

ASOS, Boohoo and Asda investigated over fashion 'green' claims

- CMA to get to the bottom of whether the firms' green claims are misleading customers
- Wider investigation into fashion sector to continue as the CMA will also consider whether to put additional firms under the microscope
- CMA interim Chief Executive says: "Should we find these companies are using misleading eco claims, we won't hesitate to take enforcement action – through the courts if necessary"

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will be scrutinising eco-friendly and sustainability claims made by ASOS, Boohoo and George at Asda about their fashion products, including clothing, footwear, and accessories. The move comes as part of its [ongoing investigation into potential greenwashing](#) and follows concerns around the way the firms' products are being marketed to customers as eco-friendly.

In January this year, the CMA turned its eye to the fashion sector, where an [estimated £54 billion is spent by consumers annually](#), and its initial review identified concerns around potentially misleading green claims. These included a number of companies creating the impression that their products were 'sustainable' or better for the environment – for example by making broad claims about the use of recycled materials in new clothing – with little to no information about the basis for those claims or exactly which products they related to.

Today, the CMA has launched investigations into ASOS, Boohoo and George to get to the bottom of its concerns. Among other things, these include whether:

- the statements and language used by the businesses are too broad and vague, and may create the impression that clothing collections – such as the 'Responsible edit' from ASOS, Boohoo's current 'Ready for the Future' range, and 'George for Good' – are more environmentally sustainable than they actually are
- the criteria used by some of these businesses to decide which products to include in these collections may be lower than customers might reasonably expect from their descriptions and overall presentation – for example, some products may contain as little as 20% recycled fabric
- some items have been included in these collections when they do not meet the criteria
- there is a lack of information provided to customers about products included in any of the companies' eco ranges, such as missing information about what the fabric is made from
- any statements made by the companies about fabric accreditation schemes and standards are potentially misleading, such as a lack of clarity as to whether the accreditation applies to particular products or to the firm's wider practices

Sarah Cardell, interim Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

People who want to 'buy green' should be able to do so confident that they aren't being misled. Eco-friendly and sustainable products can play a role in tackling climate change, but only if they are genuine.

We'll be scrutinising green claims from ASOS, Boohoo and George at Asda to see if they stack up. Should we find these companies are using misleading eco claims, we won't hesitate to take enforcement action – through the courts if necessary.

This is just the start of our work in this sector and all fashion companies should take note: look at your own practices and make sure they are in line with the law.

The CMA has written to the 3 firms outlining its concerns and will use its information gathering powers to obtain evidence to progress its investigation. How the review develops will depend on the CMA's assessment of the evidence before it. Possible outcomes include securing undertakings from the companies to change the way they operate, taking the firms to court, or closing the case without further action.

The move comes after the CMA published its [Green Claims Code](#) in September 2021. The code aims to help businesses understand how to communicate their green credentials, while avoiding the risk of misleading shoppers.

The CMA's [wider investigation into misleading environmental claims](#) is ongoing and other sectors will come under review in due course.

1. ASOS sells fashion items through the website ASOS.com. George at Asda sells fashion items online at direct.asda.com/george and in store. Boohoo sells fashion items through a number of websites, including Boohoo.com, BoohooMan.com, DorothyPerkins.com, Oasisifashion.com and PrettyLittleThing.com.
2. The CMA is at the initial stage of its investigation. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that any business under investigation has broken consumer protection law.
3. The key piece of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's Green Claims Code, and to the enforcement cases announced today, is the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CPRs contain a general prohibition against unfair commercial practices and specific prohibitions against misleading actions and misleading omissions.
4. Examples and case studies can be found in the CMA's [The Green Claims Code: Environmental Claims on Goods and Services](#).
5. Read more about how the CMA is supporting low carbon growth in its [2022/23 Annual Plan](#).
6. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
7. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's

Military families to benefit from £3,000 of childcare support

- Service families with children aged 4 to 11 years to benefit from wraparound childcare
- More than 20,000 service children will be eligible for 20 hours free childcare per week
- Defence Secretary outlines further family support for UK Armed Forces personnel

The Wraparound Childcare (WAC) scheme will provide up to 20 hours per week of free childcare before and after school during term time for eligible military parents with children aged 4 to 11 years.

