

Unregistered gas fitter sentenced after carrying out illegal work

- Illegal gas work carried out on a house in Torquay leaving an 'immediately dangerous' situation
- Investigation found multiple failings left by unregistered gas fitter
- HSE encourage householders to check the Gas Safe Register for qualified professionals

An unregistered gas fitter has been sentenced after carrying out illegal gas work at a house in Torquay that left the property in an immediately dangerous condition.

Exeter Court heard that Benjamin Owen, known as Ben, trading as BPS and 'Ben the Plumber', attended a property on Barton Hill, Torquay in February 2023 where he removed an old boiler and installed a new one.

Following the installation, the boiler did not work properly. The homeowners arranged for another company to check the installation when Ben Owen was dismissive of their concerns. When this plumber attended, they had serious concerns and called the emergency gas provider, who found a gas leak on the gas supply pipe and classified the situation as 'immediately dangerous', capping the gas supply.

Gas Safe Register was called and attended the site, where they found further defects in the gas boiler installation. A third company was employed by the homeowners to rectify the faults. When they started work, they discovered additional faults created by Mr Owen.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that Ben Owen was not registered with the Gas Safe Register, which is a legal requirement. He had previously been a member of Gas Safe Register, but his registration lapsed in October 2021 when he failed to renew his membership. Since 20 October 2021, he was not registered to undertake any form of gas work.

Carrying out gas work without registration is illegal and potentially dangerous, as unqualified work can lead to gas leaks, fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Ben Owen, of Peter Street, St Helier Jersey pleaded guilty to contravening Sections 3(3), 26(1) and 27(1) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, ordered to undertake 150 hours unpaid work and to pay costs of £1,000.

After the hearing HSE inspector, Simon Jones, said: "Ben Owen undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do and the work that he undertook was found to be dangerous, putting the lives of the homeowners and their four young children at risk.

All gas work must be conducted by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life.

“We advise all householders to check that anyone they allow to work on their gas supply is Gas Safe registered. This can be done at the Gas Safe Register website.”

HSE has guidance on managing gas appliances and equipment safely, as well as what to do in an emergency at www.hse.gov.uk/gas

To check if an engineer is legally permitted to carry out gas work, visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Daniel Poole and Paralegal Michael Millman.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here www.hse.gov.uk/gas
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).