

Boiler Upgrade Scheme: Property owner guidance v1 (draft for comment)

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This guidance is for property owners who want to benefit from the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). It details which low carbon heat technologies and properties are eligible. It explains how to find an installer that can make an application on your behalf, what is required from you, Ofgem audit and compliance powers and useful contacts.

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1. Introduction

BUS Overview

1.1. Heating our homes, businesses and industry is responsible for a third of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. Switching to low carbon heating can help to reduce a building's greenhouse gas emissions. The government's ambition is to phase out the installation of new natural gas boilers beyond 2035 to ensure that almost all heating systems used in 2050 are low carbon. Heat pumps will play a major role in the pathway to net zero emissions as they are a well-established, proven technology which deliver effective heating and offer immediate and substantial carbon savings compared to fossil fuel heating.

1.2. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) aims to incentivise and increase the deployment of low carbon heating by providing targeted support to the supply chain.

1.3. The BUS is an installer-led scheme which provides upfront capital grants to support the installation of heat pumps and, in limited circumstances, biomass boilers in domestic and small non-domestic buildings in England and Wales. Grants of £5000 will be available for air source heat pumps (ASHPs) and biomass boilers, and grants of £6000 will be available for ground source heat pumps (GSHPs). The grant value should be deducted from your quote upfront.

1.4. The scheme has a committed budget of £450 million over three years from 2022-2025, with an annual budget allocation of £150 million.

1.5. In addition, between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2027, there is a [zero rate of VAT](#) on the installation of energy-saving materials including heat pumps and biomass boilers. This is another measure intended to incentivise the take up of energy saving materials in line with the government's net zero objectives.

1.6. Ofgem (on behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority) is the administrator of the BUS. We administer this scheme in line with The Boiler Upgrade Scheme (England and Wales) Regulation 2022¹ (hereinafter referred to as "the BUS regulations").

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2022/9780348232349/contents>

BUS guidance

1.7. This guidance is for property owners who wish to benefit from the BUS. It explains our administration of the BUS and includes details of:

- eligibility requirements
- what is required from property owners
- how to apply for a BUS voucher
- who can apply for a BUS voucher
- our audit regime and compliance processes
- scheme reporting.

1.8. This guidance does not anticipate every scenario that may arise. If a scenario arises that is not addressed in this guidance, we will adopt an approach that is consistent with the BUS regulations.

1.9. It is the responsibility of each applicant (installers) to understand the requirements of the BUS Regulations and how these apply. This guidance is not intended to be a definitive guide to the BUS Regulations or to provide legal advice. Your installer is responsible for ensuring that the installation and application are correct, this includes ensuring that you meet the applicable requirements.

1.10. This guidance represents our approach to matters concerning the general administration of the BUS in accordance with the BUS regulations. Where there are future changes to the BUS regulations, we will revise our administrative arrangements accordingly.

1.11. We are not seeking views on our administrative approach, which was covered in our consultation on our administration of the BUS, nor on the underlying policy, which is set by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Guidance for comment and your feedback

1.12. The BUS will open to applications on 23 May 2022, and we have published this document on a draft for comment basis to seek views on the clarity and format. This document can be relied upon and should be used as guidance on our administration of the BUS. It is important to note that we are not consulting and so our consultation process will not apply here. We are seeking feedback to ensure that this guidance is accessible and user friendly by reference to the following questions:

- In terms of the overall tone, is the draft guidance easy to read and understand?
- Is the draft guidance user-friendly?
- Are there any sections of the draft guidance which are ambiguous? Are there any sections which could be better explained?

1.13. You may provide suggestions for changes or improvements to this draft guidance during a four-week review period from 6 May 2022. Any responses should be made in writing by email to BUS.enquiry@ofgem.gov.uk by 6 June 2022, and clearly identify the related paragraph numbers.

Personal data

1.14. Ofgem will process all personal data collected in accordance with the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

1.15. Ofgem uses the personal data collected to perform its statutory functions and may share this information with other organisations in line with Ofgem’s scheme administration functions. The installer will provide you with a privacy notice which will explain the basis of the installer processing of personal data and Ofgem process.

1.16. For more information on how we process the personal information of installers on the BUS please refer to our installer information privacy policy.²

1.17. For more information on how we process the personal information of property owners on the BUS please refer to our property owner privacy policy.

Related publications and useful links

- [Future support for low carbon heat - BEIS consultation](#) (BEIS, April 2020)
- [Clean Heat Grant: further policy design proposals](#) (BEIS, February 2021)
- [Future Support for Low Carbon Heat: Boiler Upgrade Scheme - Government response to Clean Heat Grant proposals within 'Future support for low carbon heat' consultation](#) (BEIS, October 2021)

² <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/boiler-upgrade-scheme-privacy-notice-installers>

- [The Boiler Upgrade Scheme \(England and Wales\) Draft Regulations 2022](#) (Government, laid February 2022)
- [Consultation on Ofgem's Administration of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme](#) (Ofgem, December 2021)
- [Consultation response on Ofgem's Administration of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme](#) (Ofgem, April 2022)
- [Boiler Upgrade Scheme Regulations: approved standards](#) (BEIS, April 2022)

Queries and further information

1.18. For further information on Ofgem’s administration of the BUS please visit our webpage: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/boiler-upgrade-scheme-bus>.

1.19. Any questions on the BUS guidance or Ofgem’s administration of the BUS should be directed to the BUS Enquiries team at BUS.Enquiry@ofgem.gov.uk.

Contact information

Glasgow
Commonwealth House
32 Albion Street
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Tel: 0141 331 2678

www.ofgem.gov.uk

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Section summary

This chapter describes the roles and responsibilities of BUS stakeholders. This includes the government, Ofgem, installers, Property owners, MCS and Consumer Codes. It sets out the requirements that the scheme places on these parties. The roles and responsibilities listed here are non-exhaustive.

