



PRESS RELEASE

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Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire is sharing five top tips to stay safe, while going green.

Citizens Advice has found that in the South East, 61% of adults are thinking about making their homes more energy efficient in the next 12 months.

But 30% said they have already been targeted by a green scam.

160 people from across Oxfordshire came directly to Citizens Advice for help as a result of being scammed between 1 Apr 20 and 31 Mar 21.

Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire is taking part in this year's National Consumer Week to help you know how to stay safe when making your home more energy efficient.

Teresa Archer, Chief Officer of Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, said:

"It's important we know how to stay safe when going green, as scammers have no qualms about playing on the need to do our bit for the environment.

"If you're thinking of making your home more energy efficient, take your time doing research, getting quotes and reading reviews. And as always, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

"We know that being scammed doesn't just leave us out of pocket, it can leave us feeling very vulnerable, isolated and really knock our confidence.

"If you've been scammed or are worried about how to spot a scam, our advisers are here to listen and help."

Citizens Advice across Oxfordshire has five top tips to stay safe when making your home more energy efficient

- **Do your research.** Before you buy anything, check the company or website you're using. Read reviews on different websites, ask for references, verify the company's details using external sources, and read any terms and conditions.

- **Check certified schemes.** When looking for a trader to use, check [certified schemes](#) that recommend traders, like TrustMark - the Government's endorsed quality scheme.
- **Get written quotes and a contract.** Try to get quotes from at least three different contractors to help you decide if you're getting a fair price. Once you've decided, always get a written contract before you give a contractor the go-ahead. If something goes wrong it can help get what you paid for, or at least get some of your money back.
- **Pay with a secure method.** Credit cards offer the most protection, followed by PayPal or debit card. If you're paying for large home improvement works, see if you can pay in stages, and avoid paying for costs up-front where possible.
- **Be suspicious.** Scammers and rogue traders can be very smart. Take your time to make sure you're happy with your decision - if someone pressures you or contacts you out of the blue, it's most likely a scam.

If you've been scammed, talk to your bank or card company immediately if you've handed over any financial and sensitive information or made a payment. See Citizens Advice's page on [What to do if you've been scammed](#) for more information.

To report a scam or ask for advice [contact Citizens Advice consumer service](#). Offline scams, like telephone, post and doorstep, can be reported via the [Citizens Advice consumer service](#) or by calling 0808 223 1133. Report online scams to the dedicated Scams Action service either [online](#) or on 0808 250 5050.

Text scams can be reported to your mobile phone provider by forwarding it to 7726. You can also report the scam to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

For information and advice, contact your local Citizens Advice in Oxfordshire on www.caox.org.uk

Ends.

We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

- The four Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, Oxford, North Oxfordshire and South Northamptonshire and South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse all exist to provide free, confidential, independent advice in Oxfordshire and they are all members of Citizens Advice, the national charity
- For Citizens Advice general local free telephone advice, visit www.caox.org.co.uk.
- Citizens Advice Freephone Adviceline 0800 144 8848 and Textphone: 0800 144 8884

- Citizens Advice in Oxfordshire are supported by more than 670 trained volunteers and 52 paid staff working across 14 advice centres. In the last year, we helped 27,000 people across Oxfordshire with 78,000 issues.
- Citizens Advice is made up of the national charity Citizens Advice; the network of independent local Citizens Advice charities across England and Wales; the Citizens Advice consumer service; and the Witness Service.
- Citizens Advice helped 2.7 million people face to face, over the phone, by email and web chat in 19-20. We had 3.5 million visits to our national website. For full service statistics see Citizens Advice monthly publication [Advice Trends](#).