Storage heaters are basically a well-insulated box filled with ceramic bricks to "hold" the heat provided by an electric element running through the centre. They "charge" or absorb and store heat at the times when they can take advantage of the off-peak or cheaper rate electricity. Their controls can be adjusted to release heat throughout the following day.

This form of heating is generally used in areas where mains gas is not available and electricity is the main form of energy available to the household. The most cost effective method of using night storage heating is in conjunction with a cheaper off-peak electricity tariff such as economy 7 or 10.

Storage heaters really only work effectively in well insulated properties as they cannot provide instant high levels of heat, only a period of background heat throughout the day.

Night storage heater controls

It is important to control storage heaters, which means you need to be able to regulate the amount of energy/heat that they take on during the off-peak periods and how quickly that heat is released.

You need to set the Output dial according to how much heat you want now, and the Input dial according to how much heat you think you will need tomorrow. The higher the setting the quicker the heat is released.

The labelling of controls often varies across manufacturers. Input is usually on the left and sometimes called 'charge' or 'auto set'. Output can also be labelled as 'discharge' or 'temperature'.

If a heater runs out of heat in the evening while you still need it, or if the weather gets colder, you may need to turn the Input dial up.

Some storage heaters have a 'boost' setting which uses electricity from the mains to provide immediate heat, either through the heating element or a built-in fan heater. This setting should only be used if the stored heat runs out as it uses more expensive peak-rate electricity.

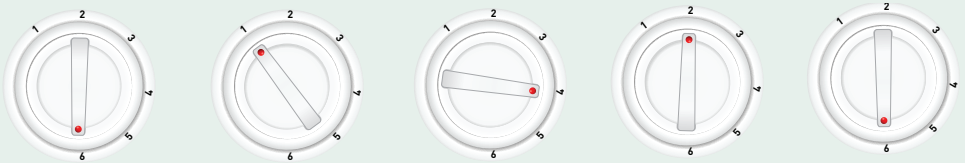
If the weather gets warmer, or the heater never runs out of heat in the evening, you can probably save money without getting cold by turning the Input dial down.

During warm weather when heating isn't needed, turn night storage heaters off at the wall but don't forget to switch it on again the day before you want your heating to come back on.

TOP TIP

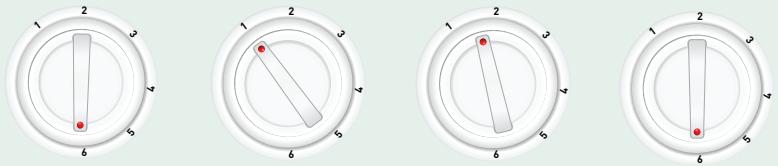
Turn the Output dial to zero about an hour before you go to bed or go out, so you're not wasting energy overheating empty rooms and ensuring you have some heat stored for release throughout the day. Turn the Output back up the next day when you want some of the heat to be released.

Typical settings for a household needing heat during the day and needing heat during the evening



Input 6 (night) | **Output 1** (night) | **Output 4** (early AM) | **Output 2** (mid AM) | **Output 6** (evening)

Typical settings for a household which is out during the day and needing heat in the evening



Input 6 (night) | **Output 1** (night) | **Output 1–2** (early AM) | **Output 6** (evening)

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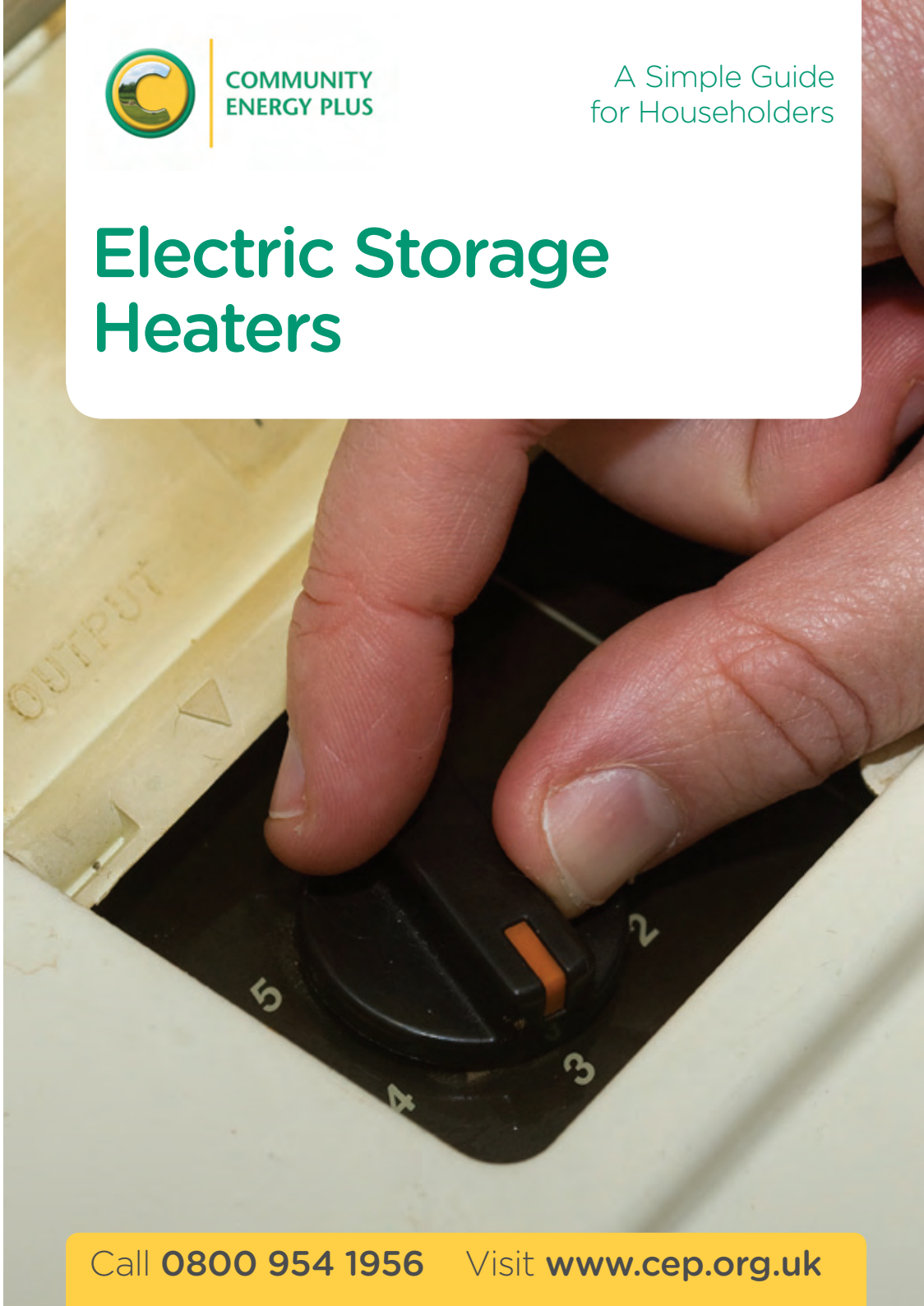

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