

# Oil Installer

News and views from an evolving heating world



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# Fighting for the future of liquid fuel heating

Because OFTEC doesn't always blow its own trumpet, we are sometimes criticised for not doing enough to defend the oil heating industry. This is an understandable concern – there's a lot at stake. I want to take this opportunity to reassure Oil Installer readers that, with our industry partners, OFTEC is pursuing every possible opportunity to argue that liquid fuels must be an essential part of future heating. And, as you can read on page 16, we are working on a wide range of projects and our efforts are making progress.



Some have asked why OFTEC is putting resource into heat pump training, rather than defending the oil heating sector. The answer is simple. Firstly, it's the right thing to do – it's a service that heating technicians have asked us for – and, by doing it, we are better placed to fight for liquid fuels. This may sound counter-intuitive, so let me explain.

Every heat policy announcement by the Government since 2010 has made it clear it thinks heat pumps will have an important role in the future. We know that they won't work everywhere, but it's far better that OFTEC demonstrates support by offering heat pump training and registration options, rather than simply resisting what's happening.

By actively supporting, we are then in a much more credible position to argue that renewable liquid fuels like HVO are not only also needed but have an important role to play. Were we to attempt to obstruct the roll-out of heat pumps or only focus on liquid fuels, it would confirm the false impression that we are simply a fossil fuel organisation acting purely out of self-interest. The truth could not be more different. At OFTEC we want decarbonisation to succeed in a way that is fair and affordable, and that means a future where renewable liquid fuels play a vital role alongside other low carbon heating options.

**Paul Rose**

Paul Rose,  
CEO, OFTEC

# Kehelland report reveals the need for HVO – and how to make it work

As part of our demonstration of renewable liquid fuels for heating, OFTEC and UKIFDA have made a detailed comparison of the heat decarbonisation options for 17 homes in the Cornish village of Kehelland that are participating in the bigger Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) project.

We compared the capital and running costs for converting the homes from oil heating to either HVO or an air source heat pump (ASHP) – which is the Government's preferred decarbonisation option – modelled over a 15-year period.

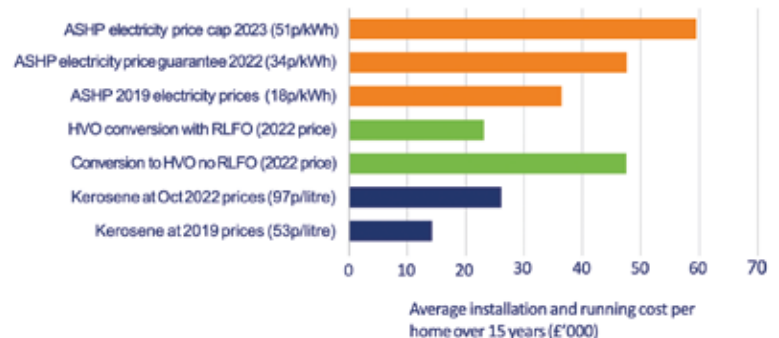
To assess the installation cost of the heat pump option, the Government's own heat pump checker web tool was used for each home. Worryingly, it showed that all 17 homes needed other energy efficiency improvements along with the heat pump install, resulting in an average installation cost of over £23,000. By comparison, conversion to HVO cost around £500 – a much more affordable option for the householders.

The benefits of the energy efficiency work meant that the heat demand for the electric heating option was reduced, and the superior efficiency of the heat pump meant that running costs were reduced, although this is ultimately dependent on the electricity price.

However, the modelling showed that, with appropriate government support, HVO was cheapest overall, and was the only option that had roughly comparable costs to the existing oil heating. As a result of these findings OFTEC and UKIFDA have been able to tell government that two simple policy changes would enable HVO to be offered as a viable and attractive alternative to an air source heat pump for existing oil heated buildings:

1. Bring the fuel duty rate of HVO for heating in line with that of kerosene heating oil.
2. Create a mechanism that would extend or mirror for home heating the current provisions within the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) which already results in a HVO price reduction for users of vehicles, mobile machinery and aircraft.

**Average cost of decarbonisation options for homes in Kehelland village compared to existing heating (kerosene)**



# Building regulations move to a new home

The Grenfell Tower tragedy has brought a renewed focus on building standards and safety. One of the outcomes of the Dame Judith Hackett review was the introduction of the Building Safety Act and the formation of a stronger and independent regulator under the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) called the Building Safety Regulator. The remit of the new Building Safety Act is to set out an ambitious set of reforms for the built environment, business and society (including for residents).

To compliment changes established by the Act, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and HSE have reached agreement on the transition of technical policy from DLUHC to HSE and this includes the



Building Regulations and Competent Person Schemes (CPS) like OFTEC's registration scheme.

In a statement from Peter Baker (chief inspector of buildings, HSE): "The new BSR is committed to taking over the governance of CPS 'as is' and sees self-certification of controlled service work having an important role in its new regime."

OFTEC is committed to working with the new BSR and helping shape the future of building services work via our training and registration schemes. You can read more about how the Building Safety Act is likely to impact on technicians on page 10.

BSR will only have governance in English jurisdictions, and the change will take effect from April this year. The Welsh Government will retain direct control of Building Regulation and CPS in Wales.

## Did you miss OFTEC's successful webinar about the future of off-grid heating?

If you missed our webinar about the future of off-gas grid heating and need to get up to speed, don't worry, you can still access the recording online. The hour-long webinar was broadcast in April and featured staff from OFTEC's technical team and consultant, Joe Bath. It focused on the Government's current heat decarbonisation strategy and discussed the role of heat pumps and renewable liquid fuels in future off-grid home heating. The training and registration options for installers wishing to diversify into heat pumps, and OFTEC's HVO demonstration project were among the topics covered in detail. Over 180 people watched the discussion live.

The webinar is still available to view for all OFTEC registered technician on the OFTEC portal under the webinar section. You can also view older webinars there too, including our reviews of recent Part L changes.



Josh Leaney

## New staff

### Josh Leaney

Josh has joined OFTEC's IT department on a part-time basis and will be assisting in all IT matters. Josh, who is currently studying to obtain his Computer Science degree, also enjoys working on his own programming projects, which are based on his studies. His passions include spending time outdoors and flying his drone to capture beautiful views of Suffolk from above.



**David Knipe**  
Training Manager



**Jon King**  
Registration Manager

**OFTEC's new heat pump training -  
delivering essential skills for a growing market**

**Installer Training Theatre**

Tues 27th June 11am  
Weds 28th June 3pm  
Thur 29th June noon



# OFTEC's new heat pump training to feature in InstallerSHOW event programme

OFTEC will be presenting about our new heat pump training options each day at the InstallerSHOW.

Heat pumps are certain to play an important role in future heating, but for the transition to succeed it's essential that installers have the necessary skills to get the best out of these systems. Developed by a team of industry experts, OFTEC's new suite of heat pump training courses, which cover air source, ground source and heat pump system design, will prepare you with the knowledge you need.

Join the talks, which will be at the installer training theatre of the InstallerSHOW, to find out how our training modules and registration services can help you diversify your business and take advantage of the opportunities offered by government funding schemes such as the Boiler Upgrade Scheme and the Department of Energy Strategy and Net Zero (DESNZ) Home Decarbonisation Skills Training Competition grant.

The talks will take place on:

- Tuesday 27th June - 11am
- Wednesday 28th June - 3pm
- Thursday 29th June - 12pm

Talks will be led by David Knipe (OFTEC's training manager) or Jonathan King (OFTEC's registration services manager).

The InstallerSHOW at the NEC Birmingham is the UK's largest event for installers and specifiers of air, water, heat and energy technologies. As well as presenting, OFTEC will also have a stand (i22) where we'll be showcasing OFTEC's role as a one-stop registration solution for all off-gas heating technicians, whether you work in traditional or renewable technologies.

We look forward to seeing you at InstallerSHOW 2023 in June. Registration is free and tickets can be booked at <https://installer-2022.reg.buzz/oftec>

## Electronic or paper? How to get the version of Oil Installer you want!

Oil Installer is now available electronically and as a paper magazine. If you're reading this issue of Oil Installer electronically and wish you'd received a paper copy of the magazine, the good news is that, if you are an OFTEC member, you are eligible to opt to receive the next issue as a paper magazine completely free of charge. All you need to do is let OFTEC know by contacting our marketing team by email at [marketing@oftec.org](mailto:marketing@oftec.org) or look out for link to our online option form in our regular e-newsletters.

If you're reading the paper version and happy to receive the magazine electronically, the only thing you need to do is to visit [oilinstaller.co.uk/subscribe](http://oilinstaller.co.uk/subscribe), complete the simple log-in process to create your account and you'll receive a notification each time a new issue goes live.

Alongside the changes to the magazine, the Oil Installer website has had a complete makeover. It's a great place to keep up to date with industry news and, if you haven't checked it out yet, please take a look. We hope you find it interesting and welcome your feedback.

