

How can I tell how old my boiler is?

Unfortunately, there is no easy way to tell by simply looking at the boiler. Records should be left when the boiler is installed though, so these can be checked to find out the age. When you have the boiler serviced you can check both the age and the efficiency with the registered heating engineer.

How can I tell whether I have a regular or combination boiler?

If you have a combination boiler, you won't have a hot water tank, over-top electric water heaters or a cold water storage tank and the boiler will start up every time the hot tap is turned on. Another sign indicating a combination boiler is if it has five pipes (two for heating, two for hot water and one for gas) coming out of it.

How can I tell whether I already have a condensing boiler?

Look for the flue which will be sticking out though an external wall from the back of the boiler. If it is plastic and a white plume puffs out of it when the boiler is working then it is likely to be a condensing boiler. Non-condensing boilers will have a metal flue (because the gases are hotter) and except in cold weather, the gases will normally not be visible as they are much hotter than those from a condensing boiler.

Should I insulate first or replace my boiler?

If you have a poorly insulated home, then it is a good idea to insulate surfaces such as walls and lofts, and fully draught proof before installing a new boiler. A well insulated home should always require less heat, and if this is installed after boiler replacement it is likely to be oversized – meaning that it won't be working as efficiently and will have a higher upfront cost.

What size boiler will I need?

Boilers should be capable of providing heat for the number of radiators in the house, and the size of the property – over sizing will result in lower efficiencies and unnecessary capital costs. The size of boiler will depend on levels of the size of your home, how well it is insulated insulation of the home and the type of heating system you have.

For combi boilers, power rating is generally determined by hot water requirements as this will generally produce more than enough heat output for space heating. Size for size replacement is not recommended as insulation levels may have been improved or the original sizing may have been incorrect – heating and hot water demand should always be reassessed before any installation.

