

# The home owners guide

## To getting a new boiler

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## **The Home Owners Guide to getting a New Boiler..**

You may have downloaded this ebook because your boiler has broken down or you are planning a new boiler installation in the near future. Regardless of how urgent the situation, this quick book will help you.

***Don't get mis-sold - understanding the jargon***

***Choose the best boiler for your family & home***

***Understanding expected costs and additional add-ons***

***Getting the right size boiler for your home***

***Making the best investment suited for your future plans***

***Protecting the new boiler***

### **What boiler is best for my home?**

Lets get this clear, there is no one boiler, brand or system that is best for every family or property in the UK. There are so many variables between the family and the home that they live in that one size cannot possibly fit all. Often there may be a grey area between the needs of the property and the needs of the family.

Because of this we feel its best to give you all the information relevant to your individual needs and help you conclude the best option rather than being biased to any one model or brand.

Below you will find some great unbiased tips for choosing the best boiler for your own situation and also some tips for finding a reputable company that can install the new boiler with the minimum of stress.





## Top Tips for choosing a Combi Boiler

The unwanted cost of replacing a boiler is never welcome news. Below I will try to explain the most common costs for landlords facing a new boiler replacement.

### How much does a new boiler cost?

Asking how much a new boiler costs is like asking how long is a piece of string. There are many variables so lets break down the main considerations piece by piece.

The final cost of replacing a boiler is mostly dependant on how complex it is to get the required pipework for any boiler to the place that you wish the boiler to be located. If you are replacing your boiler “like for like” the cost of labour and materials will be minimal compared to upgrading your system.

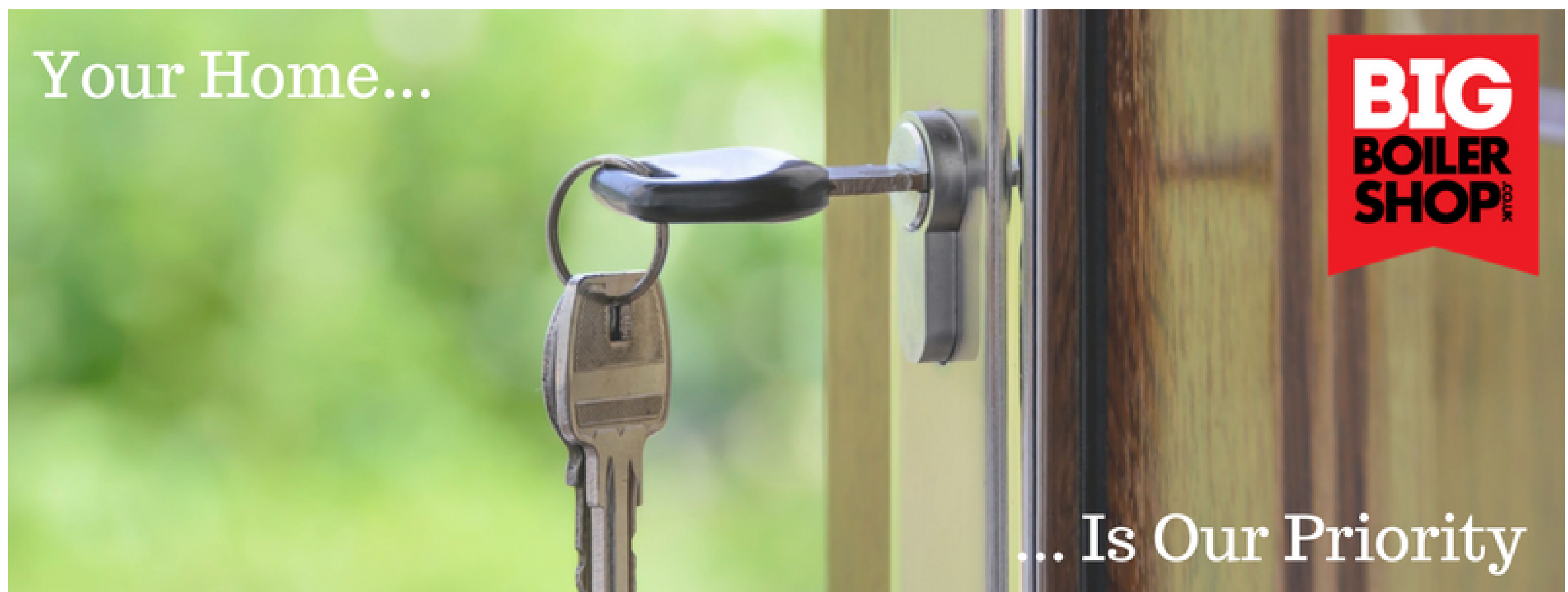


When choosing the actual brand or model of boiler a number of factors such as brand, warranty, size or kW output, all affect the cost between one model and the next. Add to this the varying difference of overheads between a one man band, big national companies and every other sized company between, you may find hundreds and even thousands of pounds difference between 2 new boiler quotes. The best brands with the longest warranties, added system protection and energy saving controls installed by a established company is a totally different product and experience from the sole trader wanting to make a quick £200.