To view the subscriber content, which OFTEC registered technicians have free access to, and access the digital magazine, you'll need to set up an account, but it's a simple login process and only takes a few moments to complete.

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# OFTEC competent person scheme 21 years old

Can you remember back to 2002? It was a good year for Arsenal, winning another league and cup double but also a good year for the oil heating sector when HM Government (in the form of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) first recognised officially that technicians on the OFTEC registration scheme can have an exemption from applying for a building notice.

Under Statutory Instrument No.440 (dated 28/02/2002) there was to be a new schedule 2A to the Building Regulations 2000 that now listed OFTEC alongside FENSA (Fenestration), HETAS (solid fuel), CORGI (gas), and the Institute of Plumbing (drainage/plumbing), as suitable registration schemes for each sector.

The recognition, that came into force on 1st April that year, reflected the professionalism and expertise an OFTEC registered technician held in installing oil appliances and storage tanks to the Building Regulations, and leaving installation and commissioning documentation for an audit trail. However, it was not until 2005 that the work notification system was set up with local authorities, enabling registered technicians to notify their installations electronically via OFTEC directly to their local authority.



OFTEC would like to thank all Oil Installer readers for supporting us during the last 21 years, and for being one of the 20,000 heating business or 30,000 individual technicians registered during this time. Your collective work has resulted in the self-certification of over half a million heating equipment installations to date. Keep up the good work!



## Clean heat market mechanism

In April 2023, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) issued a consultation on its proposed heat market mechanism. Its purpose is to support the development of the UK market for heat pumps, and the plans directly impact on boiler manufacturers.

The idea is to force boiler manufacturers to make heat pumps or pay other manufacturers to do so on their behalf. This is achieved by making the manufacturers obtain tradeable credits – for the heat pumps they make or those made on their behalf – as a proportion of their total boiler production. The scheme is scheduled to begin in 2024/25 and that year a manufacturer would



**Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero**

need credits equalling 4% of their total boiler production. In 2025/26, that would rise to 6%, and the requirement is expected to increase further in future years.

The plan applies to all types of fossil fuel boilers and to all manufacturers that make more than 1,000 appliances each year. Hybrid systems

are also included, and a heat pump/fossil fuel boiler hybrid system would be worth half a credit.

The scheme is controversial but shows the Government is doubling down on its efforts to boost the heat pump market. It claims that the proposed mechanism will create a market incentive to grow the numbers of heat pumps installed in existing premises each year, providing industry with a clear, long-term policy framework for investment and innovation. The manufacturers argue that they will be forced to make or obtain credits for heat pumps whether there is a market for them or not, and that the scheme could make boilers more expensive.



# OFTEC compliance

OFTEC's compliance team works hard to ensure that all registered businesses and technicians uphold the highest standards. However, each quarter a few are suspended or have their registration revoked. This can be for various reasons and means they no longer have the right to display themselves as OFTEC registered.

From the 9th Jan 2023 - 13th April 2023 a total of 29 businesses had their membership revoked\*.

The revoked businesses are:

Company No.	Business Name
3823	Southwest Oil Heating Specialists Ltd
14324	Peter D Smith Limited
9890	Irvine Anderton Plumbing
3778	Aquatherm Ltd
102649	Mick Berry Plumbing & Heating Ltd
7769	Craig S Taylor Plumbing Services Ltd
12941	Classical Gas Ltd
500917	Chris Devon and Sons
14080	Watters Plumbing & Heating
1011	Beatty Rose
103770	DJH Plumbing and Heating
500810	Anderson Heating & Plumbing
500559	DFC Plumbing and Heating Ltd
500675	AA Cooper Ltd
500647	Essential Plumbing and Heating
103916	Leandro Silva Plumbing Ltd
500505	T2 Southern Ltd T2 Southern Ltd
3171	Lindsey Plumbing
103058	John Read Chimney Sweep
102082	The Gas Man Services
104515	Think Gas Heating Services Ltd
500161	ADCO-Chester Heating-Plumbing-Electrical-Maintenance
102743	Flaming Gas Services
8380	Stephen Duncan Heating & Plumbing Services Ltd
101734	R King Plumbing & Heating
101659	Multi Plumb Ltd
101543	M P H Boilers & Sweeps
101699	G & S Plumbing and Heating Ltd
103945	Baw Installations

\*Businesses do have the right to appeal decisions regarding their status made by OFTEC.

# OFTEC takes the HVO message to the heart of government

In April, OFTEC and UKIFDA took the renewable liquid fuel message to the heart of UK government by holding a drop-in session in Parliament for MPs.

The aim of the event was two-fold. Firstly, we wanted to tell MPs of our concerns regarding the Government's proposed heat policy and what the impact could be on voters in their area. Secondly, we wanted to showcase our solution, tell them about the work we've been doing, and explain what they can do to help us.

The event was carefully timed to achieve maximum impact, just ahead of the local elections and before the Energy Bill was set to return to Parliament. The cost of decarbonisation, and particularly the high cost of installing heat pumps in older buildings is a concern for voters. There are increasing calls for other options to be supported and amendments to the Energy Bill, which are being championed by the Cornish MP, George Eustice, could enable HVO to be used in heating at a price close to kerosene. This would make it an idea low-carbon choice for many rural households.

The event was a great success. Around 27 MPs or their researchers attended, which was an excellent result, and many others who couldn't attend contacted us for information and to pledge support.



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# Don't forget

Changes to the Building Safety Act are set to increase the potential penalties on anyone who fails to notify building work, which includes heating installation work. Building work and associated trades are tightly controlled in the UK through a framework designed to ensure that work is carried out to an appropriate standard. It's vital that heating installers understand their legal responsibilities and comply with the Building Regulations. We have published the following information to ensure you are accurately informed.

## What work is covered by Building Regulation?

The Building Regulations 2010 cover the construction and extension of buildings and many types of alteration projects, including the installation or replacement of a heating system, adding extra radiators to a heating system, or the installation or replacement of an oil storage tank. Further details for work in England can be found in Approved Document J, but keep in mind that the requirements for heating and hot water systems span a number of approved documents.

## How is compliance with Building Regulations achieved?

The route to compliance with the regulations differs across the UK. In England and Wales, the Channel Isles and Isle of Man, there are three options:

- Submitting a building notice and obtaining approval from local authority building control
- Use of a private approved building inspector.
- Use a tradesperson registered with a competent person scheme.

Heating technicians that are registered with a government approved competent person scheme can self-certify certain types of building work, including heating installations. Membership of a competent person scheme is voluntary – you can still use local authority or private approved inspectors if you prefer. However, while membership of a competent person scheme is voluntary, the need to comply with the regulations is not – it is a legal requirement.

Different rules apply in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland – see the online version of this article for links to more information.

## What is a Competent Person Scheme?

Competent Person Schemes were introduced by the UK Government to allow individuals and enterprises to self-certify that their work complies with the Building Regulations as an alternative to applying to your local authority or using an approved inspector.

A competent person scheme operator – for example OFTEC – must comply with the DLUHC conditions of authorisation. There are 21 conditions that must be met, and compliance is confirmed through regular annual inspections. From April 2023, the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), which sits under the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), took over responsibility for

the management of Building Regulation system and competent persons schemes from DLUHC.

A recognised competent person must be registered with a scheme that has been approved by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). To be registered with a competent person scheme, a heating technician must demonstrate that they meet the relevant minimum technical competence requirements. They must have passed an OFTEC – or industry approved – personal certification assessment in the scope of registration being applied for and provide a current certificate of technical achievement. They must also undergo an on-site inspection.

## What happens if you fail to comply with regulations?

If applicable installation work is not certified in accordance with Building Regulations, or compliant, the installer may be subject to enforcement action. A local authority has a general duty to enforce the building regulations in its area and will seek to do so by informal means wherever possible. If informal enforcement does not achieve compliance with the regulations the local authority has formal enforcement powers which it may use in appropriate cases.

If a person carrying out building work contravenes the Building Regulations, the local authority may prosecute them in the Magistrates' Court where an unlimited fine may be imposed (sections 35 and 35A of the Building Act 1984). This will soon be strengthened by the Building Safety Act, with up to two-years imprisonment being added to the sanctions available to the courts.

This action will usually be taken against the person carrying out the work, for example the builder, installer or main contractor. However, alternatively, or in addition, the local authority may serve an enforcement notice on the building owner requiring alteration or removal of work which contravenes the regulations (section 36 of the 1984 Act). If the owner does not comply with the notice the local authority has the power to undertake the work itself and recover the costs of doing so from the owner.

