



Annual Report 2020-21

FIRST FOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY ADVICE

ABOUT US

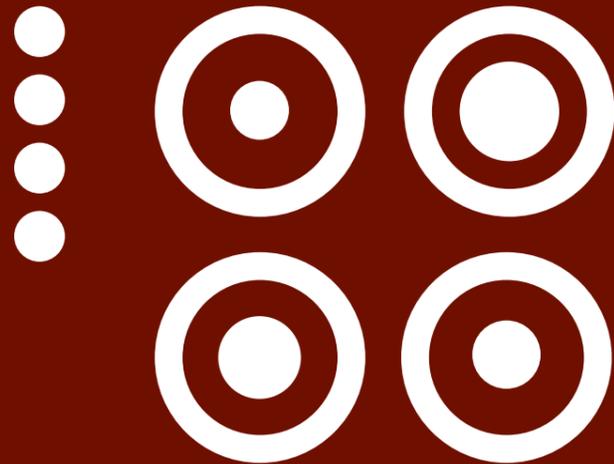
Electrical Safety First is the UK charity dedicated to reducing deaths and injuries caused by electrical accidents. Our aim is to ensure everyone in the UK can use electricity safely. We campaign on behalf of consumers to improve electrical safety regulation and make sure that safety messages are appropriate, up-to-date and well communicated.

We provide expert information and advice to help people protect themselves from faulty, damaged, sub-standard and poorly maintained electrical installations and appliances. We are recognised by government and industry as the leading campaigning charity and technical authority on electrical safety.

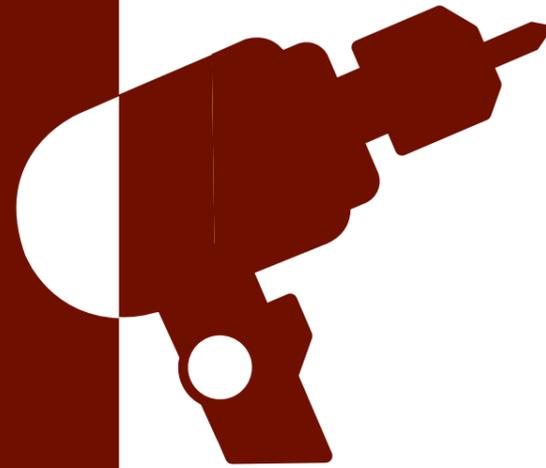
Strength Through Difference – Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

At Electrical Safety First we believe that everyone has the right to be safe from the dangers that electricity can present. We are committed to a culture of inclusivity and equality and believe that the diversity of our team helps empower us to campaign on behalf of everyone in the UK, to keep them safe from electrical risk.

In our small team we make sure that everybody's voice is heard and that we are all able to use our individual experiences and unique talents in a truly collaborative approach to achieving the Charity's goals. Our staff are valued and supported, and we believe that by acknowledging and respecting that we are all different, we are better able to represent all of the people we are working to protect.



CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION



I was honoured to be asked to succeed Alison Parkes as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Electrical Safety First from October 2020. Like her, I am immensely proud of what the Charity has achieved during the course of the past year, a year in which headlines have continued to be dominated by Covid-19 and latterly climate change. Our full-time staff team has been equal to the challenge, adapting to the brave new world of virtual reality with, for example, home working and a hugely successful Product Safety Conference held online last November. The Board of Trustees has also had to be adaptive continuing its oversight work through a variety of virtual forums (including holding our meetings via MS Teams!).

I would like to extend a warm welcome to new trustees Sarah Frost and Richard Olszewski, who joined the Board earlier this year. They bring a great deal of relevant experience. I am looking forward to being able to meet all trustees face-to-face again as soon as circumstances permit.

During the year, we have been able to continue to make progress against the Charity's goals. In particular, we saw the long-awaited introduction of five-yearly electrical checks in privately rented homes in England and the establishment of Consumer Scotland, with a requirement to establish a database of major electrical product recalls. These are significant steps in protecting consumers from electrical risk.

We continue to examine the Charity's strategy to make sure our goals remain up-to-date and relevant and that we are ready to address new risks and electrical safety issues associated with climate change and the path to 'net zero'. In addition, our workstreams are considering the change in lifestyle that has resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic that has led to more people working from home, shopping online and buying second-hand electrical goods. Much of this will build on our existing work but there are also new areas in which we will need to become involved, alongside our other key campaigning issues which remain as important as ever.

As always, our campaigning activity is underpinned by robust research, including government fire data and our own consumer awareness research. By focusing on target regions in the UK identified through this research as being most at risk on certain topics, for example product recalls and registration, we are able to track the success of our campaigns in prompting positive behaviour change, and adapt our messages for each region based on their perceived barriers to taking effective action to keep themselves safe.

The Charity's principal source of revenue to fund our activities is Certsure LLP, our commercial joint venture with the Electrical Contractors' Association; earlier this year the Management Board of Certsure appointed an independent Chair (Gary Anderson).

Despite an initial concern over the potential effect of Covid-19 on the Charity's income, I am pleased to report that it has not as yet had a significant impact on our long-term planning and we expect to be able to continue with our current work and maybe even build the extent of our charitable activities.

Alison Parkes and Paul Canning are retiring from the Board this year after each has completed nine years as a trustee. Nick Ratty will also be retiring after six years' service. During the financial year, Anne Ferguson decided to step down as a trustee having served as Chair immediately prior to Alison. All have made immense contributions to the work of the Board and I want to record our thanks to each one of them for that. I'd also like to express my gratitude to Alison for her leadership of the Board (2018-2020) while she was Chair and for her wise counsel during the transition to myself – thank you.

Finally I want to acknowledge Lesley and the whole of her team at Electrical Safety First for their continued hard work and the professionalism they have maintained throughout these most testing of times. Thank you all.

Andy Chaplin
Chair

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

When I joined Electrical Safety First in February 2020, I was looking forward to an interesting and challenging first year with the Charity. I had no idea just how challenging that first year was going to be. Within a few weeks the country was in lockdown, and we found ourselves adapting to working remotely whilst trying to keep electrical safety included in a news and policy agenda that was understandably focused on the Covid-19 pandemic.



However, despite these unprecedented challenges, the last year has still seen significant progress for some of the Charity's key priorities.

June 2020 saw the introduction of five-yearly checks on the electrical installations in privately rented homes in England. This is something for which the Charity has campaigned for many years and we will continue to work with the devolved Welsh and Northern Irish governments to ensure that they also introduce five-yearly checks as soon as possible. While this is a significant step towards improving electrical safety for tenants, there is still inequality between housing tenures, with no requirement outside Scotland for any electrical checks in socially rented housing. We have consulted extensively with the Social Rented Sector, with the results being presented in a policy paper that states a clear case and support for the introduction of mandatory five-yearly checks in socially rented homes.

The inequality of electrical safety protection across housing tenures is an issue that can present serious safety risks. As we continue to learn from the Grenfell Tower tragedy of 2017, we believe that it is vital that electrical safety is included in the Building Safety Bill, which entered Parliament this year. We are calling for mandatory five-yearly electrical checks to be carried out in all homes in High Rise Residential Buildings, regardless of tenure.

Another important milestone for the Charity came when the Consumer Scotland Act was passed in June last

year. The Act sets up Consumer Scotland as a new body that will work across a range of consumer protection issues. We successfully campaigned for this to include the establishment of a central database for major product recalls in Scotland and the provision of advice to affected consumers. We hope to work with the Scottish Government on both the development and promotion of the database.

