



ISSUE 70

SCAMS AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter



Free boiler? Free insulation? Don't let a good offer become a costly scam

As the days get shorter and the weather starts to turn colder, many of us begin thinking about keeping our homes warm and, with energy bills still a concern, how we can make our homes more energy efficient.

Unfortunately, scammers know this too.

You may receive a text message, phone call, letter, email or even a knock at the door offering a “free boiler”, “free insulation” or “government energy grant”. They may say you have been specially selected, that your home qualifies for a scheme, or that you need to act quickly before an offer expires.

Some energy-efficiency schemes are genuine – but that doesn't mean every offer you receive is.

In this newsletter:

- How may the scam work and how to decide what is genuine p.2
- Stop, check & decide. warnings about ‘free’ services plus help with energy bills p.3
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How might the scam work?

A text message

You receive a message saying:

“Your property may qualify for a government-funded energy upgrade. Click here to check your eligibility.”

The link takes you to a convincing-looking website which asks for your name, address, date of birth and other personal information. You may then be contacted by someone trying to sell you something or use your information for further scams.

Don't click on unexpected links in texts. If you think an offer might be genuine, find the organisation's website yourself rather than using the link in the message.

An unexpected phone call

Someone calls claiming to be from your energy company, the government or Ofgem. They may tell you that your boiler is old, your home has been identified as suitable for insulation, or that you are entitled to a grant.

They might then ask for personal or financial information or try to arrange an appointment.

Ofgem does not sell energy to households or carry out doorstep sales. If someone contacts you claiming to be from Ofgem, don't provide any personal or financial information. End the call and make your own enquiries using contact details you have found independently.

A knock at the door

A stranger tells you that they are working in your area and that your house has been identified as needing insulation or a new boiler.

They may use phrases such as:

- “You've been selected for a government scheme.”
- “Your neighbours have already had it done.”
- “We only have a few spaces left.”
- “You need to decide today.”
- “We need to check your boiler or loft before we leave.”

These are all designed to make you feel that you need to act immediately.

You don't.

A genuine trader should give you time to consider the offer and check the details independently. If you are interested in the offer, ask for written information and take time to check it before agreeing to anything.



“But what if the offer is genuine?”

This is an important question.

There are genuine schemes which can help eligible households with energy efficiency and heating improvements. For example, the Boiler Upgrade Scheme provides grants towards eligible heat-pump installations, while other schemes can provide help with measures such as insulation and heating improvements.

The fact that genuine schemes exist is one reason these scams can be so convincing. So don't feel that you have to say “no” to every offer. Instead, take control of the decision yourself.

STOP – CHECK – DECIDE

STOP

Don't agree to anything immediately, particularly if you weren't expecting the contact. Don't hand over your bank details, passwords or other personal information. If someone is at your door, you don't have to let them in.

Check

Find out exactly which scheme they are talking about. Don't rely on the information, telephone number, website or QR code provided by the person who contacted you. Instead, look up the organisation independently and check whether the scheme exists and whether you could be eligible. If you are unsure, ask someone you trust to help you check.

Decide

Don't allow someone else to make the decision for you. A genuine opportunity shouldn't require you to make a rushed decision because someone says the offer will disappear today. Get a written quotation if work is being proposed and check exactly what you are being offered, what it will cost and who will carry out the work.

If you are approached about an energy scheme, don't be afraid to take the details away and check them first. You are always entitled to take your time and make sure the offer is right for you.

Be particularly careful with “free”

The word FREE can be very persuasive.

“Free” doesn't always mean completely free. Different schemes have different eligibility rules and arrangements, and some offers may involve contributions or additional work. Don't assume that because someone uses the words “government scheme” or “grant funded”, the offer is automatically genuine.

Struggling with your energy bills? Help is available.

Energy scams aren't the only concern. With the cost of heating a home still putting pressure on household budgets, it's important to know that genuine, independent help is available. [Citizens Advice Cheshire](#) provides free, independent and impartial energy advice to residents across Cheshire. They can help with:

- Advice about energy bills, tariffs and payment methods
- Help with energy arrears and negotiating with suppliers
- Advice about heating controls and energy efficiency

- Checks to see what financial support you may be entitled to, including the Warm Home Discount, Winter Fuel Payment and Cold Weather Payment
- Help in a crisis, including fuel vouchers where appropriate
- Information about the Priority Services Register
- Home visits, local office and telephone appointments

Visit: www.citizensadvicecw.org.uk/our-projects/energy-advice-service

 0808 278 7806

 energy-advice@citizensadvicecw.org.uk

Age UK Cheshire's Warm Homes

For eligible people aged 50+, our Warm Homes service offers benefits & income maximisation checks, advice on energy efficiency and keeping warm. In Cheshire West, we can help eligible people access Cadent's Priority Services Register. For eligible residents aged 65+ in Cheshire West, we can support applications to the Crisis & Resilience Fund, which can help with food, energy and essential household items. A separate fund is available in Cheshire East, with application support through our I & A team.

 01606 305001  enquiries@ageukcheshire.org.uk

Green Doctors

Green Doctors offer free, impartial energy advice and can help with energy or water bills, keeping warm, improving energy efficiency and dealing with cold, damp or draughty homes.

 0330 1740 863  Greendoctor.CLM@groundwork.org.uk

You don't have to wait until you're in crisis before asking for help.

Don't be embarrassed to say no!

If someone catches you off guard, remember that you are allowed to say no. You don't need to explain yourself or give a reason.

And if you've already given someone your details or agreed to something and are now worried, don't ignore it because you're embarrassed. Talk to someone you trust and get advice as soon as possible.

As the weather gets colder, genuine organisations will be helping people improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Unfortunately, scammers know this too.

So, if you receive an unexpected offer for a free boiler, insulation, heating upgrade or energy grant, don't feel pressured to decide there and then.

STOP – CHECK – DECIDE.

Take your time. Check the offer independently. And remember, you are always allowed to say no.

If you are affected by the content of this bulletin, you can talk to us. Our Scams Awareness and Aftercare Team can offer free support, advice and guidance. Contact our team today on:

 01625 612958 (OPTION 5)

 scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk