

Government policy: PAS2035- A new specification for the energy retrofit of domestic buildings.

PAS2035 and Trustmark are potentially the most disruptive policy changes to hit the heating industry in decades and if we allow it to filter in unchecked, it could radically transform how heating engineers not only carry out their day job but whether they can operate at all. This is not scaremongering, we urge industry to not to sit back. Take action. Write to your MP, make your voices heard.

What is PAS2035?

PAS2035 is a new standard for the energy retrofit of domestic buildings, proposed by Government via changes to the current ECO3 scheme. This includes:

- Mandating the TrustMark Government Endorsed Quality scheme as a requirement to undertake ECO3 (Energy Company Obligation V3) work. The Trustmark registration required to access ECO will then require installers to work to PAS 2035 for all their retrofit energy efficiency work (e.g. boiler replacements)!

Do we need new standards?

No industry is immune from the need to manage and monitor standards. Which is why the Heating and Hotwater Industry Council, HHIC, have long campaigned for more support and funding for enforcement of existing Building Regulations, to ensure that standards remain high and to make it harder for the 'cowboys' to trade.

Heating professionals are highly accredited. They work hard to gain accreditation, and there are already many tools in place to indicate quality. For example; Gas Safe Register, CIPHE, manufacturers' accreditation and training and the Competent Persons Schemes.

Gas Safe registered engineers also use Benchmark, a scheme that operates with the support of boiler manufacturers and provides a checklist for a safe and reliable installation, as well as supporting consumer protection.

We believe that the mechanisms for quality and efficiency are already in place, and with more funding and support we can continue to raise standards and deliver a first class heating and hot water industry to UK homeowners. Failure to enforce the current PAS2030 properly, and police the workmanship of those accredited, has been a root cause for many poor installations identified.

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 info@hhic.org.uk

 01926 513777

 @HHIC

Camden House
Warwick Road
Kenilworth
CV8 1TH

PAS2035- the reality

- 1 There are approximately 130,000 Gas Safe registered engineers in the UK and yet only 350 (0.4%) of them have registered with the current ECO scheme.
- 2 Businesses must pay to install under the ECO scheme and undertake additional training.
- 3 Installation of new and replacement boilers will be plagued with burdensome administration and red tape. Costing businesses further time and expense.
- 4 Every ECO job will now need up to 6 'professionals' for every installation (although there are loopholes which mean that they don't have to actually be qualified).
- 5 Industry know that most boilers are purchased as a distress purchase, these bureaucratic delays could leave the most vulnerable (those eligible for fuel poverty measures are by definition vulnerable) without heat and hot water.
- 6 Administration of technical monitoring may be transferred from Ofgem, the ECO administrator, to TrustMark. Should we be outsourcing something with such high levels of consumer interest to a private company?
- 7 Government expects costs to increase for suppliers and industry. We estimate that this will equate to £41,000 a year per company. This includes registration fees, training, time away from trading, reduction in the number of jobs completed due to time delays, and the employment of at least one new member of staff to be a retrofit coordinator.
- 8 Costs will be passed on to consumers in the form of increased costs per measure installed. Government also admits that this burden will disproportionately fall on small business. As they are forced out of the market by larger companies able to absorb the costs.
- 9 The PAS2035 document currently costs £195 to buy meaning that engineers are unable to properly review and respond.
- 10 The steering group that determined PAS2035 did not have representation from the heating industry, despite claims that it was developed by the industry.

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Some will say that there is no cause for concern as ECO work is not compulsory and they can simply choose not to engage, leaving the bureaucracy to those who choose to. We believe to adopt such a view would be naïve. One thing we cannot stress enough is that this policy is sliding in below the radar. Once this standard makes its way into ECO it could (and most probably will) then make its way into Building Regulations and standards.

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