

Oil Installer

News and views from an evolving heating world



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Spring 2026 Volume 20 No 1

- HVO CAMPAIGNERS MARCH TO WESTMINSTER
- THE WARM HOMES PLAN UNPACKED
- FUTURE HEAT POLICY UPDATE

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Chairman's Foreword

Readers of this magazine will know better than most that businesses thrive when there's a stable economy and helpful policies. The consumer confidence it generates means homeowners are more likely to spend money – and it helps businesses develop successful strategies and plan investment.

Labour arrived in government with a growth agenda but seem to have spent a lot of time firefighting since coming into office. High energy bills are a key issue for millions of households and businesses and must be fixed to achieve the stability and growth we need. Keeping bills affordable while successfully delivering Net Zero will be a difficult balance to strike, and the government's newly published Warm Homes Plan focusses on achieving this goal. It remains to be seen how successful it will be.

Oil-heated households fared better than most during the recent cost of living squeeze, and oil remains the cheapest fuel you can use. However, anyone wishing to upgrade their boiler may find it costs more than it should due to the impact of the Clean Heat Market Mechanism (CHMM), an absurd policy designed to encourage manufacturers to make more heat pumps. But fining manufacturers that don't hit the government's arbitrary target risks damaging UK manufacturing because it undermines our ability to invest and innovate. This makes no sense, particularly when, as the Government consultation on alternative low carbon heating solutions makes abundantly clear, the alternative technologies are even more expensive.

It was good to see renewable liquid heating fuels included in that consultation, and the best thing the government can do now is give a clear signal that it supports the use of renewable liquid heating fuels and cancel the CHMM.

I have no doubt that the current consultation will provide the evidence needed and, once long-term certainty over our future is provided, our industry will be ready to support the government's growth agenda.

Neil Sawers,

Neil Sawers
OFTEC Chairman



Warm Homes Plan published

The government has finally published its long-delayed Warm Homes Plan, which it says sets out how it will help people find ways to save money on energy bills and transform our ageing building stock into comfortable, low-carbon homes that are fit for the future.

The new plan sets out the government's policies for the rest of this Parliament and doubles down on heat pumps and heat networks as the government's preferred low carbon technologies, with electrification of heat the key priority. However, the plan also includes funding, training, and regulatory changes that will directly affect technicians and customers who rely on liquid fuel heating.

The priorities in the plan also reflect the current cost of living squeeze. With ECO now cancelled, £5 billion will be invested in a new Warm Homes Fund to support home upgrade improvements. Of this, £600 million is specifically targeted at low-income households, where affordability

is a major concern. There is a clear shift away from insulation measures and Ministers claim the multibillion-pound plan will bring down energy bills by helping households to install heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage in their homes.

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme – which offers grants of £7,500 towards the cost of a heat pump – will be extended to the end of this parliament. The plan also includes a consumer loan scheme, to help people cover the up-front costs of these often-expensive technologies.

In terms of regulation, the number of Certification Bodies operating in the energy efficiency and microgeneration sectors will be reviewed. There are also proposals to restrict installers from being members of more than one Certification Body for the same type of installation work.

For more analysis of the announcement, please turn to page 17.

OFTEC welcomes new Marketing Manager

OFTEC is delighted to announce the appointment of Sally Buist as its new Marketing and Communications Manager. Sally will work under the leadership of Malcolm Farrow, Director of Marketing and External Affairs, strengthening the organisation's strategic communications and marketing efforts.

Sally brings with her many years of commercial marketing experience across a range of sectors, with a proven track record of delivering effective campaigns, building strong brand presence, and engaging key audiences. Her expertise and insight will be a valuable asset as OFTEC continues to grow and develop its profile.

Outside work, Sally has a long-standing passion for geography and travel, enjoying the chance to experience the world's natural landscapes first-hand. She spends her free time walking her two energetic dogs and is also an active netball player.

We are pleased to welcome Sally to the team, and look forward to the experience, creativity, and leadership she brings to OFTEC.



Heat policy update

Consultation provokes unprecedented response calling for support for renewable liquid heating fuels

The government's decision to launch its consultation on the role of alternative clean heating solutions last November, was an important milestone for our industry and a vindication for our lobbying efforts - we have long campaigned for a consultation about the use of renewable liquid heating fuels.

It was also a priceless opportunity to ensure the voice of oil heating users and people working inside the industry was heard by DESNZ.

We created simple template consultation responses to make it as easy as possible for people to join in. We then launched a new phase of the Future Ready Fuel campaign to encourage oil heating users, heating technicians and fuel suppliers to submit supportive responses. We backed this up with news releases and Facebook social media advertising carefully targeted to rural areas.

We also wrote to over 600 rural parish councils asking them to include information in newsletters, and engaged with rural MPs across the political spectrum.

The government often evaluates consultations on the basis of the number of positive or negative responses it receives to each question, so getting a high number of positive responses is important.

The campaign was an outstanding success:

- 16,000 supportive consultation responses were generated – 85% from consumers.
- The response heatmap shows excellent participation in most target areas.
- A delegation from Cornwall submitted their response in person and met Lord Whitehead, a DESNZ minister (see separate article on pages 8 & 9).

• Over 100 pieces of consumer media coverage were achieved.

• Rural Labour MPs submitted a supportive joint response, and the Plaid Cymru Westminster group, Scottish National Party, Democratic Unionist Party and Liberal Democrats all submitted supportive responses.

Thank you to everyone who supported the campaign and helped us achieve this hugely positive outcome.

Next steps – when will renewable liquid fuels like HVO be supported?

While it was good that the government has undertaken this consultation, it must also be said that it was far from perfect. It was launched too late to influence the government's Warm Homes Plan, yet contained questions about some technologies that are already being actively supported by the government.

Some of the assumptions were also questionable, and OFTEC and UKIFDA met with officials to discuss concerns and wrote to DESNZ to highlight several issues that we think could potentially mislead respondents.

