

Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS)

Summary of updates in the BUS installer guidance

Introduction

This document outlines the updates that we have made in each iteration of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme installer guidance. The paragraph numbers referred to in this document relate to the paragraph numbers at the time of updating.

Overview of amendments to Boiler Upgrade Scheme installer guidance

Version 2.4

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity

Boiler Upgrade Scheme overview

- Paragraph 1.2: Added sentences detailing the change notice issued by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to increase the BUS grant level and detailing the new grant values.
- Paragraph 1.5: Sentence added to guide readers where they can find more information regarding the October 2023 grant level changes.

Related publications and useful links

- Added link to the DESNZ change notice.

Voucher applications and voucher redemption applications

- Figure 1: Updated to reflect new BUS grant levels.

BUS voucher

- Paragraph 5.57: New paragraph explaining the process if a voucher is not redeemed within the voucher validity period.

Grant level change

- New section detailing the grant level changes.
- New table added (table 9) to reflect new bus grant levels.

Withdrawal of a BUS voucher application

- Paragraph 5.65: Paragraph added explaining installers can request a voucher be withdrawn but only where the corresponding redemption application hasn't already been approved.

Grant level change – October 2023

- New section added, summarising the grant uplift changes applicable to the scheme from 23 October 2023.
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Version 2.3

Throughout the document

- Minor amendments to text to improve clarity.

BUS guidance

- Paragraph 1.7: Updated language to improve understanding.

Related publications and useful links

- Updated broken link to Rural-Urban Classification for Output Areas Locator Tool.

Heat pump specific requirements

- Paragraph 3.68: Specified that any shared ground loop system must not exceed 45kWth.
- Added section to clarify position on the use of Hybrid heat pumps.
- Added footnotes referencing BUS regulation 2.

BUS installer accounts

- Paragraph 4.46: Added reference to Welsh translated service.

Voucher applications and voucher redemption applications

- Paragraph 5.38: Amended text to reflect that installers will be informed upon a voucher application being rejected, not Property Owner's.
- Paragraph 5.60: Amendments to text to improve clarity.
- Paragraph 5.61: Amendments to text to improve clarity.
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Version 2.2

Throughout the document

- Updated links to the new BUS installer portal URL.

Version 2.1

Throughout the document

- Minor amendments to text to improve clarity, and updates to footnotes and cross-references to other sections within the document.

- Removed references to the manual BUS voucher redemption process and replaced with the updated digital voucher redemption application process.
- Updated references to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (the Energy Department), formerly known as the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Related publications and useful links

- Added a link to the BUS Quarterley Reports.

Ofgem PEL

- Paragraph 3.59: Specified that heating systems cannot be added to the Product Eligibility List at request.

What is an account?

- Paragraph 4.4: Added text specifying that MCS have new functionality on their 'Find a Contractor' page to filter for Installers with a BUS account.
- Added a footnote link to the 'Find a Contractor' page.

Voucher applications and voucher redemption applications

- Figure 1: Updated language to improve understanding.

Withdrawal of a BUS application

- Paragraph 5.60: Updated text to reflect the withdrawal process on the BUS digital portal.

Stage 2: Voucher redemption application

- Paragraph 5.63: Updated text to reflect the new process for voucher redemption on the BUS Digital Portal.
- Removed links to the voucher redemption application form
- Paragraph 5.65: Added guidance text on the process for voucher redemptions with insulations exemptions.

Re-applications

Voucher re-applications

- Paragraph 5.70: Updated text to improve understanding
- Paragraph 5.71: Updated text on withdrawing a voucher if an installer will not be able to complete a voucher within the voucher validity period.

Redemption re-applications

- Paragraph 5.79: Added text to update the process on re-applying for a redemption application.

Audit Types

- Paragraph 9.3: Added text explaining what evidence Ofgem may request from a property owner and the formats a property owner can provide the evidence.

Version 2.0

Throughout the document

- Minor amendments to text to improve clarity, and updates to footnotes and cross-references to other sections within the document. Removed references to the manual BUS voucher application process and replaced with updated digital voucher application and redemption application process.

