



Winter 2020

# PlumbHeat

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Editor Cassandra Gowans  
[cassandra.gowans@snipecf.org](mailto:cassandra.gowans@snipecf.org)

Editorial Offices  
Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street,  
Edinburgh EH7 4GH  
Tel 0131 556 0600 ■ Fax 0131 557 8409  
■ Email [contact@snipecf.org](mailto:contact@snipecf.org)  
[www.snipecf.org](http://www.snipecf.org)  
Follow us @SNIPEFnews

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Advertising Sales David Hughes  
[davidh@connectcommunications.co.uk](mailto:davidh@connectcommunications.co.uk)  
Design & Production Ryan Swinney  
[ryan@connectcommunications.co.uk](mailto:ryan@connectcommunications.co.uk)

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**MAINCOR**

# Comment

FROM FIONA HODGSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SNIPEF

## Pushing for crucial change in our industry

**W**ith the general election now behind us, it is time to push for the changes our industry so desperately needs.

Prior to the election, SNIPEF and APHC called on candidates across the UK to support our joint election manifesto. It highlights four key areas we believe are critical to building a resilient and sustainable construction landscape in which plumbing and heating firms can thrive.

### PAYMENT ABUSE

We know payment abuse is a major problem. The knock-on effects not only stunt business growth but also impact the mental health of business owners. SNIPEF is backing the Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group, calling for MPs to commit to ending late payments by penalising serial late payers, mandating 30-day payment terms and protecting retentions.

We also want government to legislate the use of project bank accounts in the public sector. We are urging Scotland Excel to insist on using them for its £1.5 billion social housing construction framework.

### PENSIONS

The 2019-20 Pension Schemes Bill does not address the

**“Ask your MP to support our manifesto – together we are stronger and we can make a difference”**



Fiona Hodgson,  
Chief Executive,  
SNIPEF

unintended consequences of legislation affecting hundreds of UK plumbing and heating businesses who provided a pension to their employees in a multi-employer industry scheme. Legislation introduced in 2005 means businesses paying into these schemes are exposed to Section 75 debts, causing not only anxiety for employers but also potentially devastating consequences for the business itself.

SNIPEF has been proactively working with MPs in an effort to limit the consequences for those employers caught up in the legislation. We want the government to change the way debts are calculated and introduce exemptions for unincorporated employers, in particular those who are retired and facing bankruptcy through no fault of their own.

### GREEN ECONOMY

Both the UK and Scottish Governments have set ambitious climate change targets. This will have major implications on our industry and provide huge opportunities for it to develop and grow to meet the demand for low-carbon



### Taking action

Learn more about our manifesto and how to put pressure on your MP  
**/ Page 38**

technologies. We need clear direction and support to make sure the workforce is trained in these technologies and consumers are informed and incentivised to invest in them. Above all, we need to ensure that those empowered to make the changes and install the products have the right skills to do so.

### SKILLS

We are facing a skills shortage which is only likely to get worse. Our members are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit skilled labour and there is a real need for the government to invest further in apprenticeships.

While there are many benefits to employers who recruit apprentices, there can also be significant costs, so we urge the government to support them. We would also like to see equal funding for older entrants to the industry and money to upskill those already working in the sector.

Our focus in 2020 is to lobby government to ensure changes are made to create a level playing field where businesses in our industry can grow. We encourage you to contact your MP and ask them to support this manifesto, mentioning your own experiences and the importance of the need for positive change. Together we are stronger and we can make a difference. ■

# Training for the future

In today's current climate, the issue of renewable technologies is now more important than it ever has been. With a potential phase-out of fossil fuels and the government's targets to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases, it's important to keep up with the latest renewable trends.

There will be an increase in renewable heating solutions with high-efficiency boilers and heat pumps powered by hydrogen and other green gases becoming more popular.

Products such as air source heat pumps transfer heat from outside to inside a building, or vice versa. These can last more than twenty years with low maintenance requirements, proving both cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

There will also be an increase in intelligent heating controls to regulate homeowners' heating outputs – this is a factor that we must consider and make sure we understand and are up to date with. It is crucial for plumbers to adapt and take advantage of new products which can only be done through training.

As an industry, we must invest in more apprentices to help the sector grow with skilled and properly qualified operatives. These apprentices will be educated in renewable technologies and can bring a fresh skill set to your company.

It is equally important that as working plumbers, we invest in our own skill level. We have all seen the way technology has advanced over the years and developed the products

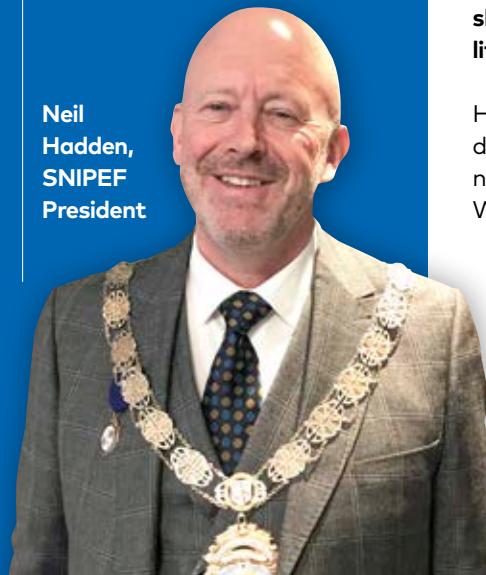
we use every day. These changes show no sign of stopping, and given the Scottish Government's climate change commitments, we're likely to see more changes, particularly moving to more renewable technologies.

To keep up with these changes, we must up-skill ourselves and our staff. It can be a challenge to find the time to commit to education but it's something we must do in order to remain competitive.

It is important to be Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accredited as it is a requirement of the Domestic RHI scheme that all heating systems are certified by MCS. A renewable installer needs to achieve this accreditation to show the quality standards their company works to.

With the skills shortage that's affecting our industry at the moment and the environmental changes that are due to come, it is key that investment in training, for both apprentices and working plumbers, is what we should be focusing on to prepare for the future.

**Neil Hadden,  
SNIPEF  
President**



# News

## LATEST FROM AROUND THE FEDERATION



## James Frew apprentices are up to the challenge

The building services company highlights its commitment to developing its young workforce

**Three James Frew plumbing apprentices have completed a charity challenge by helping a retreat which provides short breaks for children with life-changing illnesses.**

Mark McNaught, Jonathan Harkness and Declan Smith designed and installed new barn doors at the Whiteleys Retreat stables.

The work was part of the 2019 Ayrshire DYW Apprentice Challenge, which encourages Foundation, Modern and Graduate apprentices to deliver a project that helps the community they work in.

Above: Jonathan Harkness, Declan Smith, Mark McNaught



## Got a story?

Email us on  
contact@snipec.org



## Changing lives

What you need to know about updates to regulations on accessible toilets / [Page 26](#)



## On the right path

Len Bunton explains how to avoid some of the common pitfalls in business / [Page 40](#)



Apprentices from a range of Ayrshire businesses took part in teams as part of the regional final, with the winners going on to compete at a national level.

Whiteleys Retreat offers amazing spaces for children and their families to enjoy and explore, with two five-star assisted catering cottages where they can try a wide range of therapies including art, horticulture and music. The

team designed the new barn doors, sourced the materials, manufactured the doors and installed them on site in Alloway.

Mark said: "I really enjoyed negotiating with suppliers and we managed to source a lot of the materials for free."

"The project involved a lot of joinery work and we got some advice from a supervisor on how to plan the job. It has given me a better understanding of how to work as a team."

Third-year apprentice Declan added: "I really found the whole experience worthwhile. We chose a project that was outside our comfort zone and we had to work as a team. I am now more confident about presenting my ideas and have developed my project management skills."

Whiteleys' thrilled General Manager, Bernard Smith, paid tribute to the hard-working team. He said: "We can't thank James Frew enough for all the work they have done for the charity – their workmanship

Below:  
Roddy Frew

has been spot on." James Frew was also nominated as a finalist in the Large Employer of the Year category at the 2019 Scottish Apprentice Awards.

The awards were hosted by Skills Development Scotland and took place in Dundee's Caird Hall in November.

Managing Director Roddy Frew said: "We were delighted to be shortlisted in such a prestigious category. Our commitment to developing our young workforce is yielding significant dividends."



## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Masterclass for potential plumbers of the future

Students were given a taste of life as a plumber during a week-long course designed to help them get to know the industry.

The Introduction to Electrical and Plumbing Trades course was delivered by Ayrshire College in partnership with The Prince's Foundation. The event, held at the



Malcolm Thomson at the Masterclass lead workshop

Morphy Richards Education Centre at Dumfries House in November, was aimed at S4 pupils and gave the students an overview of the plumbing trade.

SNIPEF Regional Training Officer Robert Barclay

attended the careers session on the final day where pupils discussed their future options with various trade and employer organisations. Also supporting the course was SNIPEF member Malcolm

Thomson, Managing Director at D. Blake & Co Ltd, who conducted a masterclass workshop looking at lead.

Robert said: "This was very well received not only by the school pupils and the apprentices but also by the college staff and myself.

"Malcolm demonstrated an ability to make it look so easy to produce his lead corner while educating his audience on many aspects of the lead industry.

"He also answered plenty of questions during the masterclass."

## Raising a glass to the industry

SNIPEF members, staff and contractors got together to chat about the industry – and enjoy a drink – at the annual Pie and Pint Night.

The Kilmarnock association hosted its popular event for the third time.

Guests at the bash at Kilmarnock's Rugby Park stadium mingled with other members, discussed industry topics with SNIPEF staff and took part in a raffle, with prizes donated by Ideal Boilers.

SNIPEF CEO Fiona Hodgson and SNIPEF Membership Officer Andy Furnevel both attended the event.

They agreed that it was a great opportunity to meet up with local members and manufacturers, as well as talk to potential new SNIPEF members.

Representatives from 12 companies – including ATAG, Conex-Banninger, McAlpine Plumbing Products, Stelrad, Vaillant and Worcester Bosch – were also there to offer advice and information about their products.

The event in Kilmarnock was a great opportunity to meet manufacturers



## Workers' ill health revealed in annual report on sickness and injury

**Around 1.4 million workers in Britain are suffering from an illness linked to their job, according to the annual Health and Safety at Work report.**

The research, published by the Health and Safety Executive, revealed sickness and injury cost businesses £15 billion in 2017/18.

More than 28 million working days were lost in 2018/19 due to work-related ill health. And there were 600,000 cases of depression, anxiety or stress related to people's jobs.

The statistics, compiled from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and other sources, show that the industry with the highest incidence of self-reported illness and injuries was the electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply sector with 4,900 cases for every 100,000 workers. Construction was sixth



**£15 BILLION**  
Annual cost of work-related injury and new cases of ill health in 2017/18

with 3,400 per 100,000 and water supply, sewerage and waste management was at number ten in the list with 2,390 cases.

The most common cause of injury was a slip, trip or fall – accounting for 29% of the 69,208 non-fatal incidents. A fifth of injuries were caused by lifting or carrying items and one in ten resulted from being hit by a moving object.

A total of 147 workers suffered fatal injuries in 2018/19.

For more information about the Health and Safety at Work report, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics)

## Construction industry shows support for new Common Assessment Standard

**A coalition of more than 30 construction organisations is backing a new scheme designed to simplify and strengthen the construction prequalification process.**

The Common Assessment Standard replaces a multitude of prequalification schemes



with a simple process based on one industry-agreed questionnaire. It will be the primary route to qualification

in construction, replacing the need for clients to specify a particular assessment body.

# 1.4 MILLION

working people suffering from a work-related illness

# 28.2 million

working days lost due to work-related ill health and non-fatal workplace injuries

# 0.6 MILLION

work-related depression, anxiety or stress cases

Meanwhile, contractors will only need one annual assessment, saving both parties time and money.

The Common Assessment Standard is based on existing PQ questionnaires, including PAS 91, but its remit is broader, reflecting an overall drive towards more stringent supply chain standards that reflect recent changes and priorities in the marketplace.

Ian McKinnon, CHAS Managing Director, said: "CHAS is the first recognised

assessment body to certify companies against the Common Assessment Standard." SNIPEF members are able to access the Common Assessment Standard modules and other CHAS products as part of their SNIPEF membership.

Members also get a 20% discount on their annual CHAS membership. For more information, please contact the SNIPEF Membership team at [membership@snipec.org](mailto:membership@snipec.org) or 0131 556 0600.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Push for use of project bank accounts on new housing framework

**SNIPEF has urged Scotland Excel to insist on the use of project bank accounts (PBAs) for its £1½ billion social housing construction framework.**

Speaking after Scotland Excel's recent Glasgow conference, SNIPEF CEO Fiona Hodgson said many member firms would be engaged as sub-contractors on the new framework. She added: "We hope all the contracts let under the framework will be using PBAs to ensure supply chain firms receive payments well within 20 days and are

protected from upstream insolvencies."

Fiona recently met with the Royal Bank of Scotland, which has worked closely with the Scottish Government to develop a methodology for opening and operating PBAs.

David Rennie, RBS Relationship Director, said: "We have an expert team ready to assist every public body in Scotland wishing to use PBAs. The experience of PBAs in Scotland has been very positive in ensuring cashflow security for small firms in the supply chain."

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## TRAINING

## Female workers wanted

Action for Children is looking for women to join their seven-week Women into Construction course in Edinburgh.

The programme starts on 3 February and includes an SQA Level 4 Health and Safety in a Construction Environment qualification.

Students will get the chance to take up work experience opportunities and trade taster days. The course also features accredited construction qualifications including Manual Handling, Safety Awareness, Small Plant and Tools, Working at Height, Abrasive Wheels, PASMA and Vehicle Reverse Marshall.

After completing the programme, students will be offered support to explore the different career progression opportunities open to them, such as college, Modern Apprenticeships, employment and further training.

To find out more information about the Women into Construction course, held at Castlebrae Business Centre, call 0131 661 1354 .

## SNIPEF NEWS

## Spreading the word at Scottish Letting Day

The SNIPEF team advise on all things plumbing in the letting industry

**SNIPEF staff were on hand to offer information and advice at the Scottish Letting Day exhibition.**

The event, run by the Scottish Association of Landlords, is the biggest annual gathering of letting professionals in the UK.



More than 40 exhibitors and around 500 delegates visited the two-day show at Edinburgh's Dynamic Earth in November.