With the exception of renewable liquid heating fuels, the most striking thing about the consultation was how expensive the other options were to install and, in many cases run – far more than an oil boiler.

This only strengthens our view that fuels like HVO are the right option for many oil heated homes, and OFTEC submitted a comprehensive response on behalf of industry.

The big question is what happens next?

The government has so far been less than enthusiastic about supporting the use of renewable liquid heating fuels, talking about "making decisions later

this decade on the role renewable liquid fuels like HVO could play in the future heating mix". This despite industry being ready to deploy them now.

In its new Warm Homes Plan (see page 17) DESNZ reasserts its view that most homes will eventually convert to a heat pump, despite ongoing concerns about cost and practical challenges, particularly in older buildings which make up around half of the rural off-gas grid housing stock. So, for our industry, there's still much work to do.

OFTEC's view remains that the government needs to accept that off-gas grid homes are different, and that more affordable and less disruptive choices are needed. That means, alongside heat pumps, renewable liquid heating fuels must be one of the options available.

The consultation has generated an unprecedented level of support for this to happen. Most government consultations about heating generate a few hundred responses at the most. We know that at least 16,000 positive responses were submitted and the government must now listen to these views and act quickly, not kick the can down the road.

Over the next six months we intend to put maximum pressure on the government to take the steps needed to implement a fuel obligation and change the duty on HVO to make it more affordable. With these simple changes, there's no reason why a 20% fuel blend can't be introduced THIS YEAR. So, our motto going forward is: HVO by Christmas!

We may need your help again as the next phase of our campaign takes shape over the summer, so please look out for further updates.

Malcolm Farrow



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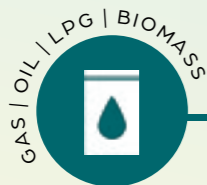
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OFTEC registration adds new HMCA healthcare benefit offering

For self-employed technicians and small businesses, private healthcare can be particularly valuable, helping to reduce the impact of illness or injury on your income or business.

OFTEC has added a new healthcare benefit for its registered technicians, by partnering with the Hospital & Medical Care Association (HMCA) – a specialist provider of private healthcare and wellbeing plans for professional and trade associations.

With over 45 years of experience, HMCA is dedicated to offering high-quality, affordable private medical cover tailored to meet the specific needs of its members and their families.

Through OFTEC registration, technicians can now access healthcare options that are not available directly to the public, providing additional support and peace of mind for individuals, families and small businesses working in the heating and energy sector.

As part of OFTEC registration, technicians can now explore HMCA healthcare options.

These include:

- **Tailored support for tradespeople.**
- **Quick access to treatment** - avoiding long NHS waiting lists and receiving timely treatment, ensuring you get the care you deserve.
- **Family plans available** - plans can be tailored to include your spouse, partner, and dependent children.
- **Exclusive rates** - HMCA offers private health plans exclusively to members of associations and membership groups.



- **No medical checks** - you're guaranteed to be accepted and there's no age restriction when joining a medical plan.

For more information on how to access the HMCA benefit, visit the OFTEC website: <https://oftec.org/technicians/marketing-and-business-support/benefits-of-registration/hmca/>

Why compliance matters in today's heating industry

At OFTEC, compliance is more than a requirement – it underpins everything we do. As the heating industry evolves through new technologies, fuels, and regulatory change, we remain focused on upholding the highest standards of safety, competence, and environmental responsibility.

Our role is to support and protect both consumers and registered businesses by ensuring that all technicians operating under the OFTEC scheme meet these standards consistently.

While the vast majority

Oil Installer Spring 2026

do, each quarter a small number of companies are suspended or have their registration withdrawn. This may occur for a variety of reasons and means they are no longer entitled to present themselves as OFTEC registered.

Maintaining robust compliance safeguards the integrity of the scheme and reinforces trust in the OFTEC name across the industry.

Revoked businesses between 1st July 2025 to 30th September 2025 (9 Businesses) are:

Company No.	Business Name
7016	A & A Plummer
502184	Abbey Gas (Whitby) Ltd
500862	API Mechanical Services Ltd
500170	Bespoke Mechanical Building Services Ltd
102812	Briggs Plumbing and Heating Services Ltd
500194	Colin Lynskey Plumbing and Heating
100091	M.A.N.T Ltd
10790	Medworth Plumbing & Heating Ltd
502845	S.H Gas&Oil services

Five years of proof: Cornish community takes HVO case to Westminster

By Margaret Major,
Managing Editor.

Towards the end of January, I joined members of a rural Cornish community on an important journey to Westminster.

The group was travelling to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to submit the findings of a five-year, community-led trial of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in domestic heating, calling for its formal recognition within the UK's rural heat decarbonisation strategy.

Presenting its evidence on the day the Government unveiled its long-awaited Warm Homes plan, the delegation from Kehelland urged policymakers to include practical, immediately deployable solutions for the UK's 1.7 million off-grid homes.

Their message was clear: rural communities want to decarbonise, but must do so affordably, with minimal disruption, and urgently.

A community-driven transition

Over the past five years, Kehelland has become central to what is widely regarded as the UK's most comprehensive community-led trial of HVO for domestic heating.

Residents initially explored electrification, but found the cost, disruption and technical challenges of converting older rural buildings to be prohibitive. Instead, the community partnered with local liquid fuel distributor Mitchell & Webber to trial switching existing oil boilers from fossil heating oil to HVO.

One participant was Kehelland Methodist Church, a multi-use community building. Andrew Geake, representing the church, said electrification was unsuitable due to the building's intermittent use.

"We need heat on demand," he explained. "Maintaining a constant temperature in a building used sporadically would waste energy and significantly increase running costs."

The switch to HVO enabled the church to achieve substantial carbon reductions while retaining cost- and consumption-effective 'heat on demand'.