Related publications and useful links

- Added links to BUS reporting webpages for BUS monthly update and BUS quarterly reports.
- Added links to BUS relevant consumer codes and contact details for the codes.

Role of installers

- Paragraph 2.3: Specified that installers need to inform us of any material changes to information provided within 14 days from the date of change.

Role of consumer codes

- Paragraph 2.12: Added website links and contact details of the Home Insulation and Energy Systems Contractors Scheme (HIES) and Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC).

Installer requirements

- Paragraph 3.7: Paragraph added to clarify what happens if an installer's MCS certification expires or changes.

Property requirements

- Paragraph 3.15: Added photographic evidence of the previous heating system to list of evidence types that installers may wish to consider where previous heating system has been disposed of.
- Paragraph 3.17: Added sentence to make it explicit that biomass boilers are not an eligible technology in self-build properties.
- Paragraph 3.21: Amended to indicate that additional evidence showing the chain of ownership “will be required” (amended from “may be required”).
- Paragraphs 3.22: Added a letter from a solicitor as an example of acceptable evidence of proof of property ownership and removed reference to self-build insurance.
- Paragraph 3.23: Amended to indicate that the evidence must also clearly show a description of the land and the date when the property ownership was transferred.
- Paragraph 3.34: Added clarification that a valid EPC must be provided at the voucher application stage.
- Paragraph 3.37: Added to indicate where the EPC has other recommendations, installers should ensure that systems installed are appropriately sized to address heat loss.

New heating system requirements

- Paragraph 3.57: Sentence added to indicate that the PEL will be updated on a monthly basis.
- Paragraph 3.58: Amended to clarify that biomass boilers also require an emissions certificate meeting the scheme “air quality” requirements.
- Paragraph 3.59: New paragraph added noting that Ofgem will not be adding new biomass products to the PEL at request of suppliers or manufacturers. Only products and emission certificates that are submitted as part of a voucher redemption application will be reviewed.

Biomass boilers

- Paragraph 3.71: Added sentence to make it explicit that biomass boilers installed in an eligible self-build, are not eligible for BUS grant.
- Paragraph 3.74: New sentence to indicate that there are other services which use the ONS database that installers can use to determine the rural/urban classification of a property.

What is an Account?

- Parts of this section have been significantly updated to reflect changes following the launch of digital application process.
- Paragraph 4.3: Paragraph expanded to include more details of what creating an account allows an installer to do, including access to digital account access area.
- Paragraph 4.4 to 4.5: Added paragraphs to indicate that the MCS website will host a list of installers who have created a BUS account with Ofgem after April 2022. The installers will be added to list automatically when an account is created after November 2022 and consent will be sought to list installer names of accounts created prior to this.

How do I create an account?

- Paragraph 4.22: Amended to include that accessible word document is available for those who require it.
- Paragraph 4.24: Identity evidence requirements updated.
- Paragraph 4.25: Added personal bank letter or statement showing the home address, as an acceptable proof of home address.
- Paragraph 4.32 to 4.33: Added paragraphs to indicate that if we request any additional information to verify and create an account, this must be provided within 14 days.
- Paragraphs 4.34 to 4.35: New paragraphs added indicating the timeframes within which we will retain proof of ID, proof of home address documents and other personal information submitted by installers.

Users

- Paragraph 4.37: Amended to include details of a “manage account” process for the new digital interface for authorised representatives.

Stage 1: Voucher application

- Paragraph 5.5: Clarified approach to receiving sensitive documents directly from property owners.
- Paragraph 5.7: Amended the paragraph to reflect that voucher applications can be submitted online, and removed direction to e-mail applications to Ofgem.
- Paragraph 5.29: Added paragraph on Letter of Authorisation (LOA) which must be used if the property is owned by an organisation not listed on company house
- Paragraph 5.29: Table 7 added providing details of who should sign an LOA for different types of property owner.

