



One-metre rule for heat pumps to be scrapped

Low take up of grants led the Chancellor to end blanket restriction on installation of controversial devices

By Amy Gibbons

23 November 2023 • 7:18pm



An “arbitrary” rule with the potential to force households to install heat pumps in the middle of their gardens is set to be scrapped by the Government.

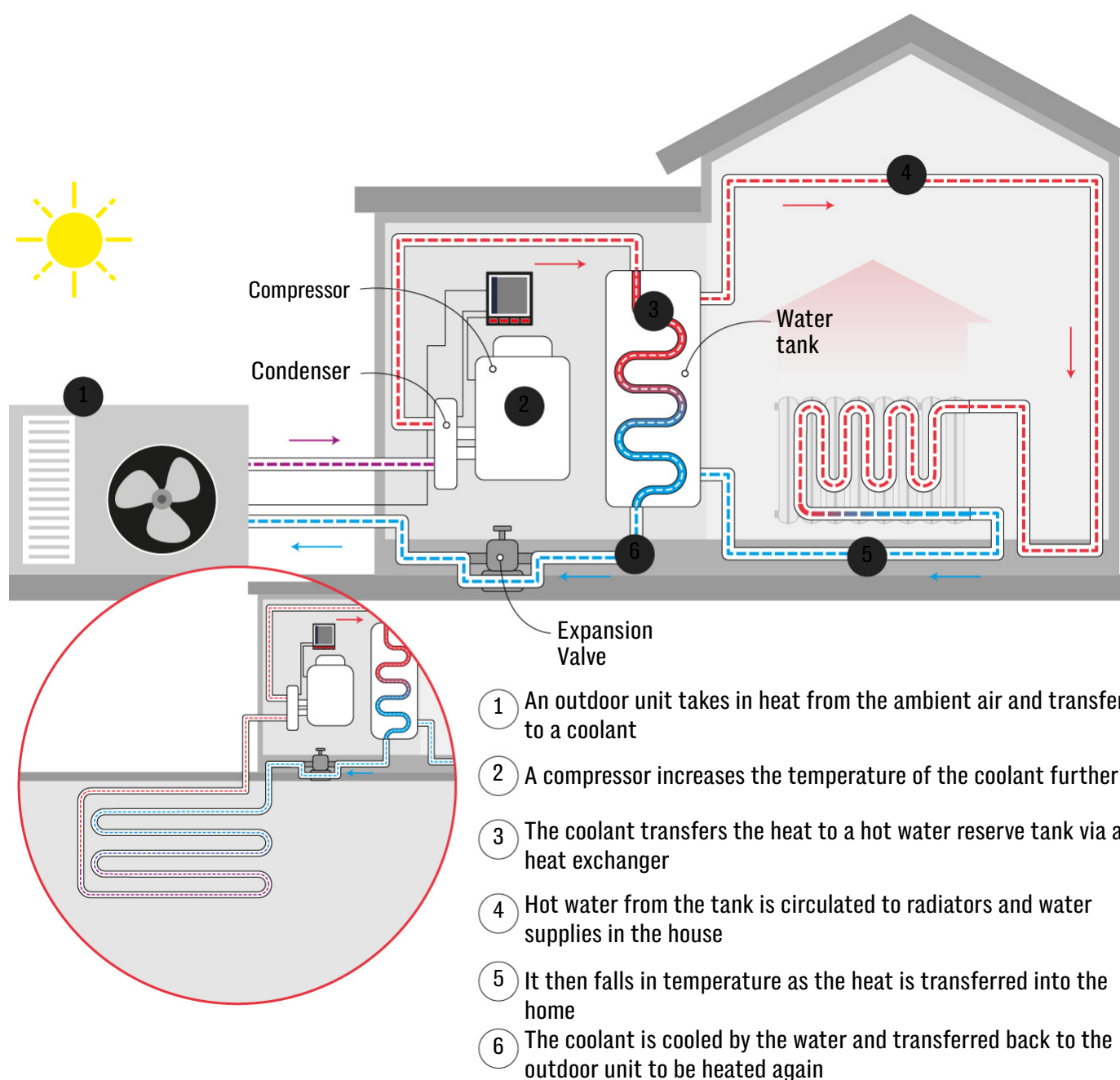
Under the plans, buried in the detail of the Autumn Statement, people would no longer have to fit the devices at least one metre from neighbouring properties.

