



The BT Big Sofa Summit Guide



How to host your own summit at home

This guide is packed full of tips and advice to inspire you to start a conversation about how you can help the environment. We don't have to be world leaders to make a difference: the BT Big Sofa Summit has lots of tools to help you think about how your home can be greener, and how you can make the most of smart tech to save money and energy.

By following the simple guide below, you'll be able to better understand that the changes you and your home make add up. Whether it's pledging to turn down your thermostat by 1 degree or just taking a much shorter shower every day, plump up those sofa cushions, grab your family or your housemates and get ready to discuss how small changes really can make a big difference.

What household are you

First, you should consider how much energy you use as a household. Are you **low**, **medium** or **high**? If you have access to your energy bills you might be able to find how you compare to other households of the same size.

Low



1-2 Bedrooms

Electricity 1800 KWH
Enough to boil your kettle
16,396 times

Gas 8000 KWH

Medium



3 Bedrooms

Electricity 2900 KWH
Equivalent to 4603
loads of washing

Gas 12000 KWH

High



4+ Bedrooms

Electricity 4300 KWH
Equivalent to leaving a standard
light bulb on for about 5 years

Gas 17000 KWH

If you're **low** or **medium**, that's great! You can use your summit to identify new ways to save energy using smart tech.

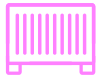
If you're **high**, you can make some small, easy changes to reduce your energy. Use the summit to identify where you can reduce your energy use and how smart energy tech can help.

How to identify your energy usage

One of the best ways to work out how much energy you are using is to look at your energy bill. Check out this useful guide from [Money Saving Expert](#) which explains how you can read your energy bills and cut energy costs with some really useful jargon-busting advice too.

Topic 1

Heating and hot water



Next up, heating and hot water. Did you know, heating and hot water accounts for over half of most household's energy bills, despite not being on all year? (Energy Saving Trust, 2020).

Have an honest conversation with the people you live with about the heating and hot water topics below and identify the areas you feel you could do better in.

★ Tips

- The longer you shower, the more energy is needed to heat up your water; showers under 4 minutes are best to save energy.
- Turning down your thermostat by just 1 degree will reduce your energy use and bills straight away – and you probably won't feel the difference ([Simple Energy Advice](#)).
- Renewable energy sources now generate a third of Britain's power, ([Ofgem](#)) and switching to a green energy provider is one of the best ways you can do your bit for the environment and reduce your carbon footprint.

🏠 Smart tech solution

Which smart tech solution is most relevant to your family or housemates' needs in helping the environment?

Smart shower head -

do you waste energy trying to find the perfect temperature? A smart showerhead will help you conserve water and energy.

- Smart showerheads give you more control over your shower with different models using LED displays to allow you to control the temperature, power, and length of your shower to preserve water and energy.
- Alternatively, keep your showers under four minutes by setting an alarm on your smart phone or even play a four-minute song.

Smart radiator valves –

are you using your heating efficiently? Ever leave every radiator on even though you don't need them all?

- Smart radiator valves allow you to remotely control the temperature of your heating and radiators from your smartphone, tablet or smart speaker.
- The technology allows better control over the heating in each room of your home, helping to save energy and money. Each valve acts as its own thermostat and controls hot water flow for each room.
- To find out more and buy smart radiator valves, visit the [BT Shop](#).

Renewable energy tariff -

do you know if you're using renewable energy? Check if you are on a 100% renewable energy tariff and, if you aren't, switch using a comparison website.

- A 100% renewable energy tariff means all of the energy you use is matched by your energy supplier through purchases of renewable energy (e.g. wind turbines, solar panels and hydroelectric power stations) – so you can help increase renewable energy use which is better for the environment.
- Many renewable energy suppliers make donations to support initiatives such as tree planting or carbon offsetting.
- Find out more about renewable energy tariffs [here](#).



Lighting and power

Did you know you could save £90 a year by turning off your appliances and lights and by switching to LED light bulbs? (Energy Saving Trust, 2020)

As a household, discuss the lighting and power topics below and identify the areas you feel you could improve.

★ Tips

- Get to grips with your electricity bill – it will tell you how many kilowatt hours (kWh) you have used which shows how much electricity you use per year.
- Get savvy with your lighting as it makes up 15% of the average UK household electricity bills. If you replace all the bulbs in your home with LED lights, you could reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by up to 40kg a year. ([Energy Saving Trust](#)).
- Consider how you're using appliances in the home - you can save around £35 a year by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode, whilst saving up to £22 a year just by using your kitchen appliances more cautiously. ([Energy Saving Trust](#)).

🏠 Smart tech solution

Smart meter – suppliers are installing smart meters as part of a national government programme to replace older energy meters so you can request one from your energy supplier.