In a year that saw deserted High Streets and shopping centres due to lockdowns and social distancing restrictions, it is unsurprising that more people than ever before chose to shop online. Reflecting this shift in consumer behaviour, a lot of our campaigning activity has focused on the risks of buying electrical products from unregulated third-party sellers via online marketplaces. These campaigns also support the Charity's call for the Government to better clarify the roles and responsibilities of online marketplaces and introduce legislation, possibly via a Bill proposed by the Charity, that would make them take responsibility for ensuring that the products sold on their platforms by third party sellers are safe.

We launched a petition in October last year calling for action to be taken against the sale of dangerous electricals via online marketplaces. It has now had over 25,000 signatures, with more than 8,000 people contacting their local MP to ask for their support on this important issue.

The Charity offers a range of innovative digital tools that make it easier for consumers to access information about



electrical safety issues, including product recalls and registration as well as helping to identify potentially unsafe electrical products sold online by third party sellers. We have had considerable interest in these tools from manufacturers and retailers,

MANDATORY FIVE-YEARLY ELECTRICAL CHECKS IN PRIVATELY RENTED HOMES IN ENGLAND WERE INTRODUCED IN JUNE 2020.

who welcome new ways in which people can find the information they need. We launched a new smartphone app in the Spring of 2021 which offers another way for people to find out about product recalls, register a product or find a registered electrician local to them – all in a convenient format that can be easily accessed.

"I don't know how to do it", that people cite for not carrying out these basic checks that can keep them safe.

As well as adapting to what the media has described as the "new normal", we are also looking ahead to the electrical safety issues that the next few years will present. The UK Government's target for 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 has significant implications for the future use of electricity. One of the biggest issues for the Charity will be ensuring that the transformation that decarbonisation is bringing has electrical safety at its centre. We have developed a white paper which considers the electrical safety implications of the decarbonisation of heat in UK homes, an increase in the ownership and use of electric vehicles and a rapid growth in the use of smart technology in the home. We are developing our strategy for "future homes" to make sure that we have a strong voice in this very important conversation in order to safeguard consumers.

In November our annual product safety conference was held online for the first time, with no cost for attending. Sessions were held over two days with over 350 people joining our virtual event to listen to expert speakers address issues around the evolution of product safety, highlighting

how today's electrical products must not only be safe to use, but also cyber-secure and sustainable. Our 2021 conference will once again be run as a free online event.

Electrical Safety First has a small team with a large remit – to make sure that everybody in the UK stays safe from the dangers presented by electricity. This year we have started to look at how we can do more to establish the Charity as one that celebrates and champions diversity, both internally and in our external activities. Staff have all undertaken training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and we are now looking at ways to ensure that our campaigning activity is as inclusive as it can be. It's important that we reach everybody in the UK and that we deliver our campaigns in a way that will not exclude those who may not access information through the more traditional channels or have additional requirements.

I will finish by thanking my colleagues at Electrical Safety First and the Board of Trustees for their hard work, adaptability and support during the year. Particular thanks go to our Chairs over the last twelve months, Alison Parkes and Andy Chaplin, who have offered invaluable support and guidance. I am very proud that we have all risen to the challenges presented by Covid-19 with positive attitudes that have ensured that, despite not being able to meet in person for a year, we have still worked as a strong and effective team, delivering excellent results that will see a positive change in consumer awareness of electrical safety issues, as well as policy change that will provide a safer environment for millions of people.

Lesley Rudd
Chief Executive

RAISING CONSUMER AWARENESS

This has been an unprecedented year, one in which the news agenda has been impossible to predict. We have adapted to the different priorities that have arisen out of the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with much of our campaigning activity reflecting the lifestyle changes that have come about as a result of restrictions.



In April we offered guidance to people who were spending more time at home, including tips for safe home working. With 70% of Brits working from home for the first time during the first national lockdown, we found that two thirds of home workers were relying on extension leads to plug in their devices, with nearly half admitting to daisy-chaining* adaptors to support their new home office set-up.

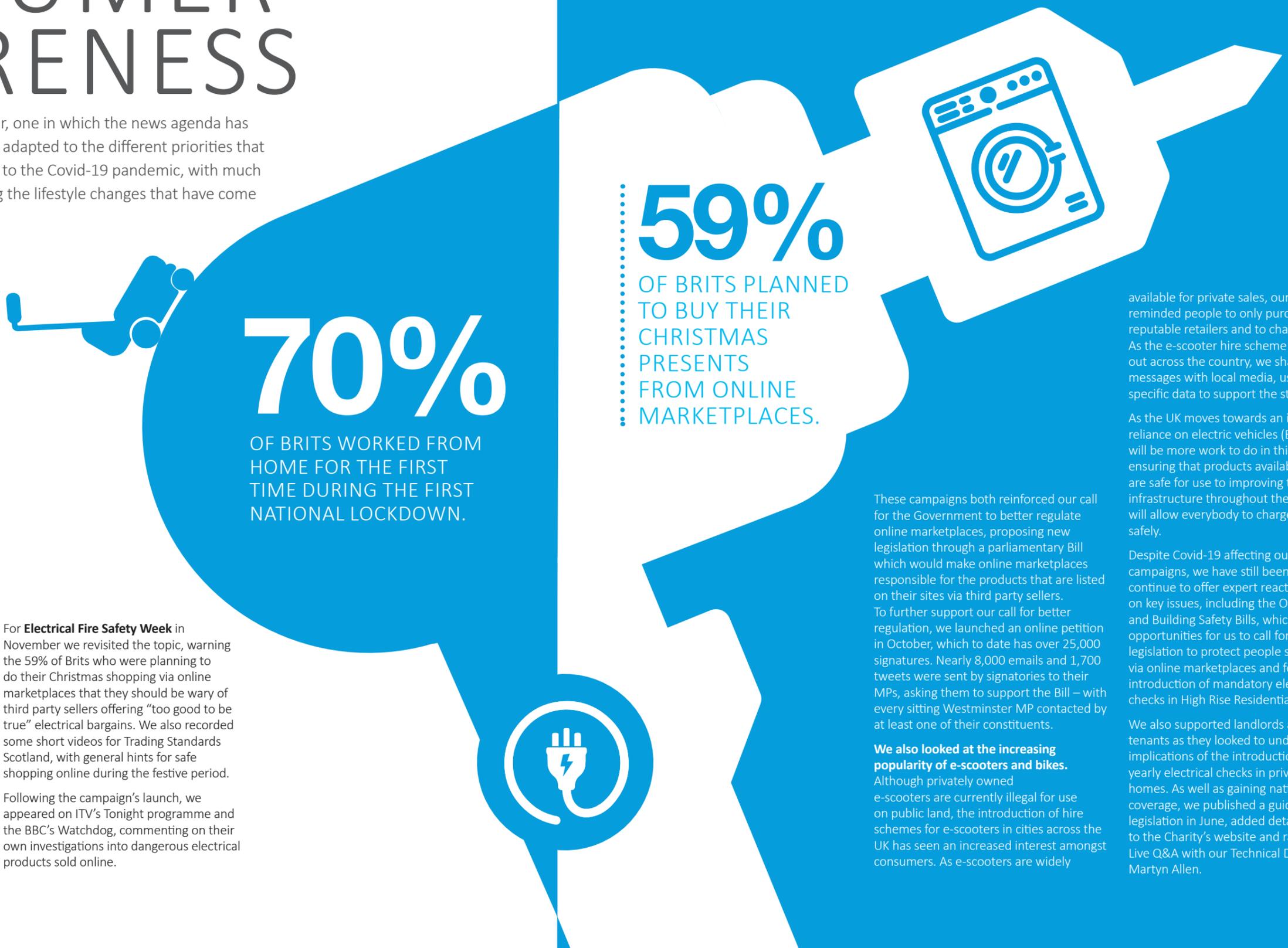
* plugging one adaptor into another to allow more appliances to be plugged in, subsequently putting a dangerous load on the socket.