From village trial to national evidence base

Early success in Kehelland led to rapid expansion into a national trial supported by industry bodies OFTEC and UKIFDA. Running continuously for more than five years, the project has generated an unprecedented body of real-world data.

For many off-grid properties where electrification remains impractical in the short to medium term, the appeal of HVO lies in its ability to deliver immediate emissions reductions rather than waiting for more complex or costly upgrades to become viable.

Climate action groups United Downs Environment Group and Chacewater Energy Group also engaged with the project, recognising the role transitional fuels can play in delivering near-term carbon savings.



Members of the Kehelland delegation inside the Houses of Parliament

Taking the case to policymakers

While MPs and select committee members have previously visited Kehelland, no minister from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) has yet done so. This prompted the decision to take the findings directly to Westminster.

"If DESNZ won't come to Kehelland, we'll take Kehelland to DESNZ," said John Weedon, director at Mitchell & Webber and organiser of the "Cornwall March to Westminster".

The delegation was met at DESNZ by representatives from OFTEC and UKIFDA, and by local MP Perran Moon, who described HVO as "a really sensible" decarbonisation option for rural communities, adding that it should be "part of the mix of different solutions".

The findings were formally submitted to the Government's consultation on Alternative Solutions for Rural Heat Decarbonisation, closing on 10 February – a decision point likely to shape heating policy for millions of off-grid households.

Industry calls for recognition

In a joint statement, industry bodies OFTEC and UKIFDA described the Kehelland project as "a remarkable success story".

"It demonstrates that with the right solution, strong community partnership and clear communication, decarbonisation can begin with no upfront cost, no disruption, and only limited additional ongoing costs."

As standard bearers for millions of off-grid fuel users," the statement continued. "Rural communities such as Kehelland have shown what can be achieved if policy reflects on-the-ground realities."

The community believes the question is no longer whether HVO works, but whether rural and off-grid voices will be reflected in national decarbonisation policy.

As one resident commented during the journey to Westminster: "Five years of proven success – but it still feels like the Government isn't listening."

With the evidence now formally before policymakers, the hope within the fuel distribution sector is that practical, certified low-carbon liquid fuels already delivering results will be recognised as a credible part of the UK's transition to net zero.

Sustainability at the heart

Concerns around the supply and sustainability of liquid biofuels remain important considerations – issues which the industry has already taken steps to address.

In order to ensure genuine sustainability, HVO supplied for



Top from L to R: Ken Cronin, UKIFDA; Perran Moon, Kehelland MP; John Weedon, Mitchell & Webber; Malcolm Farrow, OFTEC; Robert Weedon, Mitchell & Webber at the entrance to DESNZ.

heating in the UK is produced in accordance with the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) sustainability framework, supported by recognised certification schemes such as ISCC. These require full traceability of feedstocks, robust lifecycle emissions accounting and controls on land-use change.

As a result, UK-certified HVO is derived from verified waste and residue feedstocks and excludes palm oil and palm oil mill effluent (POME), which is regarded as high-risk and is not permitted within RTFO-compliant supply chains.



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OFTEC highlights funding opportunities for consumers and technicians

OFTEC has launched a new online funding guidance page, bringing together information on financial support available to both consumers and heating technicians across the UK and Ireland.

The page outlines a wide range of funding schemes, including grants that help householders reduce the cost of heating upgrades and energy-efficiency improvements, as well as support aimed directly at technicians. This includes funding for training and upskilling, alongside schemes that enable installers to undertake funded work as part of government-backed schemes.

With funding varying by region, OFTEC's guidance provides a clear, location-

specific overview, helping technicians quickly identify what support may be available in the areas they operate. This makes it easier for installers to advise customers, plan future work, and access opportunities linked to low-carbon heating and energy-efficiency initiatives.

By highlighting funding for both training and installation work, the new guidance page supports technicians as the heating industry continues to evolve, while helping consumers overcome financial barriers to improving their homes.

OFTEC technicians can view this link at <https://www.oftec.org/consumers/funding-schemes/>

OFTEC to exhibit at InstallerSHOW 2026 – don't miss out!

InstallerSHOW 2026 – the UK's biggest event for heating and plumbing professionals is back, and it's set to be bigger and better than ever!

Essential industry event

With even more products, tech, and expert advice, this year's show promises to be a must-see for anyone in the industry.

InstallerSHOW is the perfect place to get hands-on with the latest innovations, chat with industry leaders, and learn about the products and solutions that'll make your job easier and more efficient.

Whether you're focused on traditional heating systems or looking to dive into renewable technologies, you'll find plenty to explore.

Meet the team

OFTEC will be there at **Stand 5G12**, and we're excited to share all the latest news about what we're doing for off-gas grid heating technicians.

Whether you're interested in registration, training, or learning more about how renewable liquid fuels like HVO can help with decarbonising off-grid homes, we've got you covered.

Come meet the team, ask questions, and see how we're helping shape the future of heating!



OFTEC bids farewell to John Vinter on his retirement

OFTEC marks the retirement of John Vinter, who steps down after many years of dedicated service as Inspection Manager.

During his time with the organisation, John led OFTEC's inspection team and played a vital role in maintaining and raising industry standards.

Renowned for his professionalism, technical expertise and fair approach,

he earned widespread respect from colleagues and technicians alike, many of whom benefited from his clear guidance and constructive advice.

John's contribution has made a lasting impact on OFTEC and the wider industry. As he begins his well-earned retirement, OFTEC thanks him for his commitment and wishes him every happiness for the future.



John Vinter has stepped down from his role as OFTEC Inspection Manager.

Renewable Heat Obligation (Ireland)

When a certain 'Green' minister was in power in both the Transport and Environment Departments, the liquid fuel sector rarely got a mention, and any efforts to discuss renewable fuels, as part of government heat decarbonisation policy, was rejected out of hand.

OFTEC, UKIFDA and Fuels for Ireland have been working tirelessly over the past five years to make inroads with SEAI and the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, and our efforts are now starting to pay dividends.