Role of Government

2.1. The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is responsible for the policy and scheme Regulations. The Secretary of State will also have a role in how the scheme runs and this is set out in the Regulations, including but not limited to:

- approving and publishing the standards that installers and products must adhere to.
- publishing budget allocations for BUS vouchers on an annual, and potentially quarterly, basis
- determining, publishing, and reviewing the value of BUS vouchers and, if required, altering their value.

Role of Ofgem

2.2. Ofgem administer the scheme on behalf of the government. The BUS Regulations describe Ofgem's powers and functions for the BUS. Those functions include but are not limited to:

- publishing procedural guidance for prospective installers and property owners
- processing voucher applications and voucher redemption applications
- making payments to installers following successful voucher redemption applications
- publishing reports on how the BUS is operating
- monitoring and enforcing compliance with the requirements of the regulations.

Role of installers

2.3. The obligations of installers are set out in the Regulations. Installers play a key role in this scheme. Installers are responsible for:

- being certified by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) or an equivalent scheme³
- submitting voucher applications and voucher redemption applications on behalf of the property owner
- confirming that the information provided in relation to applications is accurate, and informing Ofgem of any incorrect information provided
- retaining a copy of any information relied upon for the submission of voucher applications and voucher redemption applications for six years
- providing further information related to an installation to Ofgem upon request.
- engaging with audit and compliance processes when requested by Ofgem.

Role of property owner (you)

2.4. The Regulations also sets out the roles of property owners. As you will be the end beneficiary of the BUS grant you will need to do the following:

- Confirm details related to your eligibility to us and ensuring that any information you provide or confirm to installers or Ofgem in relation to an application is accurate.
- Confirm consent for a BUS voucher application to be made on your behalf by your chosen installer.
- Engage with us so that we can verify your identity when you are confirming your consent for a BUS voucher application be made on your behalf.
- Engage with audit and compliance processes when requested to by us.

Role of MCS

³ BEIS is responsible for determining whether a scheme is equivalent to MCS. There are currently no schemes determined by BEIS to be equivalent to MCS.

2.5. The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS)⁴ is a certification scheme for microgeneration installation companies and products. It defines and maintains consistent standards, providing confidence to consumers who wish to invest in small-scale technologies that produce electricity and heat from renewable sources.

2.6. You should contact MCS if you have issues with the:

- installation process
- installer
- MCS certificate or product.

2.7. MCS works through its certification bodies. When your case is under review, the relevant certification body may contact you.

2.8. MCS installation companies working with domestic customers must also be a member of a Consumer Code approved by the Trading Standards Institute, such as the Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC), Home Insulation & Energy Systems Contractors Scheme (HIES).

Role of consumer codes

2.9. Consumer codes aim to guarantee a high-quality experience for consumers. MCS installation companies working with domestic customers must also be a member of a Consumer Code approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. MCS works closely with these consumer codes to help address complaints for domestic consumers.

2.10. There are currently two main consumer codes: Home Insulation and Energy Systems Contractors Scheme (HIES) and the Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC). To find out which one your installer is signed up to, look on MCS's installer search.⁵

2.11. Alternatively, you can check with RECC⁶ or HIES⁷ directly.

⁴ <https://mcscertified.com/>

⁵ <https://mcscertified.com/find-an-installer/>

⁶ <https://www.recc.org.uk/scheme/members>

⁷ <https://www.hiesscheme.org.uk/homeowners/find-a-hies-member/>

2.12. In the event of a dispute of with an installer, consumers can access the dispute resolution service provided by the consumer codes. Code related issues are addressed directly by the consumer codes, where there are technical aspects to a dispute, MCS works closely with the relevant consumer code to fully investigate the matter. In some cases, a dispute may need to be addressed by both organisations to ensure that they are fully resolved.

2.13. For more information and to contact the codes please visit their websites:

- [Renewable Energy Consumer Code \(RECC\)](#)
- [The Home Insulation and Energy Systems Contractors Scheme \(HIES\)](#)

3. Grants

Section summary

This chapter sets out the voucher validity periods and associated grant values for different technology types.

3.1. The technologies eligible for a BUS voucher have a set validity period and a grant value. Table 1 shows the total grant value and validity period for each eligible technology.

Table 1 - Technology specific voucher validity and grant value

Technology type	Voucher Validity Period	Grant Value
Air Source Heat Pump	3 months	£5000
Ground Source Heat pump	6 months	£6000
Biomass boiler	3 Months	£5000

3.2. The grant value should be deducted from your quote upfront.

3.3. The value of the grants will not change based on the cost or size of the installation.

4. Eligibility requirements

Section summary

This chapter outlines the eligibility requirements for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme. It describes the criteria that properties and installations must meet in order to be eligible to receive a BUS voucher. It also sets out how these eligibility requirements must be evidenced.

Summary of eligibility requirements

4.1. This section summarises the key eligibility requirements for the BUS. The chapter then discusses each one in turn in more detail. Your installer will be able to help you understand the requirements and verify whether your property and technology meets them.

4.2. The BUS has requirements which must be met in order to be eligible for a BUS voucher. Table 2 summarises the main eligibility requirement and Table 3 additional technology specific requirement.

