

- Government carbon emissions slashed 13.8%, reducing energy bills by £13million



- New 25% carbon cut target set for 2015
- High Street names kick start home insulation trials
- Green responsibility deal launched for business

The Prime Minister today announced that carbon emissions from Government HQs and offices have been slashed by nearly 14% in just one year and told Whitehall it would have to go further by cutting emissions by 25% by 2015.

It is estimated that energy bills have been cut by £13 million as a result of bearing down on energy wastage in Government departments. The 10% target covered around 300,000 civil servants in 3,000 buildings. Between 14 May 2010 and 13 May 2011 over 100,000 tonnes of CO₂ was saved.

The new 25% target for cutting carbon emissions will have an increased scope and include business related transport.

Commenting on the 10% achievement, Prime Minister David Cameron said:

"A 13.8 per cent cut in emissions in just one year is a great result and the civil service should be very proud of this achievement. But to be the greenest government ever we need to do more to stamp out energy waste in Whitehall, and make it easier for people and business to use energy more efficiently. That's why I'm committing the Government to go further by reducing emissions by 25 per cent by 2015."

Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne said:

"This achievement has shown that we're serious about leading by example and, when we promise to cut carbon, we mean it. This is only the start and we've now got to get on and slash Whitehall's emissions by a quarter by the end of this Parliament."

Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude said:

"Not only have we hit the Prime Minister's ambitious target and reduced our carbon emissions, we have slashed government energy bills - driving out waste and inefficiency."

Improving the energy efficiency of Britain's homes, buildings and businesses is a vital part of making Britain more energy secure.

The Government also announced today a series of business-led trials aimed at making it easier for people to insulate their homes and reduce fuel bills. The energy efficiency trials, many of which will include joint working with local authorities, will begin in September and will test how best to encourage people to take up the Green Deal.

The Green Deal, which will start in Autumn 2012 and is currently being discussed in Parliament,

will mean that households will be able to invest in home improvements at no upfront cost and repay through the expected savings on energy bills.

The trials are outlined in a new report from the Government's Behavioural Insights Team – known as the 'nudge unit' – and will be carried out and evaluated in time for the national roll out of the Green Deal.

Commenting on the trials, Chris Huhne added:

"The Green Deal's going to be a real hit and will be a fantastic way for people to upgrade their draughty and energy wasting homes.

"But there are currently too many barriers standing in the way of people upgrading their homes – the cost, the hassle, and the lack of trust in the people who install the kit.

"It's great that high street names are getting involved at this early stage to road-test these exciting ideas about how to make it easier for people to take up the Green Deal and insulate their homes from rising energy prices."

Examples of the trials include:

- B&Q and Sutton Council will be offering a subsidised loft clearance service to test whether removing the 'hassle' factor of insulation motivates people to make efficiency improvements. The unwanted contents of the loft clearance will be donated to local charities. B&Q will also test the impact of offering collective purchasing discounts to households for buying energy efficient products.
- Homebase and Carillion will team up with a local authority to test the impact of offering immediate rewards to residents for purchasing energy efficiency measures. The offer will include a one month's council tax holiday or vouchers to spend in store.
- First Utility/Opower will be conducting a randomised controlled trial to investigate the effect of behavioural feedback – including comparative consumption – on consumer energy use. Another trial will focus on helping people to reduce energy consumption through better information:
- Government will work with British Gas and Alert Me to investigate which channels of communication most effectively motivate consumers to save energy.

A new design of the front page of the Energy Performance Certificate is also announced today and will be launched from April 2012 with the information most likely to motivate an individual's behaviour prominently displayed on the first page. The effects could be considerable: in the last 12 months nearly 1.4 million EPCs were issued.

Communities Minister Andrew Stunell said:

"We risk losing our battle against climate change unless we make the built environment more sustainable. So it's right that homeowners and tenants across the country are given this opportunity through the Green Deal to make their homes warmer and cheaper to run.

"Making information about the energy efficiency of homes readily available and easy to understand is a vital first step in this process, and I welcome these changes to the Energy Performance Certificate that will help motivate more people to take action and make their homes greener."

The Government has also announced today the launch of a Responsibility Deal which invites business and others to make a public commitment to reducing energy use by a specific amount by a specific date in the future.