The event was the perfect opportunity to encourage attendees to use SNIPEF members and our Need a Plumber website. SNIPEF's

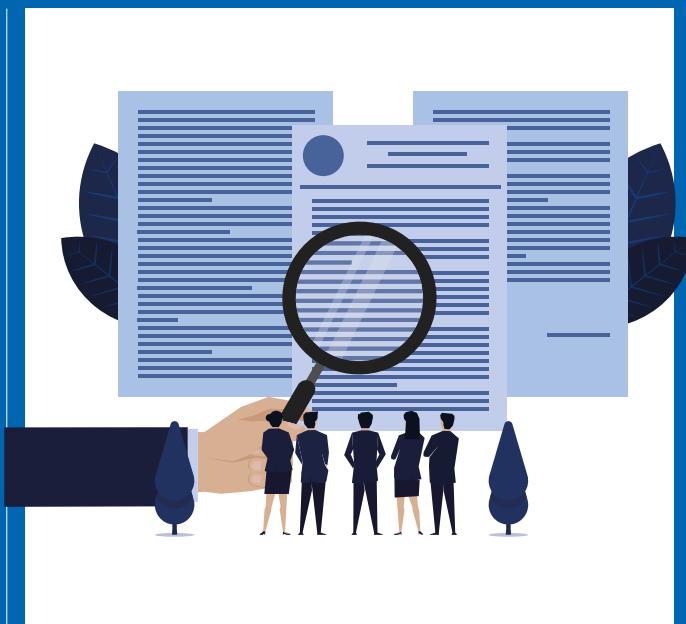
## Changes to written terms and conditions of employment

## INDUSTRY NEWS

**From 6 April 2020, new legislation will see employers issuing all employees, workers and apprentices with written terms and conditions on their first day of employment. The changes differ from current law which gives employers up to two months to issue contracted terms and conditions to staff.**

### WHAT CHANGES ARE BEING MADE?

Employers will no longer have two months to issue written terms and conditions but must issue them on or before the worker's first day of employment. All will



be entitled to receive written terms and conditions, which should include certain detailed information, including specific

working hours and days.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?**  
Issue written terms

and conditions of employment to all your employees/workers/apprentices on or before their first day of employment, starting from 6 April 2020.

Include the following information:

- Hours and days staff are required to work
- Entitlements to paid leave
- Any other benefits not covered elsewhere in the written statement
- Details of any probationary period
- Details of training provided by the employer.

For more information about the changes, please contact us at [info@snipef.org](mailto:info@snipef.org) or call 0131 556 0600 to speak to a member of our staff.



**“Exhibiting at the event for the third year in a row proved a big success”**

Cassandra Gowans, Marketing Officer SNIPEF



### Tackling tool thieves

Protect your van / [Page 36](#)

Communications and Marketing Officer Cassandra Gowans, Membership Officer Andy Furnevel and Technical and Skills Officer Mel Shepherd chatted to landlords and letting agents.

Cassandra said: “Exhibiting at the event for the third year in a row proved a big success.

“It provided us with the ideal opportunity to advise landlords from all over Scotland on why they should be using a SNIPEF member. Listing the benefits, including peace of mind that our members are qualified professionals, resonated with the delegates.”



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 MEMBER OFFER

## SNIPEF partners with Xact to offer a new benefit to members

SNIPEF has teamed up with the Xact Group to provide members with Business Assist – a sector-specific website that provides best practice guidance and template documentation to help with legal compliance for health and safety. All SNIPEF members can access Business Assist at no extra cost.

Business Assist offers members an extensive range of support. Resources include sector-specific risk assessments with guidance notes, as well as detailed specimen action plans for each topic.

There's also an alerts service highlighting upcoming changes in health and safety legislation and approved codes of practice.

The website is continually updated to reflect changes in current legislation and best practices to ensure compliance at all times. The introduction of new legislation will always be highlighted in advance.

There is also a premium Business Assist Advice service where members pay a fee for full access to all best practice information, risk assessment templates, guidance notes, template documents and letters.

Members who sign up to Business Assist Advice can access 12 hours of tailored health and safety advice.

All SNIPEF members should have received an email containing their login details to access the Xact benefit. If you have not received an email with your details for Xact, please contact the SNIPEF Membership team at [membership@snipec.org](mailto:membership@snipec.org) or 0131 556 0600.



## Meet our new starters

 SNIPEF NEWS

### ① Cassandra Gowans – Communications & Marketing Officer

Cassie is from Dundee, where she worked in magazine publishing before moving to Edinburgh to work in marketing and communications. Away from

work, Cassandra is a keen music fan and also enjoys cooking programmes, reading and aerobic dance classes.

### ② Mel Shepherd – Technical & Skills Officer

Mel is our new Technical and Skills Officer. Prior to joining SNIPEF, he worked in the construction sector for many

 RETIREMENT

## BPEC Chairman George Thomson retires

George Thomson, former SNIPEF National President and member of the SNIPEF Edinburgh and District Local Association, has retired as

the Chairman of BPEC. George has served as Chairman since 2015 and has been a Director and Trustee since 2008. He will

pass on the role of BPEC Chairman to Duncan Wilson, who has worked at the company for several years.

During his 40 year-career in the plumbing industry, George has taken on a number of leadership roles and has represented the sector on both the national

and international stage. He was presented with a SNIPEF Merit Award last year which recognised his outstanding contribution to the plumbing industry.

We all wish him a very happy retirement and we're sure he will be missed by everyone at BPEC.



L-R:  
Mel Shepherd,  
Cassandra  
Gowans, Alicia Allen

years. He is from Carnoustie and is married with two children and one grandson.

Mel also enjoys playing golf and has been a member of Carnoustie Golf Club for more than 30 years.

### **③ Alicia Allen – Membership & Communications Manager**

Alicia recently moved to Scotland from New Zealand, where she has worked in the marketing and communications industry for the last eight years.

Alicia is enjoying living in Edinburgh and, as a keen traveller, she hopes to maximise weekend trips around Europe and the UK.

**Climate challenge**  
What you can do / [Page 24](#)



# TRADESAVERS

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\*Offer valid from December 2019 - May 2020. Prices exclude VAT.

## Upcoming events and training

Keep an eye out for the following member events:

**Water Byelaws Course**  
19 February, Glasgow  
11 March, Fife

**Approved Certifier of Construction Scheme**  
25 February, Glasgow  
18 March, Fife

**Scottish Water Byelaws Presentation**  
4 March, North East Scotland College,  
Aberdeen Altens Campus

**HIP Apprentice of the Year Northern Ireland Heat**  
12 March  
Belfast Met College

**HIP Apprentice of the Year Scottish Heat**  
9 April, West College Scotland, Paisley Campus



### Out and About

On the road with SNIPEF's Fiona and Andrew / [Page 18](#)



### On top of the World

Apprentices win medals at WorldSkills / [Page 29](#)



### Key to safety

Protect your van from tech savvy crooks / [Page 36](#)



### Pressure's on

Getting new MPs to act over payment abuse / [Page 38](#)

# Meet a member

In our latest personal profile, we catch up with **Malcolm Thomson**, Managing Director at D. Blake & Co Ltd

### HI MALCOLM, TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMPANY.

We were established in 1877 and were originally a traditional plumbing company but we're now known for quality leadwork and metal roofing. We mainly carry out restoration of historical buildings requiring leadwork and we also do a lot of copper, zinc and stainless steel extension roofs and dormers.

As Managing Director, my role includes estimating, supervising, managing health and safety, all HR and ordering sundries and material for all works. And of course, the most important aspect which is making sure we are profitable so we can survive.

### HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THIS TYPE OF WORK?

I started work in 1984 as an apprentice leadworker and learned my trade before getting the chance to work my way through the business, from estimating to finally running the company. I am a qualified plumber but throughout my working career I have spent most of my time on roof work.

### WHAT IS THE BEST PROJECT YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH, AND WHY?

Gribloch House in Stirlingshire – it was the perfect site. The clients were fabulous people and I really enjoyed recovering the roof in copper and working with all the

sub-contractors. It was a very enjoyable place to go to work every day. We removed the original roof, redesigned all the lead gutters and installed a new standing seam copper roof throughout.

Another significant project I worked on was recovering the lead turret at St Ninian's Manse in Leith, Edinburgh. This was a very high-end piece of work, especially as a well-known architecture firm were moving in below. This meant that not only did everything have to look correct but that they were overseeing and making sure the work met their expectations.

### WHAT IS YOUR FUNNIEST PLUMBING MOMENT?

I was working in a kitchen replacing some cast iron when two large angry dogs got in. I had to lock myself in a cupboard and I was in there for hours. It wasn't funny at the time but looking back it seems quite funny now.



### QUICK FACTS

**NAME:**  
*D. Blake & Co Ltd*

**BASED:**  
*Musselburgh,  
Edinburgh*

**PHONE:**  
*01315513424*

**WEBSITE:**  
*[www.dblake.co.uk](http://www.dblake.co.uk)*





Malcolm, far right, with the other judges at the SkillPLUMB contest

### WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE?

To keep turning out quality restorations and to keep the long tradition of our company going.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE JUDGING THE LEADWORK CATEGORY AT THE RECENT SNIPEF SKILLPLUMB APPRENTICESHIP COMPETITION.

It was really enjoyable! It was great watching young talent showcase their skills but also good to give them positive feedback so they can understand what it takes to get to the top.

## Malcolm's quick-fire questions

### COFFEE OR TEA?

Coffee

### SWEET OR SAVOURY?

Both

### FAVOURITE FILM?

*The Shawshank Redemption*

### LAST THING YOU READ?

I don't read

### WHICH SUPER POWER WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO HAVE?

Mind reading

### MORNING PERSON OR NIGHT OWL?

Both

### FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION?

Palma

### DREAM CAR?

Aston Martin

**“It was great watching young talent showcase their skills”**

### WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT THE INDUSTRY?

I'd get rid of 'White Van Men' saying they can do the works and letting standards fall.



### CONTACT

For more about membership, call 0131 556 0600 or email [membership@snipec.org](mailto:membership@snipec.org)

It makes an embarrassment out of our trade.

### WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A SNIPEF MEMBER?

As a trade body they want to bring everyone together like a family. That sort of close working makes it easier for people to pass on knowledge to each other. ■

### NEW MEMBERS

- Gasco Energy Services
- Russell Plumbing & Maintenance
- T P H Plumbing & Heating Ltd

- Whyte Plumbing & Heating Services Ltd
- F E S Support Services Ltd
- Jacobsen Property Solutions

- A T S Gas Services Ltd
- W H Donachie Plumbing & Heating Limited
- Richard Irvin FM Limited
- Campbell Construction Crieff Ltd

- David Grieve Plumbing & Heating Engineers
- S G M Plumbing & Heating
- M J M Plumbing & Heating Services

**The future of low-carbon heating is a hot topic, with climate change and emissions targets constantly in the news.**

SNIPEF member Barry Sharp has experienced the shift towards more eco-friendly alternatives first-hand through his company Renewable Heat.

While cost used to be the driving force in most customers' decision to fit a heat pump, concerns about the environment are now influencing consumers – and driving a boom in the renewables business.

One of Barry's recent customers is a perfect example of this. His firm was called in to fit a ground source heat pump at a 130-year-old home in Morningside, Edinburgh.

Barry explained: "This was the first client I've probably had in 15 years who asked me what the carbon saving would be. I worked it out and it was eye-opening – about a fifth of the figure for natural gas.

"The client was already well-versed in what they wanted. I'd looked at their system and suggested putting in a really good boiler instead, but it wasn't about that."

Before they could start fitting the pump, Barry and his team needed to check the house was suitable for the system.

He said: "The downside of a heat pump is that it's not got the oomph of a gas boiler. That's maybe 30kw but a heat pump is maximum 12kw. We have to make sure the house



The new heat pump in place



# Going und

As renewables continue to be one of the fastest growing areas in the industry, SNIPEF member **Barry Sharp** reveals the challenges and rewards of fitting a ground source heat pump in Edinburgh

can handle a heat pump – is the insulation level decent, are the windows good?"

The team carried out heat loss calculations to work out what each room required and what the house needed to stay warm. Barry added: "It was pretty much bang on 12kw so we thought yes, this will work."

Once they knew the house was suitable, the team could bring in a drilling rig to create the boreholes needed to lay the pipework. Barry admitted the machinery raised eyebrows in the leafy Edinburgh suburb.

He said: "It's a very well-to-do area and we dragged a drilling rig into the garden – it looked horrific. It's about the size of a small van and arrives on a low



The team dug two boreholes in the garden for the system's pipework

loader. The compressor that runs it is also the size of a van. Both of these got dragged into his garden and we hammered down 130m. The drilling rig we use can go up to 400m in



depth but we normally only go to about 200-250m. On this project, we needed about 260m of depth so I split it across two 130m boreholes.

"If the rig gets a clear run at it, it'll drill that in about a day. It takes about half a day to set up and half a day to get ready."

But the team were in for a surprise when they started drilling. Barry explained: "We came across a problem I've never had before. Our drillers are very clean and when stuff's coming out, it gets pumped to a skip. The skip settles the silt



and pumps out the fresh water. Usually it's just a little bit of freshwater and that'll get put down a drain. But it turned out there was an aquifer, water

Fitting the system  
at the customer's  
Edinburgh home

Barry believes the increase in the renewables market is great news for SNIPEF members. He said: "It'll keep the cowboys out because it's too difficult – this is where it really lends itself to SNIPEF members."

"SNIPEF members are professional plumbers who are already thinking about health and safety

procedures and are more established businesses."

He added: "A ground source project can be up to £30,000 – it's a big consideration. We put a lot of work into selling confidence, giving clients design information and spending time with them to talk through how we're going to do it."

under the house. When the driller hit that, he started hitting lots and lots of water.

"The skip filled up right away so we had to organise a bowser. We had two of them and each one was 6,000 gallons. We did that twice, plus we pumped some out in the garden.

"It's really unusual to have so much water. Luckily the drillers are very professional and tend to come from a background of water wells, so they're well versed on managing this."

Once the holes were dug, Barry could get on with the pipework. "We biocide it, flush it out and then put anti-freeze in," he said. "We fill it with a vegetable-based anti-freeze, so if there's any bacteria they're likely to use it as a food source – that's why we use the biocide.

"It's a closed system so it's a pipe that goes from the heat pump, down the hole and back up. That's protected to -15C and it can run as low as -5C inside that pipework."

