Air Source Heat Pumps

Myth buster

Right where you belong

gleeson

We understand that modern technology like air source heat pumps can sometimes result in apprehension and scepticism. They are quite different to the gas boilers we have all come to expect in new build homes.

We have produced the following ‘myth-busters’ to help ensure that you have just as much confidence in this technology as we do.

“ASHPs don’t get hot enough.”

Your ASHP can heat your home up to 30°c should you wish. Whilst this may take more time than a gas boiler, your ASHP can still achieve the same high temperatures should you wish.

“ASHPs are inefficient.”

This is all about careful design. Not all heat pumps are made equal, there is a wide variety of designs that is made up of different sizes, power, functionality, etc. So choosing the right one is the skill and that’s why we use MCS qualified, specialist designers to do this for us. The technology has been used across the world for decades, so any inefficiencies have been tried and tested over a significant period of time in various weather conditions.

“ASHPs don’t work in cold weather.”

ASHPs work by taking energy from the outside air and concentrating it for use in our homes. This of course means that when it’s colder outside, there is less energy available. This doesn’t mean that the ASHP won’t work, it just means that, compared to the summer months, more electricity will be required to achieve the same amount of heat output. It has to work harder to take that heat out the air.

The higher energy use in Winter months is more than offset by the energy savings made in the Summer months.

As testament to this, Norway have been using ASHP technology successfully for the last 40 years and temperatures are generally much colder than in the UK. In 2020 they accounted for 60% of households and this number is growing*.

*Reference: ‘Current deployment of heat pumps’ available at nature.com/articles/s41560-022-01104-8

“ASHPs cost a fortune to run.”

ASHPs use electricity to operate. Whilst this is a zero-carbon ready means of generating heat, at present electricity is unfortunately around 4x the cost of gas per unit. However, an ASHP can produce much more heat with a unit of electrical energy than a gas boiler can with a unit of gas energy. This means that on average across the year, your ASHP will be roughly the same in terms of cost. Don’t forget you won’t have any standing charge to pay on a gas service.

Gleeson homes are constructed using modern building methods and materials and are well insulated, making ASHPs well placed for a new build home.

“ASHPs are really noisy.”

Even at full load, your ASHP is no louder than an electric toothbrush. In normal conditions, it will be even quieter (about the equivalent to the sound of moderate rainfall). Plus, unlike gas boilers which are located inside your home, your ASHP is outside so by comparison, your home will actually be quieter with an ASHP. Your ASHP has been installed facing away from your home, so any noise is directed away from your windows.

“But what about when I’m in the garden, won’t the noise bother me then?”

As a rule, we only tend to spend time in the garden during the summer months. In warm weather, your ASHP won’t be working hard at all meaning it will be extremely quiet and therefore shouldn’t be noticeable. You can also temporarily place your ASHP in ‘quiet mode’ should you need to.

I don’t know how to get my ASHP serviced.

Servicing is required annually to maintain warranty and is super easy to arrange. You can either ask the subcontractor that installed your ASHP to service your unit, or you can go online to search for an accredited installer. Similar to an annual boiler service, costs will vary so we encourage you to shop around for the best quote. There is also less disruption to you as the unit is outside meaning the service can take place without the need in most instances for anyone to access your property.

“Why are Gleeson using ASHPs, when other housebuilders aren’t? Why are there no solar panels?”

Solar panels are sometimes used by other housebuilders to ensure compliance against the latest Building Regulations where gas boilers have been installed. At Gleeson, we have moved straight to air source heat pump technology, which means that our homes produce significantly less in-use carbon emissions compared to the equivalent new build home built using a gas boiler and solar panels*. As we perform well above minimum standards, we are not required to install solar panels on our homes.

Based on the latest proposed legislation from Government, it is widely expected that by 2025, it will be very difficult for Gas Boilers to meet the requirements of the building regulations**. As such, you are likely to see air source heat pumps becoming far more prevalent in new build homes. Your Gleeson home is ahead of the curve. Our early adoption of air source heat pumps reflects Gleeson’s commitment to minimising our carbon footprint.

*Reference: Please see Future Homes Hub: Guide for housebuilders and their advisors - masonry construction

**Reference: GOV.UK The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation.

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gleesonhomes.co.uk

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NEW HOMES QUALITY CODE