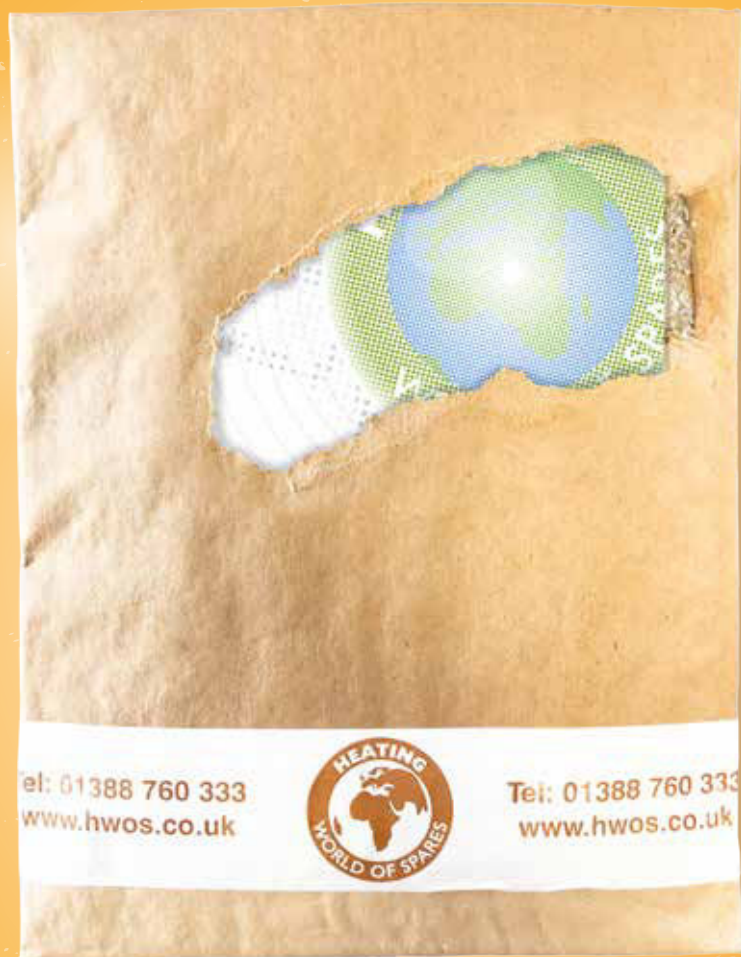


Oil installer

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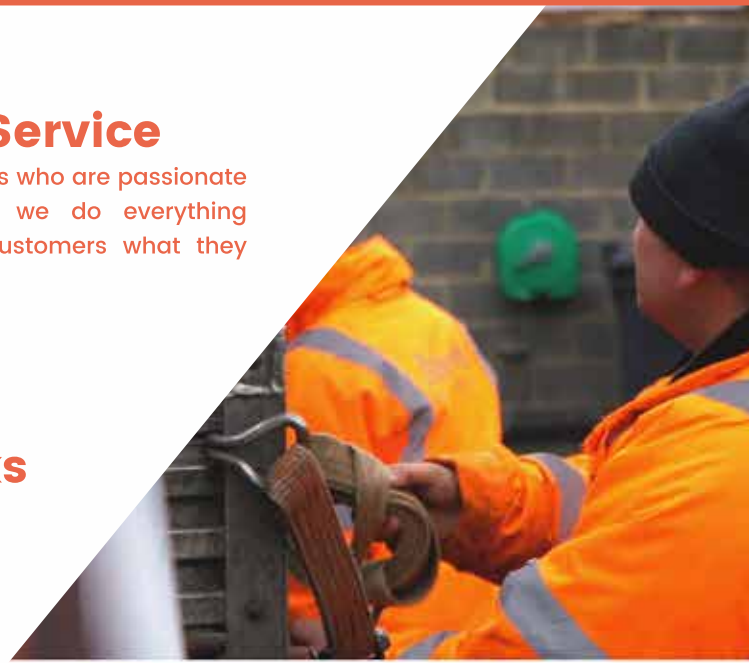
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A pivotal year for the oil heating industry...

This year may be pivotal in establishing the long-term future for the oil heating industry. OFTEC's research into the viability of low carbon biofuels – due to be published very shortly – should help us to finally challenge the thinking of policy advisers who claim that electrification is the preferred solution for decarbonising heating.



Relying too much on low carbon electricity reminds me of the old saying 'don't put all your eggs in one basket'. The wider deployment of heat pumps will be important as we reduce emissions of the harmful greenhouse gases that cause climate change. However, the use of biofuels and other low carbon heating technologies will help take some of the pressure off the electric grid, which will struggle to meet the future demands of both heating and transport. This is good for energy security, plus the competition between technologies also means better value for consumers.

There are other reasons too why biofuels deserve serious consideration. Perhaps the most important one is simple human nature. When the original central heating revolution started 50 years ago, the benefits were so obvious that the technology almost sold itself. Consumers relished living in warmer homes and not having to cope with the dirt and inconvenience of solid fuels.

Now, things are different. Modern central heating is very efficient, and most people are happy with the heating they own. It will be difficult to convince them to abandon equipment they have already invested in heavily, have trusted over many years, and which works perfectly well. We may be facing an existential climate crisis, but many consumers will have other spending priorities.

So, while heat pumps are an excellent technology, their large-scale deployment will be a hard sell. By contrast, a fuel that is a near drop in replacement for kerosene and offers an easy low carbon solution has got to be an easy win for consumers – and that makes it a winner for our industry too.

Niall Fay

Chairman
OFTEC

Free registration for new apprentices

There's been a lot of talk about the technician shortage timebomb in the heating industry. Many of you tell us you came into the industry through the tried and tested apprenticeship route – gaining on-the-job experience at the same time as classroom learning. We would love to see this practice continue and for more school leavers to consider an apprenticeship in the heating trade.

To help encourage this, we are offering one year's free OFTEC registration for newly qualified apprentices.

In order to qualify for this offer, we do need to see proof of apprenticeship with details of the units taken. The qualification must be a minimum of level 3 (or level 6 in the Republic of Ireland) and include oil heating in addition to other heating and plumbing units.

To find out more about this offer, email: registration@oftec.org

OFTEC urges heating businesses not to ignore value of apprenticeships – see page 33

New technical officer joins the team

OFTEC has welcomed Clare Griffin to the technical team. Clare brings with her over 15 years' experience as a plumbing and heating engineer. She has been self-employed and has worked for several Suffolk-based heating businesses as well as carrying out sub-contract work for British Gas.

Having been 'on the tools' for a number of years, Clare has first-hand experience of life as a heating technician and is looking forward to putting this to good use in the technical team.

If you are interested in joining the team at OFTEC, see our job advert on page 23.



Clare Griffin

A day in the life of...

This is the third in our 'day in the life of...' series and time for you to get to know our communications team a little better. You may not realise this, but you probably already know us quite well! After all, we tell you all our news every month, fill your Twitter and Facebook newsfeeds with tips and advice you can pass on to your customers and we keep you supplied with leaflets and logos when you need them.

The role of the marketing and communication team is probably best explained by splitting it into two activities.

1. Trade and consumer marketing
2. PR and lobbying

We have several different marketing audiences: heating technicians, training centres, equipment manufacturers and homeowners, but our overall message remains the same whoever we are

awareness drives demand for OFTEC services – but those services cannot function without a healthy membership.

There are now approaching 10,000 technicians registered with OFTEC all over the UK and Ireland which means that when we receive an enquiry from a homeowner looking for someone to install or repair their heating, we can put them in touch with several local heating businesses. This is fantastic, but we

It is our goal to become THE 'go to' organisation for off-grid heating

talking to: 'promoting excellence in heating'. It is our goal to become THE 'go to' organisation for off-grid heating – not just for liquid fuel but solar, biomass, solid fuel and heat pumps.

Trade and consumer marketing

Trade marketing is encouraging membership of our technician registration scheme and trade association and consumer marketing is raising awareness with homeowners. You really can't have one without the other – homeowner

want more – so we regularly advertise the OFTEC registration scheme.

Most of our technicians are registered for oil so our next task is to encourage them to branch out into new technologies such as solid fuel or renewables – take a look at our article on adding new scopes of registration on page 7.

In a nutshell, trade and consumer marketing is about getting our voice heard! There are the 'in-house' tasks such as sending out the monthly email newsletters, producing advice leaflets

OFTEC's marketing and communications team



Charlotte Bethel



Malcolm Farrow

for homeowners and developing content for our websites. But we also write articles for industry magazines such as Oil Installer, issue press releases to relevant publications, take out adverts, conduct radio interviews and cultivate partnerships with relevant organisations that will help keep OFTEC a household name. We also need to give you an insight of what's happening with government policy as it could impact your business, and this is where our lobbying and PR activities step in.

PR and lobbying

Influencing heat policy is challenging. It means understanding the drivers – such as the need to decarbonise – and then promoting the solutions our industry can offer. It means keeping up with the ever-changing debate, reading the reports, responding to government consultations, meeting influencers and joining the discussion at events and online. We write regularly to MPs in rural constituencies to ensure that they understand how policy may affect their constituents. We work hard to ensure that our industry is considered because there are thousands of homes and businesses that could be catastrophically affected, were the government to simply ban oil heating without a cost-effective



Cathy Johnson

alternative such as a liquid biofuel.

Another important policy topic is fuel poverty and, whilst ECO may be a controversial subject, we felt strongly that removing oil heating from it completely would not be good for consumers or for the wider industry. We lobbied hard and managed to secure a u-turn – and won an award of excellence for this campaign!

Communication should be a two-way thing, so, whilst it's important that we keep you up to date with the latest industry news, changes to building regulations and government policy, we also like to hear from you. Whether it's by giving feedback to your technician representative (registeredtechnician@oftec.org), answering our surveys or emailing us (marketing@oftec.org), we rely on you to tell us how we can make the world of off-grid heating better for you.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) – what the OFTEC compliance team have learnt

If you read our “Day in the life” article on the compliance team in the last issue of Oil Installer, you will know that it’s really important for Paul and Julia to keep their skills up to date. This is so that they can communicate effectively with homeowners and technicians on any issues.

Paul and Julia have recently both re-taken their oil assessments at one of our local approved training centres – alongside other heating technicians. As candidates they definitely preferred the training element to the assessments but as Paul said “the assessments are necessary for all of us to demonstrate competence.” Paul has also completed the new solid fuel training and assessment.

What other methods do the compliance team use to be in the best position to help resolve issues between customers and technicians?

- Attending manufacturer courses
- Accompanying OFTEC regional inspectors on site visits
- Completing the Consumers Rights Act 2015 training
- Reading industry updates in magazines and online
- Keeping an eye on social media – it’s amazing what businesses give away for free online
- UKAS training on an ISO standard helps the team make impartial decisions
- ... and of course, OFTEC’s own newsletters and Oil Installer magazine

However big or small your business is, you should actively focus on CPD and not just the refresher courses you need to take every five years as part of your registration. Regularly evaluate your business – are there other services your customers would like you to offer? (See our article on maximising your registration on page 7). Are there industry



Paul and Julia from the OFTEC compliance team with their certificates

changes you need to be more familiar with? Are there more advanced techniques or processes that you could start using?

Running your own business isn’t easy – are you confident in doing the books, submitting your tax return or quoting for new business? Perhaps you’ve got that sorted, but you want to learn how to advertise your business online – there may be short courses run by your local Chamber of Commerce that are available free to small businesses. You can also look out for online training that you can complete in your own time.

CPD is just like any other tool of the trade – if it gets forgotten at the bottom of the tool chest and goes rusty, it’s no use to anyone. There’s plenty of free CPD out there – OFTEC’s technical books and helpline, manufacturers’ hotlines/training/roadshows, OFTEC E-News, Oil Installer, Twitter, You Tube... and many online courses can be done in your own time.

Misleading advertising challenge upheld by ASA

OFTEC and FPS have won a challenge to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), regarding a poster distributed by a renewable heating supplier, ReEnergise.

In a poster, the renewable heating supplier wrongly claimed that ‘oil heating will be outlawed by 2030’ and encouraged schools and colleges to switch to alternative systems ahead of the 2030 ‘deadline’.

The ASA considered that consumers were likely to understand the claim, ‘Don’t forget it’s now government policy that oil will be outlawed from estates by 2030’, to be an objective statement of fact. Because the ASA had not seen evidence that showed that the government intended to prohibit, as opposed to phase out, the use of oil from estates, they concluded this claim “had not been substantiated” and was therefore misleading and breached CAP Code (Edition 12) rules 3.1 (Misleading advertising) and 3.7 (Substantiation).

If you see any further misleading adverts, please forward them to: marketing@oftec.org who will contact ASA to raise a further case.

Technician falsely claiming OFTEC registration is prosecuted

Daniel Park of ‘Flames and Flues’ or ‘Flaming Burners’ had falsely claimed to be both OFTEC and HETAS registered and had also carried out substandard solid fuel stove installations. Following a recent court case brought by Trading Standards in both Dorset and Somerset, Daniel Park has been sentenced to an 18-month conditional discharge and given substantial fines due to several false claims that he made to customers.

Councillor Andrew Parry, cabinet member of East Dorset District Council with lead responsibility for trading standards, said: “With safety-critical installations, such as wood burners or gas appliances, it is

vital that consumers can trust the competence of the business they are dealing with. They have a right to expect that claims made by businesses are true wherever they are advertised, and this includes on social media sites used by traders to attract work. Our Trading Standards service regularly intervenes and investigates false claims and we will take formal action such as prosecution where that is appropriate.”

OFTEC takes all reports of traders falsely using the OFTEC name very seriously. If you come across anyone displaying the OFTEC logo when they are not entitled to, please send pictures or website links to: logos@oftec.org

How to maximise your registration with OFTEC

Did you know that OFTEC also offers registration in most other off-grid technologies? As the heating industry evolves to meet the challenges of decarbonisation, the number of homeowners relying on oil as their only form of heating is likely to drop. As well as giving you new opportunities today, branching out into new areas will help future-proof your business.



What are the benefits for your business of adding more scopes of registration?

- Homeowners looking to 'do their bit' for the environment may wish to install a renewable technology alongside their existing oil system – you could install the new system and then provide ongoing servicing;
- Your existing customers may ask you to recommend an electrician – you could do the work yourself!
- Retain your existing customers, even if they switch to a new heating technology;
- You could win new customers from OFTEC website referrals;
- Great value self certification of installation work for all registered scopes;
- It's cost effective and easy to administer all your registrations in one place.

What are the options?

Oil heating

Even if you are already registered for oil heating, you may still be able to offer additional services. So, if you started with single stage pressure jet appliances (regular domestic boilers), you can add 'multi-stage pressure jet' (commercial systems), 'vaporising burners' (some types of range cookers), 'oil storage tank and pipework' installation and even 'unvented hot water' systems. Adding extra qualifications in the oil heating category is very easy and you'll only be charged a small admin fee to cover the cost of reissuing ID badges and your OFTEC certificate of registration.

We receive enquiries every day from homeowners looking for a registered technician to service or repair their boiler, so even if you

limit your training to our service and commissioning qualification, you could still win more business.

Renewables

Renewable systems are here to stay and the market will grow as the government decarbonisation policy is defined – even if liquid biofuel replaces kerosene. It's important to be ready for this and plan for getting qualified now.



OFTEC's registration director, Adrian Lightwood

OFTEC offers registration in solar thermal, ground and air source heat pumps and biomass systems. By also registering for our 'Microgeneration Certification Scheme' (MCS), your customers will currently be in a position to claim Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payments.

Solid fuel

Many homes on oil (or gas) also have an open fire or solid fuel burning stove so, by adding solid fuel registration for installation or servicing and commissioning, you can do more work for existing customers. Sign up today for OFTEC solid fuel training and be ready to provide professional

advice on the tighter controls that are on their way after the government issued its clean air strategy.

Part P electrical work

Part P qualified installers can install a new circuit, replace a consumer unit or make additions or alterations to existing circuits in special locations (including bathrooms). If you are already registered with OFTEC for oil, adding Part P could extend the amount of work you are able to carry out for your customers.

Energy efficiency (PAS2030)

PAS2030 registration replaced Green Deal and is required for any business installing measures under schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. The OFTEC PAS2030 scheme offers registration for the following:

- Oil fired condensing boilers
- Heating system insulation
- Heating controls
- Hot water systems
- Underfloor heating
- Warm air heating systems
- Water efficient taps and showers.

How to add scopes to your registration

If you are qualified in any of the above technologies, just fill in form R593, which you can download from: www.oftec.org/technicians/manage-your-registration

How to book training?

Visit www.oftec.org/technicians/ training for a list of approved training centres and courses – you can discuss your requirements with your local centre directly.



Registered
Business



Top gear: Firebird and ELCO drive efficiencies

When heating engineer Brendan McGrath of BJ Plumbing and Heating was asked to tender for a heating refurbishment at Donnelly & Taggart's Renault and Dacia showroom, Ballymena, his immediate thoughts turned to the type of boilers required to satisfy the heat demand for this ambitious project.

Brendan explained: "Heating in the building was previously provided by a large, inefficient cast iron boiler. Although the property was well insulated, areas of the building were un-zoned, which posed a problem as the car showroom needed to maintain a comfortable temperature for customers and staff in the adjoining office area. So, I needed a heating system that would rapidly respond to the needs of the client in all weather conditions."

Although Brendan is a well experienced contractor in this type of refurbishment, he decided to seek advice from Paul McGuckin of Firebird Heating Solutions Ltd on the appropriate type of heating appliance for the project.

Brendan continued: "As the Technical Manager for Firebird Ireland, Paul has a wealth of experience in the heating industry and is always on hand to offer technical advice for these types of projects. I had used Firebird products in the past and had always been satisfied with the performance, reliability and support given, so they were an obvious choice for this project."

Paul visited the site and was immediately able to specify the correct appliance from Firebird's adaptable Envirogreen boiler range and suggested that areas of the heating

system should be completely upgraded and zoned for comfort and efficiency.

Outlining the project, Paul said: "To meet the specific needs of this project, I specified a single Envirogreen boiler from the popular Boilerhouse range. These boilers have an output of 100kW and are fired by an ELCO low NOx liquid fuel burner, making them one of the most efficient boilers on the market. From September last year, it has been an EU requirement that all new liquid fuel fired boilers use a burner that achieves a post combustion NOx level of 120 mg/kWh.

"When this was first announced, Firebird immediately set about selecting the best burner available to achieve these requirements. At the same time, we looked at the situation as an opportunity to work closely with a burner manufacturer and produce a unit that was reliable, easy to maintain and an excellent match for our highly efficient oil boilers."

The result of this collaboration has been the introduction of the FB2 and FB3 burners onto all Firebird oil fired heating boilers. The burners are supplied by world renowned manufacturer ELCO, which has been a market leader in burner technology for over 90 years. The company's latest low NOx burners, with outputs from



12 - 100kW, have been created with UK and Ireland installers in mind, featuring several 'plug and play' features and a design that is straightforward to commission, fit and maintain.

Paul explained: "By working with ELCO, we have selected the best possible burner available for our boiler range. In fact, tests have shown the combination of ELCO burners and Firebird Envirogreen boilers can result in NOx levels as low as 60 mg/kWh! Every burner is pre-fired by ELCO but it is still a requirement to have the boiler correctly commissioned by a qualified engineer for specific site conditions."

Commenting on the success of the car showroom project, Brendan said: "The advice I was given by Firebird was superb and the boiler and burner combination was an excellent choice for the project. The Firebird boiler replaced an old cast iron unit of less than 65% efficiency. Firebird boilers have seasonal efficiencies of over 93% and the whole building has been zoned. This means that on fuel savings alone the capital cost involved in the project will be off set rapidly over a short number of years. Paul was also on hand to oversee commissioning and I was impressed with the overall performance of the ELCO burner."

Heating engineers can join Firebird this summer on its Nationwide Roadshow, which will include full demos of the burners and boilers. Members from the ELCO team will also be on hand to answer any questions. Contact a local Firebird sales manager for more details.

For more information on the Firebird Envirogreen range with ELCO's low NOx technology, visit: www.firebird.uk.com or www.firebird.ie

For more information on ELCO Burners, email: elcoburners.uk@aristonthermo.com





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At last – an oil tank insurance policy for homeowners

Many homeowners using oil may believe that they are fully insured against the risk of pollution following a leak or spill from their tank by their standard buildings and contents insurance, but the reality could be very different.

Pollution and contamination can sometimes be excluded completely from standard insurance policies, or included within a limit. Even when cover is given, it is almost always restricted to physical loss or damage caused by a sudden and identifiable incident, rather than a gradual leak, or as a result of wear and tear or lack of maintenance. Clean up of a policy holder's own land and water, including groundwater, is often not provided for at all or is limited.

The result can be a devastating uninsured clean-up bill for the homeowner, particularly if ground or surface water is affected.

Specialists

Recognising the risk that homeowners face, Oil Spill Insurance is launching HomeSpill, a stand-alone policy which, amongst other things, will cover the costs of a 24/7 spill response and emergency clean-up by registered specialists. Cover will also be provided for tracing and accessing the source of the leak, temporary heating, restoring soft landscaping and third-party liabilities up to policy limits. Policy limits of £100,000 or £250,000 will be available to purchase.



Before cover is provided, OFTEC registered tank installers and boiler engineers will be utilised to carry out the initial tank systems inspections and any remedial works, and then engaged annually thereafter.

Judy Hadden, of Oil Spill Insurance, said: "For homeowners to be aware of their responsibilities for safe oil storage and to use the services of OFTEC registered technicians to minimise the chances of a pollution event is of paramount importance. Homeowners shouldn't rely on simple verbal assurances that they're covered.

They should ask very precise questions and get the answers in writing".

"We have had significant interest in HomeSpill from home-owners, oil buying clubs, oil installers and engineers, as well as other stakeholders such as water companies, the regulators and, of course, OFTEC, who are all keen to see the water supply and environment protected".

Readers can register their interest in being kept up to date on the launch of HomeSpill on the OilSpill Insurance website at www.oilspillinsurance.co.uk.

Waste disposal – a reminder

If you read our recent articles in E-News about waste disposal, this is just a reminder and a handy reference to all the online sources of information for you to review.

In accordance with the government's "Waste Duty of Care Code of Practice" (bit.ly/waste-duty-of-care) there is a legal obligation for all trades, including heating installers, to dispose of trade or hazardous waste properly. When clearing a site and disposing of old items, such as appliances, oil tanks, filters, nozzles or even packaging, you need to consider exactly how these will be

removed and disposed of – even if you sub-contract this out. It is your responsibility to check that the appropriate authorisation to dispose of the waste is in place.

Those transporting and disposing of commercial waste need to hold an upper tier waste carriers' licence which can be applied for online:

- Applications England and Wales (bit.ly/oft-eng-wales)
- Applications Scotland (bit.ly/oft-scotland)
- Applications Northern Ireland (bit.ly/oft-NI)

If you are unsure about what you require, read the government's online guidance (bit.ly/waste-overview).

Those transporting waste without a licence could be prosecuted, and we certainly wouldn't want to see that happening to any of you, so we are introducing awareness of the waste carriers' licence as a new requirement of registration. Our regional inspectors will soon start asking for evidence of licences. If registered technicians are found to be transporting waste without a licence, it will be logged on your inspection report as an area for improvement.

Matt Northcott celebrates ten years with OFTEC



Matt Northcott

Having started his career as a plumbing and heating technician, we were keen to understand why Matt decided to join OFTEC ten years ago. His career with OFTEC has taken him from Technical Officer to Technical Manager and more recently to Registration Services Manager.

Why did you choose plumbing and heating as a career?

Like many school leavers, I was keen to enter the world of paid employment rather than continue into further education and rack up thousands in student debt. I already had an interest in plumbing and heating as a career, but I was particularly drawn to the theory and practical elements of good system design.

How did you start out in the trade?

I followed the path familiar to many technicians and attended my local college where I worked towards my NVQ in plumbing and heating. I also worked alongside a sole trader and gained stacks of practical experience in all sorts of plumbing and heating work – from fitting heating systems and bathrooms to boiler breakdowns (oil and gas).

Once I finished my NVQ, I then worked as a service and maintenance engineer for a couple of years and completed more training including unvented hot water and air conditioning. I even completed the OFTEC domestic and commercial qualifications – so perhaps even then OFTEC was calling me! This experience gave me great knowledge of the industry as a whole.

How did you end up working for OFTEC?

I saw an opportunity! I was already interested in what went on behind the scenes in the industry – why things are done the way they are and how regulations get developed and thought it would be interesting to work for an organisation that is involved in this process. And I was right!

My first role with OFTEC was as a technical officer – I was able to use my previous knowledge to help provide advice to registered technicians whilst at the same time helping to review standards and regulations. It was then a matter of 'right place, right time' as another opportunity arose to step up to the role of Technical Manager. This meant getting more involved in standards and regulations and even talking to key manufacturers in the industry as we work to improve safety and standards in the industry.

So, why the move to the role of Registration Services Manager?

Again, another opportunity to develop my career in management! I'm the type of person that enjoys learning and building on my skills. This role uses my appreciation of the challenges of working as a heating technician and combines it with my technical and industry knowledge. It's a role that has allowed me to develop my supervisory skills, managing both a team of administrators and subcontracted regional inspectors and I'm really enjoying the variety of challenges it presents.

And what next?

The last ten years have absolutely flown by and I feel very fortunate to have had so many opportunities to develop my career during this time. The next ten years are set to be even more exciting as OFTEC supports industry in the development of a low carbon liquid fuel and the whole heating industry (not just oil) works towards the decarbonisation of heat.

If you are interested in joining the team at OFTEC, please see our job advert on page 23.



Clean Air Zones and
the UK Van Operator
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Penalty charges for diesel vans

Four-fifths of the diesel-engined vans currently on UK roads will attract penalty charges when entering a Clean Air Zone (CAZs) because they do not meet the required emission standards, according to analysis by Manheim.

Commercial vehicle remarketing company Manheim has produced a free guide – 'Clean Air Zones and the UK Van Operator: What You Need to Know' – which explains what the incoming CAZs are and how they could affect businesses.

In April, London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) was the first urban centre in the UK to levy a charge on non-compliant vehicles. CAZs are being introduced in 2020 in two major UK cities (Birmingham and Leeds) and similar schemes will follow by 2021 in other cities and towns mandated by government to tackle local air quality issues. According to Manheim's data analysis, around 3.3 million vans do not currently meet the ULEZ/CAZ exemption criteria.

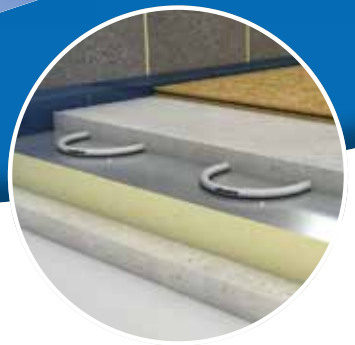
In London and Birmingham, the only vans exempt from ULEZ/CAZ penalty charges will be those with Euro 6 diesel engines, Euro 4 petrol engines, or battery electric vehicles. However, it is estimated that 99% of vans in operation today are diesel powered. Birmingham City Council has indicated non-compliant vans entering its CAZ will face an £8 daily charge from January 2020.

To download Manheim's free guide 'Clean Air Zones and the UK Van Operator: What You Need to Know', visit: www.Manheim.co.uk/CleanAirZones

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Clean growth update – turning down the heat!

“The heating industry has a vital role to play. It is essential for installers, suppliers and manufacturers in the coal and oil sectors to show leadership” – BEIS Call for Evidence on Heat in Buildings

Decarbonising the harmful emissions from heating is a massive challenge. MASSIVE. Paint that word large! Better still, light it up in neon technicolour letters ten feet high to really get the message across (except don't because that would contribute to emissions too).

Because other energy sectors will be very difficult to decarbonise – for example, heavy industry – almost all the greenhouse gas emissions from heating must be removed if the UK's overall targets are to be achieved. That makes heat emissions a crucial priority for the government and its Clean Growth Strategy, published in October 2017, set out the level of ambition required (the Irish government has also published its own strategy document and faces

similar challenges). Since then, quite a lot has been happening and the likely next steps are beginning to take shape.

Key priority

Reducing heat demand and improving energy efficiency is a key priority for all homes, and the government is committed to moving as many homes to EPC band C as possible by 2035, and fuel poor homes by 2030. It's not clear yet how this will happen but after ECO3 finishes in 2022, it is likely that new incentive and support schemes will be set up.

Insulation measures have fallen 95% since 2012, so there's a significant need to step up activity in this area

and this will also have a positive impact on reducing fuel poverty.

For new homes, the aim is to dramatically improve their thermal efficiency, through a combination of improved regulation and by mandating low carbon heating. As a clear statement of the government's ambition, the chancellor announced in his spring statement that fossil fuels are to be banned in new builds from 2025.

For on-gas grid homes it's still unclear whether low carbon gas – probably hydrogen – or a switch to electric heating will be the best way forward. Lots of research work is underway to prove whether hydrogen is a viable option and, given that the gas grid is worth at least 40 billion pounds,

Challenges for the decarbonisation of heat: local gas demand vs electricity supply Winter 2017/2018

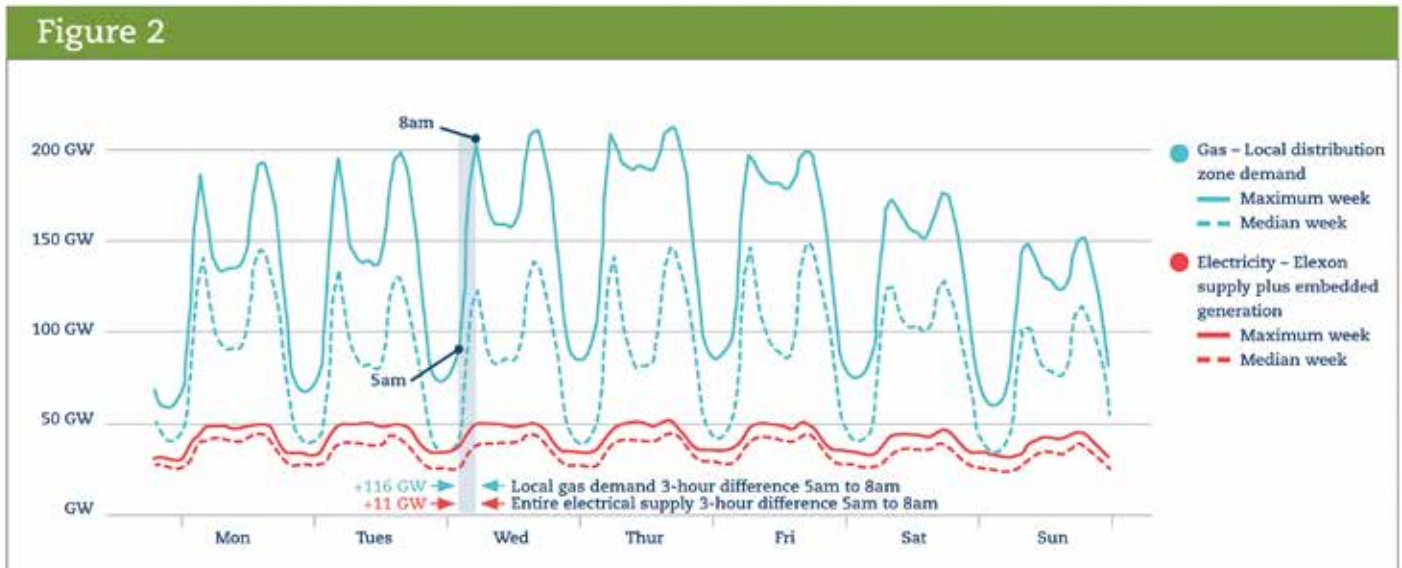
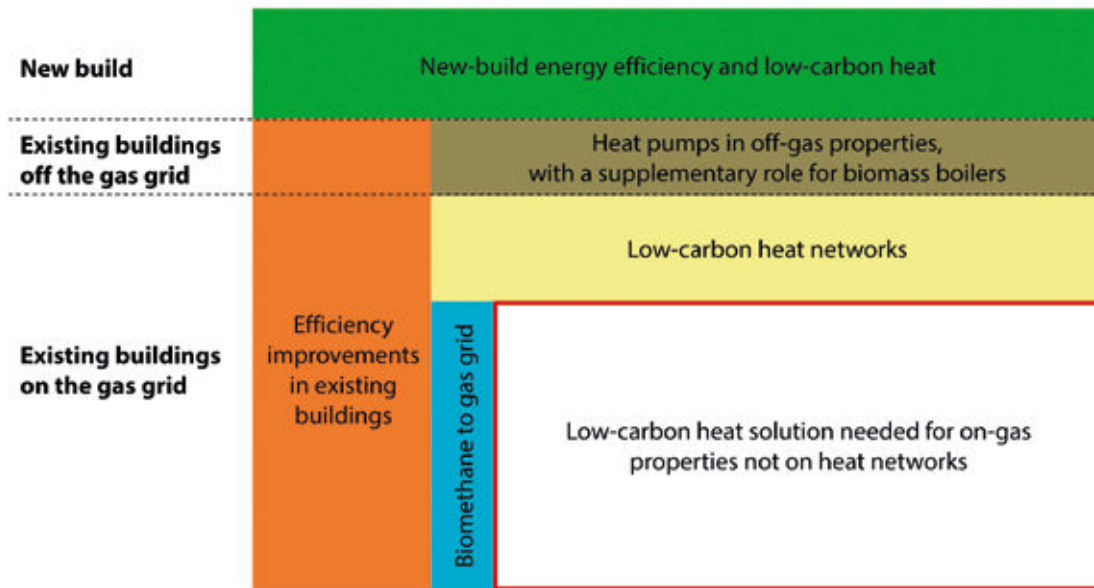


Figure 2: Britain's local gas demand and electrical system supply - median and maximum demand weeks. The week dating 22nd to 28th January is the median demand week for the 2017–2018 heating season. The week dating 26th February to 5th March represents the maximum demand week of the 2017–2018 heating season.

Figure 2.2. Low-regrets measures and the remaining challenge for existing buildings on the gas grid



Notes: The sizes of the blocks broadly reflect the scale of emissions reduction, but do not do so precisely. Some potential for heat networks will be in new-build and off the gas grid, rather than all on-grid as presented. Biomass for heat may also play a role in hard-to-insulate rural properties.

The Committee for Climate Change – CCC: Next steps for UK Heat Policy (2016) www.theccc.org.uk/publication/next-steps-for-uk-heat-policy/

it's worth the effort to see if it can be retained. Whichever option is chosen it will lead to significant changes for home owners, so the government is taking time to make the right decision.

BEIS (the government department responsible for tackling climate change in the UK) spent much of 2018 gathering evidence to find the best way to develop a low carbon pathway for off-grid homes – which have been categorised as a more urgent priority.

While heat pumps remain the preferred replacement for fossil fuels such as oil and coal, BEIS seems to have concluded that all low carbon technologies have both good points and significant challenges. For this reason, it decided that further research was needed on biofuels and direct electric heating. Studies were commissioned and these should report this spring. OFTEC has commissioned its own research which was completed in April and will be revealed at our annual conference in June. The thermal efficiency of off-grid homes is also significantly worse than on-grid, so prioritising them for improvements is essential. It is expected that a government consultation on a range of options will take place later this year.

Alongside research, BEIS has also been meeting industry representatives as they develop their thinking on the best way ahead. OFTEC has been heavily involved in these discussions, which have been crucial for two reasons:

1. they have helped our industry to focus on the challenge and the action we must collectively take;
2. it has helped convince BEIS that we are serious about this issue, and that low carbon liquid fuels deserve serious consideration.

Electricity capacity

If you have read to this point, you will have realised that electric heating – using heat pumps and possibly direct electric – is being considered as a solution for both existing on and off-grid homes and new build. Electricity is also seen as crucial for transport, and the government has announced targets for the deployment of electric vehicles. The key question is – will there be enough of the stuff?

It's worth remembering that the electricity itself must be largely renewable if carbon targets are to be met. Currently, the UK only meets around 50% of its electricity demand from renewable sources (including nuclear) so there needs to be a huge increase in renewable generation, combined with clever demand

management and battery storage.

Whether it can be done is a huge uncertainty, particularly as the grid must be able to withstand significant spikes in demand, particularly during periods when renewable generation will be low – for example, cold, dark, windless winter days. The need to have enough capacity to withstand winter weather – including one in twenty-year extreme weather events – is also essential if electrification is to be a viable way forward.

While the Committee for Climate Change favour this approach, the government may conclude that it will be safer not to place too much burden on the electric grid and that a more balanced strategy is preferable, utilising a range of energy sources. This is where hydrogen and biofuels – biomass, bioliquids and bioLPG – could have an important role to play and the advantages of this approach have been noted in recent German energy studies.

Whatever path is taken, significant changes to the way we heat our homes are likely, and an expanded role for electric heating is certain. With the clock already ticking, the government will need to have their preferred strategy in place by the early 2020s at the latest. Watch this space for more details...

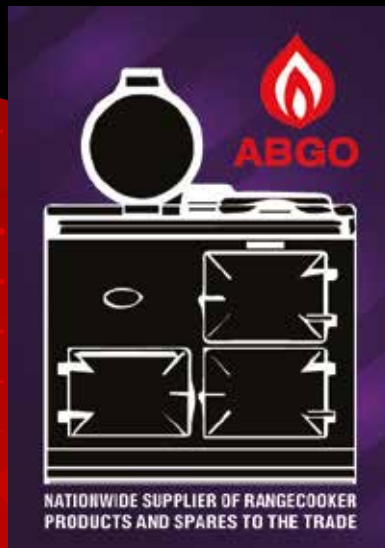
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Survey exposes the temperature tinkerers!

The weather may still be wintery but suspicions about room temperature tinkering are leaving many households hot under the collar, according to new research by boiler manufacturer Worcester Bosch.

The study of 2,000 Brits shows that 70% disagree with their partner over the room temperature, leading to a rise in 'temperature tinkerers', people who sneakily tinker with the thermostat without telling their partner.

Temperature tinkering happens regularly, with the room temperature being changed an average of four times per week, with a quarter (26%) of respondents adjusting the room temperature daily!

Men's suspicions run high

Men are the most likely to feel a victim of temperature tinkering: almost two thirds (63%) claim their stealthy partners fiddle with the thermostat when they're not looking, whereas just

47% of women accuse their partner of doing the same.

The research shows that men actually prefer a warmer room temperature.

For men, the perfect temperature is approximately 24 degrees whereas for women the preferred average room temperature came in slightly cooler at 23 degrees, debunking the myth that women prefer it warmer.

Victoria Billings, Director of Marketing from Worcester Bosch, said: "This study goes to show how often the room temperature is discussed, debated and tinkered with in the home.

"The UK might be a nation of secret temperature tinkerers who like the temperature a few degrees hotter, but we would recommend that you stick to our suggested 21 degrees. Hopefully this will reduce arguments across the UK and help identify those naughty tinkerers!"