Since heat pumps run at a different temperature to boilers, it can mean larger radiators have to be fitted to compensate. Barry added: "We got lucky. As it was an older house, they tend to oversize the radiators. We did the calculations and all rooms bar one had the correct radiators, and that room had a stove."

Once the system was in place, Barry fitted a smart thermostat he can check remotely. If there's a fault, sensors send an alert to his phone and he can dial in to the system to fix the problem.

With interest in renewables still growing, Barry believes training is key to preparing the industry for the future.

He said: "It's time to get skilled up. The market will be here before you know it and it won't be long before they start telling us we can't fit gas boilers.

"There's a chance that an apprentice starting tomorrow who works with one of the major housebuilders may never see a gas boiler." ■

We catch up with our CEO Fiona Hodgson and Regional Training Officer Andrew Thomson to find out what they've been up to...

### **As SNIPEF CEO, I'm often travelling to events. Over the past few months I've been up and down the country attending useful and insightful sessions.**

These events are a way to represent our members' interests, make sure our voices are heard and ensure we are making the right changes in the industry.

### **NEW CHARGE**

SNIPEF and other industry representatives wrote to the government last year warning of the problems that the reverse VAT charge would cause companies and requested a delay in its introduction. As a result, the implementation of the charge was postponed by 12 months. I attended a meeting in London with representatives from HM Treasury, HMRC and BEIS to discuss the new charge and how it would be communicated to businesses.

### **NORTHERN IRELAND**

I've made a lot of visits to Northern Ireland recently. SNIPEF, as part of BSE Skills Ltd, is leading a project to update the Plumbing & Heating Apprenticeship Framework in Northern Ireland. To do this, we need the views of those working in the industry and delivering the training.

I met with member firms, the Department for the Economy, the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments and South East Regional College to discuss the Level 3 NVQ Diploma

in Domestic Plumbing and Heating and consider any extra qualifications, certification and training which might be needed.

I then headed to the Built Environment Skills Partnership event. The partnership was originally formed to share knowledge and act as a collective voice of the industry to ensure that construction apprenticeships meet the needs of employers. I also attended the Specialist Engineering Contractors' Group meeting where the main point of discussion was payment abuse.

### **PLENTY OF SKILL**

One of my recent highlights was heading to Birmingham for the WorldSkills UK competition. The contest is all about improving the prestige of apprenticeships and technical education, to inspire more young people to consider these as career routes.

Out of the eight competitors in the plumbing and heating category, five work for SNIPEF member firms. It was a privilege to spend time with some incredibly talented and motivated apprentices.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting them, their employers, families and lecturers and was so proud of their achievements. The icing on the cake was when Scotland took gold and silver medals courtesy of Connor Cruden and Kyle McGeoghe. It was an immensely proud moment and a huge achievement for them. ■



**By Fiona Hodgson, Chief Executive, SNIPEF**

**KEY:**  
○ Fiona visit  
△ Andrew visit



# OUT



**By Andrew Thomson,  
Regional Training  
Officer, SNIPEF**

**As a SNIPEF Regional Training Officer, I have the busy job of working within the apprenticeship training programme. I look after those working in Aberdeen, Dundee, Fife and Perth. This involves monitoring apprentices on the programme and providing support to them and their employer.**

Apprentices are usually recruited into the programme by September so the last few months have seen me undertaking a lot of workplace reviews with them.

I visit them on site in their work environment and it's a great opportunity for employers to give feedback on how their apprentices are progressing.

#### FRIENDLY COMPETITION

I headed to the heart of Aberdeen to visit CAS Duncan, which currently has three apprentices serving their time – two first years and one third year.

I met Gordon Main, the Operations Manager, who helped me with the reviews and gave me positive feedback for each apprentice. Gordon was exceptionally pleased with one of his first year apprentices, who represented Tullos Training at this year's SkillPLUMB regional heat competition for the lead category.

I also travelled to Premnay, Insch to meet with Derek Scott, of Derek Scott

Plumbing & Heating, and his third year apprentice who was runner up in the copper category at the SkillPLUMB regional heat.

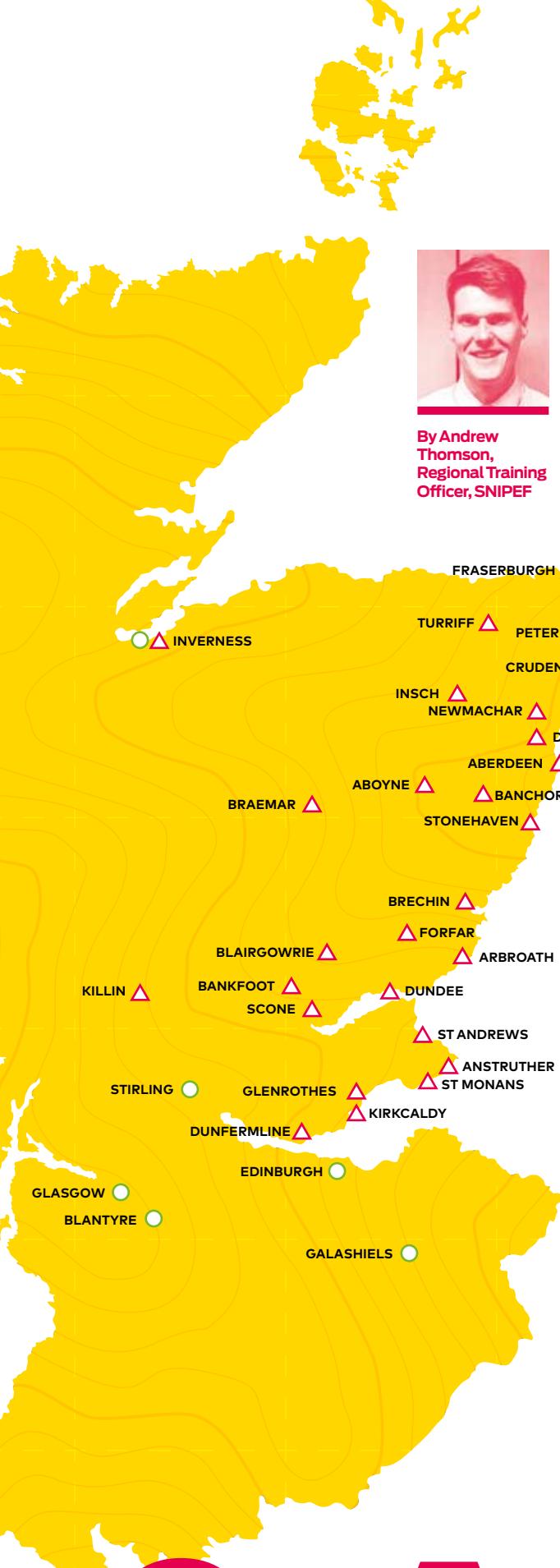
The apprentice, who is another Tullos Training student, also competed in the SkillPLUMB final at WorldSkills UK. Derek and his apprentice were busy working on a new build property installing new plumbing systems including above and below ground drainage, central heating and the almost forgotten skill of lead work.

#### GREAT IMPRESSION

One of my highlights was during a visit to G & A Barnie Group Ltd. I carried out reviews with their current first year and almost time served fourth year apprentice. During my meeting, Branch Manager Steven Gunn provided clear and concise feedback on both apprentices.

Reflecting back it has been a very productive period and it's always great having direct contact with employers and having the chance to see apprentices develop their skills outside of college. ■

**“Reflecting back it has been a very productive period and it's always great having direct contact with employers”**



# & ABOUT

# MainsBooster

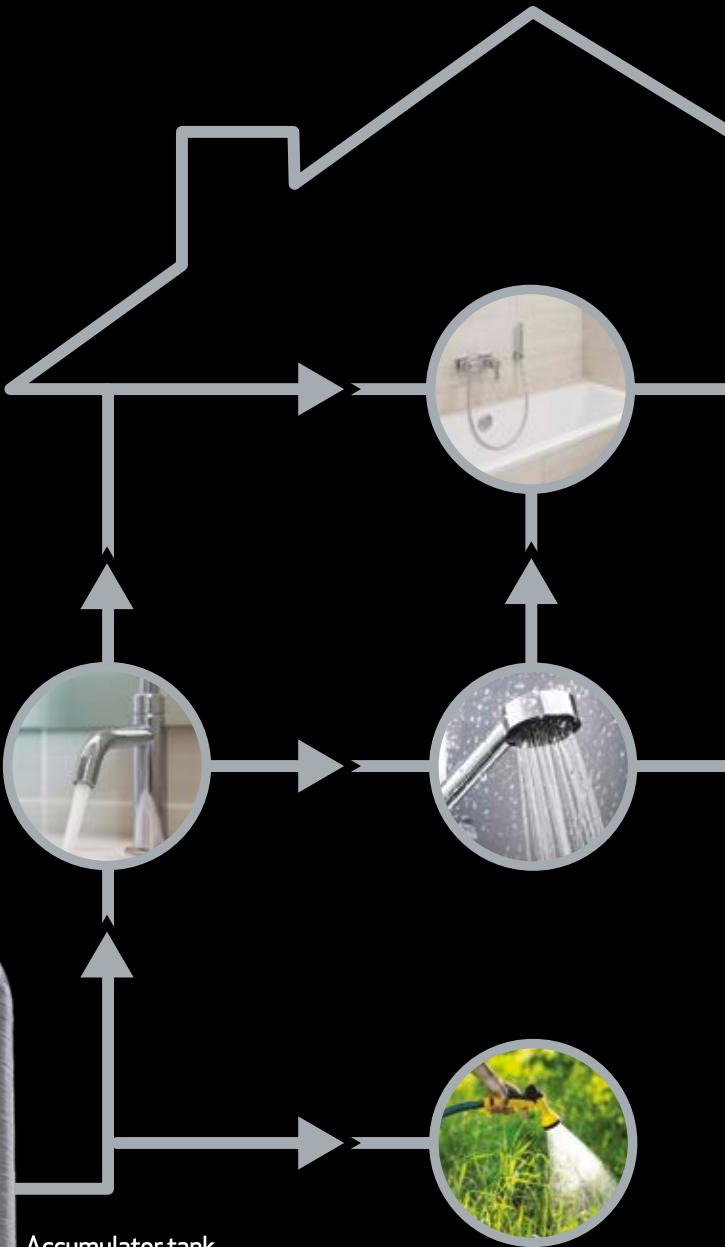
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## R A N G E

Boost their flow.  
Boost their day.

A range of product solutions to boost **mains flow and pressure**. Improving water performance to your shower, bathroom and whole house.

- ✓ Simple to install
- ✓ Regulation compliant
- ✓ Online pump selector



Salamander Pumps



[www.salamanderpumps.co.uk](http://www.salamanderpumps.co.uk)

# Remote control

Scottish Water offers remote track inspections thanks to new app

**S**cottish Water has launched a new app allowing track inspections to be carried out remotely.

The software means that domestic service connections on to new mains – installed by a utility connection provider – can be checked by Scottish Water without a physical visit to the site.

The app also means an outcome response can be issued on the same working day, as well as cutting out the current wait of five working days for a visit.

Under the process, users simply request an inspection by Scottish Water by means of geo-tagged photographs. A dedicated team then reviews the checks as they are submitted.

The number of remote inspections being processed via



Inspection information can be submitted remotely through the Scottish Water app

the app is increasing every week.

To download it, just search for 'Scottish Water' in the Google Play or Apple Store.

It will appear in your search list under the name 'Dev Services' and is free to download.

Once you've downloaded it, first time users need to email [remoteinspections@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:remoteinspections@scottishwater.co.uk) to request access and add new sites for inspections.

If you want new sites to be added, please include these details in your email:

- Scottish Water case reference (if known)
- site address
- postcode
- plot(s).

The app can be downloaded by anyone but you won't be able to use it until you request access via the remote inspections mailbox and Scottish Water has set you up as a user.

Once verified by Scottish Water, there's a simple two-step process to get started:

- You will receive an email from Scottish Water, which you will need to accept to use the service.
- You should now be able to log in to the app using your email address and password.

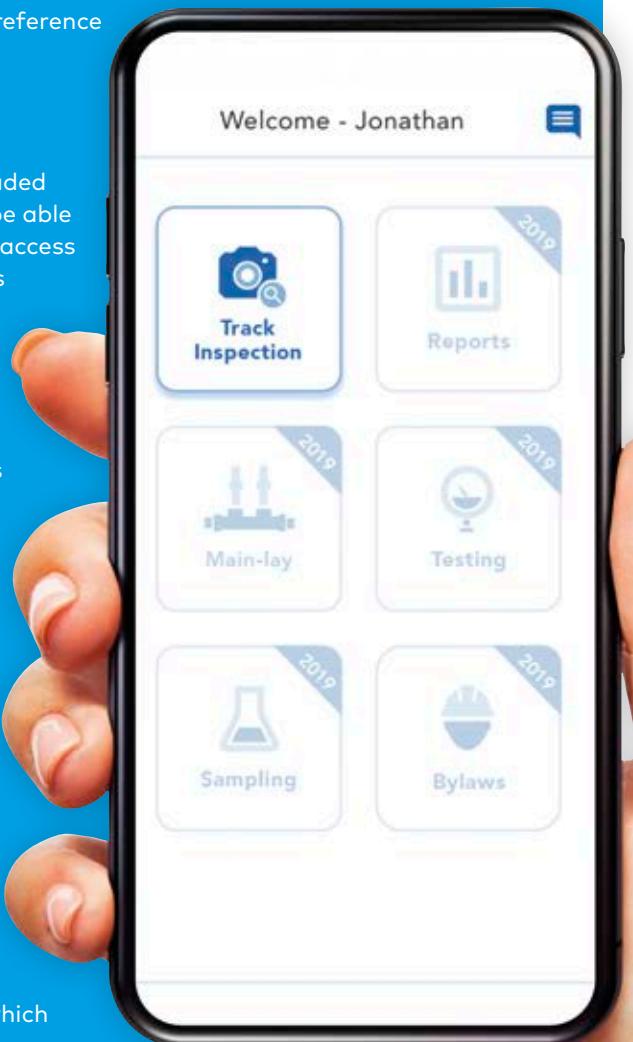
The app has already been updated to provide new features.

Scottish Water is also in the process of planning and developing additional functionality, which

will broaden the scope of eligible remote inspections.

This will include main laying, pressure testing and disinfection of mains, sampling, retail connections, and single house customer connections.

