

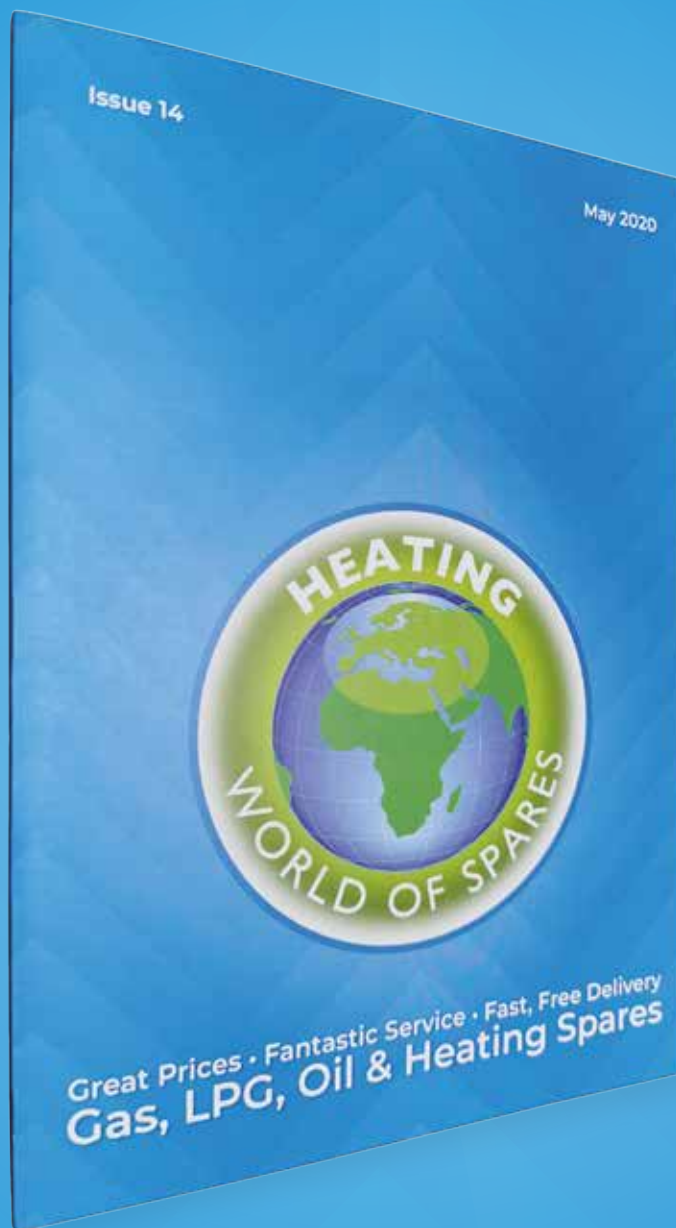
SUPPORTING
OUR MEMBERS
THROUGH COVID-19
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Oil installer

News and views from an evolving heating world



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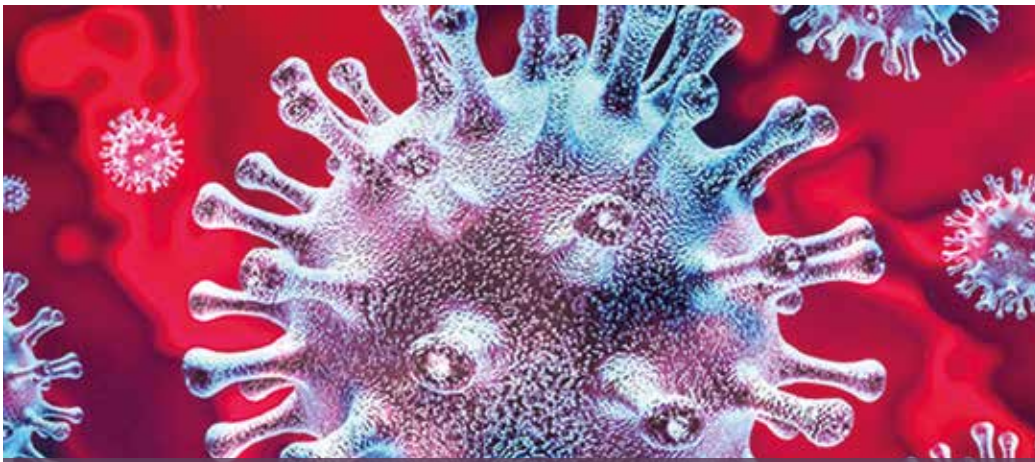
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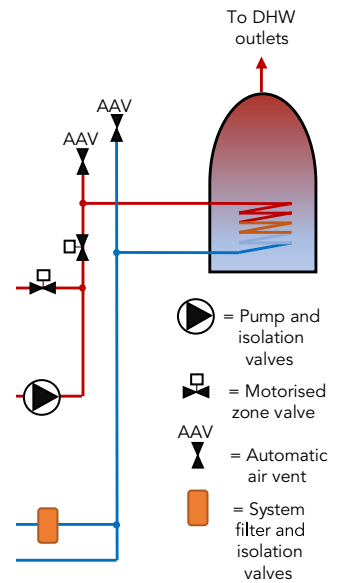
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Challenging times for all in the battle against Covid-19

Until recently, the biggest and most urgent challenge facing the heating industry was how to respond to climate change. This has now been superseded by the battle against COVID-19 – at least for the moment. None of us know what the full impact of the current situation will be. However, it's unlikely that any corner of our industry will remain unaffected, and the repercussions for both individual businesses, consumers, and the wider economy will be far reaching.



It goes without saying that OFTEC is acutely aware of the impact on registered heating businesses. First and foremost, we hope you and your families are safe and that your businesses will be able to weather this immediate period of uncertainty. OFTEC has acted quickly to provide advice and support and we will continue to offer whatever assistance we can in what may be challenging trading conditions in the period immediately after the crisis has passed.

Once we get to that point, thoughts will turn again to the decarbonisation agenda. While this topic may not be making headlines at the moment, governments are continuing to develop their policy ideas. However, fighting the current COVID-19 fire will undoubtedly deplete government reserves and hit the finances of many consumers hard. There is a risk that this will slow the carbon reduction momentum.

It's essential then that policy planning takes account of the likely economic realities of the post-COVID-19 future. Now, more than ever, decarbonisation strategy must be cost effective, practical and fit for purpose. If this is not understood, and bad decisions are made, progress with decarbonisation could be severely set back. For our own industry, this present adversity may present an opportunity. Changing the fuel, rather than switching to an alternative heating system will be the most cost-effective option for many off-grid homes, so it's vital that we continue to take that message to policy makers, to ensure that low carbon liquid fuels are an option for the future.

Laurance Coey

Chairman
OFTEC

Five-year registration option

For some time, OFTEC has offered businesses the flexibility of registering for either one or five years. When you renew, you can now choose either of these options and can opt to pay by Direct Debit at no extra cost.

In order to make it possible for businesses to select the five-year registration when renewing online, we have implemented a small change to the five-year registration option. From 1st April 2020, all registration payments for technicians and additional scopes must be aligned to the same renewal dates as the business. You can check whether your dates have already been aligned in your registration account at: www.ofteconline.com.

OFTEC now offers Trustmark registration

OFTEC is pleased to announce that it has just been accepted as a Trustmark scheme operator.

Joining Trustmark will enable OFTEC registered businesses to continue to undertake energy company obligation (ECO) work. Please email: alightwood@oftec.org if you are interested in joining.



Staff update

In March, OFTEC was very sad to say goodbye to registration services manager, Matthew Northcott who is leaving to further his career in an unrelated industry.

Matt had been with OFTEC for more than ten years, working in both the technical and registration departments and he will be very much missed by the whole team. OFTEC is pleased to announce that Jon King, who joined last year as compliance manager has been promoted to replace Matt in the registration department.

See page 34 for an opportunity to join OFTEC as inspection services manager.

Supporting registered businesses during the lockdown

Information for OFTEC registered heating technicians

The unprecedented lockdown period in the UK and Ireland has been extremely testing for many people. Decisions that would normally be unthinkable have transformed our daily lives, presenting a range of challenges – whether it's juggling work and childcare, or getting used to the isolation, lost income or patchy home broadband.

For heating technicians - who do not have the option of working from home - we recognise that things have been exceptionally hard. To begin with there was complete confusion in the UK as to whether heating technicians were key workers and therefore eligible for childcare within school settings. Then, there was a further lack of clarity as to whether any work at all could continue in people's homes.

One thing that certainly is clear – visiting homes in the course of repairing broken heating systems puts technicians at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. It's also clear that those that have managed to continue working have been very

much appreciated by their customers. We hope that those who have stopped working due to childcare constraints or health issues will be able to swiftly resume once restrictions are relaxed and it is safe to do so.

Support for registered businesses

We have sent technicians several email updates and you may have already seen our information page on: www.oftec.org, but here's a quick summary:

Automatic FREE EXTENSION to your registration

All those businesses and technicians with active registration on 24th March 2020 have automatically received a free registration extension of two months. This covers all the schemes and additional scopes you are registered with through OFTEC. This amounts to approximately 6,900 businesses and 9,800 technicians across UK and Ireland. So, if your registration was due to expire on 1st May, it will now expire on 1st July at no extra cost to you.

The UK government has provided the following guidance:

"Work carried out in people's homes, for example by tradespeople carrying out repairs and maintenance, can continue, provided that the tradesperson is well and has no symptoms. Again, it will be important to ensure that Public Health guidelines, including maintaining a 2 metre distance from any household occupants, are followed to ensure everyone's safety."

They also state: "You should notify all clients in advance of your arrival. On entry to the home you should wash your hands using soap and water for 20 seconds. You should wash your hands regularly, particularly after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing, and when leaving the property. Where facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser should be used, and you should carry this with you at all times. You should ensure good ventilation in the area where you are working, including opening the window."

"No work should be carried out in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household, such as emergency plumbing or repairs, and where the tradesperson is willing to do so. In such cases, Public Health England can provide advice to tradespeople and households."

"No work should be carried out by a tradesperson who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild."

In the Republic of Ireland, only emergency call out work may currently take place, but the above advice would also be good practice at this time.

There are some variations on the UK guidance in Wales, Scotland and NI – links to the latest information for all regions of the UK and the Republic of Ireland are on the OFTEC information page bit.ly/OFTEC-COVID-19-Info.

This guidance was reviewed on 30/04/2020 - check online for the latest information.

Automatic FREE EXTENSION to your qualifications

If your qualifications were due to lapse before 31st May, you have received an automatic three-month extension. This recognises the fact that most training centres have been closed and so it will not be possible to re-sit qualifications until the UK/Irish restrictions have been lifted. So, if your qualifications were due to lapse on 1st May you now have until 1st August.

We will keep monitoring the situation and keep you informed by email of any further changes. You can also keep checking for updates on our information page at: www.oftec.org/technicians/covid-19-information-page.

Government financial support packages

The UK and Irish governments have put in place unprecedented financial support measures – links to all of these can be found here: www.oftec.org/technicians/covid-19-information-page.

OFTEC services

Our offices have remained open but with a skeleton staff, working remotely, for essential services.

- The technical helpline will continue to run as normal.
- Technical book updates can still be downloaded from: www.oftec.org
 - For login issues, please email: marketing@oftec.org.
- Registration services will be limited to general enquiries and online services available at: www.ofteconline.com including:
 - works notifications
 - updating your contact details
 - renewing your registration online.
- OFTEC Direct is temporarily closed.
- All inspection work has been stopped temporarily.
- Deadlines from any non-conformities from an inspection have been extended until works can be completed safely.
- The compliance team will only respond to matters where there is a significant risk of harm to people, property or the environment.

Although staff may be reached by the usual phone numbers, we strongly recommend you email your queries through to us. Bear with us if response times are longer than usual.

It's extremely likely that the fall out from COVID-19 will continue to affect many aspects of our daily lives for some considerable time to come. OFTEC will support registered technicians throughout this difficult period and we look forward to providing our services for you into the future.