Table 2 - Main eligibility requirements for the BUS

Summary of General Eligibility requirements	
Installers	Must be MCS certified ⁸
Location	Properties must be located in England or Wales
Type of building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic and small non-domestic buildings are eligible • Social housing and new builds are not eligible • 'Self-builds' are the only eligible new builds
Energy Performance Certificate	All properties must have an EPC ⁹ with either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No recommendations to install loft or cavity wall insulation¹⁰

⁸ The BUS regulations Schedule 4

⁹ Except self-builds

¹⁰ Applications can still be made where there are loft or cavity wall recommendations, but the necessary insulation will need to be installed, and a new EPC generated, by the time the installer redeems the voucher

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Or provide evidence of being exempt from the insulation requirements.
Previous heating system requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The previous system must have been a fossil fuel powered heating system or an electric system, excluding heat pumps • All heat generating components must be replaced¹¹
Eligible technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Source Heat Pumps • Ground Source Heat Pumps • Water Source Heat Pumps • Ground Source Heat Pumps as part of a shared ground loop • Biomass boilers
Commissioning date	On or after 1 April 2022
Capacity limit	45 kWth ¹² total capacity limit, including for shared ground loop systems. This covers the vast majority of domestic and small non-domestic properties.
Heat pump or biomass boiler system requirements	Your installer will be able to advise you of which technology is most suitable for your home and help you to understand the eligibility criteria, including the technical eligibility criteria for the system.

Table 3 - Technology specific requirements

Requirement	Heat Pumps	Biomass Boiler
Location	Urban and rural properties in England or Wales	Rural properties only in England or Wales

¹¹ There are some exceptions to this requirement and your installer will be able to advise if they are relevant

¹² kWth means kilowatt thermal. It is a unit of heat supply capacity used to measure the output from a plant.

Properties	Can be installed in all properties excluding new builds and social housing	Cannot be installed in self-builds
Gas Grid connection	Property can be on or off the gas grid	Cannot be installed in properties on the gas grid or with a capped gas supply

Which technologies are eligible?

4.3. The technologies that are eligible for BUS funding are an air source heat pump, ground source heat pump or a biomass boiler. Your installer will be able to advise you of which technology is most suitable for your home and help you to understand the eligibility requirements. The technologies will be subject to a series of technical requirements and your installer will be able to help you understand them and verify whether your technology meets them.

Heat pumps

4.4. Heat pumps use electricity to draw heat from the air, ground, or a nearby water-source and transfer it into your home, compressing it to produce a higher temperature to provide heating and hot water. They are more efficient than traditional gas boilers, producing several units of heat for every unit of electricity consumed. Heat pumps can be installed in properties both on and off the gas grid.

4.5. Due to their superior efficiency compared to fossil fuel boilers, running costs for heat pumps can be comparable to existing heating systems when they are installed to the relevant standards and in a well-insulated home. This depends on the existing heating system and your MCS installer should provide you with an estimation of the system performance before you sign a contract with them. Replacing a gas or oil boiler with a heat pump can help reduce exposure to volatile prices.

4.6. The current higher cost of electricity relative to gas means that, in some homes, installing a heat pump may initially lead to higher running costs. However, government is committed to rebalancing energy costs to ensure that heat pumps are no more expensive to operate than a gas boiler and will be comparatively cheaper to run over time.

4.7. Hybrid heat pump systems, for example a combination of a fossil fuel boiler and air source heat pump, will not be supported under BUS. This includes space heat or hot water only heat pump systems.

4.8. There is a minimum efficiency requirement for heat pumps to ensure that the system is performing well and that significant carbon emission reductions are achieved. Heat pumps must have a seasonal coefficient of performance (SCOP) of at least 2.8. Your installer will need to select a system that achieves this.

4.9. Heat Pumps must meet the requirements of the latest standards published by the Secretary of State and the latest MCS standards. Again, this is something your installer will be able to advise on.

Air Source Heat Pumps

4.10. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) absorb heat from the outside air to heat your home and hot water, using a heating system. They can still extract heat when air temperatures are as low as -15°C.

Ground Source Heat Pumps

4.11. GSHPs must generate heat using a thermodynamic cycle by transferring energy stored in the form of heat from the ground, including water in the ground or surface water or both, and use that energy to heat a liquid.

4.12. The ground loop is the equipment which absorbs energy in the form of heat in the ground, including heat in water in the ground or surface water. This is the heat generating component of a GSHP and must be new (see Table 2).

4.13. GSHPs as part of a **shared ground loop system** are eligible. A ground loop is shared when two or more GSHPs receive the heat from the same loop through a hydraulic connection. The ground loop in relation to the second or subsequent GSHP forming part of the system does not have to be new. ¹³

¹³ The BUS Regulations, Regulation 9(1)

Biomass boilers

4.14. Biomass boilers are also supported under the scheme.¹⁴ They burn solid biomass, usually wood chips or pellets, to deliver space heating and hot water to your home. Biomass stoves which are designed and installed to burn wood pellets to generate heat which is radiated directly into the room in which it is installed are not eligible. Biomass boilers may only be installed in rural areas¹⁵ with no mains gas connection.

4.15. You can check if your property is in a rural area by entering your postcode in the search box of [this interactive map](#) and reading off the 'Rural Urban Indicator'. If your postcode is in an area designated as rural the indicator will be D1, D2, E1, E2, F1, F2. If your postcode is in an urban area (A1, B1, C1, C2), then you are not eligible to install a biomass boiler under the BUS.

4.16. Biomass boilers installed in self-build properties will not be eligible for support.¹⁶ See paragraph 4.27 for the definition of a self-build property.

4.17. Your biomass boiler must have an emissions certificate which demonstrates that polluting emissions are kept to a minimum. You do not have to source the emissions certificate; your installer will help you select a boiler which conforms to the emissions limits.

Biomass boiler fuel and maintenance

4.18. Burning wood of the correct quality and sustainability standards is vital to minimise emissions and maximise system efficiency. You can use the [Biomass Suppliers List \(BSL\)](#) to find fuel that meets these standards. The BSL is a list of eligible wood fuels. Fuel types registered on the BSL include: logs, woodchip, wood pellets and wood briquettes.

