

Procurer's Note: Electrical Products

Updated May 2014

What does sustainability mean for electrical goods?

The biggest factor in buying electrical goods sustainably is generally their energy use: the more efficient they are, the better. However, as well as basic power use there are other things to consider: for audio-visual equipment, standby mode can be a drain on power. For washing machines, water use becomes a factor.

Across the board too, life span is important: typically, electrical goods cannot be recycled and do not biodegrade. Buying equipment that will last longer is therefore a more sustainable option.

All central government departments and their related organisations must ensure that they meet at least the mandatory levels set out in Government Buying Standards (GBS).

The Energy Efficiency Directive

[Article 6 of the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU](#) came into force on 5 June 2014. Its obligations on central government departments, their agencies and non-departmental public bodies are (for England) set out in a [Cabinet Office procurement policy note](#). The governments of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will be issuing similar administrative directions.

In brief, the requirements are:

a) All public sector bodies in scope of Article 6 must, when purchasing products and services and purchasing or renting buildings, comply with the energy efficiency standards set out in the Directive (Article 6 plus Annex III), subject to certain qualifications. In scope

organisations are defined as all central government departments including non-ministerial departments, executive agencies and NDPBs.

b) Other public bodies, including local and regional government, are not obliged to do the same, but are encouraged to do so, following the example of central government. All central government departments are asked to support the application of Article 6 by bodies associated with them including at a regional and local level in any way possible. For example, through sharing their own best practice.

How does the Energy Efficiency Directive relate to Government Buying Standards?

We anticipate that for all energy-using product GBSs, the energy usage element of the standard will be matched or superseded by the requirements of the Energy Efficiency Directive.

Defra will be removing the energy efficiency requirements from the published GBS on a rolling basis and replacing them with a cross reference to the Directive. Any non-energy using elements (e.g. water use, CFCs etc.) will be retained.

In the meantime, departments are advised that they need to meet the standards in Article 6 in respect of the energy using characteristics of those products. The GBS will apply in relation to other aspects of the product.