

Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS)

Summary of updates in the BUS property owner guidance

Introduction

This document outlines the updates that we have made in each iteration of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme property owner 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 property owner guidance

Version 2.5

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity.

BUS overview

- Paragraph 1.3 amended to include latest grant levels for BUS.
- Paragraph 1.4 text added to provide information on scheme extension.
- Paragraph 1.7 added to explain May 2024 BUS regulation changes and direct to new guidance version for more information.
- Paragraph 1.8 added to explain a 'properly made' application.

BUS guidance

- Paragraph 1.17 text amended to clarify that the BUS regulations take precedence over the BUS Guidance.

Related publications and useful links

- Addition of links to October 2023 grant level change notice and March 2024 government response to BUS consultation.

Role of government

- Paragraph 2.1 bullet point 1 text amended to include approving consumer codes as one of the roles of government.

Role of installers

- Paragraph 2.3 bullet point 1 added to clarify that installers are responsible for providing eligibility information and providing further information on request.
- Paragraph 2.3 bullet point 8 added to clarify that the discount that the BUS grant provides is passed on to the property owner.

Role of property owner

- Paragraph 2.5 text amended to provide clarity.

Grants

- Table 1 amended to reflect latest grant levels on BUS.
- Paragraph 3.3 added information on changes to the grant levels which occurred on 21 September 2023.

Summary of eligibility requirements

- Table 2 'type of building' text amended on property developers for further clarity.
- Table 2 'Energy Performance Certificate' text added to provide additional information on EPCs.
- Table 2 'heat pump or biomass boiler system requirements' text added to provide additional information on requirements for eligible systems.

Heat pumps – eligibility criteria

- Paragraph 4.10 text added to specify that shared air loop systems are not eligible on the scheme.

Heating system eligibility

- Paragraph 4.25 added, information moved from 4.28.
- Paragraphs 4.26-4.27 added to improve clarity of information for readers on requirements of an eligible heating system.
- Paragraph 4.30 added, recommends that installers wait until a voucher application has been made and the voucher issues before commissioning the eligible plant.
- Paragraph 4.31 added, recommends installers and property owner discuss the decision on when to apply, links to 4.30.

Eligible properties

- Paragraph 4.38 added new section 'Requirements for retrofit properties' to provide clarity on existing heating systems.
- Paragraph 4.39 added new section 'existing heating requirements' to provide clarity on what an eligible existing heating system is.

Applying for the BUS voucher

- Paragraph 5.8 added to explain a 'properly made' application.
- Paragraph 5.13 text added to highlight the new 120-day commissioning date eligibility rule.
- Paragraph 5.17 bullet point 1 text added to clarify that a letter from a solicitor or a build contract is an acceptable for of evidence for BUS.
- Paragraph 5.17 bullet point 5 text added to clarify that copies of bank statements demonstrating payment of invoices are an acceptable type of evidence for BUS.

Property owner consent

- Paragraph 5.22 bullet point 8 added to clarify that, to be eligible, the property owner has not received other support from public funds or government schemes.

Audit and compliance

- Paragraph 6.6 amendment to wording for enhanced clarity.
- Paragraph 6.18 amendment to wording for enhanced clarity.

Version 2.4

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity.

Applying for the BUS Voucher

- Section 5.11: created new paragraph to address new digital 'Cancel Application and Re-Apply' feature.
- Section 5.16: created new paragraph to address new digital 'file upload' feature, noting the file size limit and required format for uploads.

Version 2.3

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity.

BUS overview

- Paragraph 1.3: 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.
- Figure 1: Updated to reflect new BUS grant levels.

Related publications and useful links

- Added link to the DESNZ change notice.

Grants

- New table added (Table 2) to reflect the new grant amount.

Grant level changes – October 2023

- New section added detailing the grant level changes applicable to the scheme from 23 October 2023.

Version 2.2

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity.

BUS guidance

- Paragraph 1.15: Updated language to improve understanding.

Heat pumps – eligibility criteria

- Added section to clarify position on the use of Hybrid heat pumps.