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John Conboy

It would be fair to say that John Conboy had a passion for installing oil storage tanks. It would also be fair to say that what John didn't know about installing oil storage tanks wasn't worth knowing. It is, for this reason, that OFTEC and the oil industry mourn the passing of one of its most committed participants.

John's association with OFTEC started back in 2004 when, with his wife Sally, he started up TRS (Essex) Limited. The company was incorporated on 17th May 2004 and John soon took out OFTEC registration to start on 1st July 2004. The business specialised in the installation of oil storage tanks of any size and in any location. Employees soon joined as did John's own son Adam in 2005.

During his time as a 'hands on' installer John gave up valuable time to sit on the OFTEC registered technician committee (RTC), which sat periodically to discuss topical issues occurring in the field, and to feed back suggestions to OFTEC's senior management for improvements to the registration scheme or technical reference material.

Once OFTEC came under UKAS accreditation, John volunteered to take on a more formal role as the sole registered technician on the OFTEC scheme committee (OSC). This saw him act as part of an impartiality committee, ensuring the training and registration schemes were run with integrity and fairness. John was a significant contributor, making his views known and count to the likes of OFTEC, government officials, local authority building control, oil equipment manufacturers and training providers in a bid to improve the scheme for the benefit of registered technicians.

In June 2013 an opportunity arose to become an OFTEC inspector and John took it with both hands, as did OFTEC.

It was a short interview!

Since his induction in 2013 and until very recently, John was a familiar face to technicians in the south east corner of England, who valued his fairness while on site checking work, but also his vast experience. But OFTEC inspections are not just about oil tanks so John relished the chance to learn more about heating and hot water systems and, more recently, how renewables integrated with oil heating. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks!



For the last couple of years, as well as continuing his inspection work, John put in two days per week at the OFTEC head office in Ipswich, supporting the compliance team when they needed to expand. John quickly became a favourite with the administration staff, with his helpfulness and experience making their jobs a lot easier. The favoritism increased when he used to bring in cakes made by his wife Sally.

Sadly, in late March this year John became unwell and one Wednesday evening in April was admitted to Colchester Hospital where he sadly passed away on the morning of Thursday 9th April.

John, who leaves his wife Sally, his son Adam, daughter Amy and granddaughter Grace along with an extended family, is fondly remembered by OFTEC, his fellow inspectors and by many friends and colleagues in the oil heating industry.

20 July 1960 – 09 April 2020

"Help stop fraudulent registration to maintain industry standards" – OFTEC

OFTEC is underlining the serious problem that businesses fraudulently using the OFTEC logo can cause for the industry.

OFTEC's competent person scheme is designed for oil, solid fuel and renewable heating technicians. The scheme also offers registration for technicians who hold Part P electrical qualifications and who install energy efficiency measures under PAS2030.

Unlike GasSafe, OFTEC registration is not mandatory but it is equally important to maintaining industry standards and protecting consumers.

Those businesses who are not registered with OFTEC but deliberately use the logo to mislead customers could be carrying out poor quality work, damaging the reputation of all

responsible registered technicians and at worst, putting the safety of consumers at risk.

Commenting, OFTEC registration director Adrian Lightwood said: "The OFTEC badge is there to protect customers and provide them with confidence and peace of mind that they are employing a competent person who is fully qualified, insured and checked to carry out heating works.

"We work hard to ensure the OFTEC name remains synonymous with the highest professional standards and therefore clamp down hard on anyone who falsely claims OFTEC registration.

"We recognise that in some cases, registration may have lapsed and a business has simply forgotten to

remove the logo, or a technician who has completed OFTEC training has wrongly assumed they can then automatically display the logo. However, we also know there are others who are fraudulently using the OFTEC identity to gain more business.

"We take these incidences very seriously and work closely with regional trading standards who have the legal powers to take action if the issue is not resolved."

OFTEC is asking for help to protect industry standards by identifying any heating businesses who are believed to be falsely claiming OFTEC registration. Cases can be reported by contacting OFTEC's marketing team at: logo@oftec.org and further information found on the "reporting logo misuse" section of OFTEC's website at: www.oftec.org

Clean growth update...

COVID-19 crisis should lead to a change in the government's heat policy plans, says OFTEC's head of communications, Malcolm Farrow

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, many are beginning to wonder whether it will have an impact on heat policy. The government, acting on advice from the Committee on Climate Change, is focussed on two main decarbonisation options – heat pumps or hydrogen boilers, or, perhaps a combination of the two.

An enormous amount of work is currently underway to develop both these solutions and to plan how to overcome the many technical, logistical and practical challenges. If anyone is in any doubt about how serious the government is about making one or both solutions work, a brief trawl of the internet will quickly reveal the wealth of BEIS-commissioned research and practical projects that are completed or underway.

Other options, such as heat networks, are also being considered for urban areas, but most other potential solutions are currently seen as being of limited value. So, will COVID-19 change anything? While none of us know yet what the full impact of the virus will be, it's clear that the impact on the UK and world economy will be enormous. It's very likely that we will enter a period of economic recession, with higher unemployment and lower consumer spending. Fighting COVID-19 has emptied government reserves and hit the finances of many households hard. It could take years for the UK economy to recover and this is certain to impact on the deployment of low carbon heating.

While there are currently no indications of a government rethink, it's essential that policy plans take account of the new economic realities. Why? Because a failure to do so could completely derail progress with decarbonisation, which is already playing catch-up following the disastrous failure of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). Now more than ever, UK decarbonisation strategy must be cost effective, practical and fit for purpose to ensure that industries, businesses and consumers can get fully behind measures and make them work.

This is particularly true for off-grid homes, which the government



Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC's head of communications

continues to see as 'low hanging fruit'. While heat pumps are an excellent technology in modern, well-insulated homes, the failure of the RHI presents an important lesson for the future, particularly when it comes to retrofitting older, less energy efficient homes. If homeowners are unwilling or unable to invest in heat pumps and the associated energy efficiency improvements that are usually needed, when the economy is doing well, how will they afford it when times are tough?

Without huge upfront subsidies it's very difficult to see how the majority of households will be encouraged to switch from oil and LPG heating. And where would these subsidies come from? Government has, quite rightly, made billions available to support businesses and households through the COVID-19 crisis. This must mean there is less funding left in the UK's decarbonisation pot, raising important questions about the best policy going forward.

Options such as carbon taxes, or mandating that homeowners improve their homes before they are allowed to sell them, may also be considered. But these could cause considerable hardship and would further weaken an already fragile economy. They could also be very unpopular politically.

The answer lies, not in backing technology winners, but in

encouraging competition to drive down prices. Low cost solutions will be the best solutions, at least until we recover from the COVID-19 shock. For off-grid households, including the 1.53 million who currently rely on oil heating, extensive independent research shows the answer could, indeed many would say should, lie in liquid biofuels. While some challenges need to be overcome, with the right policy support, a fully sustainable, fossil-free liquid fuel could be in use by 2035.

Changing the fuel instead of the appliance and all that entails, is the simplest, lowest cost approach. This is an option which must be taken seriously and included in BEIS' off-grid heat consultation expected later this year.

OFTEC supports food bank charity

OFTEC has donated 1,000 items of personal protective equipment to help support a food bank charity during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Disposable gloves have been given to Ipswich-based Families in Need (FIND) which delivers thousands of parcels each year to people in crisis and has seen demand for its services soar during the pandemic.

FIND founder Maureen Reynel MBE, said: "We are very grateful for OFTEC's donation which will help protect our volunteers who collect, sort and deliver the essential supplies of food and personal care items."

Malcolm Farrow, head of communications at OFTEC added: "The gloves have been donated from OFTEC's online shop stock as the site has been temporarily closed due to the current situation. Without FIND, many local adults and children would go hungry so we wanted to do our small yet worthwhile bit to help ensure the charity can continue to carry out its vital work safely."

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Scottish energy efficiency policy must be inclusive, says OFTEC in consultation response

Scottish energy policy must fairly provide for rural consumers living in some of the country's lowest standard homes, says OFTEC in its response to the recent 'Energy Efficient Scotland: Improving energy efficiency in owner occupied homes' consultation.

Proposals outlined in the government document include the introduction of a legally binding standard to ensure all homes in Scotland meet Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating C at point of sale or major renovation, from 2024.

If a seller is unable to bring their home up to standard before sale, the responsibility would fall on the buyer to do so within a specific timeframe, proposed to be 12 months, or face a fine.

Whilst OFTEC fully supports the consultation's aim to improve home energy efficiency and believes a legally binding standard could be introduced at a future point, the trade association fears the timeframe is premature and could lead to financial hardship and difficulty for many homeowners.

The timeframe is premature and could lead to financial hardship

Commenting on the proposals, OFTEC CEO Paul Rose says: "OFTEC strongly backs a 'fabric first' approach to energy efficiency and agrees that EPC Band C is a realistic target for most properties. However, those homes with the lowest EPC ratings, many of which are in rural off-grid areas, would need considerable investment to bring them up to the proposed standard.

"A deep retrofit of this kind could easily cost anywhere between £20,000



OFTEC CEO Paul Rose.

and £60,000. So, when you consider that the least efficient homes are often owned by those on low to middle incomes with little or no savings to draw on, it's difficult to see how these households could possibly meet the expected costs.

"More time is needed before a binding target is introduced, and more robust support measures put in place, to prevent many rural homeowners being unfairly penalised by these measures."

OFTEC is also concerned that using point of sale as a trigger point to meet the proposed standard could lead sellers to adopt the lowest cost rather than best solution, just to achieve a sale. As a result, standards could be undermined.

Passing responsibility to the buyer in cases where the seller is unwilling or unable to pay for improvement work could also stall the housing market and encourage 'gaming' where purchasers try to acquire homes for unreasonably low prices.

OFTEC's consultation submission also outlines how decarbonisation progress continues to be threatened by the lack of affordable, practical low carbon heating solutions currently available to consumers.

According to Energy Savings Trust,

heat pumps, which are among government's favoured options for rural homes in particular, cost between £6,000 to £18,000 to install. Without significant support, these figures fall well beyond the financial capabilities of most households.

To help address the glaring gap, OFTEC is working with industry partners to introduce a sustainable low carbon liquid fuel to replace heating oil. The simple solution would enable existing high efficiency boilers to be retained and so greatly reduce the capital investment involved.

Paul Rose concludes: "Extensive independent research shows that changing the fuel rather than changing the appliance is the most cost-effective way for both consumers and government to decarbonise heat from oil using homes. We are confident that with the right policy support, a 100% fossil-free liquid fuel could be in use by 2035, ten years ahead of Scotland's net zero target.

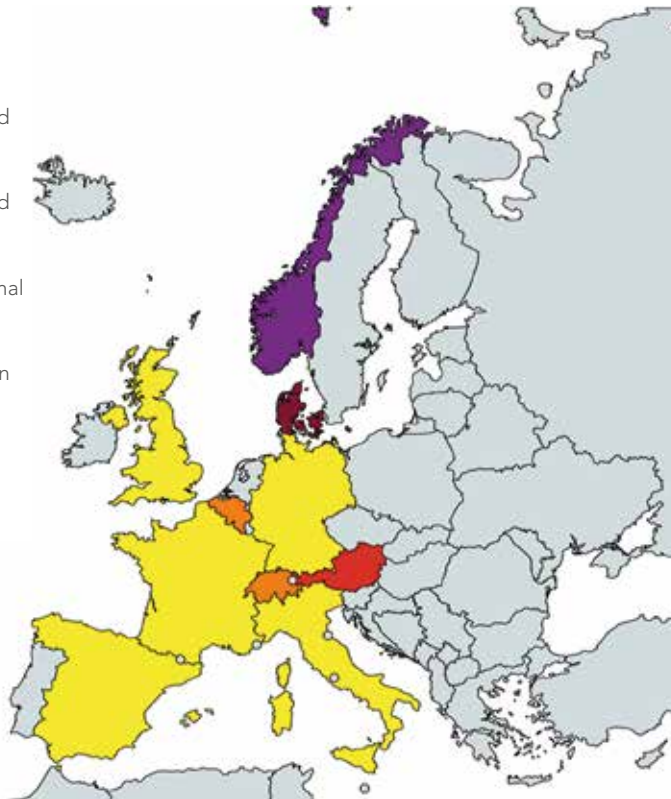
Changing the fuel rather than changing the appliance is the most cost-effective way

"Scottish Housing Minister Kevin Stewart has said that government wants 'all our homes to be warmer, greener and more efficient'. For this to be achieved, it's crucial that the next round of policy does not leave whole sectors of society behind. But without some modifications to current proposals, this could be exactly what happens.

