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[www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press](http://www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press)*

### **NEW BOILER NEEDED?** **HOW TO AVOID THE EXPENSIVE OPTION**

*Research by consumer watchdog Which? reveals that independent heating installers are better value for money and home owners could be wasting large sums by opting for British Gas*

Consumer watchdog Which? has found that independent heating engineers are much cheaper than British Gas (BG) for boiler replacement jobs. Which? looked into this issue after several of its members pointed out the significant discrepancies between British Gas quotes and those from local independent firms for boiler replacements and other heating related services.

One example showed BG quoting £3,997 to replace a 12-year-old combination boiler in a one-bedroom flat in London. For the same work, independent engineers quoted between £2,000 and £2,300. In Nottingham, researchers came across a price of £5,106 from BG to install a new boiler in a five-bedroom house compared with two independent quotes of £2,485 and £2,888. One Which? respondent in Manchester also complained that he had been quoted £3,457 by BG to replace a heat-only boiler with a modern condensing equivalent, while local contractors were asking for between £1,700 and £1,940.

Robert Higgs, Chief Executive of the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA), comments, "We are always warning consumers about the danger of taking the cheapest quote, but this research actually illustrates something quite different.

"Much of BG's work is sub-contracted and householders are simply paying for a perceived peace of mind from using the country's best known heating name – they are not paying extra for additional quality or competence.

"We understand that, with an estimated 20,000 individuals who carry out illegal gas work in the UK every year, homeowners might too easily assume all small installation firms are cowboys and that they are much better taking the 'safe option' and going with what many people still refer to as the 'Gas Board'; but safeguards are in place – the new Gas Safe Register, which replaces the CORGI scheme from 1 April 2009, consists of approximately 55,200 companies and 120,000 operatives who are experienced, qualified and competent engineers.

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

“Additionally, all our members are independently inspected and assessed before being accepted into membership, providing third party verification of members’ professionalism and competence – just the sort of reassurance members of the public are looking for.

“At a time when family budgets are tight people are on the lookout for the best deal and whilst gas safety is not an area for compromise the Which? research shows that it is possible to employ the services of a local, independent company and make substantial savings – and providing the installers are on the new Gas Safe Register the homeowner can have peace of mind”.

For details of your nearest HVCA engineer visit the TrustMark website at: [www.trustmark.org.uk](http://www.trustmark.org.uk).

Ends

Issued on behalf of the HVCA by Next Step Marketing. Media enquiries to: Denzil Lee. Tel: +44(0)1256 861186; Fax: +44(0)1256 861100; E-mail: [info@nextstepmarketing.co.uk](mailto:info@nextstepmarketing.co.uk).

### Note to Editors

On 8 September 2008, Capita signed a ten-year contract with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to operate a new gas installer registration scheme in Great Britain from April 2009. The new scheme replaces the

CORGI gas registration scheme which will end on 31 March 2009 in England, Scotland and Wales.

All Gas Safe Register installers will carry a Photo ID to be shown to customers. They will display the engineer's qualifications and category of registration.



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

**Caption for picture at [www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press](http://www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press):**

*'If your boiler needs replacing you're likely to obtain a more competitive quote from your local HVCA member and other independent Gas Safe Register companies'*