With his departure in January 2025, and recent commentary that the State could face fines of up to €26bn and may 'only' reduce its emissions by 51% by 2030, the landscape has changed and the Department is much more receptive to a wider range of decarbonisation solutions.

The current Government is proposing to introduce 'The Renewable Heating Obligation' – this will be new legislation mandating all energy suppliers to have a certain percentage of renewable fuel in their heating fuels. This is good news, takes us away from the 'boiler ban' threatened many years ago and gives a new lease of life to liquid fuels.

While government still says it is pursuing an electrification policy, many now realise that electrification is not the only solution and, with an increasing demand for electricity generally, there is a realisation that alternative solutions will also have to be considered if climate targets are to be met. Biogas, biomass and low-carbon liquid fuels all have an important role to play in the country's decarbonisation journey.

For our sector, it's easy. We have seen boiler manufacturers test from 1% to 100% HVO in modern condensing boilers and it works, fantastically. The downside is the cost. HVO is in high demand from the transport, aviation and power sectors and trades at a premium to kerosene. Government recognises this and has suggested a low starting blend in draft RHO legislation of 1.5% and 3% for years one and two of the obligation but no clarity on long-term forecasts.

The Department has sent its TRIS notification on the RHO to the European Commission on 23rd December 2025. The TRIS process is to prevent technical barriers to trade and other EU member states have until the expiry date of 30th March to make comment. With a mooted start date of 1st January 2027, it does not



Image: left to right: Ken Cronin (UKIFDA), David Blevings (OFTEC Ireland) and Kevin McPartlan (Fuels for Ireland.)

give a lot of time for the legislation to be scrutinised, and any amendments made, before being implemented.

As a sector, we would like to see a higher initial blend, and an independent consultant's report supports our view. The consultant clarified: "Based on an examination of future heating demand, and the penetration of other heat decarbonisation technologies as modelled by SEAI's energy forecasting team, it was determined that (with no trading and no use of multipliers on fuels) an obligation rate of 15% in 2030 would be required for the RHO to meet its objective of contributing to an increase of up to 10% in RES-H."

We believe the real elephant in the room is the perceived cost to the consumer. No government wants to increase costs to consumers, and heating – especially for rural users – is an emotive issue. Many rural TDs will be nervous about being seen to slap further increases on constituents already reeling from the cost-of-living crisis.

But we are concerned that the Department's officials may not really understand the mechanics of the blending process and how a lower blend rate could disadvantage the scheme and cost consumers more!

We have provided evidence to the Department of the increased costs of blended fuel to consumers and said that our preferred starting blend is 5% with a longer-term ambition (within five years of 20%). The increased cost to the consumer at 1.5% blend rate is €20pa, at 3% its €41 and at 5% blend it's an additional €68pa.

At 1.5%, the importers are unlikely to blend (as it's a very low level) and will probably resort to paying the buyout price. This has not yet been set by legislation, but it is expected to be at the same level as the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation. Our estimates show that in Year 2, at 3% this buyout cost could see the consumer paying an additional €82!

So, if government sticks with the lower blend rate and the importers go down the buyout route, this cost would be passed on to the consumer with no physical renewable fuel going into consumers tanks!

So, the Government has a choice – it can mandate a system that produces a 5% blend, which contributes to the RES-H target, reduces its liability to the EU and costs the consumer an additional €68pa or continue with the lowest level of ambition where no renewable fuel ends up in the consumer's tank but they end up paying an additional €82pa.

It's a no-brainer in our book and as this goes to print, we will have taken that message to the many TDs and parliamentarians that support the deployment of low carbon liquid fuel as a realistic and cost-effective option to assist decarbonisation.



Image: left to right: Ken Cronin (UKIFDA), Nicolas Browne (GAC UK & Ireland), Kevin McPartlan (Fuels for Ireland), and David Blevings (OFTEC Ireland)

Beat the summer rush – book your OFTEC training now!

OFTEC courses are available at more than 100 approved centres throughout the UK and Ireland, covering liquid fuel, solid fuel, and heat pumps.

Remember, your qualifications remain valid for up to five years. If they expire, you'll lose the ability to self-notify installation work, along with access to the wider benefits of registration. That could mean missed opportunities and unnecessary stress.

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Carl Arntzen retires as Worcester Bosch CEO

Worcester Bosch has announced that its CEO, Carl Arntzen, will be retiring at the end of March 2026. He will be succeeded by current Sales & Marketing Director, Jo Shepherd, who has been with the business on its legal board since 2022.

Carl joined the business as one of the first interns for Worcester Heat Systems in the early 80s and became a design engineer in 1985. He then developed through a number of functions including engineering, product management, field service and sales. He was appointed CEO in 2011.

During his tenure, he made a significant contribution to the business, as well as leading it through a period of operational continuity within a changing market environment.

Speaking about his departure, Carl commented: "I'm incredibly proud of what Worcester Bosch has achieved during the last decade. We have navigated a fast-evolving market,

introduced new technologies to our portfolio, and continued to grow and foster our loyal installer base, all while delivering efficient and reliable warmth to homes across the UK.

"Although I am looking forward to my retirement, I leave with fond memories of my time at the company. I will miss my colleagues – many who have become close friends – and the customers and connections I've made across the heating industry over the years. Jo has proven she is a brilliant leader who will guide the company through the next stage of its evolution. I'm proud to hand over the reins to her and wish her the best of luck."



Jo Shepherd is an award-winning senior business leader with over two decades of experience across sales, marketing and customer strategy. Since joining, she has led Worcester Bosch through the rapidly changing industry, enabling the company's evolution into a multi-tech heating manufacturer.

Jo said; "Carl's contribution to both our company and the wider industry as a whole is monumental. He has expertly helped us navigate through a changing landscape, setting us up for continued success and for that I and all of us at Worcester Bosch are extremely grateful. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours."

