

Businesses urged to sign up to offer green homes improvements

Business Secretary Alok Sharma today (Wednesday 12 August) urged tradespeople across England to step forward and sign up to be able to offer services through the government's new Green Homes Grants scheme – as over 1,000 businesses across the country have already applied to do so far.

The £2 billion Green Homes Grant Scheme will see the government fund up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements up to £10,000 to make over 600,000 homes across the country more energy efficient, supporting over 100,000 jobs in green construction, cutting carbon emissions and helping people save money on their energy bills.

The scheme will cover green home improvements ranging from insulation of walls, floors and roofs, to the installation double or triple glazing when replacing single glazing, and low-carbon heating like heat pumps or solar thermal – measures that could help families save up to £600 a year on their energy bills.

To take part and offer their services through the scheme, all tradespeople must register with TrustMark. Where tradespeople are installing energy efficiency measures, they must also be certified to installation standards. To install low carbon heat measures, tradespeople must be TrustMark registered and certified through the Microgeneration Certification Scheme for the relevant heating technology.

Anyone wishing to do so can simply [register with TrustMark via their website](#), with accreditation taking as few as 5 working days for those who already have membership of a recognised trade body such as the Federation of Master Builders, the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency and Building Engineering Services Association, or who are already certified under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

Business and Energy Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The Green Homes Grant scheme will not only cut emissions and make a serious dent in people's energy bills, but will create new work for many thousands of talented builders, plumbers and other tradespeople right across the UK.

Today I'm urging businesses to sign up and get TrustMark accredited so they can crack on and offer their services to households across the country when the scheme opens.

Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), said:

In a world where anyone can set themselves up as a builder, I welcome the government's emphasis on accreditation for tradespeople and quality assurance as part of the Green Homes Grants scheme. This will help ensure that only high quality work is carried out, and consumers are protected.

The FMB is a provider of TrustMark, and I believe that a recognisable scheme such as this will give homeowners the confidence they need to carry out building works and help boost jobs in the industry.

Simon Ayers, chief executive of TrustMark said:

The £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme is the best kickstart we could have hoped for, 24 million homes require improvements to enable us to meet the government's 2050 net zero carbon target. As we undertake this journey, the construction and energy industries will play a vital role in the delivery of low carbon homes, providing healthier and more comfortable living conditions.

TrustMark is working hard with their Scheme Providers to increase the numbers of TrustMark registered businesses so we can meet the demand of the Green Homes Grant scheme. Businesses can join and select a scheme provider that can support their application.

The Business Secretary also spoke today to organisations including Certass, the Microgeneration Certification Scheme, the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting, Federation of Master Builders, and National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers who will be encouraging their members to sign up to the TrustMark and get certified to the relevant standards so they can complete work paid in part through the Green Homes Grant.

Installers must meet Publicly Available Specification Standards to install energy efficiency measures. All work under the Green Homes Grants will need to be to Publicly Available Standard (PAS) 2030: 17; however installers can also be registered to PAS 2030: 2019.

[ESFA Update: 12 August 2020](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Latest information and actions from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, schools, colleges, local authorities and further education providers

[Commission of Work 2018/19: minister's reply to the ASC](#)

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[Response to the Secretary of State's announcement of 12 August 2020](#)

News story

Ofqual responds to the statement by the Secretary of State for Education about 2020 GCSE, AS and A level results.



We understand this has been an incredibly difficult time for students, who have not had the chance to prove their knowledge and skills in exams.

The approach we have developed with exam boards and assessment experts for awarding GCSEs, AS and A levels is the fairest way of giving students an opportunity to move on in the unprecedented circumstances this year, with

grades which carry value.

Every grade students receive tomorrow has been based on teachers' judgements – either wholly, or in combination with the statistics. For example, where adjustments were needed, students were moved up or down according to the centres' views as to which students were closest to the grade boundary.

The vast majority of the grades students receive will be the same as, or within one grade of, their centre's grade. Adjustments were only made where necessary to bring consistency to the standards between schools and colleges. However, that moderation was essential to create a level playing for students.

The system in place will give students the best estimate of the grade they would have achieved if exams had gone ahead and ensures they are not held back in their lives, despite the cancellation of exams. However, we recognise that any process for calculating grades may produce results that need to be reviewed, which is why we have put in place an appeals process. We believe this process is the fairest for all students in the circumstances.

However, we understand why the government has wanted to provide some additional assurance for students, by confirming that evidence from valid mock exams can be considered as part of an appeal. We are working urgently to operationalise this as fairly as possible and to determine what standards of evidence will be required for the appeal. We will provide more detail early next week.