"We are keen to continue working with government to ensure consumers have access to the affordable, practical low carbon heating solutions they need to really get behind the decarbonisation process and push for net zero."

Oil heating restrictions: status 2019

- Heating oil ban enacted for new and existing systems
- Heating oil ban enacted (with exceptions)
- Regional ban enacted (new buildings) / National ban in discussion
- National / Regional restrictions in discussion
- Other restrictions enacted / in discussion (taxes, RE obligations, etc.)



Europe targets oil heating in drive towards low carbon

In the months before COVID-19 dominated all the headlines, the need to reduce carbon emissions had become a regular topic in the media. But while discussion has focussed on how we take action in the UK, it's easy to forget that other countries also have the same pressing need to act.

Across Europe, policies are being deployed to bring forward cleaner, lower carbon heating and to encourage a shift away from fossil fuels. The picture varies from country to country, but the direction of travel is clear and oil heating, in particular, is now under considerable pressure in many parts of the EU. The potential for heating oil bans is now also an issue at EU level.

Restrictions

Many countries are seeking to restrict or even ban altogether the use of oil, alongside measures designed to stimulate the market in low carbon heating. The actual strategies used vary considerably. Some have imposed country-wide restrictions while in others, only certain regions have taken steps to

encourage or mandate change.

The measures used include imposing tighter technology regulations, with more demanding controls on emissions (e. g. CO₂, NO_x), higher efficiency requirements or new measures relating to storage or system operation. Others have banned the use of oil boilers, use of high carbon heating oil or the sale and installation of new oil boilers.

Finally, some countries have imposed restrictions but still allow the installation of oil heating where no other reasonable possibility is available. In some, the use of biofuels is permitted.

Alongside these constraints, many countries now offer schemes such as subsidies or tax incentives to encourage the adoption of greener alternatives such as heat pumps.

The map accompanying this article summarises the current situation and underlines the need for the oil heating industries in the UK and Republic of Ireland to show they have the solutions that will meet this world-wide challenge.

Mandatory electrical checks in the private rented sector

MHCLG has announced that regulations to mandate periodic electrical testing in private rented properties are due to come into force on 1st June 2020 – subject to parliamentary approval – but will be phased in, applying to new tenancies from 1st July 2020 and all existing tenancies from 1st April 2021.

When the regulations come into force, guidance will be published for landlords to clarify rules on remedial work and help ensure they only engage electricians with the correct level of qualification and competence to undertake inspections.

The draft regulations put before parliament can be downloaded from: www.bit.ly/draft-prs-regs.

Solid fuel technicians – make friends with your local sweep!

Technicians working on solid fuel appliances will know the importance of having the flue regularly swept.

When booking a visit to service such an appliance, OFTEC recommends contacting a local chimney sweep to arrange for them to sweep the flue before the service visit takes place.

There are three main chimney sweep organisations, each of which have a 'find a sweep' facility on their website. These are:

- The Guild of Master Sweepers:- www.guildofmastersweepers.co.uk
- The National Association of Chimney Sweeps:- www.nacs.org.uk
- The Association of Professional Independent Chimney Sweeps:- www.apics.org.uk





Futurebuild at ExCel London – aka Nightingale Hospital

Just a few weeks before the ExCel exhibition centre in London was converted into the Nightingale Hospital, it was home to the Futurebuild event. As the name suggests, this was an event that very much looked to the future, with innovation and new technology taking centre stage. On 3rd March, when the event opened, no-one could have foreseen that in less than one month the building would be accepting its first patients.

However, looking back on Futurebuild, MCS had a vision to bring together strategic partners and showcase how different areas of industry will increasingly have to collaborate. Properties will no longer be limited to energy provided by national infrastructure but will embrace integrated technologies powered by home-grown energy. As one of

MCS' certification bodies, OFTEC will play a vital role in ensuring that installers deliver high quality outcomes for consumers.

Bringing together different technologies on the one stand enabled visitors to gain an insight into the many ways that energy can now be generated and stored in the home. Working equipment on the stand, including a ground source heat pump and battery storage, certainly drew the crowds and helped give visitors that were new to the technology, an insight into how it could meet their requirements. Visitors were also keen to find out more about OFTEC's work on liquid biofuels and their role in a low carbon future for heat in the home.

Check your qualifications

There are now several multi-stage domestic boilers on the market, so this is just a quick reminder that to service or commission this type of equipment, you need to hold the OFT10-201 scope of registration.

Obviously, with the recent temporary closure of training centres, if you do not already hold this qualification and you would like to add this to your portfolio, it may take longer than usual to book onto a course. You can check details of centres offering this course at: www.joinoftec.com.

Trouble-shooting for the non-technical...

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, OFTEC has published a page online giving consumers guidance on a small number of checks they could carry out in the event of problems with their heating system.

Technicians are encouraged to share this information with their customers in order to avoid unnecessary callouts

for minor issues which put themselves and their customers at increased risk of contracting the virus. The advice stresses that homeowners should not attempt to carry out any repair work on their heating systems, as this could cause further damage to the system, or potentially lead to dangerous situations.

bit.ly/trouble-shooting-tips

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Seven year guarantees on heat pumps for Grant installers

Grant UK has announced that G1 Installers who are accredited to fit its heat pumps can now access longer guarantees on the Aerona³ heat pumps that they purchase, install and register through the G1 scheme.

From March 2020, Aerona³ units which are installed by a G1 air source heat pump installer will be eligible for a seven year guarantee – two years longer than the guarantee previously available through the scheme.

In order to be eligible to be an accredited heat pump installer through the G1 scheme, installers must have successfully completed the Grant air source heat pump product training course. Once accredited they will then be able to offer their customers seven year guarantees on the Aerona³ heat pumps they install and register through the G1 Scheme, subject to terms and conditions.

The Aerona³ R32 air source heat pumps from Grant are their greenest, most efficient generation of heat pumps yet. Achieving some of the highest performing SCOPs in the market today, straightforward to install, simple to maintain and service, compact in size and quiet in operation, and now with guarantees

of up to seven years through the G1 scheme, the Aerona³ heat pumps can deliver sustainable, reliable home heating for years to come, says the company.

“Renewable technologies are becoming increasingly popular with air source heat pumps playing an important role in the industry and for all of us here at Grant,” comments Kevin Ellis, renewables sales manager at Grant UK.

“To meet the growing demand for our heat pumps, Grant UK is striving to deliver a cross-section of customer support to ensure that engineers are equipped with the tools they need to specify and install Aerona³ heat pumps. Whether this support be in the form of pre-sales technical advice, such as heat loss calculations and product specification, through to MCS sign off or now the longer guarantee periods available to G1 accredited heat pump installers, Grant UK is committed to not only developing high performing air source heat pump units but also delivering installer and customer support before, during and after installation.”

www.grantuk.com/professional/g1-scheme



Martyn Bridges, director of technical communications and project management at Worcester Bosch

Worcester welcomes government's commitment

Worcester Bosch has welcomed the UK government's commitment to invest in technologies that will help decarbonise UK heating and hot water.

Martyn Bridges, director of technical communications and project management at Worcester Bosch told *Oil Installer*: “The government has awarded five UK projects investigating whether hydrogen is a viable option to reduce our UK carbon emissions £30m of funding. We welcome this indication of commitment by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to invest in technologies that will help decarbonise UK heating and hot water.

“Hydrogen has been explored and discussed by heating experts and scientists as a potential alternative to fossil fuels universally for quite a while. We at Worcester Bosch believe this to be a strong contender.

“Through funding localised projects and proposals such as the ‘Acorn’ project in Aberdeen and ‘Hynet’ scheme in Chester, we are hopeful about the prospect of hydrogen as a future heat source. We believe that this method is a very sensible approach and will prove the concept, and subsequently acceptance, of hydrogen.”

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk



UK amongst countries leading the way in renewable energy

Across the world, countries are facing increasing pressure to reduce the ecological imprint they leave on the planet, slow down climate change, and protect the environment for future generations. Greater emphasis has been placed on the importance of transitioning to using renewable energy, instead of fossil fuels.

But which countries are leading the way in using renewable energy?

Compare the Market has analysed the energy consumption of 21 countries to reveal which are using the most and least renewable energy sources in their total consumption. With renewable energy varying from wind, solar, hydropower and bioenergy, there are an increasing number of more environmentally-friendly options for producing the energy that we use each day.

Germany leads the world with a renewable energy consumption of 12.74% of their total energy use. The country is undergoing an energy revolution aimed at replacing its fossil fuels with wind and solar technology, which scientists agree is pivotal for every country to adopt in order to

avoid a climate disaster across the globe.

In particular, Germany has been working to reduce its coal use, with the first half of 2019 seeing the country use more renewable sources of energy to produce electricity than coal and nuclear power combined, a first for the country. In addition, renewables accounted for 40% of Germany's electricity consumption in 2018, and more work is being done to continue the rise in renewable energy use.

New energy record

The UK ranks second in its renewable energy use at 11.95% in the country's total consumption. Wind power has been particularly prevalent, with a new energy record set when wind provided over 40% of the nation's power.

The USA ranks at 10th with a renewable energy proportion of less than half that of the UK and nearly three times less than that of Germany at 4.32%. South Africa ranks at 15th with even lower renewable use levels at just 2.25%. Other countries with a

particularly low consumption include Mexico at 1.65%, South Korea at 1.63% and Russia at 0.04%. And whilst the likes of Germany and the UK are leading the way, it is critical that these figures continue to rise over the next few years for all countries across the globe.

With the world facing increasing demands to slow down and stop climate change, it is pivotal the adoption of renewable energy continues. A UN report predicts that by 2050 the population will reach 9.8 billion and by 2100 this will rise further to 11.2 billion.

With the increasing number of people living on the planet, the demand for energy will naturally increase, and it is crucial that we are catering for this in an environmentally conscious way that is not damaging to the planet.

For the developed countries such as the UK and US, it is pivotal to alter the energy they are using to ensure levels remain at a manageable level. In 2018, the UK saw a dramatic decrease of 96% in its use of coal since 1970, showing its push to using different energy sources.

By 2050, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) reveals that renewable power is expected to provide the majority of global power at an impressive 86%.

Peter Earl from the energy team at Compare the Market, said: "It's very important to not only be aware of how much energy from non-renewable sources is being used both individually and globally, but to put that in a context that everyone can understand.

"Championing the countries that are leading the way in using renewable energy is equally important and we are proud to see the UK is one of the countries highest up in the league table."

The countries with the highest proportion of renewable energy include:		
Rank	Country	% of renewable energy used
1	Germany	12.74
2	UK	11.95
3	Sweden	10.96
4	Spain	10.17
5	Italy	8.8
6	Brazil	7.35
7	Japan	5.3
8	Turkey	5.25
9	Australia	4.75
10	USA	4.32

THE JOURNEY TO NET ZERO CARBON:

Grant outlines its vision for heating systems in 2030

Grant UK has outlined its vision for the future in a 'manifesto for change'. The publication, *Grant UK 2030 Vision: Heating homes sustainably for future generations*, lays out the company's mission to support its customers on the journey to net zero carbon by providing efficient, sustainable and cost-effective home heating, from traditional systems to renewable technologies.

