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NEW BOILER NEEDED? BEWARE THE EXPENSIVE OPTION

Recent consumer research commissioned by the Heating Helpline reveals that independent heating installers provide much better value and homeowners can waste large sums of money by opting for a large utility company.

6 April 2010 – Recent consumer research commissioned by the Heating Helpline has revealed that the leading utility companies are overcharging homeowners by quoting excessively high prices for the installation of a new boiler.

Householders have complained that British Gas and other large utility companies are quoting inflated prices for replacing a boiler, with local, independent engineers typically quoting significantly lower prices.

One example showed British Gas quoting £4,215 for a boiler replacement and for the same work independent engineers quoted between £2,500 and £3,000.

Robert Higgs, Chief Executive of the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA), comments, "Much of British Gas' work is sub-contracted and householders are simply paying for the perceived peace of mind from using the country's best known heating name – they are not paying extra for additional quality or competence.

"With an estimated 20,000 individuals carrying out illegal gas work in the UK every year, homeowners might feel a big name like British Gas is the safe option but it is not difficult to locate a reputable, competent local heating engineer – the Gas Safe Register consists of approximately 55,200 companies employing 120,000 operatives who are all experienced, qualified and competent engineers.

"All our own members who undertake domestic gas work are Gas Safe registered and they are also all members of TrustMark, the government-backed scheme that makes it easy for consumers to find reliable, reputable trades people.

"By employing the services of TrustMark registered traders, homeowners can be assured that they are using a firm that operates according to industry best practice, with a standard of workmanship that has been verified by their TrustMark Scheme operator".

To find a reputable heating engineer in your area, contact the free Heating Helpline on 0800 840 4069 or visit the website at:
www.heatinghelpline.org.uk.

Backed by the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA), the Heating Helpline provides essential information on energy saving in the home and the importance of regular heating maintenance, and offers dozens of money-saving solutions for homeowners.

Ends

Issued on behalf of the HVCA by Next Step Marketing Ltd.

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Note to Editors

Established in 1904, the HVCA is the premier organisation representing central heating contractors across the UK, and exists to promote fair dealing and the sound installation of heating systems.

HVCA members all undergo third-party inspection and assessment of their technical competence and commercial capability every three years. This process is carried out by an independent certification body with an established industry reputation.

HVCA members who undertake gas installations are registered with Gas Safe – the gas safety watchdog body – and are also members of TrustMark, the Government-endorsed scheme designed to direct customers towards reliable tradespeople.

HVCA operates the *Heating Helpline* (www.heatinghelpline.org.uk) to provide consumers with free, impartial advice on every aspect of home heating.