*For more information, please email [remoteinspections@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:remoteinspections@scottishwater.co.uk)*



# Beating the blues

We explain how to comply with the rules on inlet valves in toilet cisterns to make sure you avoid the risk of contamination

## WHY HAVE THE REQUIREMENTS BEEN INTRODUCED?

Concerns were raised to the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) by some UK water companies in 2018 regarding blue water contaminating public water networks.

These worries initiated a string of actions and the priority was to identify the cause of the contamination.

The blue water was found to be entering the network through toilet cisterns due to the type and design of the inlet valves (IV) which were being used.

WRAS and the water companies – through the WRAS Technical Committee – identified the need to clarify the criteria these products must satisfy.

Another action was to carry out a full review of Regulation 4(1) of the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, The Water Supply (Water Fittings) (Scotland)

Byelaws 2014 and The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

To sum up the above, the focus was on the design of WC inlet valves that can be height adjusted below the overflow level and air gaps within toilet cisterns.

## AUK1 AIR GAP

The toilet pan and the toilet cistern are classed as one appliance. There are two air gap requirements for toilets using cisterns: an AUK1 and a Type AG air gap.

An AUK1 is an air gap which is used with an interposed cistern with an air gap of at least 300mm between the pan spill-over level and the cistern overflow.

The internal side of the base of the cistern should also be spaced 15mm away from the highest point of the toilet pan.

This should be achieved through the design of the cistern and pan. This is

relevant to both close-coupled and back to wall, concealed cistern setups.

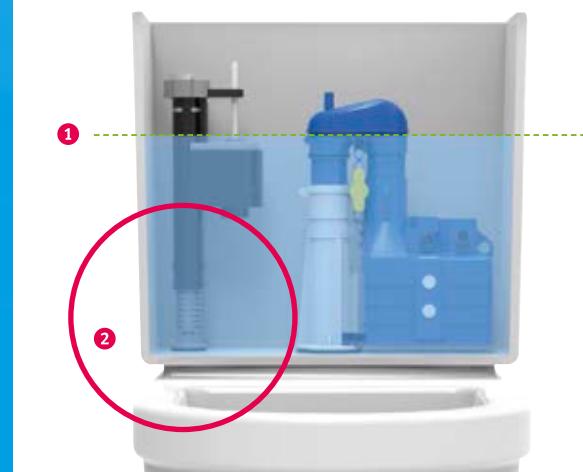
The AUK1 air gap is the priority to set when determining air gap distances.

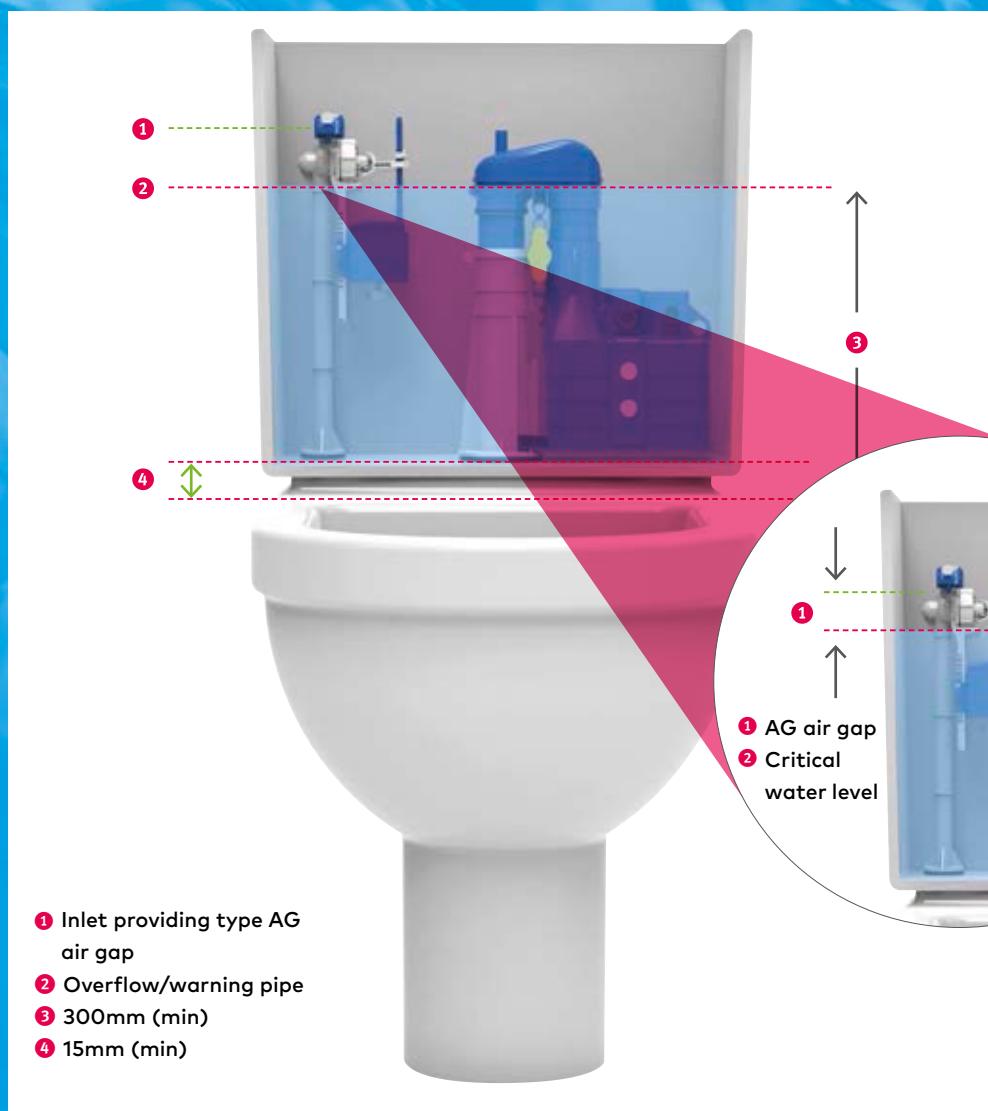
Ensuring that there is a Type AUK1 air gap will then determine the height of the outlet of the inlet valve to



By Martyn Raine,  
Technical  
Manager,  
SNIPEF

- ① Critical water level
- ② Adjustable or dismantle joint below water level (inlet valve only – does not apply to siphon or flush valve)





ensure a Type AG air gap is achieved internally.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

'But this should be set by the manufacturer', I hear you say. Yes, you might think this, but it is not actually the case – the manufacturer has no legal responsibility to ensure compliance with the water byelaws/regulations as they are not in control of where their product is installed.

Byelaw 3 gives guidance on restrictions of water fittings and what is expected from any water fitting installed. The installer and the building owner are responsible for any work being carried out.

If you cannot achieve the required AUK1 gap of 300mm it will be the case that a flushing valve that

can achieve the required height can be installed.

Adjustable flush valves are available that incorporate an internal overflow of more than 19mm in diameter.

This will allow the minimum of 300mm to be achieved to comply as an AUK1 air gap.

#### TYPE AG AIR GAP

Regarding the inlet valve within a toilet cistern, the air gap required is a Type AG air gap – a non-mechanical backflow prevention arrangement with an overflow of no less than 19mm diameter.

As the overflow level is initially set through the AUK1 air gap, the AG air gap can now be established or checked. The gap will need to be a minimum of 28mm

Illustrations:  
Thomas Dudley  
Ltd

#### FIND OUT MORE

More information about the requirements for toilet cisterns and inlet valves can be found at [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk) or feel free to contact martyne.raine@snipef.org

from the overflow level of the cistern to the outlet on the IV. If this distance cannot be achieved, then the installation is not compliant.

Inlet valves have a strict requirement to their design, which means there should be no joints or connections that sit below the overflow level of the cistern.

This rules out the use of inlet valves that can be adjusted in their stem.

These types of inlet valves are popular with replacement and repair work as it can prove difficult to achieve the correct heights in some older cisterns.

The reason

this type of valve is not compliant is that the adjustable connection can fail – leaving the water supply exposed to contaminated water.

This contaminated water could back siphon into the building water system or even into the public water network.

The quiet fill type inlet valves that incorporate a silencer tube or bag that cannot provide a Type AG air gap are not compliant and should not be used on an installation that is connected to supply that is wholesome.

Water Undertakers have legal responsibilities to ensure the water network quality is not compromised.

The network supply is classed as a food product as it is consumed.

Water Undertakers have the power to insist on rectification of any non-compliant installation through enforcement and legal action. ■

# Rising to the CLIMATE

Vaillant's **Mark Wilkins** reveals the practical steps you can take as the industry turns to low-carbon solutions

**E**missions from buildings, transport, power generation, agriculture and industry all contribute to our national carbon output.

The challenges in each sector are different, but heating is particularly tricky due to the diverse range of property types.

The Committee on Climate Change has described the decarbonisation of heating as "necessary, feasible and cost-effective" in its *Net Zero: The UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming* report, while the net-zero by 2050 target has been enshrined in law through an amendment to the Climate Change Act.

Scotland continues to lead the way in the UK and has amended the Climate Change Act with the improved Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

The changes have set targets to cut Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2045, five years ahead of the rest of the UK, with interim reductions targets of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040.

The *Delivering on Net Zero: Next Steps for Scotland* report estimates that at least 90% of Scottish homes will need to be fitted with a form of renewable heat by 2050, up from 4% currently. This is a

huge challenge and implies an annual average installation rate of 70,000 renewable heating solutions (e.g. heat pumps) compared to an annual gas boiler installation rate of around 20,000.

The political will is there, and Scotland certainly has ambition, but pinning the future of the environment on a single type of fuel or technology is neither viable with the current infrastructure, nor suitable for our diverse range of communities, housing stock and climatic conditions.

Instead, a more complex approach is required: one that begins with insulation to reduce energy consumption and incorporates multiple technologies, including heat pumps and boilers powered by hydrogen and other green gases, which are bolstered by intelligent heating controls.

## FORWARD PLANNING

Driving energy efficiency and using low-carbon heating sources is easier to implement in new-build properties where these solutions can be specified and designed at an early stage.

In England, the consultation on The Future Homes Standard and proposed changes to the English Building Regulations is considering ways to future-

**90%** of homes in Scotland will need to be fitted with some form of renewable heat by 2050

**4-6 MILLION**

number of homes with older and less efficient boilers

**50%**

Emissions reduction target for 2020

By Mark Wilkins,  
Head of Training and External Affairs, Vaillant

**20**

The year Scotland aims to re



# CHANGE Challenge

of homes are currently fitted with renewable heat

**3/4**

75% reduction target for 2030

**90%**

2040's emission reduction target

**45**

duce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero

proof new buildings for low carbon technologies.

Every high-carbon heating system installed in a new build home today is a lost opportunity for decarbonisation. We need to ensure new homes are future-proofed with low-temperature heating systems and space for water or battery storage to enable future upgrades.

#### EFFICIENT UPGRADES

Decarbonising heat in the replacement market is clearly more challenging. But there are steps we can take, the first obvious one is to target older, inefficient non-condensing boilers. Since 2005, more than 95% of boilers installed in homes have been high-efficiency condensing boilers, however, it is estimated that between 4 and 6 million homes still have older, less efficient models. Upgrading to high-efficiency boilers and exploring opportunities with modern controls will help cut a home's carbon emissions, as will educating homeowners on how to best use their new heating systems.

Heat pumps are another possible option and you can now get a variety of air, ground and domestic hot water heat pumps for a range of applications.

Having the necessary skills to correctly specify, install and commission low carbon technologies is essential.

#### TECH TRAINING

There is no "silver bullet" in terms of a single technology that will deliver a low-carbon future. A range of technologies

including heat pumps, solar, heat networks, biogas and hydrogen will all play a role.

To ensure that these low-carbon technologies are correctly selected and systems are designed, installed, commissioned and optimised properly, it is essential that we upskill the workforce across the supply chain.

The Committee on Climate Change report recommended the introduction of a nationwide training programme for designers, specifiers and installers, which Vaillant welcomes and believes should not only be considered by the government but should be implemented as soon as possible. We also think that some form of funding would be a huge benefit to offset the costs incurred by installers who invest in training for the future.

Alongside this national training programme, a regulatory and support framework for low-carbon heating is required to address the funding gap.

#### TIME TO ACT

As an industry, we can continue to talk about the future, or we can act. It is very clear that we need to act now, and based on feedback from installers, specifiers and designers, we understand that they are ready, willing and able to make a difference.

Scotland is leading the way with the move to low carbon technologies, setting ambitious targets and looking at ways to support the mass uptake of these new technologies, the rest of the UK now has to catch up. ■

**Thousands of people across the country need help when they use the toilet. But around 25,000 disabled people in Scotland require more support than standard accessible facilities can provide.**

That's why Changing Places Toilets (CPTs) provide a vital lifeline for those who rely on the extra space and specialist changing equipment to improve their quality of life.

They include those with profound and multiple learning disabilities, spinal injury sufferers and stroke victims.

A lack of provision of suitable sanitary spaces can lead to social isolation, with carers forced to change people on public toilet floors or wait until they get home.

To help tackle this unacceptable situation and ensure dignity for everyone, there has been a change to the Technical Standards.

CPTs have been recognised as good practice in key building types within BS 8300 since 2009. The Technical Handbooks have had a specification for a CPT since 2013, but these have always been a voluntary provision, where the building owners have made the choice whether or not to install them

# Changing lives with Changing Places

Thousands of disabled people and their carers rely on specially adapted toilets. Updates to the Technical Standards will help provide more of the vital facilities – here's what you need to know about the new rules

– until now. More CPTs are needed to allow more people to get out and about and enjoy the sort of day-to-day activities that many of us take for granted.

## SETTING THE STANDARD

The need for specialist toilets and changing facilities was first brought to public attention by the learning disability organisation PAMIS.

Image: ©PAMIS

## What is a Changing Places Toilet?

A CPT is a large sanitary facility measuring at least 3m by 4m which is suitable for people who have more complex care needs. It will also help many other people for whom standard accessible toilets are not suitable. The facility should include:

- a height-adjustable adult-sized changing bench
- ceiling mounted track hoist
- centrally located peninsular WC with a space on both sides
- height-adjustable wash hand basin
- privacy screen
- grab rails

- a call system
- non-slip flooring.

In a building that includes other changing facilities, such as a swimming pool or leisure centre, the provision of a wall-mounted shower and floor drain is also required.