- Section on Power of Attorney (paragraph 5.38 to 5.41): Added new section detailing how consent can be provided through an attorney where property owners have provided a last power of attorney and how to proceed within the application.
- Paragraph 5.46: Added sentence to indicate we will provide a Welsh translated service where the installer requests this.
- Paragraph 5.49: Added sentence clarifying that where we reject a voucher application, we will send a notice to the installer outlining the reason for rejection.
- Paragraph 5.52: Added sentence indicating that we will also notify the property owner that a BUS voucher has been issued.
- Paragraph 5.57: Added paragraph to indicate that BUS regulations do not allow for any extension to the voucher validity period and if the installation is not completed within the voucher validity period, the voucher will expire.
- New heading: withdrawal of a BUS Application (Paragraphs 5.58 to 5.61): Added new paragraphs detailing how a BUS application can be withdrawn. Also clarifies that failure to provide information requested within 14 days could lead to rejection of the BUS application.

Stage 2: Voucher redemption application

- Paragraph 5.66. Added sentences to refer to use of the MCS installation certificate number to check key information. Also, to indicate that where we reject a voucher redemption, we will send a notice to the installer outlining the reason for rejection

Re-applications

- Paragraph 5.68: Added sentence to make it clear that applications need not be withdrawn for the purpose of re-application.
- Paragraph 5.69: Paragraph modified to set out how to re-apply using the new online voucher application process.
- Paragraph 5.77: Added new paragraph to indicate that if there is an unsuccessful redemption application, an installer may seek to resolve the issues for which it was rejected and submit a new redemption application within the voucher validity period.

Help with a BUS account creation, application and redemption

- Paragraph 5.79: Inserted "Enquiries Team" in place of "Applicant Support Centre" and included the contact for help.

Audit types

- Paragraph 9.2: Added a sentence to indicate that where Ofgem has selected a targeted audit we will notify the installer of this, and payments will be put on hold until the audit is complete.
- Paragraph 9.10: Added to the list of evidence we may request during audit (which an installer has an obligation to keep for six years from date of voucher application or voucher redemption applications).
- Paragraph 9.13: Amended to include that we will write to installer and property owner to outline that an audit has taken place.

Withholding payments during investigation and non-compliance

- Paragraph 9.23: Further clarification that a right of review function does not apply to our function of withholding payment, and that we will only withholding payment during a targeted audit or investigation into compliance.

Complaints

- Paragraph 11.4: Amended to include that installers or property owners can request a review of a decision made by us.

Version 1.1

Throughout the document

- Minor amendments to text to improve clarity and updates to cross-references to other sections within the document.
- Removal and amendment of text which was time limited referring to the regulations coming into force, the launch of the scheme, and the request for feedback on the guidance.

BUS guidance

- Removed 'Guidance for comment and your feedback' section.

Related publications and useful links

- Added details of and hyperlinks to the Ofgem Boiler Upgrade Scheme webpage and the BUS guidance for property owners.

Role of property owners

- Section 2.5: Added responsibility of property owners to confirm details related to their eligibility to us.

Installer requirements

- Section 3.5: Confirmation that the BUS voucher application must come from the installer listed on the MCS installation certificate.

Property requirements

- Section 3.8: Sentence to confirm that the eligibility requirements are the same for domestic and non-domestic properties.
- Sections 3.10 and 3.11: Paragraphs to confirm a range of properties that can be eligible under the BUS.
- Section 3.13: Clarification on eligibility of self-build properties where previous heating system did not exist.
- Section 3.15: Text added to clarify that new builds not built and owned by individuals are not eligible at the point at which they are being built.
- Section 3.16: Amended definition of 'eligible self-build' to clarify that the definition refers to the building, rather than the overall property.
- Section 3.18: Paragraph to confirm requirement of additional evidence to verify when ownership of eligible property changes ahead of a heat pump being installed or a BUS voucher application being made.
- Section 3.19: Text added to make explicit that self-build evidence provided must demonstrate both that the funding and ownership criteria noted above in paragraph 3.16 have been satisfied.
- Section 3.19: Removed reference to planning permission documents being acceptable evidence for a self-build.
- Section 3.20: Amended to indicate that property owner is the individual referred to.
- Section 3.27: Added to confirm properties that have undergone a sale through the "Right to Buy" scheme are not classified as social housing under BUS.
- Moved section on EPCs to Sections 3.31-3.38.
- Section 3.28: Clarification that EPC is used to judge whether the insulation requirements are met and the need for well insulated building to make heating system efficient.
- Section 3.29: Sentence make explicit that there is no requirement for self-build properties to supply evidence of minimum level of insulation.