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OFTEC is widely recognised for its commitment to liquid fuel heating, training and registration. But we also support today's wider heating industry, with registration options designed to help your business grow.

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UK Warm Homes Plan: what it means for off-grid heating

The UK Government has published its long-awaited Warm Homes Plan, setting out how £15bn of public funding will be used between now and 2030, to upgrade up to five million homes and lift around one million households out of fuel poverty. Framed as both a cost of living and climate measure, the plan marks the most significant reset of domestic energy policy in more than a decade.

For those in the liquid fuels and off-grid heating sector, the plan is notable not only for what it includes – largescale support for electrification – but also for what it leaves unresolved about the future for oil-heated homes.

Why domestic heating matters

Homes are central to the UK's climate and energy challenge as the second-largest source of emissions after transport. They produced around 14% of the national total of CO₂e in 2024 – largely because around 85% of homes still rely on fossil-fuel boilers for heat.

This reliance has also left households particularly exposed to volatile global fuel markets, a vulnerability laid bare during the recent energy crisis as prices – and bills – surged. The problem is compounded by the UK's ageing, poorly insulated housing stock, which wastes energy, driving up use, bills and emissions.

Because of this, buildings are expected to deliver around 20% of the emissions reductions needed to meet the UK's 2030 climate target. Yet progress has been slow, with heat-pump and insulation installation rates consistently falling short of earlier ambitions, despite successive government support schemes.

It is against this backdrop that the Warm Homes Plan seeks to reset policy and accelerate change, addressing domestic heating as both a climate priority and a cost-of-living issue.

A decisive shift towards electrification

At the heart of the plan is a clear policy pivot away from a traditional

“fabric-first” retrofit model towards rapid electrification. Ministers argue that technologies such as heat pumps, solar PV and battery storage now offer the fastest and most cost-effective way to cut household energy bills, particularly when combined with smart tariffs.

Notably, the plan does not set a firm end date for the sale of fossil fuel boilers, nor does it propose an outright ban on oil heating systems. Hydrogen is mentioned only cautiously, “not yet a proven technology” for domestic heating.

What does this mean for oil-heated homes?

There are around 1.5 million UK homes currently heated by oil, many in rural and off-grid locations. For these households, the plan presents both uncertainty and risk.

On the one hand, generous grant funding and new loan products may accelerate the switch to electric heating where properties are suitable. On the other, many off-grid homes are hard to insulate, expensive to retrofit and poorly suited to standard low temperature heat pumps.

The plan offers little clarity on transitional technologies, hybrid systems or the future role of low-carbon liquid fuels. While heat networks and electrification dominate, there is no dedicated pathway for decarbonising existing oil-heated homes that cannot easily make the switch.

Implications for the sector

For the liquid fuels industry, the plan underlines the need to continue active engagement with the policy debate. Electrification remains firmly the Government's preferred route, but delivery risks remain – from installer capacity and grid constraints to consumer acceptance and real-world performance.

In this context, the absence of a clear strategy for off-grid homes only emphasises the need for discussions around alternative decarbonisation options, including renewable liquid fuels, hybrid heating systems and staged transition pathways that protect households from excessive costs.

The Warm Homes Plan sends a strong signal of intent – but leaves important questions unanswered for a significant part of the UK heating market.

Margaret Major

Of the £15bn total:

- £5bn is earmarked to fully fund retrofit packages for low income households, covering measures such as insulation, solar panels, batteries and heat pumps.
- £2.7bn expands the existing heat pump grant scheme, offering £7,500 per installation, with air-to-air heat pumps included for the first time.
- £2bn will underpin a new government-backed low and zero interest loans programme to remove upfront cost barriers for home upgrades.
- A further £2.7bn is allocated to “innovative finance”, including green mortgages that reward low-carbon, energy-efficient homes.
- £1.1bn is committed to expanding heat networks, particularly in urban and multi-occupancy buildings.

The remaining funding will flow to devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which will design their own delivery mechanisms.

Heat pumps: ambition tempered by realism

Despite the strong policy emphasis, the Government has quietly scaled back its expectations for heat pump deployment. The new target is 450,000 installations a year by 2030 – around 250,000 retrofits and 200,000 new builds.

This is lower than previous ambitions and below the trajectory recommended by the Climate Change Committee. It reflects slow market growth, high installation costs and consumer hesitation – challenges that are particularly acute in older, rural and off-grid properties.

Industry welcomes the Warm Homes Plan

Grant UK and Worcester Bosch are among those who have responded positively to the launch of the Warm Homes Plan.

Warm Homes Agency, which will be key to the Plan's successful delivery, take shape."

Energy bill reduction

Worcester Bosch's Director of External Affairs, Martyn Bridges added: "We welcome the Government's announcement of the Warm Homes Plan.

"Any type of initiative that intends to reduce the heating and hot water bills of properties, as well as improve the comfort for many, is something we'll always support.

Adding a caveat, Martyn continued: "We do feel that the plan could have gone further and included an acknowledgement of hybrid systems, as our recent trial with the University of Salford found that hybrid heat systems can effectively heat homes in the UK while still working towards the country's Net Zero goals.

However, we will still be doing our bit in helping achieve some of the ambitions and targets set out in the Warm Homes Plan."

"The launch of the Warm Homes Plan is potentially, a key moment for energy affordability across Britain and underlines this Government's commitment to cleaner energy," says Neil Sawers, Commercial Technical Manager at Grant.

A welcome approach

Neil continued: "The Plan's three-pillar approach is welcome; direct support for low-income families, an offer of universal access to clean energy financing and meaningful protections for renters.

"Heat pumps are central to the new Warm Homes Plan, and we are pleased about the continued focus on this proven and clean home heating solution.

Working with industry

"We will continue to work with industry as the Plan develops and we look forward to seeing the new

Grant develops dedicated support hub for new build homeowners

Grant UK has added a new feature to the Customer Support Centre on its website. The New Build Homeowners Support hub is a dedicated area where homeowners who have moved into a new build home can learn more about the Aerona air source heat pump.



understand how their heat pump works, ensure their product is registered, and it provides extensive online support for living with a Grant heat pump.