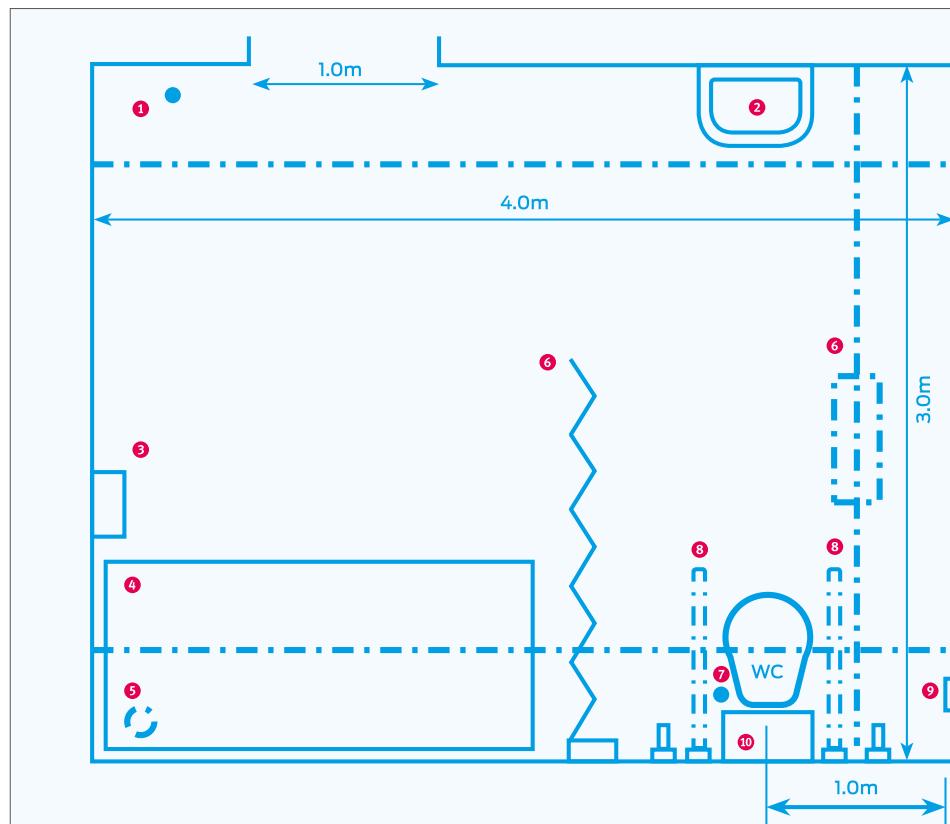


In 2006, the Changing Places, Changing Lives campaign was launched by the Changing Places Consortium.

The old regulations in the 2017 Technical Handbook stated that a CPT is a toilet with a changing facility that is suitable for use by people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities, or other disabilities, and for whom standard accessible toilets may not be fit for purpose.

The old regulations also stated that to be added to the Changing Places national register, all new CPTs needed to meet the standards specified by the Changing Places Consortium. These standards meant that registered facilities should meet the needs and expectations of the people who use them, as well as their carers.

Building Standards held a consultation period on the proposed changes to the regulation which took place from 18 February to 13 May 2019. They received 1,100 responses and 99% of the people who replied agreed with the proposal to add CPTs as a requirement in key building types within BS 8300.



Drawing taken from the Technical Handbook Non-Domestic

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| ① | Alarm pull cord   | ⑥ | Retractable privacy curtain/screen   |
| ② | Large power-assisted height<br>adjustable wash hand basin | ⑦ | Alarm pull cord  |
| ③ | Shower unit with long-reach hose                          | ⑧ | Vertical and drop-down support rails   |
| ④ | Height adjustable changing/<br>showering bench            | ⑨ | Alarm reset button   |
| ⑤ | Floor drain   | ⑩ | Flat-topped close coupled cistern<br>providing back rest and colostomy<br>bag changing surface |

## NEW NON-DOMESTIC TECHNICAL STANDARDS 3:12:13

### NEW BUILDINGS

A CPT is now required in certain large new buildings, including retail buildings, assembly or entertainment buildings, a building bigger than 5,000m<sup>2</sup> or with a capacity of more than 1,000 people or a building containing a swimming pool. This regulation also covers a hospital or secondary school providing community facilities.

### CONVERSIONS OR EXTENSIONS

Where a building is being converted or extended and a Changing Places Toilet is not already present within the building, one should be provided

if the conversion relates to the above new constructions or if the floor area increases by 25%. For example, this could relate to office premises being converted to a leisure club or a hotel to include a swimming pool.

Provision of a CPT should be in addition to, not instead of, the provision of standard and accessible sanitary accommodation.

A CPT should be located to provide easy access for users, taking into account factors such as security or payment barriers and the access route to, and within, the building. ■



**By Mel Shepherd,  
Technical & Skills  
Officer, SNIPEF**

*Further information and guidance about Changing Places Toilets can be obtained from the Technical Handbook Non-Domestic – Environment 3:12:13 or go to [www.gov.scot/publications/building-standards-technical-handbook-2019-non-domestic](http://www.gov.scot/publications/building-standards-technical-handbook-2019-non-domestic)*

## Round-up of latest WaterSafe® activities and events

For more information and advice about how you can benefit from WaterSafe membership, please visit [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk)

# Targeting trusted talent

WaterSafe launches campaign to recruit qualified plumbers in Northern Ireland

**WaterSafe, the national body for approved plumbers, has joined forces with Northern Ireland Water to recruit eligible plumbers on to the largest online approval directory for professionals working with drinking water.**

Michael McGreevy, Water Regulation Manager at Northern Ireland Water, said: "The water we supply is consistently top quality and we want to ensure it stays that way when it reaches our customers' taps. For this reason, we always recommend to our customers they use a plumber or plumbing business approved by WaterSafe."

Members of WaterSafe benefit from:

**1. Free promotion and branding** with a listing on the largest online directory for approved plumbers in the UK – promoted by Northern Ireland Water.

**2. Customer reassurance** that

you're qualified and trusted to work safely with water by Northern Ireland Water and the drinking water regulator.

**3. A direct link to Northern Ireland Water** to self-notify plumbing work and access free advice on the water regulations.

### MORE PIPEWORK, LESS PAPERWORK

Plumbers on the WaterSafe register can self-notify their work to Northern Ireland Water – and issue a certificate stating their plumbing work complies with the regulations, which protects customers from any legal comeback.

All WaterSafe plumbers are trained in the Water Fittings (Supply) Regulations that keep drinking water safe.

With less than a third of plumbers in Northern Ireland trained in the water regulations, WaterSafe membership is a great way to stand out from the competition.\*



*\*From a survey of 300 plumbers in Wales and Northern Ireland in 2019.*

### ALREADY A MEMBER OF SNIPEF? DID YOU KNOW IT'S FREE TO JOIN WATERSAFE?

If you're a qualified plumber who is currently registered with SNIPEF, find out about joining WaterSafe at no extra charge today.

Contact SNIPEF at [www.snipef.org](http://www.snipef.org) or visit [watersafe.org.uk/howtojoin](http://watersafe.org.uk/howtojoin) for more information.

## Helping people know where to stop

**WaterSafe's winter campaign encourages homeowners to stop, find, check and label their internal stop tap in case they need to shut off their water supply in an emergency, such as burst pipes.**

Data from the Association of British Insurers shows that during a spell of freezing weather, a claim to repair a burst pipe costs an average of £8,800 – and can often be more.

With repair costs significantly

reduced if the stop tap is used to turn off the water as quickly as possible, helping homeowners find their stop tap is WaterSafe's top tip this winter.

WaterSafe recommends that homeowners contact an approved plumber if they can't locate their stop tap or if it's not working properly. For more stop tap and winter plumbing advice head to [watersafe.org.uk/winter](http://watersafe.org.uk/winter)





# We're on top of the World

Delighted Scottish plumbing apprentices win gold and silver medals at WorldSkills UK contest

Continued on page 30



Continued from page 29

**Scotland's top plumbing apprentices took home gold and silver medals after a brilliant performance at this year's WorldSkills UK competition.**

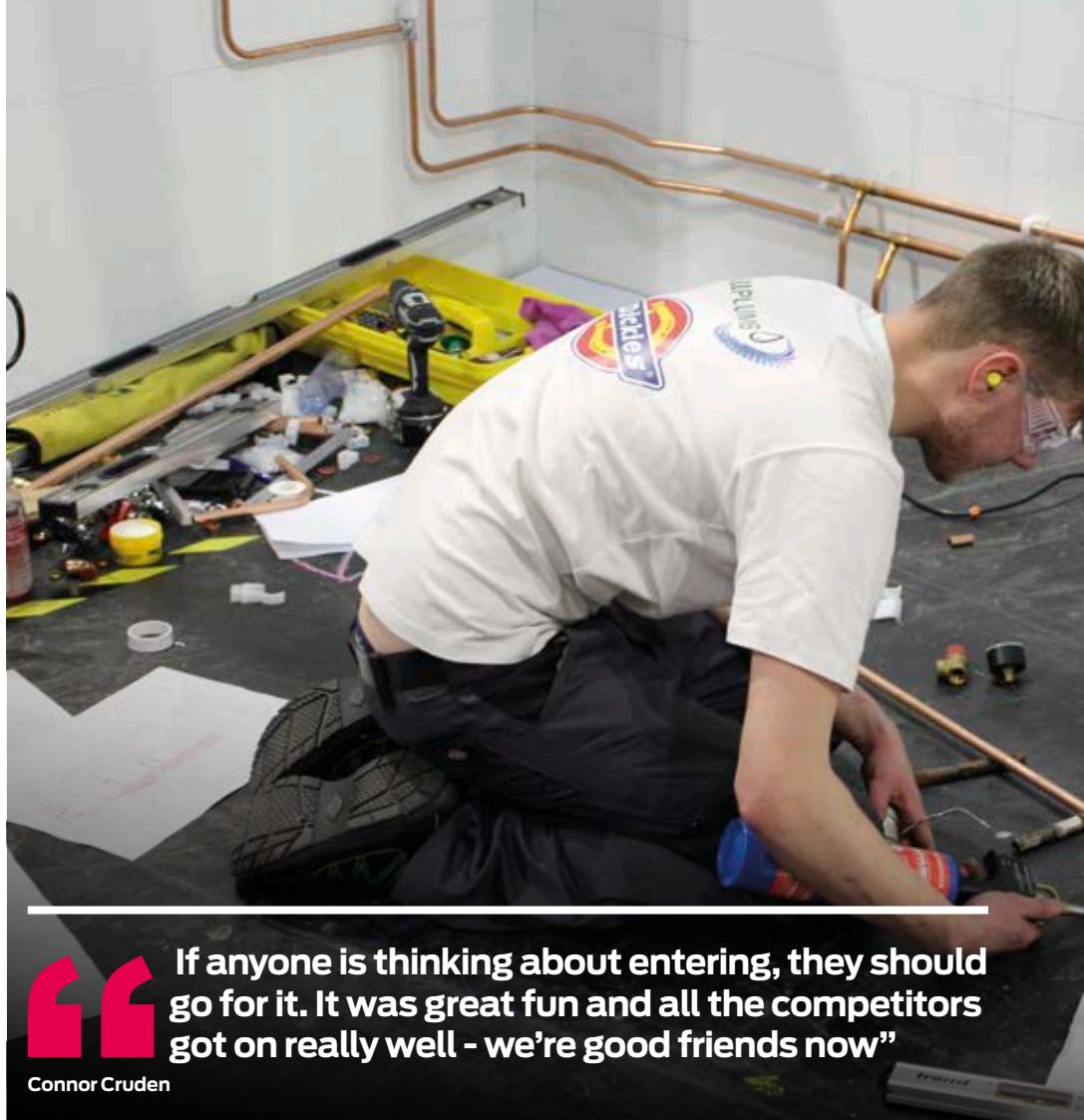
Talented Connor Cruden, 19, who works for Cowie Plumbing and Heating, was named the SkillPLUMB champion following the three-day event in Birmingham.

Perth College UHI student Kyle McGeoghe, 21, of William Combe & Son Ltd, came second in the challenge.

And Alexander Clouston and Sam Henderson were both highly commended for their work in the contest. Inverness College student Alexander works for Pipedream Plumbing Ltd while Sam, who studies at Tullos Training in Aberdeen, is employed by Derek Scott Plumbing and Heating.

Cameron Clark, of Dundee College and employer James Lammond Ltd, also took part in the contest, while Lewis Sim, of SNIPEF member firm McDonald and Munro, won silver in the electrical category of the competition. All the plumbing apprentices work for SNIPEF member firms.

Connor, a student at Moray College, admitted he was shocked when he was named the winner of the gold medal at the NEC in November. The



**If anyone is thinking about entering, they should go for it. It was great fun and all the competitors got on really well - we're good friends now"**

Connor Cruden

teenager said: "I couldn't believe it – I really didn't expect it. I was so nervous before we started and I'd been telling myself I wouldn't get anything. I never thought when I applied that I'd win the gold medal."

#### FINAL CHALLENGE

All the finalists earned their place following a series of challenging regional heats

Connor at work during the contest and below (left to right) Cameron, Sam, Kyle, Connor and Alexander

held throughout the year. The Scottish heat is organised by SNIPEF and the BPEC industry network. Connor, who started his apprenticeship with Neil Murray Housebuilders before joining Cowie Plumbing and Heating last year, took part in two gruelling seven-hour sessions over two days to take the top prize.

Finalists had to install a small sealed domestic central heating system with expansion vessel, pump and ancillary equipment, including a radiator, unvented hot water cylinder and a Worcester Bosch boiler, as well as associated copper pipework.

Their work was marked against strict criteria including joint quality, bend angles and measuring and marking out, which had to be accurate to within 2mm.

"We didn't know exactly what we'd be doing until the day of the competition," Connor said. "I thought it was going alright while I was working but I didn't





think it would be the best." Despite the rivalry during the competition, Connor revealed the finalists soon became friends. He said: "It was really good fun. All the competitors got on really well and we're good friends now. If anyone is thinking about entering the next competition then I'd definitely advise them to do it."

Connor admitted he hadn't always wanted to become a plumber. He said: "I actually wanted to be a farmer when I was younger but there was no money in it. I liked the idea of a trade and I've really enjoyed it."

## HIGH STANDARDS

Connor's employer, SNIPEF member Gary Cowie, travelled to Birmingham to support him.

He said: "It's a great achievement. The standard was ridiculously high so we couldn't be overly confident but I knew that he was very good."

