



TRUSTMARK e-newsletter

MPs and Minister support TrustMark

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Gareth Thomas MP agreed to address MPs at an event in the House of Commons on the 13th May. He asked them to support and promote TrustMark locally in their constituencies up and down the UK, in the fight against Cowboy Builders & Rogue Traders.

With just over 100 attendees there was considerable interest from MPs and members of the House of Lords, where they confirmed they wanted to engage further with TrustMark. Many stated their concerns that never a week passed in their constituencies without a complaint about a rogue builder or tradesman. The Minister stated that he was delighted to be able to continue to help raise awareness of TrustMark, as it had made excellent progress over the last twelve months in informing the public about the risks of employing Cowboy Builders and Rogue Tradesmen, as well as providing them with the alternatives to secure good quality tradesmen because *“TrustMark offers an excellent scheme at no extra cost to the consumer”*.

Deep Sagar, chair of TrustMark, thanked MPs and the Minister, scheme operators and consumer organisations. He said TrustMark’s vision is to become the “Intel of the construction and building tradesmen trade”.

Herts Council signs up to TrustMark [↗ BACK TO TOP](#)

Hertfordshire County Council have set the standard for local authority accreditation schemes by becoming the first local authority to become an approved scheme operator for TrustMark.

They can now assess any firm, big or small to the TrustMark standard, across any of the 25 trades currently covered by the scheme. This means that any Hertfordshire based-contractor has the facility to apply for TrustMark status through their local authority.

County councillor Richard Smith, Executive Member for Community Safety, said: “We are delighted to be launching the TrustMark scheme with the help of Exor Management Services who are Hertfordshire’s partners in this programme.”

Hertfordshire County Council also stated how important it is that they find reliable solutions to the issue posed by ‘rogue’ traders and help to positively identify the majority of firms that follow the rules. They intend that their stringent accreditation and assessment procedures will help make the Hertfordshire / TrustMark scheme the place to come to for individuals who want to choose a reputable tradesman for work inside or outside their home.

KBSA joins TrustMark [↗ BACK TO TOP](#)

KBSA - The Kitchen Bathroom Bedroom Specialists Association is the latest approved operator within the TrustMark scheme, bringing the total to 27. They are a national trade association founded 30 years ago to promote excellence within the interiors industry and now boast more than 400 members throughout the UK.

Tony Nicholas, Chairman of the KBSA commented: “This is tremendously exciting for the KBSA and another major development that makes the KBSA membership a must have for quality specialist retailers.”

Their members are dedicated to upholding the association’s high standards of design, supply, installation and customer service and all members follow careful

[MPs and Minister support TrustMark](#)

[Herts Council signs up to TrustMark](#)

[KBSA joins TrustMark](#)

[TrustMark to launch into Scotland](#)

[Trading Standards Institute web site linked to TrustMark](#)

[Consumer Protection Organisations promote TrustMark](#)

[Further Big Brand Promotion](#)

[£80 million of complaints received by Consumer Direct](#)

[Trading Standards Institute exhibition](#)

vetting prior to admission and must also have been trading for at least two years in order to be considered for KBSA membership.

All members offer a Consumer Care deposit guarantee scheme or a more comprehensive Consumer Care Plus, insurance backed workmanship warranty and deposit protection scheme.

TrustMark to launch into Scotland [↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

TrustMark is planning to launch itself into Scotland in partnership with BERR, the Scottish Government and other stakeholders.

TrustMark are presently making a positive response to the Scottish Governments consultation document on 'Proposals for a National Trusted Trader Framework for Scotland.'

This will be done with a view to TrustMark participating more comprehensively in Scotland in support of homeowners and TrustMark members already operating in Scotland.

In support of this launch the first piece of promotional activity will be distribution of the new TrustMark leaflet which will be going into people's homes across Scotland through the distribution of Yellow Pages.

Trading Standards Institute web site linked to TrustMark [↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

Following the request by the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) their web site now provides TrustMark member firms details on a county and town search basis:

<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/consumers/approvedsearch.asp>

Consumer Protection Organisations promote TrustMark [↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

Over the last few months a number of supporting articles have been published by consumer protection organisations, these include:

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in their 'Adviser' magazine wrote a 2000 word feature which went to every CAB advisor / employee around the UK.

In the spring edition of the Institute of Consumer Affairs, 'Help & Advice' magazine another interesting TrustMark article was featured.

The Electrical Safety Council (ESC) had an article in their magazine 'Switched On' as well as including it in 'Professional Electrician' magazine and the NICEIC 'Connections' magazine, ensuring a distribution of well over 100,000. The article can be viewed on:

www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk/news_trustmark.html

Local Government Task Force (LGTF) magazine titled 'Constructing Excellence' also featured an excellent article.

Further Big Brand Promotion [↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

With just over 300 Homebase stores around the UK now promoting TrustMark through their Kitchen Installation Service, it means that another major high street brand is highlighting the benefits of TrustMark to the public.

The promotions being undertaken at the moment include in store leaflets, point of sale dispensers along with posters and wind-master displays for use as you enter the stores as well as messaging on their in-store radio channel HBFM.

A promotion at the Homebase headquarters in Milton Keynes was carried out by the TrustMark team in early May, targeting all of the staff at HQ. The aim was to ensure they had full awareness of TrustMark.

£80 million of complaints received by Consumer Direct [↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

Consumer Direct received more than 19,000 complaints about builders, plumbers, electricians, decorators and other home improvement tradesmen in the first three months of this year totalling almost £80 million.

During that period, concerns about home maintenance and improvements accounted for the highest number of calls to the government advice service. In total, Consumer Direct advisers logged 19,075 home maintenance complaints,

slightly down from 19,335 last year.

Complaints about building work totaled £40 million, problems with fitted kitchens reached £14 million, and central heating installation and servicing complaints topped £5.5 million.

Consumer Direct gave the following tip for people carrying out home maintenance or improvement projects: "Ask friends and neighbours for recommendations or look for tradesmen who are approved by the government-endorsed TrustMark scheme (www.trustmark.org.uk)."

Trading Standards Institute exhibition [↑ BACK TO TOP](#)

Between the 24th - 26th June, TrustMark will for the third year running, be attending and exhibiting at the 'Consumer Affairs & Trading Standards Conference & Exhibition' in Bournemouth.

This event gives TrustMark the opportunity to discuss the benefits and opportunities of the scheme with Trading Standards officers and others interested parties.

If you are interested in attending and meeting up with TrustMark team on stand 'L3', please contact a member of the TrustMark team as soon as possible.

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