With new build developments making the transition to low carbon heating systems, detailed handover support for heat pumps is more important than ever. This is where Grant UK's New Build Homeowners Support hub steps in, providing tailored customer support for those living in new build properties which are heated by a Grant Aerona air source heat pump.

The principal aim of this new digital resource is to provide homeowners with all the key information they need for their heat pump heating system when they move into their new home. Split into core sections, Grant's new hub helps consumers

"A crucial part of any heat pump installation is the customer handover," comments Anna Wakefield, Grant's Head of Internal Sales and Marketing. "With new builds however, the installation can be completed several months before the homeowner moves in, so the installer is not always available when the handover takes place. Our dedicated New Build Homeowners Support hub will help bridge this gap, providing developers and their homeowners with a comprehensive digital toolkit to assist with the handover process for their new Grant heat pump system."

Grant supports Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance with £10,000 donation

Throughout 2025, Grant UK continued its longstanding support for Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance (WBAA), donating £10,000 to this local charity to support its lifesaving work in the community.

Grant prides itself on working closely with those in the local communities surrounding its Wiltshire-based headquarters, whether it is through grassroots initiatives with sports clubs and schools or supporting the work of charities. Since 2019, Grant has supported WBAA, which provides specialist critical care by land and air to patients in extreme and life-threatening situations.

In 2025, the team organised and

took part in fundraising activities which included popular bake sales, a competitive Easter Egg Hunt, a STEPTember step count challenge and the annual Christmas raffle.

"The amazing work of WBAA is recognised by all our team," comments Anna Wakefield, Grant's Head of Internal Sales and Marketing. "This is one of the reasons why our internal fundraising activities continue to receive engagement amongst our employees. Our latest annual donation will hopefully help paramedics and doctors to continue to provide expert care to those in need in our local community. We are also pleased to confirm that Grant will be supporting Wiltshire and Bath Air



Imogen Linham (left), Corporate Fundraiser at Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance and Anna Wickers (right), Marketing & Events Coordinator at Grant UK.

Ambulance as our Charity Partner for 2026."

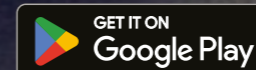
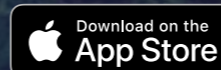
"We can't thank Grant enough for their incredible support," says Imogen Linham, Corporate Fundraiser at Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance. "Over the past six years the company has undertaken seemingly every type of fundraising possible to support our charity, raising enough money to fund a whole week of lifesaving work."

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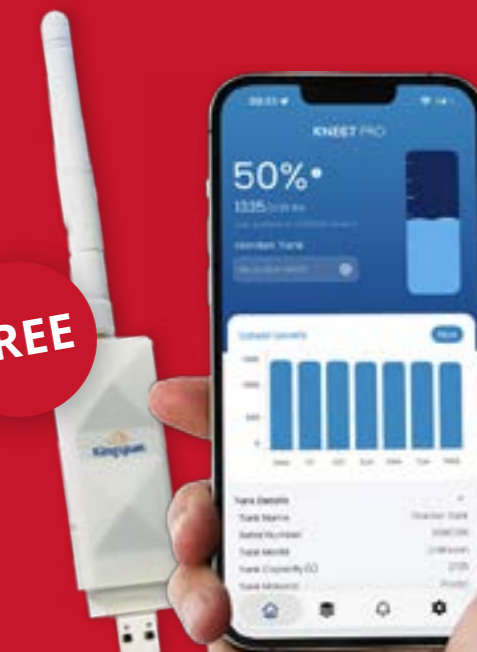
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The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025

This guidance refers specifically to the social rented sector.



This law places an obligation on landlords to deal with problems which can impact on health, including no heating (an emergency hazard). The message is that should you win a contract with a landlord/property agent, you need to be able to respond within 24 hours of it being reported.

The Regulations are also known as 'Awaab's Law' in memory of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died tragically in 2020 as a result of a severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home.

Awaab's parents had complained repeatedly to their social landlord in the three years prior to Awaab's death, but no action was taken by their social landlord to treat the mould.

Awaab's Law came into force for the social rented sector from 27th October 2025. From this point social landlords have to address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed timeframes.

Awaab's Law requirements on social landlords

The Regulations include the following requirements for landlords:

- Investigate any potential emergency hazards and, if the investigation confirms emergency hazards, undertake relevant safety work as soon as reasonably

practicable. The investigation and the work must both take place within 24 hours of becoming aware of the hazard.

- Investigate any potential significant hazards within 10 working days of becoming aware of them.
- Produce a written summary of investigation findings and provide this to the tenant within 3 working days of the conclusion of the investigation.
- Undertake relevant safety work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard.
- Begin, or take steps to begin, any supplementary preventative work to prevent a significant or emergency hazard recurring within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant or emergency hazard. If steps cannot be taken to begin work in 5 working days this must be done as soon as possible, and work must be physically started within 12 weeks.

Upon becoming aware of a potential hazard, social landlords should use all available information to initially determine if the hazard is a potential significant or emergency hazard and take steps to complete relevant safety work within stated timeframes.

The timelines set under Awaab's Law are the maximum statutory timeframes in which landlords must act.

Landlords can and should act more quickly if circumstances require, especially in situations where other legislation requires a faster response and/or according to their policies and procedures.

Where the social landlord believes there is a significant or emergency hazard

A potential hazard is reported, or the landlord becomes aware of a potential hazard. The social landlord reviews available information about the hazard and the resident's circumstances. Based on this, they make an initial assessment to decide whether the issue is a potential 'significant' or 'emergency' hazard, or if it falls outside the scope of Awaab's Law. This marks day zero in the Awaab's Law timeline.

