

## FACTSHEET 1

# Heating, Warmth & Comfort After Spinal Cord Injury



For people living with spinal cord injury, higher energy use is often unavoidable. The focus should be on:

- ✓ Maintaining a safe and comfortable home
- ✓ Improving energy efficiency where possible
- ✓ Accessing financial support and specialist advice



With the right combination of practical changes and external support, it is possible to better manage energy costs without compromising health or independence.

### 1 Why warmth matters

Maintaining a warm and stable home environment is especially important for people living with spinal cord injury. Changes in circulation, reduced mobility, and impaired temperature regulation can make it harder to stay warm, increasing the risk of discomfort, illness, or secondary complications such as pressure injuries.



The goal is not to reduce essential heating, but to use it as efficiently as possible while keeping heat inside the home.

### 2 Practical steps

- Aim for a consistent indoor temperature (typically 18–21°C, or higher if clinically advised)
- Avoid large fluctuations in temperature, which can be harder for the body to manage
- Use programmable timers so heating comes on before you wake or return home
- Consider smart thermostats to better control heating patterns

### 3 Zoned heating and room use

If possible, focus heating on the rooms you use most frequently. For example, keeping a bedroom and living space consistently warm may be more efficient than heating the entire home all day.



For people with spinal cord injury, warmth is a health necessity, not a luxury. Prioritising insulation and heat retention can significantly reduce the amount of energy needed to maintain a safe and comfortable environment.

### 4 Keep the heat in

- Seal draughts around doors, windows, and flooring
- Use thick curtains or thermal linings, especially at night
- Block unused chimneys or vents
- Install radiator reflector panels on external walls

### 5 Longer-term improvements

- Loft insulation and cavity wall insulation
- Double or triple glazing
- Upgraded heating systems (where funding is available)



#### Further Support

Contact Back Up's Energy Advisor on [energy@backuptrust.org.uk](mailto:energy@backuptrust.org.uk) or visit [www.backuptrust.org.uk/energy](http://www.backuptrust.org.uk/energy).

Our advisor can discuss the challenges you are facing and offer advice, support and onward referrals to other organisations where appropriate.



#### Other Organisations

**Energy Saving Trust** — [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

**Scope** — free disability energy advice service — [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice** — support with billing, disputes, and energy rights — [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**Turn2us** — tools to find grants and check benefit eligibility — [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)