



NIVEN OAKS

NORTHWOOD, SANTRY



Before you move
into your new
Passive House home



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
This is just the first step of a settling-in process	
The settling-in programme	2
What is Passive House?	3
How we know Passive House works	
The building is the Passive House	
Adaptable to individual needs	
A building that is certified to perform	
The benefits of living in a Passive House apartment	4
Your home will be more cost-efficient to heat	
Your home will be easier to keep warm	
You'll have fresh air, even with the windows closed	
You won't feel draughts anymore	
Your home has been designed to minimise damp and mould	
Your home will probably be quieter than you're used to	
Your home will be healthier to live in	
Your home will be more comfortable	
Five principles of Passive House	5
What the five principles mean for you	6
A Passive House will be different to your last home	7
Prepare for some change	
Some of the new technology might feel strange	8
Talk to your neighbours	
Check the weather before you leave the house	
You can put away your winter bedding—possibly forever	

Your indoor air will always be fresh and filtered	
You might hear some new noises	
You don't need to rely on radiators to keep you warm	
Heating	9
Hot water	
Damp and mould	
Please don't smoke by the intake vents	
Dust and filtration	
Sensors for comfort, efficiency, and sustainability	10
In some ways, it's not that different	
The costs / savings of living in a Passive House	11
Living in a Passive House	
Guidance for energy-efficient living	
Images of the new technology in your home	12
Your panel heater	
Your heat pump	
Your MVHR	
Your cooker hood	
Your windows	
Thinking ahead: How to approach your first two weeks	13
Support and resources	14

Introduction

We have created this guide to help you understand what you can expect from your new building.

This covers some of the basics that it might help to understand before you move in — there's a lot more we're going to tell you, but you only need this for now.

This pack has been designed to give you information that will help you prepare for the moving in process and address the most important questions that you will probably have.

This is just the first step of a settling-in process

This isn't the only help you'll get, it's part of a long-term programme of support that will ease you in to Passive House living.

No-one is able to take everything in on moving day so we are kicking off this support programme by providing you with this guide to what you can expect from your new home.

Getting the best out of living in a Passive House requires its residents make some adjustments to how they live and how we help you to prepare for them matters. Especially because they're designed to improve your quality of life in this home.

One of these adjustments is getting used paying much less for your heating. Another is that you won't paying a gas bill at all.

Others include getting used to leaving your heating system on all the time (because it's more efficient that way, so it uses less electricity overall) and using the kitchen extract fan whenever you cook to clean the air you breathe.

Some of it may feel strange but you'll get used to it.





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The settling-in programme

Passive Houses aren't new, they've been around for over 30 years so we have been able to lean on a lot of experience in planning your new home.

Living in a Passive House will take a little getting used to—it's like a normal building, just built better, and that will make the experience of living in it unexpectedly surprising.

The obvious things like consistent warmth and comfort will come easy, but new residents have reported being surprised by the impact of small differences.

The indoor peace that comes from street noises being blocked out by triple-glazed windows can be a real surprise.

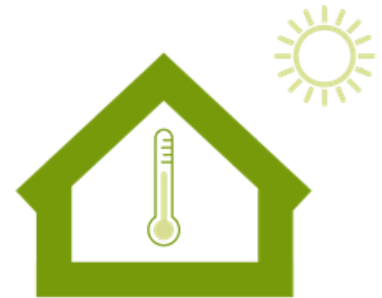
As can the noise made by the motor in your fridge because you may not have heard it before.

While you settle in we'll be there to support you, helping to make sense of how the building works and how to get the best out of it for yourself.

Over the first year in your new home we will host periodic resident meetings and feedback sessions as we wish to stay engaged on how the building is working for you.

What is Passive House?

A Passive House is a building standard that is used to design low-energy buildings—low energy in this case means that they require less energy to heat and keep warm than a traditional building.



They are designed with five key principles that enable energy efficiency and comfort:

1. High levels of carefully installed insulation
2. Airtightness, to prevent draughts and heat loss
3. Mechanical Ventilation and Heat-Recovery (MVHR) to ensure a constant supply of fresh, filtered, temperate air
4. High quality triple-glazed windows
5. Thermal bridge-free design that insulates junctions against heat loss and damp and mould

How we know Passive House works

Passive Houses deliver these benefits because of the way they are designed and built to improve building performance.