In line with the government's target of net zero carbon by 2050, Grant UK's goal is to take the lead on decarbonising home heating with either a focus on biofuels, renewable technologies, such as heat pumps or where appropriate, hybrid heating systems.

Grant's 2030 vision also outlines a pathway that could help ensure off-gas homes will no longer be solely reliant on fossil fuels for heating. Grant recognises that off-gas homes and businesses will face significant barriers in moving to a carbon neutral energy supply, including potentially crippling costs. With that in mind, the company has outlined changes that must be made, to help the industry decarbonise including:

- The need for future legislation to consider how to make older houses more energy efficient
- Introduction of a scrappage scheme for older inefficient appliances to encourage homes to switch to



- greener heating methods
- Financial support consideration for installers to encourage them to train on renewable technologies, increasing uptake and ensuring installations are of a high standard
- The future proofing of all new homes to ensure an adequate electrical and plumbing infrastructure is fitted today to allow for the move to renewable technologies in the future
- Supporting installers with training and heat loss calculation services

"Our 2030 vision outlines how government targets can realistically be met," explains Paul Wakefield,

managing director of Grant UK. "Hybrid systems are a significant and immediately available solution to transitioning the off-gas market towards low-carbon heating as they combine a traditional boiler with a renewable technology like a heat pump.

"This approach prioritises the renewable technology, with the boiler providing back up when required and is ideal for retrofit hard-to heat homes. A typical carbon reduction of up to 70% can be achieved with this method of heating and even more when using a biofuel alternative for the boiler.

"Installers will be so important to deliver the change that is required to move away from a reliance on fossil-fuels, especially those in off-gas areas. Our aim is to support installers as much as possible to enable this to happen."

Grant UK is currently investing in external training facilities and staff to both improve awareness and product knowledge in the marketplace, and help heating engineers diversify and grow their own businesses.

www.grantuk.com

Vans to run on renewable diesel fuel from waste cooking oil

Vehicle manufacturer Ford has approved the use of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in its Transit vans, sourced from waste oils, including used cooking oil collected from restaurants and kitchens.

The use of renewable diesel instead of conventional fossil fuels can contribute to improvements in air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90% compared with regular diesel. Vehicles running on HVO also emit

fewer nitrogen oxide emissions and particulates than other diesel vehicles.

Ford tested HVO in its 2.0-litre EcoBlue engine to ensure no modifications were required, and that servicing would not be affected. No further development of the fuel was required before it could be used in Ford's most recent Transit vans.

"Enabling our vans to run on fuel made from waste, including used cooking oil, may sound far-fetched but using

hydrotreated vegetable oil is, in fact, a very real way in which Transit drivers and fleet operators will soon be able to help everybody enjoy improved air quality," commented Hans Schep, general manager of commercial vehicles at Ford Europe.

HVO is available at selected fuel stations in Europe, mainly in Scandinavia and the Baltics, where it can be offered in a pure form or as a blend with regular diesel.



Future homes “must have insulated condensate pipes”

Condensate Pro has called for all builds to have condensate pipes insulated as standard. The company has commented following a recent consultation from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) setting out the UK government's plans for the Future Homes Standard, which includes a proposal to include more stringent build quality advice on pipework where it enters or exits a building.

“We welcome the fact that new build quality guidance is potentially being included in the building regulations, which will help energy efficiency. However, you must not ignore the pipework itself. If the condensate pipe connected to condensing boilers, or the pipes running to air source heat pumps are not fully protected properly, including those systems which are powered by gas/oil or even in the future, hydrogen boilers, they may be at risk of breakdown or not running efficiently,” says Dave Smith, managing director of Condensate Pro.

Millions of boilers suffered malfunction and breakdown due to frozen condensate pipes in the big freeze of 2018, says Dave Smith, and a recent poll has shown that a large percentage of the trade are still not proactively protecting condensate pipes from freezing with some 60% of 160 poll respondents said they never or only sometimes protect condensate pipes. With the future home standard encouraging a move to alternative fuel sources, such as a hydrogen mix or heat pumps, the need to protect the pipework from freezing temperatures remains vital, he continues.

“Our hope is that the focus on the new building regulations on energy efficiency and pipework coming into the home, encourages the industry to look again at best practice, even in retrofit situations on existing houses. We believe the current industry guidance is slightly flawed as it is very difficult to achieve practically on site – mainly in terms of pipe size and holes drilled into cavity walls where the pipe passes through,” Dave explains. “I would like the guidance to be changed, but in the meantime Condensate Pro provides a much simpler, better looking and easy way to make sure pipes are protected.”

Condensate Pro was invented and founded as a company in 2019 by David Smith, a plumbing and heating engineer with decades of experience in the trade. Dave has also manufactured a drift kit and grinder head, to help achieve a clean, faultless fitting on existing installations and uneven masonry.

www.condensatepro.co.uk

Grant UK appoints new technical design manager

Grant UK has appointed a technical design manager as part of its ongoing programme to develop and expand the renewable product customer support available through the company. This new role has been filled by Stuart McWhinnie who will now head the design and specification team at Grant UK.

The range of customer support services provided by Grant UK has increased in line with its growing product portfolio. Since 2018, Grant UK has developed its range of package heating solutions, specifically centered around air source heat pumps and supporting technologies such as cylinders and complementary heat emitters. To complement this expanding range of innovative technologies, Grant UK has also increased the number of pre-sales technical support services it offers to engineers which has resulted in the growth of its in-house design and specification team over the past eighteen months.

Having previously worked for Grant UK, Stuart's understanding of the business and its ethos is well established. Stuart started his career in the heating industry as a sole trade plumbing and heating engineer and later became a third-party engineer for Grant UK in 2004.

Three years later Stuart joined the company as one of its in-house field service engineers working on all of Grant's products to provide customer service support to end-users in South West England and Wales. Between 2007 and 2015, Stuart's roles at Grant UK varied from working in the field as well as being office based, providing technical support and later becoming customer services manager.

In 2015, Stuart left Grant UK to join another heating manufacturer where he held the positions of technical manager and later engineering manager. Five years later, Stuart has returned to Grant and is looking forward to further developing the design and specification team.

“I am looking forward to working with the Grant team again”, continues Stuart.

“In particular, I am looking forward to working closely with the design and specification team to build upon their customer-centric approach to delivering pre-sales support. I want to ensure that our customers, who are entering into new fields of technology in the renewables sector, feel confident in their product knowledge as well as knowing that they have the support of Grant UK behind them.”



www.grantuk.com



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



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Thank you

Without you, our registered technicians, OFTEC's competent person scheme would simply not exist. So at this time when COVID-19 presents an unprecedented challenge to our industry, we would like to salute your skill and expertise and to thank you for being registered with us. We look forward to serving your needs throughout the rest of this period of uncertainty, and long into the future.

The OFTEC Registration Team



OFTEC's response to the Irish energy strategy

Both Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic (ROI) are heavily reliant on kerosene for home heating – *FACT*. Over 65% of homes in NI and 39% of homes in ROI use it to provide space heating and hot water.

Both jurisdictions have indicated that a change in energy policy is required to reduce carbon emissions. No issue there, but the ROI has laid out a very ambitious strategy in its Climate Action Plan 2019 which calls for the installation of 600,000 heat pumps by 2030, including 400,000 in existing buildings. *That breaks down to 60,000 a year and 236 a day.*

While that level of install may be achievable, assuming existing gas and oil technicians' move to installing heat pumps, the reality is that the housing stock is not suitable for this change.

More than 90% of Ireland's off-grid properties are below BER C1 and, without significant disruption and expense, would not be suitable for moving to heat pumps. Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's first concern will be getting the economy up and running again. The Climate Action Plan has an estimated cost of €30bn, but in the current climate this is very unlikely to be available.

B30K – coming to a training centre near you!

As the industry moves closer to introducing biofuel blends, OFTEC has partnered with member companies and its approved training centres across Ireland to provide readily accessible biofuel demonstrator sites.

These sites will convert a liquid fuelled boiler to run on B30K, which is a blend of 30% UCOME (used cooking oil methyl ester) and 70% kerosene. This will enable OFTEC to invite politicians, civil servants and technicians to see first-hand a liquid fuelled boiler running on a low carbon bio-blend. It will show how easy it is to convert existing appliances and promote this option as the simplest, most cost-effective solution to the problem of reducing carbon emissions in off-grid homes.

We had hoped to feature pictures of the sites up and running in this issue but, because of the COVID-19 crisis and temporary closure of centres,

Easier solution

To that end, a simpler and easier solution is to introduce a low carbon liquid fuel, utilising existing equipment, thus substantially reducing costs for consumers but giving the massive carbon savings that are required to meet targets.

In Northern Ireland a more measured approach has been taken and the Department of Economy has issued a consultation on the future of energy policy rather than a diktat. OFTEC has responded to the consultation suggesting low carbon fuel blends as the solution rather than a mass move to heat pumps, which the local housing is not suited for, without massive investment that homeowners do not have.

Investment

In NI, 70% of bungalows, 44% of terraces, 50% of semi-detached and 53% of detached houses are in SAP band D-G. The thermal properties of these dwellings will be so low that considerable investment will be required to make them heat pump ready.

This is unlikely to be considered cost effective by homeowners, who, in most cases, will be unable

to afford either the renovation costs or the capital cost of the heat pump itself. The government is unlikely to be able to pay these costs for them, so it makes sense to consider lower cost solutions.

OFTEC has suggested to both governments that in many cases it would be better to retain or modernise the existing heating system, upgrade insulation and decarbonise the fuel by introducing a low carbon liquid fuel to replace heating oil.

OFTEC's suggested solution is to roll out a biofuel blend up to 2027 and to deliver a fully renewable sustainable biofuel by 2035. OFTEC submitted a comprehensive response to the Department of Economy's call for views on a future energy strategy for Northern Ireland.

Based on SAP 10.1, if all 505,900 oil-using homes in NI were to move to B30K – 30% UCOME (used cooking oil methyl ester) and 70% kerosene – there would be a 28.2% reduction of emissions from these homes which equates to c.0.56 MtCO₂e or approx. 21% of total emissions from home heating – *that would be very good news indeed!*

we will instead bring you an update in the next issue of *Oil Installer*. We hope Irish technicians will be able to visit a training centre after the summer months to view the converted boilers in operation.

The following venues in Ireland will have a boiler running on B30K this year; Ballyfermot ETB, Cork ETB, Firebird (Newry & Cork), Grant Engineering (Offaly), Martin Hogan (Dublin), METAC (Portlaoise) and SERC (Crumlin).

We know B30K works as we ran extensive field trials back in 2010 in Norfolk (GB) and, locally in Northern Ireland a two-year trial with the NI Housing Executive in 2012. The results were very positive and the case study findings from the NI trial showed clean and stable combustion behaviour, good atomisation with very clean heat exchangers. There were no reported breakdowns and the customers were



A burner from the NI field trial in 2012 showing no soot or carbon deposits on burner or combustion head.

very satisfied with the B30K blend, saying they noticed no difference in their heating system or comfort levels.

The establishment of demonstrator sites in the training venues and manufacturers' premises will enable us to show that B30K is a viable option for liquid fuel appliances for the future and to provide government with reassurance that the industry is ready to deliver real carbon savings now.



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Grant presents Wiltshire Air Ambulance with £10,000 donation

Over the course of 2019, Grant UK's staff were busy completing fundraising activities in aid of the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, resulting in the company presenting the local charity with a donation of £10,000 to help support its essential work.

At the beginning of last year, Grant UK announced that its chosen charity to support in 2019 was the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. This charity, based less than ten miles from Grant UK's headquarters in Devizes, provides a vital emergency service within Wiltshire and the surrounding area. It is equipped to deliver helicopter emergency medical service and, in

2019 completed 1,233 missions. The charity is funded solely by donations so support from local people and businesses is essential to allow Wiltshire Air Ambulance to do what it strives to do – saving lives.