We will continue to do everything possible to ensure students achieve grades that are as fair as possible in the circumstances this summer.

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[Carving out a piece of history as Highways England sets benchmark with community artworks](#)

Thanks to the talents of a local woodcarver, residents will soon be able to enjoy the tree once again and it will continue to play a part in the community for many decades to come.

Despite extensive investigations and hi-tech testing by Highways England, it was not possible to retain the tree near the A45/A6 Chowns Mill roundabout in Northamptonshire.

The much-needed improvements, which will improve traffic flow and make journeys more reliable, would leave the tree – known locally as Three Oaks – unstable and at risk of falling down.

The Chowns Mill project team turned to woodcarver Carrie Yuen to help transform the three trunks and some of the branches from the tree into works of art.

She is crafting the wood into three stunning benches, covered in woodland creatures, which will be installed at Castle Fields to complement a Timber Trim Trail created by Higham Ferrers Town Council.

The council recently received approval from Historic England to install the trail at Castle Fields and has been given funding support from East Northamptonshire Council.

Some of the woodland creatures are emerging as the benches are created

In addition, some of the smaller pieces of wood will be turned into nature items such as owls and mushrooms. These will be used to help raise money for the Mayor's charities and help out the local community.

Highways England Project Manager, Dean Holloway, said:

We were very disappointed that despite our best efforts we were not able to safely keep the tree and carry out these important improvements.

But knowing how the residents felt we were determined to put the wood to good use and we are very grateful to Carrie for her incredible artistry that has created these wonderful benches for everyone to enjoy.

Some of the branches have also been donated to Stanwick Lakes to create some natural habitat for the wildlife so the legacy of the Three Oaks will continue.

Taking shape, a dragonfly sculpted into one of the benches

Woodcarver Carrie, who is based at nearby Knuston, said:

I am glad to have the opportunity to give this much-loved tree a second life.

There are three themes to the design of the benches all connected to the Three Oaks. We have the animals that lived around it such as the fox, badger, rabbit, squirrel, owl, mole and mouse. A second

bench will feature creatures that fly around the oak branches such as butterflies, moth, dragonfly and bat. A third bench depicts the bugs of the oak habitat such as the caterpillar, spider, beetle, ladybird, worm and millipede.

Each trunk will take around four weeks to transform into the benches and Carrie hopes to have all three completed by the end of the summer.

Local resident Justina Bryan, who had led the campaign to save the tree, went to see the carving work in progress. She said:

It is important that we keep this piece of history for the community. It was a mature oak and known by generations of people. Certainly the older generation remember the Three Oaks a landmark when they walked to the station.

Everyone tried so hard to keep the tree but sadly we couldn't save it. This is the next best thing as we can still keep it in the community.

Carrie shares some of her design ideas with local resident Justina Bryan

The Mayor, Councillor Tina Reavey, said:

The carved benches will be a wonderful addition to Castle Fields. Using the timber from the Three Oaks in this way provides not only beautifully crafted benches but a unique legacy that can be shared by all.

I am very grateful that some of the smaller carved items are being donated to help raise funds for my chosen local charities. It was a real shame the Three Oaks could not be saved but it is fitting that the timber will enable me to support local ventures and groups within the town.

Contractor Ground Control, appointed by Highways England to carry out environmental and landscaping works for the Chowns Mill scheme, have met the costs of transportation, woodcarving and delivery of the benches.

Construction manager, Jeremy Willis, said:

Caring for our environment has always been the underlying principle of Ground Control and so we are always happy to support projects that go towards offsetting the necessary works and supporting local communities. It was important for us that anything we did was delivered locally and Carrie was therefore our first choice to

bring this timber to life. We are so pleased with the end results and hope that the local communities enjoy the pieces for many years.

Mayor Councillor Tina Reavey is given a sneak peek at one of the benches

At Chowns Mill roundabout the A45 is crossed by the A6 and provides access into Higham Ferrers and Rushden. The junction is being redesigned as a half hamburger layout with a new link road connecting the A6 South and A5028 with the existing roundabout. All approaches will be widened to provide extra lanes and capacity.

The new road layout was set to fall within 1.5m of the Three Oaks and the road lowered, to a construction depth of 2m from the existing ground level.

Arboricultural specialists concluded that all of the roots encountered in testing would need to be removed which would impact on the tree's overall health, potentially leading to tree mortality. Meanwhile severing major roots would make it less stable and a safety hazard.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.