National and local lockdowns unsurprisingly have led to an increase in online shopping with marketplaces being seen as a safer option than visiting the High Street.

As beauty salons and hairdressers were forced to close, people looked to recreate the salon experience at home. Research carried out for the charity in May 2020 revealed that 40% of Brits either had already bought or were considering purchasing an electrical beauty product from an online marketplace for use during lockdown. Our technical team carried out a visual assessment of a snapshot of electrical beauty products available for sale via Amazon Marketplace, eBay and Wish.com and judged that they all presented an electrical safety risk. Our advice reminded people to shop directly from manufacturers or from the websites of retailers they know and trust, rather than buying from third party sellers on online marketplaces.

For **Electrical Fire Safety Week** in November we revisited the topic, warning the 59% of Brits who were planning to do their Christmas shopping via online marketplaces that they should be wary of third party sellers offering "too good to be true" electrical bargains. We also recorded some short videos for Trading Standards Scotland, with general hints for safe shopping online during the festive period.

Following the campaign's launch, we appeared on ITV's Tonight programme and the BBC's Watchdog, commenting on their own investigations into dangerous electrical products sold online.



70%

OF BRITS WORKED FROM HOME FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING THE FIRST NATIONAL LOCKDOWN.

- DESPITE COVID-19 AFFECTING OUR PLANNED CAMPAIGNS, WE HAVE STILL
- BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE TO OFFER EXPERT REACTIVE COMMENT ON KEY
- ISSUES, INCLUDING THE ONLINE SAFETY AND BUILDING SAFETY BILLS.

59%

OF BRITS PLANNED TO BUY THEIR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FROM ONLINE MARKETPLACES.

These campaigns both reinforced our call for the Government to better regulate online marketplaces, proposing new legislation through a parliamentary Bill which would make online marketplaces responsible for the products that are listed on their sites via third party sellers. To further support our call for better regulation, we launched an online petition in October, which to date has over 25,000 signatures. Nearly 8,000 emails and 1,700 tweets were sent by signatories to their MPs, asking them to support the Bill – with every sitting Westminster MP contacted by at least one of their constituents.

We also looked at the increasing popularity of e-scooters and bikes. Although privately owned e-scooters are currently illegal for use on public land, the introduction of hire schemes for e-scooters in cities across the UK has seen an increased interest amongst consumers. As e-scooters are widely

available for private sales, our campaign reminded people to only purchase from reputable retailers and to charge safely. As the e-scooter hire scheme was rolled out across the country, we shared our messages with local media, using region-specific data to support the story.

As the UK moves towards an increased reliance on electric vehicles (EVs), there will be more work to do in this area – from ensuring that products available for sale are safe for use to improving the charging infrastructure throughout the country, that will allow everybody to charge their EVs safely.

Despite Covid-19 affecting our planned campaigns, we have still been able to continue to offer expert reactive comment on key issues, including the Online Safety and Building Safety Bills, which presented opportunities for us to call for better legislation to protect people shopping via online marketplaces and for the introduction of mandatory electrical safety checks in High Rise Residential Buildings.

We also supported landlords and tenants as they looked to understand the implications of the introduction of five-yearly electrical checks in privately rented homes. As well as gaining national media coverage, we published a guide to the new legislation in June, added detailed guidance to the Charity's website and ran a Facebook Live Q&A with our Technical Director Martyn Allen.

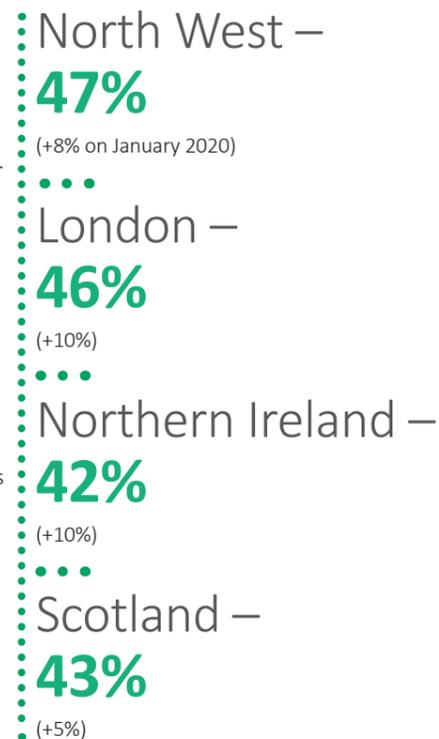
RESEARCH BASED CAMPAIGNING

All of the Charity’s campaigning activity is underpinned by robust research. Following our last major consumer awareness survey, which was carried out in January 2020, we identified regions that were particularly “at risk” when it came to our key campaigning issues. These regions either had lower awareness levels or were more likely to adopt dangerous behaviours. We carried out more research in these regions, helping to identify the demographics most at risk within them and develop campaign messages that would resonate.

Product Recalls and Registration

The regions identified as being most at risk were London, Northern Ireland, the North West and Scotland. We looked at the barriers to registration and the ways in which people would like to find out information about recall and safety notices. For example, when it came to barriers, people in Scotland were most likely to believe that the product guarantee was enough to “cover” them in the event of a recall so did not see a need to register a product, whilst those in London, Northern Ireland and the North West said that they simply forgot to do it.

A follow-up survey carried out in January 2021 saw an improvement in awareness levels around recalls and registration across the UK, with the target regions showing significant improvements. When it comes to product registration, 49% of UK adults said that they always or often register their electrical appliances. In the target regions, these figures were:



Although these are significant improvements, they are still below the national average, so the Charity will continue to campaign in these areas with messages based on the 2020-21 research.

• DURING THE COMING YEAR WE WILL TARGET REGIONS MOST AT RISK WHEN IT COMES TO BUYING COUNTERFEIT ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS AND LESS LIKELY TO USE REGISTERED ELECTRICIANS.

49%

OF UK ADULTS SAID THAT THEY ALWAYS OR OFTEN REGISTER THEIR ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES.

findings. Wales has also been added as a target region, following a drop in awareness identified in the January 2021 survey.

During the coming year, we will also be targeting those regions most at risk when it comes to low awareness of the importance of using **registered electricians** and how to find one (East of England, North East, West Midlands) and those more likely to buy **counterfeit electrical products** (London, South West, Yorkshire & Humberside). Planned activity will be based on in-depth research on these issues that has been carried out in the target regions.

Digital Tools to Help Consumers Stay Safe

During the year, we made improvements to the digital tools that we offer.

Our Alexa Skills voice app, which allows people to ask if the electrical appliances in their homes are subject to a recall notice, was extended to Google Nest. During the coming year, further improvements will be made to improve both the user experience and analytics, to enable us to learn more about how the information is being used.

