

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1 2AA

CC: Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy,
Rt Hon Alok Sharma, COP26 President
Jonathan Brearley, Chief Executive, Ofgem

25 August 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Achieving our net zero target is a shared endeavour between government, industry and the public.

We are fully committed to the UK's goal to reach net zero. We want to work with you and share our collective insight from consumers and industry to make this process as easy as possible for the public to engage with and understand.

As representatives of consumers and industry, we are collectively urging you to address these gaps in the upcoming Net Zero Strategy:

- **Information** - Many people have difficulty understanding what home technologies to install. There is too little information about the different options available and the benefits they're intended to deliver. People need accessible, unbiased guidance on the changes needed for their homes and how to make them.
- **Protection** - Consumer protections must be fit for purpose for the rapidly expanding low carbon, energy efficiency and smart technology markets. Currently, inadequate protections mean when installers go bust, people find it difficult to fix problems and are left with guarantees and warranties that are useless or difficult to enforce. Furthermore, if protections for the net-zero transition don't keep up with the pace of change, we open the door to scammers and rogue traders. Previous energy efficiency and low-carbon schemes have been marred by scams and mis-selling. We've recently seen the roots of this



issue reemerge, with the top issue we've seen in relation to the Green Homes Grant scheme being scams.

- **Financial support** - The vast majority of people will be unable to make these changes without financial support like grants, low-cost loans and financing. The government must bring forward specific support schemes for people who are fuel-poor, in vulnerable circumstances or less able to afford these changes. Everyone should benefit from warmer, more efficient homes.

Retrofitting 29 million homes as part of the net zero transition is a once in a generation undertaking. Public trust and confidence will be crucial. Both could be easily lost if people can't work out how to make the changes that are right for their homes, if they're put off by horror stories of things going wrong or they can't afford to make changes.

In addition to upfront costs, Citizens Advice research has shown two very clear barriers to people making these adaptations:

- **It's currently too complicated:** Right now the process of installing low carbon heating, upgrading insulation or installing smart technologies is time-consuming, confusing and stressful. Researching and choosing the right technology, finding a reputable installer and having the work completed demands huge amounts of knowledge, time and effort.
- **Things go wrong too often:** The process of making adaptations is often beset by problems, including dodgy installations, technologies not working as expected, and people facing difficulties in fixing things when they go wrong.

Previous energy efficiency schemes didn't start out with strong enough quality standards and many people were left struggling with damp and mould due to poorly installed insulation. Others suffered damage to their homes, leaving them with long-term problems that were expensive, disruptive and distressing to resolve. While some improvements to consumer protections have been made since then, they don't go far enough for the pace and scale of changes to homes needed for net zero.

The government has an opportunity to address this and avoid past mistakes, by giving people the tools, support and confidence they need to engage with the process and support the transition to net zero. Putting any future retrofit schemes on a long-term footing will allow industry greater time to upskill, better support its implementation,



and improve the experience for people making changes to their homes

Your government has shown a strong commitment to addressing the climate emergency through the 10-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and the UK's global leadership through COP26. Now is the time to give people the confidence to future-proof their homes, and provide much-needed certainty for businesses to unleash innovation, invest in skills and create good quality green jobs.

We are ready and willing to work with you to achieve this.

Yours sincerely,



Dame Clare Moriarty
Chief Executive, Citizens Advice



Brian Berry,
Chief Executive, Federation of Master Builders



Anabel Houlton,
Chief Executive, Which?



Nick Molho,
Executive Director, Aldersgate Group