Its roll-out follows successful trials at pilot sites around the country over the last two years and from the Autumn school term will be open to more than 20,000 children across the UK.

While childcare costs vary across the UK, serving personnel are expected to save around £3,000 per child per year based on typical costs.

The wraparound childcare scheme provides practical support to some of the unique challenges faced by service families, such as frequent relocations that require military families to move home, find new schools and childcare provision, and adjust their lives. This is part of the Armed Forces' commitment to being an inclusive, modern and flexible employer.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our Armed Forces personnel sacrifice a great deal in the service of their country and whether it is providing flexible working or accommodation options, I am determined they feel supported in their family life.

Providing free wraparound childcare is another clear way of supporting the unique challenges they face as parents and will go a long way to helping them to enjoy a thriving family life as well as a thriving career.

Corporal Vicki Taylor, Royal Air Force said:

Everyone I have spoken to who also benefits from wraparound

childcare agrees that it's a fantastic scheme. For my family it saved us financially, reduced our stress levels, and has given us more quality time with our children.

The wraparound childcare [pilot scheme](#) began in September 2020 and an expansion in September 2021 meant six sites – Woolwich Barracks, RAF High Wycombe and RAF Halton, Catterick Garrison, and in Lincolnshire and the Plymouth area – took part. Over 1,900 children benefited from support at these sites during the pilot.

This scheme is part of the wider package of support to service personnel and their families, as laid out in the [Armed Forces Families Strategy](#), and has already had a positive impact on service families involved. Recent feedback shows an improvement in family wellbeing, increased contentment with service life for non-serving partners as well as the huge financial savings.

The Ministry of Defence is committed to supporting service families and has also introduced [flexible working arrangements](#), expanded offerings to co-habiting couples and extended [Help to Buy](#), giving our armed forces the chance to get a foot on the housing ladder.

[£54m heat network funding helps households ditch fossil fuels](#)

- Over £54 million in UK government funding will enable the supply of clean energy to nearly 28,000 homes and businesses in England
- cash will support the rollout of heat networks helping reduce energy bills and support local regeneration
- move away from costly fossil fuels will see heat networks also help shore up the UK's energy independence

Nearly 28,000 homes and businesses will be shielded from costly fossil fuels as the UK government awards more than £54 million to innovative heat network projects in England.

Funding announced today (Friday, 29 July) will support the development of schemes in London, Bedfordshire and Woking that use low-carbon heat sources such as heat pumps and energy from waste to warm properties.

The move will mean home and business owners can ditch boilers fuelled by more costly oil and gas, helping reduce energy bills and boost the country's energy independence. The cash injection will enable the projects to develop and complete construction of the networks providing energy to households and commercial sites including shops, offices and public buildings.

As well as helping households move away from expensive fossil fuels, the funding helps address the urgent need to reduce the carbon footprint of heating homes and workspaces, which makes up almost a third of all UK carbon emissions. The annual carbon savings from these 4 projects is the equivalent to taking over 5,500 cars off the road or the average household use of over 400 kettles.

Minister for Business and Energy Lord Callanan said:

These projects will transform how tens of thousands of households and businesses keep their properties warm.

By investing in cutting-edge low-carbon heating technologies we are helping to secure a lasting move away from using fossil fuels and protecting consumers from the costs that are driving up energy bills at a time of high global prices.

Almost £28 million will fund 2 innovative heat network projects in Haringey in London, with nearly £17 million going to a project in Stewartby in Bedfordshire and a further £9 million for one in Woking.

A heat network is a distribution system of insulated pipes that takes heat from a central source, such as large-scale heat pumps or heat recovered from industry and delivers it to a number of domestic or non-domestic buildings.

Heat networks are uniquely able to unlock otherwise inaccessible large-scale renewable and recovered heat sources, such as large rivers and industrial heat. This allows them to reduce bills, support local regeneration and provide a cost-effective way of reducing carbon emissions from heating, whilst simultaneously boosting energy security. Heat networks which use renewable sources, such as ambient heat and geothermal, also help to increase the UK's energy independence and reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels.

The projects receiving funding are:

- Haringey London Borough Council has been awarded £27.8 million funding for 2 heat network projects – Wood Green District Heating Network (£10.6 million) and the Tottenham Hale and Broadwater Farm District Heating Network (£17.2 million) – which will collectively supply heat to almost 10,000 homes when fully built out. Both heat networks will be supplied primarily by heat generated by the Energy Recovery Facility being built at the Edmonton Eco Park
- Thamesway Energy Limited has been awarded over £9.4 million for a major expansion to an existing heat network which supplies heat to public sector, commercial and residential customers in Woking town centre. The investment in new infrastructure will enable up to 3,450 new homes to be supplied as part of a major infrastructure scheme in the west and south of Woking
- Vital Energi has been awarded £16.9 million to develop a heat network using waste heat from the Rookery South Energy Recovery Facility, which

is located in a former brick clay extraction pit near Stewartby in Bedfordshire. Up to 12,000 homes and non-domestic buildings could eventually be connected to the scheme

Projects located across England and Wales have been awarded funding through the scheme, including in Bristol, Gateshead, Leeds and Liverpool. A total of over £250 million has been awarded since 2018, which will help households and businesses across the regions to access low carbon heating

Earlier this year the government introduced its Energy Security Bill which will increase consumers protections. For the first time Ofgem will be appointed to oversee regulation of the heat networks market – some 480,000 consumers across Britain – to ensure consumers are charged a fair price, including by enabling the regulator to investigate disproportionate prices and take enforcement action.

- The £54 million funding announced today comes from the government's £320 million [Heat Networks Investment Project](#), which supports the development of heat networks across England and Wales
- HNIP applicants are expected to adhere to Heat Trust standards of customer protection, or equivalent, as a condition of eligibility
- Heat Networks will play a vital role in decarbonising heat, which underpins the [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#), and are included in the [Energy White Paper](#)
- a list of awards announced so far can be found on the website of the [HNIP delivery partner, Triple Point](#)
- the £288 million [Green Heat Network Fund](#) is the UK government's successor funding scheme to HNIP and will support low-carbon technologies like heat pumps, solar and geothermal energy in the roll out of the next generation of heat networks
- heat network projects are further supported through the [Heat Networks Delivery Unit](#) (HNDU)

[£400 energy bills discount to support households this winter](#)

- Households to start receiving £400 off their energy bills from October, with the discount made in 6 instalments to help families throughout the winter period
- government confirms today important details of the Energy Bills Support Scheme, which will provide energy bill discounts to 29 million households across Great Britain
- today's announcement comes as the government launches a new online one stop shop setting out ways homeowners can help to heat their properties as part of wider Help for Households campaign

Millions of households across Great Britain will receive non-repayable discounts on their energy bills this winter, as the UK government today (29 July 2022) sets out further details of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

The £400 discount, administered by energy suppliers, will be paid to consumers over 6 months with payments starting from October 2022, to ensure households receive financial support throughout the winter months.

Those with a domestic electricity meter point paying for their energy via standard credit, payment card and direct debit will receive an automatic deduction to their bills over the 6 month period – totalling £400.

Traditional prepayment meter customers will be provided with Energy Bill discount vouchers in the first week of each month, issued via SMS text, email or post, using the customer's registered contact details. These customers will need to take action to redeem these at their usual top-up point, such as their nearest local PayPoint or Post Office branch.

In all cases, no household should be asked for bank details at any point. Ministers are urging consumers to stay alert of potential scams and report these to the relevant authorities where they are suspected.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

People across the country are understandably worried about the global rise in energy costs, and the pressure this is placing on everyday bills.

While no government can control global gas prices, we have a responsibility to step in where we can and this significant £400 discount on energy bills we're providing will go some way to help millions of families over the colder months.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nadhim Zahawi, said:

We know that people are struggling with rising energy prices which is why we have taken action with support over the winter months to help ease the pressure on household budgets.

This £400 off energy bills is part of our £37 billion of help for households, including 8 million of the most vulnerable households receiving £1,200 of direct support to help with the cost of living.

We know there are tough times ahead and we will continue to do everything in our power to help people.