Grant UK held fundraising activities both internally and externally. These included 'food Fridays', themed bake sales, dress up days and culminated with Grant UK's annual staff raffle which took place before Christmas. The raffle raised nearly £700 alone thanks to ticket sales and the great selection of prizes, the majority of which had been donated by Grant UK's suppliers.

In addition, some of Grant's employees participated in external fundraising activities. This included some staff completing 'Dry January' and taking part in the White Horse Walk, an event organised by Wiltshire Air Ambulance. Staff raised over £1,100 from these two events thanks to the generosity of sponsorship from colleagues, friends and family.

"We are thrilled to present Wiltshire Air Ambulance with this donation," comments Anna Wakefield, head of marketing at Grant UK. "2019 was our first year working with this local charity and it was great to learn more about the fantastic work they carry out on a daily basis. Charity fundraising has become a very important part of Grant UK with staff from all departments getting involved. With the Wiltshire Air Ambulance being a local charity whose assistance may be needed by any one of us, staff have really got behind supporting this great cause.

"Grant UK is pleased to confirm that it will be continuing to support the Wiltshire Air Ambulance this year as well," continues Anna. "2020 is the 30th anniversary of the charity so it should be a busy year of fundraising to mark this milestone. Everyone at Grant UK is really looking forward to working closely with the Wiltshire Air Ambulance for another year and raising more funds to support its role in the local community."

HWOS to supply kerosene nozzles

Heating World of Spares Ltd has announced an exclusive deal with Fluidics Instruments BV to supply its AFN kerosene nozzles to the UK market.

Fluidics AFN nozzles are OFTEC certified and are specifically tested and rated for use with kerosene. All nozzles are 100% tested and checked a minimum of five times. They can be used as a replacement for the majority of existing nozzles from other manufacturers and are available from 0.40 to 1.10USgal/hr in 60° and 80° angles, solid and hollow spray patterns,

HWOS Ltd. are independent merchants of oil and gas heating spares, controls, tools and consumables and supply engineers across the UK, CI and Ireland.

Fluidics Instruments BV, established in 1977, specialises in the development and manufacture of atomisers, nozzles and related products for oil burners.

www.hwos.co.uk

www.grantuk.com

Too many moving parts could stop the cogs from turning...

Martyn Bridges, director of technical communications and project management at Worcester Bosch, discusses the impact of different regulation standards across the UK

Our net-zero targets are underway. The route to no-carbon in new builds is one of the many tracks to take on. Although this is arguably easier than trying to get existing properties to nearly zero carbon, including regulations around emission levels, issues are still arising.

While it is important to ensure that all governments in the UK share the same determination to reach our goals, I think that too many moving parts could end up stopping the cogs from turning.

The competitors

Beginning the race was England, with Part L of the building regulations put out for consultation, closely followed by local interpretations from Wales, with Scotland's newbuild regulations already in place. Although first off the mark, it is quite clear that Scotland and Wales have been more ambitious than England when it comes to regulation.

England has opted for quite conservative but tangible figures. There are two options in the proposals for new build homes, either a 20% or 31% reduction in CO2 emissions compared to current figures.

The options for Wales, however, are 37% and 56%. Even the lesser ambitious Welsh target is higher than England's highest. Scotland on the other hand, has a system in place not dissimilar to the Olympic medals: bronze, silver and gold, with gold being the least carbon emitting design and bronze still challenging, but the easiest to reach. Although somewhat different to the other government's methods, rest assured they are gunning for zero carbon homes much faster than the current English strategy.

The number one place?

There is no answer on who has set the most realistic target. Wales and Scotland may look like they are taking a leading stance in reaching



net zero with their ambitious targets, but the volume of houses built in Wales and Scotland is much lower than in England. In fact, if you add up all Welsh and Scottish homes, there would still be less than the number in England. So, both can be more ambitious as they have less houses to take on.

It is hard to say which government is right, however we shouldn't be in this predicament anyway. Three different sets of targets on the table will ultimately be confusing when our end goal is the same: zero carbon. Different targets and timings to this can cause confusion and may have the reverse effect due to the impact on the housebuilder.

Many housebuilders have a national presence – with a number of designs being used for all constructions. This is problematic as with multiple regulations they will have to be a bit more disciplined about which house insulation, fabric and materials they use depending on the house's location.

For example, if regulations vary by region, housebuilders may only focus on England, deciding it is too expensive to keep building the same volumes in Wales. This has happened before, but at a smaller scale. In Glasgow, it was decided

that only homes built to the gold standard were to be allowed. As a result, builders simply slowed down or even stopped building in Glasgow for a time.

The finish line

In short, whilst it is great to see government taking our net zero targets seriously, I think that consistency across all borders would work far better.

We must remember that we are talking about brand new houses here, which aren't restricted by the current housing stock. They are not inheriting existing houses, having to bring different aged buildings up to differing insulation levels. That is a separate piece of legislation which has arguments for why there may be various versions. For newbuilds, though, I just can't see why there isn't a uniformed regulation for the whole of the UK.

Reaching the finish line of net zero 2050 isn't a sprint, it is a long-distance team race. This is a monumental task that we as a nation are taking on together. Every piece of regulation or legislation is contributing to our end goal. All in all, net zero isn't a competition, so governments shouldn't be making it into one.

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Hounsfeld shortlisted for best British boiler

Suffolk-based oil boiler manufacturer, Hounsfeld Boilers, has made the shortlist for a prominent national award. The H&V News Awards showcase the very best products within the heating and ventilation industry and Hounsfeld's Tuscan wall mounted oil boiler is up for 'Domestic HVAC Product of the Year: Boilers and Heaters'. The winner of the award was to be announced soon after *Oil Installer* went to press.

Andrew Hounsfeld, MD, set up Hounsfeld Boilers in 2008 with a desire to "revolutionise the domestic boiler" and make products far more sustainable. He says: "I had worked for some of the biggest UK boiler companies, but I had become frustrated – manufacturers had become too price focused, which had driven down the quality of the boilers on offer. I decided to put the customer first and invent a boiler which would be built to last, whilst also minimising the lifetime running costs for the homeowner."

He added: "I also created a fresh new practical design that's easy to install and service for the installer, whilst still delivering a value for money product. Thanks to my engineering background I developed an oil-fired boiler that satisfied these objectives and also created a high-performance boiler with a host of features not found on any other in the marketplace."

In 2019 Hounsfeld added the Tuscan wall-hung boiler to its collection. Production at the Hounsfeld factory is increasing with two new recruits joining the team and sales are expected to increase as awareness of the new boiler grows.

Andrew is delighted with recent sales performances and thrilled that his latest boiler has received such recognition. He says: "We're always proud that our oil boilers are popular with heating engineers and homeowners and it is wonderful that our Tuscan boiler has been shortlisted for this top gong! It's great recognition for the entire Hounsfeld team that our Tuscan boiler has been nationally recognised and selected as one of the best heating products on the market. We manufacture all components onsite in Suffolk and proud to say that our boilers are made in Britain."

Hounsfeld Boilers are designed and manufactured at Lion Barn Industrial Estate, Needham Market, which was set up in 2008 by Andrew after 30 years in the boiler industry.

www.hounsfeldboilers.co.uk

Worcester named best domestic boiler manufacturer in Home and Garden awards

Worcester Bosch has been named as the UK's best domestic boiler manufacturer in Build Magazine's 2020 Home and Garden Awards, following glowing feedback from the publication's awards research team.

Build's Home and Garden Awards showcase the businesses who work tirelessly to turn a house into a home, and Worcester Bosch has come out on top of the domestic boiler manufacturer category based on various criteria including customer feedback, innovation, longevity, online reputation and business performance.

Victoria Billings, director of marketing at Worcester Bosch said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be named the best domestic boiler manufacturer by Build Magazine, a comprehensive source of information in the construction industry.

"We are constantly working to improve and develop new ranges of boilers by listening to feedback from customers and installers. Last year we launched the innovative Greenstar Lifestyle range, which has been well received by homeowners and installers alike. We are extremely proud to continue to be market leaders in the boiler industry and we look forward to warming more homes for years to come."

www.build-review.com/awards/home-garden-awards



Danfoss introduces "InstallerLife" app

Danfoss has introduced a new app that allows engineers to find details of products required in their day-to-day working life. It includes a converter tool where engineers can find a current product that can be used in place of an old or competitor unit. It also includes details of a current product in the form of a data sheet.

Amongst other facilities on the app, engineers will also find the burner scanner which allows them to diagnose a problem on their OBC range of control boxes.

For more information go to: www.installer.danfoss.co.uk where you can download the app to a phone or tablet, or use the QR reader on the back cover of this edition of *Oil Installer*.

Worcester reveals new hydrogen-fired boiler

Last year, the UK committed to a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. A bold target that requires new technology and industry changes across a number of sectors in order to become a reality.

Steps are already being taken, for example in transport, but for the heating and hot water industry, removing carbon is much more difficult, largely because of the existing infrastructure, where the majority of UK homes use natural gas for heating.

Boiler manufacturer, Worcester Bosch, believes that replacing natural gas boilers with hydrogen gas may be the simplest solution to the nation's heating problems. The main by-product of burning hydrogen gas is water, meaning that it is a carbon-free fuel source and could be a key method to help decarbonise heating and hot water in UK homes.

The Worcester prototype hydrogen

boiler fits into the same footprint as a current natural gas boiler. Hydrogen-ready boilers will be a direct replacement to natural gas, burning natural gas on its first day up until the switch to hydrogen takes place. Also, with a similar build to existing boilers, installers will already have most skills necessary to fit these products too.

Over the last few years, Worcester Bosch has not only been advocating hydrogen, but they have also developed a prototype boiler that can run on 100% hydrogen gas.

Prototype

The prototype has been designed to also run effectively on natural gas. This means that in the future if hydrogen gas becomes reality, those who have a 'hydrogen-ready' boiler can simply convert to hydrogen without the need for an entirely new heating system.

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



said: "The development of hydrogen-fired boilers will mean millions of existing heating systems in our homes can be saved, rather than the entire system needing to be replaced.

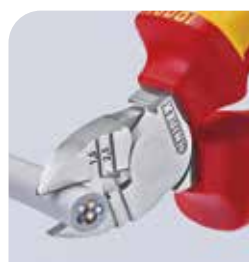
"The beauty of hydrogen as an alternative to natural gas is that as well as water as a by-product, Worcester Bosch has developed a technical solution that will feel familiar to both homeowners and installers. The gas network is also in place, so homeowners won't experience any major infrastructure disruption.

"With fully developed prototypes, various trials planned and many heating engineers and manufacturers in agreement that this could be a viable solution to decarbonise heating and hot water, we are hopeful that the future will be hydrogen."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

An ideal addition to every toolbox

The Knipex diagonal insulation stripper is an ideal addition to all technicians' toolboxes, says the manufacturer.



"With long tips for ultra-fine cutting work, the powerful strippers are ideal for working in confined spaces," explains Knipex.

"The insulation strippers' high cutting capacity is due to the high leverage joint and its induction hardened blades give a cutting hardness edge of approximately 60 HRC."

The chrome-plated tool enables cutting of NYM cables up to 5 x 2.5 mm² and also features precision stripping holes for single conductors of 1.5 and 2.5 mm². The tool's handles are insulated with multi-component grips and are VDE tested.

www.knipex.com

PipeSnug responds to "future home standard" consultation

PipeSnug has responded to the recent "future home standards" consultation, encouraging the inclusion of build quality guidance in Part L of the building regulations.

The consultation sets out the UK government's plans for the future home standard, including proposed options to increase the energy efficiency requirements for new homes in 2020. It will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency by 2025.

"One of the proposed changes would require the fitting of a grommet or collar on to a pipe where it enters or exits a home, helping to maintain the energy efficiency of the building," explains Alex Lever, PipeSnug director.