We know these principles work because every Passive House undergoes a rigorous quality assurance and certification process.

Your home has already been quality tested to ensure that it delivers on the promise of the Passive House building standard.

The building is the Passive House

The whole building you live in is the Passive House, and the apartments are situated within a Passive House superstructure.

The building and technology within it have been designed (and certified) to work together in order to

deliver an average 20 degree temperature across the whole structure, day and night, with very little need for active heating.

Active heating usually means traditional heat sources like central heating systems and radiators. It can also mean an open fireplace like you'd find in the homes of the past.

Passive Houses are cleverly designed to prevent heat being lost from the building unnecessarily. Most of the heat a Passive House will need is generated by people just going about their lives, moving, cooking, and heating water.

Adaptable to individual needs

Individual apartments can be adapted to suit the individual needs of their residents.

While Passive House is designed to deliver this average temperature residents will be able to increase the heat in their living spaces with panel heaters, or let heat escape by opening windows.

The building is designed in a way that enables residents to choose how to make themselves comfortable.

A building that is certified to perform

Above all else, a Passive House achieves all of this through careful design, quality workmanship, exacting quality assurance, and a tried-and-tested rigorous approach.



The benefits of living in a Passive House apartment

Your home will be more cost-efficient to heat

They are designed to need minimal heating, so you'll rarely need to use the panel heaters you'll find in your home.

Your home will be easier to keep warm

They are designed to retain heat, so most of the heating you need will come from cooking, your own body heat, and heat generated by your neighbours.

You'll have fresh air, even with the windows closed

These apartments have their own ventilation systems (MVHR) that constantly work to replace indoor air with fresh air from outdoors.

You won't feel draughts anymore

Passive Houses are designed to be air tight, so you won't feel draughts, just a constant, even indoor temperature — you will feel air move but that will be pre-heated, fresh, filtered air that's maintaining the indoor temperature.

Your home has been designed to minimise damp and mould

The constant ventilation means that each apartment expels moist air, so those conditions that lead to damp and mould are removed — if it's there it's a sign of another issue.

Your home will probably be quieter than you're used to

Triple-glazed windows block your home from outside noise pollution like traffic and street noises.

Your home will be healthier to live in

All of this means that your home is a healthier place to live in, new Passive House residents often report that long-term conditions improve, seemingly on their own.

Your home will be more comfortable

Consistent temperatures and a healthier environment, and reliable bills mean that you'll be able to relax a bit more in your home.

Five principles of Passive House

The Passive House standard uses mix of clever design and strategic measures to achieve its goals.

01

High levels of carefully installed, continuous thermal insulation

02

High-performance windows, installed seamlessly with the insulation layer

03

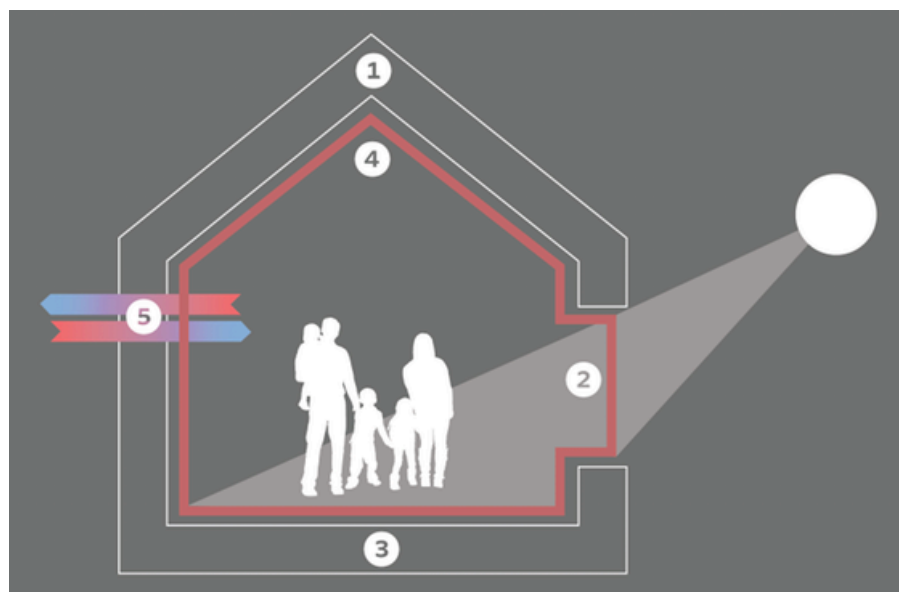
Airtightness, to stop heat escaping through gaps in the building