## **Do you currently have a Combi Boiler?**

For the last 15 years the most common boiler sold and installed has been the combi boiler. If the homeowner already has a Combi boiler in the property then its almost certain they will replace “like for like” with another Combi boiler, otherwise known as a straight swop or replacement. Combi to Combi replacement can be as low as £1000 from the sole trader to £3500 for the large national companies.



## **Do you currently have a Conventional or System Boiler?**

If you still have the older type heating system, the type that has a boiler and hot water cylinder, expect the cost of upgrading to a modern Combi system to be anywhere between £1300 and £4500 inclusive of Vat. If you would prefer to keep the old style system but just change the boiler expect costs to range between £1000 & £3500.



# "So what affects the price and what Boiler do I really need?"



## Boiler Brands

There are over 15 brands on the UK market. The smaller brands such as Alpha, Biasi, Ferroli, Heatline & Vokera may produce some well built boilers but aftercare can lack if ever needed during the warranty period. Not having their own fleet of service vans & engineers they often subcontract service & repair work to established local installation companies. I have even known one of these companies outsource the entire customer service department to a company that does not produce boilers. But as these brands have smaller marketing departments and no service staff or vans on the books, so the end result is a competitive priced boiler.

If however you prefer the security of the bigger companies, brands such as Baxi, Ideal, Glowworm, Vaillant & Worcester Bosch not only offer longer warranties for your money, but are backed up their own service fleets and dedicated customer service departments available on freephone or landline numbers after office hours and throughout the weekend.

## Extended Warranties

Unless you are planning on selling the property in the next few years and therefore have no need for a longer warranty, my advice to any customer is

*"get the boiler  
with the longest  
warranty you can  
afford."*

For the last few years the maximum warranty offered by most of the boiler manufacturers has increased from the previous norm of 2,3 or 5 years to longer 7 & 10 years when installed by approved or accredited installers. The bigger brands may still be able to offer competitive “entry level” boilers with 2 and 3 years warranty options. These options are still decent boilers, just offered with less warranty cover to the end user and less risk to the manufacturer.

A Warm Home...



... For All The Family



## **The car engine for your home**

Try to think of your boiler as a car engine. The older the car gets the more parts under the bonnet will wear down or break and need replacing. The same is true with boilers. Under constant use day in day out for years something will need replacing and once you are outside the warranty period, those expensive repair costs are going to come at when you least expect them.



Upgrading the warranty from 5 or 7 years to the top level 10 years, will cost a extra £100-£200, but will give you peace of mind that your back is covered if needed. During the expected life of the boiler ( 10-12 years ), one major component will cost more than this to replace.





## How big or what size boiler do I need?

This question come up time and time again so let me help shorten that string to something a little easier to measure.

Firstly, take my word for it, when talking about Combi boilers most people should forget about how big their house is or how many bedrooms & radiators you have.



When choosing the boiler model you need to know what kW ( kilo watt ) size or output you need.

In most cases this should be based on how much hot water you will need at any one time.



Please note that across all manufacturers the bigger the model number the more hot water the boiler will produce. i.e. a 26kW boiler delivers more water than a 24kW boiler and a 32kW boiler will deliver more hotter than a 30kW option. You will also find that the the larger kW combi boilers are suitable sized to deliver heating for larger houses with more than 4 bedrooms. Obviously there will always be exceptions, but for most families the combi boiler is best option to deliver heating and hot water.



## “Inside Tip”

Other than the cost of the boiler itself, you may find that going from a smaller sized kW boiler to a larger model also increases the chance that a new gas pipe has to be installed ( known as a gas pipe upgrade ). Depending on how far the boiler is from the gas meter and how difficult it is to access the pipe, the gas pipe upgrade could add a further £50-£500+ to the cost of the installation.





## Hot Water

The smaller range of combi boilers will be between 24kW and 28kW giving hot water output of around 10 -11 litres per minute. 10 litres per minute is more than adequate for a decent hot shower but will not be able to supply the kitchen sink with hot water at the same time as the shower.



With a little tweaking of the water outlets, the next boiler size range up ( 29kW - 34kW ) will be able to cope with the kitchen sink and the shower providing there is enough incoming cold water to the property. On average, these midrange sized boilers cost around £100 - £200 inc vat more than the smaller 24kW options.

The larger size combi boilers are between 35-42kW AND SHOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED if the property has 2 showers running from the boiler and there is a strong chance that both will be used simultaneously. The biggest boilers will normally cost around £200 more than the midrange boilers.



## **What if your home or property has 2 showers?**

Ok, so the first question is, do you have any electric showers? If so how many?

If you have 1 shower from the boiler and also 1 electric shower, then ignore the electric shower as the boiler only has 1 shower to provide water for. If you have 2 electric showers, the boiler does not feed any of them and you might even be able to choose the smaller 24kW boiler as its only need is to heat the property and do the dishes.



If however your property has 2 showers that both require hot water from the boiler, you need to check that you have enough incoming cold water to supply the showers before choosing a boiler that can heat up this water. A 35kW boiler and 15 litres incoming cold water would be the minimum requirement to feed 2 showers at the same time.