"Connor's a cracking lad and a really good guy. He always

Silver medallist Kyle, top, and all of the finalists

wants to improve and he's got a great future ahead. Everyone in the business is delighted for Connor. It's a reflection on them because it shows how well they're training him. He's a joy to teach and the guys teaching him are very good."

Moray Combe, who employs silver medallist Kyle, was also thrilled with his apprentice's performance. He said: "He's really good, he's super keen and he picks things up really quickly. He's also got a great

personality which is one of the most important things when you're dealing with people – the customers really like him."

Connor is now eligible for selection for the squad that will be narrowed down to Team UK and compete at the international WorldSkills Shanghai 2021 in China. He will also have the chance to take part in the Grundfos Installer Championship in Italy in March.

## ROLE MODELS

SNIPEF CEO Fiona Hodgson described the amazing result as testament to the high quality of apprentice training in Scotland. She said: "The skills of these young people are the foundation for the future of our industry and it's fantastic to see their achievements recognised on a national stage.

"They are a credit to the lecturers who teach them, and to the forward-thinking employers who provide them with training on the job."

All the finalists received prizes including a BPEC training manual, CIPHE membership, and tools and products donated by the competition sponsors.

Neil Collishaw, CEO of BPEC, said: "We are so proud of all the finalists. It is so challenging for them to work under pressure and the standard of work this year has been exceptional.

"The finalists are all excellent ambassadors for the industry and brilliant role models for other young people considering a plumbing career." ■



# College winners are all top class

The future of the plumbing industry is in good hands if the achievements recognised at the recent prize-giving ceremonies are anything to go by. Here's a round-up of the award events hosted by colleges around Scotland and the apprentices honoured for their hard work

## SNIPEF MEMBER WINNERS:

- **William Wilson Cup, Best Plumbing Apprentice – 2nd Year** Mark Reid, W&M Stuart Ltd
- **Grampian Plumbing Services Ltd Shield, Best Adult Plumbing Apprentice** Martynas Satinskas, Korrie Mechanical & Plumbing
- **CIPHE (Chartered Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering) Scotland Design Guide, Best Plumbing Achievement** Connor Cruden, Cowie Plumbing and Heating



## MORAY COLLEGE, INVERNESS

Moray College, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, has been training apprentices across a wide range of trades since the early 1970s when it was Elgin



Technical College. Its annual Apprentices Prize-Giving Ceremony was once again well attended when it was held on 26 September.

Jim Mackinnon, Moray College's Curriculum Team Leader for Plumbing, said: "Apprentices work hard at their trade and I've found most of the students have a good attitude to learning, and to becoming the best that they can."

"They are aware there are prizes available which produces a healthy competitive culture and the employers are very supportive and realise the hard

work that their apprentices have put in to each year's work.

"The growing number of apprentices over the years is testament to the demand of the employers who require their apprentices to attend college to receive the best training possible and achieve the required qualifications."

Neil Foxcroft, SNIPEF Regional Training Officer for Highlands and Islands who attended the prize giving ceremony, said: "It's a great annual event." The SNIPEF Shield for the best first-year plumbing apprentice was awarded to Jake Carpenter.

Mark Reid, left



## NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE, ABERDEEN

There were four awards presented in the plumbing category at North East Scotland College's apprentice ceremony in Aberdeen on 4 November, including two which were sponsored by SNIPEF.

Susan Grant, Chairman of Committee at the college, praised the hard work of the students and the continued support of local companies to sponsor

### SNIPEF MEMBER WINNERS:

- **City Plumbing Supplies Trophy (Plumbing Stage 1 Award)**

Andrew Fraser,  
Michael Strachan  
Local Plumbers Ltd

- **PTS Trophy (Plumbing Stage 2 Award), SNIPEF Award and SP Education & Training Award** Taylor Robertson,

Sugplumb Ltd

- **Winner of the SNIPEF Award and the SP Education & Training Award** Steven Glennie, Camwater

Above: North East Scotland College winners

the ceremony. She said: "The annual Construction Crafts Awards provide an opportunity to offer formal recognition of the hard work and achievements of our students, who, in conjunction with the efforts and commitment of staff, and the support of their employers, have been involved in the vital process of education and training related to the industry."

Andrew Thomson, SNIPEF Regional Training Officer,

thanked organisers of the ceremony. He said: "It was a well organised but informal event with around 70 family, friends and employers there to support the apprentices."

"We've seen apprentice numbers fluctuate in the area so it's good to celebrate the hard work of these young people and the commitment of local companies to continue to invest in apprenticeships to secure new skilled plumbers for the industry in the future."

**It's good to celebrate the hard work of these young people and the commitment of local companies"**

➤ **Continued on page 34**

## SNIPEF MEMBER WINNERS:

### Borders College

- Best 1st year: Ged Lamb, Greenheat Renewables Ltd
- Best 2nd year: Conan McVey, Caledonian Heating & Plumbing Ltd
- Best 3rd year: Scott Clark, South East Heating Services Ltd

### Edinburgh College

- Best 1st year: Harris Millar, CHAPS Ltd
- Best 2nd year: Norman Chisholm, Latent Heat Ltd

### Forth Valley College

- Best 1st year: John Fraser, DMA Canyon
- **Norman Tweedie Award for best lead work:** Fynn Turnbull (Borders College), Teviotdale Plumbing & Heating
- **David A More Trophy for Best Overall (across all three colleges)**  
Scott Clark (Borders College), South East Heating Services



## SNIPEF EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT APPRENTICE PRIZE-GIVING

The SNIPEF Edinburgh and District Branch held its annual Apprentice Prize Giving Event on Thursday 31 October at Borders College in Galashiels.

The ceremony was hosted by SNIPEF Branch President Duncan Sharp and Vice-President David Paterson.

SNIPEF Membership Officer Andy Furnevel was also at the presentation. Apprentices from Borders, Edinburgh and Forth Valley Colleges were nominated by their college lecturers and by SNIPEF Training Officers Vanessa Docherty and Malcolm Drysdale for the hard work and dedication they

have demonstrated over the year. Scott Clark, a student at Borders College who works for South East Heating Services Ltd, was awarded the David A More Trophy – presented to the top apprentice from all three institutions.

Below: Duncan Sharp with Scott Clark



## SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COLLEGE

South Lanarkshire College's Annual Construction Awards Ceremony was held in the Hamilton Townhouse, Hamilton, on Monday 23 September 2019. During the prize-giving, three awards were presented to plumbing apprentices by SNIPEF Regional Training Officer Vanessa Santi.

## SNIPEF MEMBER WINNERS:

- **Apprentice of the Year – 3rd year:** Ross Kerr, Ingen Technical Services Ltd
- **Apprentice of the Year – 1st year:** David Williamson, Precise Installs Ltd

- **Richard Mitchell Excellence Award:** Ross Ker, Ingen Technical Services Ltd



The 2020 HIP Apprentice of the Year competition kicks off this month – and it's making its first visit to Scotland

# TIME TO Shine

This year's HIP Apprentice of the Year contest is heading to Scotland and Northern Ireland when the 2020 competition kicks off in January.

Plumbing students will go head to head at eight regional heats across the UK before the winners meet in the grand final.

Prizes worth up to £10,000 are on offer at the finale of the contest – as well as the prestige for the trainee and college of being named the country's best apprentice. The competition

visits Belfast Met College in Northern Ireland on 12 May and will be making its first trip to Scotland for the heat at West College Scotland's Paisley Campus on 9 April.

SNIPEF's Technical Manager Martyn Raine will join the judging panel in Paisley as the students take on a series of practical tasks.

Last year's winner was Lewis Blakely, a third-year apprentice at Coleg y Cymoedd. He said the best advice he had for anyone entering the competition in 2020 is to focus.

"Take your time – there's

For more information, go to [www.hip-magazine.co.uk](http://www.hip-magazine.co.uk)

a lot of bends and measurements," he said. "That's what won it for me – taking a step back, looking at it, getting my levels right and double-checking all my measurements before I soldered."

The final of the contest – which is now in its 12th year – will be held at the ADEY Innovation Training and Conference Centre in Cheltenham.

Running alongside the HIP Apprentice of the Year will be the popular Meet the Lecturer/Manufacturer series, which gives top manufacturers the chance to update lecturers on the latest product innovations in the industry.

Celia Matthews, Managing Director at HIP Magazine, said: "It's always a pleasure to see the next generation of plumbing and heating engineers show just what they can do.

"The standard of competition is always so high and we can't wait to see what the 2020 competition brings." ■

Tony Kite (last year's Head Judge), Lewis Blakely, Lee Perry

Lewis Blakely (the 2019 winner) with Lee Perry (lecturer, Coleg y Cymoedd)



Learn how to protect yourself from the growing threat of tool thieves who are using keyless entry to break into vans

# The key to staying safe

**K**eyless theft is a rising epidemic, allowing thieves to break into a vehicle in as little as ten seconds. While you may typically associate keyless theft with car owners, this isn't always the case. Van drivers are also at risk, with 89% of Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) stolen last year without the owner's keys. Contractors must be aware of the increased risks of keyless theft and take the necessary security measures in order to keep their vehicles safe.

## WHAT IS KEYLESS VAN THEFT?

Keyless theft, as the name suggests, is where thieves use master keys or electronic devices to break into a vehicle without ever having the owner's keys – affecting both traditional key-entry models, and those with a keyless ignition system.

Vehicles with keyless entry systems are thought to be the most at risk, giving thieves easy access to vehicles from right outside the owner's home. Vehicle tracking experts, Tracker, recently found 96% of motorists with keyless models were at risk of having their vehicle stolen through the signal relay method, as explained below.

Let's have a closer look at

how these two common types of van theft work in practice:

### MASTER KEY THEFT

A skeleton key is a tool that's traditionally used by locksmiths, however, they have become common in aiding vehicle thefts. In 2017, a stream



of motorists with keyless models are at risk of having their vehicle stolen through the signal relay method

of reported vehicle thefts were put down to the use of a master or 'skeleton' key, which could be purchased online for as little as £20.

### SIGNAL RELAYING

There has recently been a lot of controversy around the security of keyless entry systems. Vehicles with keyless entry use fobs to emit a short-range radio signal to allow the owner to unlock the doors. The same signal is then used to start the ignition for vehicles with start buttons. Signal relay is where thieves use a wireless transmitter to boost the signal from a nearby fob, tricking the vehicle into unlocking.

While the key still has to be fairly close by, this method allows thieves to easily steal vehicles from driveways or outside their owners' homes.



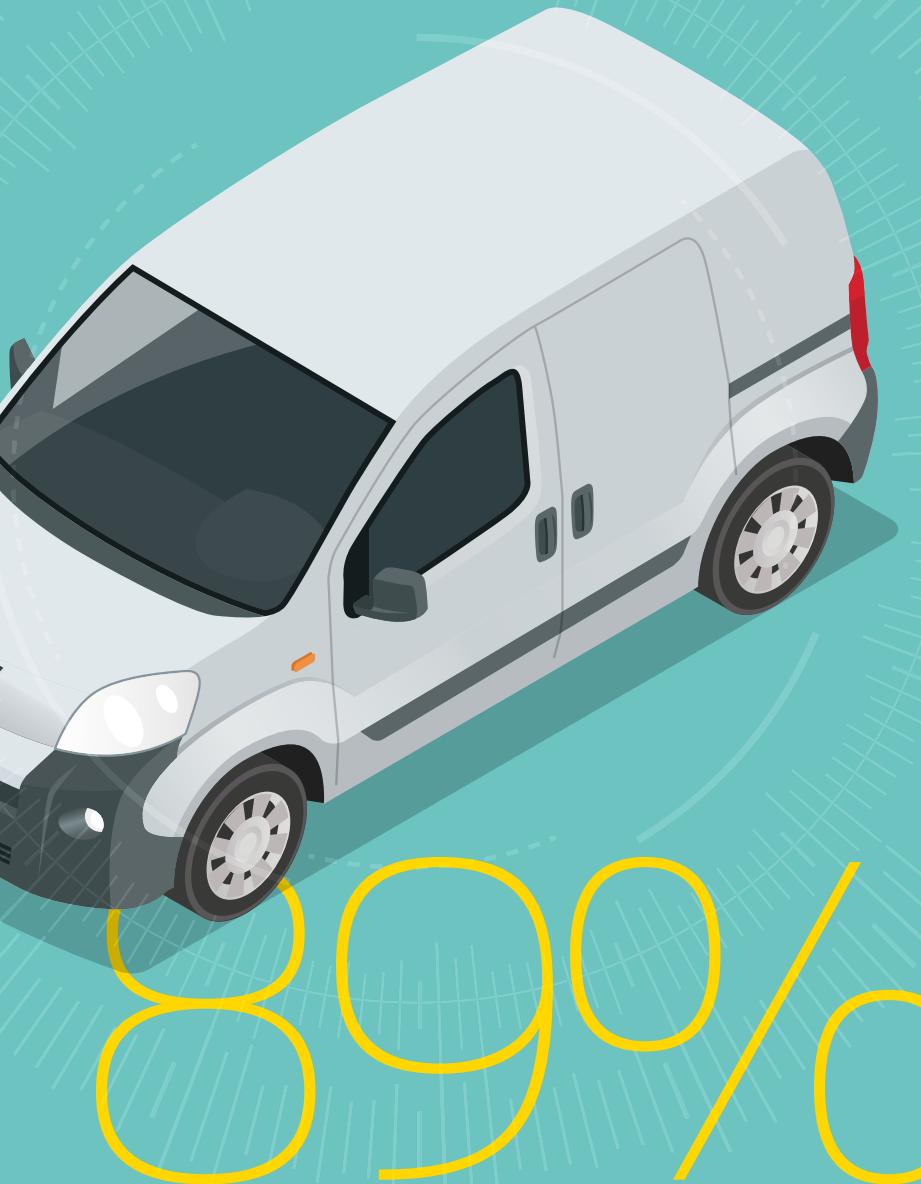
By Martin McGaffney  
Account Executive,  
Jelf Clark Thomson

#### Jelf Clark Thomson key benefits for SNIPEF members include:

- Dedicated and experienced team dealing with all SNIPEF policy holders

- A local service from an office local to you
- Discounted rates for various insurance services
- Regular monitoring and control of the

- cost of claims
- Tailored policy wordings specific to our industry
- A flexible service ethos to meet your needs.



of Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) stolen last year without the owner's key

#### HOW TO AVOID FALLING VICTIM TO TOOL THEFT AS A RESULT OF KEYLESS ENTRY

There are a number of things contractors can do to help protect their vehicles, and contents, from theft. Some of these include:

##### KEEP YOUR KEYS IN A BLOCKING POUCH

If you have a keyless entry system, it's a good idea to invest in a 'blocking pouch' or keep your keys inside a tin box. This will prevent thieves from being able to amplify the signal.