- Added footnotes referencing BUS regulation 2.

Assisted digital

- Paragraph 5.35: Added reference to Welsh translated service.

Version 2.1

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity.
- Addition of footnotes to support guidance
- Replaced mentions of 'BEIS' with 'The Department for Energy' to reflect the department's restructuring.
- Added new guidance to reflect digitisations of voucher redemptions

BUS Overview

- Figure 1: Changed 'plant' to 'heating system' for greater clarity.
- Paragraph 1.18: Added in line to reflect BEIS's name change to The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (the Energy Department)

Role of government

- Paragraph 2.1: Added in line to reflect the BEIS's name change to The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (the Energy Department)

Role of government

- Paragraph 2.5: Added in guidance on amending any details you have provided to Ofgem.

Eligible properties

- Paragraph 4.36: Replaced 'has the minimum level of' to 'meets the insulation requirements' for clarity.

Choosing an installer and technology

- Paragraph 5.3: Reworded for clarity and added in footnote referencing MCS's 'Find a Contractor' tool.

Applying for the BUS voucher

- Paragraph 5.6: Replaced 'BEIS' with 'Energy Department'

Desk Audits

- Paragraph 6.3: Added in sentence to explain how Ofgem may request additional information via email or post.

Complaints about policy and policy decisions

- Paragraph 9.3: Replaced 'BEIS' with 'Energy Department'

Version 2.0

Throughout the document

- Amendments to text to improve clarity and updates to cross-references to other sections within the document.
- Addition of footnotes to support guidance by referencing corresponding regulation(s).

BUS guidance

- Paragraph 1.22: Added footnote with link to privacy notice.
- Added link to the Ofgem BUS homepage and BEIS guidance (Check if you may be eligible for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme) under the 'Related publications and useful links' section.

Role of property owner

- Paragraph 2.4: Re-phrased first bullet point to improve readability and provide greater clarity.

Role of consumer codes

- Paragraph 2.10: Added contact details and links to information on the consumer codes.

Biomass boilers

- Paragraph 4.14: Added in 'under BUS' for greater clarity.

Eligible Properties

- Paragraph 4.31: Clarified definition of 'development companies'.
- Paragraph 4.38: Added more information on the process in which we check if a property has the minimum level of insulation.
- Paragraph 4.40: Clarification added for loft and/or cavity insulation recommendations
- Paragraph 4.43: Rephrased to improve clarity and readability.

Choosing an installer and technology

- Paragraph 5.2: Added sentence to indicate that an MCS installer applies to the scheme on behalf of property owners.
- Paragraph 5.3: 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.

Applying for the BUS voucher

- Paragraph 5.10: Added sentences explaining that property owners will be notified when we issue a voucher to an installer, including the validity period of the BUS voucher and steps to take if it expires.

Property owner consent

- Paragraph 5.18: Added sentences to inform companies that, if they are not listed on Companies House, they must sign a 'Letter of Authorisation' (LOA) to confirm consent. Added in table below 5.18 showing the authority we would accept.
- Paragraph 5.20: Added a reference to Paragraph 5.34 where the assisted digital pathway

is explained.

- Paragraph 5.22: Added a new paragraph providing explanation of how we use the information provided in the voucher application to undertake a soft verification check using a third-party provider and steps to take if the check fails.
- Paragraph 5.23: Added list of acceptable ID documents in the event property owners are required to provide them.

Power of Attorney

- Paragraph 5.28-5.31: Added in new guidance for property owners who provide a lasting power of attorney.

Assisted digital

- Paragraph 5.35: Added sentence to indicate we will provide a Welsh service if the installer requests this.

Why we undertake audits

- Paragraph 6.8: Added examples of evidence we may require from a property owner in the event of an audit.
- Paragraph 6.9: Updated examples of additional evidence we may require if the property is an eligible new build.

Consumer rights and protections

- Previously, this section was a sub-heading under '6. Audit and Compliance', now it has its own heading under '7. Consumer rights and protections'.