To help people shop safely online, our ‘Check It Out’ extension alerts shoppers who are looking to purchase electrical products on Amazon and eBay when they are buying from a third-party seller rather than directly from a manufacturer or well-known retailer. Initially available on Chrome, this year we launched versions for Firefox, MS Edge and Safari. The extension will be further developed to include other online e-commerce sites, including the increasingly popular Instagram Marketplace.

The Charity has developed a new smartphone app, launched in Spring 2021 on iOS and Android. It offers a range of electrical safety information, from checking for electrical product recalls and registering a product through to finding an electrician.

Working in Partnership

The Charity has been working with stakeholders to improve consumer understanding of the need to register their electrical products and check for recalled items in their homes. Beko, British Heart Foundation, Dixons Carphone, Kingfisher, Whirlpool and the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) have all committed to help promote the Charity’s new digital tools. Promotion in store, online and via social channels all form part of the strategy, and the Charity is inviting other manufacturers, retailers and stakeholders to follow suit.

The Wireless Consortium has developed an Application Programming Interface (API) that will allow online retail platforms to check that the products available for sale on their sites meet the appropriate safety standards. The system has already been adopted by Amazon in Japan and the USA. We met with the Wireless Consortium and introduced them to the OPSS so that this potential solution to the online sale of counterfeit products can be included in the forthcoming product safety review.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY FIRST ONLINE

We had fewer overall visitors to the Electrical Safety First website compared with the previous year, 2019-20. This was largely due to international travel restrictions meaning that people did not need to visit our popular content about travel adaptors. Despite this overall drop in visitor numbers, in February 2021 we hit our highest amount of traffic to local "Find an Electrician" pages with 7,214 visits, marking a 64% increase on February 2020.

We added a new resource to the Guidance section of the Charity's website, 'Your Questions Answered'. This enables visitors to ask questions about electrical safety, drawing answers from the over 2,000 pages of content on the site. If a user cannot find the information they need, they are able to submit their own question and it will be added to the site. Since its addition to the website in August 2020, there have been 20,566 visitors to the pages, with over 100 new questions submitted and answered on the site.

We have continued to use our Google Grant, which gives us \$40,000 each month with which to bid on key search terms. At the end of March 2021 we ranked #1 on Google for 40 search terms, including "Part P Certificate", "Electrical Fire Safety" and "Electrical condition report".

TOTAL WEBSITE VISITS:	UNIQUE VISITORS:	PAGES VIEWS:
2,912,609	2,490,859	4,156,051

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

			
19,800	24,112	1,674	1,176

TOP 5 CONSUMER PAGES:

- WATTS TO AMPS**
340,996
(8.20% OF TOTAL WEBSITE TRAFFIC)
- AMPS TO WATTS**
313,133
(7.53%)
- HOME APPLIANCE RATINGS**
263,070
(6.33%)
- RCDS EXPLAINED**
132,709
(3.19%)
- OVERLOADING SOCKETS**
128,739
(3.10%)

ABOUT OUR ONLINE AUDIENCE

We can see that the majority of visitors to our website and Facebook page come from the 25-34 year old age group. The low percentage of 18-24 year olds visiting our Facebook page is a reflection of its decreasing popularity amongst younger people, who are more likely to use other platforms for their brand engagement. Although our Facebook page continues to perform well, we will be investigating new platforms, including TikTok, during the next year to ensure that we continue to reach consumers of all ages.

SITES FOR CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

With home schooling replacing classroom-based learning for much of the year, we saw significant increases in visitors to our educational websites for young children and teens.

SWITCHED ON KIDS

- VISITS:**
153,529
(+43.85%)
- PAGE VIEWS:**
1,010,700
(+28.75%)
- DOWNLOADS:**
51,208
(UP 24.24%)
- 230 VOLTS**
- VISITS:**
15,021
(+20.90%)
- PAGE VIEWS:**
64,392
(+9.83%)
- DOWNLOADS:**
3,795
(+9.21%)

TOP 5 DOWNLOADS:

- BEST PRACTICE GUIDES**
37,764
- LIST OF WHIRLPOOL AFFECTED DRYERS**
11,634
- LANDLORDS' GUIDE ENGLAND AND WALES**
8,436
- GUIDANCE ON MINIMUM PROVISION OF SOCKETS**
4,282
- LANDLORDS' INTERIM CHECKLIST**
1,473

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

We continue to provide guidance for electrical professionals on the Charity's website. This year, there were 37,764 downloads of our **Best Practice Guides** (BPGs), with the most popular being:

- BPG 4:** Electrical installation condition reporting: Classification Codes for domestic and similar electrical installations **22,838 downloads**.
- BPG 1:** Replacing a consumer unit in domestic premises **14,918**.
- BPG 2:** Guidance on the management of electrical safety and safe isolation procedures for low voltage installations **10,155**.

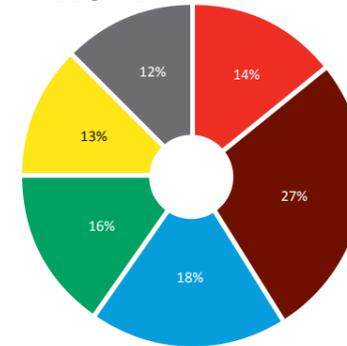
We have started developing a guide on the minimum specification for periodic inspection and testing in domestic rented accommodation, which will be published in 2021.

The guidance on the **Wiring Regulations**, hosted on the website, is continually updated, achieving just under 70,000 page views during the year.

TOP 5 TECHNICAL PAGES:

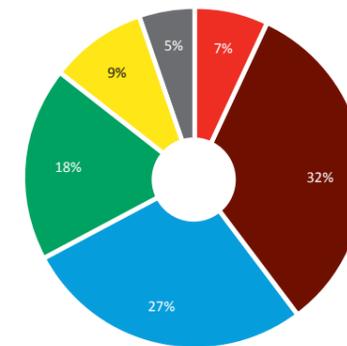
- BEST PRACTICE GUIDES**
94,170
(2.29% of total website traffic)
- WIRING REGULATIONS – NEW, REWIRED AND SIMILAR**
47,921
(1.15%)
- WIRING REGULATIONS LANDING PAGE**
21,709
(0.52%)
- WIRING REGULATIONS – INSPECTION, TESTING, CERTIFICATION AND REPORTING**
21,678
(0.52%)
- PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES LANDING PAGE**
18,196
(0.44%)

ELECTRICAL SAFETY FIRST WEBSITE:



● 18-24 ● 25-34 ● 35-44 ● 45-54 ● 55-64 ● 65+

FACEBOOK:



● 18-24 ● 25-34 ● 35-44 ● 45-54 ● 55-64 ● 65+

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

Although the Covid-19 pandemic meant that face-to-face engagement with Government was not possible during the last year, the Charity still continued to influence MPs and policy makers both at Westminster and in the devolved parliaments.



Despite the restrictions brought about by Covid-19, the Charity received 59 mentions over the last year:

Westminster - 39
Welsh Parliament - 10
Scottish Parliament - 10

Westminster

Over the last year we have worked on the Fire Safety Bill, introduced by the UK Government with the aim of ensuring that people feel safe in their homes and that a tragedy like the Grenfell Tower fire never happens again. We helped MPs and Lords table amendments to the Bill to add a requirement for people living in High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) to have regular electrical safety checks regardless of the tenure of their property and for a register of electrical appliances within these buildings to be kept. Our asks had very good cross-party support.