##### TURN OFF YOUR KEYLESS FOB SIGNAL

It is possible to turn off your

keyless fob. You can find out how to do this using your vehicle manual.

##### PARK SECURELY

Pay attention to where you park your van. You should always park in a well-lit area with lots of footfall to minimise the risk of theft. If you have a garage, be sure to install proper security systems, motion detector lighting and even CCTV to keep your van safe.

##### EMPTY YOUR VAN, WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Never leave anything of value inside your van for long periods of time. Leaving valuable tools or equipment

parked up overnight won't only make your van a more tempting target, but could result in you losing your tools as well as your van in the event of a break-in.

#### FIT OLD FASHIONED LOCKS

Fitting old-style physical locks, in addition to your keyless system, can deter thieves. Whilst they may still want to break into your vehicle, old fashioned locks may slow them down and cause noise.

#### WILL MY INSURANCE COVER TOOL THEFT RESULTING FROM KEYLESS ENTRY?

Most contractor or trade insurance policies exclude claims for theft of tools from a business vehicle unless the business vehicle is securely locked at all access points.

In addition, overnight exclusions typically apply. These mean that any theft of tools between the hours of 9pm and 6am are automatically excluded, unless the business vehicle is in a securely locked building.



**Jelf**  
CLARK THOMSON

To find out more about tool theft insurance, please contact Martin McGaffney at Jelf Clark Thomson by email [mmcgaffney@clarkthomson.co.uk](mailto:mmcgaffney@clarkthomson.co.uk) or call 07711484946.

Certain insurers may offer wider cover.

Make sure you know the limitations of your policies. Check the terms of your contractors or trades insurance policy to find out if your van is covered for keyless entry theft. ■

# TIME TO TALK

With payment abuse continuing to cause misery for many, our legal expert says it's the perfect moment to get the message across to newly-elected MPs

**As a result of the General Election last December, 650 members of the House of Commons were elected (including 59 Scottish MPs, 18 MPs from Northern Ireland and 40 Welsh MPs). We are now in a position to contact our MPs with a simple message: Payment Abuse = Broken Lives + Broken Buildings.**

Unless they support legislation to enhance payment security for SMEs in construction, the industry will continue on a downward spiral of declining investment in jobs and skills and of falling standards and quality.

In contacting our new MPs we should not hold back. They should understand that SMEs create the bulk of the industry's value and the future survival of many of these companies depends on MPs supporting measures to ensure that they are paid.

**“Every firm needs to make these problems known to all MPs and draw on their own experience”**

## INSOLVENCIES

Insolvencies in the construction industry are running at their highest rate since the recession. Over 30,000 SMEs in Carillion's supply chain lost monies when Carillion collapsed in January 2018. The Business Select Committee in the House of Commons concluded that Carillion had treated them with 'contempt'.

As I'm writing this, the news is that Wetheralds, a Leeds-based specialist painting and decorating contractor, has been forced into liquidation by a string of main contractor bad debts. The company had worked on a large number of high-profile jobs across the UK over the 33 years of its existence.

The final blow for this firm was the loss of £150,000 for work done for the Simons Group which went into administration in October 2019. This came on top of £911,000 worth of unpaid work for the Shaylor Group which went into insolvency in the summer. One of Wetheralds' directors said: "We've never seen

anything like this in all our years of business. Bigger firms are a law unto themselves now. Pay less notices and major firms not paying are driving good firms out of business."

This is a picture that is reflected in the four corners of the UK. Early in 2019, Dundee-based building services company McGill & Co collapsed with the loss of 425 jobs – this company had been going since 1981. Its administrators blamed delays in payment on a number of significant jobs.

In Northern Ireland, an M&E contractor, Blackbourne Ltd, went into insolvency in September. One of the causes of its insolvency was the Carillion collapse. In March, Wales suffered its own version of the Carillion collapse; main contractor Dawnus went bust with almost £40 million left owing to its sub-contractors.

## GETTING THE MESSAGE TO MPS

Every firm needs to make known these problems to all MPs. But first and foremost, each must draw on its own experiences of payment abuse. How many of your payments are made late? How many payments are for amounts that are less than the amount applied for? Have you lost significant sums as a result of insolvencies? And remember: On public sector projects, tier 1 contractors, unlike their subcontractors, do not carry any insolvency risk. Public bodies do not go into insolvency.

Always emphasise the broader impact of payment abuse. It is a substantial cause of mental health issues amongst business owners and senior employees which, in turn, has repercussions for family relationships.

Poor payment practices also help drive poor behaviours which drive poor quality (according to Dame Judith Hackitt who produced a report in May 2018 on improving building safety – following the Grenfell tragedy). ■



**By Rudi Klein,  
Barrister and  
SEC Group CEO**



# KEY ACTION

## Our demands for change

SNIPEF has issued a joint manifesto with the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors (APHC) calling on politicians to focus on the changes needed for a sustainable construction sector. It highlights four vital areas:

### Green economy

We welcome the UK Government's targets to move to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. However, for this to be successful we need clear guidance on how this will be achieved and assurances that support will be provided to upskill the current workforce and ensure only those suitably qualified are able to do the work. There is also a need to incentivise consumers to invest in low carbon technologies.

#### We call on the government to:

- Provide more clarity on the ambition for net zero greenhouse gas emissions
- Support employers to upskill the existing workforce
- Introduce a Licensing Scheme to ensure those working in the industry demonstrate a minimum level of competence
- Incentivise consumers to invest in renewable technologies.

### Skills

The industry is now facing the challenges of a skills shortage with employers struggling to find suitably qualified and skilled staff. In the light of Brexit, the position is likely to get worse, and there is an immediate need to invest further in skills.

#### We call on the government to:

- Prioritise funding for apprenticeships in our sector
- Provide financial support or incentives to employers to employ apprentices
- Provide support for older entrants to the industry
- Support upskilling not only for those currently in the industry but for those seeking employment from other sectors which are in decline.

### Payment abuse

Poor payment practices continue to be the bane of the construction sector and need to be urgently addressed. Payment abuse causes insolvencies, encourages poor standards of work and is affecting the mental health of business owners.

#### We call on the government to:

- Mandate 30-day payment terms on all public sector contracts and sub-contracts
- Impose penalties on serial late payers
- Legislate for the use of project bank accounts in the public sector
- Legislate to protect cash retentions.

### Pensions

The 2019-20 Pension Schemes Bill does not address the unintended consequences of legislation currently affecting hundreds of UK plumbing and heating businesses who provided a pension to their employees in a multi-employer industry scheme.

Under Section 75 of the Pensions Act 1995, there is a legal liability on the employer to meet the cost of buying annuity policies for all current and former employees who are members of the Scheme.

Section 75 debt is triggered when an employer withdraws from the Scheme, which has resulted in employers in retirement now facing personal

bankruptcy. Those still trading not only have responsibility for the pension liabilities of their own employees but also for employees whose employer left prior to the introduction of the legislation or through insolvency thereafter – "orphan liabilities".

These unintended consequences are having a significant effect on the mental health of the affected employers.

#### We call on the government to:

- Amend current legislation for this type of Scheme
- Introduce an exemption for unincorporated businesses now facing personal bankruptcy
- Change the way in which section 75 debts are calculated.

# Follow the

How to steer a course through the many pitfalls in modern business – and avoid going down the road of costly and lengthy disputes

**F**rom the feedback that I receive, it's clear to me that many firms are now looking at the markets they operate in and the employers and contractors they work with.

The bane of the industry in recent years has been suicidal tendering. It's an issue the Scottish Government is looking at, but there is no easy answer.

My opinion is there should be greater concentration on a tenderer's track record, on capability resources and the ability to deliver a complex project rather than focusing on price – but this will take a huge shift in mindset.

One solution is for tenderers to be selective in the projects

they are bidding for, and to seek out those procuring organisations who are interested in building long-term relationships.

## ONEROUS CONTRACT CONDITIONS

I have written before about contractors taking on unacceptable levels of risk set out in contract documents.

It is essential you study the contract documents you are pricing to see if there are issues which will need to be reflected in your tender price, and also to see if any of the conditions are heavily amended and/or contain onerous provisions.

I am often faced with situations where contractors have signed up to payment



Len Bunton  
FRICS FCIArb,  
HON FRIAS  
SEC Group  
Scotland

provisions which have a serious impact on their cash flow. My advice is to take your time and get external advice to identify any clauses that could cause you difficulty – in other words, read the small print.

Another unwelcome feature is the increasing level of Contractor's Design Portions (CDP) in contract documents – I recently witnessed one project where 40 different CDP packages were involved.

There are many issues emerging from CDP, including a lack of clear definition as to scope, an inability to discuss how interface issues are going to be dealt with and an inability to accurately define the term "design development".

Once the preferred bidder has been identified, sit down with the contractor and the supply chain and work your way through these CDP issues with a responsibility matrix.

## AVOIDING DISPUTES

What else can you do to avoid payment disputes? I am a great advocate of having an agreed schedule of payment dates in your contracts and sticking to it. This does not mean that you will get paid what you apply for, but at least it will ensure you are complying with the contractual payment requirements. Another factor relates to the accuracy of



# rightpath



your payment applications. My advice is to provide as much detail as you possibly can. Do not give a third party the opportunity to reduce the amount you are claiming and if you are asked for further information then provide it.

You also need to get the timing of the notifications right. Every contract or subcontract will have particular notification procedures and this has been fertile ground for disputes. Make sure you read the notice provisions and comply with them.

## RECORDS, RECORDS, RECORDS

If you end up in a dispute resolution process then you will need adequate records to support your position.

Take regular photographs of

activities on site – I have even seen time-lapse cameras being used where the contractor was able to demonstrate he was unable to access part of the project. Send the photos to your employer with a constraints schedule of any activities being delayed.

The agenda and minutes of site meetings are also very important, so make sure these are as detailed as possible.

It is critical that the proper notices are given on time, with the contractor and subcontractor recording and notifying the reason for delays, what has caused them and what needs to be done to prevent further delays occurring.

Most of the claims I see at adjudication lack detail and are not substantiated, so they get

rejected. The same criticism applies to loss and expense claims – there are usually too many general headings without adequate substantiation.

## TIME TO DUMP RETENTIONS

The oldest chestnut in the construction sector has been a bane of the industry for more than 40 years. I say get rid of retentions.

The Scottish Government needs to bite the bullet and scrap them once and for all.

However, I also think the industry needs to respond by ensuring that defects are rectified quickly and at the end of the job we achieve a zero defects project.

Once that happens it will be easier for the public sector to support the complete abolition of retention.

## ADJUDICATION?

If you accept my view that this is now becoming an endangered species, what is the solution if somebody has not been paid on time for what they are due?

The answer lies in the introduction of a Conflict Avoidance Process (CAP) into contracts. A third party is called in to consider the issues and issue a non-binding recommendation for resolution. In many instances, they can be the catalyst for the employer and the contractor to get around the table to find a solution themselves.

It seems such a sensible process and is significantly cheaper and quicker than adjudication. CAP, in my opinion, is a game changer.

**I'm a great advocate of having an agreed schedule of payment dates in your contracts – and sticking to it"**

# Are you looking to take on an apprentice plumber in Scotland?

SNIPEF Training Services Ltd has the right tools to help you train the future fully qualified plumbing operatives that you will need.



## REASONS TO HIRE AN APPRENTICE PLUMBER

### **INCREASED LOYALTY –**

When you invest time and money training apprentices, they feel motivated, valued and grateful to join a skilled team. This increases the chance they'll remain with the business longer.

### **SKILL SWAPPING –**

While you teach the apprentice the practical skills they need, the apprentice will bring back the most up to date methods and information gained from their training course.

### **THEY'RE**

**ENTHUSIASTIC –** Apprentices are generally keen to get stuck in, prove themselves and learn as much as possible, bringing fresh enthusiasm to the business.

## WHO WE ARE

SNIPEF Training Services Ltd is the Plumbing Industry's Training Provider for plumbing apprenticeships in Scotland.

We deliver the Modern Apprenticeship in Domestic Plumbing & Heating SVQ Level 3 using a network of SQA Approved Colleges & Training Centres across Scotland.

## WHAT WE DO

**COSTS –** Subject to available funding from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) we will meet the full cost of the College/Training Centre Training Programme.

**FINANCIAL INCENTIVE –** A grant is available to the business at the end of the apprentice's 4th year, depending on achievement and available funding from SDS.

**MONITORING –** We monitor all entrants on the Training Programme and provide support to apprentices and employers.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Once you have found an apprentice please contact us and request the Plumbing Apprentice Application Form which can be posted or emailed to you.

## CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on taking on an apprentice plumber please contact us on 0131 524 1245 or [training@snipef.org](mailto:training@snipef.org) alternatively you can visit our website

[www.becomeaplumber.org](http://www.becomeaplumber.org)



# ProZone

9 pages of in-depth and insider knowledge from the UK's premier plumbing and heating professionals

Salamander Pumps



## 51

### Power boost

Turn up the pressure with some help from Salamander Pumps' range of solutions

### Fuelling the future

How oil boiler systems can be converted to low carbon liquid fuels to help rural homes go green

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### Next chapter

New brochure brings together a full range of renewable heating technologies in one place

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### On show

Check out the latest kitchen and bathroom products and get inspiration at exhibition

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Contact our team to showcase your business in PlumbHeat's ProZone.

David Hughes  
0131 561 0022  
davidh@connectmedia.cc



### On the right Trac

Piping system gets an upgrade with the addition of a second outer sleeve for extra safety

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### Cool and cosy

Discover the stylish ways to stay warm and comfortable with the latest workwear ranges

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### Beat the freeze

How to ensure pipes are properly protected before winter temperatures start to plunge below zero

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## Time for government to back low carbon liquid fuels

Action on climate change is urgently needed, including reducing emissions from home heating. But the challenge is particularly complex for the UK's 1.53 million oil heated homes and government's current 'one size fits all approach' will not work for these households.

Rural properties are typically difficult to retrofit due to their age and poor thermal efficiency which inevitably adds substantial costs to any proposed upgrades.

