

Industry leaders join forces to promote consumer safety legislation through the Consumer Protection Alliance

Of the 258 house fire related deaths last year, 146 occurred in homes without a working fire alarm (Source: Electrical Safety First website: www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk)

Four industry leaders have formed the Consumer Protection Alliance, a non-commercial, not for profit, strategic alliance to promote consumer safety and protection across the construction, gas and electrical installation sectors.

The alliance is the first collaboration of this nature in the UK.

B&Q Homefit, Certsure LLP (trading as ELECSA and NICEIC), Gas Safe Register, and the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman, will be using their combined resources and collective media reach to educate consumers, landlords and businesses on the most frequent causes of injuries and fatalities in the construction, gas and electrical installation industry.

Furthermore they desire to assist policy makers in order to create more effective consumer legislation.

Individually these organisations have a proven track record of promoting consumer awareness through measures such as:

- **B&Q Homefit** is the fitting arm of the largest home improvement retailer in the UK. B&Q Homefit is the first & only national retailer to have all their approved trade people fully vetted by the WHICH? Trusted Trader scheme.
- **Gas Safe Register** is the official list of gas engineers who are legally allowed to work on gas appliances. As well as ensuring all engineers on the Register are qualified to work safely on gas, the Register works to protect the public from unsafe gas work through educating consumers and raising awareness of gas safety
- **NICEIC and ELECSA** have a register of more than 33, 000 electrical contractors who have been assessed to carry out electrical work in the home and regularly promote the need to use a registered electrician.
- **Dispute Resolution Ombudsman** (which incorporates The Furniture Ombudsman) advises consumers and over 150 organisations on consumer law

Each organisation will continue to promote safety via their owned media channels, but will now have a larger voice through the Consumer Protection Alliance, which will substantially increase the reach of this crucial message. Making market statistics, plus advice and citations from key authorities, available will be key to this initiative.

This strategic alliance will share and utilise resources and information based on current research; arming domestic home-owners, landlords and relevant business owners with the best tools possible to reach informed decisions about how best to improve their homes, properties and work spaces.

Together, these industry leaders will highlight the reasons for, and benefits of, using competent, trained, and professional tradespersons over unaccredited and potentially unscrupulous traders.

To achieve these goals a programme promoting education will be implemented, ensuring that all concerned can easily and proactively access, understand and comply with the relevant advice and legislation.

-Facts and Figures

- 23m UK homes use gas for heating, hot water and cooking. Inspections conducted by Gas Safe Register found unsafe gas appliances in 1 in 6 UK homes
- Over 120,000 engineers can be found on the Gas Safe Register
- 250,000 illegal gas jobs are carried out each year (Source: Gas Safe Register: www.gassaferegister.co.uk)
- Carbon monoxide poisoning leads to 200 hospital visits and 40 deaths each year in the UK (Source: NHS: www.nhs.uk)
- 350,000 serious injuries and 70 deaths are caused each year by electricity
- 49% of Brits either can't remember when, or have never had an electrical check on their current home
- More than 33 000 registered electrical firms can be found at www.niceic.com or www.elecsa.co.uk
- Of the 258 house fire related deaths last year, 146 occurred in homes without a working fire alarm (Source: Electrical Safety First website: www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk)

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- 1.** The Consumer Protection Alliance has been formed with the sole ambition of promoting consumer awareness of gas and electrical safety laws.
- 2.** Its current members include, Certsure LLP (trading as ELECSA and NICEIC), Gas Safe Register, The Furniture Ombudsman, and B&Q Homefit.
- 3.** The strategic alliance will consider any organisation looking to join, provided they can add value and benefit consumer protection.
- 4.** Focus will be on educating and assisting home-owners, buy-to-let landlords, estate agents, and business owners in the hospitality and hotelier sectors.

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