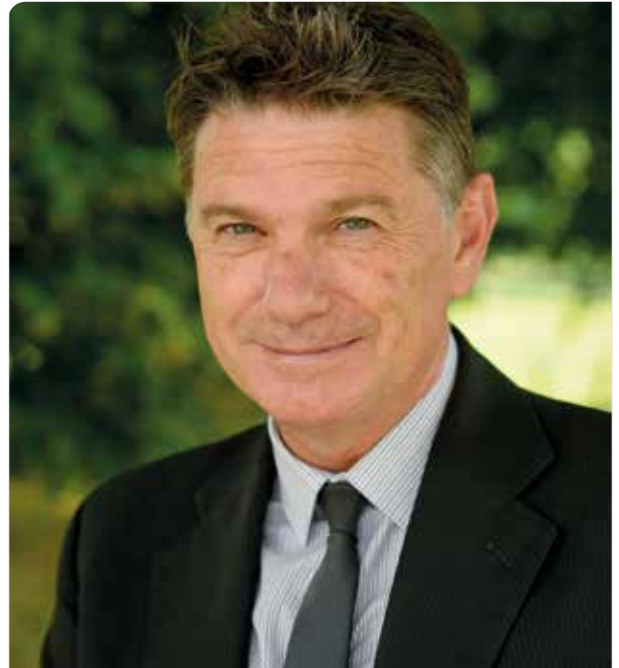
Uncertified work often comes to light when a house is sold and the owner is forced to sort the matter out.

# to notify!

## Statements from OFTEC and Local Authority Building Control.

**Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC registration director** said "Building Regulations are primarily there to safeguard consumers and ensure that work is carried out to a satisfactory standard. The framework in place to achieve this is tried and tested. Competent persons schemes provide a way for heating technicians to self-certify the installation work they carry out. While other routes to compliance are available, anyone who thinks it is acceptable to work outside the Building Control system by not getting their installation work certified is letting their customers down and, potentially, breaking the law".

**Statement by Local Authority Building Control (LABC).** A person who intends to carry out building work (which includes the provision or extension of a controlled service or fitting such as those governed by Part J – Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems) must apply to the local authority, unless other routes to notification specified in the building regulations, such as the competent person schemes, are used or required instead.



Adrian Lightwood, OFTEC registration director

An advertisement for the Harlequin Oil Tank App. The background shows a hand holding a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which includes a search bar, a list of products, and a 'Shop Now' button. To the left is a large yellow banner with the Harlequin Tank Centre logo and a list of app features. To the right is a blue speech bubble with a QR code and the text 'Register Now'. The bottom of the ad features a blue bar with contact information.

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# A return to Grant for Gareth Grinsell

Grant UK welcomes back Gareth Grinsell, who has been appointed as its new area sales manager for South West England. Gareth was formerly part of Grant's technical team so brings a wealth of experience to his new role.

throughout his career, Gareth will be on hand to provide the tailored advice that customers need for their next heating project. He will also be working with the company's regional sales manager for the West and sales support engineers to deliver comprehensive sales and technical support throughout his area.

Gareth will be working with installers, merchants and other heating professionals throughout the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Avon. He will be on hand to provide sales and product support for all of Grant's sustainable heating solutions, from its HVO compatible oil-fired boilers and award-winning Aerona<sup>3</sup> air source heat pumps to its underfloor heating systems and other complementary technologies.

Gareth started his career in air conditioning and refrigeration after completing his qualifications at college. For over 10 years, Gareth specialised in the heating and air conditioning sector, which included installing air source heat pumps when the technology was in its early generation of development.

In March 2008, Gareth joined Grant's technical team and spent his first three years with the company working as a technical advisor, before transitioning to its field service team where he was field engineer for the Midlands, South West England and Wales. In 2018, Gareth left Grant to set up his own business, which focused on oil and heat pump installations and maintenance.

Having been an installer and providing both pre and post installation support



"I'm really looking forward to this exciting new chapter," comments Gareth. "Having worked for Grant for over ten years and then installing Grant boilers and heat pumps for the past five years, I have a solid understanding of the products and what support customers need. I am looking forward to providing on-site technical support, assisting with designs and quotations, and building relationships with existing and new customers in my area."

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# Hounsfeld speaks out in favour of HVO

Andrew Hounsfeld of Hounsfeld Boilers shares his thoughts on the Government's decarbonisation policy.

We all know that politicians very rarely answer the questions they've been asked, and we've probably all shouted at the screen during Question Time when an MP's reply sidesteps the question. However, sometimes by repeating the Government stance the politician underlines how little they know about the subject, and how a government's course is set and not geared to even think about turning slightly off target to get a better outcome.

In the oil heating industry, we've all been delighted that MP George Eustice's Renewable Liquid Heating Fuel Bill has been progressing slowly through Parliament for the last few months. The bill seeks to revise/reduce the duty on HVO, which is a concern we've been raising in the trade press for a while.

We were recently contacted by James Hibbert-Hingston, a heating engineer with 35 years-experience in the industry who installs heat-pumps, hybrid boilers and liquid fuel boilers, so has vast experience and working knowledge in those areas. James had contacted his local MP, calling on him to support George Eustice's bill and HVO in general. James was very disappointed in his reply which was a masterclass in not answering the question and merely repeating the Government stance. This shows a lack understanding about the potential of HVO and demonstrates the Government's focus on heat pumps. James asked us to look at his MP's reply and give our thoughts as we're a passionate oil boiler manufacturer that has been campaigning about the benefits of HVO and producing HVO ready boilers for a long time.

When an MP states that: "Buildings are responsible for around 30% of our national emissions, and decarbonising homes and buildings not only helps the UK work towards net zero emissions, but also creates an unparalleled opportunity for job creation and innovation," it is stating the obvious.

It also underlines how important it is to get up to speed on the

decarbonising process. At the moment the UK has no ability to produce HVO fuel and relies on imports from Europe (where production plants are increasing in number each year) or from the US and Canada following the recent removal of the import tariffs. If the Government embraced and acknowledged the opportunity that HVO provides, then we could have our own HVO processing plants, creating skilled jobs in the UK and providing economic benefits to the country, while also making the UK's heating supply more secure.

The MP continued: "One of the hardest things to decarbonise is heat and heat pumps are central to achieving net zero. The Government takes the role heat pumps can have in driving down carbon emissions very seriously and has set an ambitious target of 600,000 heat pump installations a year by 2028. A £60 million Heat Pump Ready programme will help to support reaching this target and provide funding for pioneering heat pump technologies."

This is all well and good, but reducing the duty on HVO, as the Eustice bill is trying to achieve, would be a massive support to existing off-grid homes and help to decarbonise their heating with immediate effect. Also, providing grants to convert older boilers to run on HVO would cost less in grants and would mean those homes could keep their existing heating infrastructure.

Exactly how much money this could save the Government is clear, as the MP states: "To encourage consumers to install low-carbon alternatives, a new £450 million three-year Boiler Upgrade Scheme will offer households £5,000 for low-carbon heating systems, such as heat pumps and £6,000 for ground source heat pumps. This scheme is open to domestic properties, running from 2022 to 2025."

Research by OFTEC shows that the cost of converting existing non-HVO ready oil boilers to HVO would cost around £600 per home, considerably less than £6k, so why doesn't it look to save over £5k per home when there are, according to the Energy Saving Trust, over 4m off grid homes in the UK? Of course, there would



need to be an HVO awareness raising campaign, but there would still be real savings to be had in the Government's spending.

The MP does make a short reference to HVO but seems to be unaware of OFTEC's research and two-year trials: "The Government recognises that biofuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil biodiesel may play a role in future off-gas-grid decarbonisation, particularly for properties that are not suitable for a heat pump. However, further evidence is needed to consider what role these biofuels could play and to develop the policy framework which would support such a role."

The Government already has all the proof it needs from OFTEC:

- HVO is low carbon
- HVO is 100% sustainable.
- HVO reduces emissions by 90% when it replaces kerosene for heating.

We are taking some positives from the fact that the wheels seem to be turning in the right direction for HVO, although slowly! We remain concerned that there are still MPs who appear not to fully understand how HVO can play an important role in decarbonising off-grid homes and seem to be unaware of the results of OFTEC's research projects. We also believe the Government is still placing too much faith in heat pumps being the only solution to solve the heating and decarbonising crisis. Heat pumps clearly have an important role to play in the solution, but they are not the only solution, and one size does not fit all. HVO offers an affordable, easy solution for millions of off-grid homes to enjoy affordable warm homes whilst reducing their carbon footprint and we need to ensure all MPs are aware of this.



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# We want you on our team

OFTEC has immediate vacancies in North Wales, Midlands, East Anglia and Central England for our expanding team of field-based contracted inspectors. Applicants must have an in-depth experience of off-gas grid heating technologies, including renewables under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS).

OFTEC inspectors carry out the valuable work of auditing heating business and checking individual competence through on-site visits. Working under a service level agreement this is a great opportunity to be your own boss, represent a long-established registration scheme operator in your area, and help maintain the high standards of work our registrants provide to consumers.

To discuss this opportunity, please contact John Vinter, Inspection Services Manager, on 01473 618 558 or email [jvinter@oftec.org](mailto:jvinter@oftec.org).

**[www.oftec.org/careers](http://www.oftec.org/careers)**



# Grant promotes biodiversity at Swindon HQ

Grant UK has been focusing on biodiversity at its new headquarters in Swindon, where the company has planted an abundance of bulbs and wildflowers, as well as installing wildlife-friendly features throughout the site.