Williams wins "Best Company" accolade

Williams & Co – the nationwide plumbing and heating merchants with 36 trade counters and three regional fulfillment centres across England, have been awarded the status of being amongst the Sunday Times '100 Best Company to work for'. The company began in Portsmouth in 1972 as a local plumbing and heating merchant.

"This is truly epic news for us, and – we hope – the industry. We're working ceaselessly to make Williams & Co the best plumber's merchant in Britain for our chosen customer type, and the best employer in our sector," says Williams managing director, Ray Stafford.

A spokesperson for the Sunday Times commented: "I would like to congratulate Williams & Co on their achievement of a two star accreditation status and being named as one of the UK's Best Companies to Work for.



"Best Companies have been producing the accreditation standard since 2006 to acknowledge excellence in the workplace. We are proud that organisations like Williams & Co focus on their employees and have been rewarded with an engaged workforce who tell us that they're a best company to work for."



Andrew Martin

Schiedel expands its nationwide team

Schiedel Chimney Systems has welcomed its new sales manager for the South West and South Wales, Andrew Martin. With more than 30 years' experience in the plumbing and heating sector, most recently at Wilo, Andrew is regarded as a valuable addition to Schiedel's growing team.

Andrew is responsible for sales and technical support for installers, distributors and retailers in both the commercial and domestic sectors, specialising in the residential market. He joins Colin Wood, recently employed to look after customers in the north, focusing on the newest addition to Schiedel's commercial range, Ontop Metaloterm.

Phil Lowe, sales director for Schiedel, said: "The Schiedel range has expanded this year thanks to our dual brand strategy with Ontop, allowing us to broaden our offering across domestic and commercial markets. To deliver the enhanced variety of products and look after an increasing customer base we need more reps nationwide. Andrew and Colin come with a wealth of experience – both great additions to the Schiedel team."

www.schiedel.co.uk



Colin Wood

Oxford launches world-first low carbon “Energy Superhub”

The city of Oxford will pioneer a model of rapid transport and heat electrification that can be rolled out to other cities to reduce air pollution and support government plans to decarbonise the UK economy.

Energy Superhub Oxford will demonstrate an ecosystem of practical decarbonisation approaches by applying machine learning and grid scale energy storage infrastructure to bypass network constraints. The project aims to reduce emissions and improve public health by accelerating a switch to electric vehicles and decarbonising heating for homes and buildings to support Oxford City Council’s journey to zero carbon.

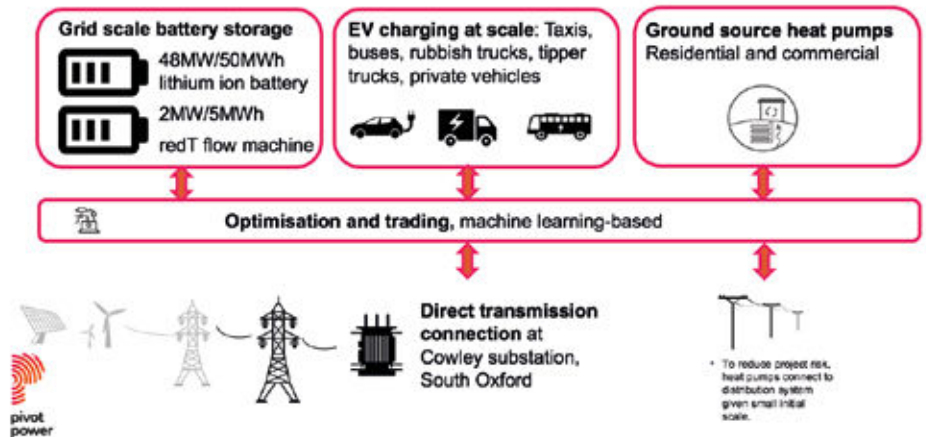
Smart software will manage the energy storage, electric vehicle charging and heat pumps, to reduce strain on the grid and allow it to accommodate more renewables. The project aims to save 20,000 tonnes of CO2 per year by 2021, rising to 44,000 tonnes per year by 2032. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will contribute c.£10 million to support the £41 million project.

From 2020 to 2021 Kensa Contracting will design and install ground source heat pump systems in 300 homes using an innovative shared ground loop system that sees each household with an individual Kensa heat pump connected to a larger ambient temperature district heating network. Running costs for this type of system compare well to mains gas boilers, with half the carbon footprint. The optimisation platform is expected to cut heating bills and carbon emissions by a further 25%, developing a tailored plan for each home based on its heat profile and taking advantage of time-of-use tariffs to shift heating demand away from expensive, high carbon times and maximise the use of low carbon, cheap, off-peak power.

Significant carbon savings

Dr. Matthew Trehwella, managing director of Kensa Contracting, said: “Ground source heat pumps are a tried and tested technology that have been shown to produce

Energy Superhub Oxford optimises power direct from the transmission system



significant carbon savings, low running costs and zero point of use air pollution.

“By using smart controls that learn the occupant’s preferences and building heat physics, it will be possible to avoid the peaks of grid strain and shift load to the times when the grid can best accommodate it. Better still, these times also have lower carbon and lower cost electricity which further increases the appeal of ground source heat pumps. This combination means that ground source heat pumps transform from being a potential strain on the grid to becoming part of the solution. When added to the battery storage and electric vehicle charging elements of this project, it creates a powerful energy system that is fit and ready for a low carbon future.”

The project will see Pivot Power install the world’s largest hybrid lithium ion / vanadium redox flow machine energy storage system (50 MW). It will combine the high-power capabilities of a lithium-ion battery with 2 MW / 5 MWh of the heavy cycling, non-degrading characteristics of vanadium redox flow machines, supplied by UK energy storage experts, redT energy.

The use of this technology, combined with the Kensa shared loop ground source heat pump technologies, will make the Energy Superhub Oxford project one of the largest examples

of real-world smart local energy systems across energy vectors. The University of Oxford will evaluate the performance of the energy storage system, and assess the environmental, social and economic impacts of the project on local stakeholders.

Smart energy overhaul

Energy and clean growth minister, Claire Perry said: “Oxford is set for a smart energy overhaul, with these projects aiming to meet the city’s energy needs through greener, low carbon technologies. Backed by government funding, this has the potential to completely change the way people go about their daily lives – from going to work on an electric bus to using the heat rising from the earth to heat your home without gas.

“These projects are an example of our modern industrial strategy in action, helping companies and consumers seize the opportunity of the global shift to a cleaner, greener, more flexible energy system.”

The University of Oxford, together with a UK university-led energy revolution research consortium, dubbed EnergyREV and the Energy Systems Catapult “Energy Revolution Integration Service” (ERIS), will study the project to produce reports and recommendations that will support the rollout of similar initiatives elsewhere in the UK, and around the world.

Concerns over lack of progress in home energy efficiency

The latest edition of the English Housing Survey (EHS) for 2017-18, published recently by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, reveals that after 20 years of progress, improvements to home energy efficiency have ground to a halt. The average SAP EPC rating of homes in England remains at 62 (equivalent to EPC band D), unchanged since 2015.

OFTEC CEO, Paul Rose, comments: "OFTEC has not seen the detailed figures that sit behind this headline, but we know that the average SAP rating for English rural homes in 2016-17 was significantly lower than the overall average – just 45 – equivalent to an EPC rating of E. In October, BEIS minister, Claire Perry, stated in reply to a parliamentary question, that only 3% of homes that used oil heating in Great Britain were in EPC band A-C, while 97% (1,138,000) were rated D-G. We remain very concerned

at the lack of progress in this area.

"Rural homes have continually missed out on government support to improve their energy efficiency, and they should now be high on the government's priority list. However, given that financial support for energy efficiency improvements has fallen steadily in recent years, it's now right that we question the government's commitment to this vital issue."

Tragic consequences

He continues: "We are particularly concerned about households in rural areas and what the bald statistics do not reveal is the misery and tragic consequences of cold, poorly insulated homes. Fuel poverty in rural areas is unacceptably high and the excess winter death statistics are a national scandal, standing at 50,100 for last winter in England and Wales according to the latest ONS figures.



Paul Rose, OFTEC CEO

We understand that around a third of these deaths may be directly related to cold homes, which emphasises the need for urgent action.

"Looking further ahead, if the government is to meet its targets to reduce the harmful emissions that contribute to climate change, it must reduce energy demand. Improving the energy efficiency of the UK's housing stock will be crucial if we are to make rapid progress in this area. Most of the easy wins have already been done and deep retrofit costs for hard-to-treat rural homes can often cost tens of thousands of pounds. With massive pressure on public finances, we will need to quickly find and adopt the most practical and cost-effective solutions to meet these challenges – something that will be far from simple to achieve."



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Liquid fuel “is a fuel fit for future domestic heating”

Before looking forward it does no harm to look back – from centuries of using coal or peat on the humble open fire in Ireland, fast forward to the second half of the 20th century when central heating became the preferred option (for those who could afford it). In the 1970/80's oil was the fuel of choice and thousands of solid fuel 'link up' systems became the norm in Ireland. Natural gas was introduced in the Republic (initially from Kinsale) in the 1980s, and finally in Northern Ireland in 1996.

Liquid fuel is still the premier choice for home heating in the Republic of Ireland with 40% of homes using oil (686,000), compared to 34% using natural gas. Similarly, in Northern Ireland 68% of homes (530,000) use oil as their main fuel.

Looking at progress, an oil boiler installed in Ireland in the 1970's or 1980's offered around 70% efficiency, and, in many cases was fitted to a single pipe system with no separate hot water, zoning or thermostatic control. Today's condensing boilers offer efficiencies of up to 94%, with zoning and thermostatic control the norm and consumers can even control the heating from their smartphone!

Many of our buildings are now better insulated and more comfortable. Building regulations push to further increase energy efficiency and bring down actual heating demand. Now customers can install smaller, more efficient condensing appliances.

To meet governments' future climate obligations, the twin priorities are to further reduce our demand for heat and to supply that heat with technologies that are smarter, cleaner, highly efficient and, increasingly, from renewable energy sources. This presents many choices and challenges – especially for the off-grid sector. UK and Ireland's current focus is on moving domestic home heat to electric heating (air source heat pump) but for older properties this would be extremely costly. Over 90% of the Republic's off-grid properties are below BER C1 – these homes are not suitable for moving to



Glen Fuels has been topping up tanks in Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford for more than 30 years

ASHP without significant disruption and expense for the homeowner. Recent research indicates that costs for upgrading a house to make it suitable for a heat pump could be in the region of €40,000 to €60,000. (www.superhomes.ie)

Recent research indicates that costs for upgrading a house to make it suitable for a heat pump could be in the region of €40,000 to €60,000

At OFTEC, we believe that electric heating for existing off-grid housing stock is impractical due to the prohibitive costs. While grants are available, they are insufficient and would still require substantial cash input from consumers. Most upgrades or replacements happen when the current heating appliance breaks down, indicating that heating upgrades are not high on consumers 'wish-lists'.

So, what is the answer?

Simply put, OFTEC believes the solution is to decarbonise the fuel and utilise the existing heating systems that are already in 1.2million homes across Ireland. Further efficiencies could be gained by promoting better use of controls and additional insulation. This would cost only a

fraction of the expense of making a house ready for an air source heat pump.

For example, if all 686,000 homes in the Republic moved to a B30 biofuel (30% FAME/70% Kerosene mix) the carbon saving would be twice the size of DCCAE's proposal to move 170,000 oil fired homes to air source heat pump by 2030. In addition, the cost benefit of replacing existing oil boilers with new condensing oil boilers is nearly twice as good as replacement with air source heat pumps, assuming fabric thermal upgrades in both cases.

So, is OFTEC anti heat pumps?

Not at all! A heat pump can be a very effective heating solution for a modern, well insulated house or for houses that currently have more expensive heating systems (such as solid fuel or electric).

However, it does not make economic sense to propose the widespread replacement of oil boilers with heat pumps.

So, in conclusion, the liquid fuelled sector has moved forwards in leaps and bounds in terms of efficiency, comfort and controllability in the last 40-50 years. A new biofuel blend would reduce carbon emissions and help government reach its targets, making us just as relevant in the 21st century.



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Warmflow becomes a superhero for Belfast cancer charity!

Local charity Friends of the Cancer Centre recently called on people across Northern Ireland to grab their cape and become a superhero to take on its 190ft abseil down Belfast City Hospital's famous yellow tower block.

The charity's "Take on the Tower" abseil took place during the middle of April and once again, Northern Ireland-based heating company Warmflow extended their support to the charity by sponsoring the event, meaning that even more of the money raised could be used to support local families affected by cancer.

Brian Beattie, marketing manager at Warmflow Engineering Company Ltd., said: "Warmflow has been supporting Friends of the Cancer Centre for a number of years and we are delighted

to be involved with the Take on the Tower abseil. The superhero theme for this year's event was a great idea and we encouraged people from across Northern Ireland to register and take on the challenge of abseiling down Northern Ireland's fourth tallest building. All the money raised from the abseil will make a huge difference to Friends of the Cancer Centre."

Friends of the Cancer Centre, based at the heart of the Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital, is one of the leading cancer charities in Northern Ireland, working to support cancer patients and their families through key projects in the areas of clinical care, patient comforts and research.



Brian Beattie, marketing manager at Warmflow Engineering and Claire Hogarth, fundraising manager at Friends of the Cancer Centre, don their superhero costumes as they launch the Cancer Take on the Tower Abseil, which gave daredevils the opportunity to abseil 190ft down Belfast City Hospital's famous yellow tower block

Claire Hogarth, fundraising manager at Friends of the Cancer Centre said: "This was our fifth Take on the Tower Abseil and this year we were delighted to have Warmflow on board as our event sponsor. Our superhero theme is a great chance for people to grab their cape and have a bit of fun when taking on one of Northern Ireland's most iconic buildings!"

www.warmflow.co.uk

"Tick tank off your list" – OFTEC's latest campaign

How many times do you go and service a customer's boiler and then look for the oil tank? How often is it hidden behind screens, foliage or half 'buried' at the bottom of the garden, possibly non-compliant with building regulations, forlorn and forgotten.

Well, it's time to change customers' view of their oil tank. It is an important and integral part of their home heating system and should be treated with the same care and attention as any other part of the system. This year, in Ireland, we are focusing on safe oil storage and will be running a media campaign encouraging consumers to 'Tick the Tank off Your List', encouraging them to ensure their home heating system is 'fit for purpose'.

A tank 'health check' will be a prominent message throughout the consumer campaign along with the message of 'bunded is best'. Too many tanks are past their 'use-by' date and need replacement. We need to make this transaction both painless and seamless for liquid fuel consumers with installers working alongside manufacturers to ensure consumers remain with liquid fuel.



Potential disaster

We need to reinforce the message of safe fuel storage, balanced with the potential environmental disaster that can occur should a single skin tank give way. Many homeowners are unaware that, whilst their household insurance may cover them for escape and/or damage from an oil spill, it may not cover the replacement of any garden/top soil removed for remediation works. However, rather than focus on the negatives, industry needs to be positive and proactive, helping consumers keep their heating fuel safe and ready to advise consumers on what they need to do.

Most consumers may currently be unaware of what 'bunded' refers to or the benefits it presents. Our campaign aims to change that!

A simple explanation of a tank-within-a-tank approach and the advice that, 'even if your inner tank suffers a leak, the oil will not damage the surrounding environment' is an easy concept to understand and will help homeowners recognise the benefits. The high-level of safety offered by bunded tanks means that not only is the fuel less likely to leak out, but the oil is also harder to remove by fuel thieves.

The 'it's better off bunded' 2019 campaign will include merchants' posters, flyers, a consumer survey, fuel distributor post cards and leaflets for technicians to give to their liquid fuel customers to provide advice and information on the many benefits of bunded tanks.

So, next time you are servicing a boiler, why not take some time to discuss the condition and suitability of the customer's current oil storage? Once the benefits are fully understood, customers will embrace better and safer storage and the market will be transformed. The environment will see clear benefits through less pollution, while the industry will see benefits in terms of better installation standards and fewer warranty issues. Good news all round!

Registered technicians in demand in ROI as local authorities seek compliance in rented sector

All landlords have a legal duty to ensure that their rented properties comply with certain minimum physical standards. These minimum standards are currently set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017.

The one of interest to us is 'regulation 12' that states: 'the landlord must ensure that all gas, oil and electricity installations are maintained in good repair, and safe working order and that every room has adequate ventilation and both natural and artificial lighting'. So how does the Landlord demonstrate that his oil-fired boiler is maintained in good repair and safe working order?

Well it's good news for registered technicians because the guidelines suggest that (for oil) OFTEC control documentation (CD/12, CD/11 or TI/133D) completed by an OFTEC registered technician is a suitable way for landlords to record that an oil-fired boiler meets the standards. We would encourage technicians to use the CD/12 (available from OFTEC Direct)

as this is designed specifically for rented accommodation.

Plenty of work!

We are seeing more requests from local authorities who recognise the OFTEC control documentation as a good sign of compliance and who are asking for details of local registered technicians for oil and now, solid fuel inspections. If you have a solid fuel qualification, please contact registration@oftec.org so we can add this to your registration and include this service in your free online database listing.

The ROI government expects councils to inspect at least 25% of all private rented accommodation (each year) by 2020. The Central Statistics Office indicated that there are 500,000 rented properties in the Republic (2016) which means 125,000 inspections per annum – so there is plenty of work!

If you have not already introduced yourself to your local authority and



advised them of your availability and scopes of registration, it's a really good time to do so and could win you more work!

The guidelines can be viewed online at: bit.ly/rented-standards-guidelines (or scan the QR code to view)



Job opportunities at OFTEC Compliance Technical Officer

Due to continued growth, we are looking for a new compliance team member. This is a fantastic opportunity to join the team at OFTEC's Ipswich HQ and offers scope for career progression.

Great customer service skills are a must along with an eye for detail and good organisational skills. You will be able to put your knowledge of the liquid fuel heating industry to good use and your analysis of non-compliance trends could help influence the wider industry.

Full training and ongoing professional development will be provided for the right candidate.

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The closing date is 31st May 2019

For an informal chat about the role or to request an application form and job description, please contact Andrew Peirson (Office and HR Manager) on 01473 618 552 or apeirson@oftec.org

OFTEC is a leading trade organisation for the heating and cooking industries in the UK and Republic of Ireland. We are committed to the highest standards and operate a competent person registration scheme for heating technicians. See www.oftec.org for more details.



Thousands of prizes won in Grant's installer promotion

Grant UK's largest ever installer promotion, launched last summer for members of its G1 installer scheme, has been deemed a huge success by the company with thousands of prizes being delivered to installers during the last six months of the year.

The 'Big G1 Giveaway' commenced in the summer with a prize draw taking place every month between July and December. G1 installers had to register an eligible product via their portal or G1 Click app to be automatically entered into a prize draw. Each month, fifty top prizes were awarded with all the remaining entrants receiving a runner-up prize.

During the promotion, more than 3,000 prizes were sent to G1 installers throughout the country. In each draw, ten Kane 255 analyser kits, ten Fill and Flush machine packs, and 30 Rhino 3m pipe carriers were available to win. For those who did not win one of the top prizes, a runner-up prize was sent which varied each month, from voltage testers and tools through to winter van packs and notepad folders. The top prizes, worth up to £400, were all hand delivered by Grant UK's sales team.

Guaranteed to win

"The 'Big G1 Giveaway' certainly lived up to its name," says the company. "With so many prizes given away to so many G1 installers, the promotion served its purpose to reward active scheme members. If a G1 installer registered an eligible product, they were guaranteed to be a winner and, if they registered products every month of the promotion, they were guaranteed to win six prizes!"

Although the 'Big G1 Giveaway' has finished, the G1 installer scheme continues to offer a wide range of benefits to engineers. First launched in 2011, the scheme enables installers to activate extended guarantees on the Grant products they install as well as accessing other benefits including training and marketing support. Open to engineers who work with oil and/or renewable products, the G1 scheme provides homeowners with a network of installers who can install and maintain their Grant products. For more details about Grant UK's G1 installer scheme, visit: www.grantuk.com/professional/g1-scheme.

Hounsfield launches wall-hung boiler range

Oil-fired domestic boiler manufacturer, Hounsfield Boilers, has launched new models extending the range of its Tuscan oil boilers.

The company's new Tuscan wall-mounted heat-only oil-fired boilers are available in two models, the internal and the external, with an output of 12-19kW. Both models are equipped with the life-long aircraft grade stainless steel Teflon cored flexible hose, that will not rot or degrade; a Bentone BF1 burner; plus thicker insulation to retain heat and reduce noise. The new external wall-hung models also include a frost thermostat which senses water temperature rather than air, a tough weather proof casing and a compact size of 640mm x 760mm x 320mm.

Managing director, Andrew Hounsfield, commented: "We've designed our boilers to be the most cost-effective, durable and easy to install on the market. All of our Tuscan boilers come with a five-year no quibble warranty and all come with everything in the box – even the masonry drill bit for wall-mounted boilers – so there will be no need for dashes down the merchants to get a part.

"We're really proud that our customers keep returning to Hounsfield as they know they can rely on the quality of the design and manufacture as well as know the boilers are incredibly easy to install and service."

He added: "Every boiler undergoes over fourteen quality checks during manufacture, including the burner which is test fired and is pre-bled with kerosene; the oil filter and fire valve kit comes pre-assembled – features designed to save time and hassle for the installer."

Hounsfield Boilers was set up in 2008 by Andrew Hounsfield after 30 years in the boiler industry, having worked for some of the biggest boiler companies in the UK. With an engineering background his aim was to design an affordable, high-performance, high-specification oil-fired boiler that was easy to install.

Hounsfield boilers can be ordered via merchants or direct from the company.

www.hounsfieldboilers.co.uk



Andrew Hounsfield with the new Tuscan wall-hung boiler

Warmflow launches new product range in Frankfurt

Warmflow Engineering showcased its new product range at the ISH heating trade show in Frankfurt, Germany, during March.

ISH is widely recognised as Europe's most important heating tradeshow and was selected by Warmflow as the perfect showcase to launch its new range of oil and renewable heating solutions to the international domestic heating sector.

During ISH, Warmflow launched:

- **Air Water Heat Pump:** extremely compact and highly efficient.
- **Biomass Boiler:** designed for outdoor (-21°C) and indoor use.
- **Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP):** an advance, high-efficiency GSHP.
- **"Insta" Oil Boiler:** High efficiency oil boiler providing instant hot water without the need for thermal storage.

"Each of these products highlights Warmflow technological leadership and commitment to redefine what is possible," said sales director, Oliver Cormican. "While innovation is a key ingredient of our success, we also place huge importance on making our products easy to use and great value for money. A value proposition that we believe will win us new business at ISH."



Warmflow markets its heating solutions all over the world and has an international distribution network in countries as diverse as Greece, the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark, France, USA and New Zealand.

www.warmflow.co.uk

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Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management at Worcester Bosch

Hydrogen gas is being hailed as a potential saviour for heating homes in an environmentally friendly way. But what about people off the gas grid who use oil as their heating fuel? Martyn Bridges, director of technical communication and product management at Worcester Bosch, explains why biofuel from waste is a potential solution, what current research has revealed, and what this all means for installers.

Why we need to 'green' our oils

So-called high carbon heating fuels were the first targets during government discussions around how to decarbonise heating and hot water. Coal and oil were named as two such fuels. Whilst we would beg to disagree with oil's inclusion, nevertheless it was what was decided. So, what do you do? There are two choices. You either take oil-fired appliances out of sale or you 'green' the oil.

With regard to greening oil, we looked back to 2008-9 when a pretty extensive field trial was undertaken in East Anglia using biofuels. They used up to a 50% blend of FAME oil (fatty acid methyl esters) – essentially it was waste cooking oils, such as chip shop-type oils – and some virgin oils as well. It was discovered this worked quite well in an oil-fired boiler.

Why finding a waste oil source is key

Any current solution to decarbonising heating and water needs to be a green version. This means it must come from a non-crop-based source – a waste source, essentially. This is wholly technically possible and we think this will roll out in perhaps two or three stages, with a blend of bio and kerosene oil first of all, perhaps by the mid-2020s, and eventually a 100% bio oil, probably by the mid to late 2030s.

In the UK we use kerosene oil in our oil-fired boilers – we are one of the few countries in the world that do this. This happens to be the same product that's used in the aviation industry and there is a desire to decarbonise that as well. So it works rather well: if we can decarbonise flight transportation we will, by association, decarbonise oil fired heating and hot water.

What green bio fuels may look like

Some of the players in the aviation fuel industry are looking at new technology and trying to get their bio oil not from crops or virgin oils but from industrial gas – waste sugars, used car tyres, etc. The good news is that there are very positive indications that bio oil can be converted from landfill-type waste and used again to heat people's homes.

It's early days, of course, but the appliances we used on our biofuel trials are virtually the same as those used to burn normal kerosene oil. We had some slight component changes – long-life oil hoses being one of them and oil

pumps with slightly different seals – but generally speaking it was all very similar. This means there will be no great skills shortage – and no great changes required to the existing heating system or to the property.

What next at Worcester Bosch?

We will have an example of a biofuelled boiler up and running at our Clay Cross factory during 2019. This will be used as a demonstration to the policy makers, engineers and installers just to show what can be done.

Stop press...

In May, Worcester Bosch launched its new **Greenstar 8000 Lifestyle range** – presently gas-fired only, the range has been specifically designed to offer more choice to both installers and customers. Backed by years of development and direct feedback from hundreds of installers, the new Greenstar 8000 Lifestyle includes two models: Life and Style. The Greenstar 8000 Life is a direct replacement for the CDi Classic which has been installed in well over one million homes whilst the Greenstar 8000 Style is the company's most stylish boiler to date. Available in high-gloss black or white, this boiler has all the benefits of the 8000 Life, with the addition of an aesthetic look and feel, changing how homeowners perceive a boiler to be and perform.