Households will see a discount of £66 applied to their energy bills in October and November, rising to £67 each month from December through to March 2023. The non-repayable discount will be provided on a monthly basis

regardless of whether consumers pay monthly, quarterly or have an associated payment card.

This means that where a person's housing circumstances change during the 6-month period, such as those leaving or moving home, they will still benefit from the relevant portion of the total £400.

This also applies to students and other tenants renting properties with domestic electricity contracts from landlords where fixed energy costs are included in their rental charges. In these circumstances, landlords who resell energy to their tenants should pass the discounted payments on appropriately, in line with Ofgem rules to protect tenants.

As part of this package, we are confirming today that further funding will be available to provide equivalent support of £400 for energy bills for the 1% of households who will not be reached through the EBSS. This includes those who do not have a domestic electricity meter or a direct relationship with an energy supplier, such as park home residents. An announcement with details on how and when these households across Great Britain can access this support will be made this Autumn.

Details set out today will ensure the scheme is delivered to as many domestic electricity customers as possible over the winter, regardless of which supplier they use or their choice of payment method.

- Direct Debit customers will receive the Energy Bill discount automatically as a deduction to the monthly Direct Debit amount collected, or as a refund to the customer's bank account following Direct Debit collection during each month of delivery
- standard credit customers and payment card customers will see the Energy Bill discount automatically applied as a credit to standard credit customers' accounts in the first week of each month of EBSS delivery, with the credit appearing as it would if the customer had made a payment
- smart prepayment meter customers will see the Energy Bill discount credited directly to their smart prepayment meters in the first week of each month of delivery
- traditional prepayment meter customers will be provided with redeemable EBSS Energy Bill discount vouchers or Special Action Messages (SAMs) in the first week of each month, issued via SMS text, email or post. Customers will need to redeem these at their usual top-up point

Steps are also being taken to protect consumers from the risk of fraud, gaming, and non-compliance. Suppliers will be expected to report to government action they are taking to ensure the support has been passed onto consumers, including notifying customers in writing they have received the £400 Energy Bill discount from HM Government, and ensuring it is clearly shown on bills or statements for Direct Debit and credit customers.

Greg Hands Energy Minister said:

Today we have set out how the government will deliver discounts to

help 29 million households with their energy bills this winter.

I encourage families across the country to engage with these plans and particularly those customers on traditional prepayment meters who need to take action.

Coupled with world-leading action to radically enhance our home-grown energy security, we will continue to be on the side of British consumers now and into the future.

The Energy Bills Support Scheme forms part of the government's £37 million Cost of Living Support package, providing [Help for Households](#) with rising prices, targeted at those most in need.

Households most in need will be eligible for further support in addition to the Energy Bill discount. This includes:

- a £650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for around 8 million households on means tested benefits
- a £300 one-off Pensioner Cost of Living Payment for over 8 million pensioner households to be paid alongside the Winter Fuel Payment
- a £150 one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment for around six million people across the UK who receive certain disability benefits
- a £500 million increase and extension of the Household Support Fund available to councils to support vulnerable households with the cost of essentials such as food, utilities and clothing

Today's announcement comes as the government launches an online service to help homeowners save money on their energy bills by providing a one stop shop of ways to make properties more energy efficient.

[The new GOV.UK website](#), originally available through the Simple Energy Advice (SEA) service, offers a breakdown of support available through various schemes and how much financial support they can receive towards energy improvements.

This is part of the government's 'Help to Heat' support, investing £12 billion to make homes, particularly for low-income households, warmer and cheaper to heat, already delivering average energy bill savings of around £300 a year.

Lord Callanan, Energy and Business Minister, said:

This is a challenging time for many amidst the rising cost of living, which is why the government is stepping in with direct support.

From delivering discounted energy bills throughout the winter months to launching a new website providing homeowners with help to make homes cheaper and warmer, we want to make sure UK residents have the information they need to access all the support that is on

offer.