At a meeting with the Government Minister we agreed to withdraw the amendments, as the Government believed the Building Safety Bill would be a more appropriate Bill for our asks. However, we achieved an important concession with the confirmation that a working group would be established to look more closely at electrical safety. Electrical Safety First is a member of this small group of experts and the first meeting was held at the end of March. A Government consultation was also announced on electrical safety

in the social rented sector. Most HRRBs in England contain socially rented flats so this is an important step forward to protect residents.

- FOLLOWING A
- CONSULTATION WITH
- THE SOCIAL RENTED
- SECTOR, WHICH SHOWED
- OVERWHELMING SUPPORT
- FOR MANDATORY
- ELECTRICAL SAFETY
- CHECKS, WE PUBLISHED
- OUR PAPER, IMPROVING
- ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN THE
- SOCIAL RENTED SECTOR IN
- ENGLAND.

Electrical Product Recalls

Electrical Safety First has been concerned for some time about the low response rate to electrical product recalls in the UK. To try and address the issue we set up a working group to find a clear way forward on supporting improved recall response and

registration rates. The **Improving Product Registration and Recall (IPRR)** group is chaired by the Charity and brings together sectors that represent manufacturers, retailers and other interested parties. The group is seeking a way to improve electrical product registration rates of white goods and influence public policy to improve the recall process.

The **Online and Home Electrical Safety All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)** has continued to press the Government to improve product safety and the regulation of online marketplaces. It has looked very closely at the issues of online harms, and a key activity has been the lobbying of

Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister of State for Digital and Culture, supported by 44 MPs and representing cross-party support for the sale of dangerous electrical products to be included in the Bill. The APPG also sent a response to the Government on its recent Product Safety Review.

We are expecting a minimum of two UK Government Bills that are relevant to the Charity to enter Parliament in the coming year.

The **Building Safety Bill**, which recently had its Second Reading in the House of Commons, will take forward reforms to ensure that buildings comply with new standards following the Government consultation "Building a Safer Future" – a direct result of the Grenfell Tower disaster. We have an interest in this Bill as, amongst other things, we are seeking to improve electrical safety in High Rise Residential Buildings.

The **Online Safety Bill** will be introduced as a result of the Government White Paper on "online harms" and is expected to have a particular focus on protecting younger people from illegal content. We believe that this Bill should be extended further to

include the online sales of electrical goods as then it will have aspects on 'duty of care' for consumers. We will be seeking to amend the Bill to include this.

- WE HAD A MINISTERIAL
- MEETING IN DECEMBER
- WITH LORD GREENHALGH
- FROM THE MINISTRY OF
- HOUSING, COMMUNITIES
- AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- (MHCLG) ABOUT THE
- FIRE SAFETY BILL AND
- A DISCUSSION ON THE
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A
- WORKING GROUP.

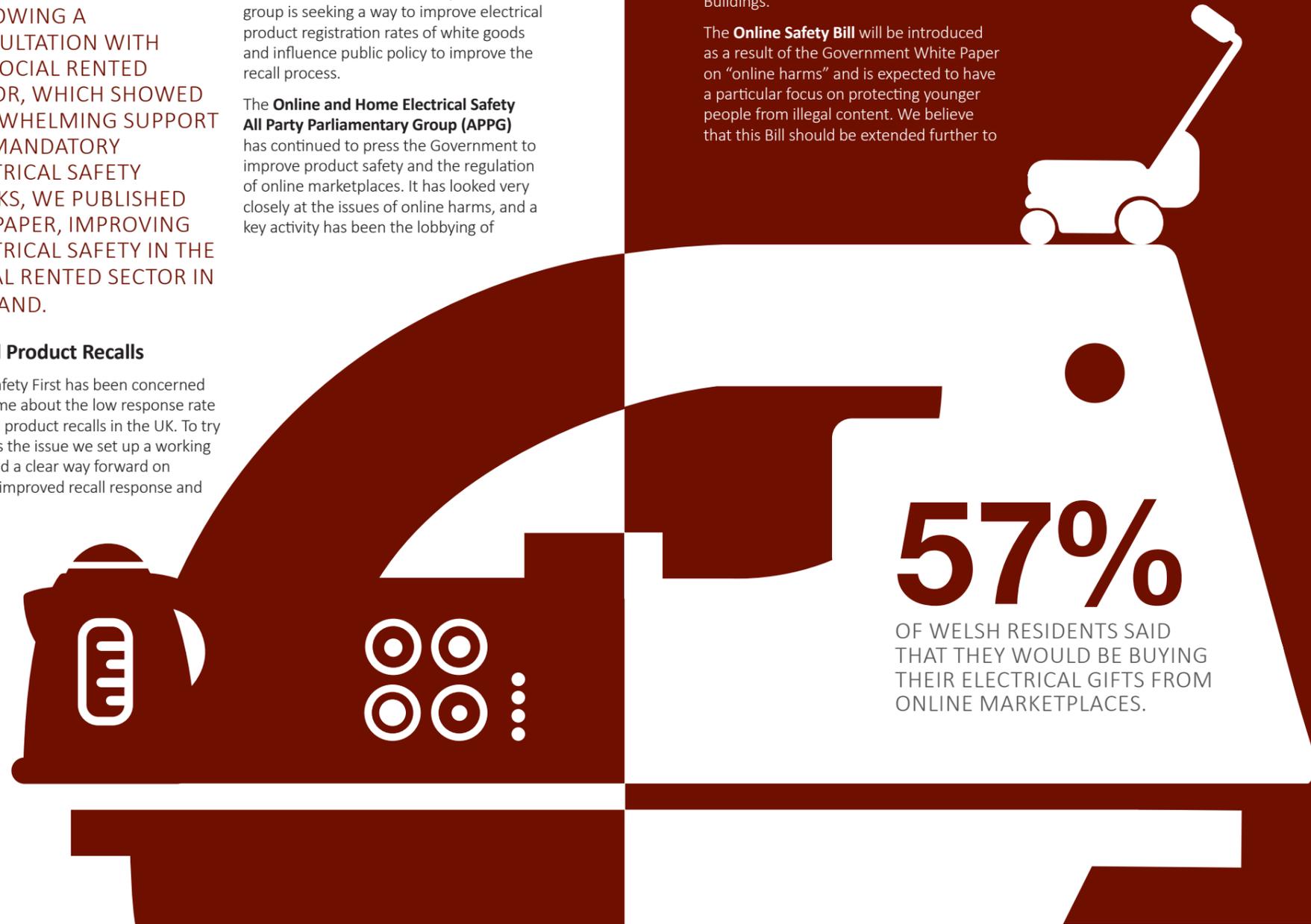
For the second annual Welsh Electrical Safety Week (30th November – 6th December 2020), we covered the topical subject of consumers buying their Christmas shopping online, with almost three in five (57%) Welsh residents saying that they would be buying their electrical gifts from online marketplaces. Prior to the awareness week, Huw Irranca-Davies MS gave a statement in the Senedd in support of the campaign. We provided digital content and messaging for stakeholders to share on their social media channels. The campaign was covered by BBC News Wales, appearing as its top online story.

Scotland

Short-Term Lets

Like elsewhere in the UK, the Short-Term Let (STL) sector has grown significantly over the last few years, but it lacks a consistent regulatory safety framework. The majority of STLs in Scotland are in owner-occupied properties, let via companies like AirBnB, which only have to meet basic electrical safety requirements. This is in contrast with properties offered as private rentals, which have the highest level of legislative protection in Scotland.

