Cut your carbon

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reducing energy, water & carbon

Lightbulb moment to lift gloom

Many of us had been focusing on the state of the planet and the resulting long-term impact, until Covid-19 struck and now rightly this has taken over the headlines with huge shorter-term impact on our lives at every level.

Aside from the obvious health impact for those who have been exposed to the virus and those working on the front line, for the rest of us many are having to adapt to working from home and having our family in lockdown with us, compounded by the worry of reduced work opportunities and falling family incomes. Combine the two and I fear there may be a further impact. With everyone at home during the working week and weekends they will be using lots more energy; the TV and games consoles are on for the kids (and the grownups), the heating is on during the day, we're making lots of cups of tea, normally drunk in the work place and obviously the lights are on

longer as we slave over our laptops trying to adjust to remote working, and remote relationships. The result, increased energy bills just when, for many, their household income is falling.

Reducing carbon footprint for the betterment of our planet, is still important as there will be life after Covid-19 but we only have one planet, so what are our quick wins now to help us reduce our energy usage while we are all staying at home?

There are the obvious ones that we must not forget:
■ Only fill the kettle by the amount of water you need for that cuppa – over filling means you need more energy to heat more water, that you never use. Use the cup you are going to drink from as a quick measure to fill the kettle.
■ Make sure those TVs and other devices are not left on standby, as leaving items on standby is still using energy even when not in use.
■ Lightbulb moment! The answer to

one of the biggest savings has been above your head all along. Many households are still using traditional incandescent, old compact fluorescent (yes the ugly curly ones) or inefficient halogen, which consume a lot of unnecessary energy.

LED bulbs, however, use up to 80 per cent less energy and have a far longer lifespan and, if you buy the right ones, they also provide a better quality of light, much needed if you are working from home, and in some cases they have smart features.

By using less energy, you're creating less demand from your energy supplier, which in turn reduces your carbon footprint.

As well as reducing your carbon footprint by switching to LED bulbs, you'll also see a massive reduction in your energy bills, leaving more money in your pocket during these challenging times.

Show me the maths. A standard 60w lightbulb that's turned on for five hours a day at an average of 11p

electricity charge per unit will cost £11.50 per year to run and typically last 2,000 hours (there are 8,760 hours in a year). I suspect everyone will have their lights on far more than five hours in the present lockdown.

A good quality LED bulb running for the same length of time at the same charge rate, will cost only £1.70 a year. That's a saving on your home energy bill of £9.80 a year per bulb and, depending on what you buy, an LED bulb will last from 20,000 to 50,000 hours, so huge reduction on waste and potential landfill, and unnecessary trips to the shops to buy new bulbs.

Many argue that LED lamps are too expensive, but that's no longer the case where a good quality LED lamp can be an only a couple of pounds. So, if you purchased 10 to change across your home, you might have a cost

of say £20, but based on a longer daily 'on time' of say 10 hours, due to Covid-19 lockdown, your household would be saving £196 per year.