

Making our homes more energy efficient can save money in the long run, and it's good for the environment. It's an important part of how we can meet our UK climate change target.

But it's also important that you feel confident when you're making these decisions.

There are some misleading claims out there, so stay alert to things like scams, rogue traders and bad practices from companies. This includes:

- ✓ Rogue traders trying to pressure you into signing a contract on the doorstep
- ✓ Scammers taking advantage of the current issues with energy suppliers, for example posing as an impacted or new supplier to get your personal information
- ✓ Being contacted by an unknown company and told that your insulation needs replacing, sometimes using scare tactics to add pressure
- ✓ Traders incorrectly stating that they are 'government backed' or there are government grants available to convince you to get work done

With our tips you can make sure you have the knowledge and confidence to make the best decisions.

Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward.

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.

citizensadvice.org.uk



Published November 2021

Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Registered charity number 279057.

Be wise to being green

How to be a confident eco-friendly consumer

From making your home more energy efficient to buying energy tech like solar panels, it's great to make eco-friendly decisions – saving money and helping the environment.

But it's important to make sure you're doing it in a smart and savvy way.

Follow our simple tips to help you be **#GreenAndWise**



Do your research

- ✔ Before you buy anything, check the company or website you're using. Read reviews on different websites, ask for references, verify the company's details using external sources, and read any terms and conditions
- ✔ If you're getting home improvements done, make sure you get written quotes. Try to get them from at least 3 different contractors to help you decide if you're getting a fair price
- ✔ When looking for a trader to use, check out certified schemes that recommend traders, like TrustMark – the Government's endorsed quality scheme

Protect yourself

- ✔ **Always get a written contract before you give a contractor the go-ahead.** If they don't do what you agreed, this can help you get what you paid for, or at least get some of your money back.
- ✔ **Pay with a secure method** – credit cards offer the most protection, followed by PayPal or debit card. If you're paying for large home improvement works, see if you can pay in stages, and avoid paying for costs up-front where possible
- ✔ **Be suspicious.** Scammers and rogue traders can be very smart. Take your time to make sure you're happy with your decision – if someone pressures you, it's most likely a scam

Watch out for scammers

There are some scammers taking advantage of people who want to be more eco-friendly. They may pretend to be offering a government grant, or ask for payment for energy efficiency home improvements only to never deliver them. Here are some of the main warning signs to look out for:

- ✔ There's unexpected contact, such as someone you don't know getting in touch
- ✔ You're being asked for personal information like passwords or your bank details
- ✔ You're being urged to respond quickly so you don't get time to think about it or talk to others
- ✔ You suspect you're not dealing with a real company, for example they don't have basic details like a postal address
- ✔ You're being asked to pay for a product or service before receiving written confirmation of what's been agreed

Remember: Don't give money or personal details to anyone you don't know, trust or have only met online, and don't click on any links they send you.

If you're not sure about something, seek more advice!

Where to get more information

If you'd like more advice on how to be a safe and savvy consumer, visit [citizensadvice.org.uk/NCW21](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/NCW21). We have tips on things like:

- ✔ How to find a trader you can trust
- ✔ The steps to take before you get building work done
- ✔ How to spot a scam and what to do if you think you've been targeted

What if something has gone wrong

We know sometimes things still go wrong, even if you do everything right, and if they do we're here to help. Get in touch with the consumer service or visit our advice pages for more support.

If you've had a problem you can also contact the Citizens Advice consumer service on **0808 223 1133**.

If you think someone might be trying to scam you, get advice. Contact the Citizens Advice consumer service for help with what to do next, and report scams or suspected scams to Action Fraud by calling **0300 123 2040** or going to [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk).