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A collaborative approach

While it's the nature for business to be competitive, some things are best achieved by taking a more collaborative approach. Tackling the challenge of achieving net zero in the heating industry is one such undertaking – we will only be truly successful if we work together. For companies used to competing with others, this doesn't always come naturally and, as you might expect, trade associations can play a crucial role in enabling this to happen.



I'm pleased to say that in the liquid fuels sector, collaborative working has become second nature. As we welcome the new UKIFDA CEO, Ken Cronin, I should pay tribute to his out-going predecessor, Guy Pulham, who has ensured that the working relationship between the fuel distributors and OFTEC has never been stronger. This is crucial as we prepare for the introduction of renewable liquid fuels such as HVO. OFTEC has also recognised the importance of supporting the growth of heat pumps installations, so we are working closely with MCS and other industry bodies to improve training and installer expertise.

That doesn't mean that commercial rivalry is a bad thing. Ensuring consumers have more choice drives innovation and leads to better value and more successful outcomes. This is something government must understand in a year when we expect important decisions to be taken. A one size fits all approach to heating will not deliver the transition to low carbon that the UK and Republic of Ireland needs, any more than a size 8 shoe will fit every foot.

Too many homes, particularly in rural areas, are not suited to heat pumps without significant disruption and very high levels of investment in energy efficiency improvements. Some households will want to make that investment and should be supported to do so. However, many others won't, or can't, so will need other options. Hybrid systems might suit some, but many others will want to take the cheapest and easiest route – and that's where renewable liquid fuel comes in. With government support, it could soon be a reality.

Paul Rose

CEO, OFTEC

Grant schemes in Scotland – opportunity for OFTEC registered technicians

Home Energy Scotland can provide an interest free loan for homeowners who wish to install energy efficiency improvements in their home. This includes oil boilers, low carbon heating systems, heating controls, insulation and more. A requirement of the scheme is that oil boilers are installed by an OFTEC registered technician. If installing renewable heating systems, MCS registration is required.



Due to lockdown restrictions, it's anticipated that most work through this scheme will need to be delayed (unless it is an essential activity). The expiry date of loans already issued has therefore been extended by a year from the date of offer. For more information visit: www.homeenergyscotland.org/find-funding-grants-and-loans/interest-free-loans/overview

Save up to 70% of the cost of renewables training and certification

Whether or not you've been taking part in the OFTEC and MCS FREE introductory webinars (page 8), you may well have been considering 'when' rather than 'if' you'll need to start working with renewables to supplement your usual line of work. Particularly if you work on new builds where a ban on the use of fossil fuel heating appliances from 2025 has already been announced. The good news is that there's never been a better time to get involved as the UK Government has agreed to foot the bill (up to 70%) for renewables training and certification of 1,000 technicians, which will save you on average £1,300.

There's still time to register your interest in the Renewable Heat Installer Training and Support Scheme at www.rhitss.co.uk but hurry as the scheme will close in May 2021.

OFTEC COVID-19 update

All OFTEC services are fully operational, including the technical helpline, registration services and OFTEC Direct. Some staff are working from home so that social distancing guidelines can be followed by those staff who need to be in the office. You can check for updates on our COVID-19 information page (www.oftec.org/technicians/covid-19-information), where you will also find guidance on working safely during the pandemic. Ahead of any site visit, we strongly recommend keeping your customers informed about what precautions you will be taking and what you will expect from them.

Most training centres remain open, although they may have adjusted their usual course timetable and are likely to be running courses with fewer attendees. This means you will need to book a course further ahead than usual to avoid a break in your registration. You can sit your assessments up to six months ahead of your renewal without impacting the renewal period.

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If you have an inspection due, your regional inspector will be in touch to explain how this will proceed in a COVID-secure manner – you can also read about the new code of conduct on our COVID information page.

Above is a quick reminder of the many online services that can be accessed online 24/7 and which website to find them on (with four websites to choose from, we know it's easy to end up on the wrong website).

Benefits of OFTEC registration

Last year we announced a new partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). This gives OFTEC registered businesses a £30 discount on new FSB membership (which starts from £147 per year) by quoting code OFTEC30 when checking out online.



Why join the FSB?

The FSB is a not-for-profit membership company that provides a host of services to their members such as:

- Free 24-hour legal advice help line.
- Free 24-hour debt recovery services.
- Free online legal hub with downloadable factsheets and documents to ensure your business literature remains up to date and compliant.
- Free legal costs insurance and tax investigation protection.
- Free everyday business banking as well as a payment scheme so your customers can pay by card or online easily and securely.
- A local representative and regional events.
- Strong campaigning at government level to help persuade those in power to back small businesses.

Many of the benefits by themselves are worth more than the annual subscription – so it really is a matter of what the FSB can save you, rather than what it will cost. If you are unsure about whether FSB membership is worthwhile for your business, call Richard George on 07825 669 182 who will be pleased to explain more about their services. Please note, the FSB only operates in the UK; we are still investigating similar schemes for the Republic of Ireland.

To view this and your other benefits of registration, visit the technician hub on www.oftec.org.

HVO home trials commence

It's early days, but the development of a renewable liquid fuel to replace kerosene has taken an important step forward in the UK, with the news that the first stage of new field trials using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is underway.

The trials, which are being coordinated by OFTEC and UKIFDA, involve around a dozen sites across all parts of the UK. In this trial, existing appliances are being used since the aim is to replicate, as far as possible, the range of real-world situations that will be encountered when the fuel is available commercially. Some straightforward modifications are made to each appliance to make it suitable for the characteristics of the new fuel and, so far, the news is excellent, with no major problems and excellent performance reported.

It is hoped that this first stage will lead to a much bigger trial within the next year, which will be necessary to satisfy all parties that HVO really is a robust solution. However, tests across Europe have already been undertaken successfully, so no major problems are anticipated.

The field trials will inform the guidance information that technicians will need to carry out conversions, and work on this is already well underway. The trials will also provide an opportunity to demonstrate the potential of HVO to MPs, civil servants and others involved in developing heat policy.

OFTEC and UKIFDA join forces to provide reliable consumer information

The next decade will see significant changes to the way many people heat their homes, with the government committed to dramatically expanding the installation of low carbon heating, particularly heat pumps. While all heating will need to decarbonise, the changes are likely to be felt first in off-gas grid households, which the government sees as a priority.

While they may be a priority – and occasionally referred to as “low hanging fruit” – they present a considerable challenge and the impact on rural households must not be underestimated. For owners of oil, LPG and solid fuel heating systems, the changes could be extremely costly and, without access to good information, there’s a risk that many could end up with solutions that don’t suit their homes, making them more expensive and difficult to heat. The installation cost of some renewable heating systems is much higher than traditional fossil fuel systems, so these would be very costly mistakes.

While no one likes to waste money on a poor outcome, this is not the only reason for concern. Not only would major problems be disastrous for the households concerned, but it could

also lead to an overall loss of trust in the renewable heating industry, potentially derailing progress with decarbonisation. With money likely to be scarce, we will only have one chance to get this right, so it is vital that rural households are well-informed. While there is already some good information out there, very little is geared specifically towards off-gas grid households. The new OFTEC/UKIFDA-led project hopes to put that right.

At its heart will be a new information website, but that, on its own, will achieve very little unless people know it is there. So, there will also be a range of supporting projects to encourage rural households to visit the site and to use the information. Homeowners often rely on trusted tradespeople as a source of advice, so we hope you will help us to make them aware of this new online resource. The aim is that it will back up the advice you no doubt already give, enabling and empowering rural customers to make the right choices when it comes to heating their homes in the future.

Work is just beginning as this issue of Oil Installer goes to press, so look out for more updates from OFTEC and UKIFDA soon.



Trevor Seed

Trevor Seed – obituary

OFTEC is sad to report that Trevor Seed passed away in October 2020. Following in his father’s footsteps, Trevor returned to J Seed & Co. in 1965, after a short spell at Leyland Trucks, to utilise his skills in the design and production of steel oil storage tanks, as part of the family-run business.

Over the decades, Trevor committed a vast number of days of his own time to help the industry develop, by participating in OFTEC technical meetings and the registered technicians committee RTC/1. Many will remember Trevor for speaking with passion (and sometimes frustration!) and for his vast practical knowledge that he was only too willing to impart to others.

Brexit and beyond

2020 was a year of fierce debate amongst the public, politicians and formal Brexit negotiators as the UK prepared to leave the EU single market. So, what does it mean for OFTEC registration services in Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI)?

OFTEC is pleased to say that very little has changed. Training and assessment courses will still be certified independently by certification bodies operating under UKAS accreditation to ISO 17024. UKAS is a signatory of several regional and international accreditation forums which means that it will retain international recognition

post Brexit. Therefore, the OFTEC oil and solid fuel heating assessments completed by technicians in either NI and ROI will continue to be valid and accepted as a pre-requisite for OFTEC registration.

OFTEC Direct delivery update

After a short period of delays immediately after the New Year while couriers wrestled with new customs declarations and taxation paperwork, OFTEC Direct deliveries to NI and the ROI are now getting through relatively swiftly. The main impact of Brexit rests with OFTEC, including the extra administrative processes of

cross-border trading and the increase in postage fees to Ireland. OFTEC is trying to absorb these overheads to continue to serve registered technicians in Ireland with technical books, control documentation stationery and other goods to help you work compliantly, safely and professionally. It may be necessary to make some adjustments later in 2021, so keep an eye on E-News for further updates.

To view the latest range of products available to OFTEC registered technicians at preferential rates, visit www.oftecdirect.com.

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Correction and update to the technician representative article

On page 8 and 9 of the winter issue of Oil Installer, there was an article about technician representatives and the OFTEC Scheme Committee (OSC). A last-minute change to the article, resulted in a misleading sentence which implied the OSC is to only support those in Ireland. This is not the case. The OSC is the impartiality

committee that oversees the integrity of the OFTEC registration scheme in both the UK and Ireland. We thought it would be useful to share the list of OSC members, elected at the OFTEC AGM, if you have any issues that you would like raised at the quarterly OSC meetings, please contact your sector representative:

Chairman (OFTEC Board rep)	Bob Clark	South West Peninsular Training
Local Authority Building Control	Vacant	
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)	Mussa Awaleh	
Sector Skills	Vacant	
Ireland representative	Paul Henry	South Eastern Regional College
Approved training centres	Terry Cobain	TC Training Services
Scotland representative	Ian Dean	Nationwide Training Services
ISO 17024 certification bodies	Richard Phipps	Cert-ain Certification
GB technician representative	Guy Crabb	registeredtechnician@oftec.org
Industry representative	Steve McConnell	ICOM Energy Association
Trade association representative	Phil Stanley	Grant Engineering UK
Consumer representative	Giles Wilson	NHBC
Microgeneration	Ian Rippin	MCS Service Company Ltd
OFTEC Trade Association	Paul Rose	OFTEC
OFTEC Registration	Adrian Lightwood	OFTEC
OFTEC Registration	Jonathan King	OFTEC
OFTEC Training	David Knipe	OFTEC



Free heat pump webinars

When you read our decarbonisation policy update on page 10 you will see that the heat pump market is expected to grow substantially in the coming decade. It is already clear that low carbon heating will displace fossil fuels such as oil and gas in new builds, while government funding schemes are likely to step up support for heat pump installations in existing housing stock. This will happen irrespective of whether heat policy supports the deployment of renewable liquid fuels.

This makes heat pumps a potential business opportunity and if you've been considering branching out but are not sure whether it would be right for your business, or what the best route to certification would be, OFTEC has teamed up with MCS to offer a series of FREE downloadable webinars which could help demystify the process. Visit www.oftec.org/ events for more details.



Have you received your copy of our monthly E-Newsletter recently?

E-News for registered technicians contains important and timely technical updates, registration and industry news. Members' Monthly Update contains important updates for our trade association members. If you haven't received your copy for a while, it could be that you have accidentally unsubscribed. Please email your name (including your technician and company ID where appropriate) to marketing@oftec.org and we can investigate and let you know how to become reinstated.

Extending your scope of registration

The number of enquiries into Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) and TrustMark registration with OFTEC continues to grow and it is likely that these schemes will be a requirement of any future government funding schemes, as well as the current Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and Green Homes Grant (GHG) Schemes.

As well as TrustMark and MCS renewables (solar thermal, heat pumps and biomass), OFTEC also offers PAS 2030 and Part P electrical plus you can extend your existing competent



person registration to include renewable technologies, solid fuel or unvented cylinder qualifications.

For PAS2030 certification, businesses must operate a quality management system (QMS). TrustMark has helpfully provided FREE templates which can be downloaded from the 'Tradespeople' section of their website (www.trustmark.org.uk) and



used when setting up your QMS.

If you are interested in extending your registration, please visit www.oftec.org/technicians/manage-your-registration for further information or email OFTEC on registration@oftec.org.

Please note that government-funded schemes are liable to change, so OFTEC recommends you assess any opportunities carefully and look out for any news updates.



Registration fees frozen for 2021

We were all quite keen to see the back of 2020, but perhaps less keen to welcome in 2021 with tougher lockdowns throughout the UK and Ireland. Whilst most registered technicians have been able to continue working during the most recent restrictions, we are only too aware of how much harder working during the pandemic has been; in some cases, longer hours for the same work or fewer jobs per week.

Last autumn, the OFTEC Scheme Committee (read more on page 8) recommended to OFTEC that, due to the difficult trading conditions,

registration fees should not be increased in 2021. We are very pleased to report that this recommendation has been accepted, so fees for those renewing CPS, MCS and PAS2030 in 2021 will be frozen at their 2020 level.

OFTEC would also like to remind you that there is a direct debit option, enabling you to spread your payments over 12 months, rather than a paying the whole fee up-front. This applies to both one-year and five-year registration options. For further information, please email the OFTEC registration team (registration@oftec.org) when your renewal is coming up.



OFTEC Direct

OFTEC Direct is open for business, but due to social distancing requirements, is currently only able to accept online orders. If you haven't placed an order online before, it's very easy – you just need to create an online account first at www.oftecdirect.com.

Plus, due to popular demand, the OFTEC Oil Heating Pocket Guide is back in stock, refreshed to include latest best practice guidance and building regulations.



Oil Heating Pocket Guide
Domestic

Decarbonisation update

Policy announcement overload!

At the beginning of December, the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC), published its latest report on which steps the UK must take to achieve its net zero decarbonisation target.

The report, and associated research ran to over 1,000 pages and contains ideas that, if adopted by government, will transform the heating industry over the next two decades. For example, it would end the installation of fossil fuel heating – gas by 2033 and oil by no later than 2028. Instead, the Committee wants to see one million heat pumps installed each year by 2030. This would be a huge change – there are currently only around 30,000 heat pump installs each year at present, compared to 1.6m gas boilers and 65,000 oil boilers. The research supporting the report proposes that much of the increase in heat pump installation in the 2020s would be in new build or off-gas grid homes, although they also state that up to 900,000 biofuel/heat pump hybrid systems could be needed for hard to treat off-gas grid homes.

Just before this, in late November, the Prime Minister published two important documents. First, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced a Ten Point Plan for what he called a green industrial revolution. This focused on all areas of the UK economy and, like the CCC's report, the headline for heating is a massive growth in heat pump deployment although, this time, 600,000 heat pump installations each year by 2028. The Prime Minister's plan also stated that support would be available for rural households to upgrade their heating systems and that new regulations to support this would be forthcoming.

Alongside the goal of decarbonising energy, the plan also focuses on the need to support a green recovery, create jobs and ensure consumers get a fair deal.

The third point is crucial recognition that the next stage of the decarbonisation process moves beyond infrastructure to impact directly on the way we live. A key policy question will be how costs are distributed across the economy. If there are too many losers, there may be a backlash – you may remember



the populist, grassroots, yellow jackets movement seen in France. Cost is certain to be a concern for 65% of oil-heated households, because the cost to upgrade their energy efficiency is expected to be much higher than average, making heat pump deployment extremely expensive. This adds credence to the liquid fuel heating industry's proposal, which is likely to be a much cheaper option for many households than either heat pumps or a hybrid system.

What does it all mean for the liquid fuel industry?

These documents provide a glimpse of what we can expect from the forthcoming UK Heat in Buildings Strategy. The focus on off-gas grid homes and emphasis on the need to act quickly, means change is coming sooner rather than later – and we will be first in the queue. The Government is expected to deploy a mix of both carrots and sticks – for example grant schemes backed by tighter regulation – to encourage or, if necessary, compel households to install heat pumps.

However, while the most eye-catching headlines are about heat pumps, there is a commitment to open the market to other clean energy alternatives as well. This is a crucial point in what might otherwise have been bleak news for the fossil fuel heating industry. It potentially leaves the door ajar for low carbon liquid fuels such as HVO. The key task for industry is to demonstrate that HVO is a viable, cost-effective solution and work to do this is ongoing.

What does it mean for heating installation businesses?

For anyone working 'on the tools' and willing to embrace the changes, it's happy days basically. There's likely to be a lot of work around in the next few years, providing the Government's policies are effective in making the changes happen. This has not always been the case, but the recent announcements suggest the Government is much more serious this time, and the need to take action has also never been greater.

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Carl Arntzen, Worcester Bosch CEO with Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Industry responds to the Ten Point Plan

Carl Arntzen, CEO of Worcester Bosch, was one of twenty business leaders asked to join in a roundtable debate following the announcement of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan.

Following the debate, he commented: "We at Bosch welcome the new "green industrial revolution" that has been set out by the prime minister. The UK is leading the world in its drive towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and we look forward to working with the government to help turn admirable ambition into accelerated action. Although 2050 may seem a long way off, action needs to be taken now to ensure that we can reach it.

"The 10 steps are bold and we are delighted to see that hydrogen will play a key role in delivering them. The investment of £500 million in hydrogen is a positive start and can help to reduce carbon emissions significantly – particularly in the way that we heat our homes, power our transport (especially heavy transport) and meet the challenges of increasing electricity demand through decentralised power supply.

"With the foundation of solid government backing, hydrogen will be a ready-to-go solution in the near future and therefore making a strong impact in the fight against climate change. It demonstrates the role that technology can and should play in finding practical solutions to the challenges that we face."

OGUK's chief executive, Deirdre Michie also commented on the plan: "We are pleased to see the Government is committed to its ambitious plans for tackling emissions in spite of all the other challenges we face. Our industry is already in action, evolving and contributing. We were one of the first major sectors in the UK to embrace the Government's target to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

"The good news for jobs and the economy is that, with the right support, companies based here in the UK have the expertise to make us world leaders in tackling emissions, including through carbon capture and hydrogen production, both of which are key to the clean energy system of the future. Exciting new technologies and innovations need to sit alongside

delivering real reductions in emissions and improved efficiency; things that our industry and every one of us can be getting on with right now."

Following the announcement of the plan, UKIFDA responded by urging the Government not to forget over four million off-grid homes and businesses when setting energy policy.

Guy Pulham, who was chief executive at the time, said: "The announcement and focus on heat pumps doesn't take into account the high cost to install heat pumps in the majority of UK homes, which have EPC ratings of D or below.

"Heat pumps may be ideal for new homes but for many of our members' customers' homes, they are not suitable. These homes generally are built pre-1919 and have poor insulation, making them very difficult to make changes to. They may also require further upgrades to the electricity supply to the property, as the supply simply isn't consistent enough to run a heat pump comfortably, especially as other demands are made on electricity supplies, such as vehicle charging.

"We strongly urge the Government to be technology neutral and to create a fair, inclusive, supportive and effective policy on eliminating carbon from home heating. The government must include liquid biofuels on the list of decarbonisation solutions for home heating.

"With the economic impact of COVID-19, it is important that households' finances are not strained further by having to spend large amounts to install heating solutions when there are more efficient, cost-effective solutions. While our industry is carrying out trials, we want people to register their interest so they can be first to know when greener liquid biofuels will be available to use in the home heating sector.

"All government needs to do is to say that liquid biofuels will form part of the policy solutions. Once they do that, then industry will respond to the supply challenge and consumers will have choices in beginning their personal decarbonisation transition. To succeed, government policy must encourage innovation and investment and our industry is waiting to start meeting the needs of the UK's net zero challenge – so why delay us further?"

New chief executive for UKIFDA

Energy industry professional, Ken Cronin, has been appointed as the new chief executive of the UK and Ireland Fuel Distributors Association (UKIFDA), having joined on 11 January to work alongside outgoing CEO, Guy Pulham, who left the association on 4 February.

Ken has worked across a number of energy sectors including nuclear, renewables and oil and gas, and joined UKIFDA from the representative body for the UK onshore oil and gas industry, UKOOG, where he was chief executive for over seven years.

"I am delighted that Ken joined us in January," commented UKIFDA president, Janet Kettlewell. "His impressive track record of working within the energy industry across political, business and campaign groups gives him excellent insight into our industry and at this critical juncture he is poised to take our industry to the next stage where we see liquid biofuels as part of future energy policy.



New UKIFDA chief executive, Ken Cronin

Thanks to the work, over the last three years, of Guy Pulham, UKIFDA now has a robust voice across the whole of the fuel sector, creating collaborations with other trade associations as well as on-going activity with both the UK and Irish governments."

Commenting on his appointment, Ken said: "The liquid fuels industry is poised to play a lead role in the UK and Ireland's net zero challenge, and I will be joining at a particularly exciting time as trials of

liquid biofuels are now taking place in off-grid homes across the UK. It is really important to me that the customers the industry has so proudly served for decades, are provided with a realistic and lowest cost choice to meet our net zero ambition, I will be pursuing every opportunity to work with both the UK and Irish governments to ensure liquid biofuels form part of the future energy mix and press them to set timelines for the transition. Working alongside companies in the industry and stakeholders we will continue to urge governments to put a clear pathway in place, from which our industry will respond to the supply challenge.

"Off-grid communities across the UK and Ireland will then have choices in how they heat their homes and meet their own, as well as government, decarbonisation goals. This is the point I know the UKIFDA team has been making to government over the last three years and I hope to build on this sterling work going forward."

Grant UK gives Wiltshire Air Ambulance a lift

Grant UK has donated £10,000 to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance (WAA), a local charity that has been supported by staff at the company since 2019.

Despite the limitations on normal fundraising activities such as bake-offs, staff events and raffles during 2020, the Grant team still managed to pull together and raise a fantastic £10,000 for its chosen charity.

The fundraising activities included a Valentine's Day bake sale, which raised £100. Grant UK's head of marketing, Anna Wakefield, ran the virtual Bath Half Marathon and raised £810 for the charity through her JustGiving page. Other initiatives, including the selling of old company equipment and furniture, also contributed to the total.

"2020 was an incredibly difficult year for charities in particular," said Anna. "Despite the pandemic and restrictions, the Wiltshire Air Ambulance has continued to deliver vital medical assistance and support to critically ill and injured patients throughout. Charity funding is more important than ever and Grant UK is thrilled to present this latest donation



The Wiltshire Air Ambulance – Grant's chosen charity

to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, and we are also pleased to confirm that our support for this local charity will continue into 2021."

WAA fundraising manager, Des Regan, added: "We'd like to thank everyone at Grant UK for their continued support for our lifesaving charity. Wiltshire Air Ambulance has been operating on the front line throughout the coronavirus pandemic and that wouldn't be possible without the support of generous donations from the public and companies like Grant UK. This donation of £10,000 is essentially like Grant UK funding our operations for a whole day – which is a tremendous effort." www.grantuk.com.

Get your hands on a Danfoss nozzle display

These wall-mounted racks have proved very popular with stockists for displaying behind their trade counters. Holding up to 100 nozzles at any one time they make it very easy for customers to see the range and select what they need and, for a limited time only, Danfoss is making some more of these available.

They will be distributed on request on a first-come first-served basis so don't hesitate to get your request in by contacting Mark McElroy:

mark.mcelroy@danfoss.com.



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Customer cost and carbon matters

I am sure you know how much oil currently costs but do you and your customers know how it compares to other fuels and technologies such as LPG, wood pellets and air source heat pumps?

How many domestic oil customers have you lost over the last 20 years because they have chosen to replace their oil boiler with an alternative fuel source? I wonder how many of those customers are happy that they moved away from oil now if they are having to fund higher running costs?

There's a useful resource that could help with customer retention as it enables you to inform domestic householders about comparative running costs across all fuels and technologies so that they can see for themselves before they decide.

Sutherland Comparative Running Cost Tables have been around for so many years now that many have forgotten about their existence, but that is what they provide – comparative running

costs across all fuels and technologies. Using their data, you can demonstrate the consequences of changing technology before your customers spend their money unnecessarily and move away from oil.

A major update

The Sutherland Tables have recently undergone a full update and now include figures for 1980s dwellings, where heating systems have been upgraded to current build standards and regulations. They also detail boiler and system efficiencies for dwellings built to 2006 building standards.

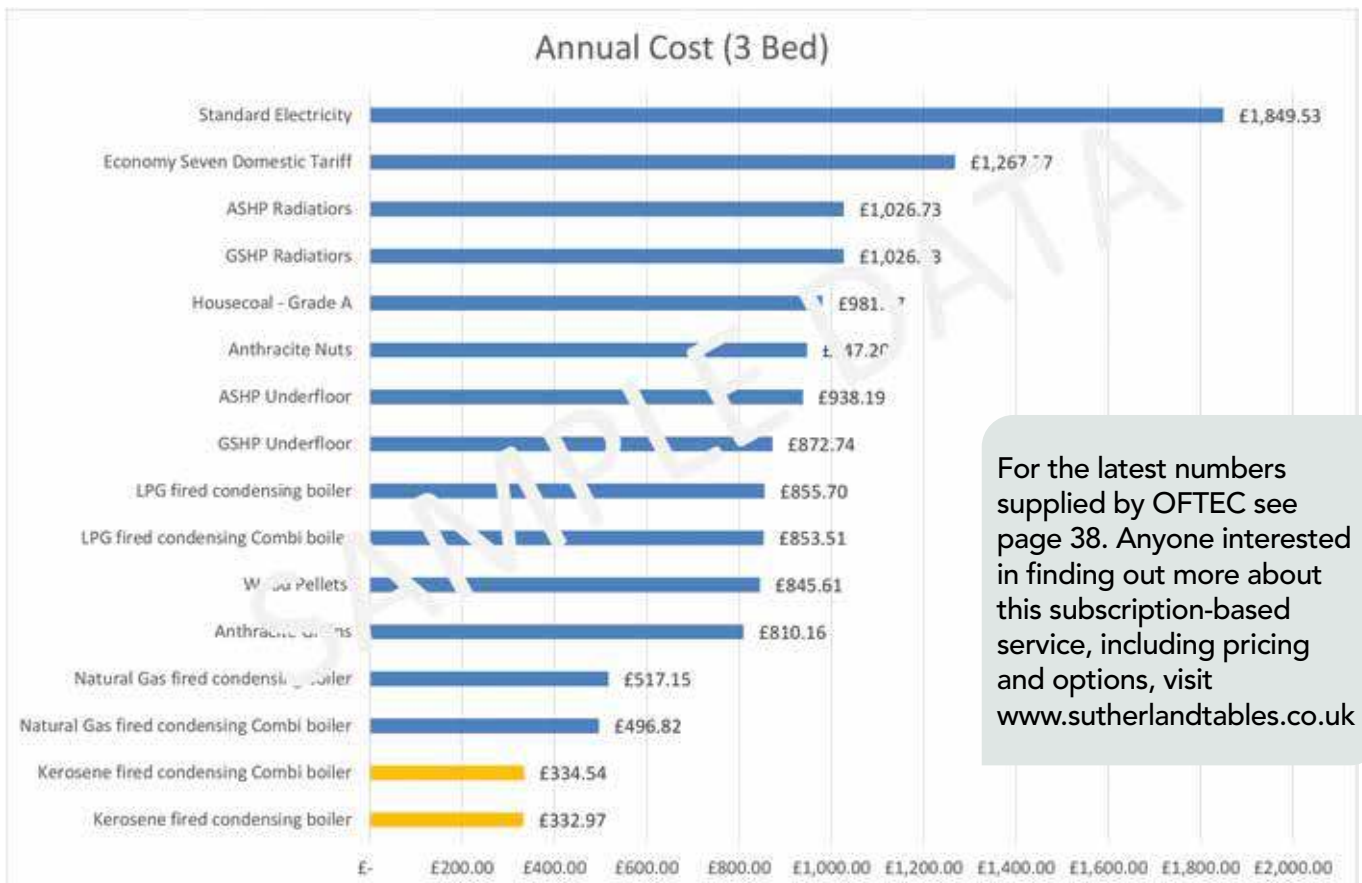
As part of the upgrade, the Sutherland Tables will be launching a new product soon. The Home Heating calculator will allow installers to demonstrate the comparative running costs and carbon savings that could be achieved by replacing an existing boiler and/or by upgrading current heating system and controls. It will also calculate the appropriate size of replacement boiler for each

specific property, in line with building regulatory requirements.

Carbon emissions

And when it comes to carbon emissions, the Sutherland Tables has it covered. It's latest offering www.homeheatingcarbonemissions.com demonstrates where the different domestic heating fuels and technologies currently sit in the mix against the readily available alternative fuels and technologies. It shows how much better (in terms of carbon emissions), your customers could be by simply retaining their oil-fired heating system and converting it to one of the new waste derived liquid fuel alternatives such as HVO.

So, whether your customers want to find out more about the running costs associated with their heating system or calculate the environmental impact of their current emissions, the new offerings from the Sutherland Tables can provide the information you need to help them make the right decisions.



For the latest numbers supplied by OFTEC see page 38. Anyone interested in finding out more about this subscription-based service, including pricing and options, visit www.sutherlandtables.co.uk

Energy Strategy – Northern Ireland

Politicians from Northern Ireland will be presented with a draft energy strategy later this year by Minister Dodds. This will set out a roadmap on how NI consumers will heat their homes in the future and how carbon emissions can be reduced to align with the UK's 2050 net zero commitments. The work is ongoing and by the time this article is printed, draft policies will have been published and discussed at the Heat Strategy Working Group.

It is a tough challenge! A recent report by ARUP (an independent firm of consultants) indicated that, although over 50% of the c.800,000 domestic properties in NI have some cavity wall and loft insulation and over 85% have double glazing, fewer than 50% of properties have an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) band of C or above. This is not good news if policy pushes electrification and heat pumps as the sole solution to carbon reduction, because they are unlikely to meet the required comfort levels in those homes without substantial retrofit works.

ARUP's modelling suggests that we need to up the number of retrofit measures from the current 16,500 buildings each year to 30,000 if NI is to align with the UK's 2030 energy efficiency target. It goes further and suggests we need an annual retrofit of over 50,000 buildings in the next decade if we are to meet the 2050 target.

The obvious question is, who is going to pay for it?. Grants to help with the

cost of energy efficiency improvements have tended to be for those on lower incomes or are means tested. We have seen a reluctance from consumers in the 'able to pay' sector to take on 'debt' to retrofit homes. There is talk of 'Green mortgages' and 'pay as you save' products but, unless grants are realistic and easily accessed by the 'working population', consumers are not going to rush to retrofit their homes when they have a perfectly good heating system in place.

OFTEC has proposed that a technology neutral approach is a more sensible and fair way to meet the challenges; some houses will be perfectly suited to a heat pump, or easily upgraded to take a heat pump and that is the best solution for them. But for off-grid homes with a low thermal efficiency, it is cheaper and easier to move the user from burning kerosene to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) with an immediate reduction of c.90% in carbon emissions.

Renewable liquid fuels such as HVO can be a near drop-in replacement for kerosene and existing equipment can be retained with no requirement for retrofitting insulation (although this would be encouraged to maximise savings).

As part of the Heat Strategy Working Group, OFTEC invited civil servants and group members to a demonstration of a boiler running on hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) at a local boiler manufacturer.



Given the timing in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, many were reluctant to travel so we hired a local video company to make a video of the process and took it to the group!

The demonstration was recorded and circulated to policy makers and civil servants and has been warmly received, with many follow-up enquiries on how it works and requests for HVO for trial purposes.

We are pushing hard to have renewable liquid fuels included in the new energy policy so that consumers can reduce their carbon footprint significantly without spending the large sums of money required to retrofit a house to make it suitable for an alternative heating source.

The future for HVO as a viable and realistic option for decarbonising the liquid fuel sector is real and gathering pace. You can watch the video at www.oftec.org/future-heating/making-the-switch-to-hvo-in-northern-ireland

For further information contact David Blevings dblevings@oftec.org





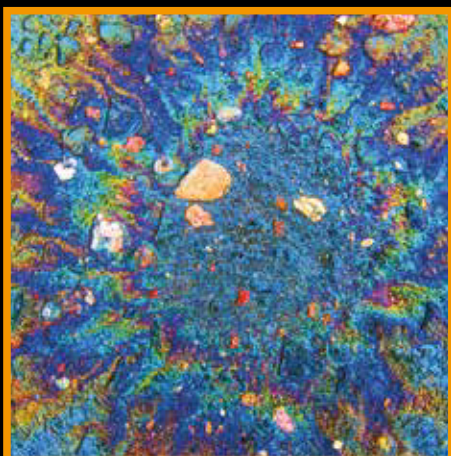
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The future's blue

Sean Keleher, national technical manager at Navien UK, assesses the strength of oil boiler technology and discusses how refurbishing older stock is imperative to improve household efficiencies.



Oil-based systems remain in demand as viable heating options, particularly in rural and off-grid areas, and are responsible for helping to heat approximately 1.5 million UK homes. Oil boilers can be installed inside or outside, which gives installers greater flexibility in terms of siting.