Reporting

- Previously, this section was a sub-heading under '6. Audit and Compliance', now it has its own heading under '8. Reporting'.

Queries, feedback and complaints

- Changed heading from 'Useful Contacts', as it was known in the previous iteration of the guidance, to 'Queries, feedback and complaints'.

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 Overview

- Figure 1: Application process overview flowchart added.
- Sections 1.7-1.12: Information on low carbon heating technology added.

BUS guidance

- Removed 'Guidance for comment and your feedback' section.
- Update of 'Related publications and useful links' list.

Contact information

- Section 1.23: Update of contact information and removal of postal address.

Role of MCS

- Deleted information on consumer codes covered in the 'Role of consumer codes' section.

Summary of eligibility requirements

- Table 2: Removed the word 'small' preceding 'non-domestic buildings'.
- Table 2: Text added to clarify that new builds not built and owned by individuals are not eligible.
- Table 2: Text added to clarify intended meaning of 'self-builds'.
- Table 2: Row added to provide information on how other sources of funding can affect eligibility for the BUS.
- Table 3: Text added to clarify that heat pumps can be installed in eligible self-builds under the scheme.
- Removed section on 'Which technologies are eligible?'

Heat pumps explained

- Removed paragraph referring to 'hybrid heat pump systems'.

Heat pumps – eligibility criteria

- Deleted of paragraph detailing that heat pumps must meet the requirements of the standards published by the Secretary of State and the MCS standards.
- Section 4.7: Added paragraph stating that ASHP systems must be hydronic to be eligible under BUS.

Heating system eligibility

- Section 4.18: Clarified that certain heat generating components of the original heating system can be retained including immersion heaters, circulation pumps and solar thermal collectors. Added that a full list of retainable parts can be found in the BUS installer guidance.
- Section 4.19: Clarified that electric heating systems include storage heaters, electric panel radiators and electric boilers.
- Section 4.20: Paragraph added stating that the heat pump or biomass boiler must provide **both** space and hot water heating and be capable of meeting the full space heating and hot water heating demands of the property.
- Section 4.22: Clarified that the installer is responsible for commissioning the system.

Further information on low carbon heating

- Section 4.23: Replaced link to the Simple Energy Advice website with a link to the Energy Saving Trust website.
- Section 4.24: Added a paragraph stating that an installer can advise on which technology is most suitable for a property and help the property owner to understand the eligibility criteria.

Eligible properties

- Deleted paragraph referring to the to the 45kWth limit (this eligibility requirement is set out in Table 2).
- Section 4.27: Clarified that domestic and non-domestic properties include, but are not limited to, owner-occupied properties, properties rented out to tenants, second homes and holiday homes.
- Section 4.28: Clarified that mobile properties such as park homes may be eligible if an EPC can be issued on the basis that it is a property and all other eligibility requirements are met.
- Section 4.30: Clarified that properties that have undergone a sale through the 'Right to Buy' scheme are not classified as social housing.
- Section 4.30: Clarified that new build properties built at scale by development companies are not eligible for BUS at the point at which they are being built.
- Section 4.32: Amended definition of 'eligible self-build' to clarify that the definition refers to the building, rather than the overall property.
- Section on 'Insulation requirements and EPCs' largely moved to Chapter 5, including a flow chart on EPC requirements for an eligible grant application and voucher redemption.
- Section 4.37: Paragraph added setting out that installations in eligible self-builds do not need to supply evidence that the minimum required level of insulation is present since these properties are required to be insulated in line with current building regulations.

Applying for the BUS voucher

- Section 5.5: Added sentence detailing that the installer will receive the grant payment from Ofgem, on behalf of BEIS.
- Section 5.11: Clarified that it is only necessary to provide sufficient evidence that the property satisfies the definition of self-build set out at paragraph 4.32.
- Section 5.11: Clarified that the list of acceptable evidence given at section 5.12 is an indicative, non-exhaustive list of the types of evidence that could be used to demonstrate that a building is a self-build, and that it is unlikely that all the evidence listed will be required.
- Section 5.11: Added sentence setting out that sensitive information on these documents that does not impact on us judging whether the definition has been met (eg bank details) can be redacted by the property owner if they so wish.