Through our 'Short-Changed' campaign, we called for STLs to have mandatory five-yearly electrical safety checks carried out by registered electricians, placing it on a par with the Private Rented Sector. As most fires are caused by appliances in Scotland, we also campaigned for the checks to cover both the electrical installation and any electrical products provided with a let. We were delighted that draft legislation for the sector includes our proposals for mandatory electrical safety checks. Subject to the approval of Holyrood, the legislation will be introduced later in 2021 and STL hosts will have until 1st April 2024 to comply with the new regulations. This would require over 32,000 STL properties to complete an electrical safety check at least every five years, protecting around 1.6 million guests annually.



WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

Our relationship with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) continues to grow, cementing the Charity's status as electrical safety experts in Scotland. We are a key member of their Electrical Safety Working Group which was established to collaborate on campaigns to help reduce electrical fires and injuries in Scottish homes.



During 2020 the group launched a social media campaign, 'Bright Spark', to help people find properly qualified and registered electricians local to them. There are currently several avenues for consumers to find competent and qualified individual electricians and businesses, but there is no comprehensive database and there is low recognition among consumers for the multiple databases that do exist.

To support the Bright Spark campaign and provide a solution to this problem, we established an online portal – www.findanelectricianscotland.com – to help people find a registered electrician in their area. The campaign materials have been seen 75,000 times on social media during the year.

Consumer Scotland Act

We successfully lobbied for an amendment to the Consumer Scotland Bill in the Scottish Parliament. The Bill aimed to establish a new body, Consumer Scotland, which will have responsibility for co-ordinating advice and undertaking advocacy work on consumer issues in Scotland. Our proposals require the body to establish a central database of major product recalls in Scotland and provide advice to consumers adversely affected by them. We gained both government and cross-party political support for our proposals, and the Bill which included our amendments became The Consumer (Scotland) Act 2020 when it received Royal Assent on 9th June 2020.

Facts and Figures

Responded to four government and parliamentary consultations

Achieved nine mentions in the Scottish Parliament through debates, questions and motions

Participated in two Scottish Government Working Groups and two Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Groups

Published four policy and briefing papers

Northern Ireland

Research and Policy Engagement

We published our first major piece of research in Northern Ireland, 'Recharge', which reviewed the level of electrical risk in Northern Ireland's housing, with a particular focus on the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and vulnerable groups. The report found that found private tenants

WE SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIED FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSUMER SCOTLAND BILL IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT.

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR BILL, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO COMPLETE ITS PASSAGE IN THE NORTHERN IRISH ASSEMBLY BY THE END OF 2021, WILL IMPOSE DUTIES ON LANDLORDS TO CARRY OUT PERIODIC ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKS FOR ANY PRIVATELY RENTED PROPERTY.

in Northern Ireland had less protection from electrical risk than in other parts of the UK and older and disabled people are disproportionately impacted by fires and accidents resulting from electricity in the home.

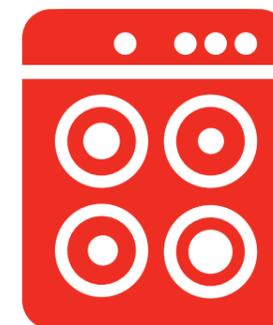
The report offers a series of recommendations to enhance electrical safety for these groups and across tenures. We used the research to engage Executive Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and stakeholders working across the housing and disability sectors, including the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland, and made significant progress in raising awareness of these important issues and the profile of the Charity's work in Northern Ireland.

Protections in the Private Rented Sector

A key policy focus in Northern Ireland has been to achieve vital protections for tenants living in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). In England and Scotland, mandatory five-yearly electrical safety checks in the PRS are legally required, with Wales expected to follow suit shortly.

Working closely with the Department for Communities in the Northern Ireland Executive, and through engagement with and support from a range of stakeholders including Housing Rights and the Chartered Institute of Housing Northern Ireland,

we achieved the inclusion of similar protections in new legislation for PRS tenants in Northern Ireland. The Private Rented Sector Bill, which is expected to complete its passage in the Assembly by the end of 2021, will impose duties on landlords to carry out periodic electrical safety checks for any privately rented property. As a result, landlords will be prevented from commencing a new lease if an electrical safety check has not been completed.



75,000

THE BRIGHT SPARK CAMPAIGN MATERIALS HAVE BEEN SEEN 75,000 TIMES ON SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE YEAR.

FIRST FOR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Our engagement with specialist, professional media and government outlets supports our Thought Leadership and public affairs activities, highlighting our relevance and expertise. As the recognised expert in our field, we work with a wide array of stakeholder organisations, including government departments, trade, consumer, and non-profit organisations, and across the electro-technical industry supply chain.



Strong partnerships are vital to extending our reach and conveying our messages to a wider audience. Our in-depth features in stakeholder and related media offer a detailed rationale for our policy positions and consumer campaigns, and provide a platform for our Thought Leadership views on emerging trends and developments.

These articles and blogs appear across a wide range of media channels and sectors. They include housing media, such as *Inside Housing*, *Property Journal* (the Chartered Institute of Housing magazine) and *Landlord Today*. But they also encompass features for other important stakeholders, from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the international fire safety sector and various health and safety outlets, through to those aimed at older people and the legal profession.

We believe it is also vital that we continue to be a significant expert voice in the industry press. Regular features support an ongoing dialogue with manufacturers, retailers, and installers, as well as those entering emerging areas such as electric vehicles and smart homes. Features this year have included 'The Evolution of the Electrician' - a thought leadership piece for *Professional Electrician* magazine that discussed the ways in which the industry is changing in response to Net Zero. This

illustrates how our expertise can flag forthcoming trends, opportunities and challenges in the consumer or legislative landscape. In this way, we help ensure all key stakeholders are informed of potential implications, for both business and consumer protection.

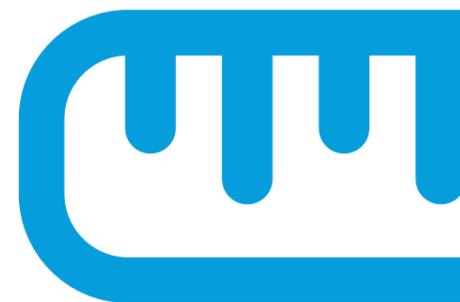
This year we have commented on topics as diverse as the 'Right to Repair' Bill and the circular economy, the dangers of the online sale of potentially dangerous electrical products, and the need for regular electrical checks across all housing tenures. We have also highlighted the innovative, tailored tools that we have developed to help keep consumers safe. In supporting public affairs events, template releases for parliamentarians have proved particularly effective and are reproduced in their blogs and constituency columns in local press, as well as on their own websites.

In addition to our membership of various standards setting committees and working groups, we provide briefings and information to various government departments and NGOs. The Charity now has an established presence in the Government's Intellectual Property Office (IPO) annual report, in which our work addressing the rising tide of electrical counterfeits is effectively showcased.

Another important element of the Thought Leadership strategy is supporting the practical application of better regulation – which is also the aim of the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) Regulatory Awards. Our submission for the 2021 award focused on the 20 hours of online training that we delivered to around 400 Trading Standards Officers across the UK, based on our research carried out for OPSS on the offline sales of second hand goods. It achieved a Highly Commended award.

The Thought Leadership strategy and our in-depth features clearly position the Charity as the trusted leader in its field, with the expertise and ideas required to deal with the demands of a complex, rapidly changing world. We aim to inspire those conversations that might otherwise have been lost. Or, possibly never even considered.

