

News Release



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HOW TO FIND REPUTABLE TRADESPEOPLE FOR YOUR 2015 HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

According to the recent Lloyds Bank Spending Power Report, consumers' confidence in their financial situation is at its highest level for at least four years, boding well for a brightening economy in 2015. It will mean homeowners up and down the country will now be planning home improvements in 2015 – extensions, new kitchens, bathrooms, boiler upgrades and perhaps renewable energy technologies. The Building & Engineering Services Association (B&ES) has some timely advice to homeowners on how to find reputable companies for this work and the sensible steps to take to ensure everything goes smoothly.

18 March 2015 – According to the recent Lloyds Bank Spending Power Report, consumers' confidence in their financial situation is at its highest level for at least four years, boding well for a brightening economy in 2015. The report revealed that people's sentiment towards their personal situation has not been higher since the survey began in 2011. Almost a quarter of those surveyed said they will have more disposable cash to spend in the coming months; together with job security continuing to

improve, it points to an improvement in householders' disposable incomes and a continuation of 2014's robust economic growth in 2015.

Homeowners up and down the country will now be planning home improvements in 2015, with many still adopting the 'Don't Move, Improve' mantra.

The Building & Engineering Services Association (B&ES) has some timely advice on how to find reputable companies for this home improvement work and the sensible steps to take to ensure everything goes smoothly.

Mark Oakes, Head of Specialist Group Services at B&ES, said, "With the consumer confidence at levels not seen since the crash of 2008, homeowners that have stalled on home improvements in the past few years will now be putting plans in place for extensions, new kitchens, bathrooms, boiler upgrades and perhaps renewable energy technologies. This might mean major expenditure and they will want to steer well clear of the thousands of rogue traders and cowboy builders operating in the UK and their all too prevalent rip-off tactics.

"For peace of mind we strongly recommend that homeowners only use the services of a TrustMark member. It's the only trade competence scheme officially endorsed and backed by the Government. TrustMark was set up specifically to help homeowners and consumers locate local reputable tradespeople to carry out quality improvements, repairs and maintenance work on their homes or gardens. Then follow these simple guidelines to be sure of a completely satisfactory outcome:

- Obtain written and itemised quotes from at least three TrustMark members. Ask for a written quotation – not an estimate. A quote is legally binding but an estimate is not.
- Getting quotes will give you a realistic guide to how much the work is likely to cost and it will also help you plan for the work and look at ways to raise money, if you need to.

- Itemised quotes help you to compare what different traders charge for each part of the work. They will also help you to decide which part you can remove if the costs are higher than your budget allows.
- Quotes should include VAT. If it is not mentioned, check whether it is included and write down the final amount you will be asked to pay. Agree how payments will be made and discuss potential delays to the work, including who is responsible for them and any cost related to delays. Don't pay up front – and a TrustMark member will not expect you to.
- Have a regular dialogue with the contractor and raise any issues as they arise – don't wait until the end of the work. Have a clear idea of when the final payment is due and remember that you are entitled to withhold a reasonable amount of money to ensure problems are put right."

For more information about the TrustMark scheme visit:
www.trustmark.org.uk.

Ends

Issued on behalf of B&ES (the Building & Engineering Services Association) by Next Step Marketing Ltd

Media enquiries to: Heather Lambert. Tel: +44(0)1256 472020;
 Fax: +44(0)1256 471010; E-mail: heather@nextstepmarketing.co.uk

Notes to editors

Since its formation in 1904, B&ES, the Building & Engineering Services Association (formerly the HVCA) has represented the interests of companies engaged in a wide range of building and engineering services including domestic heating and renewable technologies.

B&ES members are subject to regular, third-party inspection and assessment of their technical competence and commercial capability,

carried out by an independent certification body at least every three years.

B&ES members who undertake gas installations are registered with Gas Safe – the gas safety watchdog body – and are also members of TrustMark, the Government-endorsed scheme designed to direct customers towards reliable tradespeople.

Picture Caption:

“Planning a major home improvement project? Don’t take chances – make sure the tradespeople you employ are members of TrustMark.”