this summer due to heat



Living in a heat-trap home has serious physical and cognitive consequences. MyBuilder's survey revealed that **46% of British respondents suffered from poor sleep this summer due to the stifling heat**. To beat the heat, 17% slept in a different room, while 5% even said they slept outside at least once because their homes were too hot. This figure rose to one in ten of 18- to 34-year-olds, and **14% among 18 to 24-year-olds**. Londoners in particular resorted to escaping outdoors to get some sleep, with 10% admitting doing so.

Sweltering indoor temperatures also took a toll on many Britons' quality of life. **More than one-third (37%) said the heat in their homes has negatively affected their well-being**, and 27% felt they could not escape it, even inside their homes. The problem became so severe that 20% of respondents said their bedroom was unusable during the heatwaves, while 21% said the weather had stopped them from being able to enjoy summer. Over one-quarter (27%) admitted that the relentless heat led to bad moods and irritability.

It's also slated as a problem for those who work from home, **18% said they struggled to focus or be productive when working from home due to the heat**. Remote workers in London reported worse conditions: 22% stated they couldn't focus, while 31% of 35 to 54-year-olds struggled to be productive due to the heat.

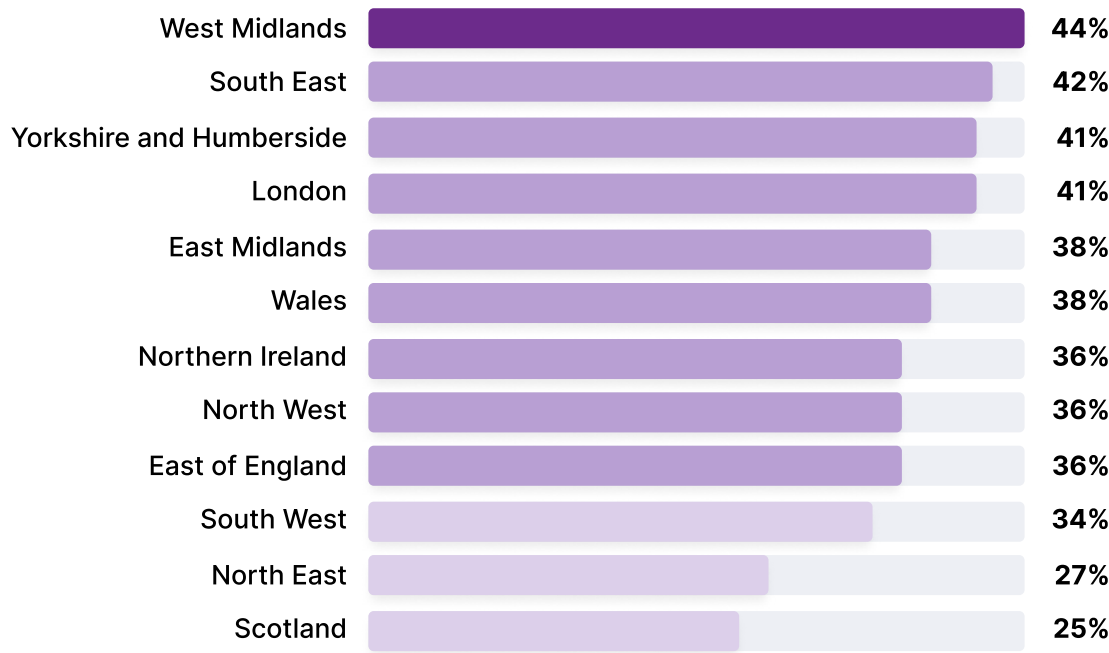


Weighing the costs of change

More than one-third of homeowners cannot afford to make heat adaptations to their home

A summer of scorching temperatures and warnings that 2027 is “very likely” to be the hottest year on record globally have put home adaptations on many people’s minds. In fact, 71% believe the summers will just continue to get hotter. According to MyBuilder’s survey, the most common barrier is affordability. **More than a third (37%) of people surveyed said they cannot afford the changes they want to make to their homes to cope with the heat.** This figure rose to 51% of people with children living in their homes, and to 47% among 18 to 34-year-olds.

Affordability by UK region



In addition, while 39% of British respondents believe air conditioning has become a necessity, many people are concerned with its climate footprint. **Nearly one-third (29%) said they want air conditioning in their homes, but are worried about its environmental impact.**

The knowledge gap keeping homes hot

More than half of Brits are confused about what home-adaptation help is available

While the cost of home upgrades is clearly prohibitive, the report shows that a lack of knowledge could be preventing Brits from adapting their homes to the modern climate.

