

Oil Installer

News and views from an evolving heating world



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New year, same old challenges...

Welcome to the first Oil Installer issue of 2024 - what should be an important year for our industry. The UK Government's new Energy Bill - which became law last autumn - contains a commitment to consult within 12 months on a scheme to enable renewable liquid fuels like HVO to be used for heating at affordable cost. What's required is similar to a scheme already in place for renewable transport fuels, so it should be easy for the Government to consult on and then implement what's needed.



It's important that the Government gets cracking because 2024 is also a General Election year. If the consultation is delayed, it's possible we may have a new government in place, and who knows then what direction heat policy may then take? What the heating industry and consumers urgently need is more certainty about the future of off-gas grid heating. The announcement that the phase-out date for off grid fossil fuel installations would be delayed to 2035 was sensible. It is fairer for consumers and more practical, but it's important the opportunities to make progress with decarbonisation are not delayed. To reduce that risk, OFTEC and UKIFDA are pressing the Government to hurry up and get on with the job!

Our message is simple. Alongside support for other heat technologies, incentivising the use of HVO provides the simplest and most cost-effective way for oil heated households and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions. It's much easier for existing users to adopt it than options with high upfront costs, and our industry is ready and waiting to support the transition.

This year has already seen the launch of a new OFTEC product - the liquid fuel field guide - another important milestone in our ongoing commitment to support the needs of the liquid fuel heating sector.

Martin Cooke

Martin Cooke,
Chairman, OFTEC

It's time to forget the old ideas about CPS

Competent Person Schemes (CPS) have been with us for a while now - 21 years in fact. When they started back in 2002, the individual scheme operators focused on single technologies. For example, HETAS were the CPS for solid fuel heating, while OFTEC's supported the oil heating sector.

Over time that has gradually changed, with some CPS providers expanding the scopes of registration they offer, while others have kept to their original position. Solid fuel remains the sole focus of HETAS, but other scheme operators, including OFTEC, have expanded their offering. While liquid fuels remain the priority, OFTEC added solid fuel in 2015 and more recently, biomass, heat pump, Part P, MCS, and Trustmark registration.



Competition is good news for heating engineers

This diversification has several benefits for heating engineers. Increased competition means more choice and potentially more competitive pricing. It also means you can stay with a single provider as you or your business diversifies - which could save money and keeps renewals simpler. In the past, this was of only moderate value, but in an industry where decarbonisation is a reality, the potential to diversify and offer a broader range of technologies may become an increasingly popular - even essential - option to ensure businesses to remain competitive.

Spreading the word about CPS changes

While heating engineers have been aware of these changes, the wider world has been slow to wake up to the diversification within the CPS sector. It's understandable that householders may not realise that a solid fuel heating installer registered with OFTEC is no different to one registered with HETAS when it comes to competence and the ability to self-certify work. Particularly if they've used HETAS registered engineers in the past. However, it's apparent that some industries that should know better have been slow to understand the changes.

One example is insurance. OFTEC was recently made aware of a policy offered by a leading insurance company that stipulated that the homeowner's solid fuel appliance must be installed by a HETAS engineer or the policy would be invalid. We've also been made aware of landlords that make similar stipulations relating to individual technologies, in one case leading to a registered business missing out on a valuable installation contract.

Given that this is obviously wrong as well as being anti-competitive, OFTEC is now taking positive action to make the wider world more aware that a competent person scheme registration is equally valuable, regardless of which scheme provider the business is registered with. If you have any examples of problems of this kind, please contact OFTEC's marketing team - marketing@oftec.org

Get TrustMark through OFTEC

TrustMark is the Government Endorsed Quality Scheme which covers work carried out in or around homes. Joining TrustMark complements Competent Person Scheme registration and provides consumers with added peace of mind that they are engaging with a business which has been thoroughly vetted to meet required standards, and which has also made a commitment to good customer service and trading practices. TrustMark registration is a condition of several funding initiatives such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO).

How do I become registered for TrustMark?

You can apply for TrustMark registration as an extension to the OFTEC Competent Person Scheme (CPS) for the following trades:

- Heating engineer (liquid fuel)
- Electrical
- Heat pumps
- Biomass
- Solar thermal



TRUSTMARK
Government Endorsed Quality

OFTEC operates the TrustMark registration scheme in accordance with the Framework Operating Requirements, which sets out the systems we must adhere to when approving businesses for TrustMark registration. By taking out TrustMark registration you have access to not only OFTEC's benefits and discounts, but also those offered by the Trustmark scheme.



OFTEC registration manager completes Future Leader Programme

OFTEC would like to congratulate Jon King (Registration Manager) for his recent certification in a Future Leaders program towards net zero. Jon finished over 50+ hours of leadership content and training over a 9-month period, demonstrating his abilities to work innovatively and collaboratively as a leader working towards a Carbon Net Zero world. Well done Jon.

OFTEC Technical Manual

The manual consists of 4 modules, and has been designed to accompany the OFTEC training and assessments, as well as being an invaluable aid to technicians:

Module 1: Is the core module and is required for all schemes, as well as covering everything required for installation (appliances and fuel storage) (OFT10-105E and OFT10-600a).

Module 2: Covers single-stage pressure jet servicing and commissioning (OFT10-101).

Module 3: Covers multi-stage pressure jet servicing and commissioning (OFT10-201).

Module 4: Covers vaporising servicing and commissioning (OFT10-102).



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InstallerSHOW returns for 2024... prepare to be surprised

At almost 50% larger than last year, you can expect to find a whole lot more to see and do at InstallerSHOW 2024.

There's no other event in the UK that offers installers and decision-makers working across heat, water, air and energy the opportunity to get hands-on and in front of the products, the technologies, the knowledge and the industry leaders that will help you make informed decisions and do your job more effectively.

Alongside the wealth of content available at the show, OFTEC will also have an exhibition stand (5A12) where visitors can find out more about the organisation, and the benefits of registration and membership.