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk



The Worcester Bosch Greenstar Heatslave II combi

Grant Engineering enjoys another successful ISH exhibition

At the beginning of March, Grant Engineering attended the ISH exhibition in Messe Frankfurt. ISH is an internationally recognised trade fair focusing on the responsible management of water and energy in buildings. At this year's show, 2,532 exhibitors from 57 different countries were present and nearly 50% of the 190,000 visitors had flown in from outside Germany to attend.

This is the second ISH exhibition that Grant Engineering has attended after exhibiting for the first time at ISH in 2017. This year, Grant had a larger stand which enabled the company to display more products to audiences from the latest modulating oil boiler technology through to biomass boilers and air source heat pumps including hybrids. All three models within the Grant Solo Fan Convecter range, including the Hideaway, were also incorporated into the 150m² stand enabling visitors to view Grant's new and expanding heat emitter range.

Product concept

Also on display on the stand was an exciting new product concept which will further extend Grant's



hybrid technology offering in the future. A prototype of this product took to the centre of the stand and over the course of the show's five days, it attracted much attention. Set to revolutionise the way in which renewable energy can be incorporated into existing home heating, this exciting product once again represents how Grant Engineering is at the forefront of innovative product research and development in the heating industry.

Representatives from throughout the group were on hand to speak to visitors of the Grant stand. Neil Sawers, Grant UK's technical manager, was one of the members of staff who

attended the show. "ISH has always been a landmark exhibition for the sector," comments Neil. "It has established itself as a global event where companies strive to showcase their market leading products and ideas. ISH 2019 did not disappoint with high footfalls throughout the days and it once again brought together some of the industry's most exciting innovations and concepts which are set to shape the future of heating."

The organisers have confirmed that ISH 2021 will return to Frankfurt from 22nd – 26th March 2021.

www.grantuk.com.

Firebird launch VIP Installer app

Firebird have launched a new app which enables installers to access information on the company's VIP Installer account-based system whilst on the move.

Once an account is set up, installers can register boiler installations and services without the need to re-enter their own details each time. Not only does this provide an easy to access on-line history for the installer, says the company, but it also acts as a handy reference guide for when boiler services are due, ensuring

compliance with warranty terms and conditions. This is backed up by an email notification system to both the installer and homeowner, one month prior to the service date to act as a reminder.

Registering with Firebird to become a VIP Installer allows installers to offer customers a 10-year warranty. Firebird's range of installation manuals can also be viewed or downloaded via the app.

Commenting on the launch of the new app, David Hall, Firebird's UK director said: "We are very excited by the launch of Firebird's new app which adds another dimension to our VIP Installers area. Designed with the professional in mind, we are convinced this technology will provide an invaluable management tool for the heating industry."

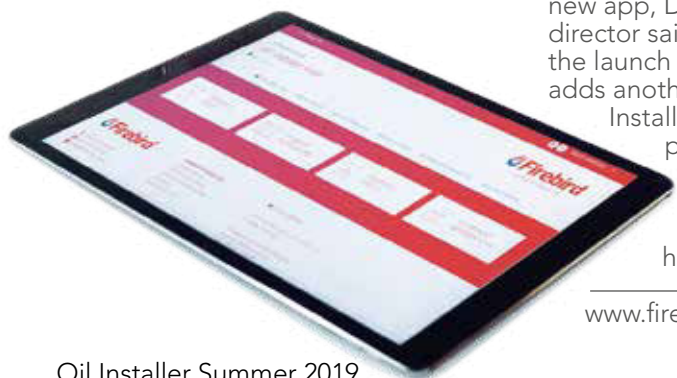
www.firebird.uk.com

Warmflow Connect launched to reward installers

Boiler manufacturers Warmflow have launched their new Warmflow Connect installer scheme, designed to offer a range of unique benefits to installers who purchase Warmflow products.

Installers who purchase, install and register any Warmflow product can now benefit from the exclusive reward programme, which offers the opportunity to collect points for every purchase made to redeem against prizes including power tools, test analysers and free boilers. Registered members can also benefit from bespoke advice, lead generation and extended warranties.

For more information on Warmflow Connect, contact the sales office on tel: 01952 607750, or visit: www.warmflow.co.uk/connect



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5

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Worcester reveal their new feline ambassador!

Without pussy-footing around, Worcester Bosch have announced that Remy, the cat, is the winner of a nationwide competition, The Purr-fect Role.

The Purr-fect Role was launched with the aim of finding a feline friend to help with the ever-growing busy schedule of 'Worcester the Cat' – the star of Worcester Bosch's current television advertisement.

Last October, Worcester Bosch launched The Purr-fect Role campaign, which saw nearly five thousand stunning 'catppllicants' apply to become the organisation's latest ambassador and reach the top of the pussy cat pedestal. The astonishing purr-ize (sorry!), included a pampering session, £5,000 prize money and a starring role in the National Love Your Pet photoshoot.

All the 'catppllicants' were showcased in Worcester Bosch's manufacturing facility where the 1850 staff were invited to vote for the winner.

Victoria Billings, director of marketing at Worcester Bosch, said: "Remy fits all the criteria; a friendly feline who has heaps of cat-titude, loves attention and isn't afraid of the limelight.

"We were blown away when nearly 5,000 cats took part in The Purr-fect Role campaign. It was amazing to



see so many cats offering to lend a paw to our star 'Worcester the Cat'. Our products warm the nation and of course, a big part of your home are the pets that bring out its character and warmth."

Remy, a nine-month-old grey English Short Hair, lives with his human, Sarah Branley in Greenhithe, Kent. Sarah said: "I am delighted that Remy has won the competition and I'm very proud of him, particularly as there were so many worthy entries."

HiKOKI launches new battery and cordless tool range

HiKOKI Power Tools has launched its 12V Peak Slide cordless tool series, featuring a new range of powerful, slimline batteries. The new 12V range is aimed at professional users who need to work in confined spaces over long periods of time.

The new range includes the DS12DD brushless cordless driver drill, the DV12DD brushless cordless impact driver drill and the WH12DD brushless cordless impact driver. The compact but powerful batteries make the tools lightweight and easy to handle – none weigh any more than 1.2kg. More tools will be added to the range later in the year.

"The demand for cordless power tools is growing all the time," explains Simon Miller, marketing director for HiKOKI Power Tools UK. "Our research shows that professional users are looking to get the job done anywhere and powerful, compact cordless tools like these give them the power and flexibility to do this."

www.hikoki-powertools.co.uk



Grant UK welcomes new sales manager to the South East

Grant UK has appointed Kevin Fossey as its new area sales manager for the South East, further increasing the level of sales coverage that the company can offer to engineers and merchants.

In March, Kevin joined Grant UK and becomes the twelfth member of the external sales team who provide area support to heating engineers and merchants throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Kevin now covers Hertfordshire, London, Surrey, Kent, West Sussex and East Sussex.

Over the course of his career, Kevin has worked in the heating industry in a variety of roles allowing him to develop a thorough understanding of all aspects of the sector. He completed a plumbing and heating



Kevin Fossey

apprenticeship after leaving school before going on to work on the other side of the counter, working in a local independent merchant for a number of years. He then joined a manufacturer as an account manager, working closely with installers and providing over the counter sales assistance.

Kevin will be on hand to provide sales support on all of Grant's products, including the Vortex and VortexBlue

oil fired boilers, the renewable ranges and their latest heat emitters such as the Uflex underfloor heating range. In addition, he will also be working closely with the G1 installers in his area.

"I am looking forward to representing Grant UK in the South East, where oil is a big influence in the area but where customers are also keen to learn more about innovative renewable technologies," says Kevin. "I am hoping to meet as many of my local customers in the coming weeks, getting to know the installers and merchants and assisting them in any way that I can."

www.grantuk.com



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Tuffa to the rescue with a fire-protected tank!

When it comes to locating an oil tank, a Tuffa fire-protected tank gives you flexibility, says the company.

One of Tuffa's UK customers had an old single skin steel oil tank positioned in a brick outbuilding wall. Although it looked good – being unobtrusive and in keeping with the property – it did not meet current regulations.

When it came to replace the tank, the customer was initially advised that a new tank would have to be made from plastic and positioned in the middle of her small garden to comply. She explained that this would spoil the look of her garden and detract from the ambiance of her cottage. She feared that it might result in her home being more difficult to sell and may affect the value of her property.

However, Tuffa came to the rescue. A Tuffa fire-protected tank can be located adjacent to a building or within an outbuilding, and Tuffa's steel workshop can produce a tank to a specific size, says the company. Once the new tank was installed, the customer said: "The new steel tank enhances my property. Instead of detracting from it, I have invested in a product that is in keeping with a beautiful old house."

Tuffa designed and built a bespoke 600 litre steel, banded fire-protected heating oil tank to her specifications. The tank was manufactured to fit the existing space in the wall.

Tuffa's unique patented fire-protected material is integrally factory-fitted around the inner tank and the tank is delivered with a Local Authority Building Control (LABC) certificate.

The tank was installed by Richard Bates of KK Tanks Ltd. "Tuffa's fire-protected tanks are ideal for the customer and installer," he said. "The fire-protection enables the tank to be placed either alongside the property or in an out-building. It's safe and tidy for the customer and makes



the install easier as there is no additional building work required," he added.

In addition to the plastic banded fire-protected oil tanks, Tuffa has recently released details of a new standard range of slimline steel fire-protected tanks in capacities from 900 litres.

www.tuffa.co.uk

Fire-protected tanks FAQs – see page 39.

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J Seed & Co's fire-protected tanks are unique to the market. Being triple-skinned, these units are one of the safest and secure oil storage systems currently available.

All units have a steel outer with access lid, ensuring the fill point, vents and contents gauges are insulated in the event of a fire. A unit comprises of a banded tank, insulation plus a steel outer, so everything is locked away underneath the insulated secure steel lid.

"We offer plastic inner to keep the weight down," said Wendi Whittle, sales manager. "These are available in a variety of standard sizes from 750 litres

up to 2,500 litres whilst all steel units can be made to any size.

"A wide choice of colours, including any BS or RAL colours, is also available, enabling tanks to be painted to blend

into their surroundings. With a choice of top or bottom outlet and a 30-minute fire rating as standard, a 60-minute fire rating is available if required.

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Firebird host burner training events

Firebird are offering installers and heating engineers the opportunity to receive one-to-one training on the 'Firebird by elco' low NOx burner, designed in conjunction with the company's Envirogreen boiler range.

In a series of events that are being held across the UK, Installers are able to work on actual burners and meet key personnel from the Firebird and elco technical teams. The events also include a technical presentation highlighting the many benefits of Firebird's Envirogreen range, which is followed by a complimentary meal and the opportunity for further discussion. Designed specifically to meet restrictions placed on NOx emission levels, the Envirogreen range at 60mg/kWh far exceeds the stringent 120mg/kWh limit introduced last year.

Commenting on the initiative, David Hall, UK director of Firebird Products Ltd said: "We have been overwhelmed by the success of these events and the thirst for knowledge from the heating industry. By having the opportunity to work on a Firebird by elco low NOx burner, installers are seeing first-hand the numerous benefits this burner and the Envirogreen range has to offer."

www.firebird.uk.com





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OFTEC urges heating businesses not to ignore value of apprenticeships

With news that the overall number of apprenticeships in England has fallen since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017, OFTEC is urging heating businesses not to dismiss this valuable opportunity to upskill and expand their workforces.

According to Department of Education statistics, 375,800 apprenticeships were started during the 2017/18 academic year, a fall of 24.1% on 2016/17 figures and down 26.2% on the number recorded in 2016/15.

This drop is despite the launch of the Apprenticeship Levy, a government initiative designed to encourage businesses to invest in and train new and existing employees by making apprenticeships more affordable.

Government top-up

The levy requires organisations with a wage bill over £3 million to pay an annual 0.5% on their payroll. The funds go into individual Digital Apprenticeship Scheme (DAS) for businesses to spend on approved apprenticeship training and assessments, with government providing a further 10% top up.

Smaller companies, which includes many of the UK's heating businesses, can also benefit from the levy as they only need to pay 10% of qualifying training costs and government will foot the remainder of the bill.

Yet, two years on from the levy launch, only 20% of paying employers have taken on an apprentice – reflected in the falling number of apprenticeship starts – and £3 billion of Apprenticeship Levy funding has been left untouched.

Furthermore, employers have only two years to spend the money in their DAS account, so from April, any unused funds started to return to government on a month by month basis and is no longer available.

OFTEC training manager, David Knipe, comments: "It's no secret that the heating industry, like so many other sectors, is suffering severe skills

shortages. Record employment levels are contributing to an increasingly competitive recruitment market and the issue could be further exacerbated if immigration is restricted under the terms of Brexit.

Necessary skills

"Apprenticeships, particularly when almost wholly funded by government, offer an excellent way for business owners to recruit at low cost and develop the necessary skills within their companies to remain competitive and fuel growth."

To further support heating businesses, OFTEC is offering free registration for the first year to newly qualified apprentices. In Great Britain and Northern Ireland they should have completed training up to level 3 and in the Republic of Ireland up to level 6. They also need to be employed with an OFTEC registered business.



David Knipe

David Knipe concludes: "As an industry we are in danger of a generation gap as older, highly skilled technicians retire and there are currently not enough new people coming in to replace them. So, encouraging fresh talent into the sector is vital.