4.19. Your installer will provide written details of the specified fuel for your system along with fuel storage and handling requirements. Your installer will also provide you with the system's maintenance requirements and maintenance services available. Many biomass boiler

¹⁴ The BUS Regulations, Regulation 10

¹⁵ The ONS classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 people.

¹⁶ The BUS Regulations, Regulation 11

manufacturers require use of specific fuels and regular maintenance checks for the system warranty to remain valid. You should check these requirements with your installer.

Heating System Eligibility

4.20. Your new low carbon heating system will need to replace an existing fossil fuel or electric heating system which does not include a heat pump and cannot be used in conjunction with it. In the case of heat pumps, fossil fuel heating systems include those fuelled by gas, oil, Liquefied Petroleum gas (LPG) and coal. Biomass boilers may replace fossil fuel heating systems fuelled by oil, LPG, and coal, but may not replace the heating system in a property with a gas supply, including where the gas supply has been capped or clamped. Electric heating systems include storage heaters, electric panel radiators or and electric boilers.

4.21. Heating systems **must be commissioned on or after 1 April 2022**¹⁷ to be eligible. The commissioning date of your heating system can be found on your MCS certificate. The commissioning date of the heating system is the date on which any tests and procedures that amount to the usual industry practices for that type of system were completed. These tests will demonstrate that the heating system is operating correctly, generating heat, and that it complies with industry standards.

Further information on low carbon heating

4.22. You can find more information and also impartial advice on low carbon heating technologies and whether they might be suitable for your property on the Simple Energy Advice site.¹⁸

Which properties are eligible?

4.23. Only properties in England and Wales are eligible.

4.24. Domestic and small non-domestic properties are eligible.¹⁹ The maximum installation capacity of up to 45 kWth covers the vast majority of these properties. The maximum permitted capacity of the system includes shared ground loop systems where the maximum permitted

¹⁷ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 8

¹⁸ <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/your-home/heating-and-hot-water>

¹⁹ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 5

capacity of the whole system is 45 kWth. The 45 kWth must meet the full space and water requirements of the property. Your installer will be able to advise you of which technology is most suitable for your home and help you to understand the eligibility criteria.

4.25. The scheme is open to all properties including those that are privately rented, second homes and holiday homes. Social housing and new builds will not be eligible for BUS with the exception of self-build properties.

4.26. Social housing is defined as accommodation made available for people whose needs are not served by the commercial housing market. This could include rental accommodation made available below the market rate or shared ownership arrangements.²⁰ Support for the decarbonisation of social housing is available through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) in England and the Optimised Retrofit Programme in Wales.

4.27. The BUS is not open to new build properties with the exception of self-build properties. For clarity, self-build properties are owned by individuals and built either through a builder or as a DIY project, not companies or developers. Self-build properties meet the eligibility requirements where all of the following criteria are met:

- Any building that forms part of that property was built principally with the use of the labour or resources of the first owner (including where the resource was a loan which the first owner was liable to repay)
- The property has not, while the building was built or at any subsequent time, been owned wholly or partly by a person who is not an individual
- The date the property was first occupied must be after the first commissioning date of the heat pump.

4.28. Heat pumps installed in self-build properties will be eligible for support.

4.29. Biomass boilers installed in self-build properties will not be eligible for support.

Insulation requirements and EPCs

²⁰ For the full definition, please refer to section 68 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

4.30. An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) gives information about a property's energy use, together with recommendations on how to reduce energy demand and save money. It's required every time you buy, sell, or rent a property.

4.31. Low carbon heating systems are at their most efficient when installed in a home that is well-insulated. To be eligible for the BUS, properties are required to have a valid EPC with no outstanding recommendations for loft or cavity wall insulation, unless the property is exempt²¹ (see Table 4) and you can provide the associated evidence. A valid EPC means the most recent EPC issued for the property and one which is less than 10 years old.

4.32. If you don't have a copy of your EPC, or if you are unsure if your property has one, you may be able to access a copy on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate>

4.33. If there is not a valid EPC for your property, an assessment of your property will be needed before an EPC can be issued. As a new EPC assessment will incur a cost, if your property needs to have insulation (loft or cavity) in order to be eligible for the grant (see paragraph 4.37 below), you may wish to secure the EPC after this work has been completed.

4.34. There is no set fee for an EPC assessment as the cost will vary depending on the size and type of your property. Prices can start at £60 but you may want to obtain a quote from more than one EPC assessor. You can find one in your area here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-new-energy-certificate>.

4.35. If loft and/or cavity wall insulation is recommended on your EPC, you should arrange for the installation to be completed and new EPC produced before your installer applies for the voucher.