The InstallerSHOW runs from the 25th - 27th June at the NEC in Birmingham.



Registration is open for InstallerSHOW 2024 book your tickets here <https://installer-2024-splash.reg.buzz/show-site-button/>

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 mean they no longer have the right to display themselves as OFTEC registered.

From the 11th of October 23-16th January 24 a total of 19 businesses had their membership revoked*.

The revoked businesses are:

Company No.	Business Name
500196	AEM Plumbing and Heating
501230	AHCO SYSTEMS LTD
14411	Anthony Freeman Ltd
500729	Aurora HVAC Ltd
501472	CCPH Ltd
101128	Chillflame Limited
102017	DP Plumbing
104535	G T Plumbing & Heating Engineers Ltd
100733	Gaulton Plumbing & Heating Services
501465	Giles Hopkin
501479	Green Heating Projects Ltd
2173	Ian Lawrence Plumbing & Heating
7308	John Harris
105790	JW Plumbing and Heating
103217	Matthews Brothers Total Property Maintenance Ltd
105821	Plumber Jones
104640	RMB Plumbing & Heating
500162	Wigbert Wallace

* Businesses have the right to appeal decisions regarding any sanctions made by OFTEC..

Unscrupulous East Anglian tradesman jailed

On 10 November 2023 at King's Lynn Crown Court, Ben Draper of Wisbech was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

Mr Draper pleaded guilty to one offence of contravening professional diligence under consumer protection regulations, and four offences of dishonestly appropriating monies for works which he did not undertake, and by his failure to refund monies he intended to permanently deprive consumers of their property, contrary to the Theft Act 1968.

It is noteworthy that Mr Draper's failure to notify installation work formed part of the case against him - a timely reminder that the notification of boiler installations is a legal requirement. OFTEC had been contacted by Norfolk Trading Standards because, alongside other offences, Mr Draper was falsely claiming that his business was OFTEC registered and OFTEC provided information confirming his non-registered status as part of the investigation.

Commenting on the successful prosecution, Norfolk Trading Standards said: "The circumstances of the case are that Mr Draper, a self-employed builder, contracted with at least twelve consumers across Norfolk to undertake building and home improvement works, including boiler replacements. Mr Draper requested deposits from the consumers totaling just under £29,000 to secure contracts. Mr Draper then failed to attend the consumer's properties to undertake the work or undertook work of a poor standard; he also failed in some cases to register boiler/appliances with the requisite safety bodies. Mr Draper then blocked consumers' ability to access communication with him and failed to refund monies for his failure to complete the works. This caused the victims financial and emotional distress and necessitated additional expenditure to employ other traders to complete the work."

At the request of Trading Standards, the judge also issued a Criminal Behaviour Order against Mr Draper for a period of five years, to ensure that any future work he undertakes complies with good commercial practices. Any breach of this order is deemed contempt of court. Costs of £1000 were also awarded to Trading Standards.



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Homely optimisation controls

The Aerona³ R32 air source heat pump range is suitable for installation with Homely heat pump optimisation controls, providing installers and their customers with further choice when it comes to controlling their Grant heat pump systems.

Homely is a smart system controller, which is quick and easy to install, controlling up to two heating zones as well as the domestic hot water. Featuring up to two wireless temperature sensors and advanced software which uses future weather forecasting to predict the heating system needs, the Homely controller constantly communicates with the Aerona³ R32 heat pump to help ensure that the heat pump and wider system are operating as efficiently as possible. Homely is also designed to work with agile tariffs (subscription required) which can provide additional cost saving benefits for the end-user.

Designed for installation alongside the Aerona remote heat pump controller, the Homely installation kit comprises of a Hub, temperature node(s) and the supporting accessories needed to secure the Hub and node(s) into place. Instead of using an interface or third-party controls, homeowners can control their device via a dedicated app which allows consumers to set their heating schedules and make adjustments to their room temperatures when away from the home. There is also a separate app for installers which allows engineers to monitor multiple heat pumps installations which are connected to Homely Hubs, providing remote access to heat pump performance data,



diagnostics and system information (subscription required).

"We've been working closely with Homely and are pleased that its popular controls offering are now compatible with our Aerona³ R32 range when installed alongside our Aerona remote controller," comments Neil Sawers, Commercial Technical Manager at Grant. "Not only are Homely controls suitable for installing with new Aerona³ heat pumps, but they can also be retrofitted to existing Aerona³ heat pumps for homeowners wishing to further optimise their heating systems. Featuring one press commissioning, the compatibility of Homely controls with Grant heat pumps will be welcome news for heating engineers and their customers."

Grant donates a further £20,000 to charity

Following another year of fundraising in 2023, Grant UK presented Wiltshire Air Ambulance (WAA) with a donation of £20,000 to support the lifesaving work it provides to the local community with its delivery of critical medical care.

Since 2019, Grant has supported WAA. During this time, employees have organised regular fundraising activities with the company presenting the charity with annual donations to support its essential provision of Helicopter Emergency Medical Services throughout Wiltshire and the surrounding areas.

Throughout the last twelve months, the Grant team, customers, and suppliers have taken part in several activities including wellness initiatives, rugby guess the score sweepstakes, bake sales, fancy-dress days and also supported a Christmas raffle to raise funds for WAA.

WAA is a charity that relies on donations with it costing an average of £4.5million a year to keep its lifesaving service operational 365 days a year. The WAA team is called out on an average of three times a day to people who have suffered serious or life-threatening illnesses or injuries. Its critical care team has the expertise and equipment to provide lifesaving care with the speed of the helicopter helping to get patients to the nearest hospital as quickly as possible.

"Having worked closely with WAA for several years now, the Grant team have a thorough understanding of the essential service that this charity provides to the local community," comments Anna Wakefield, Head of Internal Sales and Marketing.



"We welcomed WAA representatives to our head office last year for one of our 'Lunch and Learn' sessions which gave us the opportunity to find out more about its recent work and speak to members of the medical team. In 2023, our support was as strong as ever and this resulted in our latest donation which now brings our grand total raised for WAA to £65,000. We are also thrilled to confirm that we will be continuing to support WAA in 2024 as a charity partner."

WAA Corporate Partnerships Lead Naomi Barker added: "We can't thank Grant enough for its incredible fundraising efforts to support our lifesaving charity.

"In the four years Grant has partnered with WAA, it has effectively funded over four days' of our work, which is potentially 16 missions. Its support has made such a difference in the community. They're lifesavers!"

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* according to expected future ERP regulations

The top five servicing tools for 2024

From mending leaks to putting pipework together, Arctic Hayes supports busy installers with its comprehensive range of boiler servicing and installation essentials that become the unsung heroes as boiler breakdowns become more common.

Pipe cutters

A toolkit 'must-have' as achieving precise, clean cuts without any burrs is crucial when cutting pipes. It's imperative to ensure a secure connection without damaging connectors like O-Rings, and to avoid crushing the pipe which can cause leaks. The Arctic Hayes 26mm pipe cutter is specifically designed for PVC and multi-layered pipes. Its operation is straightforward - simply insert the pipe, apply pressure to cut and obtain a clean, precise edge. For larger pipes, the 42mm Ratchet Pipe Cutter provides an equally user-friendly experience.



Pipe benders

An essential tool for installers, pipe benders need to be easy and comfortable to use. Bending a pipe to fit a particular angle can often eliminate the need for additional joints and fittings, ultimately reducing potential points of failure and mitigating the risk of leaks or other plumbing complications.

The Professional Pipe Bender is engineered to handle both 15mm and 22mm copper pipes, as well as light grade stainless steel pipes. Its non-slip handle ensures a secure grip and comfortable operation, enabling the forming of precise and ripple-free bends. The Mini Pipe Bender, constructed from robust aluminium, also has an ergonomic handle design and is capable of bending pipes from 6mm to 10mm.

Test pumps

Test pumps are indispensable for pressurising plumbing systems and identifying potential leaks. Arctic Hayes offers the Digital Pressure Vessel Hand Pump, featuring a clear, easy-to-read LCD screen with accurate measurements in various units and scales, including PSI, BAR, KPA, and KG/CM². The range also includes a 180mm angled adapter for connecting to inaccessible spots, as well as a flexible 450mm connector equipped with a female Schrader quick release connection.

Keys and screwdrivers

Precision instruments like tape measures and levels play a critical role in ensuring installations are flawlessly aligned. A well-rounded toolkit should contain high-quality versions of radiator keys, regular and long-reach screwdrivers, spanners and stopcock keys, alongside magnetic part dishes, designed to keep nuts, bolts and screws safe and within easy reach.

Surface protection

One of the most important pieces of the modern toolkit is good surface protection products. Arctic Hayes' Padded Work Mats make life easier on aching knees, dust sheets provide protection to customer furniture, and shoe covers and self-adhesive floor protectors help avoid damaging or marking customers flooring.

InstallerSHOW just gets better

The UK's biggest event focusing on the sustainability of heat, water, air and energy will be almost 50% larger than last year!

Prepare to be surprised by how much InstallerSHOW – at the NEC Birmingham from June 25-27 – has to offer your business. There's a whole lot more to see and do for heating and plumbing businesses, a huge programme of presentations and seminars focusing on the issues and challenges that concern us all – PLUS a chance to engage with over 600 exhibitors showcasing the very latest product innovations that will lead the way to net zero.



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Working together
to deliver sustainability
and net zero

Reader letter

I read the winter Oil Installer magazine with interest, especially the articles about delaying the 2026 ban on oil boilers and optimism about HVO. Clearly, this is good news for the oil industry. Having read the OFTEC HVO handbook, published last July, I note it contains points which highlight the optimism, but also challenges to overcome.

The classification of HVO as 'net carbon neutral' must be considered alongside the environmental costs associated with processing, refinement, and transportation emissions. Until manufacturers publish the embedded carbon contained within all their products, it remains impossible to establish environmental impacts accurately, or draw accurate comparisons.

Ultimately, HVO is a lifeline for the oil industry, but objectivity is key. Few would argue that the most effective methods of reducing emissions in our sector remain focussed on minimising heat loss. After that, the technology best suited to the property type and client budget must surely be considered with equal importance alongside life cycle environmental impacts. Applying this logic objectively will ensure we meet the increasingly stringent emission targets. For example, HVO could be perfectly aligned with some off-grid, hard-to-treat homes, such as listed buildings, especially when paired with the most efficient modulating appliances, controls, and futureproofed low-temperature heating systems. Equally, biomass will be an alternative consideration.

Failure to remain objective could see tribalism escalate amongst respective technology stakeholders, which will inevitably cascade to installers. Surely it's in all our interests to develop a multi-skilled workforce capable of advising clients on all suitable technologies and therefore installing the best possible option? To help achieve this, perhaps a unified vision is needed from our industry leaders promoting objectivity and sustainability as a priority instead of partisan bias.

Simon Ashman

We'd love to hear your own thoughts on this – please email Liz@oilinstaller.co.uk

Grant introduces the Aerona Smart Controller

The Aerona Smart Controller is an intuitive new addition to Grant's heat pump range, which combines a sleek 4.5" touch screen display, self-learning functionality, remote monitoring and heating curve configuration to deliver optimum efficiency.

The Aerona Smart Controller is a weather-compensated controller that can operate up to three heating zones as well as the domestic hot water. Featuring a modern user interface, the controller is straightforward to navigate, allowing installers and homeowners to access the core heat pump and system settings with ease. In addition to setting the heating schedules, domestic hot water timings and the systems on/off schedule, the Aerona Smart Controller also has in-built installer assistant features which support the set-up and commissioning of an Aerona³ heat pump.