"A career in the heating sector has always offered job security and this won't change as even with technology advancing and diversifying, the basic need for heating and hot water will remain. A constantly evolving heating market also presents many opportunities for those technicians who are willing to continue learning.

"For too long, apprenticeships have been considered 'second rate', but this couldn't be further from the truth. This perception does now seem to be changing but we still need more employers and young people to recognise the highly credible route to further education and future employment apprenticeships provide."

Brush up on your training, says HETAS

"The heat is on for installers to brush up on their training" says HETAS, as they call on all registered installers who completed a HETAS H003 dry appliance course prior to June 2014 to brush up on their skills with a refresher course.

Since June 2014 it is a mandatory requirement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) for all registered operatives on combustion appliance competent person schemes to have successfully completed a relevant training course within the past five years.

HETAS offers a range of courses specifically designed for installers, retailers and those involved in the wood fuel and biomass chain. The refresher courses are available to any person who has previously completed a HETAS course.

A refresher course needs to be undertaken by anyone who has previously completed the following courses:

- Two day solid fuel awareness course
- Three day solid fuel awareness including the engineers course.
- H003 certificate older than 5 years
- H004 certificate older than 5 years
- H006 certificate older than 5 years

The H003 dry appliance course is suitable for stove retailers, chimney sweeps and allied traders who wish to install, service and maintain dry solid fuel appliances. The course is a pre-requisite for installers keen to be a registered member of HETAS' competent persons' scheme.

Bruce Allen, CEO of HETAS says: "With refresher courses being a government requirement and part of ensuring on-going competence, HETAS must ensure that all registered installers are updated every five years, to ensure they are well informed about the latest regulations and to ensure they maintain a high standard of service for their customers."

For a full list of HETAS approved training centres in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland visit: www.hetas.co.uk/professionals/training-centres

Worcester rejuvenates its installer training programme

Worcester Bosch has announced a major change to its training programme. With 16,000 installers passing through its training academy each year it was decided it was time to overhaul the courses.

The company has been gathering feedback from its installers on what they want the training academy to offer, and following this feedback, the company has produced a diversified programme that covers more topics, in greater



detail whilst promoting progression. Installers are able to book themselves on to a topical course which covers all of Worcester Bosch's products in more detail, rather than a product specific course.

Curriculum

The training centre has now increased its centre-based courses to 28. It now also offers a selection of mobile courses and three progression packages within the curriculum. The portfolio of courses is split into the following sectors: Oil, renewable, certified, system, gas, commercial, mobile and 'other'.

Topics include but are not limited to: specification; installation and commissioning; service and maintenance; repair and fault finding; and legacy service and repair.

Nick Fothergill, national training manager at Worcester Bosch said: "Our state-of-the-art training academy is now in full swing following its opening in 2017. It made sense to rejuvenate our own training programme to ensure that we are giving installers the essential skills they need to progress in the current market."

For more information or to book on to a course, visit: www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/professional/training/courses/category/new-courses



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Nicola Smith, who swapped life as a stockbroker to become an engineer. Nicola has been a lecturer in smart meter installation with DTL since February 2017

Let's get more women into engineering

– an International Women's Day plea from training provider DTL

Attracting more women into construction and engineering must become a higher priority for government and employers, urges Develop Training Ltd (DTL).

The training company says redressing the gender imbalance is not just desirable from an ideological viewpoint but also a means of helping to tackle the chronic skills shortage afflicting the industry. Two thirds of employers say a shortage of engineers is a threat to their business.

DTL, whose customers include household names in the utilities and energy sectors, highlighted the issue to coincide with International Women's Day during March.

John Kerr, DTL's director of education

& training, told Oil Installer: "The industries we serve are among the most male-dominated in the country. Only nine per cent of the UK's engineering workforce is female, and we have the lowest percentage of female engineering professionals in Europe."

He said the challenges included improving the way construction and engineering were portrayed in schools, encouraging girls and young women to study engineering-related subjects and changing perceptions of working in the industry.

"In many ways, the obstacles to bringing more women into the sector are the same as we face in attracting young people," said Mr Kerr. "The industry offers well-

paid, secure and skilled work with great career prospects, but it still encounters prejudiced ideas of dirty manual labour. There are a number of excellent initiatives to attract women into engineering and construction, and some great role models, and we hope that broader changes in society will also play a part in breaking down barriers. We support International Women's Day and the Balance For Better campaign in their efforts to make a difference."

Role model

One female role model is DTL's own Nicola Smith, who swapped life as a stockbroker to become an engineer. Nicola has been a lecturer in smart meter installation with DTL since February 2017, passing on the skills and knowledge she developed during her time as a hands-on installer to others.

Nicola hopes that at DTL, she can play a part in encouraging women into engineering: "I'm a massive advocate of encouraging more women into the industry. I really want to encourage women to see it as a career choice. There's genuinely nothing a man can do that we can't. With practice, you become just as capable as your male colleagues. I really can't shout loudly enough about it."

www.developtraining.co.uk

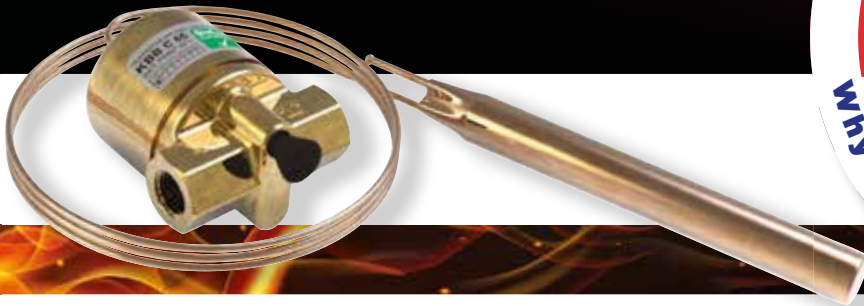
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Alongside inspection duties, you may be required to investigate consumer complaints and represent OFTEC at local trade or industry events. Computer literacy and exceptional communication skills are required along with a full driving licence and access to an unmarked vehicle. Remuneration is based on a fee per inspection with travel and other expenses reimbursed.

The successful candidate must also be able to diversify as OFTEC registration can now be granted for solid fuel and renewable heating technologies as well as oil.

The closing date is 31st May 2019

For an informal chat about the role or to request an application form and job description, please contact Andrew Peirson (Office and HR Manager) on 01473 618 552 or email apeirson@oftec.org



ASK OLLIE!

– Ollie responds to the latest questions received by his friends in OFTEC’s technical team

I have to fit a fire valve to protect an external appliance. Are there any restrictions as to where it can be sited?

The fire valve body should be installed external to the appliance casing at a distance stipulated by the appliance manufacturer. Always check the manufacturers’ instructions.

I have heard that plastic oil supply pipe can be used above ground if it is protected by a sleeve. Is this true?

No. BS 5410 is clear that, whilst approved types of plastic supply pipe can be used, it is restricted to installation below ground only. This means that a minimum of two joints are required below ground for conversion to copper/steel before rising above ground. Each joint should also be provided with a means of access. Further information on installing oil supply pipes can be found in section 2 of OFTEC Technical Book 3

I have been asked to install a balanced flue appliance in a compartment. Is a permanent air supply for ventilation purposes still required?

Yes. Balanced flue appliances in compartments still require an air supply for ventilation purposes to disperse latent heat. OFTEC’s Oil Heating Pocket Guide contains a quick reference look-up table which has the free area of air supply openings already calculated for you based upon the appliance output. Alternatively, further information can be found in OFTEC Technical Book 4, section 1.8.

I have serviced an external boiler and identified that the low-level flue terminal wasn’t protected by a guard. Should a terminal guard be fitted?

Yes. BS 5410-1 & 2 require that when the lowest part of a flue terminal is less than two meters above the ground, a balcony, a flat roof or other place in which any person has access, the terminal must be protected by a guard.

OFCERT® – why select products have this logo?

OFCERT® is the oil firing industry scheme to license and identify equipment and products that have been designed to comply with a recognised standard and manufactured under an approved quality assurance scheme. It forms an integral part of OFTEC’s work to promote excellence in oil fired heating and cooking. The scheme has two elements – OFTEC standards and OFCERT licences.

OFTEC standards

Although there are minimum British and European standards that oil firing equipment must meet prior to being placed on the market, a fundamental part of the OFCERT® scheme is a suite of product standards developed by OFTEC in consultation with its members. Examples of OFTEC standards that will probably be familiar to installers include OFS T100 for ‘polyethylene oil storage tanks’ and OFS T200 for ‘steel oil storage tanks’.

OFTEC standards are provided to assist manufacturers in voluntarily producing a range of selected equipment that exceeds minimum industry requirements.

Anyone can purchase an OFTEC product standard and can manufacture the product to the best of their ability. Technicians should be vigilant for marketing phrases such as “made to” and “manufactured in accordance with” when specifically looking to purchase OFCERT® licensed products. OFTEC will only issue licenses against products that have been independently verified to comply with our standards. Licensed products would have been issued a unique identification number, which can be traced or verified through the manufacturer or the OFTEC technical team.

OFCERT® licence

Equipment manufacturers can apply for an OFCERT® licence for a specific product if it meets the following criteria:

- it has been manufactured under an accredited quality assurance scheme to BS EN ISO 9001
- it incorporates the relevant OFTEC standard
- it has been tested by a third-party accredited test house

Once in receipt of the necessary documentation and fees, OFTEC then grants the product a licence and the manufacturer subsequently has the right to use the OFCERT® logo.

In summary, whilst it is not a legal requirement that oil firing equipment must have an OFCERT® licence, selecting products that do have a licence provides additional reassurance of their suitability. OFTEC would like to remind technicians that next time they are selecting a fuel storage tank, contents gauge, overfill prevention device, fire valve, deaerator or atomizing nozzle, you can identify products currently holding an OFCERT® licence in our equipment directory which is available at: www.oftec.org/technicians/equipment-directory or by using the QR code shown.



Fireplace surrounds – the essentials for correct installation

There have been several incidents recently where heavy stone fireplace surrounds have fallen away from the wall, causing serious injury and, on at least two occasions, the deaths of young children. Many fireplace surrounds are installed by DIY enthusiasts or fitters with little or no appropriate training, and in many cases unsuitable materials are being used to secure the surrounds.

These surrounds generally consist of two vertical sides supporting a horizontal lintel, on top of which sits the mantel shelf. The weight of these components in modular, stone or artificial stone surrounds can be considerable – each part can exceed 50kgs in weight. If the components are not correctly installed, it is possible for the mantel shelf to detach and topple over, in some instances bringing the whole assembly down.

As well as being triggered by a child pulling down or hanging off the edge of the mantel, even passive weight,

such as placing heavy objects on the shelf, can cause the surround to collapse.

Manufacturers and suppliers should ensure that adequate information is provided to installers to assemble and install the fireplace surround safely. This information should include:

- Which wall/floor types the fire surround is suitable for and those on which it should not be mounted (e.g. non-structural walls such as demountable partitions or lightweight metal stud walls, etc);
- How the fireplace is to be assembled including the sequence;
- The recommended bonding products and the extent of their application (e.g. area and joint thickness) to bed the individual stone components together;
- The recommended method of using the bonding product given the type of stone involved (e.g. pre-wet porous or impervious);
- How the fireplace surround should be secured to different forms of wall

- construction and finish;
- The number and type of mechanical fixings to be used, where they are positioned, and how they are to be fixed to both the stone components and to the wall to hold and secure the stones in position;
- The curing time before the fireplace can be used with a lit fire;
- Any additional information for the home-owner e.g. how much weight may be placed upon the mantel.

Designers of modular stone fireplace surrounds should ensure that their design incorporates or includes fixings or fixing kits that are suitable for a range of locations and are able to be installed on to a variety of floor and wall types. Installers should ensure that they follow the manufacturers' and suppliers' guidelines.

More detailed information on the correct fitment of fireplace surrounds can be found in Technical Notice 024, downloadable from the registered technician's area of the OFTEC website.

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Integrally fire rated tanks – frequently asked questions

Every oil tank installer knows that finding a suitable location for an oil tank can be challenging. On the one hand, technicians need to ensure the tank installation complies with regional building regulations, and on the other hand, clients often want their oil tank installed in a location that would not be compliant unless a fire protection barrier is constructed to protect the tank and its contents. Surprise, surprise – the client does not want a fire protection barrier installed either!

For this reason, technicians and homeowners sometimes investigate the possibility of installing an integrally fire-rated tank, hoping this will provide a solution to the age-old argument of compliance versus customer preference.

What is OFTEC's position on the use of integrally fire-rated tanks?

OFTEC requires technicians (or their client) to contact their Local Authority Building Control Body* (BCB) and carry out the work under a building notice. At completion, the BCB will issue a building regulations compliance certificate if they believe the work to be compliant.

Why is this the case? Guidance on the installation of oil tanks can be found in building regulations approved documents and BS 5410. In these documents you will find familiar guidance, such as the need for tanks to be sited a minimum separation distance from non-fire rated buildings, openings in buildings and legal boundaries. If these separation distances cannot be met, these documents describe the type and size of fire protection barrier needed to protect the tank and adjacent buildings. Technicians who follow this guidance benefit from 'a presumption of compliance with building regulations'. When you notify the installation via OFTEC's works notification system, OFTEC updates the BCB database and provides your client with a certificate of Building Regulations compliance. OFTEC can confidently issue this certificate as you have followed written guidance.