While some may argue there are alternative off-grid options, such as heat pumps, these present prohibitive upfront costs, require homes to be well-insulated and bring with them unwanted levels of disruption during installation. Unless an individual is looking to completely refurbish a property and bring it up to modern housing standards, a heat pump is likely to incur higher costs overall and is hardly a desirable option for off-grid homeowners.

In stark contrast, oil installations take up minimal internal space, and compared to other fuel options, benefit from an excellent heat release-to-cost ratio. So rather than being the antiquated, inefficient heat generators of the past, the latest condensing oil-fired boilers can operate at almost half the cost of a typical 25-year-old boiler, while also remaining extremely simple to install and maintain.

However, there are still oil boilers out there that are either non-condensing or lacking the efficiency of the latest models. These basic, yellow flame units pre-date the Ecodesign requirements under ErP legislation from 26th September 2018, which also stipulates that oil-fired boilers must have maximum NOx emissions of 120mg/kWh. NOx levels are under continuous scrutiny and any engineers encountering such boilers should recommend that they are replaced with more efficient modern units as soon as possible.

Oil installers are well-aware of the benefits of condensing boilers; they are cheaper to run and much more efficient, emitting much less harmful carbon monoxide than non-condensing models. They benefit from larger heat exchangers with more surface area, enabling them to extract more heat from the



Blue flame technology

combustion process – reducing the amount of waste gases going into the atmosphere.

While there are condensing yellow flame models that adhere to these requirements, smarter manufacturers are looking to get ahead of the game and ensure their oil-fired units remain futureproofed as energy efficiency regulations continue to tighten.

The future is blue flame

Efficiency credentials are further enhanced when taking advantage of the latest modulating blue flame burner technology, which has been growing in prominence throughout the oil heating sector for a number of years. By utilising these cleaner burners, blue flame boilers allow heating engineers to provide their customers with highly efficient oil boilers, boasting significantly lower NOx emissions.

Blue flame technology operates on the principle of converting heating oil to a gas at high pressure through a specially designed nozzle. It is then premixed with the air required for

combustion, before being drawn in through the burner, resulting in a clean blue flame, with much lower NOx emissions than traditional, yellow flamed models.

With blue flame the obvious choice for oil boilers, Navien's revolutionary blue flame technology guarantees superior efficiency and ultra-low NOx emissions (57mg/kWh). In fact, we recognise the importance of blue flame so much, we only manufacture boilers that include this technology. Oil boilers such as our LCB700 Blue Flame are lightweight* and "OpenTherm" ready, allowing instant access to the latest control technology, at minimum disruption to homeowners, while reducing installation costs. Using these models in conjunction with our Smart Plus control pack, provides an overall, industry leading A+ ErP energy rating.

Take control

OpenTherm technology enables boilers and controls to successfully 'speak' to each another. The amount of heat delivered by the boiler can be adjusted to match demand by reducing the flow temperature to a minimum. Such advanced modulation boosts efficiency, as it enables the boiler to operate at lower flow temperatures for extended periods of time. Combined with a low return temperature and a delta T of 20°C, the latest oil boilers can operate in condensing mode for longer – maximising efficiency. Furthermore, correctly set heating controls will allow customers to set the level of comfort that best suits them, while minimising energy waste and fuel consumption.

So, with sustainability set to dominate the landscape of the heating industry for many years to come, oil installers need to look towards the latest blue flame boilers. Not only will this ensure customers benefit from reliable and futureproofed products, it will also remove harmful polluting boilers from the market and play a valuable role in improving household efficiencies in line with the latest industry legislation. www.navienuk.com

*the lightest unit weighs just 58kg



The Navien LCB700 blue flame oil boiler

Grant UK unveils NEW oil boiler brochure

Grant UK has published a new brochure which combines the Vortex and VortexBlue oil-fired boiler ranges alongside Grant's energy management systems, in one useful resource. At 52 pages, the new Oil Boiler Range brochure is more comprehensive than ever before with a fresh look and clearer layout.

Sixty-three models make up the Vortex and VortexBlue oil boiler ranges which were previously listed in two separate brochures. With so many installers fitting both ranges, the decision was made to combine the previous two brochures into one resource for all customers, including installers and merchants through to end-users. The result is a new bumper issue brochure, which also includes the addition of Grant's energy management systems.

The new brochure is split into sections for both the Vortex and VortexBlue ranges, the boiler Technical Specifications, and the Energy Management System range. All the

boiler sub-ranges have their own separate page listings which include an introduction, the key product features and the individual models and outputs available. The boiler technical specifications are all included in a separate part of the brochure where the data tables, dimensions and boiler drawings can be found. This structure was chosen so that homeowners and heating engineers can turn to the specific sections and product information most relevant to them.

In addition to revealing its brand-new brochure, Grant UK is excited that it is being sustainably produced. Marking the beginning of a move to make all its brochures print environmentally friendly, Grant UK's new brochure is 100% recyclable. It is being printed on 100% recycled, uncoated paper using a plant-based ink meaning that brochure can be recycled.

"We are incredibly pleased to share this new brochure," says Anna Wakefield, head of marketing and



Bigger and better, the new Grant UK oil boiler brochure

data protection at Grant UK. "Not only has the styling and content been updated, but how this brochure is being printed and produced is also new. As a company, we have implemented a number of measures to make our operations more sustainable, from onsite recycling to product packaging, and the type of printing materials we use for our literature is the next step to being more environmentally friendly throughout the business."

www.grantuk.com/support/manuals-brochures.

Setting new standards in sustainability

For over 40 years, Firebird has designed and manufactured high performance solutions for the home heating market. More recently, the company has demonstrated a clear focus on renewables and sustainability, and has invested heavily in the development of products with increased fuel efficiency, reduced emissions and which use more renewable and sustainable fuel sources.

"Our mission is to play a pivotal role in supporting households, communities and governments to adopt and strengthen their sustainability practices," says Firebird's UK national sales manager, Gary Davies. "Through our R&D centre, we have developed and continue to develop, new and ground-breaking renewable heating solutions and products for the market."

These products include the company's Enviroair Air Source Heat Pumps, which are Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) compliant, with a low running cost PCB controller and high-tech intelligent heating controls, as well as a wide range of supporting products and solar solutions.



"We also manufacture the most efficient oil boiler on the market at 97.5% efficiency and NOx emissions as low as 60mg/kWhr – half the EU limit – ensuring the use of very little fuel, which is kinder to the environment and to customers' pockets," comments Gary.

As well as making huge strides in sustainability, Firebird, is also working to find a solution to the over-reliance on fossil fuels, particularly in rural areas.

"One such solution would be the introduction of HVO to the UK home heating market," explains Gary.

"HVO fuel is fossil free, sustainable and renewable, reduces greenhouse emissions by over 90%, and is a drop-in replacement for current fossil fuels. There are no significant up-front capital costs, just the addition of the Firebird HVO burner to the boiler and then it can be implemented almost straightaway.

"HVO can work with any liquid fuel boiler and, if used in homes, can potentially make these homes almost carbon neutral immediately."

Firebird has first-hand experience with HVO as the company uses the fuel to power its plants in Plymouth and Newry and recently introduced it to the plant in Cork.

Firebird has already completed successful case studies using HVO for home heating in houses in the UK, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. These studies saw HVO fossil free fuel achieve a 90% reduction in greenhouse gases, 95% efficiency, 100% sustainability. No capital costs were incurred and there was no requirement for new boilers or tanks. www.firebird.uk.com

National award for Hounsfeld Boilers

Hounsfeld Boilers has won a major national award for its pioneering, wall-hung Tuscan boiler.

The H&V News Awards provide a platform for showcasing the very best products within the heating and ventilation world sector, and Hounsfeld's revolutionary Tuscan oil boiler won 'Highly Commended' in the 'Domestic HVAC Product of the Year: Boilers and Heaters'.

The winners were announced at a virtual award ceremony on 25 November, which was hosted by comedian, Tom Allen.

Andrew Hounsfeld, MD and inventor of the Hounsfeld Boiler, was delighted with the award win:

"We're over the moon to have received this top accolade. We were the only independent and the only boiler manufacturer to make the shortlist, so this award is amazing. We're very proud of our boilers, they

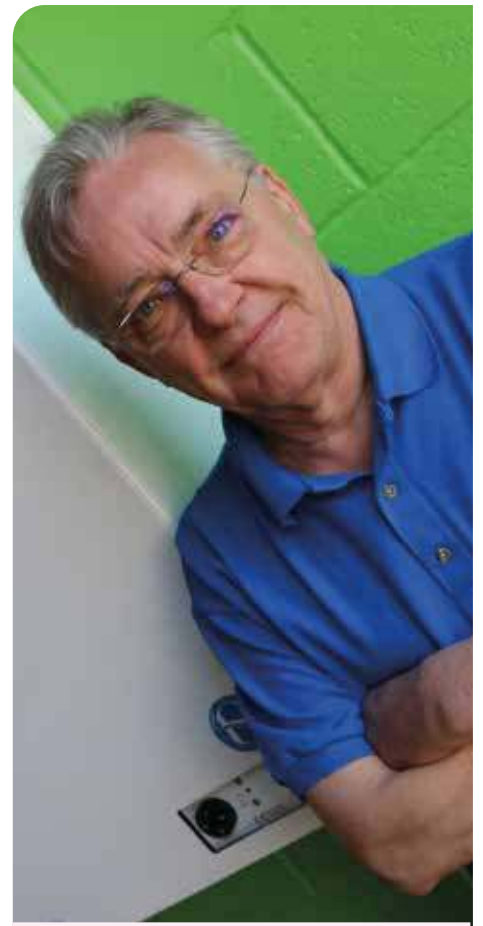
are industry-leading; they've been designed to run incredibly efficiently, built to last and very easy to install and offer homeowners an excellent return on investment."

He added:

"This year has been incredibly testing for everyone, but we've managed to keep the factory open throughout the pandemic and to continue to supply plumbers and heating engineers with our oil-fired boilers across the country. I'd particularly like to thank our hardworking team for its support and for helping to create Britain's best boiler!"

The Tuscan wall-hung boiler was added to Hounsfeld's collection in 2019 and was quickly snapped up by heating engineers and homeowners. The units are manufactured at the Hounsfeld factory, which is proud of its 'Made in Britain' status.

www.hounsfeldboilers.co.uk



Hounsfeld Boilers MD, Andrew Hounsfeld

Social media support for Grant G1 Installers

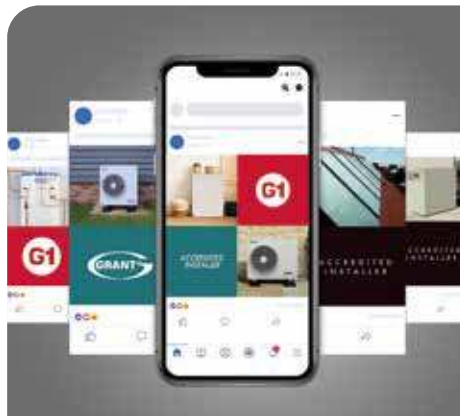
G1 installers can now download digital content for use on their social media platforms, to promote their G1 status and raise awareness of Grant amongst their customers. Exclusively available to G1 installers, the images can be accessed via the online G1 Portal.

Social media is playing an increasingly prominent role for businesses, with more and more heating engineers creating company profiles on one or more of the mainstream platforms. Grant UK recognises that while G1 Installers need product information in traditional formats, such as printed brochures, leaflets and data sheets, digital content is also a key resource.

With this in mind, Grant UK has published a brand-new series of images that G1 installers can use and share via their own social channels. Each image is G1 branded, enabling members to promote their status. For installers who specialise in one Grant technology, there are specific versions which solely promote either oil boilers or air source heat pumps. And for installers who fit a range of Grant products, there are multiple combinations that showcase both

Grant renewable and oil boiler products in single assets.

The social media assets are available to download as jpeg files from the online G1 Portal. Installers simply need to log onto their account, navigate to the 'Downloads' page using the menu on the left-hand side of their dashboard and then select the filter 'Social Media Assets' to see the available content. They can then choose which ones they wish to use, download the images and save copies



Digital assets for Grant G1 installers

on their own devices.

"At the core of the G1 Scheme is support for our loyal members," says Anna Wakefield, head of marketing and data protection at Grant UK. "From extended guarantees through to sales leads, training and marketing support, the G1 Scheme delivers rewards and provides installer support in many ways. This new social content is just the latest way we are helping G1 installers to be equipped in the marketplace to best position their businesses in front of their customers, specifically online.

"We really hope this new digital content will be of value to members and we will be continuously adding to the bank of assets so installers can turn to the Portal for professional, fresh content for use today and in the future."

If you are already a G1 Installer, log on to your Portal – www.g1.grantuk.com – to download the social assets. If you are not yet a member but are interested in joining the scheme, visit www.grantuk.com/professional/g1-scheme

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"VERY RELIABLE SYSTEM AND VERY RELIABLE CUSTOMER SUPPORT"



"GOOD PRODUCT, GOOD SERVICE AND BACKUP"



"BEST OIL BOILER ON THE MARKET BY FAR"



"SIMPLY THE BEST"



 Trustpilot



VORTEX



VORTEXBLUE

Extended guarantees applicable when installed by a G1 accredited installer. Full T&C's apply.



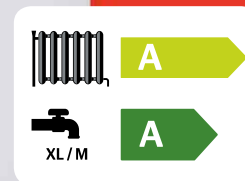
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Litre hinged expansion vessel

£150+

Over £150 worth of factory fitted extras included – saving 2 hours installation time



Domestic hot water mini expansion vessel and pressure reducing & pressure relief valve factory fitted



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Williams opens new trade counter in Poole

Williams Trade Only Plumbing and Heating Supplies opened the doors to its 39th branch, in Poole, at the start of December. Despite last year's unpredictable trading conditions Williams, an independent merchant, has retained all its branches and is still growing.

Poole branch manager, Rob Arthurs, brings years of experience in the plumbing sector to the branch and has put together an enthusiastic new team, with great local knowledge of the area. His ambition for the branch is to be the first choice for heating and plumbing supplies for those in the trade in Poole and surrounding areas.

The opening has created four new jobs initially, and as the branch



Williams' staff on site in Poole

becomes established, more jobs will be available. This latest branch to open in the South West, joins the huge Bristol regional fulfilment centre and trade counter which opened in 2019, providing more same day deliveries into the region.

Ray Stafford, Williams MD said: "Whilst we have been servicing the Poole area with same day deliveries for many years, we are delighted to further enhance our 'trade only' service offering to this vibrant town with the opening of our newest trade counter. I'm sure that Rob Arthurs and his team will set new standards for excellence locally."

He added: "Poole is the first in our next wave of branch expansion, which will include locations in Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire. These additional sites will be supported by further investment in our second distribution centre, which will be created by the expansion of our current site at Milton Keynes. This expanded distribution facility will come online early in 2021."

As with all Williams' trade counters and facilities, employee and customer safety has been a top priority this year. Poole is no exception and is Covid-secure. www.williams.uk.com

Record year for oil boiler enquiries

New data from Boiler Guide has shown an increase of 36% in customer enquiries for new oil boilers.

Enquiries for boiler repairs and maintenance were also up by 17%, from 2019, indicating that homeowners are looking to update their heating systems in a bid to improve heating efficiency.

The Market Harborough-based company supplies sales leads to heating professionals for boilers and renewable heating solutions, including heat pumps and solar systems. Overall, enquiries across the gas and oil sectors were up 28% compared to the previous year, marking a record year for Boiler Guide.

Founder, David Holmes said: "We have seen huge growth in traffic

to our website during 2020. During the various lockdowns, homeowners have increased their online activity, looking to make improvements around the home, and this can be seen in the number of customers updating their heating systems. With people stuck indoors and without the option of holidays, it's clear to see that many of us are investing more in our homes."

The upward trend looks set to continue throughout 2021 with January enquiries up a further 48% compared to the same period last year.

David added: "The results speak for themselves and it is encouraging to see that heating engineers have the opportunity to grow their businesses in such difficult circumstances." www.boilerguide.co.uk



Ideal installation with FlueSnug

Ideal Heating endorsement for FlueSnug

Boiler manufacturer, Ideal Heating, has endorsed FlueSnug for use with its boilers and flues. Designed to help ensure new build properties meet airtightness requirements, FlueSnug simplifies the installation of flues in older properties.

"We are happy to support and endorse FlueSnug for use with Ideal boilers and flues. It is a great product, so easy to fit and has huge benefits to the installer," says Richard Farrow, product manager for domestic boilers, Ideal Heating.

"FlueSnug helps installers comply with new building regulations and rigidly holds the flue in place. It is perfect for those who want to do a 'proper' job, with an excellent finish."

Removing the need for pointing, FlueSnug can be installed in less than five seconds and snugly fits the 152mm core-drilled hole in the wall through which the boiler pipe and flue exits. The product can be used both inside and outside the property for the best finish, prevents heat escaping and acts as a barrier to drafts, damp, insects and pests.

FlueSnug also allows installers to quickly access the pipe and flue for any service or maintenance requirements, without having to remove existing brickwork, mortar or sealant, saving even more time and cost for installers and their customers. The existing FlueSnug can be refitted, meaning that you don't have to buy another one.

"We are absolutely delighted that Ideal Heating endorses the use of FlueSnug," says Alex Lever, director of PipeSnug. "It is fantastic that such a reputable company recognises how the product makes life easier for installers out on site." <http://pipesnug.co.uk/>

Firebird has been delivering world class products and training for the past 40 years, while setting new standards in quality, sustainability and innovation. We guarantee a stress free installation process and a backup service you can really trust - great for the installer and the customer!

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Free Design
Consultation
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Today



The UK's first and only, AAA rated combi oil boiler

The market-leading research & development team at Warmflow has done it again. Not content with developing the UK & Ireland's first and only AA rated combi oil boiler, the latest innovation in the Warmflow oil boiler range sees the combi boiler moving from AA rated to AAA rated status, thanks to a market-leading patented design. What this means, in practice, is that the Warmflow combi oil boiler is up to 5ltrs of fuel per week more efficient than other market leading oil combi boilers available, saving the homeowner money.



The new offering is part of a revolutionary overhaul of the entire oil range, which sees new features and benefits added to all boilers in

the newly-named Agentis range. All boilers will come under the Agentis branding with Utility and Kabin pak models replaced with new & improved internal and external models.

The new combi oil boiler is now one of the slimmest on the market at only 515mm wide which will ensure it fits into the tightest of kitchen and utility room spaces. Featuring a 24ltr, hinged expansion vessel for ease of servicing, other features include a reduced component count, O ring push fit connections, a domestic hot water mini expansion vessel, pressure reducing & pressure relief valve factory fitted as standard. The additional components added will save an installation engineer around £150 and 2 hours labour in time saved fitting the components.

In addition, all Agentis combi boilers now come as a Professional model which include over £250 worth of factory fitted extras including an Adey Magnaclean Pro 2, Teddington fire valve, Crosland oil filter, improved condensate installation kit, bottles of inhibitor as well as a 5 years parts & labour warranty out of the box.

Making life easier with Spectre

Launched to bring performance and value to the trade user, the Spectre range includes screws, hole saws and screwdriver bits – all designed to get the job done without breaking the bank.

The company's user-friendly products include Advanced Multi-Purpose Wood Screws, which incorporate a long list of features, often only found in premium screws. Spectre's Advanced Timber Fixing Screws are also crammed with features and are widely used in exterior timber, fencing and landscaping applications. The Spectre range of screwdriver bits includes nut drivers, bit holders and bit sets covering Pozi, Torx and Philips in 25mm and 50mm lengths.

Spectre is rethinking its packaging and every box has clear and easy to read information and an actual-size



The Spectre range

screw illustration on the side. To make life even easier, and to keep screws safe, Spectre has also launched a Site Organiser – a tough, six-compartment case with metal handle and catches and it comes with a selection of screws. www.spectreadvanced.com

New slimline cylinders from Grant

Five new slimline hot water cylinders ranging in size from 150-300 litres are now available from Grant UK. These new models join the MonoWave High Performance cylinder range, providing installers with efficient hot water storage solutions when space is at a premium.

Designed to work with traditional heating appliances, as well as renewable technologies, the new MonoWave Slimline cylinders partner effectively with Grant's oil-fired boiler and air source heat pump ranges. The slimline cylinders are stainless steel, like all of Grant's cylinders, and combine durability with efficiency in compact units. The new slimline models, which are available in five sizes (150ltr, 170ltr, 200ltr, 250ltr and 300ltr), provide customers with effective hot water storage even in the smallest places.

Each of the five new cylinders has a diameter of just 510mm making them ideal options for installations where there is limited space. The tappings are labelled and colour-coded, making installation easier and more installer-friendly. Furthermore, all the slimline cylinders also feature a 3kW fitted immersion, have a single coil



Grant Wave Cylinder Range

and are unvented, indirect models.

"We are pleased to now offer slimline variants of our popular MonoWave High Performance cylinders," comments Kevin Ellis, Grant UK's renewables sales manager. "An efficient cylinder can greatly improve the performance of the overall heating system so these slimline models provide our customers with a solution even when space is restricted. Delivering comprehensive package heating solutions is a core part of Grant's offering and the addition of these new cylinders further adds to the choice we can provide."

www.grantuk.com/professional/products/cylinders.

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A1 Tank Services – the A-Team of oil tank installers

North Yorkshire's A1 Tank Services is an approved Tuffa Tank installation company. For the past decade, the family business has been run by company director, John Marshall – the modern-day equivalent of the A-Team's Colonel John "Hannibal" Smith.

The company has been exceptionally busy this year, helping to prop up the economy and warm the UK's population with the installation of diesel dispensers and heating oil tanks and in this case study we hear about one tricky challenge overcome.

"An unprecedented number of homeowners have been replacing their heating oil tanks this year for several reasons," explains John. "Bargain-hunters are making the most of low oil prices by brimming their tanks, exposing cracks and weak bases in tanks that are not usually filled to maximum capacity. Additionally, lockdown restrictions have forced homeowners to spend more time at home, resulting in a greater focus on home and garden improvements or maintenance."

Solutions not barriers

One homeowner using his spare time to improve his outside space by replacing his old oil tank was Yorkshireman and keen gardener, Neil. His single skin oil tank was installed



Lifting the new tank into place



Neil's old tank needed replacing

adjacent to the house around 20 years ago, but started to show serious signs of wear, tear and discolouration. Neil had contacted several installers, who recommended a conventional installation of a standard bunded oil tank. However, due to modern regulations, a standard tank would need to be sited at least 1.8m away from the house. This would have meant removing the shed or installing the tank in the middle of the garden – not something green-fingered Neil was going to accept lightly.