- Section 3.30: Paragraph amended to clarify the evidence requirements needed for exemptions to insulation requirements highlighted in Table 1.
- Section 3.33: Added sentence to make explicit that insulation requirements on EPC can be addressed either before or after the installer submits a voucher application.
- Section 3.34 to 3.36: Paragraphs to confirm eligibility of properties with specific EPC recommendations such as room-in-roof insulation and solid wall insulation and internal wall insulation.

New heating system requirements

- Section 3.41: Amended to make explicit that heat pumps and biomass boilers must distribute heat using a liquid to provide *both* space heating and hot water.
- Section 3.42: Added wording to clarify that installations must provide both space and water heating to the property, and that the installation must be capable of meeting the full space heating and hot water heating demands of the property.
- Section 3.44: Added requirement to completely replace an existing fossil fuel heating system or electric heating system which does not include a heat pump.
- Section 3.45: Sentence added to clarify what electric heating systems include.
- Table 2: Added night storage heaters to other parts that can be retained.
- Section 3.46: Removed reference to “hybrid systems”.
- Section 3.46: Clarified that heat pump systems which use a combination of a fossil fuel boiler and a heat pump will not be supported under BUS.
- Section 3.50: Wording amended to clarify the purpose of the PEL and that it is non-exhaustive.
- Section 3.52: Wording added to make explicit that installing a product listed on the PEL does not guarantee that all requirements are met. Installers are responsible for making sure installations meet the BUS eligibility requirements.
- Section 3.53: Wording added to clarify that the PEL does not consider the SCOP of heat pumps, and installers need to calculate this themselves.
- Section 3.54: Added text clarifying that MCS certified biomass boilers that are not on the PEL, an eligible emissions certificate will be required to be submitted as part of a voucher redemption process. If we are satisfied it meets the requirements we will update the PEL.

Biomass boilers

- Section 3.65: Removed sentence stating that we will check against publicly available data to verify whether a property is on or off the gas grid.

- Section 3.65: Removed reference to the Non Gas Map as a publicly available resource to check whether a property is on or off the gas grid.
- Removed section giving instructions on how to use the ONS Postcode Directory to find out whether a property is in a rural area.

Summary of all eligibility requirements

- Table 4: Text added to clarify that new builds not built and owned by individuals are not eligible.
- Table 4: Text added to clarify intended meaning of 'self-builds'.
- Table 4: Text added to clarify that a heat pump or biomass boiler must provide heating for the purposes of both space heating and water heating.
- Table 5: Text added to clarify that heat pumps can be installed in eligible self-builds under the scheme.

Authorised representative

- Section 4.12: Clarified that the person setting up the installer account, with the legal authority to act on the company's behalf, will be the authorised representative.
- Section 4.16: Added information on sending the completed account amendment form to BUS.accountcreation@ofgem.gov.uk should the authorised representative need to be changed.
- Section 4.17: Added clarification that where the installer is a sole trader, we require that the individual setting up the account is someone with the legal authority to act on behalf of the sole trader.

How do I create an account?

- Section 4.29: Updated information on the size of emails we can receive to a limit of 35MB.

Stage 1: Voucher application

- Section 5.8: Added text requiring the home address of the property owner to be provided by the installer if it differs to the installation address.
- Section 5.8: Added footnote stating that where the property is owned by an organisation rather than individuals, installers should give the details of an individual who can legally represent the organisation, eg a director or company secretary.