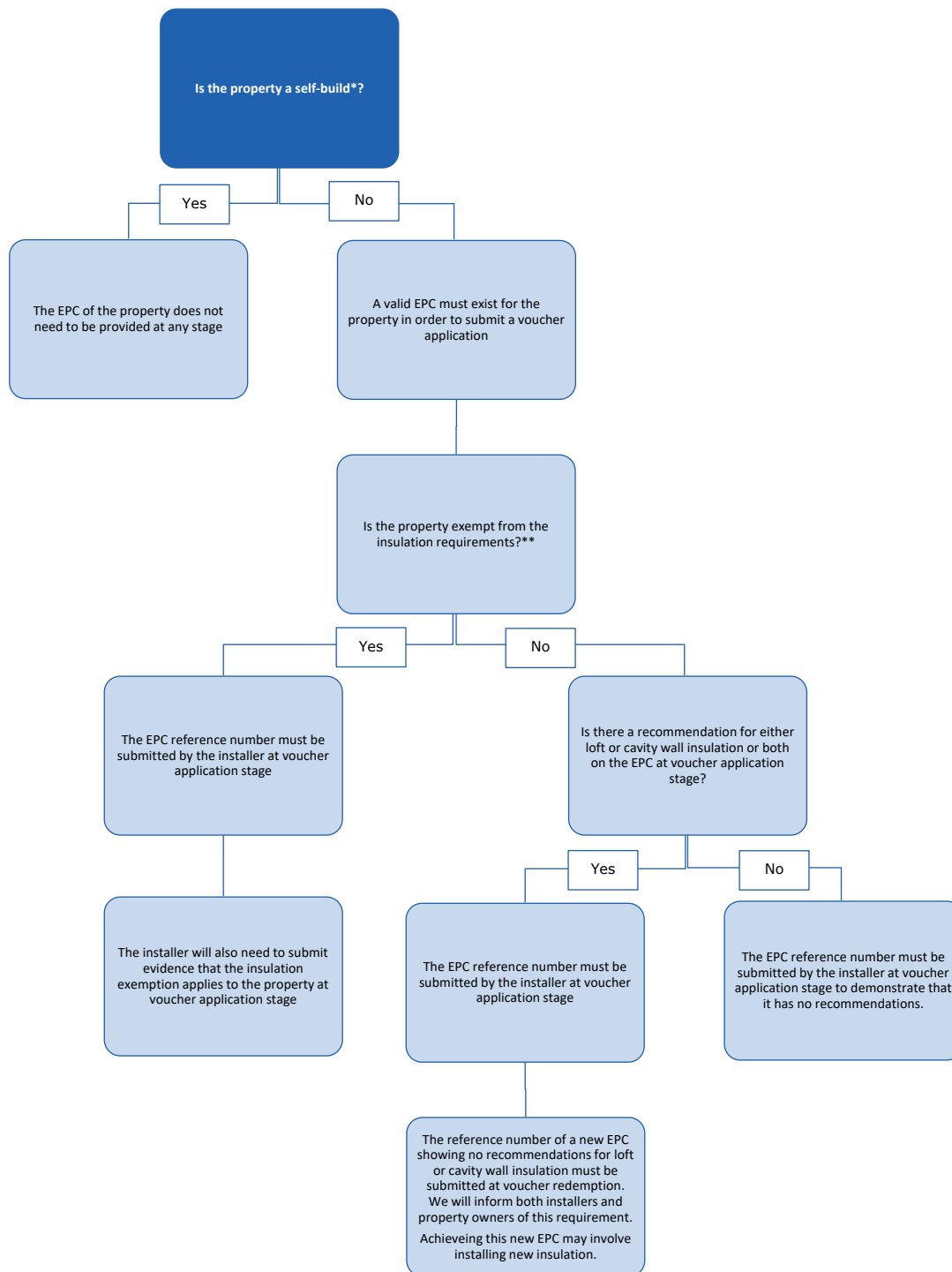
4.36. Alternatively, to avoid disruption as much as possible, you are able to make an application with an EPC that includes loft and/or cavity wall insulation recommendations if you arrange for the installation of the insulation alongside the low carbon heat system. Once the work is complete, you must obtain a new EPC which demonstrates that the insulation has been installed. Your installer will be required to submit this new EPC in order to redeem the voucher.

²¹ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 6

4.37. If you do not obtain a new EPC demonstrating that the required insulation has been installed, your installer will not be able to redeem the voucher and receive payment of the grant. It is therefore important that you install any required insulation and obtain an EPC in a timely manner. The requirements for a property's EPC are set out in the flow-chart below in Figure 1.

4.38. Self-build properties do not need to supply an EPC to evidence the required insulation is present since these properties are required to be well insulated built in line with current building regulations.

Figure 1 - Flow chart of EPC requirements for an eligible grant application and voucher redemption



*Definition set out in Chapter 4.

** Exemption reasons are set out in Table 4.

Exemptions

4.39. Some properties may be exempt from the insulation requirements.²² The list of possible exemptions is outlined below, along with the evidence that will be required to show that this applies to your property. You will need to provide this evidence to your installer as part of their application for a voucher. Please see Table 4 below for the list of exemptions we accept, the body that must confirm this and what evidence your installer must provide to Ofgem during the application. We may require further information and where needed will be in contact with the installer and you. We will review each case on a case-by-case basis. There are templates that must be used when providing the evidence.

Table 4 - Insulation exemptions

Exemption reason	Body to confirm	What evidence is required?
Property is a listed building	The planning department of the local authority, English Heritage, Cadw or a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Please visit the RICS website to find a local chartered surveyor. ²³	A letter stating that it is not possible to install cavity or loft insulation due to the property being a listed building.
Property is in a conservation area	The planning department of the local authority, English Heritage or Cadw. ²⁴	A letter stating that it is not possible to install cavity or loft insulation due to the building being located in a conservation area.
Property houses a protected species that would be materially affected by insulation (most	Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, or a chartered ecologist (please find a member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers ²⁵).	National bodies can be contacted for advice, but it may be necessary to arrange a site visit and report by a private ecologist. The letter

²² The BUS Regulation, Regulation 6 (2)

²³ RICS Find a surveyor, https://www.ricsfirms.com/?_ga=2.18901694.704885461.1651585631-1098602411.1651585631

²⁴ *Following further feedback received since our consultation that certain bodies are unable to provide the required evidence, we have refined this list to ensure accuracy

²⁵ <https://cieem.net/>

likely – though not necessarily – bats)		must state which protected species is housed at the property and that installing cavity or loft insulation would materially affect that species.
Due to local environmental conditions (for example regular exposure to driving rain).	A member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Please visit the RICS website to find a local chartered surveyor.	The property owner will need to arrange for a chartered surveyor to visit their property and prepare a report. The report would need to outline what environmental conditions prevent the property from being insulated. The report will also need to state their RICS membership number.
Due to the structure of the building (for example it's a timber framed building).	A member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Please visit the RICS website to find a local chartered surveyor.	A report from a chartered surveyor. The report would need to outline what structural features are present that prevent the property from being insulated. The report will also need to state their RICS membership number.
Because it would be otherwise unlawful	The planning department of the local authority, English Heritage, Cadw, Natural England, the Natural Resources Body for Wales, member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) or a chartered ecologist.	A letter stating which law prevents the installation of cavity or loft insulation at the property and why it does so.