Another possibility was constructing a fire rated barrier to separate the tank and building. However, due to the confined location of the tank – sited in-between the house, shed and external wall – this would mean constructing the barrier around three sides of the tank in a position which would impede access to the shed and undermine the ambience of the garden. In a desperate fix, Neil made a final attempt to save the garden's aesthetics and contacted A1 Tank Services.

Where other installers saw barriers, both literally and metaphorically, John saw solutions. A1 Tank Services recommended Tuffa's innovative fire protected tank. This tank range is bunded and integrally fitted with a unique, patented fire rated material, which enables compliant oil tank installations as close as 300mm from buildings and boundaries.

Fire Protected Oil Tanks function the same as external fire barriers but with some distinct advantages. They offer far superior aesthetics and simpler installation than traditional fire barriers and in John's experience, are probably a safer option, because some tank owners take huge risks, favouring

aesthetics over safety, and dismantle the fire barrier once the installation has been signed off. As Fire Protected Tanks have the fire barrier within the tank, there is no benefit to removing it.

Treat every installation like your own home

With a solution in place, the A-Team set about dismantling the existing brickwork, which was unsightly, unstable and completely unnecessary. The new Tuffa tank could have sat on the existing base, making installation even quicker and easier, but this would have gone against A1 Tank Service's motto to "treat every installation as if it was your home".

To tackle the restricted access, John organised for an experienced Hiab company to lift the tank over the double garage and into the courtyard while his team guided the tank into position on the concrete slabs. Lastly, the new oil line was installed and connected to the tank.

Satisfied customer, Neil was thrilled with the installation. He commented: "We had a Tuffa fire protected tank installed by A1 Tank Services. This type of tank, bunded and fire resistant, was the only type which could be installed in the same position as the previous tank, as we did not wish to have to move a large shed, nor to intrude onto our established garden. The process was very smooth, carried out by a very professional team. The tank looks great in its place."

With the job finished, the good guys saved, and the perpetrators dealt with, John removed the mandatory Cuban E-cigar from his mouth and said: "I love it when a plan comes together." www.tuffa.co.uk



Tuffa's new fire protected tank taking pride of place in Neil's garden



Atkinson extends its range of oil heating products with the acquisition of the Fuelstop Fire Valves that is now manufactured in the Westbury facility alongside the Tankmaster, Tanktop and Filstop.



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'Ready to Burn' scheme ready to go

From 1 May 2021, new legislation in England will restrict the sale of wood, manufactured solid fuels and bituminous coal intended to be burned at domestic premises (including houseboats).

While the regulations are aimed at those selling the fuels, what will your customers need to know? Hopefully, the information below will help.

Wood

If the volume of wood being sold is less than two cubic metres, it must come with the 'Ready to Burn' logo (see Diagram 1) and a certificate issued by

an approved wood certification body. Small foresters (those who currently sell less than 600m³ annually) are exempt from this rule until 1st May 2022.

Wood being sold in volumes equal to or greater than two cubic metres must be accompanied by a notice explaining:

- that it is not currently suitable to be burned
- that it should be dried for 2 years until it has a moisture content of 20% or less
- why wet wood should not be burned
- how to test the wood is ready to burn.

Manufactured solid fuels

These must also come with the 'Ready to Burn' logo and a certificate issued by an approved manufactured solid fuel certification body.

Bituminous coal

Loose or pre-bagged bituminous coal cannot be sold, except for loose coal supplied directly by a member of the Approved Coal Merchant Scheme. This exception ends on 30th April 2023. Bituminous coal from a handful of traditional small output mines in the Forest of Dean can continue to be sold.



Missed your 'flue jab'? Protect yourself with these technical updates

As part of OFTEC's role in keeping technicians up to date with ever-changing industry guidance, its technical team has produced the following documents that were announced in January's edition of E-news:



- Technical Notice 031 – Flues near windows

This notice explains whether or not a flue terminal can be installed closer to an existing 'opening' window than the minimum required by building regulations, if the window were to be permanently fixed closed. Please take the time to read it carefully.



- Updates to Technical Book 4

Following a revision to BS EN 1443, it is no longer acceptable to use chimney products with Class 1 corrosion resistance for appliances that combust liquid fuels; corrosion resistance Class 2 is now the minimum. The minimum chimney/liner designations in Book 4 have been amended accordingly.

The QR codes can be used to quickly access these documents. Alternatively, all technical notices and book updates can be viewed in the technician's hub on www.oftec.org.



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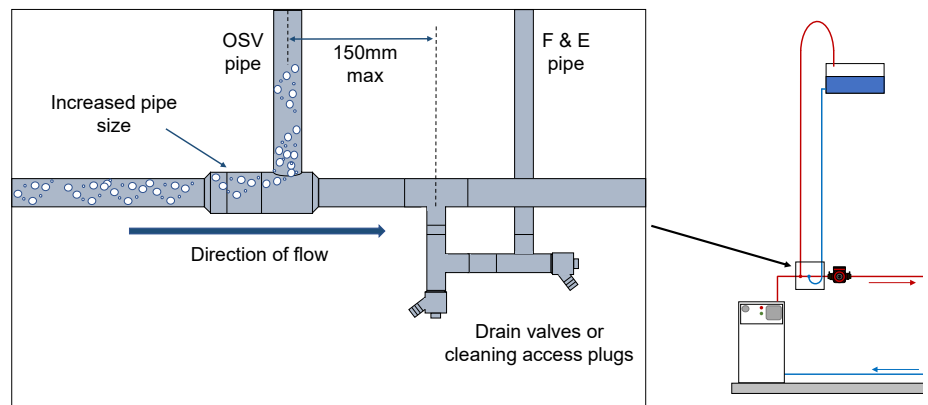
Close coupled design – avoiding pumping over and sucking down

In the last article of this series, OFTEC'S technical team continues to review some common heating design defects and advises how best to avoid them.

In an open vented heating system, the open safety vent (OSV) pipe and the feed and expansion (F & E) pipe play an important role in the safety of the system. They need to be carefully sized and designed. One important design detail is the point at which the OSV pipe and F & E pipe connect to the heating pipework – especially their position relative to each other and the central heating circulator. If this issue is ignored, water can be pumped up the OSV pipe and dumped into the F & E cistern, or air can be sucked down the OSV pipe into the heating system.

Pumping over and sucking down leads to premature corrosion of heating system components. This is because both pumping over and sucking down the OSV pipe can result in oxygen being dissolved into the primary system water (for a similar principal, think of the air pumped into the water in a fish tank that keeps dissolved oxygen levels in the water high, so the fish do not die). Increased dissolved oxygen equals increased oxidation within the system. In plain English, this means increased corrosion!

So, where should the connection points be in a domestic system? Firstly, check the installation instructions of



the heating appliance for guidance. If information is not provided there, the following layout is generally considered to be accepted practice. It is known as the "close coupled" method.

As shown in the diagram, the connections should be:

- On a horizontal pipe
- OSV pipe first
- F & E pipe next
- Coupled close together – no more than 150mm apart
- Immediately before the heating circulator.

As you can see in the diagram, it is

good practice to increase the pipe size at the point at which the OSV pipe connects to the heating pipework. This reduces the speed of water flowing through the pipe and encourages air to rise up the OSV pipe.

There are other ways to connect OSV and F & E pipes to a heating system, including pre-manufactured air separators. Whichever method you choose, ensure you have read the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions before proceeding. Further information on this topic can be found in The Domestic Heating Design Guide, published by CIBSE. To purchase a copy, visit www.oftecdirect.com.

Fuel storage tanks, boundaries and screening – confused?

Minimum separation distances between a fuel storage tank and a non-fire rated boundary are different from those needed between a tank and combustible screening. Why the difference? Hopefully, the following FAQs will assist.

What is a boundary?

A boundary 'usually' refers to the legal boundary dividing one person's property from another's. This boundary may be marked by a hedge, fence, wall etc., or it may not be marked at all – such as in the case of open-plan gardens, for example.

'Usually'? What else can it refer to?

It can also refer to a boundary line dividing domestic land from land used for other purposes. For example, the dividing line between a farmhouse garden and agricultural or livestock land; or the dividing line between

a school caretaker's garden and playgrounds or school buildings. Again, this may be marked or unmarked.

What about screening around a tank – is that a boundary?

Where combustible screening around a tank, such as trellis, for example, does not mark the line of either of the types of boundaries described above, it is not a boundary.

What difference does it make?

Plenty. Depending on the individual site circumstances, tanks should be separated a minimum of either 760mm, 2m, or 6m from a non-fire rated boundary. By contrast, the minimum separation distance to combustible screening is 600mm.

Why do tanks need to be so much further from a boundary?

The short answer is because industry

guidance documents say so! However, there are good reasons; primarily differing risks. A boundary line marks the point beyond which a property owner has no control. This means that they cannot prevent the possibility of large quantities of combustible material and/or sources of ignition being present immediately beyond the boundary. This would pose a serious potential fire risk to their tank. By contrast, screening has no source of ignition and usually contains limited quantities of combustible material. As the risk is lower, the minimum separation distance is lower too.

Further information regarding the definition of a non-fire rated boundary and the associated separation requirements for tanks serving domestic and non-domestic buildings can be found in OFTEC Technical Book 3, Sections 1.6 and 3.5

Register plate or closure plate – which to use?

When installing a free-standing solid fuel stove in an existing fireplace recess, what is the correct method to close the top of the recess if there is no raft lintel – a register plate or a closure plate? The answer depends on the flueing arrangement. This article explains whether a register plate or a closure plate should be used and explains the difference between the two.

Let's start with a **register plate**, defined as "A corrosion resistant metal plate used to close the bottom of a masonry chimney and provide connection to the connecting flue pipe".

A register plate is used where an appliance is to be installed in an existing fireplace recess and the existing flue is to be reused with no additional liner being installed. This means that combustion products, such as flue gasses and soot, will come into contact with the upper side of the register plate.

The register plate should be constructed of galvanised or stainless

steel with a minimum thickness of 1.5mm. The register plate should be attached along its four edges to the fireplace recess by screwing it to the underside of the angle iron. All fixings (including plugs) should be non-combustible and corrosion resistant, such as stainless steel.

As the register plate forms part of the chimney system, all joints need to be sealed, including those between:

- the angle iron and the recess walls
- the register plate and the angle iron
- the register plate and any access door within it
- the register plate and the flue pipe.

Soot and deposits will land on the register plate. These will need to be removed from time to time. To enable this, either a cleaning/sweeping access door will be needed in the register plate or a soot door should be provided above the register plate. A clamping ring or funnel/sump adapter should be used to connect the flue pipe to the register plate, as shown in Diagram 1 and 2.

A **closure plate** serves a different purpose. It is defined as "A plate used to close the bottom of a masonry chimney that includes a metal flue liner and prevents debris falling from the void between the flue liner and masonry structure".

As the connecting flue pipe will connect directly to a flexible or rigid metal liner above the closure plate, there is no possibility of flue gases or soot coming into contact with the closure plate. This means that the closure plate will not need to be sealed in the same way as a register plate, as it is not part of the chimney system.

The closure plate is designed to stop minor debris falling on the appliance, not major debris such as bricks. For this reason, non-combustible board is often all that is needed. However, if the closure plate will be supporting insulation placed around the liner, a metal plate (such as that used for a register plate) may be more suitable.

Ensure the closure plate is adequately supported to prevent sagging or

Diagram 1

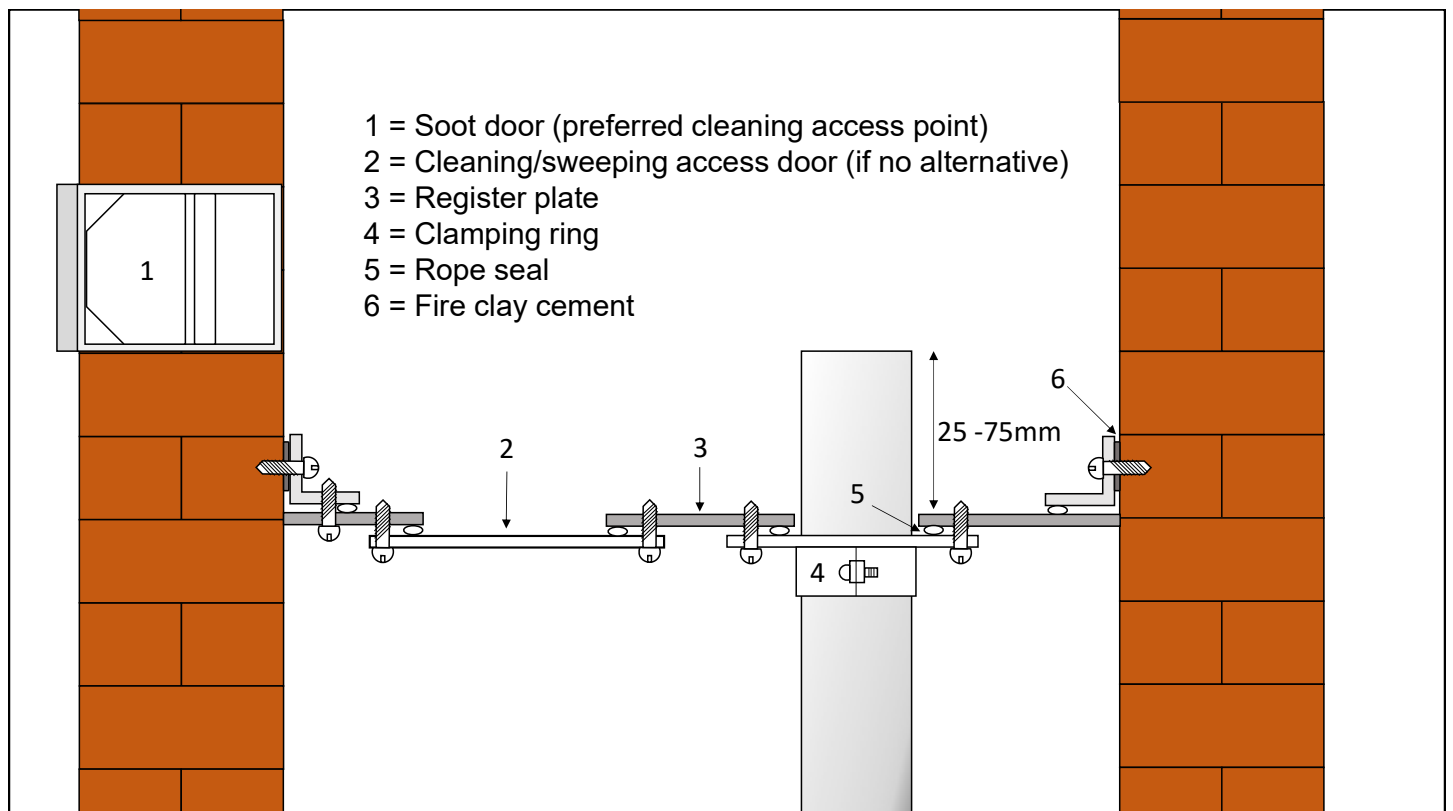


Diagram 2

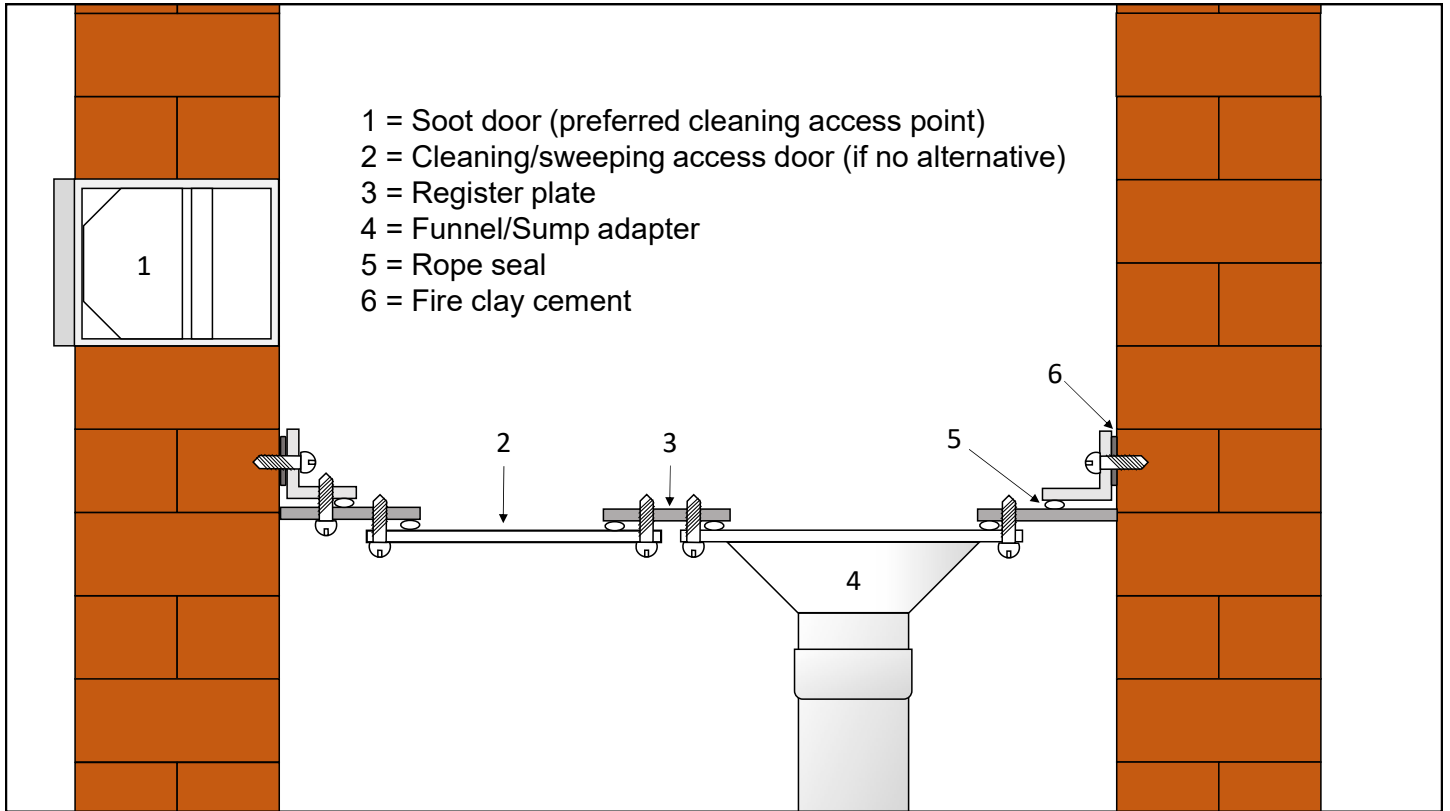
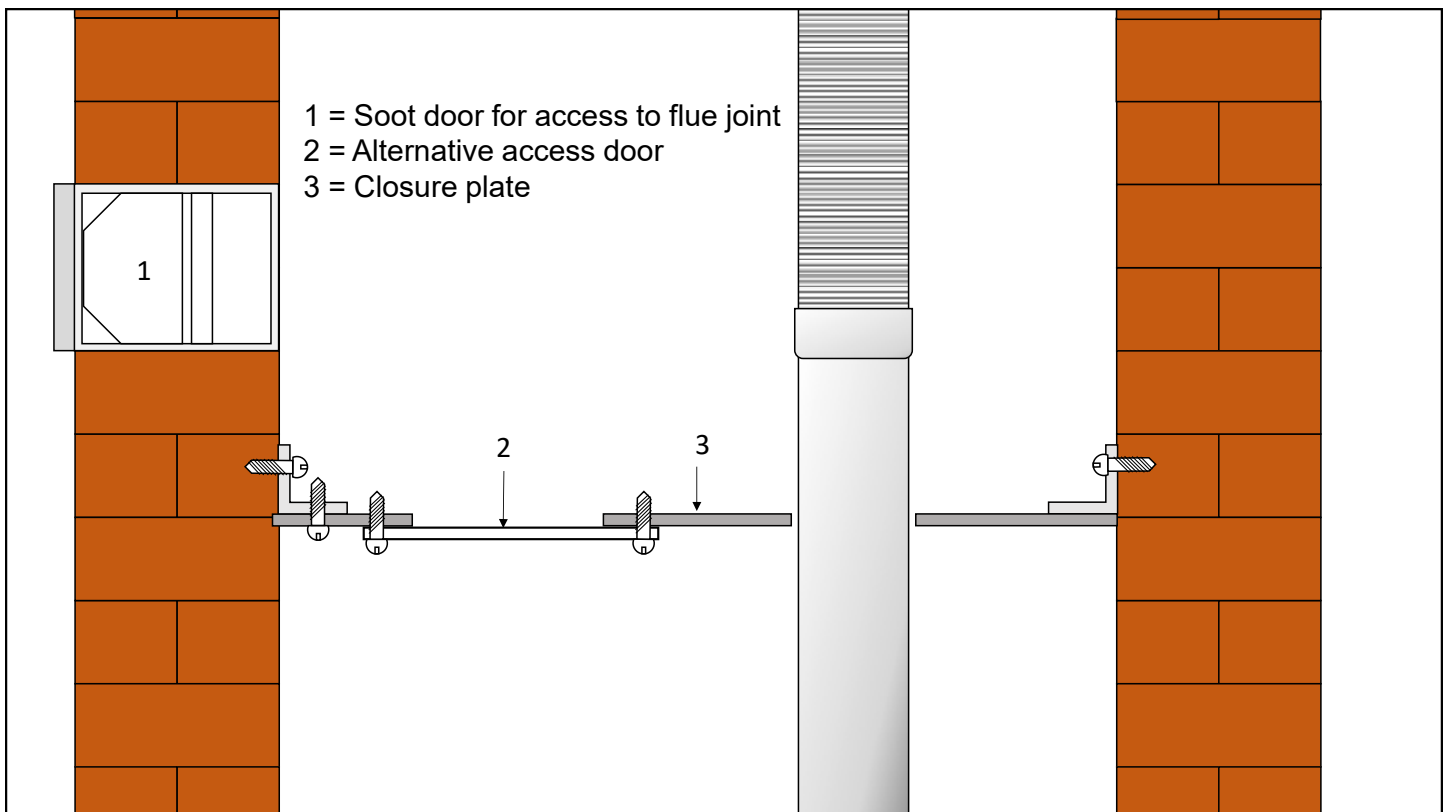


Diagram 3



breaking. Gaps between the edge of the plate and the fireplace walls and flue do not need to be sealed, unless this is necessary to prevent debris or insulation falling on the appliance. If the liner requires ventilation to the gap between the liner and chimney walls, any gap left around the board to provide such ventilation needs to prevent debris falling onto the

appliance.