04

Avoidance of “thermal bridges”— structural elements that break the continuous insulation layer—by either designing them out or using special structural insulation

05

Heat recovery ventilation systems, that capture heat from the stale air expelled from the building, to warm up fresh, filtered air before it enters the building



What the five principles mean for you

The insulation and airtightness mean that the whole building doesn't lose heat easily, so it requires less energy to keep it warm, which makes it more cost-efficient to run.

The ventilation means that, in spite of being airtight, your home doesn't get stuffy because the air you breathe is constantly being replenished by fresh air from outside.

The regular changing of air also means that your home is hostile to mould — it won't matter how much moisture you put into the air with hot showers or drying clothes, the 'wet' air will be expelled and replaced with fresh, 'dry' air.

The attention to detail that avoids the creation of thermal bridges is another way that damp and mould are prevented.

A thermal bridge usually manifests itself as a cold area of a building's fabric, which is cold because it's a point through

through which heat is escaping. These cold points are often damp, too, because moisture in the air is able to condense on them.

These cold and damp surfaces, the places where you'll usually see mould appear first, are totally eliminated in a passive house.

Also, the heat recovery function of your ventilation system means that you don't lose heat unnecessarily as air is expelled.

This doesn't mean that your new home will automatically run itself,

it just means that the most common points of failure have been eliminated — it'll be more comfortable to live in and more cost efficient to run.

The point of this guide is to help you understand how to make the most of your home by working with these systems.



A Passive House will be different to your last home

A few things to think about



Prepare for some change

This home is going to be different to any other that you've lived in before — and that's a good thing. It will be more comfortable, healthier to live in, and more cost-efficient to run.

However, we're aware that we'll need to help people learn how to live in a new building like this.

In order to achieve the comfort and cost savings some residents will need to adapt to living in this home, and some of these changes might feel a bit unusual.

Most importantly, you won't need to heat this home like your old one, which means you can make significant savings on your heating costs.

Some of the new technology might feel strange

In general, the technology in your home is designed to run extremely efficiently, so you can turn it on and just forget about it.

The hot water heating system and ventilation are set up to save you money by running with energy efficiency in mind.

For instance, your ventilation system will save you money on heating by preventing heat from escaping your home – constantly.

Similarly, the hot water system will provide you with cheap hot water everyday – but not an infinite amount of cheap hot water.

You can trust that your home has been designed to meet your basic needs in the most cost efficient manner e.g. heat, hot water, and health.

Talk to your neighbours

You and your neighbours will all be going through similar experiences with these new homes, so we recommend that you speak with them about how you are all finding your feet. It's a good way to find some on-the-spot support and build your community.

Check the weather before you leave the house

Your new home is designed to maintain a steady, average temperature of 20 degrees 24 hours a day, all year around – so in winter you won't feel the outside temperature when you're inside. New Passive House dwellers have to get used to checking the weather before they leave the house to make sure they're dressed for it.

You can put away your winter bedding – possibly forever

Your new home is designed to maintain its steady, average temperature night and day, so in winter you won't need to upgrade to heavy bedding to keep

yourself warm at night. This also means that if you have to get up in the night, or early in the morning, you won't need to brave the cold before the house warms up – it should always remain at a comfortable temperature.

Your indoor air will always be fresh and filtered

You have a ventilation system that constantly brings in fresh air so you won't need to open windows to let fresh air in.

Passive House dwellers may want to open the window to feel the breeze, or if you find yourself with a houseful of guests, but generally, there won't be a need for you to open your windows.

You might hear some new noises

Your home will be quiet, compared to others you've lived in. Its triple-glazed windows prevent the noise from outside getting inside.