5. How do you benefit from the Boiler Upgrade Scheme

Section summary

This chapter explains how property owners can engage with the Boiler Upgrade Scheme through their installer. It sets out the information and documentation that property owners may need to provide, and how property owners should provide consent to their installer's voucher application.

5.1. The scheme is designed to provide a simple customer journey by minimising what property owners need to do to benefit from the grant. It is 'installer-led' two stage application process, which means your chosen installer will apply for and redeem the grant voucher themselves. We expect your installer to discount the value of the grant from the total cost paid by you and include this in their quote.

Choosing an installer and technology

5.2. Your chosen installer will need to be certified by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). This demonstrates that they are technically competent and that the installation will be compliant with scheme requirements. It will also ensure that you are covered by consumer protection schemes governing the products and their performance, as well as the quality of the installation and service you receive from the installer. For more information on consumer codes, please see chapter 6.

5.3. You can find an installer in your area here: <https://mcscertified.com/find-an-installer/>

5.4. As with all home improvements, we encourage you to obtain a quote from multiple installers. Comparing quotes should help you decide if you're getting a fair price. Your quote should show the grant amount deducted from the total quote value.

Applying for the BUS grant

5.5. The voucher application will be led by the installer.²⁶ Once you have selected your preferred installer, the installer will:

- Apply to Ofgem, for a voucher representing the grant amount. You will likely need to assist the installer by sharing information and evidence demonstrating that the property and chosen technology are eligible.
- Provide your details to Ofgem so you can consent to the grant application.
- Complete the installation in line with industry standards and scheme requirements.
- Provide you with the appropriate post-installation documentation such as the MCS certificate for the heat pump or biomass boiler and emission certificate for biomass boilers.
- Redeem the voucher following installation.

5.6. All vouchers will have an expiration date to ensure that installers only apply for vouchers when they need them. We are not able to extend validity periods under any circumstances. Vouchers for ASHPs and biomass boilers will be valid for three months. Vouchers for GSHPs will be valid for six months. If a voucher expires before work is complete and commissioned, your installer will be able to submit a new application for the same installation.

5.7. In some circumstances, such as for installations commissioned between 1 April 2022 and 23 May 2022, installers may apply for the voucher retrospectively after the installation has been commissioned. This is permitted by the scheme at other times too, although please note that if you install and commission a system before applying for a voucher, you and the installer will be doing so at risk. We will issue a BUS voucher in the form of an email and inform your installer that a voucher has been issued. BUS vouchers are issued by Ofgem on behalf of the Secretary of State. When your installer successfully redeems the voucher, we will notify the installer and you.

What to give your installer

5.8. You will need to provide evidence to your installer for them to be able to make an application to Ofgem. This will include EPCs and information regarding yourself as outlined under property owner consent. It can also extend to other types of evidence, for example to prove that the property is a self-build. If you wish to give the documents directly to Ofgem

²⁶ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 14

instead of your installer due to the sensitivity of the documents, you may do so at BUS.propertyowner@ofgem.gov.uk. However, before you do this, please ensure you have obtained a reference for your application from the installer. You must use this reference number in any correspondences you send us.

Self-build evidence

5.9. If your property is a self-build, you must provide evidence of this to your installer. Your installer will provide this information to us during the application. Acceptable evidence to prove a property is a self-build can include:

- proof of property ownership (eg a copy of title deeds, contract of sale)
- documents confirming you received a self-build VAT exemption, self-build loan or mortgage
- an invoice for substantial structural materials or labour (eg foundations or timber frame, smaller works such as re-wiring or kitchen-fitting will not be sufficient)
- self-build insurance
- planning permission documents
- copies of bank statements
- trader and builders' invoices or contracts.

Property Owner Consent

5.10. Once the installer has submitted an application for a voucher, you will be contacted by Ofgem by email to provide your consent to the installer making an application on your behalf.²⁷ This email will come from an Ofgem email address.

5.11. You must give your consent within 14 days of receiving the email from Ofgem. Failure to provide consent may lead to the application being rejected.

5.12. Property owners will be required to confirm:

- Your full name
- Key project details, including the installation address, proposed low carbon heating system and project cost

²⁷ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 14 (2)

- That you own (or co-own) the property at the installation and where there are multiple owners of a property, that the person providing consent is acting with their agreement
- That you have instructed the installer to carry out the installation
- That you consent to the installer making a BUS application
- That you will become the owner of the low carbon heating system upon completion of the installation
- That the property is not social housing
- That you have not received other support from public funds or government schemes, such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), for any of the costs of the purchase or installation of the eligible low carbon heating system in question.

5.13. Where the EPC submitted as part of the voucher application has a loft or cavity wall insulation recommendation and the property does not meet any of the exemption criteria, that you intend to:

- Install the recommended insulation, and
- Obtain a new EPC, with no recommendations for loft or cavity wall insulation to be installed, by no later than the date on which a voucher redemption application is made

5.14. You will also be informed of the possibility that you may be contacted or access to your property may be required for audit purposes.

5.15. Where there are multiple owners for the same property, we will only need the details and confirmation of consent from one of the owners. However, that confirmation must state that the property owner giving consent on behalf of the other(s) has the authority to do so.