- Section 5.8: Re-ordered the list of information and associated evidence the installer must provide to demonstrate that the eligibility criteria are met when making a voucher application.
- Section 5.9: Added text to explain that if the property owner is an organisation, please provide an email address and telephone number of an individual who can legally represent the organisation, eg a director or company secretary.
- Section 5.10: Added text to clarify that if the property owner does not have an email address, details of the assisted digital consent process are set out in paragraph 5.37.
- Section 5.13: Clarified that eligible self-builds do not need to provide an EPC at any application stage.
- Section 5.14: Clarified that if the property is exempt from the insulation requirements an EPC needs to be provided at voucher application stage, along with the evidence demonstrating the exemption.
- Section 5.15: Clarified that if the EPC of a property does not show recommendations for loft and/or cavity wall insulation, the property meets the insulation requirements for BUS.
- Figure 3: Enlarged text.
- Section 5.18: Added text to state that installers are required to provide customers with a quote as part of the MCS process. We are required by the BUS regulations to collect information on the quote provided by an installer to a property owner for the technology being applied for.
- Section 5.19: Added text advising that we may verify the quote values submitted on the quote given to the customer at audit.
- Section 5.20: Clarified that the total quote amount should include any ancillary components, labour costs and other costs associated with the job quoted.
- Section 5.22: Added clarification that in the case of shared ground loops, where a single quote may cover multiple installations, applicants are permitted to provide the same quote for multiple voucher applications. In these cases, the installer may wish to explain to property owners the extent of what the "Total quote amount" relates to as we will confirm the property owner recognises the quote amount at property owner consent stage.
- Section 5.24: Added text clarifying that the property owner consent stage is not intended to duplicate or recreate any contractual arrangements that an installer and property owner have in place.
- Section 5.25: Clarified that consent is asked for only once and is obtained at the voucher application stage. Consent is not asked for at voucher redemption stage.

- Section 5.26: Text added to confirm that the property owner consent email is sent from the email address boiler.upgrade.scheme.ofgem@notifications.service.gov.uk.
- Section 5.28: Text added to clarify that where the property is owned by an organisation rather than individuals, installers should give the details of an individual who can legally represent the organisation, eg a director or company secretary.
- Section 5.33: Clarified that property owner consent must be provided via the validation link in the email provided. We cannot accept consent provided via any other medium, unless the assisted digital route is being used.
- Section 5.34: Added text to state that in the event property owners are required to provide us with copies of ID documents, they will have 14 days to provide us with these.
- Section 5.37: Added further information on the assisted digital consent route.
- Section 5.48: Added explicit clarification that once a voucher application is approved, a BUS voucher is issued to the installer. The voucher needs to be redeemed in order to receive a BUS grant.

Stage 2: Voucher redemption application

- Figure 4: Amended structure of flowchart to improve clarity.
- Figure 4: Added footnote to clarify that installers can make voucher applications retrospectively after the installation has commissioned, but they will still need to apply for a voucher before they can redeem it.

Grant payments to installers

- Section 6.3: Clarified that the gap between us approving a voucher redemption application and sending payment for it will be a maximum of five working days for most voucher redemption applications.
- Section 6.3: Added information that where the scheduled payment day is a public holiday, payments will be made on the following working day.
- Section 6.3: Text added stating that we may make payments more frequently depending on our capacity.
- Section 6.4: Information added that the payment reference will show the installer account ID.
- Section 6.4: Information added that where installers have more than one successful voucher redemption application, they will receive bulk payments to their bank accounts.
- Section 6.4: Information added that in order to see which voucher has been paid, installers can see the remittance email sent to the authorised representative of the

account. Authorised representatives may forward the remittance to other account users if they wish but we cannot send it to other users directly.

- Table 6: Added ability for standard users to submit voucher redemption application.

Grant value changes

- Section on grant values moved to Chapter 5.

Submission of voucher applications and voucher redemption applications

- Sections 8.1-8.3: Reworded text regarding the requirements of installers to satisfy themselves that the information they are submitting is accurate, and that we may request further information if required.

Accuracy and provision of information

- Section 8.8: Inserted clarification that providing inaccurate information could lead to us rejecting a voucher application or voucher redemption application, revoking a voucher, withholding a payment or recouping a payment from the installer.

Why we audit

- Section 9.1: Added information that aspects of our audit plan may be carried out by agents authorised on our behalf.

Audit types

- Section 9.3: Added information on desk audits, including that they may be carried out by phone or email and that we may need additional information from the property owner or the installer.
- Section 9.5: Added information that we may seek to verify the existence of an eligible heating system during an audit.
- Section 9.8: Added information that property owners can telephone the BUS Enquiry line to verify that an individual requesting to undertake an audit at their property is genuine.
- Section 9.9: Added footnote clarifying that repayment request notices will be sent to the installer and not to the property owner.
- Section 9.11: Added footnote setting out that EPC site notes should be retained going forward, and that we will expect to receive them for EPCs produced since July 2022.