When Grant transformed its new premises last year, the company made a commitment to select sustainably sourced materials throughout the redevelopment project. With the Grant team now settled in at the new headquarters, attention has focused on the outside space to make the site's outdoor areas as environmentally friendly as possible. To maximise the natural green spaces at its head office, the company has enhanced the biodiversity on-site with the first flourish of flowers now coming to life.

The first phase of the biodiversity programme commenced earlier this year with the planting of over 4,000 bulbs which have just started to bloom. Laurel, lavender and rhododendrons have been planted surrounding the patio areas where employees can sit and relax during their breaks. Laurel trees have also been planted elsewhere on the site to create additional pockets of nature and green areas amongst the urban spaces.



Compost bins have been made from recycled pallets and these will enable Grant to collect and compost the fallen leaves and cut grass from the site, compost which will then be used in

the new growing season when fresh plants and bulbs are ready to be sewn. At the end of March, wildflower seeds were also planted and these will provide a natural haven for bees, butterflies and more when the flowers grow. Throughout next month, Grant will also be taking part in "No Mow May" allowing the grass areas on the site to grow, encouraging the daisies, dandelions and clover to flower which will boost pollination.

"Making our Swindon headquarters a great space to work meant creating engaging indoor spaces and inspiring outside areas," comments Anna Wakefield, head of marketing.

"By focusing on biodiversity, we have not only made some beautiful outdoor areas for our employees to enjoy but we have started an exciting programme which will make the site a wildlife-friendly place too. The extensive planting of flowers and trees as well as the installation of bird boxes, hedgehog runs and a bug hotel, have already transformed the outside space, and we have seen an increase in foxes, squirrels and hedgehogs.

"Moving forward, we will further invest in the area and as part of Grant Project Zero, our carbon reduction company-wide programme, Grant will continue to strive towards a more sustainable future in every aspect of the business."



The new Williams Trade Counter West Drayton team

## 50 at 50!

With a bit of a buzz and a lot of bacon butties, Williams launched its 50th trade counter, on the Crown Trade Park in West Drayton, earlier this year. This is Williams' seventh new branch in 12 months and tops off its commemorative birthday year in style.

Branch manager, Lee Townsend and his team welcomed local tradespeople in with great special offers, goody bags and lots of exciting prize giveaways.

Founded in May 1972, Williams is celebrating 50 years of supplying plumbing and heating essentials and has been rapidly expanding in the last few years, with West Drayton following hot on the heels of openings in Cambridge, Minworth, Coventry, Oxford, Smethwick and Cheltenham in the last 12 months.

As a strictly trade-only merchant, Williams is renowned for its understanding and support of plumbers, heating engineers and bathroom installers who in return appreciate the high levels of stock holding, a single-price policy and awesome customer care, which has earned the company a 5-star rating on Trust Pilot.

The West Drayton trade counter is open Monday to Friday from 7am to 5pm, making it easy for customers to pop in around jobs or, if supplies are needed on site, Lee and his team provide a free same day delivery service to the local area. Account holders can also shop by telephone or email outside of opening times, or quickly and efficiently online anytime, for in-store collection or delivery 7 days a week at home or on site.

Commercial director, Patrick Skilton, said: "We're very proud to have opened our 50th trade counter, and our eighth London branch, giving our loyal and new customer base another highly experienced team to support them."



West Drayton Trade Counter's first customer, Chris Cox from Applied Heating Solutions Ltd cuts the opening ribbon.

# HVO and the Future Ready Fuel campaign

To achieve net zero by 2050 means decarbonising the emissions from heating – no easy task. The Government expects heat pumps to play a lead role in the transition and they are certainly important. But a strategy of picking one technology winner could result in slower progress. Why? Because one size does not fit all when it comes to heating buildings and heat pumps are expensive to retrofit. There's a risk many households will try to hold on to their existing system for as long as possible.

OFTEC is among an increasing number of influential voices suggesting to government that it's better to support all viable options. This gives people greater choice and will make the pathway to net zero cheaper and easier – which means it's more likely the 2050 goal will be achieved.

Liquid fuels such as HVO are a key technology but are not currently supported by the Government for heating, although the Heat and Buildings Strategy makes it clear it has not been ruled out. OFTEC, together with colleagues from the fuel distribution trade association UKIFDA, has made a concerted effort to convince the Government it needs to change its thinking. Not all this work has been reported in Oil Installer, so here's a roundup of all the key developments.

## HVO field demonstration project

Over the last three heating seasons 135 homes and non-domestic buildings have been successfully converted to run on HVO. The project has been costly – the HVO is supplied to the participants free of charge – but hugely valuable.

**Key benefits:** We have been able to show conclusively that HVO works in existing appliances and that the conversion is easy and cheap to do. We've also generated a huge amount of media coverage and shown MPs and policy makers that it's a solution they should support.

## Comparing conversion cost – HVO vs heat pumps

17 homes in the Cornish village of Kehelland that participated in the HVO demonstration project were used to model decarbonisation costs in detail over a 15-year period. All the Kehelland homes – which were chosen at random – needed additional insulation work along with the heat pump, bringing the average installation cost up to over £23,000 – well beyond the means of



most households. HVO worked out cheaper, even when compared over 15 years, providing it was backed by an incentive scheme – see article on page 6.

**Key benefits:** the report shows that compared to installing an air source heat pump, conversion to HVO could be cheaper for many off-grid households and makes a convincing case for why it needs support. In April the report was presented to MPs at an event in Parliament.

## HVO conversion handbook

The HVO demonstration project provided the opportunity to develop a detailed handbook for technicians to use when converting systems to HVO.

**Key benefit:** We now have a key resource ready for when HVO is given the green light.

## Portland fuel availability report

A key government concern is whether there's enough HVO available. UKIFDA commissioned Portland Analytics to carry out a detailed study on the availability of the sustainable feedstocks needed for HVO.

**Key benefit:** the report shows conclusively that there is sufficient feedstock and production capacity available to meet all the anticipated requirements until at least 2030. The Government has been given the report as part of the evidence we provided to inform the forthcoming biomass strategy.

## Publicly Available Specification (PAS) for HVO

The sustainability of renewable liquid fuels is a key government concern. It must be manufactured using recycled materials from verifiable waste feedstocks. OFTEC has developed a PAS to ensure that only fuels that meet the correct sustainability specification are used for heating.

**Key benefit:** The PAS demonstrates to government that the heating industry takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and has a solution.

## Emissions testing

Air quality is an important issue. OFTEC commissioned research from a leading test house that proved that the NOx emissions from HVO are similar to kerosene.

**Key benefit:** The research shows that HVO has much lower NOx emissions compared to the Government's current preferred alternative to heat pumps – solid biomass – another good reason to support it.

## Audience research

Research by the Future Ready Fuel campaign has shown that there is overwhelming consumer support for renewable liquid fuels to be an option supported by the Government. Well over 90% who responded want the option to try HVO.

**Key benefit:** The views of voters really matter to politicians, so this kind of evidence is very powerful. It was a visit to the Kehelland site, where he met many local residents, that convinced Cornish MP, George Eustice to launch his 10 Minute Rule Bill in Parliament.

## The Future Ready Fuel campaign

The campaign website has been visited by tens of thousands of oil heating users and many have signed up for the regular newsletters and sent letters to their MP.

**Key benefit:** It builds vital support. The Government's plans to decarbonise off-gas grid heating are currently 'under the radar', so the Future Ready Fuel campaign helps to explain what's happening and the role renewable liquid fuels can play.

## Lobbying

Good lobbyists are expensive but can really make a difference. OFTEC is working with lobbying agencies in the UK and in Ireland.

**Key benefit:** Lobbying agencies play an important role in developing an effective campaign strategy and getting our message to the right people at the heart of government at the right time.

# How you can help

If you haven't already taken action, please do these two things NOW:

1. Tell your customers about the Government's decarbonisation plans and how they will be affected – contact [marketing@oftec.org](mailto:marketing@oftec.org) for free information leaflets if you need them.
2. Tell your customers about HVO and that they can help ensure renewable liquid fuels are supported by writing to their MP – downloadable template letters, and the answers to most questions, can be found on the Future Ready Fuel website: [futurereadyfuel.info](http://futurereadyfuel.info)

**The future of liquid fuel heating hangs in the balance. Don't think a ban will never happen.**



## Looking for heat pump training? Ask about OFTEC courses

Demand for heat pumps is growing, so now is the perfect time to take full advantage with OFTEC's heat pump training courses.

### Scopes of registration:

- OFT21-504A Installation, commissioning and servicing of air source heat pumps.
- OFT21-504G - Installation, commissioning and servicing of ground source heat pumps
- OFT21-504D - Design of heat pump systems.

On completion, heating businesses can access OFTEC's heat pump CPS and MCS registration schemes, allowing you to undertake installations funded by the Boiler Upgrade Scheme and putting your business in prime position to benefit from the growth of the heat pump market.

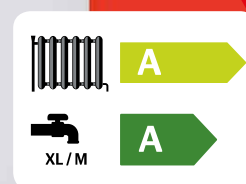
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# Worcester Bosch launches new Savvy Series

Worcester Bosch has launched its new Savvy Series to support installers in guiding homeowners through the various options and advantages around future green home heating technologies.

With the cost of living impacting the lifestyles of millions of UK homeowners, the new content series is part of an extensive push by Worcester Bosch to deliver quality and impactful energy saving tips to homeowners to help curb the cost of household spend and energy usage. It will also provide much needed guidance for consumers to empower them when it comes to choosing future greener heating systems for their homes.

The Savvy Series will be fronted by TV presenter and consumer champion Angellica Bell, with each video revealing new tips on how homeowners can either save money in the face of skyrocketing household bills or gain a better understanding of greener heating options for their home.

The series also simplifies greener home heating, giving the viewer a better understanding of the future

technology that may be available to them. The home heating solutions covered include hydrogen, heat pumps and hybrid systems.

The below topics are available on the Worcester Bosch YouTube channel and its website.

- Being the boss of your home heating and saving on energy bills
- Getting to grips with hybrids
- Hearing about heat pumps
- The benefits of home air conditioning
- Hello to hydrogen

Savvy Series presenter Angellica Bell said: "Many of us don't realise just how energy-intensive our homes can be, and as a result, how much it can chip away at our finances. By making a few quick changes to the way we set-up our homes, it can really make a huge difference. I hope the Savvy Series helps homeowners make savings on their energy bills as well as guide them to making greener heating choices."

Martyn Bridges, director of technical services at Worcester Bosch, added: "The cost-of-living crisis shows no

signs of stopping, leaving millions of us with rising household bills – and with that, mounting pressures enforcing us to consider cut-backs in all parts of our lives to cope.

"We're delighted to have Angellica as the face of our Savvy Series. Her involvement will help us reach more homeowners with both energy-saving tips and the right guidance to help them transition to the greener heating future."

Richard Lloyd, a Cannock-based installer, commented: "Future home heating solutions – what they are, and how they can help – is something customers often ask us about. The landscape is complex for those unfamiliar with the various options, and it can be quite scary to get your head around.

"This series will really support the industry in communicating to customers in new, engaging and simplistic terms not only what the different types of technologies are, but how customers can benefit from each one. This'll be a great tool we can reference in our customer communications."



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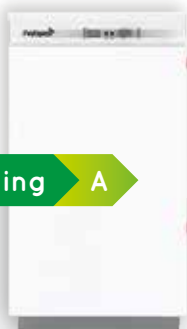


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# Going green with Warmflow

"Warmflow Agentis boilers are among the most popular oil-fired boilers in the UK, thanks to their high efficiency, reliability, and cost-effectiveness," says marketing executive Niall Patterson. "This range includes the UK's only AA-rated combi oil boiler which can save homeowners up to 5 litres of fuel per week. When paired with HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil), the Agentis range becomes even more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

HVO is a renewable fuel source made from vegetable oil. It has a high cetane number, which means it burns cleaner and more efficiently than traditional fossil fuels, emitting up to 90% less CO2. By using HVO with Warmflow Agentis boilers, heating engineers can help customers reduce their carbon footprint and meet their sustainability targets.

Switching a Warmflow Agentis boiler to HVO only requires minor recommissioning. This means heating engineers can offer a more sustainable heating solution to their customers without expensive

upgrades or major changes to their current system.

HVO is also a reliable and cost-effective fuel source. While it may be slightly more expensive than traditional heating oil, it provides more heat per unit of fuel, making it a more cost-effective option in the long run. Additionally, as a renewable fuel source, its price is not subject to the same fluctuations as traditional fossil fuels.

Niall adds: "Overall, using HVO with Warmflow Agentis boilers is a sustainable, cost-effective, and reliable solution for heating homes. By offering this solution to your customers, you can help to reduce carbon emissions and promote a more sustainable future for all of us."



## Warmflow to show off at installer show 2023

Warmflow will be attending InstallerSHOW 2023 at NEC in Birmingham on 27-29th June. On show will be the company's Zeno range of renewable home heating appliances, including the popular Zeno air source heat pump. This product comes in anthracite grey and includes Warmlink, Warmflow's unique remote-control technology for heat pumps, which allows for quick, efficient and remote diagnostics.

The company will also be showing off its Agentis professional boilers including the UK's only AA rated combi boiler, which saves time and money thanks to a range of factory-fitted accessories. Find Warmflow on Stand F80.

## Connect with Warmflow

Warmflow's Connect Scheme has revolutionised the way engineers track boiler registrations, loyalty points and warranty.

The scheme is a comprehensive package of support services that makes it easy for installers to fit Warmflow heating products in new and existing properties. It offers a wide range of benefits for installers who install and register Warmflow Agentis high efficiency oil boilers, Zeno air source heat pumps and Nero hot water cylinders.

One of the key benefits of the scheme is that it gives installers access to Warmflow's expert technical

support team. Installers can call on this team for help with any technical queries or installation issues. This ensures that installations are carried out correctly and to the highest standards, reducing the risk of problems further down the line.

Another major advantage of the



Connect Scheme is that it provides access to a wide range of training and development opportunities. Installers can keep up to date with the latest industry developments and best practices, improving their knowledge and skills as they go. This not only benefits installers, but also their customers, who can be assured that they are receiving a high-quality service from a knowledgeable and experienced professional.

The scheme also provides installers with access to a range of rewards including Ooni Pizza Ovens, PlayStations, Apple watches, which can be redeemed with points gained from registrations.



# Ireland must embrace liquid biofuels in heating if we're to meet climate targets

There is no doubt that both the public and policymakers in the Republic of Ireland are in favour of bringing about an energy transition that would see the country become carbon neutral by 2050, and the Government has developed its Climate Action Plan on this basis. The reality is however, that little progress has been made in the heating sector, which remains heavily dependent on the fossil fuel kerosene, commonly known as home heating oil. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), over one third (37%) of Irish households (about 700,000 homes total) rely on oil for their heating needs, and this figure rises to more than half (53%) in rural areas. Furthermore, only 6.3% of Ireland's heat sector demand is being met by renewable energy, which leaves us lagging far behind our European counterparts, where renewables meet an average of 22%.

So, why this lack of progress? The answer lies primarily in the fact that the Government's strategy for decarbonising the heating sector has focused almost exclusively on electrification, which was recommended by the National Heat Study. The National Retrofit Plan was rolled out to encourage the installation of heat pumps, with ambitious targets of achieving 500,000 home energy upgrades by 2030. While heat pumps certainly provide an effective means of lowering emissions – particularly for new builds – there are serious problems with an electrification-only approach. A deep retrofit, which is usually required to ensure heat pump efficiency, costs an average of €56,000 and causes major disruptions, often requiring homeowners to move out for the duration of the process. Even with the provision of a 50% government grant, few families can afford to cough up the €28,000 needed for a deep retrofit, and, in addition to the prohibitive cost and invasive nature of these works, there are serious concerns about whether the construction sector can meet the targets due to a shortage of workers and materials.

Even if retrofitting targets are met, with 700,000 homes reliant on oil-fired systems, hundreds of thousands of families in Ireland will continue to rely on liquid fuel to stay warm for years to come. It is imperative that we give these homeowners the option to lower emissions, and, contrary to the recommendations of the National Heat Study, there is a mounting body of evidence to suggest that this can most effectively be achieved through the incentivisation of low-carbon liquid fuels.

In January 2020, a report commissioned by The Alliance for Zero Carbon Heating (TAZCH) and carried out by the world-renowned consultancy firm AECOM, found that the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) can reduce heating emissions by up to 87% and provides a more cost-effective solution than heat pumps.

But if liquid biofuels are to be deployed across the heat sector in Ireland, surely that raises questions about sustainability and the availability of feedstocks? Indeed, it does, which is why Portland Analytics were commissioned to examine these issues and found that there will be more



than enough projected feedstock availability to meet renewable liquid fuels consumption requirements several times over by 2030 in both Europe and North America. The Portland analysis included only select feedstocks – based on the criteria that they did not compete with food production – and found that the projected renewable liquid fuels yield in Europe would exceed demand by between 243 - 560%. Similarly, a report conducted by consultants Byrne O'Cleirigh and published by the Department of Transport, notes that Ireland's indigenous production capacity of biodiesel/HVO could triple by the start of the next decade, from around 185 million litres, to between 435 and 735 million litres per annum.

These studies show that liquid biofuels can be used to effectively decarbonise the heating sector, and that we can produce more than enough sustainable biofuel to allow for this change to take place, while still meeting biofuel demand in other sectors. At OFTEC, we strongly believe that advanced, synthetic, and liquid biofuels must be deployed alongside other technologies like electrification and district heating (the latter of which is sanctioned by the National Heat Study but is not feasible in rural areas where there is a particularly high dependency on kerosene).