At the centre of the Controller is its advanced monitoring software. With the ability to independently adjust the heating curves for each zone, the controller cleverly calculates the optimum flow temperature for the heat pump in relation to the conditions outside of the property, while also utilising its self-learning functionality. Consequently, the controller intuitively monitors and adjusts the operation of the Aerona³ heat pump to suit the individual requirements of a property.

The Controller comes with a wi-fi hub which, alongside the dedicated web-browser platform and app, allows access to core performance data for both the heat pump and system,



remote adjustment of temperature settings and parameters, as well as giving access to error codes and diagnostics information to assist with remote system support. As well as supporting the set-up and day-to-day running of an Aerona³ heat pump, it also provides interactive performance data for end-users and engineers anytime and anywhere.

"The Aerona Smart Controller is the latest innovation to join Grant's renewables range," comments Managing Director, Paul Wakefield. "When we previewed this product at InstallerSHOW last June, the response we received from customers was incredibly positive, with installers excited to see this type of heat pump control joining our offering. Heat pump technology has evolved significantly over recent years and the controls which manage these systems have also had to transform so that optimum performances can be achieved for installers and their customers. The Aerona Smart Controller marks a new chapter for Grant's controls range, delivering intuitive operation to help maximise the performance of Grant heat pump installations."

Tigerloop BIO is HVO-ready

SPX Flow Tigerholm is proudly supporting OFTEC by supplying HVO pilot demonstrator sites with its HVO-ready Tigerloop BIO, fuel de-aerator.

One of the industry's leading oil de-aerators since it was invented by Tigerholm in 1971, The Tigerloop BIO has been extensively tested for use with HVO and carries the OFCERT License No. 2181080902.

Rigorous quality control and testing have been key to the success of the Tigerloop. Each and every

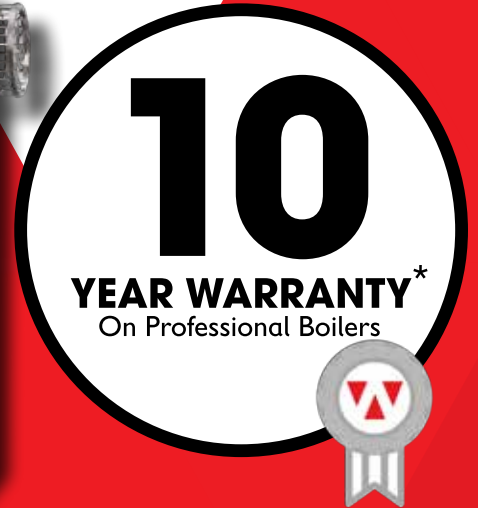
unit is functionally tested prior to delivery and pressure tested for 10 hours to ensure the integrity of its seals for a safe installation.



Further testing and calculations have been made by SPX Flow Tigerholm to determine suction supply line sizing for HVO installations using HVO-ready Tigerloop de-aerators, helping OFTEC to provide guidance on the industry conversion to HVO. These suction line sizing charts have been published in the OFTEC HVO handbook.

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Will 2024 see sustainable biofuels adopted into Irish heat policy?

All the evidence points to Ireland missing its 2030 targets. In the Republic, new research has shown that efforts to reduce emissions by retrofitting Irish buildings is stalling.

A study by UK sustainability advisors, 3Keel, and Irish building materials firm, Kingspan, claims just 10% of the Republic of Ireland's annual retrofitting target was met in 2022, with much of the country's building stock still heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Indeed, a recent report showed that the number of homes using liquid fuel (kerosene) has increased since 2016 by 28,173 to 714,177. Only 39% of Ireland's housing stock – 827,634 homes – had a valid energy efficiency (BER) rating at the end of 2022 and less than 20% had ratings of B2 or above.

This is perhaps unsurprising. Despite record levels of government funding for national retrofitting programmes, the Public Accounts Committee has been told the average homeowner is looking at a cost of €40,000, after grant aid, to bring their home to an 'A' rating standard of energy efficiency. While grants to assist with retrofitting may appeal to some, these findings reinforce the view that they are usually only adopted by relatively wealthy consumers who can afford the works and can use the grant to supplement their expenditure.

The situation is no better in Northern Ireland. A preamble to the Call for Evidence 'Renewable Energy and Net Zero in Northern Ireland' by the NI Select Affairs Committee states: "Northern Ireland's Executive set a target for 80% of its electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030."

However, the latest statistics reveal that progress is stalling. While 45.5% of total electricity consumption in Northern Ireland was generated from renewable sources between July 2022 and June 2023, this figure is down on the year before. With no renewable support scheme in place since 2017 and restricted grid capacity, the potential for renewable energy expansion is limited. While the Executive has consulted on a new renewable support scheme, its launch is not expected until 2024 at the earliest. Given the investment, planning and manufacture timelines, time is running out to deliver the 2030 renewables target.



Mark Doyle (Firebird), Niall Fay (Grant Engineering) and David Blevings (OFTEC) presenting to the Fiana Fail Parliamentary Group

So, why is government not listening to the liquid fuel sector?

We have demonstrated that boilers can easily be switched from kerosene to a sustainable biofuel and the demonstration project in GB has been running for over three years. We have member companies actively promoting biofuel ready boilers. So, what is the problem?

The difficulty is that our sectors' proposals do not mesh with governments' electrification plans. For the last number of years, UK and Irish Governments have promoted their plan to electrify virtually everything. However, we are starting to see flaws in their plans and with the potential for a change in government in the UK and Republic, the opportunity for some alternative thinking may present itself this year.

It is interesting to note that the NI Department of Economy has set up a 'biofuels taskforce' and will actively consult on biofuel inclusion in the 'new' energy strategy for Northern Ireland this year.

In the Republic we are now seeing support for sustainable biofuels to be included in energy policy. It was interesting to note Deputy Naughten TD's comments at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands in January when they discussed fuel poverty.

Deputy Naughten stated that the charity, St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has "continually highlighted" the problem with home heating oil. He said that, at the moment, there isn't an alternative, other than pursuing a deep retrofit and installing a heat pump.