- Section 9.15: Added information that MCS may contact property owners via boilerupgradescheme@mcscertified.com or on 0333 103 8198 to conduct their own checks, and that property owners should respond within seven days of receiving the communication.

Withholding payments during investigation and non-compliance

- Section 9.22: Amended text to state that we may reject any subsequent voucher applications and voucher redemption applications from an installer if we choose to withhold a payment.
- Section 9.23: Added footnote to state that civil recovery notices will be sent to installers.
- Section 9.26: Added text to define a former installer as any installer who has created a BUS account or has been a named user on a BUS account and does not currently hold any active or open applications, and not simply an installer who has created a BUS account and has made an application for a BUS voucher.

Revocation of vouchers

- Section 9.27: Added information that after we have revoked a voucher, we also have the power to reject other voucher applications and voucher redemption applications associated with a person associated with that installer.
- Section 9.28: Expanded on examples of cases that might warrant or contribute to a revocation to include the provision of information incorrect in a material particular in order to obtain a voucher or grant payment.
- Section 9.29: Removed a sentence stating that the notice of voucher revocation will contain an explanation of the effect of the revocation on the installer (ie if they will become liable to us for the value of the revoked voucher if payment has been made).
- Section 9.33: Added text to make explicit that, in cases of fraud, criminal prosecution and loss of MCS accreditation are consequences that may happen in addition to the previously listed actions available to us in the face of non-compliance.

Repayment and offsetting

- Section 9.38: Text added to make it clear that, for us to require an installer to repay or offset the value of a grant, one of the criteria that we can be satisfied by is that an installer was paid as a result of the provision of incorrect information by the installer which was incorrect in a material particular.

- Sections 9.42-9.47: Changed language from 'appeal a decision' to 'request a review of a decision' for accuracy.
- Section 9.43: Amended paragraph to state that if a property owner or installer believes an error has been made in the decision that has been reached, the installer may ask for a review of this decision.
- Section 9.43: Amended text to make it clear the decision does not necessarily need to be reviewed based on the circumstances and information that was available to Ofgem at the time of the original decision.
- Section 9.46: Added text to make it explicit that it may be quicker and easier to reapply instead as the statutory review team are unable to amend applications that have been correctly rejected. If the wrong information has been provided (for example, property owner contact details) or additional evidence hasn't yet been provided, it is likely that we'll uphold the decision and recommend that the installer reapplies.
- Section 9.46: Sentence added to state that having a voucher application or redemption application rejected doesn't prevent the installer from reapplying, providing the installation meets the eligibility criteria.

Reporting of key scheme data

- Section 10.1: Text added to state that we are required to publish reports on a quarterly and annual basis on our website.
- Section 10.1: Text added to state that we will seek to publish monthly updates on the operation of the BUS to aid transparency on how the scheme is progressing and how much budget remains available.

Queries

- Section 11.1: Added telephone number for the BUS Enquiries team.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

- Text added to make it clear that where the definitions in the glossary overlap with definitions in the BUS regulations, the BUS regulations have precedence.
- Amended definition of 'authorised representative' to state that the authorised representative will confirm that the company will take legal responsibility for all activity undertaken on the BUS account associated with it, rather than being legally responsible themselves.

- Amended definition of 'property owner consent' to state that we will contact the property owner to confirm their consent.
- Amended definition of 'PEL' to state that the products on the Ofgem PEL are taken from the MCS certified product directory.
- Amended definition of 'PEL' to state that the Ofgem PEL is not exhaustive and there may be some products on the MCS certified product directory that meet the requirements for BUS but are not on the Ofgem PEL.
- Amended definition of 'self-build' to specify that eligible self-builds cannot have been owned wholly or partly by a person who is not an individual.
- Amended definition of 'self-build' to specify that the date that eligible self-builds were first occupied must be on or after the first commissioning date of the heat pump.