While many British homeowners sweat over the cost and environmental impact of air conditioning, one alternative solution gets overlooked: heat pumps. According to MyBuilder’s survey, **49% of respondents didn’t know that some heat pumps can both cool and heat their homes**. In the summer, reversible heat-pump units push excess heat outside and recirculate cool air inside to lower home temperatures.

Not every heat pump offers this flexibility. The type most commonly fitted as a straight swap for a gas boiler, paired with ordinary radiators, only heats. Cooling comes from systems designed to do both, or from a water-based system fitted with heat pump convectors or cooling-enabled underfloor heating instead. Suitability will depend on the size and construction of the home.

Which heat pumps can cool as well as heat?

Type	Cools?	Best suited to
Air-to-air mini-split	Yes	Small-medium homes/flats, homes on electric storage heaters
All-in-one (no outdoor unit)	Yes	One overheating room, not whole-house
Air-to-air ducted	Yes	Rare in UK, only if ductwork exists already
Air-to-water + heat pump convectors	If reversible	Homes replacing radiators anyway
Air-to-water + cooling-enabled underfloor	If reversible	New builds, full renovations
Standard air-to-water + radiators	No	The default, most common UK gas boiler swap



When reversible heat pumps are a viable option, they can be more affordable to install than air conditioning. According to the Energy Saving Trust, it costs about £1,900 to install a single-unit system, or around £3,700 to add a multi-unit system to a three-bedroom semi-detached house. On the other hand, the cost of installing air conditioning to cool two to three rooms ranges from £3,500 to £6,500, while whole-home units can cost up to £15,000.

To lower the cost of heat-reducing home adaptations, UK homeowners may qualify for government funding. Homeowners in England and Wales can receive a £2,500 grant for an air-to-air heat pump through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme. This is the first instance of reversible air-conditioning systems that have qualified for domestic heating and cooling grants.

However, **56% of Britons said they were confused about which grants and subsidies are available for sustainable home upgrades.** This figure grew to 63% in the 35 to 54-year-old age group, and the knowledge gap was greatest in the North East of England, where 65% of respondents admitted to being confused by available options.

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Preparing for the next heatwave

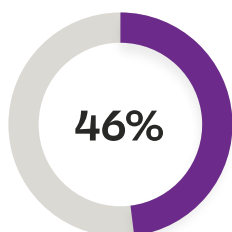
Britons are investing in minor but affordable cooling improvements

Britons are investing in home adaptations beyond air conditioning and heat pumps to prepare for future heatwaves. In fact, MyBuilder saw the **number of requests for ceiling fan installations more than double between 2025 and 2026**. Additionally, more Brits requested professional help with installing awnings, pergolas, extractor fans, and blinds. These improvements don't combat high indoor temperatures as efficiently as air conditioning or heat pumps, but their rising popularity proves that Brits are looking for affordable ways to cool their homes.

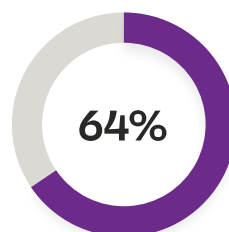


Should the government do more?

Half of homeowners don't think the Government is providing enough financial support to help homeowners adapt to hotter summers



of homeowners say the government isn't giving enough financial support to make homes environmentally sustainable



think the UK should introduce a maximum workplace temperature

As long, hot summers become the new normal in the UK, there's an open question about whether the British government will supply additional assistance to make home changes accessible. MyBuilder's survey found that **46% of homeowners don't think the government is providing enough financial support to help homeowners make their homes environmentally sustainable**, some of which could also fix a heat-trap home. This rises to 61% among 65 to 74-year-olds, compared to just 41% of 25 to 34-year-olds, suggesting older homeowners feel most exposed as energy bills and adaptation costs continue to climb.

Many Brits also believe the government should update workplace standards to accommodate a warmer climate. **64% said the UK should introduce a maximum workplace temperature.** Similarly, **60% said the UK should set a maximum workplace temperature for people working outside.**

Methodology

Survey data cited in this report is drawn from independent research conducted by Opinium on behalf of MyBuilder, among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults aged 18 and over, fielded between 3 and 8 September 2026. Of this sample, 1,380 respondents were homeowners; where a stat in this report is described as being about homeowners, it's based on this subset rather than the full sample.

Platform data referenced throughout, including air conditioning service request volumes, is drawn from MyBuilder's own job request data, comparing year-on-year changes between 2025 and 2026.