Notes to editors

- See more details on the [design and delivery of the Energy Bills Support Scheme](#)
- to help with the cost of living pressures, the government announced a package of support worth £9.1 billion to help households with rising energy bills on 3 February 2022. This support package contained a range of measures to help households with their bills which included the Energy Bills Support Scheme is one of these measures
- the government will work with Ofgem and suppliers on guidance ahead of implementation of the Scheme from October 2022. This will include a full set of the Energy Bills Support Scheme reporting requirements for suppliers, to be published in due course
- the Energy Bills Support Scheme will apply to consumers in England, Scotland and Wales. The UK government is urgently working to ensure the people of Northern Ireland receive the equivalent of this support as soon as possible. Devolved administrations are receiving extra funding through the Barnett formula in financial year 2022 to 2023, enabling them to provide similar support
- the UK government is today also launching a consultation proposing the continuation of the Hydro Benefit Replacement Scheme. This scheme protects consumers in the North of Scotland from the high costs electricity distribution in that area
- as a further step the government will consult on prices and protections for domestic consumers whose energy supply arrangements do not enable them to move to a tariff protected by the price cap such as those paying for energy through all inclusive rents
- there are rules which can protect tenants and ensure they receive the benefit of this policy. Ofgem's guidance on [how to ensure customers are being charged no more than they should when they buy the electricity through their landlord, including what to do if they think there has been a mistake](#)
- the government committed to set up the [new energy advice website](#) in the [British Energy Security Strategy](#), enhancing the online service that is currently available through the Simple Energy Advice (SEA) service. This online advice complements £6.6 billion government investment in energy efficiency through Help to Heat schemes and expanded the Energy Company Obligation

Consultation

- full details explaining the design and delivery of the EBSS can be found in the [government's official government response to this year's technical consultation](#), being published today on gov.uk
- the EBSS consultation was published on GOV.UK on 11 April 2022 and closed on 23 May 2022. BEIS received 233 written responses to the consultation from a range of organisations, including large and small suppliers, Distribution Network Operators, consumer groups and

interested charities

- BEIS also ran a series of stakeholder engagement sessions before, during and after the consultation, where we presented and discussed the proposals with more than 93 interested parties, including suppliers, consumer groups and charities
- the proposals in this government consultation response document set out the final policy decisions reached for the delivery of the EBSS

[UK and Ghana reaffirm commitment to tackle global threats](#)

The UK Government hosted the second UK-Ghana security dialogue between July 25 and 27 to discuss the countries' shared interests in tackling global issues.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel and the Minister for National Security of Ghana Kan-Dapaah agreed to strengthen law enforcement agency collaboration, strengthen engagement on border security, work together to enhance cyber security in Ghana and support regional solutions to instability in Ghana's neighbouring states.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The UK and Ghana has a deep and long-standing relationship, and we are powerful allies when confronting the scourge of organised criminal gangs that operate across our borders.

Ghana is the beacon of freedom and democracy in West Africa and through our joint work we are tackling global threats and cracking down on the threats to our mutual security.

Ghana's National Security Minister, Albert Kan-Dapaah said:

The UK is a primary and reliable partner to Ghana, therefore, we welcome essential security initiatives from the UK towards building Ghana's resilience to address national and regional threats.

The Home Secretary visited Ghana last year in the first round of talks, opening a new Home Office-funded immigration taskforce office in the process.

Because of the joint working, since January 2022, 14 organised crime groups

have been disrupted preventing the facilitation of 56 individuals from entering the UK illegally, saving the UK over £812,000 in the process.

Through the New Plan for Immigration, the UK Government are working with countries around the world to tackle the heinous people traffickers who work across borders and bring misery to vulnerable people.

The Home Secretary hosted a reception with Ghanaian delegation at Lancaster House on July 25 before counterparts discussed topics including, serious and organised crime, border management, security, countering terrorism and violent extremism, conflict prevention and military over the course of two day event.

Defence staff met to discuss peacekeeping, regional stability, counter terrorism and maritime security.

Minister of State for the Armed Forces, James Heapey MP, said:

“The UK is committed to expanding defence co-operation with the Ghanaian Armed Forces and we will continue to work together in frameworks such as the Accra Initiative to counter violent attacks and insurgency in West Africa and the Sahel.”

[Read more about the security and defence dialogue between the UK and Ghana](#)