

6 - When work is finished on grant schemes

If you'd like to apply for a grant scheme for energy improvements you will nearly always have a survey of your home, followed by some sort of planning (design) in more detail. Building work then happens.

Once work is finished there are some key things you need to know about so that you can benefit from a cosier, healthier home.

At this point:

- Some systems need to be tested and set-up (like heating or ventilation).
- All improvements should be clearly explained to you, so you know how to use and maintain them.
- You may be asked to complete surveys.
- You may need help if any issues crop up.

It's important to stress that standards and accreditations are no guarantee that you'll get good quality.

This is why we encourage you to learn more about the different stages you'll pass through on your way to a cosier, more affordable home.

A good first step is feeling more confident about what to look for, and what to ask.

Applying for grants?

See our other sheets on:

- 1 - An introduction to home improvement grants
- 2 - An introduction to Retrofit Standards
- 3 - Surveys and assessments
- 4 - Getting into the detail (design)
- 5 - Before work starts
- 7 - Mixing grant schemes with other funding

When work is finished

Questions to ask

☐**Has the system been set-up?**

(many engineers call this commissioning)

This is crucial for heating and ventilation systems to work well.

☐**Is it working correctly?**

Tapes and screens are often put on ventilation systems to protect them from building dust. Make sure they are removed.

☐**Have you removed any temporary tapes or screens?**☐**Have you cleaned it?**☐**Can I have a copy of the commissioning paperwork and any certificates?**

E.g. checklists, Electrical Safety Certificates.

If you're a tenant you're entitled to copies of these. Your landlord should also get them. Keep digital copies of any paper forms for safe keeping, if possible.

☐**Who will show me how to use and look after the new things?**

Consider whether you want someone to come with you.

☐**When will this happen?**

It's not uncommon to be told "it's all set-up, don't touch it." We don't think this is very helpful! There may be times when you need to re-set a system, or at least turn it off so you can clean it.

☐**What information will you give me? In what way?**

E.g. will it be on paper, as videos, internet links? *We'd encourage you to share what will work best for you, and ask if they can accommodate that.*



Will I hear from you after this?

On nearly all grant schemes you'll be asked to complete a survey when work is finished. This is so the industry learn what works well and what doesn't. You could ask whether you'll be sent this, how (e.g. by email, post or a phone call) and when this will happen.

Some grant schemes also ask if they can contact you again in future. This might be for a more detailed survey or interview. You're under no obligation to take part in these.



Who can I contact with questions or if I have a problem? What should I do if I have a problem?

It's important you know who you can contact if there are any problems.

*It's important to **tell the company and/or your landlord as soon as possible** if you think there is a problem.*

Note the date and keep copies of all emails, letters or messages, as well as notes of telephone conversations or meetings. Photos are helpful to explain the problem, and act as a record.

It's important to note the difference between defects caused by the building process and those due to:

- lack of cleaning,
- lack of maintenance,
- fair 'wear and tear'
- minor adjustments (e.g. a hinge on a door).

Generally, builders are only liable to fix things that are classed as defects.

When work is finished: getting help with defects

For grant funded works completed under PAS2035 and TrustMark you should:

- Approach the builder/installer first. If you've been through a council scheme, let them know.
- If you are still not satisfied, contact the builder's accreditation body/scheme provider. This will depend on the type of work they do. Examples include CIGA, NAPIT. You can usually find this information on paperwork from the builder or their website.
- If you are still not satisfied, you should approach TrustMark: www.trustmark.org.uk

If you need advice about a problem with a builder, Citizens Advice can help. Scan the QR code, or contact their Consumer helpline on 0800 223 1133.



Citizens Advice can report to local Trading Standards if appropriate.

Building contracts and responsibility

It will likely be easier to get the builder to rectify any defects while you are still within the building contract period. The length of this varies.

Building contracts usually include a 'rectification' period once work is complete. This is designed to pick up and fix any problems that only occur (or are noticed) after work was formally completed by the builder. This benefits all parties because it allows issues that weren't visible at completion to be fixed without the need for other legal processes.

Beyond a building contract, builders and designers still have responsibilities and it's still possible to get them to fix defects. But this may be more complicated (e.g. it may require court action to enforce it). The key message is to report a problem as soon as you notice it.