The technology we need is available to us now, but the Government must be prepared to incentivise its use by making liquid biofuels economically viable. A good first step would be to recognise liquid biofuels like HVO as renewable fuels for biofuel obligation certificate purposes, under the promised Renewable Heat Obligation (RHO) scheme. This would incentivise the suppliers of liquid fuel to increase the amount of biofuel used for heating purposes and would mirror a scheme that has already produced significant carbon savings in the transport sector. There is a real opportunity here, but if we are to seize it, we must be prepared to take a technologically neutral approach by using all the tools we have at our disposal to lower heating emissions in Ireland, and not unduly promoting the use of electrification over alternative options.



## Danfoss expands range with launch of 100% biofuel-ready pump

With the home heat sector increasingly embracing decarbonisation by using low carbon liquid fuels to significantly reduce emissions from oil-fired boilers, Danfoss has added an exciting new product to its established range of biofuel-ready pumps and nozzles.

The release of the new Bio100 pump sees the manufacturer of high-quality, reliable burner components take the next step in bio products, by making its pumps and nozzles 100% biofuel-ready.

### Embracing the challenge

Transitioning to liquid low-carbon fuels (many of which are already available) will contribute significantly to solving the challenge of decarbonising the home heat sector especially when used as a drop-in replacement fuel for a modern oil-fired condensing boilers. To help customers decarbonise, Danfoss embraced the challenge of getting biofuels to the boiler with the release of its Bio30 pump and HVO-ready nozzles last year

The new addition to the bio product portfolio, the Bio100 pump, is designed for both domestic and commercial applications and has been adapted to ensure all product components are 100% bio compatible as Mark McElroy explains: "We have spent many years researching fuels that we believe will be the mainstream supply for the home heating sector in the future and made the necessary changes to our existing BFP pumps, ensuring that any materials that are affected by such blends are replaced by components which are least affected over a period of time.

"Over the past 75 years, Danfoss has built a reputation for high-quality, reliable products. And provided the fuels used adhere to the required British standards, our customers can expect that same standard from our new line of bio products."

### Nozzles ready for the HVO market

The expanded portfolio of bio products also includes HVO nozzles, which have been adjusted and are now fully compatible for 100% biofuel use. These nozzles are designed for domestic oil burners in the UK and enable them to use hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) derived from used cooking oil or non-food vegetable oils.

Mark concludes: "We're pleased to support our customers decarbonisation efforts by providing them with the highest quality solutions for transitioning to carbon-neutral energy sources."



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# Take control of energy bills with Firebird's high efficiency boilers

As the cost-of-living crisis continues, boiler efficiency is high on the wish list for consumers, installers and the industry as a whole.

In the past, domestic boilers typically had an efficiency of 60%, with 40% of their energy being lost. Over the last few years Firebird has dedicated significant resources and invested heavily in developing products with increased fuel efficiency and reduced emissions, and which use more renewable and sustainable fuel sources.

Thanks to this drive towards innovation, Firebird now has the most efficient liquid fuel boilers on the market at 97.5% efficiency and NOx emissions as low as 60mg/kWhr, half the EU limit.

Research from The Sutherland Tables' September 2022 findings, shows that by upgrading from a standard efficiency boiler in a house built in the 1980s, to a high efficiency Firebird condensing boiler, you could achieve average savings of £943 per year on heating bills.

These savings would help to alleviate the current pressure on households and businesses, which have seen home heating oil almost double in price. Plus, because they use less oil, these boilers are much kinder to the environment.

Firebird's boilers are also fully compatible with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). A viable and sustainable drop-in replacement for Kerosene, HVO is fossil free and can reduce household emissions by up to 90%.

Firebird has trialled and tested HVO in the UK and Ireland to prove that it can be implemented almost immediately. The conversion requires little or no modification to existing home heating systems and there's no significant investment beyond a small conversion cost, (approx. £400) to upgrade to a Firebird by Elco HVO burner. The company's manufacturing site in Ireland and offices in England and Northern Ireland are also fuelled by HVO.

Mark Doyle, Firebird's general manager explained how the introduction of HVO for household and commercial boilers would be an instant game-changer for home heating:



"There are 1.5 million or so homes with existing liquid fuel boilers in the UK with few other choices available for homeowners to adopt cleaner, greener heat solutions."

"HVO can work with any liquid fuel boiler and if used in homes, can potentially make these homes almost carbon neutral immediately. Our trials of HVO for home heating in the UK and Ireland have proven how household greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by 90% with CO2 emissions decreasing by up to six tonnes annually, per home."

He added: "We passionately believe that we all have a part to play to reduce carbon emissions and we believe HVO is not the future, it's the 'now'. We are continuing to innovate and drive more sustainable heating solutions that help homeowners reduce their carbon footprint and future-proof their homes. Our responsibility to our customers and the environment is the key driver behind everything we do."

## New Worcester Bosch 'Fit More' promotion

Worcester Bosch is launching a new promotion as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting installers.

The 'Fit More' promotion will exclusively offer Excelebrate members the chance to receive up to £500 of Amazon Vouchers, by installing and registering one, three or six more additional boilers compared to the same period in 2022. The conditions are outlined below:

- Fit 1 more = £50 Amazon.co.uk gift card
- Fit 3 more = £150 Amazon.co.uk gift card
- Fit 6 more = £300 Amazon.co.uk gift voucher

\*Restrictions apply, see [www.amazon.co.uk/gc-legal](http://www.amazon.co.uk/gc-legal)

All installers will have to activate their participation in

the campaign to receive their reward and all additional installations must be registered on the Excelebrate account within the promotional period (3rd April to 30th September 2023).







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# Harlequin expansion plan delivers a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility

Family-run for over 42 years, Harlequin Tanks has grown into a leading manufacturer of innovative polyethylene storage tanks and systems.

With a workforce of only 3 employees in 1981 the company has grown to over 110 staff, and it's not just staff numbers that have grown. This forward-thinking company has continually developed its product range and processes and last year saw the opening of a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in East Kirkby, Lincolnshire

Built on an old airfield, at an investment of £2.2 million, the facility is capable of managing both production and delivery of its well-known products and provide better service to key customers in the UK.

Harlequin is a company that has always invested heavily in technology, continually adapting to meet changing customer needs. The facility enables the implementation of the latest technologies and machines to manufacture high quality products for evolving commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.

The continually expanding Harlequin product range now includes storage tanks for oil, diesel, and water as well as tanks for sewage treatment, hot water storage and rainwater harvesting systems. It was the growing demand for sewage treatment plants and the focus on new product development that fuelled the development of the new facility.



The significant business growth has come on the back of innovation in rotationally moulded plastic storage industry delivering increasing national and international demand for the expanding range of polyethylene storage tanks and systems. The new facility has been key to delivering this growth and has also seen the creation of additional jobs.

Talking about the new Harlequin facility, Laurance Coey, managing director, commented: "We have enjoyed a significant period of growth in the last five years and have ambitious plans for the future.

"This new facility is part of that expansion. Innovation is at the heart of our business. Our customers across the UK, and internationally, recognise the investment we make in continuous product development as well as the lengths our team go to provide exceptional customer service."





# Building simplicity with building control

James Shenton, Tuffa's managing director, talks tank installation

Relying on the local authority to send a qualified person to check and approve the installation of integrally fire-rated heating oil tanks can be time-consuming. And who's responsible for arranging the site visit from building control? The installation engineers? The homeowner?

Considering the sometimes oppressive (but understandable) installation criteria (1.8m away from any structure), these strict building regulations can be a headache for installers who want to offer an effortless installation, install heating oil tanks compliantly, offer the best service and give the end user the best information and advice, but still with an eye on aesthetics and keeping the tank out of sight.

## The FirePro™

FirePro™ is a turnkey solution for installers and homeowners alike. Working with approved inspectors from Building Control, JHAI, we have nurtured a simple, four-step, time-effective compliance process that removes all the legalese and jargon required by building control, insurance, and local authorities.

Tuffa's FirePro™ tanks are manufactured in the UK at our FPC ISO9001 factory. They are bunded with a fire-resistant jacket wrapped around the inner bund, which allows for up to 110% of the capacity of the tank, capturing any leaks and overfills. FirePro™ tanks are available in both steel and plastic, offering the same level of security and preventing any environmental risks caused by leaks and spills. With the cost of an oil spill and a hefty fine from the Environment Agency, the extra legroom is more than welcome.

FirePro™ comes in 30 or 60-minute fire protection models, so if the worst happens, you have time to get your family to safety. British standards approve the level of fire protection, and tested safety is measured in minutes from the tank's point of fire.



This fire protection measure changes the rules for installing heating oil tanks. As all installers know, regulations require a tank to be sited at least 1.8 meters from a building or have fireboards bolted to adjacent walls, which can be time-consuming.

Requiring only a 300mm boundary around the entire circumference of the tank makes the hassle of unsightly fireboards completely redundant.

Our patented approach means it's structurally safe and compliant to tuck the tank discreetly next to buildings. It can be installed inside an outbuilding and still be compliant. Although a part of the Tuffa family, FirePro™ is a stand-on-its-own tank.