Deputy Naughten commented that he: "Knows there are challenges with using HVO for home heating compared to transport, but surely there has to be options and solutions out there that are not doing the heat pumps, which cost a lot of money, and which are slow to carry out, rather than locking people in for another generation into oil-fired central heating systems."

He asked the SEAI to look at this issue.

Obviously, we would agree and if Ireland is to realistically achieve its legally binding net zero targets, the government must let cost-effective biofuel solutions play their part. OFTEC believes net zero targets both north and south of the border can still be achieved, provided governments pull in the same direction. Both governments need to be more ambitious in incentivising change and promoting cleaner fuels such as HVO.

OFTEC is actively canvassing members of the Dáil and NI Assembly and promoting the inclusion of sustainable biofuels in heat policy. We hope that several parties in the republic will include biofuels as an option on their manifestos before they go to the polls this year!

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The extra durable Diamond Coil endures more than five times as many cycles in the crash test compared to previous service coils.

Best in industry warranty

Confidence in the durability of the product has led to the company doubling the warranty from 18 months to three years as Danfoss' Stephen McElroy explains: "The Danfoss Diamond series Service 2.0 oil pump provides exceptional robustness and strength. To emphasise the superior product durability, we are happy to double our warranty from 18 to 36 months on UK and Ireland service pumps, applicable from date of production."

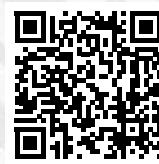
Features and benefits

- 10 times longer lifetime in critical applications e.g. in heavy-loaded conditions
- Equipped with extra durable Diamond Coil
- Double warranty
- Mechanical shaft seal
- No leakages and no oil smell
- Pump filter can be replaced in only 45 seconds compared to 10 minutes in ordinary pumps

Longer lifetime in heavy-loaded conditions

Oil burner applications have changed in recent years to be operated at higher pressures and with more insulation, partly for noise reduction, but also for energy savings, and this results in tougher working conditions for the pumps.

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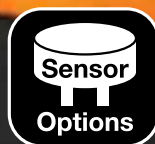
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Grant launches EvoLink Hybrid System Hub

An innovative new addition to Grant UK's hybrid heating range is now available with the launch of the EvoLink Hybrid System Hub. This wall-mounted, compact unit cleverly allows an Aerona³ heat pump to be combined with an existing fossil fuel heat source, providing hard-to-heat homes with the opportunity to reduce their carbon emissions when a standalone heat pump may not be possible.

Designed to help homes reduce dependency on their traditional fossil fuel boiler, the Hub has a maximum output to the heating system of 32kW and is suitable for installation with kerosene, HVO, gas, LPG electric and modulating biomass boilers (with space heating outputs of up to 36kW).

The EvoLink can enable an Aerona³ air source heat pump to be connected to most existing domestic heating systems. For properties where an air source heat pump alone cannot meet the entire heat demand, the EvoLink can provide these homeowners with a solution that facilitates the introduction of renewable energy into



their heating system, while keeping their existing boiler to top up any heat demand when required.

Designed for installation indoors, the EvoLink features a simple control interface. It is user-friendly for consumers while also incorporating sophisticated technology that's designed to manage the two heat sources, maximising the heat pump's use and using the original boiler as a supplementary heater. With 'comfort'

and 'green' operating modes, the EvoLink allows the end-user to select the mode that best meets their own personal preferences.

"Hybrid heating technologies are an important part of our industry's transition to low carbon heating," comments Paul Wakefield, Grant's Managing Director.

"Just as different types of heating systems have kept our homes warm for the last fifty years, a variety of solutions will be needed to heat homes in the future, helping all types of properties to reduce their carbon emissions.

"This is why we have expanded our Hybrid range with the launch of the EvoLink. By introducing a heat pump alongside the back-up of their existing boiler, the EvoLink helps households to immediately reduce their carbon emissions while also giving them time to reduce their heat loss in the years to come, which in turn will enable their heat pump to fulfil more of their heating demand and further reduce their dependency on fossil fuels."

Firebird paves the way for sustainable living

As we step into 2024, the push for sustainable home heating has never been more crucial. Firebird is committed to developing efficient, innovative heating products that are easy to install, promising homeowners long-lasting financial and carbon savings.

The company has made substantial investments in creating fuel-efficient products that are also friendly to the environment. This innovation has propelled Firebird to the forefront of the industry with liquid fuel boilers achieving an impressive 97.5% efficiency and remarkably low NOx emissions, half the EU limits.

HVO champions

As part of its ongoing commitment to creating more fuel-efficient and eco-friendly solutions, Firebird has been championing the use of HVO as a biofuel for homes. Firebird boilers are fully compatible with HVO, a sustainable alternative to kerosene that can significantly reduce household emissions by up to 90%.

It's clear the demand for information around HVO has surged in the past year, particularly among heating professionals, whose interest is clearly reflected in the demand for Firebird's boiler familiarisation courses at its site in Plymouth.

Reducing installation time

On the new build and retrofit side of the business, Firebird's Envirocyl Quick Plumb Unit is growing in popularity amongst installers and homeowners. This cylinder meets all hot water needs and its fast reheat and high insulation values make it highly efficient. As the Envirocyl Quick Plumb unit is pre-plumbed and pre-wired, it can reduce installation time by as much as 70%.

The Quick Plumb Units are designed to work with the company's Enviroair Air Source Heat Pumps in mind. Again, this will make installation quicker, saving both time and money. The Enviroair Heat Pumps are NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Building) compliant, with a low running



cost PCB controller and high-tech intelligent heating controls.

Adding to the sustainable product range, is Enviroair Underfloor Heating, which is suitable for both new build and upgrade projects. Wet underfloor heating is the most efficient way to provide space heating as it is up to 25% more efficient than traditional radiators. Underfloor heating generally runs at around 45°C as opposed to 80°C used in radiator systems, thereby saving on energy and running costs, especially, when used with a renewable heat source such as the Firebird Enviroair Air Source Heat Pump.