• OUR SUBMISSION
• FOR THE OPSS
• REGULATORY
• AWARDS WAS HIGHLY
• COMMENDED.



INDUSTRY EVENTS

Electrical Product Safety

Our technical team continues to be recognised as expert voices when it comes to product safety. During the year they have carried out research and testing to support the Charity's consumer campaigns, and worked in partnership with various safety organisations to further protect consumers from electrical risk.

Through our representation on the British Standards Institute's committees, this year has seen:

- The introduction of enhanced safety requirements for refrigeration appliances to prevent fires.
- The development and publication of PAS 7055, which covers safety requirements for button and coin batteries.
- Proposals being drafted for the indelible marking of white goods, to ensure that appliances can be identified after a fire.
- The development of requirements that will ensure that the power rating of appliances does not exceed the rating of the fitted plug. This proposal will be presented at the International Standards Committee for Electrical Appliances, part of the International Electrotechnical Commission.

Research and Investigations

We carried out an investigation into the safety and security of internet connected (smart) appliances. Safety testing found that eight out of nine samples were electrically unsafe. None of the samples met all of the internet connectivity requirements, although no high risk threats were found. Following referral to OPSS, half of the products were removed from sale and four products were listed on RAPEX, the EU's rapid alert system for unsafe products.

We also carried out some ad-hoc product investigations:

- The findings of our investigation into the safety of paddling pool heaters were included in the OPSS 'Stay Safe this Summer' campaign.
- As a result of our investigation, 16 A-rated portable electric vehicle chargers sold via Amazon were recalled.

2020 saw the 12th year of our annual **Product Safety Conference** – the Charity's flagship event which helps to protect the consumer by working closely with industry to share solutions and best practice.



To ensure that it was safe to attend and accessible to all during the pandemic, November's conference was run online and free of charge. The theme of the conference was *A Sustainable Future*, looking at how we can use sustainable thinking at every level to shape the intelligent, safety-led design, manufacture and sale of electrical products. This year's event was sponsored by the Office for Product Safety and Standards, Intertek, Schneider Electric, UL and Whirlpool.

The **2020 Safety Innovation Award** saw three organisations shortlisted for their innovative product or project that was able to demonstrate an improvement to consumer safety. This year's winner was JOB-Group for their product E-Bulb, the smallest fire extinguisher in the world. The E-Bulb can be placed directly at the potential ignition source of a fire – on an electrical circuit board/power adaptor or potential hot spot- on almost any consumer appliance. In the event of a fire starting, the E-Bulb detects the fire, reliably extinguishes it and cuts power to prevent re-ignition.

We participated in a Distribution Connection and Use of System Agreement (DCUSA) working group to find a solution to the long-standing issue of providing temporary isolation so electricians can work safely when replacing consumer units/fuseboxes – this is an ongoing issue.

In September, we held a seminar on electric vehicle charging point installations, facilitating industry discussions with organisations including Certsure/NICEIC, NAPIT, the ECA and the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV).

In October we presented at the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO) international symposium on sustainability in product safety.

In January we hosted a joint workshop with the National Consumer Federation on digital safety in design, working towards the development of a set of design principals that will hopefully feed into standards work, ensuring that connected products are safe and secure

In December, Technical Director Martyn Allen delivered the keynote speech at Beko's International Reliability Day.

We also worked closely with high-profile industry experts, including the Electrotechnical Assessment Specification Management Committee, Smart Meter Operational Group and Safety Advisory Group, and also strengthened our relationship with the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).



CERTSURE LLP

The Charity owns 75 per cent of the certification and training organisation, Certsure LLP (the remaining 25 per cent is owned by the Electrical Contractors' Association). It currently operates the NICEIC and ELECSA brands which offer industry leading certification services, Building Regulations schemes, training products, and support to the construction industry. Profits from these activities provide a significant part of the Charity's income.



Maintaining Competence in a Virtual World

One of Certsure's main activities is the assessment of electrical contractors (electrical businesses) against prescribed criteria relating to electrical wiring regulations such as British Standard 7671.

Despite the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic brought, Certsure continued to deliver over 32,000 assessments over the course of the year. Adopting a safe and flexible approach in line with government guidance, businesses were able to have their assessments carried out remotely, at their premises or as a blended option of the two. This ensured that Certsure supported the Government's desire to keep the construction industry active during this time while supporting the needs of customers.

This approach also guaranteed that Certsure's customers continued to adhere to the latest industry standards and provided assurance to consumers through safe and compliant installations.

Providing Industry Support to Landlords and Tenants

To support the legislation that introduced five-yearly electrical checks in privately rented homes in England, NICEIC launched a dedicated scheme that checks that contractors who opt in have the relevant qualifications and insurances in place to carry out the necessary electrical checks in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). Once approved, these businesses then feature on the PRS register on the Registered Competent Person Electrical website.

The website, which is promoted by Electrical Safety First and MHCLG, allows landlords or their agents to search for electrical contractors registered to undertake Electrical Installation Condition Reporting (EICR) in the PRS in England.

Since its launch in 2020, over 5,000 contractors have opted to be included on the PRS register.

Virtual Events

With all face-to-face events cancelled in 2020, Certsure accelerated its successful webinar series, *The Wire*, adding more topics to meet customers' needs.

Free and exclusive to registered contractors, *The Wire* is delivered by industry-leading technical experts and is designed to provide contractors with the knowledge they need to remain ahead of the curve. Each webinar is accredited and counts toward contractors' Continued Professional Development (CPD), where they can use the knowledge and experience gained towards their next assessment.

The 2020-21 series, which launched in April 2020, was viewed by over 10,000 contractors and resulted in over 40,000 CPD certificates being issued, supporting both Certsure's and Electrical Safety First's aspirations to raise standards in the industry.

Technical Advice

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Certsure has continued to provide industry leading technical development to electrical contractors through the production of

technical publications such as its quarterly *Connections* magazine. The technical helpline has answered more than 56,500 calls in 2020-21 and answered 4,500 emails.

SINCE ITS LAUNCH
IN 2020, OVER
5,000
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OPTED TO BE INCLUDED
ON THE PRS REGISTER.

Virtual Training

Certsure was already working on providing a new virtual training suite that mirrors the learnings and outcomes of classroom-based training courses. As a result of the pandemic, plans were accelerated and more virtual options were added to the comprehensive training portfolio.

Since its rollout in May 2020, over 3,400 contractors have booked onto a virtual training course on subjects such as electric vehicle charging and the 18th edition of the Wiring Regulations.

ELECSA Brand Retirement

In February 2021, Certsure announced the retirement of the ELECSA brand. The step, which will see all ELECSA customers transfer to the NICEIC brand by mid-2022, was a pivotal move for the organisation as it seeks to strengthen its position as the leading certification body for the building services industry.

DESPITE THE
CHALLENGES THAT
THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC
BOUGHT, CERTSURE
CONTINUED
TO DELIVER
OVER 32,000
ASSESSMENTS
OVER THE COURSE
OF THE YEAR.

Both brands use the same registration criteria and assessment process that is accredited by UKAS. It was felt that this was the right time to support customers in the move across to NICEIC, a certification body that benefits from 13 times more brand awareness with consumers than any other electrotechnical certification scheme.

Promoting Registered Contractors

Certsure is committed to promoting the importance of using a registered electrical contractor. Part of this involves securing coverage in local, national and consumer press. Between 2020 and 2021, the NICEIC and ELECSA brands were featured in over 100 articles across the media landscape. All articles referenced raising safety standards and delivering technical excellence through the use of a registered electrical contractor.

