

HVP

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Which? survey prompts calls for licence

Four out of 10 heating engineers "failed to do their job properly" and recommended "unnecessary work" to their customers, according to a recent undercover test carried out by Which? magazine.

Companies asked to service a deliberately faulty boiler ranged from small independent gas engineers to national companies such as British Gas and Homeserve.

Some recommended up to £500-worth of work that was not needed, while others failed to show up for their appointment and even wrongly suggested a new boiler be installed. Which?'s executive director Richard Lloyd has called the results "inexcusable".

This kind of incident can only reflect negatively on the industry as a whole, and is unlikely to improve consumer confidence in plumbers and heating engineers.

The survey has also re-ignited the existing debate over the need for an inclusive plumbing licence for the entire sector, with high-profile industry figures including Charlie Mullins of Pimlico Plumbers, and CIPHE president Lee Davies, calling for the creation of a single licence to practise that everyone who wants to work in plumbing, heating and renewables must undertake.

This would allow qualified plumbers to accept work covering the full range of their trade and working experience.

Currently, many plumbers and installers tell us that they feel forced to stop working in some sectors simply because they are unwilling, or unable, to invest the time and money it takes to retake all the different qualifications every few years.

In such a difficult economy, anything that prevents installers accepting every piece of work they can safely carry out cannot be positive. Instead, having a single, comprehensive qualification that covers all these sectors – and a strictly-monitored register of those who are qualified – would make regulating the sector easier, and would keep standards across the whole industry high.

It's particularly disappointing that these results have been made public at the same time as Gas Safe Register is launching a national consumer campaign to raise awareness of gas safety and the importance of regular maintenance by registered professionals.

After all, when consumers see statistics like these, reinforced by the kind of viewing figures that television programmes such as Rogue Traders and Cowboy Builders regularly achieve, is it any wonder the entire industry gets tarred with the same brush?



Jennie Ward
Editor

Top Stories

We reveal the top stories you found most interesting last month:

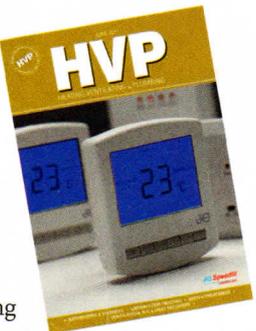
ONLINE:

- Accidental death verdict after installer electrocuted
- Plumber faces manslaughter after CO poisoning
- Staff business mileage claims must be verified
- CORGI dispute costs heating firm £41,000
- Home maintenance spending falls as homeowners tighten their belts



IN PRINT:

- **SUNi:** Plumber in ultimate success story
- **Airflow:** Ventilation can prevent mould growth
- **Worcester:** A complete underfloor heating solution
- **Kingspan Hot Water Systems:** Do you fully understand the Renewable Heat Incentive?
- **Kohler Mira:** It's a numbers game for digital showers
- **Bristan:** Tap into the makeover market
- **Xpelair:** Gain full system competency
- **Fluid Dynamics:** Scale down for comfort
- **Soler & Palau:** Get ventilated for a positive future
- **Nu-Heat:** Underfloor and more!
- **Aereco:** Make sure your home can breathe easy



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