5.16. In cases of shared ground loop applications, where there are multiple properties being connected to a single ground loop, we will require the installer to submit a separate application for each property that intends to connect to the ground loop. We will require consent from the owner of each property that intends to connect to the loop.

What giving your consent means

5.17. It's important to remember that you're only consenting to an installer making a BUS application on your behalf. This is so that Ofgem has assurance that the application is being made in good faith.

5.18. It does not mean you've committed to working with a particular installer. That's something that needs to be handled separately through the contract you sign with them.

5.19. Ofgem will contact you by email for your consent to the installer making an application on your behalf.

Assisted digital

5.20. We recognise that some property owners may not be able to access the online service to provide their consent. If the installer is unable to provide an email address for the property owner, Ofgem will contact you via an alternative channel and assess your needs. If you require support, we can help with the consent journey offline. The time period to provide consent on this alternative channel will be 28 days.

Consent in error or fraud

5.21. In situations where more than one installer has submitted a BUS application on your behalf, you can only give your consent to one of them. Once consent is given, we'll reject any applications from other installers.

5.22. Where consent has been provided in error, please contact Ofgem on BUS.application@ofgem.gov.uk so we can correct the situation.

5.23. Where we identify that consent has been provided fraudulently, we will reject an application or revoke the voucher and contact you and the installer regarding the application. We may refer the case of fraud to the police.

5.24. We will verify the identity of property owners using the information we have received from installers as part of the application. This will be done using a 3rd party verification check. This check will not impact your credit rating. Where we require additional information to verify your identity, we will request information directly from you. By allowing a BUS application to be made on your behalf you are providing consent to Ofgem to use the information to share data with the 3rd party verification for identity checks.

5.25. If we require any further information from you after you've confirmed your consent, we will get in touch. Otherwise you don't need to do anything else in relation to the BUS application.

5.26. Once you have provided consent and subject to all eligibility criteria being met, a voucher will be issued to the installer.

Completing the project

5.27. Once a voucher is issued, your installer has three months from the date the application is approved to complete the installation in line with industry standards and scheme requirements, and to register the installation with MCS (six months for ground source heat pumps).²⁸ MCS may get in touch with you regarding the quality of the installation.

5.28. If a voucher expires before work is complete, your installer will have to submit a new application for the same installation.

5.29. When the new system has been installed and the installer has completed their checks, your installer must submit a voucher redemption application to Ofgem in order to claim the grant amount.

²⁸ The BUS regulation, Regulation 15 (2)

6. Audit & Compliance

Section summary

This chapter explains our audit and compliance powers under the BUS scheme. It explains describes why we audit, the types of audits we carry out, what an audit consist of and what to expect from audits. It also sets out how you can get help from consumer codes if you experience a problem with your heating system or installer.

Why are Ofgem undertaking audits

6.1. The scheme is funded by public money. To help ensure public money has been used correctly, Ofgem run a comprehensive audit programme. The regulations provide a range of powers that allow us to take action where non-compliance, fraud or abuse is suspected or discovered. We have developed an audit regime and we will be conducting audits on installers and installations that have made a BUS application or received a BUS grant.

6.2. Ofgem carry out routine checks on applications throughout the process including pre-voucher redemption and post-payment and may also carry out site visits to properties that have installed a BUS installation. These audits are undertaken by us (or agents authorised on our behalf) to ensure the installation has taken place in your property, the relevant eligibility requirements for your technology have been met and that you, as the property owner, have consented to the installation.

Audit types

6.3. We carry out statistical and targeted audits as part of our audit programme. We have two types of audits we carry out which are site and desk audits.

6.4. **Site Audits:** We may request access at any reasonable hour to inspect a property which relates to a voucher that has been applied for, redeemed, or has had a grant paid.

6.5. **Desk Audits:** As part of our scheme compliance checks, a certain number of applications will be subject to a desk audit. Desk audits can be by phone or email. In these cases we may need additional information as assurance that the installation is compliant with scheme eligibility. Desk audits may involve getting additional information from installers or property owners.

6.6. You will be provided with notice of any audits by Ofgem ahead of an audit taking place. Ofgem will give the notice to you no less than two days before the proposed inspection is to take place.

6.7. Within the notice the following information will be provided:

- Date of the audit
- Inform you of your right to refuse the request. If you refuse the request, we may no longer be able to offer the grant to the installer and may either recoup or withhold payment.

6.8. All our site auditors are Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked for security. We will always provide advance notice before an audit takes place. If at any time you received a request from someone to access your property in relation to a BUS audit and you are not sure if they are genuine, you can check before providing access to your property by contacting us either by e-mailing BUS.enquiry@ofgem.gov.uk.

6.9. MCS and the consumer code organisations will undertake their own audit checks in addition to the Ofgem audit regime set out above and therefore may also contact you directly. This may involve emails, phone calls or a site visit.

After an audit is conducted

6.10. We will write to the installer and to you to outline results of the audit. Where there are issues identified by the audit, the letter will specify the actions required of the installer and if necessary, of you, to rectify the situation. You or the installer will be expected to address these issues and asked to report back to us when the necessary action has been taken. Instructions of how to report back will be contained within the communication from us. Depending on the nature of the issues identified and the installer's response, we may either launch a formal compliance investigation (which may involve a temporary withholding of a grant payment) or take other compliance action.