Ministers say ditching the rule would help to “capitalise on the UK’s world-leading approach to decarbonising the economy”.

Currently, planning regulations mean that to qualify for the Government’s £5,000 heat pump grant devices should be installed at least one metre (3.28ft) from any boundary wall.

The rule was originally put in place to mitigate concerns over the noise levels from older models. But critics have said it is “arbitrary” and “challenging” to follow.

How heat pumps work



The Government has now announced it will look at bringing in “new permitted

development rights” to end the “blanket restriction”.

The Autumn Statement says ministers will “consult on introducing new permitted development rights to end the blanket restriction on heat pumps one metre from a property boundary in England”.

Together with other measures, this will help “reduce delays and capitalise on the UK’s world-leading approach to decarbonising the economy”.

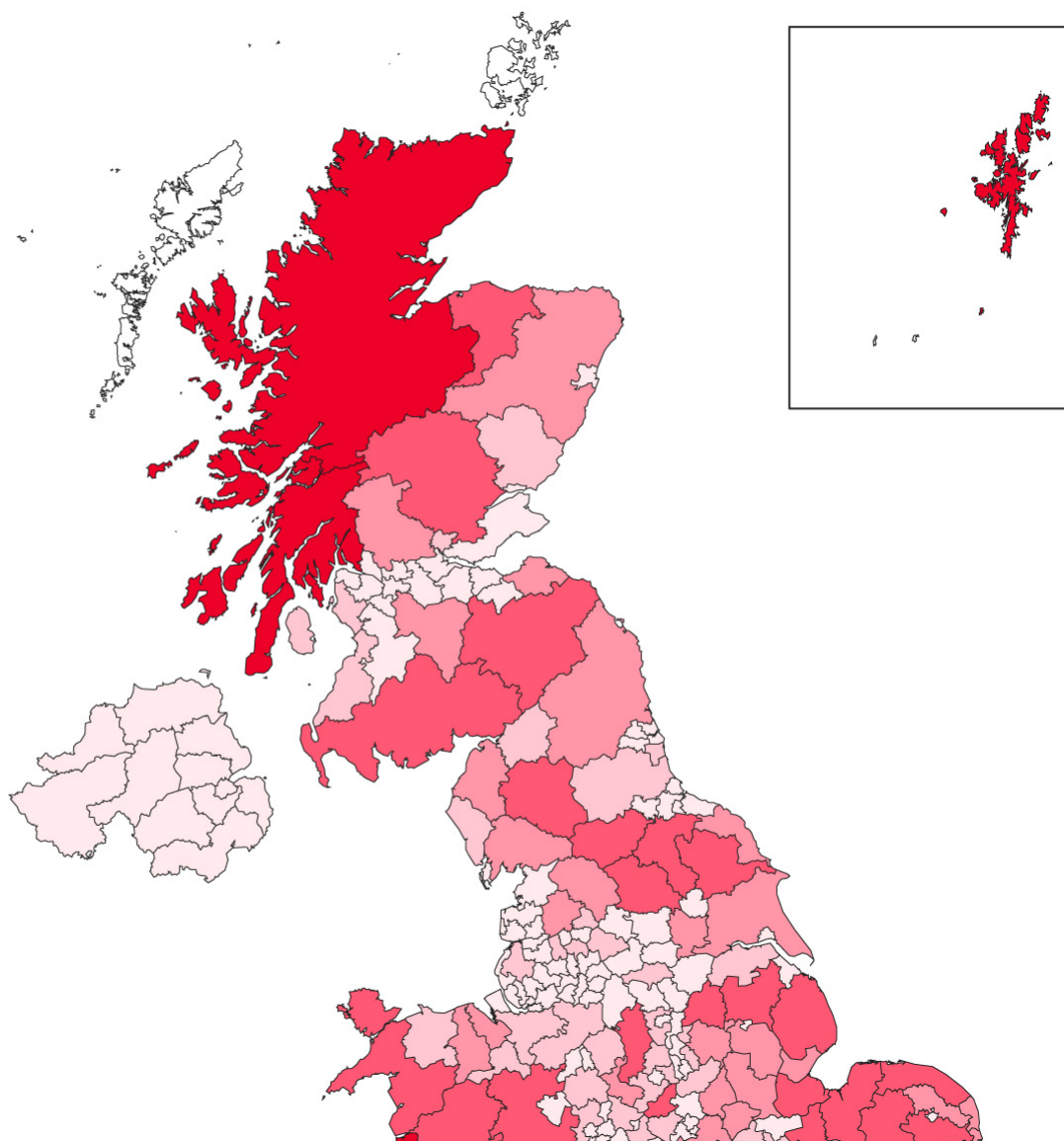
In March, The Telegraph reported that Liz Bentley, a meteorologist, had been put off installing a heat pump because she feared it could end up stuck in the middle of her narrow garden.

