Storage Heaters

What are storage heaters?
Storage heaters switch on at night when electricity is cheapest, and are the cheapest form of electric heating when used correctly. The electricity heats a core of heat retaining bricks inside the storage heater. The bricks store the heat at night and release the heat during the day.

How are they controlled?
There are two controls on most storage heaters, an INPUT control and an OUTPUT control.

1. The INPUT control tells the heater how much heat to store up during the night. This should be set dependent on how cold you think it is going to be the following day. Generally the settings are:
   - Low to medium (1 to 4) in spring and autumn
   - Medium to high (5 to 9) in winter.
   The higher the setting, the more electricity it will use.
   If there is no input control the heater will automatically decide how much heat to store.

2. The OUTPUT control tells the heater how much heat to let out into the room by opening and closing a vent inside the heater. It can also be called BOOST or ROOM TEMPERATURE.
   - If the output is set at 1, the vent will not open at all
   - If the output is set at 2, the vent is opened and closed automatically by a thermostat. The vent closes when the heater stores up heat. It opens to let the heat out gradually through the day, before closing again at night when it stores up heat.
   - If the output is set higher than 2, heat is released faster and the heater will get cold very quickly. The vent will close when the heater stores up heat, but will open again to let the heat out afterwards.
Points to note

- Do not put ornaments or clothing on top of the heaters as the cases of the heaters can get very hot and you could risk a fire, or break your heater.

- Sometimes the thermostats inside the heaters can become faulty, so if your heaters start to get very hot or do not switch on at all, either contact your landlord or an electrician for their advice.

- If you have storage heaters, use them! They may look big and bulky but because they use off-peak electricity they are much cheaper to use than bar fires or panel heaters. A well controlled storage heater should give you 10 hours of useful heat a day.

Hot water heating with off-peak electricity

If you have storage heaters you should also be able to make use of cheaper electricity to heat your hot water. You should have a hot water timer either in your kitchen or in the cupboard near the hot water tank.

The timer will automatically switch an immersion heater in the hot water tank on for about 5 hours at night when cheaper electricity is available. If you need to heat extra water during the day you can use the ‘boost’ control.

To heat water up during the day is much more expensive, so if you find you are using your boost control frequently, check that the clock on your timer is set to the correct time.