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A case study from Navien: the role of HVO in rural leisure properties

As the world seeks viable fuel alternatives to combat climate change and reduce carbon emissions, the plumbing and heating sector plays a crucial role in setting the standard towards a more sustainable future. With liquid fossil fuels, such as kerosene, being a major contributor to environmental pollution, those working in the trade must explore cleaner and more sustainable alternatives for customers.

This is where Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) emerges as a key solution for a more sustainable option.

One heating appliance and boiler manufacturer that sees HVO as an attractive, future-proof proposition for the industry, is Navien UK. In this article, Barrie Wilson, National Business Manager at Navien UK, shares the experience of an installer from Birch (Lincs) Ltd who recently completed a project using Navien's innovative HVO solutions, and explains the benefits the solution is set to bring for the end user.

The task at hand

This project, set on a rural estate, has multiple properties catering for staycations – a total of 12 high-end renovated holiday lets and rental properties.

Two of these properties are now fully complete – a one-bed, one-bath, previously derelict, refurbished barn and a two-bed, one-bath farmhouse annexe which was previously a garage with an oil boiler.

While these leisure properties are not very large, all need to be liveable, affordable, and aesthetically pleasing and, importantly for the owner, commercially viable. It was also particularly important to the owner that a sustainable solution was used for the two properties.



Finding the solution

Air source heat pumps are an excellent choice for some properties, especially those that are already energy efficient or where they are installed as part of a larger renovation project. In this particular case, there are a few key aspects that influenced the installer to recommend Navien's HVO solution instead of a heat pump for these two rural properties.

The farmhouse and annexe were refurbished to a very high specification, such as quality thermal insulation and, while heat pumps would technically work, they would not meet the owner's requirements for commercial viability for the properties due to the high upfront install cost.

Heat pumps also require a lot more space than an oil boiler and the owner found them less appealing aesthetically for these properties. A combi boiler, on the other hand, is compact as well as space-saving as there is no need for a bulky hot water cylinder.

Lastly, aged farm buildings aren't always suitable for retrofit which could make it difficult for air source heat pumps to work with the efficiencies required.

Faced with these type of challenges HVO works well in rural properties as it does not infringe on space, does not affect the look and feel of a property, and is much easier to retrofit. HVO can be substituted into an existing system with minimal work for the installer.

A seamless installation

Taking everything into consideration, the installer suggested the external version of Navien's LCB700 Blue Flame HVO-ready Oil boiler and an HVO tank for both properties. The LCB700 is the only oil boiler with a flow adjustment valve and auto-mixing valve to deliver

hot water without temperature fluctuations.

Being well-versed in working with oil, the installer and fitters for this project found the installation to be seamless and much the same as working with standard kerosene fuel.

Once the installation was completed, the property owner was very happy with the performance of the HVO solution, despite initial concerns about the cost and availability of HVO.

Although it is a more sustainable solution, HVO currently sits at around 10% to 15% more than the price of traditional fuel and is not available from all liquid fuel distributors. Currently, there are calls for the Government to incentivise the use of HVO through a renewable liquid heating fuel obligation so that it can achieve price parity with kerosene which would encourage a rapid adoption of this low carbon solution.

An installer's thoughts

Given that HVO is easy to transition to, the work required by the installer is less time-consuming and existing systems cope with the change, embracing HVO is, arguably, "a no-brainer".

From a customer's point of view, air source heat pumps can be viewed as a "scary and mystical new technology", whereas HVO is "old tech with new fuel", which makes it a simple step-change and one that is easy for installers to explain and for customers to understand.

Ultimately, HVO gives customers ease of mind at a time when it can be difficult to keep up with all the developments in renewable technologies.

Jason Birch of Birch (Lincs) Ltd commented "I believe that we shall use HVO again in the future. The only issue now is availability but, hopefully, with it being a more sustainable energy source, more legislation will be passed so that the distribution companies have more of a call for it.

"HVO's renewable nature definitely impressed the customer on this project. And I think that, in my area, it will be a very popular product."

Harlequin launches portable diesel/AdBlue tank range

Harlequin has expanded its range of commercial fuel and AdBlue storage tanks to include a range of portable tanks equipped to provide safe, easy storage and dispensing of diesel and AdBlue on site.

Made from tough and durable MDPE, these tanks are very robust and designed for a very long life. They come equipped with a 50 l/min high speed fuel pump in 12 or 24-volt variants, allowing the pump to be powered by a vehicle battery or alternate power source on site. If preferred, a manual pump can be specified as an option where no power is available.

A convenient lockable lid gives you easy access to the inside of the tank and ensures security of the diesel/AdBlue inside. A high-quality five-metre length delivery hose with automatic shut-off nozzle housed

within the system allows for hassle free dispensing of the diesel/AdBlue. Forklift channels and strapping points make for simple lifting and safe transportation of the tanks and its contents.

Easy refilling

Portable tanks are easy to refill from a static storage tank such as a Harlequin Fuel Station or Blue Station. They can be simply loaded onto a vehicle such as a pickup truck, trailer or van, saving valuable time. Specialist driver qualifications or vehicle modifications are not required to transport or use the tank.

These tanks are specifically designed to provide a convenient refill option for farming, forestry, construction, mining, quarry, power generation and fishing sectors. The range consists of 220-litre and 440-litre models in both



diesel and AdBlue variants. For easy identification, diesel models have a black lid and the AdBlue models have a blue lid. Along with a rotary hand pump, an Inline flow meter with digital display is also available as an option.

New Kingspan Titan low-profile domestic oil tank

Finding a domestic oil tank that can withstand the worst of the weather and yet also fit neatly into small spaces isn't always easy. So, the announcement that Kingspan is launching a domestic oil tank, which is tough and unobtrusive, will be welcomed by all tank installers.

The new Kingspan Titan ESLP1200 Compact oil tank is the latest addition to the brand's renowned EcoSafe bundled oil tank range. Its sturdy, low-profile design and high-quality, polyethylene construction means it's well-suited to exposed sites, persistent strong winds, temperature fluctuations, and/or high levels of UV radiation.