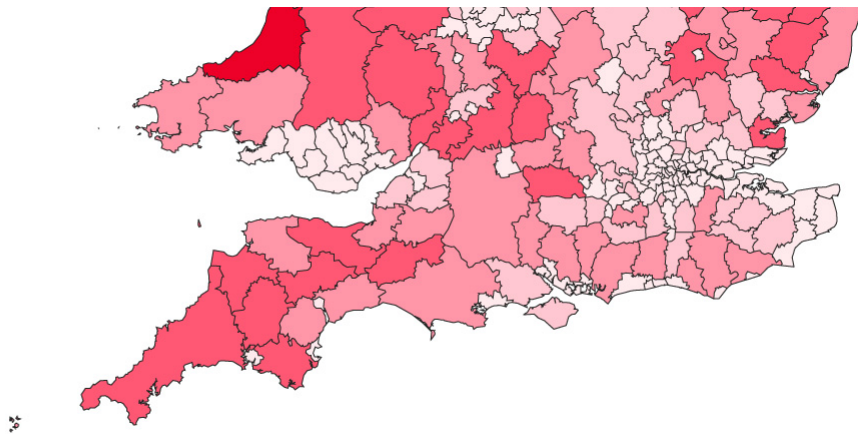
“It has been challenging to find something that fits,” she said. “I’m probably going to end up with a solution that’s not ideal for me.”

Heat pumps more prevalent in rural areas

Number of houses with heat pumps installed per 1,000 houses

- No data
- 0-5 per 1,000
- 5 to 10
- 10 to 20
- 20 to 40
- 40 per 1,000 or higher





SOURCE: MCS, DATA ACCURATE UP TO 17/05/23

She added: “If it’s stuck in the middle of my lawn, then I think that probably will be the final thing that will prevent us from moving down this road. My outside space is important to me, and I don’t really want one of these systems stuck in the middle of my garden.”

The issue was raised by the House of Lords environment and climate change committee in a letter to ministers earlier this year, which warned that the Government’s £450 million heat pump subsidy scheme was failing because of low uptake.

Baroness Parminter, the chairman of the committee, warned the one-metre mandate was making installations “more challenging in some circumstances”.

But Lord Callanan, the minister for energy efficiency, told the House of Lords that it was up to local authorities to decide how to interpret planning rules.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has been approached for comment.

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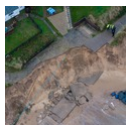
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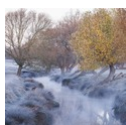
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