

Beware of renewable energy scams

Many of us aim to be more eco-friendly. One way to do this is to use renewable energy, for instance by installing solar panels or switching to a green energy supplier. However, alongside many legitimate schemes and home products, there are fraudsters using the cover of renewable energy to steal your money or personal or financial information.

If you are thinking about switching to renewable energy, follow this checklist:

- Research the market. Don't be tempted by a seemingly unbeatable deal from a doorstep trader, mailshot or cold phone call.
- Never be rushed or intimidated into making a decision. The choice of suppliers is growing so take time to shop around for the right deal.
- If you receive a cold phone call tempting you to invest in renewable energy, don't give any personal or financial information. Put the phone down.
- If you want to switch energy supplier, use the Citizens Advice comparison tool at energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk or call 03454 040506 to find the best genuine deal.
- Before signing anything, read the terms and conditions and make sure you know what you are signing up to. Ask a trusted friend for help if you need it.
- Ask friends and family for advice and recommendations on renewable energy.
- Use a scheme or association to find reliable businesses. For example:
 - Find local, trustworthy businesses through the Buy With Confidence scheme. All businesses in the scheme are vetted, approved and monitored by Trading Standards. Visit buywithconfidence.gov.uk or call 01392 383430.
 - Or use a business that's a member of an appropriate trade association for example the Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC) or the Renewable Energy Association (REA). These specialise in renewables and members must stick to their codes of practice. If a trader says they are a member of an association, check this is true.

If you are worried you have bought into a scam of any kind:

- Get advice from Citizens Advice on 03454 040506
- Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

Did you know? Switching to green energy doesn't mean all the electricity coming into your home will be green. You'll still receive the same energy (including renewable) as everyone else. However, it does help increase the amount of green energy in the National Grid.

This article has been written by Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service
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