Which? is a great tool to help your business?
I can honestly say this has been the best business decision I have ever made. The majority of my work now comes through Which?

Mike Wallace
M J Wallace Ltd, Albrighton

Which? brand is trusted by consumers?

Chances are, you’ve already heard of Which?.

For over 60 years, we’ve been standing up for the consumer, rigorously testing products and services and providing expert impartial advice to help people make informed decisions about the products they buy.

Today, we are the largest independent consumer body in the UK with over 1.4 million members and supporters.

The Which? logo is regarded by consumers as a sign of reputation and trust. If a product or service has been awarded a Which? Best Buy or Recommended Provider, you know it’s a mark of excellence that will help it stand out from the crowd.

For more information, visit which.co.uk

What you may not know is that Which? also creates new products and services.

So, when we see a market failing to deliver value to its customers, we do something about it. And now we’re delighted to tell you about Which? Trusted Traders, a service designed to help consumers in their daily lives.
Which? Trusted Traders fills an important gap in the market.

A completely free-to-use service for all consumers, not just our members, Which? Trusted Traders exists to help people find local traders they can depend on. At the same time, it gives trustworthy traders the recognition they deserve.

While there are already a number of trader schemes in the marketplace, none can provide what Which? Trusted Traders provides – an endorsement from the UK’s leading independent consumer organisation.

When you’re endorsed by Which?, you know it means something.

And Which? Trusted Traders is no different. Our trading standards professionals carefully assess every applicant to ensure they meet our high standards.

In other words, it’s not something we give to everyone. But, if your assessment is successful, then you can start reaping the many rewards:

- Benefit from the association with Which? Trusted Traders by displaying the endorsement icon alongside your own business logo - on vehicle livery, for instance
- Your own business profile featured on the Which? Trusted Traders website
- A dedicated account manager to help you make the most of your endorsement
- Regular updates to help you stay on top of any legislative or regulation changes
- Access to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service to help resolve any customer disputes
- Benefit from Which? brand advertising on TV and in a variety of other media
- Monthly Which? magazine and access to which.co.uk subscriber-only content.

You can be sure that the Which? name gives consumers the confidence that they have chosen a reputable tradesman.

Dave Simmonds
Vale Lifestyle Services, Evesham.

“Which? is the scheme that can deliver key business benefits?”
The Assessment Process

Join in. Stand out.

You send us the following key documents:

- We get a credit report on your business and assess its financial health.
- We check your trading history and carry out background checks.
- In our Local Authority areas, there's a trading standards intelligence check and we ask Company Directors to obtain a DBS check.

We'll email you de/coming actions you must complete if you want to join.

We check randomly picked customer references.

A minimum of 10 domestic customer references are selected at random.

The assessor will come to your place of business. Checks include:

1. Public liability insurance including any exclusions
2. Completed quote and invoice
3. Employer's liability insurance (if applicable)
4. Copy of terms and conditions (if applicable)
5. Copy of photo ID (driving licence or passport)
6. Utility bill (proof of address)

Every applicant undergoes an assessment to ensure they meet the high standards required of a Which? Trusted trader.

We check you're eligible to apply (see page 22).

You sign up to be assessed and pay a non-refundable assessment fee. The fee is a contribution towards the assessment.

We get a credit report on your business and assess its financial health.

We check your trading history and carry out background checks.

In our Local Authority areas, there's a trading standards intelligence check and we ask Company Directors to obtain a DBS check.

We book in your assessor visit once you've passed the initial checks.

You send us the following key documents:

- Work experience and qualifications
- How the business is run
- How you deal with customers and complaints
- All business documents (cancellation rights, estimates and quotes, terms and conditions, etc.)
- Business and administrative procedures.

A minimum of 10 domestic customer references are selected at random.

Once you've met our criteria and our head assessor has signed off your assessment, you can join the scheme.

You'll need to agree to our terms and conditions and code of conduct.

Finally, you'll pay your ongoing monthly fees. (Fees are dependent on the size of your business)

Your account manager helps you get started. Simply:

- Update your profile and start receiving customer reviews
- Read the endorsement icon user regulations and put the icon on your business materials
- Complete your post-endorsement actions (such as updating elements of your website) within 3 months, otherwise your endorsement will be withdrawn.

Every applicant undergoes an assessment to ensure they meet the high standards required of a Which? Trusted trader.

We'll email you defining actions you must complete if you want to join.

We check randomly picked customer references.

1. Public liability insurance including any exclusions
2. Completed quote and invoice
3. Employer's liability insurance (if applicable)
4. Copy of terms and conditions (if applicable)
5. Copy of photo ID (driving licence or passport)
6. Utility bill (proof of address)

If your main business is electrical contracting and you're a member of NICEIC or ELECSA, we will ask for your latest report from your registered body and you may be entitled to a free assessment if we feel we can conduct your assessor visit over the telephone.

Subscription to Which? Trusted Traders is subject to compliance with the terms and conditions of the Which? Trusted Traders scheme, payment of ongoing fees and annual reassessment in accordance with Which? eligibility criteria. During the assessment process, if we feel it necessary, we reserve the right to request a DBS check.
Some logos speak louder than others.

When you display a Which? Trusted Traders endorsement icon alongside your own logo, it says your services have been thoroughly assessed and have passed the assessment criteria. It says your services have received a stamp of approval from a respected independent consumer organisation.

In short, it gives your customers confidence that they’re dealing with a trustworthy trader.

Not everyone has what it takes to make it through the assessment process. So, when you do have our endorsement, make sure you shout about it.

We know from experience that the traders who enjoy the most success from the scheme are those that make an effort to use the Which? Trusted Traders endorsement icon.

Which? logo makes a great impression on your customers?

Here are a few dos and don’ts when using your Which? Trusted Traders logo:

- **Do** show off your endorsement by applying the icon to your business vehicle livery
- **Do** make sure the icon features in any brochures, leaflets, invoices or workwear
- **Do** put the icon on your website, if you have one – it can make a great first impression
- **Do** tell your customers what you’ve been endorsed for

**DON’T** use the logo to help sell products such as kitchens, mobility scooters or windows. *We only endorse the service you provide.*

**Some logos speak louder than others.**

When you display a Which? Trusted Traders endorsement icon alongside your own logo, it says your services have been thoroughly assessed and have passed the assessment criteria. It says your services have received a stamp of approval from a respected independent consumer organisation.

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We know from experience that the traders who enjoy the most success from the scheme are those that make an effort to use the Which? Trusted Traders endorsement icon.

**Andy Marsden**
A. J Marsden Ltd, Oldham.

**We’ve been using the logo on our website, emails and quotes and we’re now fully booked for this year. We’ve even started to take bookings for the New Year!**
Which? profile could help boost your business?

The better your Which? Trusted Traders profile, the better it is for your business.

In the same way traders see more benefits when they make greater use of the Which? Trusted Traders endorsement icon, traders see more value from their endorsement when they have a fully updated profile and reviews on their page.

Put simply, this profile is an editable page on the Which? Trusted Traders website.

It’s a great platform for you to tell potential customers where you work, what you do, where your specialist skills and expertise lie, what your experience is - everything they need to make an informed decision about whether you’re the right trader for them.

As well as providing specific information about your services, you can also upload images of your own work in the ‘My work’ section. These pictures of real-life projects are a powerful and effective testimonial and the ideal way to add visual interest to your profile.

See examples of other trader pages at whichtrustedtraders.co.uk

Getting the most from your editable page on the Which? Trusted Traders website.

- Sell your skills
  Describe where you work, what you do and where your specialist skills and expertise lie - let customers know what services you can offer.

- Industry experience
  Expand on your work experience, knowledge and qualifications, and describe any notable projects that you have worked on.

- Show off your work
  Pictures of real-life projects you’ve carried out are a powerful and effective testimonial and the ideal way to add visual interest to your profile.
Which? traders are getting great reviews?

Actions speak louder than words.

But, when the words are provided by one of your happy customers, then they carry great weight and power. They make a very persuasive argument on your behalf.

Your profile allows customer reviews to be submitted in two ways, either online or on a printed review form. Online posting is a quick and convenient way to secure feedback.

Every review, whether online or in the form of a paper review card, is pre-moderated by the Which? Trusted Traders team. We need to check that no inappropriate language has been used and that the comments are not offensive, obscene or defamatory.

We also have to check that no copyrights, trademarks or intellectual property rights of another person have been infringed. If there are any concerns, we will make additional checks, which could involve contacting you or your customers.

We should point out that even the very best and most diligent traders can occasionally garner a negative review. If it’s just one amongst many positive and complimentary reviews, then it is unlikely to be too damaging to your business and reinforces the overall credibility of the review procedure. You can, of course, respond to any reviews, negative or positive, to tell your side of the story.

It’s benefited our business in a lot of ways. It gives our customers peace of mind and it has also given us the confidence that what we are doing is right.

Colin Morgan
Homeglaze Home Improvements, Essex.

“...
The Which? Trusted Traders scheme doesn’t just align you with Which? – it also gives you extra support.

If you have a dispute with a customer and are still unable to resolve matters after following your own complaints process, Which? Trusted Traders provides you with access to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service.

We partner with a not-for-profit company called Dispute Resolution Ombudsman, which offers a completely independent service and is there to help resolve issues between the two parties and bring the dispute to a fair conclusion.

For the customer, this is appealing because it means there is a clear process to follow in the event that things go wrong, and the promise of an impartial review of their complaint, without having to go to court.

For the trader, it’s an important support service that reassures the customer and makes them feel even more confident about dealing with you.

The Dispute Resolution Ombudsman helps resolve issues between the two parties and bring the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion.

For more information visit: disputeresolutionombudsman.org
The Which? reputation stands or falls on the quality of the products and services we recommend.

So, not surprisingly, those traders who carry our endorsement are required to adhere to a strict code of conduct.

The code covers areas such as how to handle and process consumer contracts and dealing with complaints and payment issues. It makes clear what we expect of our traders and ensures they maintain high standards once their endorsement has been granted. It also provides consumers with peace of mind and makes them more likely to want to do business with you. We encourage our traders to hand out the code of conduct with their quotations.

I always mention that we are proud members of Which? Trusted Traders. Showing potential customers our reviews and the code of conduct has proved very useful in helping them to choose us.

Derek Caplen, Dee Cee Upholstery & Interiors, Southampton
Which? scheme works with likeminded organisations?

Our goal for Which? Trusted Traders is simple. We want the scheme to represent the industry standard for quality control, competency and customer service. We want it to be the yardstick that traders are measured against, for the benefit of consumers and businesses alike.

By working together with these likeminded organisations, many of which are not-for-profit, it sends a powerful message to the consumer that they are working with a safe, proficient and reliable trader.

Similarly, Which? Trusted Traders is looking to create joint schemes with local authorities, providing an endorsement not only from Which? Trusted Traders, but also council trading standards. Hertfordshire Trading Standards is just one example of how we are forming alliances with authorities to help consumers find trustworthy traders and help hardworking businesses get the recognition they deserve.

To help bring this about, we have formed a number of key relationships with relevant organisations who share similar goals and outlook.

For instance, in order to help raise and maintain industry standards for consumers, we are working with a number of top trade organisations – from the British Institute of Kitchen, Bedroom and Bathroom Installation to the NICEIC and from Gas Safe to the National Institute of Carpet and Floorlayers to name but a few.

Some of the organisations that Which? Trusted Traders work with:
Which? scheme is looking for the UK’s best traders?

We want Which? Trusted Traders to be the home of the trustworthy trader. The place to find a service provider who is reliable, reputable and recommended.

So, to this end, before you apply, you will need to pass our pre-application checks.

Once you have satisfied the pre-application criteria, you will be eligible to apply to the scheme and pay the fee required for your assessment. In the event of you meeting the scheme’s high standards and successfully passing the assessment, you will be asked to agree to the terms and conditions and our code of conduct and pay the membership fee, which will then allow you to join the Which? Trusted Traders scheme.

The cost of a Which? Trusted Traders membership, and an endorsement from the UK’s leading consumer organisation, varies according to the number of people involved in your business activities (including all employees and subcontractors). There are individual pricing bands for 0-3 employees, 4-9 employees, 10-19 employees and 19+ employees.

PLEASE NOTE that, after 19+ employees, pricing rates will vary according to the number of staff. There is also an additional charge if more than one online profile is required.

See page 22 to answer our six quick pre-application questions to find out whether your business is eligible to apply to be a Which? Trusted trader.
**6 quick pre-application questions**

We need to ask you six quick pre-application questions to work out whether your business is eligible to apply to be a Which? Trusted trader. If you pass the pre-application questions you can sign up to be assessed.

**PLEASE NOTE** To be eligible to apply questions 1-2 must be answered YES and 3-6 must be answered NO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. INDUSTRY</th>
<th>Is your business in the consumer home improvement, or servicing/repairs of consumer vehicles trade?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Which? Trusted Traders only endorses businesses in consumer home improvement, or servicing/repairs of consumer vehicles.</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. TRADING PERIOD</th>
<th>Has your business been trading successfully for six months or more?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We only assess businesses that have been up and running for at least six months of trading. We also need to collect customer references from the same trading period.</td>
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<th>3. DOOR-STEP SELLING</th>
<th>Does your business undertake door-step selling or other cold-calling?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which? considers door-step selling is bad practice and shouldn't be part of a trader’s sales tactics, so we do not assess traders who use these sales tactics.</td>
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<th>4. COUNTY COURT JUDGMENTS</th>
<th>Does your business have a County Court Judgment (CCJ) registered against it that is less than two years old?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>If a business has been issued a County Court Judgment (CCJ), we can only assess them once they have settled the CCJ and traded successfully for two years following its award.</td>
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| 5. MEMBERSHIPS | Have you or your business previously been refused membership to the Which? Trusted Traders scheme or another similar scheme, or had any such membership terminated? |

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<th>6. BUSINESS DIRECTORS</th>
<th>Do any of the directors, or anyone else that has an active involvement in the running of your business, have:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• Any unspent criminal convictions • Any bankruptcy orders made against them • Any involvement in a previous business that has become insolvent • A history of dissolving multiple companies?</td>
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If trader responds YES to questions 5 or 6 they will NOT be eligible to apply.
The association with Which? Trusted Traders is really key to us at the moment. People just get it which is fantastic.

Justin Bucknell
Justin Bucknell Electrical Ltd, Bicester