This is because your Passive House apartment has been built in line with the latest building standards and certified to the Passive House standard.

As a consequence of living in a better building you might hear the noise your fridge makes as it works to keep itself cool, or the sound of a clock ticking.

You don't need to rely on radiators to keep you warm

The design of the building has been tested to deliver an average temperature of 20 degrees all year round.

Your new home is designed to keep you warm without much need for radiant heat – most of the heat a Passive House needs is generated by people just going about their lives, moving, cooking, and heating water.

Radiant heat usually refers to heat that is emitted from a source, like an open fire or a hot radiator. The sun in the sky is also a source of radiant heat, that's the warmth you feel on a sunny day in winter, when there are no clouds in the sky.

We have included some panel heaters in your new home and they emit radiant heat. They're intended mainly for emergencies, but also in case you just prefer to keep your home warmer than the 20 degree Passive House target temperature. You'll find a small panel heater in all the main rooms of your new home.

We only mention radiant heat because people can miss the sensation of standing by the radiator or an open fire to get themselves warm.

Heating

If you feel cold you can use the panel radiators, and if it does ever feel stuffy you can open a window to let some more fresh air in, which will let some heat out.

You should only really need minimal heating to get it up to an internal temperature of 20C, but if you have your doors and windows open for a significant length of time they will let your heat escape

Hot Water

Hot water is provided by a hot-water heat pump, with water storage cylinder. This system has been chosen for these apartments because it can deliver plentiful hot water at low cost.

The hot water heat pump takes in outdoor air and extracts heat from it. The extracted heat is then concentrated and used to heat up hot water for the apartment. Hot water is then stored in a cylinder.

The system is designed to provide a sufficient amount of hot water for normal use (equivalent to 3-4 showers daily), but it does not offer an unlimited supply of hot water on demand. Part of the reason it is a cost-efficient and energy-efficient piece of technology is because it works slowly and steadily.

The unit includes an electric immersion heater that can be used as a booster device in case you run out of hot water and need it sooner than the system would normally deliver on its own but this will cost more.

Your heat pump should be left on at all times, except

for during maintenance processes. Even though it maybe 'on' all the time, it only uses electricity when it needs to. If it is switched on and off it will cost more to run.

Usually, people find that learning to live within the limitations of the water cylinder is worth the effort because of the reduced cost.

Damp and mould

The worst risk points for damp and mould are eliminated through building's design and the constant ventilation of damp, stale air for fresh air.

Please don't smoke by the intake vents

Nowadays most people don't smoke, but when they do it's outside. In these Passive Houses there are intake vents around all the outside of the apartments that draw in the fresh air for each home's ventilation system.

If you smoke, please don't smoke near an intake vent because it will be drawn into the apartment.

This can be tricky because many of the intake vents are next to the balcony areas, but they're pretty easy to spot and avoid.

Please be thoughtful for yourself and your neighbours — as well as the filters on each MVHR system work to extract pollution they will still struggle with the odour of cigarette smoke.

Dust and filtration

Filtration of the air that's brought into your home will mean that the ventilation system won't be bringing dust in, but it doesn't mean you won't see dust.

Most dust is generated within the home, but it could be brought in through open windows, too.

Also, the dust you see by the vents is held there by the static electricity generated by the working system — that can be dusted away without a problem, but if the system's working properly it may return at some point.

Sensors for comfort, efficiency, and sustainability

As part of our commitment to energy efficiency and tenant wellbeing, Tuath Housing has installed small environmental sensors and energy monitoring devices in your property. These devices help us:

- Maintain the condition of your home
- Support sustainability and energy-saving efforts
- Enhance your comfort and indoor environment

These installations are outlined in your tenancy agreement, and are part of our efforts to ensure your home performs at its best.



What these devices do not do:

They do not record audio or video, and they do not collect personal data beyond environmental or energy-related information

Privacy and compliance:

All devices have been installed in line with data protection and privacy laws. Their purpose is solely to support the performance and comfort of your home.

Ongoing care and access:

Tuath Housing may occasionally need access to check, maintain, or update these devices. We'll always give you advance notice before any visit. Please don't remove or tamper with the devices. If you notice any issues or damage, let us know so we can resolve it quickly.