"Evidence shows that pipes extruding from buildings have traditionally been sealed using mortar and silicone adhesives or are just not being sealed at all. Although mortar is tough, it is not immune to weathering and can

crack and come away, leaving the cracks open to insects, pests, drafts and water damage. Similarly, silicone sealant can also weather and fall away.



"Therefore, we would like to see the draft build quality guidance outlined in annex C of the consultation included in the approved document itself.

This will help to ensure that new homes are the most energy efficient they can be, even if the fabric of the building, including floors or walls, has been penetrated by pipework."

An effective way for housebuilders to seal around pipes and comply with the proposed changes outlined in this consultation would be to use PipeSnug. It is a grommet/ collar designed to create an air-tight seal around pipes where they enter or exit a wall or floor, says the company.

www.pipesnug.co.uk

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Grant's 'Big G1 Giveaway' - another BIG success!

Last summer, Grant UK's 'Big G1 Giveaway' promotion returned for a second year. Over the course of five months, the company handed out nearly three thousand prizes to G1 installers up and down the country, rewarding scheme members actively installing Grant products.

The 'Big G1 Giveaway' ran for five months in 2019, commencing in August and finishing at the end of December. The promotion repeated its format from the previous year with all G1 installers having the opportunity to be a winner each month by registering their Grant installations via the G1 Portal or Click app. Any G1 installer could enter, whether they registered an oil boiler or one of Grant's latest renewable appliances, and each entrant was guaranteed to win a prize.

Each month, a prize draw took place which had fifty top prizes up for grabs alongside a runners-up prize for all the remaining entries. The top prizes included branded workstation canopies, Red Letter driving experiences and branded velocity tech cases. Runner-up prizes varied each month, from plastic pipe cutters through to branded tote

tool bags, so G1 members had the chance to win five different prizes if they registered each month.

Holiday super draw

A new addition to the 2019 promotion was the 'big holiday super draw'. Every G1 installer who registered a product during the promotional period was entered into this super draw with the winner being announced in early January. The prize was £5,000 of holiday vouchers and the lucky winner was Ryan Hosking of SOS Heating Ltd based in Cornwall. Ryan was thrilled to win the prize and the vouchers will go towards a special 2020 holiday for him later in the year.

"We are very pleased that the 'Big G1 Giveaway' in 2019 was another success," says Andy Smith. "Our G1 installer scheme grows each year and we continuously strive to increase the range of benefits and rewards that are available to members. While the 'Big G1 Giveaway' is over for another year, Grant UK have some exciting plans for the G1 Scheme which will be revealed shortly."

www.grantuk.com/professional/g1-scheme

Worcester Bosch supports fight against COVID-19

Boiler manufacturer Worcester Bosch has adapted its Clay Cross manufacturing facility in Derbyshire to start producing metal ventilator casings, in a bid to support the government's call for rapid development and manufacturing of the much-needed life-saving equipment.

Following the initial approach to help, a number of prototype variants were produced and those casings were put through strict approval tests for useability and functionality, ahead of being given the green light to go ahead with production.

The company will initially be producing 550 sets of ventilator casings but is ready to produce more if required. Although the majority of the process is automated, a committed team of technicians is volunteering to produce the cases.

Carl Arntzen, CEO of Worcester Bosch, commented; "We are proud to be supporting the fight against Coronavirus in any way we can and hope that our contribution will help hospitals and those in need during these turbulent times."

Worcester Bosch is also using its large scale printing capabilities to produce patterns for scrubs, following a call that the hospital wear was running in short supply. The company is also using its 3D printers to produce 'ear guards' for NHS workers' face masks.

Worcester amongst YouGov's top domestic brands

Boiler manufacturer Worcester Bosch is "thrilled" to have been awarded sixth place in the highly coveted YouGov top ten domestic appliance brands, as recommended by its customers. It joins the list alongside Bosch Home Appliances, as some of the most desired appliance brands in the UK.

YouGov BrandIndex is one of the most authoritative and thorough measurements of brand

perception amongst consumers, with thousands of consumers and brands being measured every day.

With over 70% of customers recommending Worcester Bosch products to a friend or colleague, the company was the highest-placed boiler brand.

Commenting on the achievement, Victoria Billings, director of marketing at Worcester Bosch

said: "I'm delighted that we have been included in the top ten. Our customers are our top priority, so it's great to know that they are so happy with their Worcester Bosch boiler that they'd recommend it.

"We pride ourselves on quality and I believe our inclusion in the YouGov top ten domestic appliance brands is testament to that."

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk

Wolseley increases availability of heating spares during pandemic

Wolseley has increased the availability of heating spares to support installers as they complete essential repairs and maintenance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Wolseley has seen demand for such products remain high. As a result, to ensure installers can work quickly and improve their first-time fix rates, Wolseley has made a stock of over 600,000 individual heating spare parts available for same-day collection from branches nationwide and a further 300,000 available for next day collection.

Richard Harvey, category director for plumbing and heating at Wolseley, said: "With a large portion of the UK's workforce now working from home, domestic heating and hot water usage will be above usual levels for this time of year. Accordingly, we anticipate the demand for parts to fix emergency boiler breakdowns and plumbing faults to remain high.

First-time fix

"Boiler breakdowns are distressing for customers at the best of times, however, in the current climate, the need for installers to provide a first-time fix is even greater. We have ensured we increase our focus on maintaining a high parts availability to support installers working on emergency repairs, giving them access to the products they need to provide a fix quickly.

"In addition to domestic requirements, the supply of spare parts to commercial operations is equally, if not more important at the present time. Wolseley is committed to ensuring support for installers carrying our vital repairs and maintenance work across the nation's hospitals, nursing homes, supermarkets, schools and homes – all of which are critical to the operational stability and wellbeing of the UK. We have in-depth stock of commercial parts and controls available for next day or available on an express delivery service for more urgent requirement."

Safety measures

Wolseley has implemented a number of safety measures to ensure the safety of its customers and colleagues.

These safety procedures include:



- The closure of its trade counter doors; customers being urged to place orders online or over the phone before going to the branch. Pre-orders for essential items can be collected from a safe point at branch.
- Providing all branches with enhanced cleaning packs to maintain good hygiene standards across its branch network.
- Branch opening hours being reduced. Wolseley branches are now opening from 7.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday, however orders can still be placed for delivery overnight.
- Requesting strict adherence to social distancing guidelines when collecting products.

Customers can manage their account, check stock availability and place future orders at: www.wolseley.co.uk. Alternatively, they can contact Wolseley's customer support centre on tel: 0344 891 0196.

Heating engineers carrying out essential repairs and maintenance should refer to the latest government guidance.

To see latest COVID-19 updates from Wolseley visit: www.wolseley.co.uk/coronavirus-update

See page 5 for more COVID-19 information

Hounsfeld donates boiler to training centre

To make sure that students are 'hot' on their oil-boiler installation skills, Hounsfeld Boilers has donated a 12/19 kitchen model to a leading electrical, oil and water training centre in East Anglia.

Norwich Gas, Electrical and Oil, known as NGE0, has been training and assessing heating professionals and apprentices since 2000 and has around 500 students passing through its doors every year.

Keen to support industry, Hounsfeld Boilers was happy to help NGE0 in the training process and encourage

those who wanted to work with oil. The company also came highly recommended by one of the course leaders. Tom Brown, the lead oil trainer at NGE0 explains: "We were delighted to get our hands on a Hounsfeld Boiler. The boiler is very efficient with a range of flue options. It includes a fire valve and filters, and the bottom water-way allows the heat exchanger to be smaller making the boiler a compact and innovative design. It's ideal for our students to learn how to properly install and service a wide-range of boilers and know how to fit the best."

www.hounsfeldboilers.co.uk

Government to end sale of coal and wet wood

As part of its Clean Air Strategy, the UK government has confirmed plans to phase out the sale of traditional house coals and wet – also known as unseasoned – wood for domestic burning between 2021-2023. This will affect customers in England who currently have solid fuel appliances or open fires.

The rationale behind this move is that wood-burning stoves and coal fires are the single largest source of the air pollutant PM2.5, considered by the World Health Organisation to be the most serious air pollutant for human health. It is estimated that particulate emissions from solid fuel amount to around 38% of all UK PM emissions.

Key dates

- Sales of bagged traditional house coals will be phased out by February 2021
- Sales of loose coal via approved coal merchants will be phased out by February 2023
- Sales of wet wood in units under 2m³ will be restricted from February 2021
- Wet wood sold in volumes greater than 2m³ will need to be sold with advice on how to dry it before burning from February 2021.



efficient to burn.

These dates will give the public and suppliers time to move to cleaner alternatives, such as dry wood and manufactured solid fuels, which not only produce less smoke and pollution than wet wood or traditional house coal but are also more

Wet solid fuel emits far less usable heat because much of the heat is used to drive out the moisture within the fuel. It has been estimated that you would need to burn around three times as many unseasoned logs to achieve the same heat output as well-seasoned or kiln dried logs, making it cheaper in the long-run to use dry wood. Customers will also enjoy more of a crackle and less of a hiss when they burn dry wood.

The Burnright campaign is a good source of information on fuels. We suggest that you refer your solid fuel customers to this website and advise them on the usage of the correct fuels.

www.burnright.co.uk

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Sealed systems and pressure relief valves: don't get caught out

OFTEC's technical team continues to review some common heating design defects and advises how best to avoid them

In this issue we focus on the possibility of accidentally placing restrictions between an oil-fired boiler and the pressure relief valve (PRV) of a sealed heating system. A PRV is an essential safety device in a sealed heating system. Its function is to provide an unrestricted path for the relief of pressure and steam, should a boiler overheat. For this reason, it is essential that no valves or obstructions are fitted between the PRV and the boiler. If a boiler was to overheat while isolated from its PRV, an incredibly dangerous explosive situation could arise.

Installers sometimes unintentionally place restrictions between the boiler and a PRV when they utilise a remotely installed expansion vessel kit. Expansion vessel kits usually incorporate a pressure gauge, filling loop and pressure

relief valve in one compact unit. As demonstrated in the following diagrams, careful thought needs to be given to the location of these kits.

The following diagrams show the incorrect and correct positioning of an expansion vessel kit incorporating a PRV – notice the problems caused by mounting the kit remotely. ►

Diagram 1 – Existing installation

This diagram shows a typical existing open-vented heating system. A central heating pump (not shown) is fitted on the flow or return pipework serving the radiators. However, the indirect cylinder coil is heated via gravity circulation. The heating system will be converted to a fully-pumped sealed system featuring a magnetic system filter.

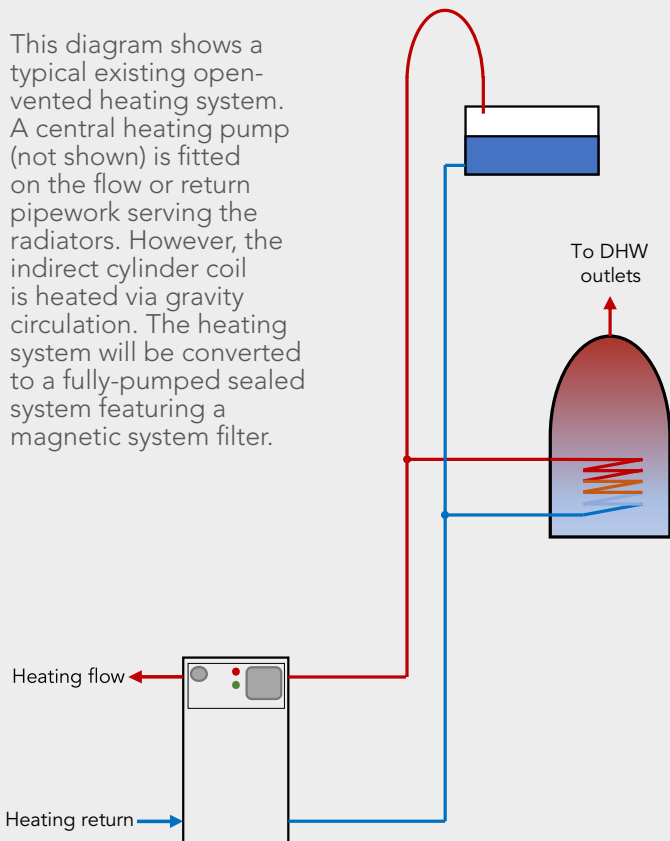


Diagram 2 – An incorrectly designed sealed system

This diagram shows the upgraded system. A remote expansion vessel kit has been used to create a sealed system. The installer has created an unsafe situation as there are isolation valves and obstructions between the boiler and the PRV.