• WITH ALL FACE-TO-FACE
• EVENTS CANCELLED
• IN 2020, CERTSURE
• ACCELERATED ITS
• SUCCESSFUL WEBINAR
• SERIES, THE WIRE,
• ADDING MORE TOPICS
• TO MEET CUSTOMERS'
• NEEDS.



FINANCE REPORT 2020-21

The summary group financial statements are not the statutory accounts but a summary of information relating to the consolidated income and expenditure account, consolidated balance sheet and cash flow statement, derived from the full audited Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charity which were approved by the Board of Trustees on 8th October 2021. The Auditor's statement under Section 496 of the Companies Act 2006 was unqualified. Copies of the full financial statement will subsequently be filed with the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charities' Regulators and Companies House.



Basis of Summarisation

As noted above, the summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law (United Kingdom General Accepted Accounting Practice). Summaries of certain primary statements have been included with no accompanying notes. The summary consolidated income and expenditure account does not split the funds into unrestricted and trading and amalgamates the following balances:

- Investment income from investments and properties
- Income from charitable activities and other incoming resources
- Investment management and fundraising costs
- Expenditure on charitable activities
- Net investments (losses)/gains on investments and properties.

The summary consolidated balance sheet discloses the subtotals only with the exception of fixed assets which splits out the investments in joint ventures separately.

The summary cash flow statement provides the total by main category only. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. The full audited Trustees' report and financial statements may be obtained on application to the Charity's head office.

Andy Chaplin, Chair

Independent Auditor's Statement to the Trustees of the Electrical Safety Council

We have examined the summary financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021 set out above and on the previous pages.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and the Auditor

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summary financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendation of the Charities SORP (2019 – second edition).

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statements with the full annual financial statements.

Basis of opinion

Our examination involved agreeing the balances disclosed in the summary financial statements to the full annual financial statements. Our audit report on the full annual financial statements of the Electrical Safety Council describes the basis of our audit opinion on those financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full annual financial statements of the Electrical Safety Council for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Kingston Smith LLP
Statutory Auditor
4 Victoria Square, St Albans, AL1 3TF
8th October 2021

Overall Result

The Charity recorded a net decrease in funds of £4,004k. This was due to an actuarial pension adjustment representing a loss of £9,900k. It also includes the share of joint venture profits of £4,962k, the investment gains over the year amounting to £2,029k as well as £780k of investment income.

Gift Aid of £3,293k (2020: £3,075k) was paid to the Charity from its subsidiaries.

Reserves at the end of the year stood at £30,235k.

Income

Total income of £5,773k included the £4,962k share of profit from Certsure LLP, the Charity's Joint Venture with the Electrical Contractors' Association.

Expenditure

Charitable expenditure for the year amounted to £1,679k (2020: £2,072k). A significant contributor to the reduction was the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in planned events and travel being cancelled, as well as ongoing control being exercised over costs.

Fixed Assets

The market value of investment properties rented to tenants by the group has reduced by £99k over the year. Formal lease arrangements exist between the Charity and tenants for all investment properties.

Pension Scheme

The pension deficit on the closed defined benefit scheme impacts the Charity's cash flows by the funding arrangements agreed with the Pension Scheme Trustees which, following the 31st March 2020 triennial review, were agreed as £600k pa to March 2021 and £250k pa thereafter.

Outlook

The Group's financial position remains satisfactory and the Charity intends maintaining, and potentially expanding, its current range of activities. Covid-19 has not significantly impacted on its ability to continue its work but the situation will be kept under review.

Cash, Investment Policy and Returns

The Charity holds the majority of its reserves in a long-term investment portfolio currently valued at £12.3m which was managed by two investment managers but has increased to three managers since the year end. Overall cash and investment balances have increased to £16,600k (2020: £14,253k) during the year. Cash balances increased by £261k and the investment portfolio gained just over £2m in value due to the recovery in markets over the course of the year since the significant drop in March 2020 at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Charity's investment policy has as its objective "to produce returns and be a vehicle for holding the agreed level of charity reserves". The investment target return is to maintain and, where possible, enhance the real value of the portfolio without taking unnecessary risks. The objective is to generate a long-term return of inflation plus 3-4% after expenses. This should enable income of towards the lower end of that range (to allow for volatility) to be taken from the fund without diminishing the real value of the portfolio. A total return approach to investment is taken i.e. generating return from income and capital gains and losses.

The investment policy is maintained under ongoing review in light of changing Group funding requirements and

portfolios are now balanced between equities, fixed interest investments, alternative investments and cash based on an intermediate risk profile. All income generated during the year is utilised to fund charity expenditure.

The Charity's investments in joint ventures relate to Certsure LLP.

Reserves and Risk Assessment

The reserves policy states that reserves, which are defined as the Charity's and its wholly owned subsidiaries' cash and investment portfolio, amounting to at least two years pure /discretionary charitable expenditure should be maintained after provision for the next three years' pension deficit payments.

If the Charity reserves exceed the minimum level as they currently do, the policy states that the Trustees will consider the best use of the additional funds. Matters they take into account include the progress of the defined benefit pension scheme to self-sufficiency, the merits of holding or investing the additional amount to fund future spend and the merits of undertaking additional charitable activities. Consideration of holding the additional amount to fund future spend includes assessing the risk to future income from Covid-19 (or any similar pandemic). The Trustees have planned an Away-Day later in 2021 to actively consider how funding and reserves should be deployed.

Risk management processes are embedded in the day-to-day operations of the Charity and risk registers are reviewed regularly by management and also biannually by the full Board of Trustees to ensure completeness and that the risk ratings and impacts remain appropriate.

SUMMARY GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Summary Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account including Other Comprehensive Income for year ended 31st March 2021

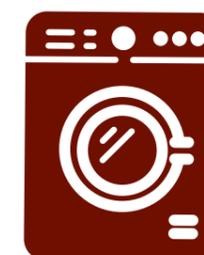
	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Income from investments	780	879
Share of profits in Joint Ventures	4,962	3,474
Other income	31	2,654
Total income	5,773	7,007
Expenditure on continuing trading activities	-	-
Expenditure on discontinued trading activities	2	(14)
Other expenditure on raising funds	104	93
Expenditure on charitable activities	1,679	2,072
Other expenditure	121	137
Total expenditure	1,906	2,288
Pension adjustment	(9,900)	4,600
Net investment gains / (losses)	2,029	(1,309)
Net movement in funds	(4,004)	8,010
Fund balances brought forward at 1st April	34,239	26,229
Fund balances carried forward	30,235	34,239

Summary Consolidated Balance Sheet at 31st March 2021

	2021 £'0000	2020 £'000
Fixed assets and investments	18,207	16,351
Investments in joint ventures: Share of net assets	6,462	3,474
Current assets	4,400	4,212
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(334)	(398)
Net current assets	4,066	3,814
Pension asset	1,500	10,600
Reserves	30,235	34,239

Summary Cash Flow Statement for year ended 31st March 2021

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Net cash (used in) operating activities	(2,535)	(3,355)
Net cash provided by investing activities	2,796	4,820
Net increase in cash in the year	261	1,465





PRINCIPAL PLACES OF BUSINESS

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Electrical Safety First is the campaigning name of the Electrical Safety Council, a registered charity in England and Wales (No. 257376) and Scotland (No. SCO39990).