Installers are well versed in the building regulations in England and Wales, differing slightly for Scotland, and Northern Ireland, which states that installation for heating oil tanks must be signed off by a competent person, building control or an approved inspector like JHAI – it's a legal requirement.

## Tricky installation?

Tuffa's partnership with JHAI has made the installation and compliance process quick and easy with just four simple steps that can also be completed by the end-user, saving invaluable installer time.

- Complete the JHAI form and send it to them directly.
- Provide any images or additional information required.
- Wait for the certification direct from JHAI.
- Once that's arrived, you're all done.

In addition to improving installation processes, Tuffa is supporting installation engineers in other ways such as through our 'Approved Installer' network for sharing installation leads, an initiative that is being extended to include 'local installers'.

## More installation leads?

Once you are registered with us, which is free to do, you will be included on the list of 'local installers' we provide for customers. The 'Approved' title is earned based on the number of tanks purchased.

Inflation and rising fuel costs have made the last few years incredibly hard with businesses struggling as a result and plumbing and heating engineers significantly affected. To reflect these difficult times, we have extended our ongoing installer support, increasing our discount across the entire portfolio by 50% from trade less 10% to trade less 15%.

Tuffa values hard work and believes it should be recognised and rewarded.

# HVO success in Jersey

In 2022, the Government of Jersey agreed a carbon neutral roadmap, which outlines plans for it to become carbon neutral by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. Reducing emissions from heating systems is a key pillar and with over 21,000 fossil fuel boilers, there's significant scope to reduce emissions.

Action is needed quickly if the targets are to be met. To support the Government, Rubis Channel Islands has been taking steps to reduce carbon emissions from boilers, by recommending renewable heating oil solutions for oil-heated households and businesses in the Channel Islands.

EcoHeat100 is a Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). Rubis believes if a customer wants to be carbon neutral, they should have a choice between energy providers and not have to spend thousands of pounds on a new heating system. EcoHeat100 enables customers to switch fuel rather than their entire system.

Rubis has been converting



businesses and customers to use this renewable heating oil and has switched over 40 customers in the Channel Islands.

Unlike in other parts of the UK, where renewable electricity generation is expanding, the Channel Islands imports its electricity from France. As all energy needs to be imported, fuels like HVO compete on an even footing.

Rubis believes the solution to transition heating oil customers is



here now. Fuels like HVO work well in all existing oil-fired heating systems following a simple, cost-effective conversion process.

The simplicity of this approach is already winning approval with customers. It's a simple message that should resonate in other parts of the UK too: if you want to make progress with heat decarbonisation, offer options that are cheap and easy to adopt!

<https://rubis-ci.co.uk/>

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# DESNZ welcomed to Sheffield training centre to view heat pump training

With significant government funding being made available for heat pump, training, it's important to see that it's being used wisely. OFTEC were pleased to welcome a team from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to Gas Training UK Ltd, an OFTEC approved training centre in Holbrook near Sheffield.

Chris Galpin, Head of Heat Pump Installers, and his team from the Department came to see a demonstration of classroom and practical sessions of the heat pump training. Alex Pearson and Jorge Aguilar-Santana represented the West Midlands Net Zero Hub team as part of the delivery of Home Decarbonisation Skills Training Competition.

The visit covered an explanation of the course and how it was developed with input from heat pump manufacturers



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

and MCS, a tour of the centre with Craig Wilkinson (owner and director of Gas Training UK), and a chat with trainees taking the course to hear the impact this programme is having to upskill their careers.

The Home Decarbonisation Skills Training Competition is funding training for people working, or who want to work, in the energy efficiency, building retrofit and low carbon heating sectors. The competition aims to increase supply chain capacity, both in terms of volume and skill level. Find out more: <https://lnkd.in/eVyXFDRF>

## OFTEC launches ground source heat pump course

Following the successful introduction of OFTEC's courses covering installation, servicing and commissioning of air source heat pumps, and design of heat pump systems, we can now offer a course in the installation, servicing and commissioning of ground source heat pumps as well.

Put together by a group of industry experts (including manufacturers, certification bodies, heat pump system designers, and approved training and assessment centres) the course follows the requirements of the Minimum Technical Competencies and MCS document MIS 3005-1 - The Heat Pump Standard (Installation) – so it ticks all the right boxes.

It covers, among other subjects:

- Health and safety and safe systems of work,
- Low carbon and low temperature central heating systems
- Principles of heat pump selection, sizing and selecting heat pump systems and components,

- Open and closed loop ground source systems,
- Operational characteristics of ground source heat pump units and heat pump system components,
- Fundamental principles of ground source 'closed loop' heat pump collector circuit design and component sizing,
- Layouts of 'open loop' collector circuits, and
- The requirements to install and test ground source heat pump systems.

The working group which put the course together worked closely with MCS to ensure that it will be able to be used for MCS registration.

It is estimated that by 2028 the UK will need 600,000 heat pump installations each year to meet home heating decarbonisation targets and that means around 30,000 installers will need to be trained to meet this demand and gain the qualifications required for MCS registration - a large increase on the current number.

## Heat pump training grant scheme goes from strength to strength

The Government-funded grant scheme to encourage existing oil and gas technicians to train as heat pump designers and installers continues to grow, and feedback from the candidates attending the OFTEC-approved centres offering the courses has been nothing short of excellent.

99% of candidates taking the course feel that they feel confident or very confident in undertaking a retrofit installation, 99% are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of training, customer service, and the whole training experience from first contact with the training centre to undertaking the course.

The grant scheme has been extended until the 31st July 2023 and, to date, over 400 people have received the discounted training. The scheme offers up to 70% off the cost of a heat pump course for candidates living in England, and is being delivered by a network of OFTEC-approved centres across the country. For further details see the OFTEC website – <https://www.oftec.org/discounted-heat-pump-training-available-for-installers-in-england>

### Based on training received, how confident do you feel to undertake a retrofit installation?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Unsure
- Not confident



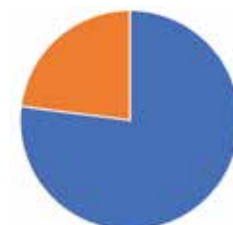
### How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of training you received?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied



### How would you rate the customer service you received?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor



# Grant launches online underfloor heating course

Free online training on Grant UK's underfloor heating range is now available via the company's eLearning Academy. The on-demand course provides an introduction to the Uflex underfloor heating range and includes an overview of the systems, accessories and controls supplied by Grant.

The Grant Uflex Underfloor Heating course lasts approximately 20 minutes and has been developed to help installers and merchants further their knowledge of Grant's underfloor heating range. The short course has no charge and candidates can either complete their training in one sitting or they can commence, pause and resume the course to fit in around their work commitments.

The training includes a general introduction to the range before taking a closer look at the Uflex, Uflex MINI and Overlay Board underfloor heating systems. It also provides an overview of the core components and accessories within the Uflex range as well covering




the controls and wiring centres. A brief summary of Grant's design and underfloor heating support services are also included.

After completing this eLearning course, candidates should have a greater understanding of Grant's underfloor heating range offering with

this free training serving as the ideal stepping-stone towards specifying their next Uflex or Uflex MINI underfloor heating system installation.



To enrol visit [www.grantelearning.com](http://www.grantelearning.com). New users will need to create an account using the enrolment key GUKPRS0820.





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**OFTEC OIL COURSES ALWAYS AVAILABLE**

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**OFT 600A:** Installation of oil fuel storage and supply systems connected to fixed combustible appliances.

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# When you shouldn't install an oil boiler

Can an existing LPG boiler, biomass boiler, or heat pump be removed and replaced with an oil boiler? The answer may surprise you.

As governments tighten energy efficiency rules, they are also tightening rules on the carbon emissions and primary energy\* consumption of replacement appliances in domestic buildings. These rules apply to all combustion appliances.

In England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Channel Islands it may not be compliant with building regulations guidance to replace an existing appliance with one that runs on a different fuel or energy source. For example, in England and Wales a replacement appliance should:

- be as efficient as the minimum seasonal efficiency stated in building regulations guidance,
- not produce more carbon emissions than the existing appliance, and
- not have a higher primary energy demand than the existing appliance.

How does this affect the installation of oil boilers? Take a look at Table 1. It gives examples of when it would or would not be compliant to install an oil boiler to replace an existing appliance in England or Wales. As you can see, in this scenario it is not permissible to replace existing electrically-powered heating systems. Further, an oil boiler could not compliantly replace a wood pellet-fired appliance unless it had the impossibly low efficiency of less than 16.55%!

Your region may have slightly different rules to England and Wales and every replacement appliance installation will vary in detail. So how do you know whether a proposed installation is compliant?

OFTEC has produced three free calculation tools that can be used to determine whether a planned appliance replacement would be compliant or not. One for England and Wales, one for Scotland, and one for Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands. They can be used for all fuel types, including solid fuel. They are available on the OFTEC portal under the technical resources section.