Emergency hazard

If a potential emergency hazard is identified the landlord must investigate the issue within 24 hours. If the landlord's emergency investigation confirms an emergency hazard, they must:

- complete all relevant safety works and make the property safe within 24 hours.

If the property cannot be made safe within 24 hours, the landlord must offer suitable alternative accommodation until the required safety works are completed.

Examples of hazards that could be emergency hazards requiring emergency action include, but are not limited to:

- gas or carbon monoxide leaks
- broken boilers
- total loss of water supply
- electrical hazards such as exposed wiring
- significant leaks
- broken external doors or windows that present a risk to home security

- prevalent damp and/or mould that is having a material impact on a tenant's health
- significant structural defects or disrepair

For some of these examples everyone will be potentially vulnerable, such as gas leaks.

Social landlords should also consider if the risk is likely to be exacerbated by a specific condition in relation to the tenant or other circumstances (e.g. a broken boiler is likely to be a more severe issue in colder months).

Significant hazard

If a potential significant hazard is identified, the landlord must carry out an investigation within 10 working days.

If the landlord's investigation (completed within 10 working days) confirms a significant hazard, they must complete relevant safety works and begin to take steps to begin any further supplementary works to prevent the hazard from reoccurring within 5 working days of concluding the investigation.

Where further supplementary works are required and it is not possible to begin them within 5 working days, the landlord must start these as soon as reasonably practicable and within 12 weeks of the investigation concluding.

If the property cannot be made safe, the landlord must offer suitable alternative accommodation until the significant hazard is fully resolved.

Where the social landlord believes the issue is out of

scope of Awaab's Law

There may be occurrences where an investigation under Awaab's Law identifies a significant or emergency hazard, but the hazard is not in scope of Awaab's Law, for example because it is due to a deficiency in neighbouring land for which the landlord is not responsible. In these cases, the social landlord is not required under Awaab's Law to temporarily or permanently rehouse the tenants.

Which type of housing does Awaab's Law apply to?

Awaab's Law applies to almost all social housing occupied under a tenancy and let by a registered provider.

The exception is for social housing occupied under a tenancy which is exempted from the repairing obligation in section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 by section 14 of that Act.

Awaab's Law does not apply to temporary accommodation, supported accommodation, or other housing that is occupied under a licence.

Awaab's Law does not apply to long leaseholds or other owner-occupied accommodation and low-cost home ownership homes, including shared ownership.

Hazards in scope of Awaab's Law repair requirements

For a hazard to be in scope of the Awaab's Law repair requirements, it must:

- be a part of buildings or land for which the social landlord is responsible
- result from defects, disrepair or lack of maintenance
- be in the landlord's control to fix
- not be damage that is a result of breach of contract by the tenant
- be a significant or emergency hazard

In 2026 the regulations will be extended to include the following where they present a significant risk of harm:

- excess cold and excess heat
- falls associated with baths etc., on level surfaces, on stairs and between levels
- structural collapse, and explosions
- fire, and electrical hazards
- domestic and personal hygiene and food safety

Further information can be found by searching 'Awaab's Law' on the gov.uk website.



Disposal of glycol

Glycol from a pressure relief valve (PRV) must be disposed of properly because it is regulated waste and cannot be disposed of on the ground or down drains. The type of glycol (propylene or ethylene), the degree of contamination, and local laws all affect the particular disposal technique.

Important steps for glycol disposal

- Contain the glycol: In a closed system, the PRV discharge should end in an appropriate, properly labelled, and sealed container

made for chemical waste, usually a special "glycol discharge bottle."

- Determine the type of glycol and Any Contaminants: Ascertain whether the fluid is ethylene glycol (which is more toxic) or propylene glycol (which is less toxic) and check for contamination. This information, usually available in the product's Safety Data Sheet (SDS), influences its classification as either hazardous or non-hazardous waste. The presence of

contaminants can elevate a non-hazardous status to hazardous.

- Avoid pouring into drains: Never dispose of glycol in sinks, storm drains, or on the ground, as this can lead to water supply contamination, harm aquatic life, and result in penalties.
- Locate a licensed disposal facility or recycler: use a licensed hazardous waste disposal service or a specialised recycler.



Kerosene fuel update

With much discussion on HVO appearing in trade journals over the last couple of years, this article is intended to clarify what is likely to happen to domestic heating fuel in the next few years.



The project was successful with only very minor technical issues being encountered in aging equipment, and it has proven to officials that we can indeed displace Kerosene use. The question for governments now becomes how quickly they want to reduce emissions from the oil-fired sector, balancing the economics given that HVO costs more than Kerosene.

In all probability, moving all installation to 100% HVO is unlikely and blends will provide a low risk and affordable pathway to full Kerosene displacement. This strategy keeps running costs to a minimum and shows a positive policy signal to attract investment in UK HVO production.

Having a robust fuel quality standard is key to avoiding problems and maintaining industry confidence. Through 2025, fuel standard BS 2869 has been undergoing review to permit up to 20% HVO to BSEN 15940 to be blended with Class C2 Kerosene. The great news is that the blend can be achieved with the final product remaining within the current fossil Kerosene specification. Therefore, the reduced carbon fuel can be treated as a Kerosene and does not require any additional technician intervention on servicing and commissioning.

Updated BS 2869 is expected to be published during 2026

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With much discussion on HVO appearing in trade journals over the last couple of years, this article is intended to clarify what is likely to happen to domestic heating fuel in the next few years.

You will have read that OFTEC, UKIFDA and other industry partners have been lobbying hard for the inclusion of renewable liquid fuel in regional government home decarbonisation strategies. In 2019, the Westminster Government challenged industry to show that Kerosene could wholly be displaced with an alternative renewable liquid fuel. From what we knew about HVO, this challenge was accepted and at a cost to industry in the region on £750,000, set about developing a demonstrator project that converted over 150 installations in homes, schools, offices, and a church, with the aims of demonstrating that HVO could a) be combusted in new and existing equipment, b) that infrastructure existed to get the fuel to the point of use, and c) skills existed in the field to manage the conversions.