- Section 5.12: Clarified that evidence provided for a self-build must demonstrate both that the property was funded using the labour/resources of the first owner and has never been owned by a non-individual.
- Section 5.13: Added a paragraph clarifying that properties that are exempt from insulation requirements still require a valid EPC to be submitted at voucher application stage.
- Section 5.14: Clarified that we do not check EPCs for insulation recommendations for eligible self-builds.
- Section 5.15: Removed recommendation that an EPC assessment may cost £60 upwards, and added text that there is no set fee for an EPC assessment.
- Section 5.16: Clarification that if there are no recommendations for loft and/or cavity wall insulation listed on the EPC then the property fulfils the insulation requirements for BUS.
- Sections 5.17-5.22: Expanded on information on how property owners can ensure that they meet the insulation requirements, including by installing insulation after a BUS voucher has been obtained.
- Section 5.23: Clarified that room-in-roof insulation is deemed distinct from loft insulation, and therefore if an eligible property has EPC recommendations for the installation of room-in-roof insulation, it will still be eligible for a BUS voucher.
- Figure 2: Moved flowchart on EPC requirements for an eligible grant application and voucher redemption from Chapter 4 to Chapter 5.
- Figure 2: Enlarged text.

Property owner consent

- Section 5.25: Added information that the property owner consent email will be sent from boiler.upgrade.scheme.ofgem@notifications.service.gov.uk.
- Section 5.26: Sentence added clarifying that seeking consent is solely for Ofgem to confirm that an installer is applying on behalf of the property owner and the property owner has consented to this.
- Section 5.26: Sentences added clarifying that the provision of property owner consent does not confirm that a property owner agrees to the installation of the low carbon heating system, and does not duplicate or recreate any contractual arrangements that an installer and property owner have in place.
- Section 5.27: Paragraph added detailing that consent will be asked for only once and will be obtained at the voucher application stage and not at the voucher redemption stage.
- Section 5.28: Clarified that where the property is owned by an organisation, the property owner is anyone who can legally represent that organisation eg a director or company secretary.

- Section 5.29: Clarified that property owners must provide consent via the validation link in the email we send to them. We cannot accept consent via another medium unless the property owner is part of the assisted digital pathway.
- Section 5.30: Removal of sentence indicating that the property owner must confirm that they have instructed the installer to carry out the installation.
- Section 5.37: Added additional information on the process for giving consent via the assisted digital route.
- Section 5.41: Amended to state that Ofgem will process property owner personal information in line with the Privacy Policy for Property Owners.
- Section 5.46: Added sentence to indicate that the property owner will be informed when a redemption application is successful.
- Section 5.47: Added information on the process for the payment of the grant.

Why we undertake audits

- Section 6.1: Combined two paragraphs into one, setting out why Ofgem undertake audits and what we audit.
- Section 6.5: Clarified that if a property owner refuses a request for audit, we may reject the voucher or voucher redemption application, revoke a voucher or seek to recoup any grant already paid out.
- Section 6.6: 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 6.7: 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.
- Combined paragraph on contacting consumer codes with a similar paragraph at Section 6.22.
- Section 6.13: Added text to clarify that we may withhold a grant if the property owner has provided false information to the installer, in addition to the possibility that we may revoke the voucher or recoup the grant payment.
- Removed section on whistleblowing given that it is only relevant to individuals who work within the energy sector or are involved in the delivery of one of our environmental or social programmes.

Consumer rights and protections

- Section 6.23: Clarification added that consumer codes exist to protect consumers from any harm they may face due to any MCS installer's misconduct.

Reporting

- Section 6.24: Added sentences to set out that we will seek to publish monthly updates on the operation of the BUS. This aids transparency on how the scheme is progressing and how much budget remains available for installers to apply for on your behalf.
- Sections 6.25-6.28: Added information on our reporting schedule.

Right of review

- Section 7.2: Added paragraph on the way in which property owners can request a review of a decision we have made through their installer.