Heat pumps: what agents need to know

Last Modified on 06/03/2026 12:35 pm EDT

Heat pumps are one of the most talked-about low carbon technologies right now, and as more customers make the switch from gas boilers, questions about heat pumps are only going to become more common. You don't need to be a heating engineer to handle these calls well — but understanding the basics will help you respond with confidence and avoid some common misunderstandings.

What is a heat pump?

A heat pump is a heating system that moves heat from outside a building to inside it, rather than generating heat by burning fuel. It works on the same principle as a refrigerator, just in reverse — extracting heat energy from the air or ground outside and transferring it indoors.

The most common domestic type is an air source heat pump (ASHP), which extracts heat from outdoor air. Ground source heat pumps (GSHP) extract heat from the ground and are more efficient but significantly more expensive to install. For most customer conversations, you'll be dealing with air source.

Heat pumps run on electricity rather than gas, which is why they're relevant to an energy supplier — and why customers with heat pumps tend to have higher electricity consumption and lower (or zero) gas consumption than comparable households.

How heat pumps affect a customer's account

Electricity consumption goes up
Heat pumps use electricity to operate. A household that switches from a gas boiler to a heat pump will typically see their electricity consumption increase significantly — sometimes doubling or more, depending on the size of the property and how well insulated it is.

Gas consumption goes down or disappears
If a customer switches entirely to a heat pump for heating and hot water, their gas consumption may drop to zero. In this case, they may want to close their gas supply point — check with them whether they still have any gas appliances (a gas hob, for example) before closing the supply.

Direct debit impact
The shift from gas to electricity changes the cost balance of a customer's bills. Electricity is currently more expensive per unit than gas, which means the overall bills of heat pump customers can be higher despite the efficiency gains — particularly in poorly insulated homes. A direct debit review is often appropriate after a heat pump installation.

Heat pump tariffs

Heat pumps run most efficiently when they operate for longer periods at lower temperatures — unlike gas boilers, which can crank up quickly and turn off. This makes them well suited to time-of-use tariffs that offer cheaper overnight rates, allowing the heat pump to run during off-peak hours and store heat for use during the day.

If a customer with a heat pump asks about tariff options, a time-of-use tariff is worth exploring. As with EVs, a smart meter is required.

Common customer questions

"My electricity bill has shot up since we got a heat pump — is something wrong?"
Not necessarily. A significant increase in electricity consumption is expected after a heat pump installation, particularly during the first winter. Ask whether they've noticed a corresponding reduction in gas usage (or whether they've closed their gas supply). If the increase seems extreme relative to what would be expected, it may be worth investigating whether the heat pump is operating correctly — but that's a question for a heating engineer, not us.

"My heat pump doesn't seem to be keeping the house warm enough."
Performance issues with the heat pump itself are outside our remit. Recommend the customer contacts their heat pump installer or manufacturer. What we can help with is making sure their tariff and account are set up appropriately to support the system.

"Should I close my gas account now I have a heat pump?"
Only if they have no remaining gas appliances. Check with the customer whether they still use gas for cooking or anything else before closing the supply point. Reconnecting gas later is expensive and time-consuming — make sure it's definitely not needed before proceeding.

"Is a heat pump worth it for my type of home?"
This is a question for an independent energy advisor, not a Good Egg Energy agent. We can talk about how a heat pump affects their account with us, but we're not in a position to advise on whether a heat pump is a good investment for a specific property. Signpost them to the government's energy efficiency advice services if they want more guidance.

Useful context: heat pump efficiency

Heat pumps are measured by their Coefficient of Performance (COP) — a ratio of heat output to electricity input. A COP of 3 means the heat pump produces 3 units of heat for every 1 unit of electricity it consumes. This is significantly more efficient than a gas boiler, which typically converts less than 1 unit of energy input into 1 unit of heat.

Customers sometimes struggle to understand why their bills feel higher if their heating system is more efficient. The honest answer is that electricity costs more per unit than gas — so even though heat pumps use energy more efficiently, the higher cost of electricity can offset the efficiency gains, particularly in the current energy market. This is likely to shift over time as the grid becomes greener and electricity prices adjust accordingly.

> **Good to know:** Heat pump customers are often highly engaged with their energy use and very knowledgeable about low carbon technology. They may know more about heat pumps than you do — and that's completely fine. You don't need to be the expert on the technology itself. Your expertise is the account, the tariff, and the billing. Focus there and you'll handle these calls well.