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Homeowners 'compromising effectiveness' of loft insulation

20 March 2012 | By Jim Dunton

Research claims just one in 10 homes gets the full benefit of loft insulation

Homeowners are disabling the effectiveness of their loft insulation to a massive extent, according to survey data released at Ecobuild.

Research conducted for the company LoftZone found that while some 14.1m of the UK's 23.3m homes had loft insulation, just 2.6m of those properties benefitted properly from the measure.

The company said a survey of 6,000 people found that 82% used their loft for storage and that 65% had fully or partially boarded the space - reducing the effectiveness of the insulation.

Dave Raval, head of the entrepreneurs fast-track at the Carbon Trust, said the research highlighted "practicality issues" with insulating UK homes.

"Lofts should be insulated to the recommended 270mm, but homeowners also need the loft for storage," he said.

"To board-out a loft, the insulation is reduced to the height of the joists, which is either 75mm or 100mm, or the insulation is compressed below 270mm by placing items on it - both of these reduce thermal capabilities of the insulation and undermine its effectiveness.

"Another issue is that insulating to 270mm covers the joists, making loft access quite dangerous because it is hard to see where to walk.

"Often, insulation will be moved to allow access for storage and for maintenance, and it is rarely replaced, further exacerbating the situation."

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Did the research discuss possible solutions to this problem? Can alternative (thinner) types of insulation be used so owners can still make use of the loft area for storage?

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Yes, there is a solution which protects the insulation but still allows the loft to be used for storage - go to