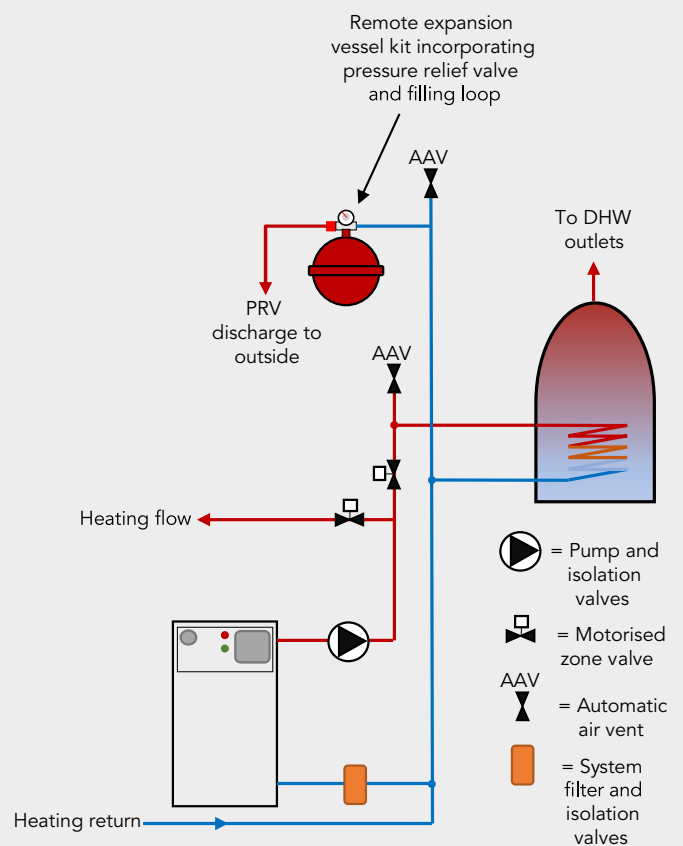
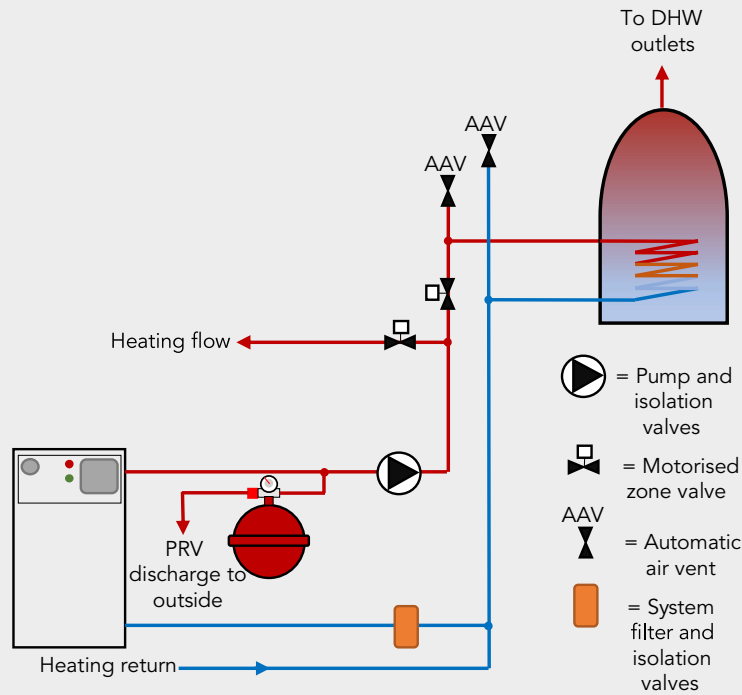


Diagram 3 – A correctly designed sealed system

This diagram shows a correct method of installing a remote expansion vessel kit that ensures there are no isolation valves or obstructions between the boiler and the PRV. It should be noted that some boiler manufacturers require the expansion vessel to be installed on the return pipework and the PRV on the flow pipe.



As a final observation, it should be noted that not all existing oil-fired boilers can be connected to a sealed heating system. Not only must the appliance incorporate a high limit thermostat, but also the manufacturer must confirm that their appliance is suitable for this type of system.

The importance of fire valves

Following feedback from an appliance manufacturer, OFTEC's technical team would like to remind technicians to ensure that all oil-fired appliances are protected by one or more fire valves, as appropriate.

Regional building regulations and BS 5410-1 require that appliances should be protected by an externally located fire valve. In addition, vaporising appliances require the installation of a second fire valve. This is required to protect equipment such as constant level controls and oil control valves, which contain a reservoir of fuel. A similar approach should also be taken with fuel lifters.

The exact location of the fire valve(s) body and sensor, as well as its temperature rating, should be as specified by the appliance manufacturer. It is essential that electronic or solenoid type fire valves must not be able to automatically reopen after the fire valve has activated, or after power supplies have been interrupted.

Please refer to OFTEC technical book 3 section 2.4 (updated July 2019) to review the appropriate location of fire valves in various situations. As always, seek further information from the appliance/fuel lifter manufacturer.

Protect yourself – inspect and change flexible fuel lines

In the event of a fuel spill originating with a flexible fuel line, home insurers may try to pass the cost on to the technician who services the appliance. *How can technicians protect themselves from this risk?*

The following advice can be found in OFTEC technical book 2:

"Flexible oil pipes should be inspected during every service visit and in the interests of safety, changed at regular intervals. There are varying types of flexible oil pipe available with guarantee periods between one and five years. Where flexible oil pipes are marked with a date stamp, the age of the oil pipe should be established and, if out of its guarantee period, replaced immediately.

"Where no date stamp is visible or where an oil pipe is kinked, damaged or any doubt exists as to its integrity until the next service visit, it is recommended that it is replaced at the time of the service. Caution should be exercised to capture any oil lost during the disconnection of the oil line(s).

"Consumable items such as nozzles, filter elements and flexible fuel lines should be replaced at least annually, or not later than the expiry of the manufacturer's guarantee period. Where a customer refuses to have consumable items replaced as part of a routine service visit, this should be recorded on the CD/11 form and a warning label attached to the appliance identifying that either an immediate or potential risk is now present."

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Mandatory control of pollution regulations

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have strict control of pollution regulations of which technicians must be aware. The final deadline for regulations in Wales was on 15th March and OFTEC would like to remind all technicians of the regulatory requirements in their region and when they apply.

Control of pollution regulations set out when and where fuel storage tanks must be provided with secondary containment (bunding). They also detail further steps that must be taken to protect the secondary containment system and pipework from damage. Although the regulations vary slightly from region to region, some of the main requirements are as follows:

- All tanks within the scope of the regulations must be within a fuel and water-resistant secondary containment system, such as a bund (integral or masonry). The bund must have a capacity of at least 110% of the largest tank or, in the case of multiple storage tanks, at least 25% of the combined capacity of the tanks, whichever is greater.
- No valve, pipe or opening used for draining the secondary containment system must penetrate the bund base or walls.
- Underground joints in fuel supply pipework must be accessible.

- Any valve, sight gauge, vent pipe or any other ancillary equipment, must be situated within the secondary containment system.
- All underground fill pipes and draw off pipes must be pressure tested before first use and, if not fitted with a leakage detection device, subsequently every five years (if underground joints are fitted) or 10 years (if there are no joints below ground). If fitted with a continually monitoring leakage detection device, this device must be regularly maintained and tested at appropriate intervals to ensure that it works properly.
- The secondary containment system and above ground pipework must be properly supported and positioned to minimise the risk of damage from impact as far as is reasonably practicable.

Control of pollution regulations are applied retrospectively to tank installations of any age, except for domestic tanks in Wales (see table). If the tank owner is found to be in breach of these regulations, they could face a fine and enforcement action.

OFTEC reminds technicians that sub-standard installations must be brought to the attention of the property owner in writing and warning labels must be attached to the installation.

For further information the regulations can be accessed via the following links:

• England:-

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2001/2954/contents



• Scotland:-

www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/389/contents/made



• Wales:-

www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/359/made



• Northern Ireland:-

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/412/contents/made



The table below explains when and where the regulations apply region by region.

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Non-domestic above 200 L	✓	✓	✓	✓
Domestic	✓ If above 3500L	✓ If above 2500L	✓ If installed after 14/03/16	✓ If above 3500L
External	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal	x	✓	✓	✓
Above ground	✓	✓	✓	✓
Completely below ground	x	✓ If within a building	✓ If within a building	x



WHERE'S OLLIE?

Our techie friend Ollie is currently self-isolating because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hopefully he will be fit and healthy again for the next edition of Oil Installer!

Oil tanks in a league of their own



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H: 1665 mm



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Dia: 1585 mm
H: 1740 mm



2440 litres
L: 2840 mm
W: 1520 mm
H: 1630 mm



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We offer a generous salary and benefit package which includes 25 days holiday, health cash plan, workplace pension scheme, life cover and training. Plus, the opportunity to work for a well respected registration scheme operator and help shape the future direction of the scheme.

The closing date is 29th May 2020

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

Industry needs to fill thousands of roles to achieve 'net zero' by 2050

More young people are being encouraged to take up a career in the heating sector following a report which estimates 400,000 energy related jobs will need to be filled to create a workforce fit to achieve net zero by 2050.

According to the National Grid findings, 260,000 of the roles will be new, including skilled technicians, engineers and other specialists, while 140,000 will replace those who have left the sector.

And with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic likely to impact significantly on school leavers looking for their first job, 2020 could be a good time to join the heating industry.

OFTEC training manager, David Knipe, comments: "Achieving net zero means not only attracting new talent into the industry but also harnessing the invaluable knowledge, skills and experience of existing workers.

"The energy sector is undergoing huge change which also brings new and inspiring job opportunities. With a low carbon alternative to replace heating oil in development, there is a strong future ahead for liquid fuels and all those involved in its production and supply, alongside the skilled technicians who will continue to install and maintain the boilers it runs in."

OFTEC says that with an increased drive to be part of the net zero solution, especially among the younger generation, a career in the heating sector could also be very rewarding.

Research by YouGov shows that over three quarters of UK adults (78%) think it's important to play a role in the UK's journey to net zero, while 57% are interested in working for an organisation that actively contributes

to this goal. For young adults, aged 18-24 years, tackling climate change was the second most popular purpose they wanted for their job.

David Knipe continues: "With widescale advancements happening across the heating industry, joining the sector today offers an opportunity to help influence and drive action on climate change.

"The role of technicians will likely evolve as consumers seek advice on the most appropriate clean energy solution for their home and rely on a skilled person to expertly install and maintain the system they choose.

"The most sought-after technicians will therefore be competent across a range of technologies including liquid fuel systems, heat pumps, solar and biomass which are all supported by OFTEC's registration scheme.

Joining the sector today offers an opportunity to help influence and drive action on climate change

"For many homes currently heated by oil, the cheapest, most cost-effective solution will be low carbon liquid fuels, and the industry aims to roll out a 100% liquid biofuel to homes by 2035. This provides renewed career opportunities for existing liquid fuel technicians and inspiring possibilities for those new to the sector."

The National Grid report 'Building



David Knipe, OFTEC training manager

the net zero energy workforce' does, however, highlight a number of challenges to attracting and retaining the skills the future heating industry requires.

