

# Fuel price commentary

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

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

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

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

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

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

### GREAT BRITAIN

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

### NORTHERN IRELAND

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

### REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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

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