Access through the plate is not usually required unless the void above is very large or there is a likelihood of debris falling onto the appliance that would need to be removed. However, the joint between the connecting flue pipe and the liner needs to be inspected. This could be achieved through an

access door in the closure plate or through a soot door provided above the closure plate, as shown in Diagram 3.

Further information on the installation, commissioning and maintenance of solid-fuel appliances can be found in OFTEC's Solid Fuel Technical Book, available at www.oftecdirect.com.



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GTEC & MCS win bid to support Green Homes Grant installers

Building services training provider, GTEC, in partnership with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), has won a bid of nearly £1m to help existing trades people access discounted training in heat pumps and solar thermal. This will help installers to meet the demand presented by the Green Homes Grant (GHG) – the government's scheme to improve the energy efficiency of UK housing stock.

The 'Renewable Heat Installer Training & Support Scheme (RHITSS)' has been awarded backing from The Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through Midlands Energy Hub and covers the whole process that candidates must undertake to achieve their place on the GHG Installer Register.

Awarding organisations BPEC and LCL Awards will provide training locations at their UK centres to support the rollout of the heavily funded courses.

Financial and practical support

The RHITSS is a whole package of

support, designed to provide financial incentive and make the process of becoming a GHG installer as easy as possible, from accessing vouchers to cover up to 70% of the cost of training and various certifications, to finding suitable training providers and overcoming the practical barriers to becoming MCS and Trustmark registered.

Griff Thomas, managing director, GTEC, said:

"We are absolutely delighted to have been awarded this bid. Our approach is focussed on helping installers more easily take advantage of the market potential of two of the most popular renewable technologies. Working with MCS, LCL Awards and BPEC, ensures candidates have access to the best possible training and support, while contributing to meeting the UK's low carbon targets.

"With the Green Homes Grant now extended to March 2022, next year could be busy for installers with the right skills to deliver related technologies and services."



New funding for heat pump training

Ian Rippin, CEO of MCS, added: "This is an excellent opportunity for those installers wishing to deliver renewable heat technologies. This scheme will provide the necessary training and support to become MCS certified, which in turn will allow a trained and certified installer to provide customers with a Green Homes Grant supported installation."

Up to 600,000 households are in line to benefit from the GHG, with 100,000 potential jobs across the UK.

Installers who booked on an eligible course prior to the launch of the voucher scheme may also be able to access funding and should contact their training provider to check. To register interest, visit www.rhitss.co.uk



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More calamities captured on camera!

We are welcoming in 2021 with another two truly terrible installations. These beauties were discovered by OFTEC registered technicians, Lewis Morgan and Mark Pollard, while out on site.

We are on the lookout for photos for our summer issue so keep your eyes peeled and send us your very best (or should that be, your very worst) snaps. Please send your photos, some company information, a brief description of the installation and your solution to liz@oilinstaller.co.uk.



Send your photographs to liz@oilinstaller.co.uk

Woeful workmanship

When **Lewis Morgan** of Burry Port-based company, plumb4u, was asked to do a routine service on an oil boiler, he was not expecting to see this.

"The boiler was installed under the ECO scheme several years ago and there was evidence of very poor workmanship," Lewis told Oil Installer. "The boiler was installed on a rotten pallet, the condensate was leaking on to the oil supply pipe, and there was no lagging on any of the pipework."

"We have given the customer a quotation to bring the installation up to current regulations and also quoted to replace the existing single skin oil tank with a new bunded oil tank with fire protection, given its location."

Working across Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion in West Wales, and trading since February 2002, Lewis and his brother Gareth run plumb4u as a family business. Lewis is hands-on, carrying out servicing and breakdowns, while Gareth is office-based and in charge of the paperwork.



MPHS to the rescue

Mark Pollard, of MPHS Ltd, found this condensate pipe shocker recently while installing an Aga for a customer in the Cotswolds. Needless to say, his team quickly put it right.

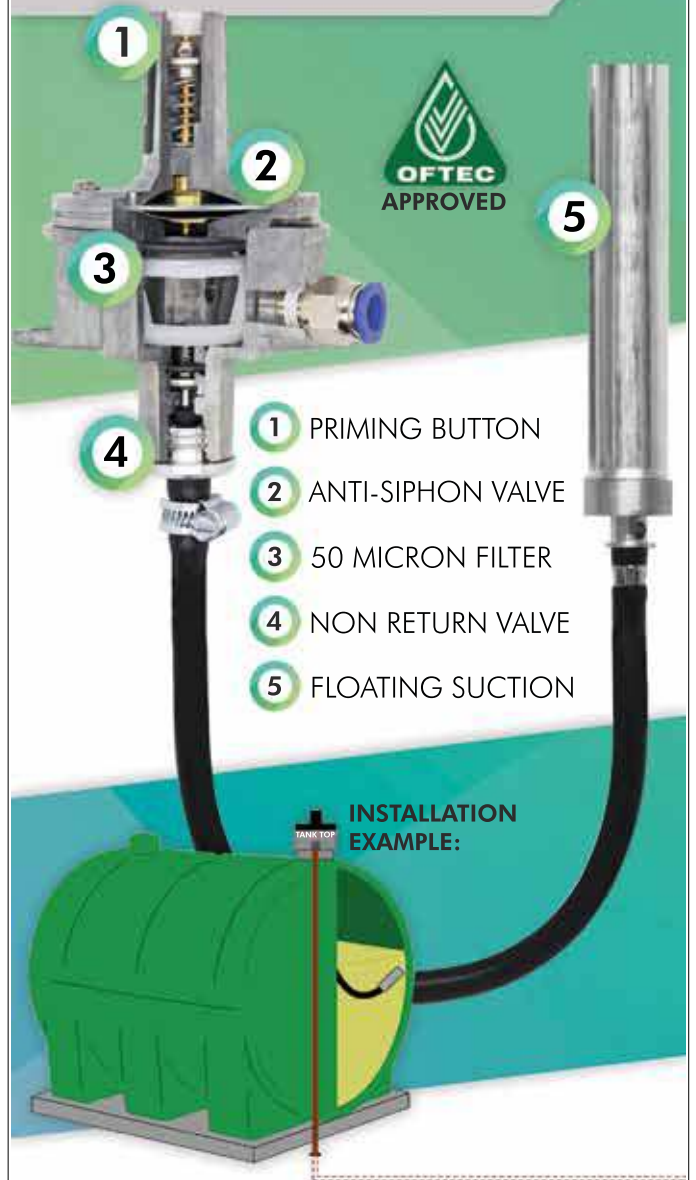
Established in 2006 and OFTEC registered, MPHS Ltd employs more than 20 staff and covers the entire Cotswolds region. The company carries out both domestic and commercial plumbing and heating works for a variety of customers, including numerous country estates and National Trust properties.



Pipe problems

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Fuel price commentary

In 2020, the Covid pandemic turned many commodity markets across the globe upside down, choking off demand to an unprecedented degree. The consequence for heating oil, which tracks trends in crude oil price quite closely, was that the price fell through the floor, resulting in the lowest annual heating cost since OFTEC first subscribed to the Sutherland Tables – just £582 for a system with a condensing boiler in Great Britain.

The crude oil price is now back to where it began last year, and demand is slowly picking up. This usually means a return to

higher prices, but many oil producers still have spare capacity. How prices in 2021 develop will depend on how successful the world is at combating the virus – if things return to near-normal then so will the price and we can expect the annual cost for a typical three-bedroomed home to be similar or slightly above the long-term average, which in the UK is around £960. Householders will certainly notice this change, but it still means oil heating will remain competitive against other off-grid options, including most renewables.

While the oil price has been extremely

volatile, the price of other fuels has been relatively stable, which is good news for customers. Production costs are a key element in the price consumers pay, but another major influence is tax and duty. It has been speculated that government may seek to rebalance this and favour electricity over fossil fuels as part of its efforts to encourage a switch to low carbon heating. Measures such as this are controversial because they can push low-income households into fuel poverty. With a new UK heat in buildings strategy due this year, it will be interesting to see whether government embraces this politically risky option.

Comparative space and water heating costs for a three-bedroomed home in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

GREAT BRITAIN

	Average: Jan17-Jan21	January 20	January 21	Price change	% difference
Anthracite Grains	£1,161	£1,209	£1,209	£0	0.00%
Electricity (Economy 7)	£1,980	£2,050	£2,027	-£23	-1.12%
Gas (British Gas – condensing)	£965	£950	£801	-£149	-15.68%
LPG	£1,897	£1,928	£1,895	-£33	-1.71%
LPG (condensing)	£1,561	£1,586	£1,560	-£26	-1.64%
Oil	£1,179	£1,350	£908	-£442	-32.74%
Oil (condensing)	£967	£1,105	£747	-£358	-32.40%
Wood Pellets	£1,450	£1,498	£1,491	-£7	-0.47%
Air source heat pump radiators	£1,744	£1,789	£1,768	-£21	-1.17%
Air source heat pump underfloor	£1,385	£1,370	£1,354	-£16	-1.17%

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Average: Jan17-Jan21	January 20	January 21	Price change	% difference
Anthracite Grains	£1,013	£1,075	£1,075	£0	0.00%
Electricity (Economy 7)	£1,725	£2,034	£1,882	-£152	-7.47%
Gas (Phoenix – condensing)	£939	£1,050	£861	-£189	-18.00%
LPG	£2,554	£2,576	£2,391	-£185	-7.18%
LPG (condensing)	£2,094	£2,112	£1,962	-£150	-7.10%
Oil	£1,160	£1,314	£846	-£468	-35.62%
Oil (condensing)	£951	£1,077	£697	-£380	-35.28%
Wood Pellets	£1,137	£1,166	£1,200	£34	2.92%
Air source heat pump radiators	£1,569	£1,752	£1,670	-£82	-4.68%
Air source heat pump underfloor	£1,262	£1,320	£1,259	-£61	-4.62%

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Average: Jan17-Jan21	January 20	January 21	Price change	% difference
Anthracite Peas	€1,586	€1,628	€1,628	€0	0.00%
Electricity (Urban Night Saver)	€2,096	€2,188	€2,255	€67	3.06%
Gas (Bord Gais condensing)	€1,348	€1,378	€1,299	-€79	-5.73%
LPG	€2,839	€2,998	€2,998	€0	0.00%
LPG (condensing)	€2,334	€2,463	€2,463	€0	0.00%
Oil	€1,575	€1,869	€1,338	-€531	-28.41%
Oil (condensing)	€1,289	€1,527	€1,097	-€430	-28.16%
Wood Pellets	€1,363	€1,398	€1,385	-€13	-0.93%
Air source heat pump radiators	€1,839	€1,913	€1,982	€69	3.61%
Air source heat pump underfloor	€1,499	€1,503	€1,570	€67	4.46%

Notes. The tables above are based on quarterly data published by the Sutherland Tables. They show the annual average cost of a range of heating options for a typical pre-1980 three bedroomed semi-detached home with a heat requirement of approximately 16,000 kWh.

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1. According to expected future ERP regulations
2. New flame sensing system launching in 2021
3. For models with high efficiency electric motors

