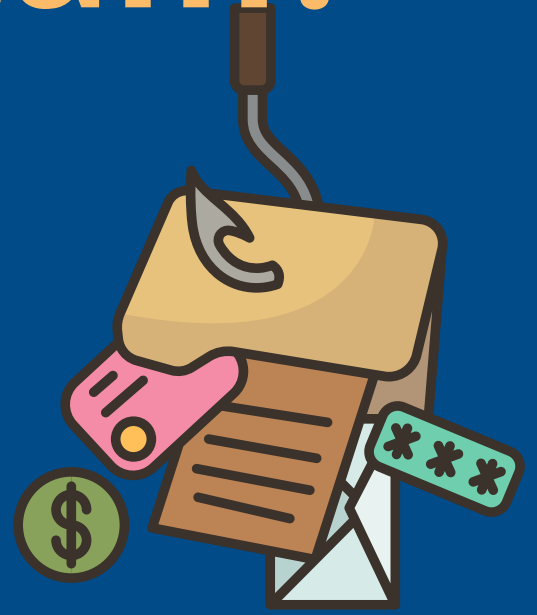


Can You Spot an Energy Scam?

Scams relating to energy or property grants are on the rise. More than 19 million adults have been targeted by a green scam in the past year, new research by Citizens Advice finds.



The charity discovered more than two thirds of adults are thinking about making their home more energy efficient in the next 12 months, but 36% said they have already been targeted by a green scam.

More than a quarter clocked the danger, but an estimated 5.2 million people have already fallen for a green scam across the UK in 2021.

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Citizens Advice's top five tips to stay safe when making your home more energy efficient



Do your research

1

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.

2

Check certified schemes

When looking for a trader to use, check certified schemes that recommend traders, like TrustMark - the Government's endorsed quality scheme.



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Get written quotes and a contract

3

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.



4

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

5

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.

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As well as scams relating to energy or property grants, scams relating to income, included banking and benefit related scams, are also increasing year after year.



Scammers will try and target vulnerable people, if you look after someone, such as a friend or elderly parents, you may worry that they are at a higher risk of fraud.



We know that online scams are on the rise. As the tactics scammers use become more sophisticated, anyone can be caught out. Research by the Office of Fair Trading

(OFT) shows that older victims are likely to lose nearly twice as much per scam as others.

Victims are often socially isolated, over-trusting or have illnesses such as dementia and can be repeatedly targeted by the scammers. One carer reported being bombarded by unwanted phone calls for over a year, demanding payments for products she had not ordered.

Here are a few key tips to protect yourself

Text scams

Be wary of messages offering energy discounts or rebates. If you're asked to fill in personal or financial details, it's likely a scam.



Phone scams

If someone calls and pressures you to hand over money or personal information, hang up immediately and call 159 to speak directly with your bank.

Email scams

If you receive a suspicious email, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk - this helps authorities track and shut down phishing attempts.



Steps to take if you've been scammed

If you think you've been the victim of a scam, there are some steps that you should take as soon as possible to help protect yourself and others:

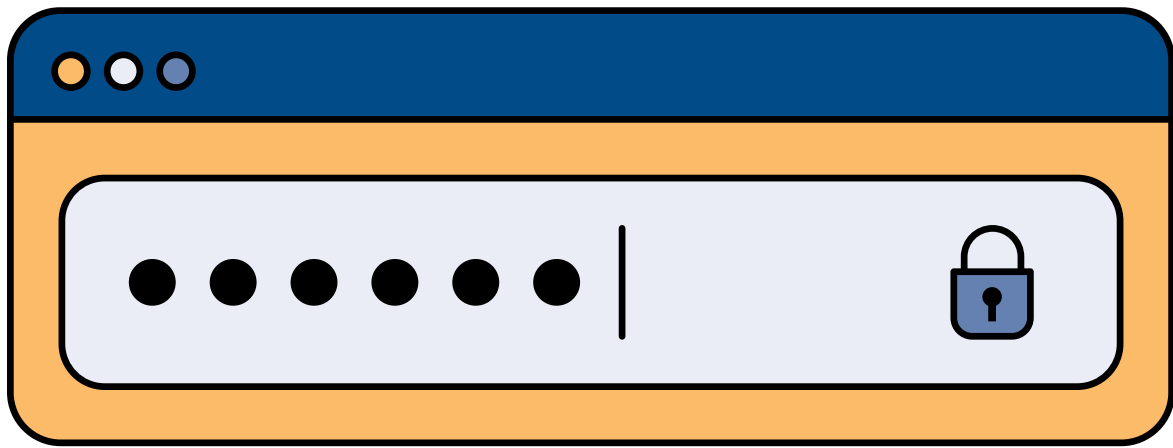
Contact your bank immediately

Contact your bank as soon as you notice fraudulent activity or think you may have scammed. You can call your bank using the phone number on your card. Some banks may also have a dedicated fraud line you can call.



Report the scam to the police

Report the scam to Report Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting www.reportfraud.police.uk



Change your passwords

Whether you've been scammed online, over the phone, or in person, it's important to secure your accounts if scammers now have your personal details. It's especially important to change your password on your online banking account.

[See our tips on choosing a strong password.](#)

Secure your computer or device

It's also a good idea to ensure your computer and any other devices – such as your phone or tablet – are also secure. Consider changing your password or passcode and installing any new security or system updates.



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Monitor your bank accounts and credit report

After you've been scammed, keep an eye on your bank accounts via online banking or by getting regular account statements, to make sure there's no more suspicious activity.



Stop contact with the scammer



If you have been in direct contact with the scammers, stop all contact immediately. Scammers will often try to get more information or money from you.

Check if you can get your money back

If you contact your bank, you may be able to recover money you've lost in unauthorised or unexpected payments.



Where to Check for Genuine Grants

With energy costs rising, many people are searching for financial help, and unfortunately, this has also led to an increase in scams.

The resources below are trusted sources of information about energy grants and financial support, helping you avoid misleading or fraudulent offers.

If you're unsure where to turn or would like extra help, you can also contact us directly by phone or email. Our team is here to provide free, confidential advice and support, and to help you take the next steps safely.

0800 145 6879

[Or email us here](#)

<https://westsussexenergy.co.uk/heating-and-insulation-grants/>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-warm-homes-local-grant>

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Resources

[19 million targeted by a green scam - here are five top tips on staying safe when making your home more energy efficient - Citizens Advice](#)

[Keeping safe from scams | Carers UK](#)

[Phone scams – dealing with cold and nuisance calls | Age UK](#)



If you need support, reach out to us:

0800 145 6879

Press 1 for East Sussex
Press 2 for West Sussex

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