The costs / savings of living in a Passive House



Passive House apartments are more cost-efficient to run because they use much less energy to heat them. However, you'll still have bills to pay because everything runs on electricity.

Living in a Passive House

The new technology in your home is easy to run properly because it's most cost-efficient when you turn it on and leave it alone.

Turning it on and off when you're not using it will actually make it more expensive to run and eliminate the benefits that led us to select it for you.

We understand that this may not be what you're used to, so we want to help you to adjust to it.

Perhaps most importantly, we want people to recognise that they don't have a gas bill anymore and we've removed one standing charge.

Guidance for energy-efficient living

We've created instructions to help you run your home most efficiently. You will receive this when you move in.

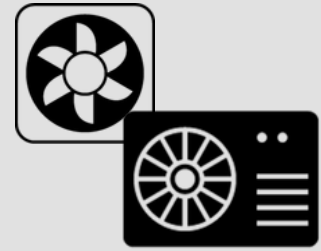
It is vital that we explain clearly how these systems should be run because there are significant cost implications that come with running them inefficiently.

For instance, if you turn your heat pump off like you may have turned off a gas boiler you'll have higher running costs and less hot water.

Similarly, it's more cost-effective to leave the ventilation (MVHR) running all the time than to turn it off, ever. MVHR warms up any air it brings in from outside using the heat that's already around, for free.



Images of the technology in your new homes



Every new Passive House home will be kitted out with the following cost-efficient, comfort-focused technology.

Your panel heater

A direct electric panel heater in every main room



Your heat pump

A hot-water heat pump, with water cylinder and immersion heater



Your MVHR

An MVHR ventilation system—this stands for mechanical ventilation with heat recovery



Your ceiling extract vent

This is part of the MVHR system and where the air is extracted



Your windows

Triple-glazed windows



Your cooker hood

A kitchen extract, recirculating cooker hood



Thinking ahead:

How to approach your first two weeks



Honestly, you shouldn't need to do much in order to get comfortable, but we can give you a few pointers to get started:

1

Take a quick look over your hot water heat pump and ventilation (MVHR) system and then just forget they exist— they're already set up to provide for your general needs

2

You can open the windows whenever you want, just be aware that you might be letting the heat out and it'll take a little while for the room you're in to warm up again

3

1.If you want some fresh air, rest assured the ventilation system in your apartment is always providing you with fresh air

4

If you feel too cold at any point, make sure the windows are closed and turn on the panel heater for a bit — it's unlikely you'll need it but it's there if you do

5

Be mindful of your hot water use—each apartment has a big cylinder of hot water (200 litres) that should accommodate your basic water needs.

This has been chosen because it is a really efficient water heater that is therefore more cost-efficient to run, but this cost-efficiency comes with a compromise — it's not an infinite source of hot water and it will run out if multiple showers are taken in succession.

There is a boost function in case of emergencies.

6

Don't try to dry your washing on the radiators, it won't work — each apartment has a towel rail that can be used for drying an item or two, but a full load of washing, straight out of the machine, can be hung on a clothes horse/rack and should be dry the next day.

The consistent temperature and air movement from the ventilation system mean that clothes can dry naturally, and relatively quickly, without risk of smelling damp.

Support and resources

With local teams working from our offices in Dublin, Dundalk, Cork and Galway, we're bringing services closer to home, and closer to you.

When you contact us, you'll get directly through to our dedicated Customer Service Centre, where trained advisors will triage your query and connect you with the right expert – whether it's about rent, anti-social behaviour, maintenance, or tenancy support. Your query will be passed to a team member based in your local area, with specialist knowledge and understanding of your community.

Please call **1800 852 751** to contact Customer Service.

For out-of-hours emergencies, please also call **1800 852 751**.

The out-of-hours service is available 5pm to 9am Monday to Thursday and on weekends from 4:30pm on Friday until 9am on Monday.

Email: **customerservice@tuathhousing.ie**

Stay tuned for 'Resident Clinics' where residents can get advice and information directly from Tuath staff.

For more information on how you can get involved in your area visit our website here: **<https://tuathhousing.ie/tuath-community/get-involved/>**

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