So far, we have been discussing oil fired appliances. The situation is better for Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) appliances. For example, Table 2 shows that installing an HVO boiler is compliant in some scenarios where an oil boiler would not be. Another reason why OFTEC is working hard to convince governments of the benefits of HVO.

Ignoring the information above could be very costly to an installer. Non-compliant installations will be deemed not compliant with building regulations which means rectification work will be required.

If you have questions about the use OFTEC's calculation tools or cannot find the efficiency of existing appliances, contact OFTEC's technical team who can advise you on the steps to take.

*\*Primary energy refers not only to the energy of the fuel itself but also the upstream activities involved in the production of the fuel e.g. extraction, processing, and transportation of fuels.*

**Table 1 – Examples of fuel switch scenarios in England and Wales – oil boiler**

New oil boiler efficiency	Existing appliance and fuel/energy type	Existing appliance efficiency	Replacement permitted?
93%	LPG appliance	75.22 % or more	<b>No</b>
		Less than 75.22%	<b>Yes</b>
93%	Wood pellet appliance	16.55% or more	<b>No</b>
		Less than 16.55%	<b>Yes</b>
93%	Electric boiler	Always 100% efficient	<b>No</b>
93%	Heat pump (electric)	Always more than 100%	<b>No</b>
93%	House coal or anthracite	84.12% or more	<b>No</b>
		Less than 84.12%	<b>Yes</b>

**Table 2 – Examples of fuel switch scenarios in England and Wales – HVO boiler**

New oil boiler efficiency	Existing appliance and fuel/energy type	Existing appliance efficiency	Replacement permitted?
93%	LPG appliance	90.2 % or more	<b>No</b>
		Less than 90.2%	<b>Yes</b>
93%	Wood pellet appliance	Any realistic efficiency	<b>Yes</b>
93%	Electric boiler	Always 100% efficient	<b>Yes</b>
93%	Heat pump (electric)	Any realistic efficiency	<b>No</b>
93%	House coal or anthracite	84.12% or more	<b>No</b>
		Less than 84.12%	<b>Yes</b>



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\* according to expected future ERP regulations

# Why does the UK choose to abide by EU Regulation when we're now independent of the EU?

Greater regulatory independence was often stated as one of the key benefits of Brexit, so it may come as a surprise to discover that the UK is currently choosing to still abide by many EU regulations, even though it's now free to make its own rules. There are several reasons why some of the expected changes haven't happened.

Firstly, during the Brexit negotiations, the UK and the EU agreed on a Withdrawal Agreement, which established a transition period lasting until December 31, 2020. During this period, the UK continued to abide by EU regulations as if it were still a member state of the EU. This was intended to provide stability and continuity for businesses and individuals in both the UK and the EU during the transition.

Secondly, the UK and the EU negotiated a trade agreement called the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), which came into effect on January 1, 2021. The TCA includes provisions on trade, fisheries, law enforcement, and other areas, and it provides for continued cooperation between the UK and the EU in various fields. However, in order to maintain access to the EU

market, the UK agreed to abide by certain EU regulations in areas such as food safety, product standards, and environmental protection.

Thirdly, even though the UK is now independent of the EU, it still has close economic and political ties with the bloc, and it is in the UK's interest to maintain good relations with its neighbours. By abiding by certain EU regulations, the UK can continue to participate in various EU initiatives and programs, and it can maintain a level of regulatory alignment that makes it easier to do business with the EU.

Finally, some EU regulations have become international standards, and it may be in the UK's interest to continue to comply with them even outside of the context of the EU. For example, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is an EU regulation that has been adopted by many countries around the world as a standard for data protection and privacy. By continuing to abide by the GDPR, the UK can demonstrate its commitment to protecting personal data and ensure that it remains a trusted partner for businesses and individuals around the world.

What regulatory issues haven't been affected by Brexit? Here are a few examples.

**Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs):** EPCs are mandatory for all buildings in the UK, and they provide information on a building's energy efficiency rating. While EPCs are influenced by EU regulations, they are not directly related to Brexit and have not been significantly affected by it.

**Oil Storage Regulations:** In the UK, the storage of liquid fuel is strict where regulations require storage to comply with various regulations, including the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 and The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Oil Storage) (Wales) Regulations 2016 and The Water Environment (Oil Storage) (Scotland) Regulations 2006. These regulations are not directly related to Brexit and have not been significantly affected by it.

**Fuel Quality Standards:** The UK has implemented its own fuel quality standards, which are largely based on EU standards. However, these standards are not directly related to Brexit and have not been significantly affected by it.

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## Scope of work

OFTEC's registered technicians often call our technical department when they are unsure of what output pressure jet boiler they can service, install, or maintain. Additionally, they often ask what scope of registration they need to hold to work on a specific boiler.

Terms like 45kW, 70kW, domestic and non-domestic can add to the uncertainty. For example, England Building Regulations Approved Document J refers to oil-burning appliances with a rated output of up to 45kW, whereas British Standards guidance documents are split up to installations serving domestic buildings

with an appliance no greater than 70kW output (BS 5410-1), and non-domestic buildings with no reference to the size of the appliance (BS 5410-2). This article will not be deep diving into classification of buildings (what is classed as domestic or non-domestic), nor how appliances with a rated output exceeding 70kW are to be installed. However, we hope the following explanation will be helpful.

The OFT10-105E allows you to install fixed oil and bio-liquid combustion appliances of any size/output for space heating and hot water services (caution should be exercised that you hold the relevant scope to enable the

commissioning of the appliance).

With regards to commissioning or servicing, this is split up into two categories. There is the OFT10-101 which allows you to work on single stage pressure jet appliances and is not restricted to size of output providing it is single stage burner. Then there is the OFT10-201 which covers multi-stage pressure jet appliances up to 2MW.

If you are unsure, don't hesitate to contact OFTEC's technical department who are always happy to assist with any queries and provide guidance on the matter.

# Fuel price commentary

In terms of heating, the 2022-23 winter was extremely tough for many people across the UK and Republic of Ireland. The impact is seen in national statistics that reveal demand for energy fell significantly – not because the weather was milder, but because households were seeking to manage the cost by either turning down or, in some cases, switching off their heating completely. Many sought to keep the cost affordable by relying more on secondary room heating such as wood burning stoves – with a downturn in urban air quality reported widely as a consequence.

While these impacts – caused by high inflation and the impact of the

war in Ukraine – caused significant discomfort and hardship, we should also remember that there may be more serious impacts too. It remains to be seen what the health and excess winter death data looks like.

In the face of this depressing situation, we must also look for positives. Were there any winners over the last quarter? The Sutherland Tables show that, perhaps surprisingly, oil heating users have benefitted from the biggest fall in heating costs – across all regions. This needs explaining. When energy prices go up, oil prices are usually the quickest to react and last winter was no exception. However, the opposite

is also often true; when prices begin to fall, oil heating users are frequently the first to benefit. Given the high prices experienced at the end of 2022 the falls are significant – and welcome – even if the average cost remains relatively high.

Of course, the extent to which you benefit will depend on when you fill your tank, but at least oil prices are heading in the right direction. Other energy prices are also beginning to fall, so the trends going forward appear at last to be positive.

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

GREAT BRITAIN (average)

	Dec-22	Mar-23	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heater	3135	<b>3189</b>	54	2%	2495
Gas condensing boiler	1930	<b>2120</b>	190	10%	1027
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	1749	<b>1773</b>	24	1%	1533
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	1752	<b>1392</b>	-360	-21%	1113
Wood pellets	2902	<b>2963</b>	61	2%	1657
Air source heat pump radiators	3320	<b>3417</b>	97	3%	2134
Air source heat pump underfloor	2957	<b>2858</b>	-99	-3%	1735

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Dec-22	Mar-23	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heater	2480	<b>2139</b>	-341	-14%	2115
Gas condensing boiler	1869	<b>1733</b>	-136	-7%	1134
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	2293	<b>2293</b>	0	0%	2050
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	1781	<b>1525</b>	-256	-14%	1091
Wood pellets	2082	<b>2116</b>	34	2%	1341
Air source heat pump radiators	2498	<b>2407</b>	-91	-4%	1876
Air source heat pump underfloor	2066	<b>1991</b>	-75	-4%	1521

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Dec-22	Mar-23	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heater	4613	<b>4583</b>	-30	-1%	2661
Gas condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	2781	<b>2781</b>	0	0%	1579
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	2776	<b>2856</b>	80	3%	2486
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	2236	<b>1965</b>	-271	-12%	1525
Wood pellets	2484	<b>2478</b>	-6	0%	1553
Air source heat pump radiators	3896	<b>3866</b>	-30	-1%	2298
Air source heat pump underfloor	3284	<b>3254</b>	-30	-1%	1922

The tables above are based on quarterly data published by the Sutherland Tables. They show the annual average cost of a range of heating options for a typical pre-1980 three bedroomed semi-detached home with a heat requirement of approximately 16,000 kWh. Prices are shown in pounds sterling (£) for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and euros (€) for the Republic of Ireland.



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