- Smart meters help you take control of your energy use by recording your energy usage every 30 minutes and displaying exactly what you are spending in pounds and pence so you can understand how and when your energy use could be more efficient ([Ofgem](#)).
- This puts an end to estimated bills due to the connection between your meter and supplier ([Ofgem](#)).

Smart lighting – are your lamps and light fittings energy efficient? Smart lighting allows home owners to control their lights from their smartphone, tablet or smart speaker, saving energy and money in the process.

- Switching to smart LED lighting could reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by up to 40kg a year - equivalent to the carbon dioxide emitted by driving your car for 140 miles ([Energy Saving Trust](#)).
- To find out more and buy LED bulbs, visit the [BT Shop](#).

Smart plug – forgetting to turn your plugs off at the wall? Now you don't have to worry about getting to any hard-to-reach places: switch off your devices with one tap on your smartphone.

- A smart plug is used to turn a plug socket into a smart home system. They can be used to turn on the plug with an app on your smartphone or through your voice using a smart speaker and can monitor the power consumption of appliances in your home ([Which?](#)).
- To find out more and buy a smart plug, visit the [BT Shop](#).



Food

Did you know, the average UK household could save £730 per year (£60 a month) by reducing food waste? (WRAP, 2020).

Have a chat with your family or housemates about the food topics below and highlight the tips you could implement.

★ Tips

- Plan perfectly and shop smart on your next trip to the supermarket by preparing a meal plan for the week. This will help you stretch food across the week and only buy what you need. ([Hubbub](#))
- Have you considered swapping a meat-based meal for a plant-based one? Swapping a meat dish for a delicious protein-packed plant-based dish is a great way to eat healthier whilst reducing grocery bills as well as your environmental impact. ([Hubbub](#))
- Make sure you understand the difference between ‘best-before’ and ‘use-by dates’ on your food to avoid unnecessary wastage ([Food.gov](#))

🏠 Smart tech solution

Take a ‘shelfie’

Before you leave the house and go food shopping, take a ‘shelfie’ photo of the inside of your fridge and cupboards on your smartphone to ensure you don’t buy what you already have.

Apps to food shop savvy

Have some food going spare? Get involved in your community with the food sharing app [OLIO](#) where you can join millions of people giving away food and other household items for free.

The [Kitche app](#) helps you keep track of when your household food is going out of date. Simply input the use-by dates to help prioritise what you eat first. You can also scan your receipt and Kitche will remind you of the food you already have at home.



Lifestyle

Finally, lifestyle. Did you know cars on the road account for 14% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions? That's the same as the emissions from heating our homes ([Committee on Climate Change](#)).

Spend some time talking about the lifestyle topics below and identify the areas you feel you and your household could work on.

★ Tips

- Could you ditch the car for shorter trips? Switching to a bike for your commute could save you over £3,000 per year, ([Cyclescheme](#)).
- Repair, re-use and recycle your old electronics. The UK produces 24kg of electronic waste per person every year. A lot of this forgotten tech can actually be fixed and re-used keeping valuable materials in use, whilst saving you money. If your items are beyond repairable, make sure to recycle the materials that can be used again, ([Let's Recycle](#)).

🏠 Smart tech solution

Electric vehicles (EV) – consider an EV next time you plan to purchase a new car as this will reduce your carbon pollution and improve local air quality, ([Count us in](#)).

- One full charge in an EV provides a typical range of over 100 miles, costing around £4-6 charging at home in comparison to £13-16 in fuel if driving the same distance in a petrol or diesel car. ([Energy Saving Trust](#)).

Apps to help you travel smarter – there are lots of apps to help you plan your journey, arrive on time, and find the quickest way to travel. Have a go at using:

- [Citymapper](#) (for some UK cities) allows you to compare routes with live estimate time travel – a great way to help make transport sustainable and hassle free.
- [Waze](#) is good for real-time traffic, route planning and has introduced a carshare option to help make your commute fast and affordable.
- [Sustrans](#) is useful if you are looking for inspiration for your next walking or cycling route.

Save time with automation – make the most of your smart speaker or smart phone voice assistant to save time and give you control.

- For example, your smart speaker allows you to automatically schedule reminders such as turning off the lights or the heating, at a specific time each day.
- Many renewable energy suppliers make donations to support initiatives such as tree planting or carbon offsetting.
- To find out more and buy a smart speaker, visit the [BT Shop](#).

Small changes, **big difference**

Hopefully this guide has helped you to identify a few different ways you can save energy and set some new resolutions – whether that’s through small changes to your routine or using different smart tech.

As a last step you could set a reminder on your phone or smart speaker for a month’s time to come back together and see how you’ve been doing with your new resolutions as a household.

We’d love to hear about your Big Sofa Summit and your resolutions so please share yours using [#BTBigSofaSummit](#).

If you’d like to find out more ways you can take practical action on climate change and share the small changes you’re making as a household, visit <https://www.count-us-in.org/en-gb/>