After multiple heating seasons, most of these installations have been converted back to Kerosene, but around 40 remain burning a 20% blend of HVO in Kerosene.

So where are we now?.....

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CASE STUDY: Warmflow supports heating upgrade for historic cottage

A Zeno R290 Heat Pump replaced an old air source unit in the historic Gamekeeper's Lodge at Castle Ward with set-up assistance from the manufacturer.



Warmflow recently visited Castle Ward, the 18th-century National Trust estate near Strangford Lough, County Down, where Technical Sales Manager, Michael led an assisted set-up for a newly installed Zeno R290 Air Source Heat Pump.

What made the visit especially fitting was that the installation took place in the estate's charming Gamekeeper's Lodge - a historic cottage that offers a unique blend of heritage and countryside tranquillity.

Castle Ward and the Gamekeeper's Lodge: A blend of history, nature and comfort

Castle Ward stands out among historic houses for its intriguing contrast in architectural styles. Built in the 1760s for Bernard Ward, 1st Viscount Bangor and his wife, the mansion features a classical Palladian façade on one side and a Gothic-inspired Georgian design on the other - a reflection of the differing tastes of the couple.

Nestled within this storied estate, the Gamekeeper's Lodge is a Victorian-era cottage surrounded by meadow and woodland. It's quietly tucked away, with distinctive stone detailing, a sun-catching porch, and original interior features like ornamental brass gas lamps and even the gamekeeper's old gun cupboard.

The Lodge bridges Victorian-era heritage living with 21st-century sustainable technology. Having Michael on-site to assist the installer, Ian Short Plumbing & Heating, to get the heat pump commissioned and linked to the Warmlink monitoring app meant that the transition from an old air source unit to a modern, energy-efficient solution was handled with care and technical precision - all while respecting the unique character of the building and its surroundings.

A vision for the future: Heritage meets sustainability

The successful set-up at the Lodge showcases how flexible and adaptable renewable heating solutions can be - even in buildings that weren't designed with them in mind. This is especially true for the Warmlink Zeno R290 Air Source Heat Pump paired with the Warmflow Nero Heat Pump cylinder, which has integrated perfectly into the Gamekeeper's lodge. Also, with Warmlink technology providing ongoing monitoring and management,

properties like Gamekeeper's Lodge at Castle Ward can offer guests warmth, comfort, and modern reliability, while also reducing environmental footprint.



For owners, trust-managers, or holiday-cottage operators who care about heritage and sustainability alike, the Warmflow Zeno R290 Air Source Heat Pump is the perfect fit.



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Fuel price commentary

A mixed picture, but oil still the cheapest fuel

In Great Britain, compared to the previous quarter, the annual average cost of most heating fuels has increased slightly, with wood pellets and LPG the main exceptions. However, in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland wood pellets have also increased in price; only LPG has fallen in all regions, although overall it remains an expensive choice.

In Great Britain, heating oil has crept up in price this quarter, as typically happens in the winter months, but it's actually fallen slightly in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland which is good news for users there.

A slightly clearer picture emerges when we look at heating costs a year ago and the longer-term average compared to now, although clear trends are hard to detect. Except for heat pumps in the Republic of Ireland, which are significantly cheaper to run now compared to a year ago,

most fuel prices have been relatively stable for the last 12 months, being either cheaper or more expensive by just a few percentage points. Most prices remain relatively high, but the winners a year ago are still the winners now and... drum roll please... oil heating is still the cheapest option, regardless of where you live.

Looking at the longer term, most fuels are currently still more expensive than the four-year average. Oil heating has probably been the most consistent performer, with prices returning to normal more quickly after the Ukraine and Covid crises than other options, and the annual cost now is still lower than the long-term average.

Looking ahead, changes made by the Chancellor in the autumn budget mean that the price of gas and electricity may fall this year, however, a lot will depend on wholesale energy prices both in Europe and the wider world. Given the current political uncertainties, it would be a brave person who placed a bet on making significant savings!

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-24	Dec-25	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heaters	£2,954	£3,218	£264	9%	£3,172
Gas condensing boiler	£1,423	£1,440	£17	1%	£1,497
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	£2,001	£2,009	£8	0%	£1,844
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	£1,270	£1,206	£64	-5%	£1,410
Wood pellets	£1,960	£2,101	£141	7%	£2,222
Air source heat pump radiators	£2,684	£2,531	£153	-6%	£2,721
Air source heat pump underfloor	£2,298	£2,167	£131	-6%	£2,330

NORTHERN IRELAND

	Dec-24	Dec-25	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heaters	£3,201	£3,411	£210	4%	£3,058
Gas condensing boiler	£1,782	£1,733	£49	-3%	£1,764
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	£2,291	£2,317	£26	1%	£2,238
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	£1,192	£1,123	£69	-6%	£1,322
Wood pellets	£1,869	£1,843	£26	-1%	£1,777
Air source heat pump radiators	£2,933	£3,077	£144	5%	£2,679
Air source heat pump underfloor	£2,459	£2,578	£119	5%	£2,256

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	Dec-24	Dec-25	Price change	% Difference	4 year average
Electric storage heaters	€3,790	€3,755	€35	-1%	€3,806
Gas condensing boiler	€2,379	€2,404	€25	1%	€2,418
LPG Condensing boiler radiators and DHW cylinder	€2,933	€3,046	€113	4%	€2,828
Oil condensing boiler, radiators and DHW cylinder	€1,767	€1,721	€46	-3%	€1,880
Wood pellets	€2,397	€2,230	€167	-7%	€2,144
Air source heat pump radiators	€3,410	€2,634	€776	-23%	€3,123
Air source heat pump underfloor	€2,913	€2,272	€641	-22%	€2,677

Notes: 4-year average is December 2021 to December 2025

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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