Along with the rest of the EcoSafe tank range, the ESLP1200 is HVO-ready, signifying that it can safely store Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). HVO is fully compatible with existing oil-fired boilers making it easy for property owners to switch to greener energy.

How easy is it to install?

The ESLP1200 is very easy to install, thanks largely to the fact that it has one



of the smallest footprint on the market – just 1200 x 1800mm. This means that it will fit on just 12 concrete slabs (600mm x 600mm), significantly cutting the time needed by an installer to lay a slab base.

But that's not all. The tank has many other built-in attributes to help make installation as quick and easy as possible.

The tank weighs just 130kg, which helps with handling and manoeuvring, as well as a Watchman Sonic Advanced Tank Pack to give installers everything they need to complete an installation.

The ESLP1200 Compact comes with a bottom outlet as standard, while top outlet versions are available on request. Channels moulded into each side of the tank are designed to contain any top outlet pipework.

All EcoSafe tanks are double-skinned, made from recyclable polyethylene,

and include a Spillstop mechanical overflow prevention device to safeguard against leaks and spills when the tank is being filled. The tanks have full regulatory and environmental compliance, and their durability is underlined by a 10-year manufacturer warranty.

Finally, all EcoSafe tanks now come supplied with the Watchman Sonic Advanced Oil Level Monitor, which allows customers to view their oil levels via a display plug. This unit can be upgraded to a SENSIT Smart Wifi device by purchasing a dongle. Customers can then download an app free of charge and monitor their tank levels using their smartphone or tablet. Users also get access to additional features such as sudden-drop alerts, predicted run-out date, plus the device is compatible with Alexa.

And, for a limited time, Kingspan is giving away a SENSIT device free with every EcoSafe tank.

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- ✓ Overcome access issues with lightweight models that are easier to manoeuvre into place.
- ✓ Removable lid for easy maintenance, allowing you to save on future upkeep.
- ✓ No need to compromise on looks; tanks crafted with an aesthetic design and a sleek powder coated finish.
- ✓ 10-year warranty when registered.
- ✓ Design life in excess of 20-years.
- ✓ Bottom outlet and top outlets available to suit all applications.

Dimensions & Capacities:

Model	Capacity	Length	Width	Height
1000SB	1,000 litres	1,800mm	600mm	1,680mm
1650SB	1,670 litres	1,800mm	900mm	1,680mm
2300SB	2,325 litres	1,800mm	1200mm	1,680mm



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New requirements in Scotland

There are new changes which come into effect on 1 April 2024 in Scotland, which technicians, designers and specifiers need to be aware of if working on new homes and buildings. The new regulations stipulate that you will not be able to use direct emission (classed as polluting) heating systems such as oil, gas or bioenergy boilers located within the building or curtilage of the building, but will have to install Zero Direct Emission Heating Systems (ZDEHS). The rationale is to future proof new homes and buildings so that they will not have to be retrofitted with a ZDEHS alternative in the future, potentially eliminating the need for disruptive retrofit works. This requirement does not affect buildings on heat networks.

Are there any exemptions whereby a ZDEHS does not have to be installed?

The following exemptions apply:

- A building that is being altered or extended under a building warrant applied for before the 1st April 2024.
- The heating is solely provided for the purpose of frost protection.
- It is providing emergency backup heating; or
- The building warrant for the new development/s was applied for before 1st April 2024, whereby direct emission heating systems may continue to be installed up to April 2027.

Do the rules apply when undertaking conversions to existing building?

This depends on the scale of the work being carried out. If it is a small-scale conversion and applied to only part of the building like the conversion of a roof space, or attached garage into habitable accommodation, then the rules would not apply. However, the rules apply if you have a change in the buildings occupancy, or have a direct emission heating system in the building or area of the building you are converting, and it is considered to be 'reasonably practicable.' What is classed as 'reasonably practicable' is outlined in Section 6.11 in the 2024 Scottish Technical Handbooks.

Do the rules apply to undertaking alterations and extensions to existing heating systems?

Currently the requirements fall out of scope when undertaking alterations and extensions on existing heating systems. However, the requirements will apply in the future to buildings which have been constructed or converted to meet the new requirements.



What types of ZDEHS examples are there?

The common examples of ZDEHS are heat pumps, electric heating, and heat networks.

When is emergency backup heating considered?

There are circumstances whereby the occupants of the new buildings require to have an operational heating system at all times, taking into account planned and unexpected interruptions to the power supply. Therefore, it can be proposed that a direct emissions heating system can be installed which is normally connected to the normal heating system. Provision would need to be made so that a source of electrical power would be in place to enable operation, with the installation meeting the minimum provisions set out in the relevant Building Services Compliance Guide. A switchover arrangement would need to be in place for when the normal heating system becomes operational again.

The proposal application to have emergency heating in a new building should contain the following information to the verifier clearly:

- Convey how the emergency heating will function on the failure of the normal system; and
- Indicate the switchover arrangement when the normal heating system becomes operational again.

For further information on the new legislation coming into effect, please see the New Build Heat Standard factsheet published by the Scottish Government. Also, see Section 6.11 of the 2024 Scottish Technical Handbooks available to view via the QR codes below.



New Build Heat Standard factsheet –
www.gov.scot



Building Regulations Technical Handbook –
www.gov.scot

New domestic liquid fuel field guide

OFTEC registered liquid fuel heating technicians now have free access to the new digital, domestic liquid fuel field guide. This useful guide has been designed to be a concise and accessible on-site reference tool to support your installation and servicing work and is now freely available to download from the OFTEC website.



eliminating the dependency on mobile or Wi-Fi signals.

Accessibility:

Registered liquid fuel technicians have received an email with links to the free digital desktop and mobile versions, ensuring you have the guide wherever work takes you. If you prefer a physical copy, the guide is also available for purchase on our OFTEC Direct shop (See QR code below).