6.11. If during our investigation, or an investigation carried out by MCS or consumer codes, we come to believe that your application was approved based on incorrect information, we have

the authority to impose sanctions on the installer. These could include withholding payments,²⁹ revoking vouchers,³⁰ offsetting payments due, or seeking repayment.³¹

6.12. We may withhold or seek to recover payments from the installer where we have reasonable grounds to suspect that:

- the installer has failed or are failing to comply with an obligation
- the installer has been issued a voucher, or has been paid as a result of incorrect information in a grant application
- the installer is not an MCS-certified installer for the technology that was installed
- the property is not an eligible property
- the heating system is not eligible or not eligible in relation to the property specified in the voucher
- the property owner has not consented to the installation or that consent is falsified
- the property owner has previously received public funding for the low carbon heating system.
- Refusal for audit access

6.13. Where we decide to revoke a voucher or withhold a payment, we will inform you and the installer of this.

6.14. If you have concerns about your installer passing the cost of any withheld or recovered payments onto you, talk to one of the consumer codes set up to protect your rights, for example RECC and HIES.

6.15. Where we believe installers and property owners have colluded in fraudulent activity, Ofgem may refer cases to the police.

6.16. Where information provided by the property owner to the installer is false and the installer has become aware, the installer must notify us of that fact no more than 14 days after becoming aware. Inaccurate information could lead to Ofgem revoking the application or

²⁹ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 19 and 20

³⁰ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 21

³¹ The BUS Regulation, Regulation 22

recouping the grant payment from the installer. Ofgem do not have any role or responsibility relating to the contractual arrangements between installers and property owners.

Fraud

6.17. Fraud is a criminal offence and Ofgem will take stringent action wherever this is suspected.

6.18. Ofgem takes a zero-tolerance approach to fraud. We have a dedicated Counter Fraud function that undertakes activity to detect, prevent and deter fraudulent activity on the environmental and social programmes that we deliver.

6.19. Irrespective of any action we may take in relation to non-compliance, there may be instances where we uncover evidence of possible criminal conduct such as fraud. In such cases, based on the nature of the information we hold, we may refer the case to law enforcement agencies for investigation.

6.20. If you have concerns about suspected fraud, you can report it to Ofgem by:

- emailing us at counterfraud@ofgem.gov.uk or
- calling us on 0207 901 7373 where you will be invited to leave a voice message. If we require further information in order to consider the concern, we will call you back.

6.21. Our website page Counter fraud for environmental and social programmes provides further information on what we do if we suspect fraud and what information we need you to provide if you are reporting suspected fraud.

Whistleblowing

6.22. If you or anyone has concerns about wrongdoing of where they live or work, or they work within the energy sector or are involved in the delivery of one of our environmental or social programmes, they can contact our whistleblowing desk by emailing us at whistle@ofgem.gov.uk or calling us on 0207 901 7121. Our website page on Whistleblowing contains further information relating to this.

Consumer rights and protections

What to do when things go wrong

6.23. If you experience problems or have concerns with your new heating system, for example underperforming equipment, repairs, or safety issues, speak to your installer first.

6.24. All installers must be a member of the Microgeneration Certificate Scheme (MCS). If you ever have problems with your installer, visit the MCS website and read 'What to do when things go wrong' for further advice and guidance.

6.25. Your rights are protected by various consumer codes, set up to promote the renewable energy sector and protect customers. These include organisations such as the Renewable Energy Consumer code ([RECC](#)) and the Home Insulation and Energy Systems Contractor Scheme ([HIES](#)). MCS can advise on when and how to engage with them.

6.26. Members of HIES and RECC are from the renewable industry, and they are required to adhere to the code, which is certified by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. A condition of MCS certification is membership to RECC or HIES. They can help deal with complaints about breaches of the consumer code, such as:

- where misleading information has been provided about the scheme or the renewable technology installed
- where the information in the contract and the actual service provided do not match up
- where the installer has inflated the costs provided in the quote.

6.27. MCS and the consumer code organisations work closely together to address complaints for consumers. If you do have a complaint, consider highlighting it to each organisation to make sure it can be fully investigated.

6.28. Should property owners have concerns about installer behaviour or costs being passed on them in cases where Ofgem have withheld or recouped payments, they get in touch with the consumer codes RECC and HIES. These consumer codes are there to protect consumers from any harm they may face due to any installer's misconduct.

Reporting

6.29. As part of our administrative responsibilities, Ofgem will publish reports on a quarterly, monthly, and annual basis on our website.³² These reports will consist of key information relating to the scheme, including the number of voucher applications received, number of vouchers issued, number of vouchers redeemed, total value of grants paid and remaining budget.

³² The BUS Regulation, Regulation 30

7. Useful contacts

Queries

7.1. For general queries regarding the BUS please email us at: BUS.enquiry@ofgem.gov.uk

Complaints

Complaints about policy and policy decisions

7.2. Where the complaint is about the scheme's underlying policy, including the eligibility criteria, please contact BEIS: boilerupgradescheme@beis.gov.uk.

Complaints about scheme administration

7.3. If you have a complaint or recommendation about our administration of the scheme or concerns on how your application has been handled, you can email feedback@ofgem.gov.uk. Our Complaining About Ofgem webpage gives more information on our complaints process.

7.4. If you have concerns about how your application has been handled or about a decision that we have made, you can lodge a complaint using Ofgem's complaints procedure.³³

7.5. If your installer believes an error has been made by Ofgem which has led to an incorrect decision being made in relation to BUS administration, they have the right to appeal this decision. Their appeal must be made within 28 days of receiving the decision notice having been sent to them. Details of how they should do this is included within our separate guidance document for installers.³⁴

Complaints about installers

7.6. If you have a complaint about your installer, you should raise it with them in the first instance. If you have already done so, but feel that it has not been resolved satisfactorily, you may be able to take the complaint to MCS,³⁵ RECC³⁶ or HIES.³⁷

³³ <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us/complaining-about-ofgem>

³⁴ <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/boiler-upgrade-scheme-guidance-installers>

³⁵ <https://mcscertified.com/>

³⁶ <https://www.recc.org.uk/>

³⁷ <https://www.hiesscheme.org.uk/>