These include loss of talent due to a 'retirement crunch' with a fifth of the current workforce due to retire by 2030. There is also fierce competition for skills from other sectors including finance and technology, with too few young people choosing to study science, technology, engineering or maths (STEM) related subjects, and a lack of women working in the sector.

David Knipe concludes: "All these issues make it even more crucial that people of all ages are encouraged to understand the value of a role in the heating sector and the security and job satisfaction this can provide, both now and in the future.

"Apprenticeships continue to play an important role in attracting much needed talent but we need to do more to encourage greater diversity of age, gender and background. This will help secure the brightest minds and expert skills the heating sector needs to achieve net zero by 2050."

Discover more at: www.joinoftec.com

Range cooker course from Boilerserve

Boilerserve has introduced a new oil range cooker training course at its oil firing training and assessment centre in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, north Staffordshire.

The course, aimed at oil engineers wishing to expand into the range cooker market, covers Aga, Rayburn and Stanley range cookers together with twin pressure jet Nu-Way and

Ecoflam burners, retrofit burners, vaporising wick and vaporising fanned oil-firing range cookers for models from early 1994 to present day.

The course is limited to four students over four days and is specifically aimed at OFTEC-registered engineers.

Boilerserve technical director,

Ron Flint, told *Oil Installer* that the course has been specifically designed for OFTEC engineers wishing to expand their work into the range cooker market. "There is currently a shortage of engineers to carry out this work," he said.

Further details are available from Boilerserve, tel: 01782 825708 or email: Boilerserve@live.co.uk

More cock-ups from the world of oil heating!

The Gallery section in the last edition of *Oil Installer* seemed to concentrate on the devastating consequences of lack of professional maintenance to both oil storage tanks and boilers. This edition focuses more on pure cock-ups – bad workmanship, lazy shortcuts and quick, cheap and very temporary solutions to potentially serious problems!

OFTEC registered technicians who have their photographs featured on these pages will win a special prize – a generous 20% discount on orders from OFTEC Direct. So, for a chance to win this valuable discount, send in your snaps showing the good, the bad and the ugly sides of oil-related installations. Don't forget to include your name, address and OFTEC registration number, and, if published, you will qualify for the special OFTEC Direct discount! (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: Liz@oilinstaller.co.uk



When **Graeme Waters** of Northern Tank Services was called out recently to a suspected failed tiger loop, he really wished he had been born with longer arms! He just couldn't reach with his spanner to change the firings... and neither would the tiger loop come out from alongside the boiler as it had been compressed into the side panel.

Graeme takes up the story: "This was a boiler that had been installed about two years ago, and the installer had used the old pipework and existing tiger loop.

"You might be able to see from my photograph that he pushed the boiler to the wall trapping the tiger loop and fire valve, so when the next issue arose it would present a problem for anyone

who didn't have a remote spanner."

But Graeme would not be defeated... "We had to replace the oil-line from the tank and take it into the boiler from the front corner in order to get the boiler running and keep the customer warm."

Northern Tank Services offers oil users throughout northern England oil storage tanks, supplied and installed to building regulations. It is a family-owned company with all installers and specifiers holding current OFTEC certification.

John Flowers, of Cornwall-based Flowtech Heating & Plumbing Services, came across a particular challenge recently when upgrading an oil line. He explains: "When we cut a channel into the existing floor to remove the oil line from the tank we were decommissioning, we found copper pipe going into the concrete at both ends but what looked like sight tube from an oil tank joining the two sections of copper. To make matters worse the plastic pipe was pushed on to the copper by about 15mm!

"How this didn't leak! From all accounts it had been in place for 15 years or more."

John continues: "The job was carried out for a customer locally when his current oil tank was condemned as it has cracks in it. We have now re-piped from a newer tank that now serves two boilers."

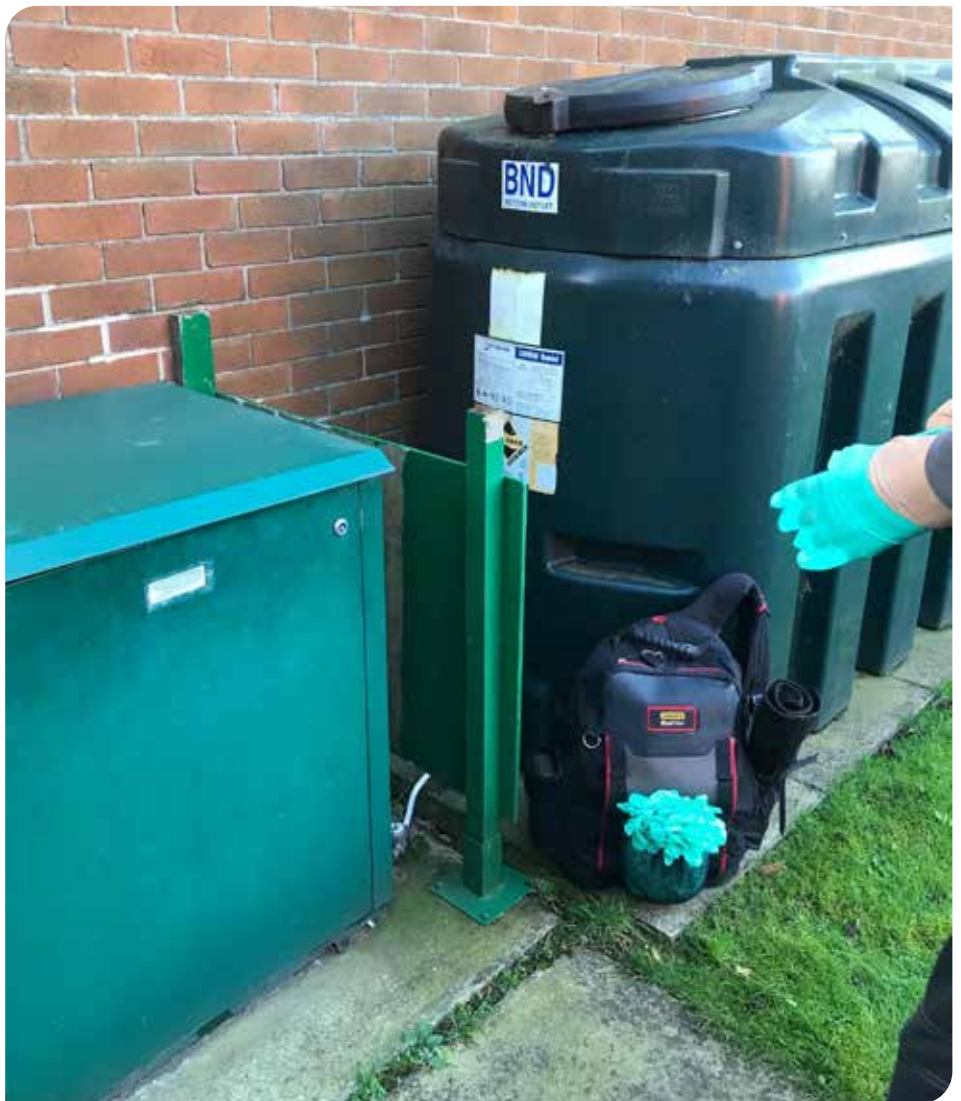
John's company is based on the Cornwall/Devon border and has recently changed its name from Flowtech Heating Services to Flowtech Heating & Plumbing Services because of the number of potential customers in the area who did not associate the company with general plumbing services! "We are a small team of four, carrying out installation, servicing and repairs to oil, gas and renewable installations. We also carry out full house pipe-outs and will even repair a dripping tap!" adds John.





During their long experience in the oil heating industry, **Rob** and **Samantha Fentiman** of RB Plumbing & Heating (York) Ltd in East Yorkshire, have witnessed many jobs which easily qualify for *Oil Installer's* Gallery pages – some good, but far too many bad and ugly!

As a result, Rob and Samantha have sent in snaps of three particular jobs which they decided to share with fellow professionals. "Job No. 1 – the customer reported that the boiler 'went bang'!" explains Samantha. But looking at the total lack of fire protection, she was surprised that the tank hadn't gone "bang" too! "The proximity of the boiler to the oil tank even melted the burner cover," she told *Oil Installer*.



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Fuel price commentary

In our last fuel price commentary, we highlighted the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Chinese consumption of oil, noting how this reduction in demand had led to a fall in the price of crude oil, which was beginning to feed through to heating oil in the UK. This certainly turned out to be prophetic, although in January we can hardly have imagined just how much of an impact the virus would go on to have around the world.

The immediate effect has seen the street price of kerosene fall to unprecedented

degree, reaching prices lower than at any time in the last decade. By the end of March, households were probably thinking they had done well to get quotes of around 35ppl; however, two weeks later, prices were as low as 22ppl, and still falling! For households able to take advantage of these low prices, it is a fantastic opportunity to fill tanks depleted after the winter. However, for those facing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19, it will only increase frustration.

So, are low prices a good thing for consumers? In the short term, the answer

seems to be yes. If it continues into the autumn, consumers will be able to refuel cheaply ahead of the next heating season. It will also ensure that oil heating remains competitive against other options. But in the longer term, the impact may be less positive. In its April bulletin, the IEA reported "Low prices threaten the stability of an industry that will remain central to the functioning of the global economy. Even with demand falling by a record amount this year, oil companies still face the challenges of investing to offset natural production declines and to meet future growth. So, 'enjoy it while it lasts' may be the message.

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 16-Apr20	April 19	April 20	Price change	% difference
Anthracite Grains	£1,153	£1,127	£1,209	£82	7.28%
Electricity (Economy 7)	£1,897	£2,022	£2,082	£60	2.97%
Gas (British Gas - condensing)	£985	£989	£938	-£51	-5.16%
LPG	£1,864	£1,874	£1,885	£11	0.59%
LPG (condensing)	£1,535	£1,542	£1,551	£9	0.58%
Oil	£1,201	£1,322	£983	-£339	-25.64%
Oil (condensing)	£984	£1,083	£808	-£275	-25.39%
Wood Pellets	£1,422	£1,531	£1,502	-£29	-1.89%
Air source heat pump radiators	£1,683	£1,802	£1,819	£17	0.94%
Air source heat pump underfloor	£1,389	£1,379	£1,392	£13	0.94%

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Average: Apr 16-Apr20	April 19	April 20	Price change	% difference
Anthracite Grains	£996	£1,027	£1,075	£48	4.67%
Electricity (Economy 7)	£1,648	£1,871	£2,034	£163	8.71%
Gas (Phoenix - condensing)	£937	£1,050	£987	-£63	-6.00%
LPG	£2,467	£2,708	£2,510	-£198	-7.31%
LPG (condensing)	£2,023	£2,219	£2,059	-£160	-7.21%
Oil	£1,173	£1,326	£1,123	-£203	-15.31%
Oil (condensing)	£961	£1,086	£922	-£164	-15.10%
Wood Pellets	£1,125	£1,118	£1,199	£81	7.25%
Air source heat pump radiators	£1,522	£1,654	£1,752	£98	5.93%
Air source heat pump underfloor	£1,257	£1,246	£1,320	£74	5.94%

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Average: Apr 16-Apr20	April 19	April 20	Price change	% difference
Anthracite Peas	€1,566	€1,628	€1,628	€0	0.00%
Electricity (Urban Night Saver)	€2,060	€2,142	€2,169	€27	1.26%
Gas (Bord Gais condensing)	€1,351	€1,420	€1,378	-€42	-2.96%
LPG	€2,740	€3,135	€2,998	-€137	-4.37%
LPG (condensing)	€2,254	€2,574	€2,463	-€111	-4.31%
Oil	€1,604	€1,940	€1,408	-€532	-27.42%
Oil (condensing)	€1,313	€1,585	€1,154	-€431	-27.19%
Wood Pellets	€1,357	€1,398	€1,404	€6	0.43%
Air source heat pump radiators	€1,809	€1,875	€1,898	€23	1.23%
Air source heat pump underfloor	€1,492	€1,476	€1,492	€16	1.08%

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

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