Key features of the field guide:

The guide has been designed to complement the OFTEC technical manual. It has been formatted as a PDF file and is essentially a digital book. Once downloaded to your smartphone or other device, it can serve as a practical tool for on-site or office use. It covers a wide range of subjects relevant to your work, including:

- Compliance.
- Fuel storage tanks.
- Fill and vent pipes.
- Fuel supply systems.
- Appliances.
- Carbon monoxide detectors.
- Flues and chimneys.
- Combustion and ventilation air.
- Heating and hot water systems.
- HVO conversions.

- Nozzle and pump pressure calculations.
- Procedures.
- Classifying risks.

Benefits:

The field guide's user-friendly design ensures that you can quickly reference relevant information, making it an ideal companion during your daily tasks. It uses hyperlinks to enable you to navigate quickly to the information you need and contains a comprehensive clickable index. Keyword searching is also possible, and this is backed up by clear design and new imagery to enhance ease of use, particularly in situations where a quick check or confirmation is required. The guide is intended to be downloaded,

Give us your feedback:

OFTEC values your input and encourages feedback so that we can improve future versions of the guide. We are committed to providing continuous support, and your technical calls and queries are always welcome. This digital guide reflects our commitment to finding ways to support you in your role.



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AHHHH!! Heat loss calculations... again!

Following OFTEC's recent E-News article addressing heat loss requirements, it is evident that the advice, guidance, and overall complexity pose significant challenges for technicians installing liquid fuel appliances.

A major obstacle faced by technicians is interpreting the requirements outlined in energy efficiency documents, such as Approved Document Part L (England) of the building regulations. These documents, while crucial, are not always straightforward, leading to confusion when striving for compliance. OFTEC aims to clarify that we do not create these requirements, instead, we merely convey and interpret them for technicians.

OFTEC Support:

OFTEC has taken steps towards helping simplify the calculation process. The receipt of a letter of intention from the Building Safety Regulator allowing

the use of the simplified method for replacement-only boilers in England is a significant step. However, it's important to note that the referenced document is still in the consultancy stage, and we actively seeking clarity for consistency. Technical notices 035 and 038 have been produced to help technicians, and OFTEC remains committed to collaborating within the industry to update and provide suitable tools and support for technicians. Emphasizing the importance of sizing and energy efficiency, OFTEC actively encourages good design practices.

OFTEC recommended tools and methods:

- Domestic Heating Design Guide (CIBSE)
- Heat Pump Calculator (MCS)
- Calculation software complying with BS EN 12831-1 and BS EN 12831-3
- Plumbing Engineering Services Design Guide (CIPHE)
- Guide B1 (CIBSE)

- FB 59 Design of Low-temperature Domestic Heating Systems (BRE)


OFTEC acknowledges the challenges technicians face in heat loss calculations and is actively working on solutions. Through industry collaboration, training, and calculation tool accessibility. The goal is to improve clarity for compliance with energy-efficient system design.



Technical Notice 035 Regional requirements - England








Technical Notice 038 Heat loss calculations



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Fuel price commentary

The UK and Republic of Ireland (RoI) energy markets are still highly dependent on fossil fuels so heating costs remain volatile as we begin 2024. The continuing war in Ukraine, and the growing conflict in the Middle East, have had an unwelcome impact on fuel prices and could potentially push them higher if they result in any further interruption to supply. This is particularly likely if production or shipping is disrupted or targeted more widely.

Despite this, many people have seen a welcome reduction in heating costs compared to twelve months ago, but the picture is far from consistent. In Great Britain, users of mains

gas, wood pellets and heat pumps have all seen significant price falls compared to a year ago. The price of heating oil remains about the same – more expensive than mains gas but highly competitive against other options – while LPG users have seen significant price increases. The good news for those who live in the RoI is that prices have fallen for all heating types, although the price fall for LPG is very small.

In Northern Ireland the picture is rather different; heating oil and LPG have both fallen in cost, as have wood pellets, while mains gas and heat pump heating now costs more to run. But look at the price

of electric storage heating – an increase of almost 50% compared to a year ago! This type of heating had previously been somewhat cheaper in Northern Ireland, compared to Great Britain and RoI, but sadly for those who rely on it, it now appears that this type of heating is now extremely expensive everywhere.

With prospects uncertain going forward, predicting the future is difficult. Any economic slowdown across the world could have the effect of reducing prices, while further conflict could increase them. Elections in several countries, including the US and UK may also be a factor in future trends.

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	Dec-23	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heaters	3135	£3,162	£27	1%	£2,751
Gas condensing boiler	1930	£1,626	-£304	-16%	£1,226
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	1749	£2,134	£385	22%	£1,612
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	1752	£1,746	-£6	0%	£1,193
Wood pellets	2902	£2,370	-£532	-18%	£1,915
Air source heat pump radiators	3418	£2,750	-£668	-20%	£2,414
Air source heat pump underfloor	2858	£2,313	-£545	-19%	£1,986

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Dec-22	Dec-23	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heaters	2480	£3,675	1195	48%	£2,406
Gas condensing boiler	1869	£2,215	346	19%	£1,327
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	2293	£2,166	-127	-6%	£2,046
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	1781	£1,429	-352	-20%	£1,128
Wood pellets	2082	£1,860	-222	-11%	£1,490
Air source heat pump radiators	2498	£2,875	377	15%	£2,105
Air source heat pump underfloor	2066	£2,377	311	15%	£1,713

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Dec-22	Dec-23	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heaters	4613	£4,304	-309	-7%	€3,061
Gas condensing boiler	2781	€2,659	-122	-4%	€1,823
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	2856	€2,831	-25	-1%	€2,547
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	2236	€2,021	-215	-10%	€1,579
Wood pellets	2484	€2,370	-114	-5%	€1,721
Air source heat pump radiators	3896	€3,640	-256	-7%	€2,623
Air source heat pump underfloor	3284	€3,069	-215	-7%	€2,213

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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