It is important to note that within building regulations approved documents and BS 5410, no



reference at all is made to the use of integrally fire-rated tanks, either as an alternative to minimum separation distances or an alternative to the construction of a suitable sized fire protection barrier. For this reason, a technician cannot presume that they have met the requirements of building regulations by installing such a tank alone. Technicians must involve their BCB prior to installing an integrally fire-rated tank, as the BCB will need to confirm that the use of such a product would, in their opinion, comply with building regulations.

What about products with "LABC Assured" certification? An integrally fire-rated tank may be listed on the LABC Assured scheme (previously called LABC registered detail scheme). Does certification under this scheme remove the need to have the installation of an integrally fire-rated tank supervised by BCB? No.

The LABC Assured scheme exists to assist a product being accepted by a BCB but does not *guarantee* that it will be accepted. In simple terms, it is a database of products that assists BCB in making an informed decision on the suitability of a product or system. When a product has LABC Assured certification it removes the

need for a BCB to carry out a full evaluation of the product, as this has already been undertaken and relevant details will be included in the product certificate.

This information helps a BCB to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether an integrally fire-rated tank is a suitable alternative approach and would meet the requirements of building regulations. In some cases, a BCB may be happy to approve the use of such a tank, but in some cases they may not.

In summary...

OFTEC registered technicians cannot presume that the use of an integrally fire-rated tank alone will meet the requirements of the building regulations. Technicians wishing to install such a tank must do so under a building notice, so that the BCB can decide whether this alternative approach meets the requirements of the building regulations. Technicians must not self-certify integrally fire rated tanks via OFTEC's works notification system.

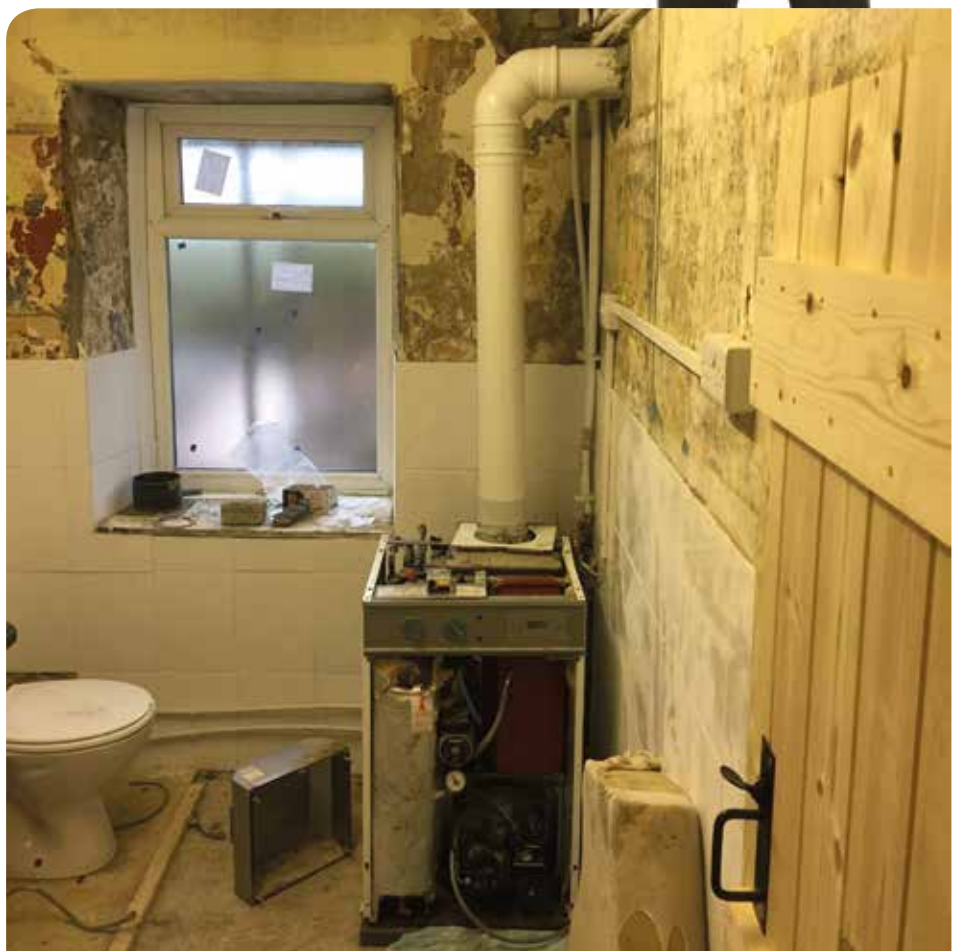
* An alternative to using BCB is to use an independent approved inspector.

The good, the bad and the ugly can win special prizes!

Oil Installer's regular Gallery pages have never been so popular – both with readers and contributors!

OFTEC registered technicians who have photographs featured in this edition's Gallery pages will win a special Snickers Gilet – courtesy of OFTEC Direct! So, for a chance to win seasonal OFTEC Direct prizes, send in your snaps now, showing the good, the bad or the ugly sides of oil-related installations. Don't forget to include your name, address, OFTEC registration number and your garment size preference, and, if published, you will be a lucky winner of an OFTEC Direct special prize! (www.oftecdirect.com)

Send your pictures, together with a brief description of your business and where you came across the subject of your snaps, to jane@oilinstaller.co.uk



"Believe it or not, this is a NEW install, in a house they are about to rent out to tenants," **Robert Williams** of Robert Williams Plumbing & Heating in Pwllheli, North Wales, told *Oil Installer*.

"The people bought the boiler on Ebay – without a flue – and have installed a flue that is not compatible with the appliance. It's a non-condensing boiler and they have fitted it with a condensing flue.

"It's a disgrace. The people who have installed it haven't got any qualifications and give us hard-working qualified engineers a bad name.

"Also look at the screws he has used for the flue. The flue is not clipped and also not screwed. To quote the installer when I asked him about the flue: 'I just had to make something of it and make it fit.' An absolute disgrace!"

Dave Pickering has been involved in oil heating and boiler maintenance for more than 30 years and, until recently, he thought he had seen it all! But, admits Dave, how many times have we all heard that?

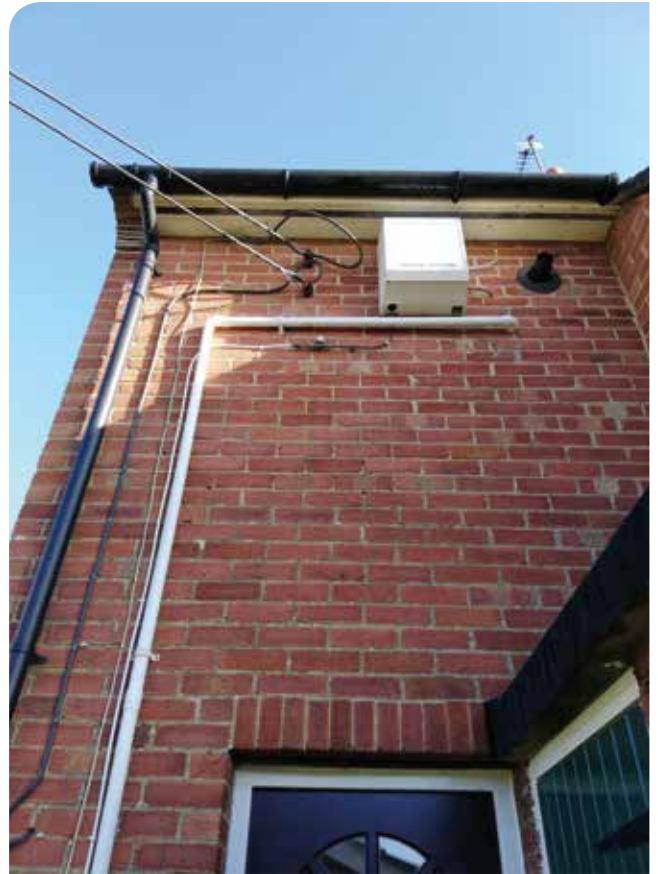
“Ninety-nine percent of my customers are people that I’ve looked after for many years, so I have become insulated from whatever was happening outside my own limited sphere... until I agreed to look after a contract by a very reputable group,” Dave told *Oil Installer*.

“I had repaired the three-port valve that I was asked to attend to and then went to service the boiler as requested. The burner was found to be at lock-out (following the coldest night in the year) due to lack of fuel, so I immediately suspected a frozen filter. This was inspected and it wasn’t that, so I traced the oil supply line back to the appliance.

“I should now tell you that this is an upstairs flat, and on rising from the ground the supply line went vertically to the first floor where I spotted the RFV and a suspicious gas meter box, both of which required a long ladder to access. The meter box hid an oil-lifter that needed resetting and fuel supply was restored.

“I just wondered how the installer could possibly think that this was an acceptable manner in which to provide an oil supply and how the young mum was expected to operate the reset buttons on both the RFV and the oil-lifter.”

Dave intends to carry out the remedial work.



When OFTEC technician **Ben Kennedy** was called out to rectify a boiler problem, he admits to being “totally shocked” at what he found!

Ben, who operates his own plumbing and heating business – BK Boiler Services – in Derry, Northern Ireland – told *Oil Installer*: “I was concerned that the flue wasn’t drafting correctly as I was able to feel a good bit of heat coming from behind the plate that was screwed to the chimney breast.



“Upon further inspection, I discovered a flue which was designed to go through a wall and defuse outside. However, this flue was nicely propped up at the base of the chimney breast and was supposed to vent up the open chimney. The brick chimney was blocked with birds’ nests – by the look of it, for quite some time!

“I was totally shocked by this find! And according to the customer it had been installed whenever the house was built, some 25 years ago!! I’ve since made safe the boiler and advised the customer to upgrade to a condensing boiler which they are happy to do!”

The Gallery pages are sponsored by:



Fuel price commentary

The crude oil price tumbled from October to the end of January, when Brent crude almost hit a low of \$50 a barrel. Thereafter it climbed again slowly and currently sits at about \$70 – slightly below the average price for most of last year. This brought down kerosene prices and was good news for any oil heating customers who needed to top up during the December – February period. It also meant that heating oil prices for the last quarter are lower throughout the UK and Ireland.

Competing heating offerings have seen mixed fortunes over the last quarter. In Great Britain, natural gas and LPG prices

have, like kerosene, fallen; in contrast, electricity prices have crept up slightly. In Northern Ireland, gas, LPG and electricity prices have been static – oil heating customers are the big winners here. In the Republic of Ireland, electricity and gas prices have increased slightly while LPG has been static. Wood pellets have been static in all areas.

Looking ahead at the prospects for 2019 there are, as ever, significant uncertainties. The trade war between the US and China and, closer to home Brexit uncertainties, mean that most economists predict that world economies will slow down in

2019. This usually means lower oil prices, particularly as US shale producers are at a production high. However, the influence of Russia on the oil market is now much greater than before, eclipsing even the previously-dominant OPEC producers such as Saudi Arabia. The Russians want higher prices and may try to limit supply to achieve this goal. The two opposing forces of economic slowdown and lower supply may cancel each other out, resulting in the price staying roughly where it is now. This would not be a bad outcome for oil-heated homes overall.

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

GREAT BRITAIN

	Average: Apr 15-Apr19	April 18	April 19	12 month price change
Anthracite Grains	1142	1159	1127	-32
Electricity (Economy 7)	1821	1913	2022	109
Gas (British Gas - condensing)	988	967	989	22
LPG	1845	1905	1874	-31
LPG (condensing)	1519	1567	1542	-25
Oil	1162	1396	1322	-74
Wood Pellets	1397	1532	1531	-1
Air source heat pump radiators	1624	1685	1802	117
Air source heat pump underfloor			1379	

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Average: Apr 15-Apr19	April 18	April 19	12 month price change
Anthracite Grains	980	973	1027	54
Electricity (Economy 7)	1554	1518	1871	353
Gas (Phoenix - condensing)	907	907	1050	143
LPG	2386	2668	2708	40
LPG (condensing)	1958	2187	2219	32
Oil	1122	1334	1326	-8
Oil (condensing)	920	1092	1086	-6
Wood Pellets	1117	1123	1118	-5
Air source heat pump radiators	1469	1459	1654	195
Air source heat pump underfloor			1246	

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Average: Apr 15-Apr19	April 18	April 19	12 month price change
Anthracite Peas	1543	1510	1628	118
Electricity (Urban Night Saver)	2023	2052	2142	90
Gas (Bord Gais condensing)	1333	1337	1420	83
LPG	2654	2689	3135	446
LPG (condensing)	2185	2213	2574	361
Oil	1551	1602	1940	338
Oil (condensing)	1270	1311	1585	274
Wood Pellets	1344	1311	1398	87
Air source heat pump radiators	1778	1806	1875	69
Air source heat pump underfloor			1476	

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. Prices are shown in pounds sterling (£) for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and euros (€) for the Republic of Ireland.

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