



# ALPESH KAVIA | CASE STUDY

## LONDON

HMOs are always a tricky situation when it comes to energy bills. Tenants prefer the simplicity of an “all included” price, but then they don’t have any incentive to manage the heating carefully. Landlords are put in the difficult position of needing to keep tenants happy while also keeping heating costs under control.

### A SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

We spoke to Alpesh Kavia from Comet Homes about an interesting installation he’d done in West Ruislip, North-West London. Although fairly typical in many regards, what makes this property interesting is that there are three similar apartments next to each other.

All are HMOs with ensuite bathrooms for each bedroom, newly built above a shop in a terraced style. In the name of science, the landlord decided to test three different configurations:

- One “baseline” apartment with just the standard 7 day timer and manual TRVs on each radiator
- An apartment with a “basic zoned” Genius Hub system: valve heads on the bedroom radiators only
- One apartment with the “full works”: motion sensors in each room, valves on all radiators including on the towel radiators in each ensuite bathroom

### HOW DID THIS INSTALLATION GO?

“The installation went smoothly”, Alpesh tells us. “One aspect that could have caused an issue with other heating controls is that in some of the bedrooms, access to the radiator valve was blocked by the bed - so tenants wouldn’t be able to reach the valve to adjust the room temperature. That’s no problem with Genius Hub though, because I just installed wireless thermostats on the wall, so tenants can use that instead.”

### SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS

These apartments are newly built to modern building standards, including insulation, double glazing and efficient A-rated gas boilers. As such, potential savings are lower than for older properties that lose a lot more heat. With this in mind, did the Genius Hub controls actually save any money?

Based on the first year’s gas consumption, the answer is a resounding ‘yes’! Compared to the “baseline” apartment, the “basic zoned” install achieved energy savings of over 7%. This is an underestimate, though, as this apartment has 6 bedrooms while the others have only 5 bedrooms. Despite the current price gap on gas, this still represents savings of over £170 per year.

The apartment with the “full works” doubled these savings, cutting gas consumption by over 15%. At current gas prices, that’s a saving of over £370 per year. And, of course, if gas prices rise, savings will increase, making Genius Hub a useful protection against future price increases.

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### WHY CHOOSE GENIUS HUB?

“About 2 years ago, I developed my own HMO. I wanted heating controls that allow me to manage the heating but also allow the tenants some flexibility, within limits. I looked at Tado, Inspire and Hive but there wasn't anything else that really met my needs. I chose Genius Hub because it allows tenants to control only the room, without overheating the whole house. Also, the other systems don't allow you to control the hot water temperature.”

### WHAT DO TENANTS MAKE OF GENIUS HUB?

“What I've learned is that if you can install Genius Hub before new tenants move in, it's the perfect time. They just accept that it's part of their new home, and that's how it works.

If you install the system with tenants already in the property, expect to have to help them to adjust to not just having 24/7 heating like they're used to. You have to help them understand what the system is and how it works; also that the sensors only detect movement, it's not a camera! I made short videos to send them on WhatsApp, and stickers with instructions. After 3-4 weeks they were familiar with the system and didn't have any more difficulties.”

### HOW'S THE EXPERIENCE AS A LANDLORD?

Landlords clearly benefit from the energy savings. But are there any other benefits to having a Genius Hub system installed in your HMO?

“It's really useful to be able to diagnose some common problems remotely, without having to visit the property. I always install Genius Hub with a temperature probe. Normally if nothing's getting heat, it's because the boiler pressure has dropped too low. If only some rooms are getting heat, it's because there's air in the system. Sometimes tenants can resolve these common issues without needing to call a plumber.

Also the, MegaFlow tank has an electric immersion heater in it, so I can use the Genius Hub app to remotely switch that on if there's any problem with the boiler. That way, the tenants are comfortable and I can schedule a plumber in the next few days, without needing to pay for an emergency call-out, or I can go resolve the issue myself when I have time.

In general, it's just great to be able to monitor and control the heating remotely. That way, I can conveniently address any issues and keep my tenants happy, while also keeping energy costs under control.”