## Top Tip

15 litres divided by 2 showers equals 7.5 litres and that is no Niagara Falls, but certainly better water flow than cheap electric showers provide.

If you wanted to deliver the best possible results from a Combi boiler I suggest the largest boilers with output's of 38-42kW. But remember to check your incoming cold water and expect that the larger boiler comes with added costs of upgrading the Gas pipe.



# Other bits that are needed, common extras?

## Time & Temperature Control

Time & Temperature control of the heating system is part of the building regulations and this is normally provided by some sort of timer and thermostat or a combined programmable thermostat. With so many options available to the home owner it can be very confusing choosing the system that best suits the individual family. Here i will give a brief description of the 3 most common options.





**The most simple option available** is the basic 24hour timer with a wired thermostat mounted on the wall. As this requires 2 separate devices it may cost slightly more than an all in one programmable thermostat but definitely has its place when the people living at the property have a very regular daily routine that does not change throughout the week. We often will advise this setup for retired people as they often prefer the simpler setup and have often used this type thermostat for many years.

***Price Guide - Mechanical Timer & Standard Thermostats Approximately £70***

**Programmable thermostats** offer a greater level of comfort & energy saving over standard thermostats as they normally have numerous temperature settings that if used correctly will keep you warm when most needed but also never allow your house to get really cold. You should normally set programmable thermostats to turn on at different temperatures throughout the day and if needed program for totally different times and temperatures at the weekend.

The wireless version of these programmable thermostats also allow for quick neat installation without a need for pre-existing wire to the boiler. This can lower the cost of the installation.

***Price Guide - Salus Wired Programmable Thermostats Approximately £40***  
***Salus Wireless Programmable Thermostats Approximately £60***





An **internet controlled** thermostat will give all the features that the programmable stats offer but also with far more control and additional information.

Allowing you to turn the heating on when you are leaving work or turn on as soon as you land home after that winter trip with your family is very convenient for some people, but the complicated setup can be too much for others.

Internet connected thermostats from brands such as Hive and Nest led the market 5 years ago but now in the last 2 years, all the big boiler manufacturers have released there own version of Internet controlled heating which I think is the better option over the better known options of Hive & Nest.

There are a number of reasons to choose the boiler manufacturer own kit over the Nest & Hive options. For me, the main reason is warranty & backup.

When installed with a new boiler the Vaillant V-Smart or Wave from Worcester Bosch will come with the same 5, 7 & 10 year warranty that the boiler will have.

You will also get full telephone & home repair service if needed.

***Price Guide - Salus Internet Controlled Stat Approximately £150***

***Vaillant Internet Controlled Stat Approximately £200***

***Worcester Bosch Internet Controlled Stat Approximately £250***







## **System Protection, Magnetic & Hard Water filters**

You would be a fool to think that without getting a regular service and topping up the oil, that your brand new car will run for 10 years, without one single breakdown. Although the new car will cost more than a new boiler installation both are considered longterm investments so protecting your investment should be a top consideration when working out your budget.





## **Chemical Cleaning & Protection**

All new boiler installations require some level of cleansing before the manufacturers warranty is valid and the legal benchmark document is signed. However, the state of the system water varies drastically from house to house so the level of cleansing should be judged on a house to house basis. After the cleaning process has been completed a protective chemical “Inhibitor” will be added to the system water before the final fill.

***Price Guide - Chemical Cleaning & Protection  
Approximately £15-30***

## **Magnetic System Filters**

On all installations, it is strongly recommended by all boiler manufacturers and the rest of the heating Industry to install some form of magnetic filter.

These filters are designed to protect the boiler from sludge and other harmful particles by trapping them in the filter before they can enter the boiler. They are also proven to help lower the Gas bill as the water can transfer heat more efficiently and the boilers pump will have to work less in circulating the heat.

***Price Guide - Magnetic Filter Approximately  
£110***

## **Hard Water or Limescale filters**

Additionally, hard water areas such as East Yorkshire and the East Midlands suffer from limescale build up within the boiler causing blockages on the Hot water side of the boiler. These areas also require additional Hard Water protection for a additional cost of around £30-£50.

***Price Guide - Limescale Filter Approximately  
£40***

# Tips for choosing a Boiler Installation company

When choosing a company to carry out such important work like a boiler installation it pays to take a little time to find a number of companies to quote for the work. Other than the final price for the work quoted, speed of delivery will be a big part of the equation if you have a cold home. But given the stereotypical view of Tradesmen and a lack of standard practice within the industry, I advise you also look for a person or firm that you can trust to deliver what they promise, on time and at the same price quoted.







- > Has this person/ company got online history?
- > Look for and find companies with live reviews  
Google reviews, Which Trusted Traders & Checkatrade
- > 2 way interaction on Social media sites such as Facebook & local forums
- > Customer Charters from Which Trusted Traders and Trustmark
- > Accreditations from boiler manufacturers, Baxi, Ideal, Vaillant & Worcester
- > Gas Safe Registered & Insured for potential damages
- > Transparent pricing, do they list example prices online?
- > Do they offer written fixed price quotation with detailed extras?
- > Put them on the spot. How do they deal with problems?



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