

Scheme Document

BENCHMARK SCHEME DOCUMENT

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The Benchmark Scheme is managed and promoted by:

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Benchmark is an established and well regarded scheme which puts in place all those elements that are required in order to ensure that domestic heating and hot water products are supplied, installed, commissioned and maintained in a way that they will be safe and they will perform with optimum efficiency. The Scheme receives widespread support from heating appliance manufacturers and the suppliers of related products. It is managed and promoted by the Heating and Hotwater Industry Council (HHIC).

Government focus on climate change and the requirement to install, commission and service domestic heating and hot water products correctly is captured in Building Regulations (England and Wales). Guidance¹ to the Building Regulations recognises that the Benchmark Scheme is a means of demonstrating compliance (see Appendix A).

Benchmark covers all aspects of installation, not simply those directly covered by Building Regulations. As a result, the Benchmark Scheme delivers the following benefits:

- Installations carried out competently to manufacturer's instructions ensuring maximum safety and performance
- Demonstrating compliance with the Building Regulations
- Products that work correctly under normal circumstances, and customer advice and protection where this is not the case
- Support for competent installers and increased isolation of unregulated, unregistered or illegal installers
- A means for members of Competent Persons Schemes to notify local authorities about commissioning
- For product suppliers, increased assurance that installers will correctly fit or use their products, such that there is a reduction of in-warranty call-outs and an improvement in after-sales support.
- Contributing to the reduction of energy consumption and carbon emissions

The elements of the Scheme which combine to deliver these benefits under a clearly branded banner are:

- Product suppliers, by meeting the requirements of the Scheme, supply products which meet all required standards and provide support to installers and customers in the supply and after-sales service related to their product.
- Product suppliers are independently audited to ensure that they meet the rules of the Scheme.
- Installers are supplied with the means (documentation, training and technical support) to competently carry out and notify (where appropriate) installation, commissioning and servicing work, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Installers work to a clear, effective Code of Practice (see Appendix B) with regard to the work and support to the customer.

¹ The "Domestic Heating Compliance Guide" 1st Edition, May 2006 (ISBN-10 1 85946 2251)

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- Customers receive documented evidence that their product has been correctly installed and is left operating at maximum efficiency.
- Customers receive clear information about how to continue to ensure optimum performance from the product supplied; any servicing requirements and gain access to effective advice and assistance from installers and product suppliers.

All of these elements are underpinned by independent governance and regular auditing, as well as clear and effective complaint handling procedures that are in place for all scheme participants.

2. SCOPE

The Benchmark Scheme is focussed on heating and hot water equipment and related products.

Its scope of activities currently covers, as appropriate, the installation, commissioning, servicing and use of heating and hot water products associated with the following types of heating system.

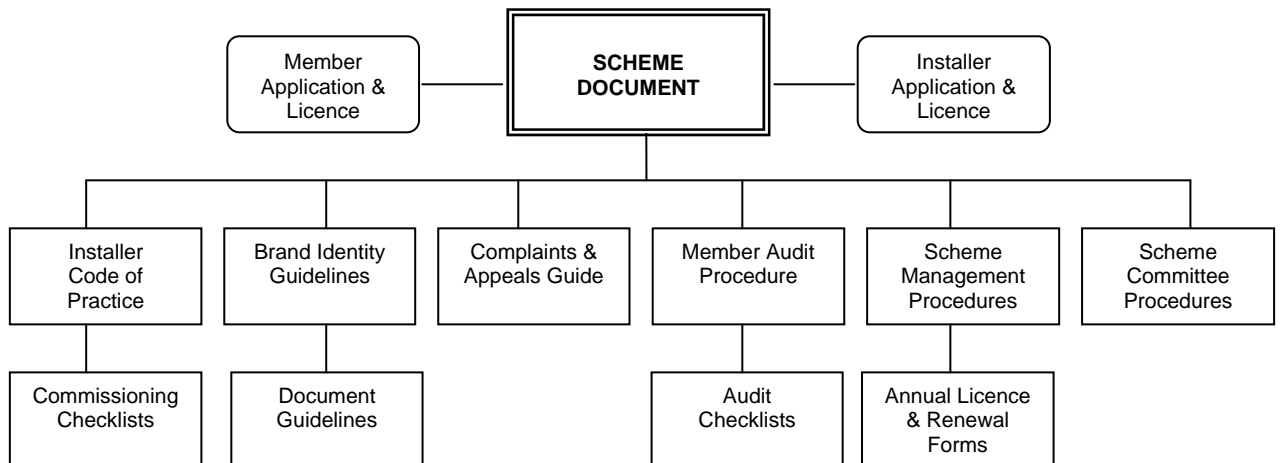
- Gas-fired space heating and hot water systems
- Hot water storage cylinders
- Water treatment products
- Solar Thermal systems

It is intended to extend the scope of the Scheme in line with the Domestic Heating Compliance Guide as required by industry and / or legislation and the Scheme structure has been designed to allow for this. As a result the scope of activity statement above may change from time to time and an up to date list is available from HHIC on request.

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3. SCHEME STRUCTURE

This Scheme Document sets out the principles and requirements of the Benchmark Scheme and refers to a hierarchy of other documents designed to deliver against the aims of the Scheme. The following figure indicates the overall documented structure and the linkage between the various documents.



The Scheme is operated by the Heating and Hot Water Industry Council (HHIC), who may sub-contract specific functions to one or more suitable bodies.

Product suppliers may become members of the Scheme provided that they are members of HHIC or an affiliated Trade Association, supply products within the scope of the Benchmark Scheme and adhere to all of the Scheme Requirements.

Installers operate to the Scheme but are not members of the Scheme. Under the conditions described in Section 6 some installers may be licensed to display the Benchmark logo.

The Scheme is subject to independent oversight and governance by the Scheme Committee. The Committee will include officers of HHIC, members of HHIC and independent representatives. The structure and responsibilities of this Committee are described in the Scheme Committee Procedures.

The management system operated by HHIC for the Benchmark Scheme is based on the general requirements of the quality management systems standard ISO9001 but has been adapted specifically to apply to the operation of the Scheme.

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4. SCHEME METHODOLOGY

The Scheme is designed by HHIC with oversight and governance by the Scheme Committee who must endorse its requirements.

Where a product supplier is a member of the Scheme they must meet the requirements given in Section 5, which includes a requirement for the supplier to be periodically audited against the relevant requirements to ensure compliance.

Where a product is being supplied, installed and maintained in accordance with the Benchmark Scheme the installer is provided with a Code of Practice and relevant commissioning checklists to use, and is supported by the product supplier.

Under the conditions given in Section 6, an installer may be licensed to display the Benchmark logo.

An installer who follows the Benchmark Code of Practice and who is registered to be able to self-certificate an installation in line with the Building Regulations will meet the commissioning requirements of Approved Document L1A simply by notifying their Competent Persons Scheme Operator of the completion of the job. The Scheme Operator will, in turn notify local authorities who will then ensure that searches carried out under the Home Information Pack Regulations will cover any self-certification requirements without further action from the customer or the Installer.

By following the Code of Practice an installer will ensure that the customer is given sufficient information to be able to fully and effectively operate the product or system and to understand how to go about ensuring that the product is appropriately serviced in order to continue to operate at optimum performance levels.

In order to promote the use of the Benchmark brand to promote customer confidence, any organisation using the logo will be required to adhere to the Benchmark Brand Identity Guidelines.

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5. SCHEME REQUIREMENTS FOR PRODUCT SUPPLIERS

In order to become and remain a member of the Benchmark Scheme a product supplier must satisfy the following requirements at all times. Because of the nature of some products not all of the following requirements may apply to every member. If a member employs installers they must comply with the requirements in Section 6.

The supplier must sign the Benchmark Licence Agreement included in the Application / Renewal document for product suppliers in order to commit to the aims and requirements of the Scheme.

Scheme Administration Requirements:

- 5.1 Promote the Benchmark Scheme to installers and customers.
- 5.2 Comply with the Benchmark Brand Identity Guidelines for promotional materials, published literature, packaging, vehicles and general use of the Benchmark logo.
- 5.3 Provide contact details for an individual responsible for the day to day implementation of the Benchmark Scheme and inform HHIC of any change to the individual or their details.
- 5.4 Retain records regarding products supplied, warranty card returns and any complaints received and to provide general reports to HHIC on these items on request.

Product Related Requirements:

- 5.5 Provide products which comply with all relevant legislation and standards, and where third party product certification is applicable, evidence of this must be provided.
- 5.6 Provide, with each product, clear and complete instructions for the use of the product by installers (e.g. installation, commissioning, servicing, dosing, disposal, calibration etc.) as relevant to the product type.
- 5.7 Provide, with each product, clear instructions and information for the use of the product by customers.
- 5.8 Ensure that installer and customer instructions comply with the Brand Identity Guidelines and Document Guidelines
- 5.9 Ensure that installer and customer instructions include contact details for relevant regulatory bodies and after-sales support
- 5.10 Make available replacement documentation on request (including installer and user instructions). If made available electronically this must be consistent with that supplied originally with the product concerned.
- 5.11 Make spare parts available in accordance with the HHIC Code of Practice for the Supply of Spare Parts².

² Note that this is a requirement of HHIC membership for manufacturers.

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5.12 Give clear terms and conditions for product warranty, including:

- a. The level of cover or limitations
- b. The period of warranty (which should be no less than 12 months from installation, or 15 months from manufacture)
- c. The procedure for use and the availability of extended warranty.

Installer / Customer Support Requirements:

- 5.13 Provide easy access to help and advice for installers and customers, including the provision of technical and safety critical advice by telephone as a minimum during normal working hours.
- 5.14 Adequately cover the Benchmark Scheme in any training delivered in support of installers.
- 5.15 Have a clearly documented procedure and trained staff for the provision of help and advice to installers and customers. The procedures should make it clear what actions can be advised or taken, and if the supplier is to take action (despatching an engineer, issuing replacements etc) the conditions for this must be clearly documented.
- 5.16 Staff training for the above should cover in detail the Benchmark Scheme in relation to the supplier's products.
- 5.17 Have a clearly documented procedure for issuing safety warnings, fault notification or product recalls.
- 5.18 Offer technical support in the field.
- 5.19 Ensure in giving advice that in the event that a recommended course of action may result in a charge being made to a customer this is clearly explained.
- 5.20 Have a clearly documented procedure for receiving and resolving complaints about products, installers, or the Benchmark Scheme.
- 5.21 Record all instances of claims made against product guarantees / warranty and analyse such records for trends or evidence of product problems.

Scheme Audit Requirements:

- 5.22 Submit to periodic audits to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Benchmark Scheme.
- 5.23 Cooperate with HHIC or their agents in arranging audit visits and recognise that a failure to agree to an audit will invalidate membership of the Scheme.
- 5.24 Complying with all reasonable requests for information during audits or from HHIC.
- 5.25 Carry out any improvement actions arising from the audit within agreed timescales, providing evidence by correspondence or undergoing an additional visit if necessitated by a substantial failure.
- 5.26 Ensure that where a documented or certificated Quality Management System (such as ISO 9001) is in place, its use to deliver the requirements of the Benchmark Scheme is consistent with these requirements. Records of internal audits, management review records and corrective/preventative actions should be made available within the audit where they relate to the Benchmark Scheme.

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6. SCHEME REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTALLERS

6.1 All Installers

In order to follow the Benchmark Scheme installers are asked to adhere to the Benchmark Code of Practice and use the relevant Benchmark Checklists in accordance with the Code of Practice.

6.2 Installers Wishing to Display the Benchmark Logo

In addition to 6.1, any installer wishing to display the Benchmark logo for promotional purposes must meet the following requirements:

- 6.2.1 Sign the Benchmark Licence Agreement included in the Application / Renewal document for Installers³, agreeing to the aims and requirements of the Scheme and the conditions for the use of the logo.
- 6.2.2 State on quotes and estimates that work will be carried out in accordance with the Benchmark Code of Practice.
- 6.2.3 Carry out installation, commissioning or service work in accordance with the Code of Practice.
- 6.2.4 Ensure that work complies with all relevant legislation, including but not limited to the appropriate Building Regulations (see Appendix A).
- 6.2.5 Comply with the Benchmark Scheme Brand Identity and Document Guidelines for promotional materials, published literature, vehicles, and general use of the Benchmark logo.
- 6.2.6 If trading in England or Wales, must be a member of a Competent Persons Scheme appointed by the UK government department responsible for the Building Regulations. If trading elsewhere, must be a member of a recognised Registration Scheme within which their competence is assessed.
- 6.2.7 Have a written procedure for receiving and resolving complaints from customers.
- 6.2.8 Ensure that products are left in a safe condition and good working order.
- 6.2.9 Ensure that a contract or written agreement (e.g. a quote accepted in writing) is in place in line with Competent Persons Scheme membership requirements, where applicable.
- 6.2.10 Support HHIC or their agents if there is a need to investigate a complaint by a customer or product supplier where it relates to the operation of the Benchmark Scheme.

³ Where product suppliers directly employ installers they need only sign the Licence Agreement included in the Application / Renewal document for product suppliers.

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7. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Checklist	The Benchmark Checklist is that which must be completed when commissioning or servicing a product. It may be included in manufacturer's installation instructions or as part of a product label (e.g. vented cylinders)
Code of Practice	The requirements to be followed by installers in order to comply with this scheme.
Competent Persons Schemes	Schemes authorised by the UK Government to register installers who can self-certificate installations under the Building Regulations.
Customers	Includes householders, landlords and tenants.
Installer	A business (company or sole trader). The use of the word "installer" is not limited to installation itself and covers those carrying out installation, commissioning and servicing of heating and hot water products, or the use of supporting products (such as water treatment or test equipment).
Product	Heating and hot water equipment including appliances and other related / supporting products.
Scheme	The Benchmark Scheme as describe in this Document.
Standards	Standards published at national or international level as normative documents (such as BS, EN or ISO) or industry recognised standards that allow product certification by a UKAS accredited Certification Body. In some cases compliance with a product standard will be a legal requirement.
Supplier	The organisation that is placing the product on the marketplace and is responsible for its compliance with relevant legislation and standards. This includes product manufacturers and importers.

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APPENDIX A – REGULATIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a critical feature of the domestic heating and hot water sector and it is widely recognised that there will be an increasing focus on the optimum use of energy in dwellings. Carbon emissions from the domestic building stock⁴ account for 27% of the total UK emission level; and the provision of space and water heating is responsible for 73% of these domestic emissions. This represents over 30 million tonnes of carbon emissions each year.

England & Wales

Energy efficient appliances can be demanded by statute, but the Building Regulations also recognise that the appliance will only deliver the optimum efficiency if they are installed, commissioned and serviced correctly.

The regulations⁵ state that:

“Reasonable provision shall be made for the conservation of fuel and power in buildings by providing and commissioning energy efficient fixed building services with effective controls; and providing to the owner sufficient information about the building, the fixed building services and their maintenance requirements so that the building can be operated in such a manner as to use no more fuel and power than is reasonable.”

They also state that:

“...the person carrying out the work shall.....give a notice confirming that the fixed building services have been commissioned in accordance with a procedure approved by the Secretary of State.”

The procedure approved⁶ by the Secretary of State is set out in the Domestic Heating Compliance Guide⁷ and Table 1 cites the Benchmark system as a means to satisfy the Regulations.

The importance of the correct installation of energy efficient appliances also impacts upon the Home Information Pack Regulations⁸ which make the inclusion of an energy performance certificate mandatory and also require that work notified under Building Regulations is included in the mandatory searches.

⁴ DCLG, “Review of Sustainability of Existing Buildings” (November 2006)

⁵ Statutory instrument SI 2006/652

⁶ Approved Document L1A, clause 65

⁷ The “Domestic Heating Compliance Guide” 1st Edition, May 2006 (ISBN-10 1 85946 2251)

⁸ Statutory instrument SI 2007/992

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APPENDIX B – CODE OF PRACTICE

FOR THE INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING AND SERVICING OF DOMESTIC HEATING AND HOT WATER PRODUCTS

Benchmark places responsibilities on both manufacturers and installers⁹. The purpose is to ensure that customers¹⁰ are provided with the correct equipment for their needs, that it is installed, commissioned and serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions by competent persons and that it meets the requirements of the appropriate Building Regulations. Installers are required to carry out work in accordance with the following:

Standards of Work

- Be competent and qualified to undertake the work required.
- Install, commission, service and use products in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions provided.
- Ensure that where there is responsibility for design work, the installation is correctly sized and fit for purpose.
- Meet the requirements of the appropriate Building Regulations. Where this involves notifiable work be a member of a Competent Persons Scheme or confirm that the customer has notified Local Authority Building Control (LABC), prior to work commencing.
- Complete all relevant sections of the Benchmark Checklist / Service Record when carrying out commissioning or servicing of a product or system.
- Ensure that the product or system is left in a safe condition and, whenever possible, in good working order.
- Highlight to the customer any remedial or improvement work identified during the course of commissioning or servicing work.
- Refer to the manufacturer's helpline where assistance is needed.
- Report product faults and concerns to the manufacturer in a timely manner.

Customer Service

- Show the customer any identity card that is relevant to the work being carried out prior to commencement or on request.
- Give a full and clear explanation / demonstration of the product or system and its operation to the customer.
- Hand over the manufacturer's instructions, including the Benchmark Checklist, to the customer on completion of an installation.
- Obtain the customer's signature on the Benchmark Checklist to confirm satisfactory demonstration and receipt of manufacturer's instructions.
- Advise the customer that regular product servicing is needed, in line with manufacturers' recommendations, to ensure that safety and efficiency is maintained.
- Respond promptly to calls from a customer following completion of their work, providing advice and assistance by phone and, if necessary, visiting the customer.
- Rectify any installation problems at no cost to the customer during the installer's guarantee period.

⁹ The use of the word "installer" is not limited to installation itself and covers those carrying out installation, commissioning and / or servicing of heating and hot water products, or the use of supporting products (such as water treatment or test equipment).

¹⁰ Customer includes householders, landlords and tenants