The issue is more acute in Northern Ireland where 68% of homes (530,400 properties) use oil heating and half of these fall into the lowest EPC Bands D-G<sup>1</sup>. In rural Scotland, 75% of households<sup>2</sup>, many of which will be on oil heating, fall into the same bracket. Rural households also face additional challenges including lower disposable incomes and

**Fortunately, there is a better solution...**  
keep the boiler but switch to a sustainable low carbon liquid fuel:



- ✓ Easy, low cost, least disruption
- ✓ Not dependent on expensive deep retrofits
- ✓ Competitive running costs
- ✓ Less impact on public purse = more homes supported

**100% low carbon liquid fuel by 2035**

**Low carbon liquid fuels deliver highest carbon reduction for least cost**

higher levels of fuel poverty. So those least able to fund carbon reduction measures are living in the hardest, most expensive to treat homes.

If consumers are to actively support carbon reduction measures, it's vital that cost and disruption levels are minimised.

Yet the most commonly advocated solution for oil heated homes is currently heat pumps.

These are expensive to install (£6,000 to £18,000) and in many older, poorly insulated properties, require extensive energy efficiency



To find out more about OFTEC's work, please visit [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)

improvements to work efficiently. This approach makes no sense for inefficient rural homes, especially when industry is working to develop a simpler, more affordable option which is less reliant on extensive retrofit work.

Independent research shows that for oil heated homes, sustainable, low-carbon liquid fuels offer the highest carbon reduction impact for the lowest cost. Homeowners could retain their existing oil boiler, keeping capital costs low, and energy efficiency upgrades, which we agree are necessary, could be undertaken at a pace to suit them.

It's time for government to stop ignoring the facts and start backing carbon reduction solutions that will work for rural homes. ■

<sup>1</sup> NIHE House Condition Survey 2016

<sup>2</sup> Scottish House Condition Survey 2016

## A complete registration service for heating technicians



OFTEC competent person registration provides a range of benefits:

- Free technical support via phone, fax or email and regular updates
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Grant UK has published its biggest ever brochure, combining all the company's renewable technologies in one place.

From air source heat pumps through to cylinders and heat emitters, Grant UK's new 64-page brochure details everything customers need to know about its package heating solutions.

Over the past eighteen months, Grant's product portfolio has significantly expanded so the demand arose for a single brochure for these technologies.

The outcome is the new 64-page brochure, which features its Aerona<sup>3</sup> R32 air source heat pumps, hybrids, cylinders, solar thermal systems as well as all of Grant's heat emitters, including fan convectors, underfloor heating and aluminum radiators.

Each of the product sections has been structured so it details all the features and benefits of the ranges followed by the supporting technical specification information.

Information about Grant UK's G-CERT Scheme and ServicePlan offering for renewables is also included so the brochure is a one-stop reference for Grant's renewable product package support.

The new combined Grant Renewable Technologies brochure reflects the company's unique offering in the marketplace with Grant able to offer installers and their merchants a one-stop shop for all their heating needs.

From the supply of the heat source, complementary technologies and accompanying heat emitters, through to the



# One-stop shop for renewable tech solutions

Grants launches new 64-page brochure bringing together all its renewable heating technologies



support with specification and design, Grant UK can assist customers throughout the installation process.

For engineers and merchants who want to discover more about Grant's package solution offering, this new brochure is the perfect

marketing tool to support them in the field.

To access the new brochure and Grant's other range brochures, including the Vortex, VortexBlue and Flue Guides, please visit [www.grantuk.com/support/downloads](http://www.grantuk.com/support/downloads)

**Installation packs** including all the essential accessories for the Aerona<sup>3</sup> Air Source Heat Pump range will be available from this month.

The kits are each made up of eight key items needed

for installations and provide customers with cost savings as well as a simplified order process.

Three different versions of the pack are available – the standard version, a second option which

includes a 30-litre Volumiser and a third type with the addition of a 50-litre Buffer. Each kit is compatible with all the Aerona<sup>3</sup> heat pump models.

*For more details, please visit [www.grantuk.com](http://www.grantuk.com)*





kbb

# LAYERS OF INSPIRATION

1 - 4 March 2020  
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# TracPipe has got it covered

Gas piping system gets an update with an additional sleeve for extra safety

**TracPipeCC® is the original TracPipe® but has a second polyethylene outer cover over the length of the product.**

It's designed to overcome the need to install an additional secondary containment sleeve.

The second outer cover includes ridges on the internal surface which form channels between the first and second covers. In the unlikely event of a gas escape, the design allows a passage to be formed for any escaping gas to move freely along

the space formed to a safe and ventilated location.

TracPipeCC® also overcomes issues around vertical runs as the ridges on the internal surface offer support to the internal pipe whilst also maintaining the channels for free movement of gas should there be an escape.

## ADVANTAGES OF USING TRACPIPECC®

TracPipeCC® is suitable for use in fire protected areas such as protected shafts, escape corridors



TracPipeCC comes in a range of sizes

and lobbies when installed in continuous lengths. It still bends by hand with no specialist tools or hot work required and is faster to install than rigid material such as copper and steel.

TracPipeCC® can be supported with standard clips/brackets as well as on cable trays or baskets. ■

# Personal touch at the kbb 2020 show

**Europe's largest dedicated kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms exhibition, kbb Birmingham, returns to the NEC for 2020 from 1-4 March.**

The event is a chance for industry professionals to learn more about emerging trends and cutting-edge products.

"This year there is a huge emphasis on personalisation and individuality," said Mark Gordon, Director, kbb Birmingham. "We want to provide retailers, architects, designers and developers with the knowledge they need to be able to give their clients exactly what they want."

"Our exhibitors will be showcasing their own takes on this trend and we look forward to seeing what they have in

store for attendees in 2020."

As personalisation is at the forefront of kbb 2020, the event will offer several layers of inspiration; from tips on creating a functional space that reflects its intended use, to ideas and materials that represent an individual's personal beliefs.

Manufacturers want to be able to offer clients unique products and services; to provide a bespoke element that no one else on the market can offer. Consumers are looking to create a space that feels personal to them and will base their interior design choices on brands that can align with their brief.

Every room has a function and whether designing for a



For more information on kbb 2020 and to register, visit: [www.kbb.co.uk](http://www.kbb.co.uk)

residential or commercial space, functionality should always be a key consideration. At kbb 2020, a range of exhibitors will showcase their unique storage solutions to help enhance this.

Many consumers are looking for timeless pieces that reflect their own design aesthetic. Brands including Caesarstone will be exhibiting innovative surfaces with a product to suit every style.

Water-saving is an initiative dominating the bathroom sector and many of our exhibitors will be showcasing what they can offer to meet this growing demand.

kbb Birmingham will feature more than 400 exhibitors and expects an audience of more than 16,000 across the four-day period. It's an unrivalled opportunity to stay ahead of emerging trends and to find out about the latest products. ■



# On-site style with Snickers

Stay warm and comfortable while still looking good in the latest work wear

## HOODIES AND TOPS

Snickers' new range of hoodies and sweatshirts for craftsmen and women are probably the most comfortable they've ever designed.

The full-zip or overhead tops are perfect for combining with Snickers' First and

Second Layer Undergarments and can comfortably be worn under a jacket on chilly days.

Street-smart and great for on-site or leisure activities there's a range of styles and colour options to choose from.

They're made from a cosy, durable polycotton fabric and have a soft-brushed finish on

the inside for extra comfort plus handwarmer pockets at the front.

## JACKETS AND GILETS

Snickers' new AllroundWork winter jackets and gilets are just what the name suggests – delivering great all-round performance with a Ripstop water-resistant outer fabric and a coated inner fabric for extra durability.

They're wind-resistant and all have the features and functionality that you'd expect in Snickers Workwear.

Designed for optimum comfort and flexibility when you're on the move, they're great-looking working clothes that will keep you comfortable in cold and windy weather.

With smart designs and an ergonomic fit, Snickers AllroundWork garments are packed with features that focus on freedom of movement as well as innovative fabrics for long-lasting protection.

There's also a range of base and mid-layer garments plus accessories like gloves, hats, face warmers and beanies.

37.5° fabric technology make these jackets and trousers a must for winter on site or for outdoor leisure activities.

You'll stay warm and dry in layered clothing that's robust, waterproof and windproof too. They're great looking garments that will keep you feeling comfy wherever you are and whatever you're doing at work in cold weather.

With a range of winter accessories as well, Snickers Workwear's FlexiWork and AllroundWork garments feature contemporary designs packed with must-have features that focus on fit, comfort and freedom of movement as well as using innovative fabrics that deliver long lasting protection.

For more information on Snickers Workwear call the Hultafors Group UK Helpline on **01484 854 788**, go online and download a catalogue at [www.snickersworkwear.co.uk](http://www.snickersworkwear.co.uk) or email [sales@hultaforsgroup.co.uk](mailto:sales@hultaforsgroup.co.uk)



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## INSULATED TROUSERS

Snickers' FlexiWork insulated jackets and trousers offer superb insulation and full weather protection.

Street-smart, stylish looks and market-leading GORE-TEX and

**Snickers**  
WORKWEAR



# Don't get left out in the cold

Make sure pipes are well protected before the next big winter freeze hits

**After the Beast from the East hit and millions of boilers broke down due to frozen condensate pipes, the heating and plumbing industry resolved it must not happen again.**

However, a new poll has shown that a large percentage of the trade are still not proactively protecting condensate pipes from freezing. Some 60% of 160 poll respondents said they never or only sometimes

protect condensate pipes. The study revealed many installers are not fully complying with industry guidance, despite frozen condensate pipes accounting for a substantial amount of boiler breakdowns in colder months.

## SOLVING THE PROBLEM

David Smith, a heating installer and inventor of Condensate Pro, the easy-to-install kit solution to protect condensate pipes, says part of the reason people aren't following industry guidance is because it's hard to carry out.

"It is very difficult to achieve practically on site – mainly in



Frozen pipes can cause misery for many when cold weather strikes

terms of the angles to be drilled into cavity walls where the pipe passes through," Dave explained. "It also adds significant time on to an installation, it can be quite intrusive to the fabric of a home and is hard to cost up and difficult to explain to a homeowner."

David has a proven track record in business, having founded and eventually sold a successful heating and plumbing company.

He has experience of fitting and trying every technique and product associated with condensate pipes, so was well placed to find an answer to the freezing pipe problem.

## FAULTLESS FITTING

Condensate Pro fits any condensate pipe installation, with specially designed UV/water resistant lagging and bond and seal adhesive. All products fit perfectly on to 32mm or 21.5mm overflow pipes and the connection and terminations are pre-insulated to make life easier when fitting.

The products offer a complete solution for every external termination – gully waste, soakaways, rainwater and soil pipes – making it easy to price the cost of installation.

Dave has also made a drift kit and grinder head to help achieve a faultless fitting on existing installations and uneven masonry. The drift kit is ideal for installers upgrading existing condensate pipes. A 76mm grinder head is also available, designed to grind a three-inch flat face against irregular faced stonework, creating a perfect surface for the connection kit.

"Condensate Pro protects the installer, their customers and the boilers which break down due to condensate pipes freezing," Dave said. "This solution is designed by a pro installer for pro installers and finally we have a product that insulates properly, is quick and easy to install and looks great!"

For more details and to watch how to install Condensate Pro visit [www.condensatepro.co.uk](http://www.condensatepro.co.uk)



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## Fill, finish and coat in the same day

Hilton Banks has now reformulated its HB42 Ultimate Wood Filler into an ultra-smooth two-part, styrene free wood filler that provides a tough and long-lasting repair.

With an easy mix application, the filler sets hard to a strong finish in 30 minutes for a weatherproof repair.

The new formula removes the risk of harmful effects styrene can cause, without losing any of the powerful and

smooth finish that the trade needs to get the job done.

Once dry, the filler can be drilled, carved, sanded or planed and is paintable and stainable. White and natural HB42 Ultimate Wood Filler – available in new 275g, 550g and 1kg sizes – can also be used on grain filling and repairs to shakes, cracks, splits and knot holes. For more details visit [www.hb42.co.uk](http://www.hb42.co.uk)



## STOP THE WASTE

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(Model: IRC2)



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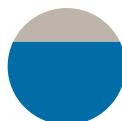


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# Give your work an extra boost

Salamander Pumps, one of the UK's leading manufacturers of domestic water pumps, has announced the launch of an exciting new mains booster range aimed at creating a simple solution to boosting mains water pressure and flow – an often complex problem for both homeowners and installers.

Recent research revealed that 48% of consumers don't know that their water pressure problems could easily be rectified with the fitting of a Salamander mains boosting solution.

The new range of 11 products features inline pumps and accumulator tanks, and is designed to provide a quiet, lightweight and easy-to-install solution to all domestic and light commercial mains water boosting needs.

## KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Along with the new range, Salamander Pumps is making specification simpler for the installer. It has introduced an easy-to-use product selector to its website, to help installers specify and source the right mainsbooster product. Salamander Pumps has also created a range of AccuBoost training modules on its eSchool.

The new mains boosting range includes:

- **CombiBoost** – an entry level inline pump boosting mains water flow up to 10 litres per minute.
- **HomeBoost** – an intelligent inline mains pump, which recognises when water pressure and flow are low and automatically boosts the incoming mains water up to 12 litres per minute.
- **AccuBoost** – a range of accumulators which store mains, cold water at pressure, before



**Salamander Pumps launches innovative new solution for increasing mains water pressure and flow**

releasing the water into the system when an outlet is opened. The AccuBoost range comprises five different sizes; 60L, 120L, 180L, 300L, 450L, with all sizes except the 60L available in either pumped and unpumped models.

Salamander's AccuBoost models have been designed to provide all-in-one solutions, meaning they require little assembly, and ensure a much simpler installation.

The tanks are manufactured from lightweight composite vessels, rather than traditional steel, reducing the weight significantly compared with some other accumulators on the market.

## TRAINING EVENTS

The products will be available to purchase through local merchants, while Salamander will also be running a roadshow and face-to-

New Salamander Pumps range is easy to install and extra lightweight

face training events throughout January to March. Gareth Richards, Technical Director at Salamander Pumps, said: "We're thrilled to be launching our new MainsBooster Range. Our research and development team have been working tirelessly to develop cutting edge technologies to ensure we're offering the best products possible."

"We understand that accumulator tanks are often heavy and laborious to install, which is why our AccuBoost tanks are made from lightweight materials and are supplied pre-assembled."

For more information about the range and product selection support, visit [www.salamanderpumps.co.uk](http://www.salamanderpumps.co.uk)



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