



Autumn 2025

PlumbHeat



Investing in the next generation

SNIPeF member Precise Installs reveals why apprentices have been vital to a decade of success



Industry update
In-depth analysis of the results of our latest State of Trade report



Peak performance
How to make sure your customers are getting the best out of their boilers



Sea change
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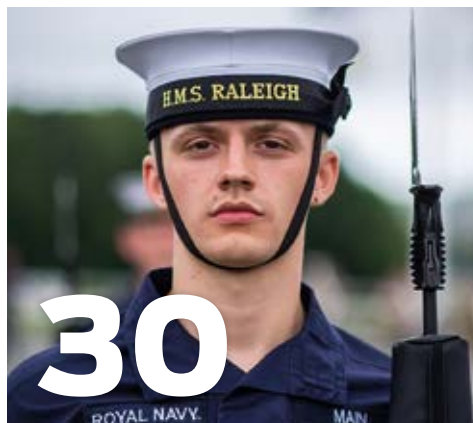
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Editor Gregor Millar
gregor.millar@snipef.org

Editorial Offices
Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street,
Edinburgh EH4 7GH

Tel 0131 556 0600 ■ **Fax** 0131 557 8409

■ **Email** contact@snipef.org

www.snipef.org

Follow us X @SNIPEFnews

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Connect Publications

Studio 4015, Mile End

12 Seedhill Road, Paisley PA1 1JS

Advertising Sales David Hughes

davidh@connectcommunications.co.uk

Design & Production Ryan Swinney

ryan@connectcommunications.co.uk

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Comment

FROM DUNCAN SHARP, SNIPEF PRESIDENT

Change starts with you

Securing the future of our profession means working together

It's been just over four months since I assumed the role of SNIPEF President and it has already been a rewarding and insightful experience.

One of my first engagements was attending the 50th Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year competition at South Lanarkshire College. As someone who began my own career as an apprentice, it was genuinely uplifting to see that same enthusiasm and commitment reflected in today's emerging talent.

Nearly 50 apprentices took part across three competition categories and I want to congratulate each and every one of them for their effort and professionalism on the day.

Special mentions go to Calum MacRitchie, who won the Copper category; Frazer Graham, the winner of the Leadwork competition; and Arren John MacMillan, who took the top spot in Renewable Technologies.

Their success is a clear reminder that the future of our profession is in very capable hands.

Yet while the competition was a powerful showcase

 **Our recent Q2 *State of Trade* report highlighted business challenges such as rising costs and flattening workloads, along with the low availability of skilled professionals"**

of the talent entering our profession, it also served as a timely reminder of the growing pressure to attract and retain skilled professionals.

This issue was reflected in our recent Q2 *State of Trade* report, which highlighted business challenges such as rising costs and flattening workloads, along with the low availability of skilled professionals.

For the first time, the report also included regional analysis which, although showing some variation across areas, confirmed that the same underlying issues are being felt throughout the country.

An important step in addressing some of these longstanding pressures is the development of SNIPEF's

new apprenticeship campaign. After more than eight years without meaningful improvement in government support, combined with rising costs and a shrinking workforce, some members are questioning whether they can continue to recruit and support apprentices in the current business environment.

For some, this is the first time they have had to hold back on recruitment and training. This is a worrying sign for the future stability and resilience of our profession.

Through our campaign, we want to highlight the barriers faced by employers and make a strong case for more effective support from the government. This is not only about funding but about creating the right conditions that allow businesses to invest in the next generation.

Your voice is vital in making this happen. You can contribute by completing the apprenticeship survey we have circulated. Your insights will help us present a clear picture of the challenges across the country. With the 2026 Scottish election on



the horizon, we have a real opportunity to influence the conversation. I encourage all members to speak to their MSPs and local candidates, raise these issues and help us advocate for a fairer and more sustainable approach to apprenticeship training that supports both employers and future professionals.

Turning to another highlight, it was great to meet and speak with so many of our members and affiliates at InstallerSHOW in Birmingham.

Events such as these are more than just industry showcases. They are vital opportunities to build partnerships, share ideas and strengthen the collective voice of our profession.

In the face of the challenges ahead, these relationships will be key for SNIPEF in ensuring we move forward together with purpose and unity.

I was also encouraged by the successful publication of the Nesta/SNIPEF *Start at Home* report, launched at InstallerSHOW. This research project gave SNIPEF members the opportunity to receive full training and install a heat pump in their own homes, providing valuable hands-on experience in a real-world, lived-in setting.

In doing so, participants not only gained deeper insight into the technology but also potentially opened up a new business opportunity.

We will continue to follow the progress of those involved to assess whether this practical approach offers a viable route into the growing renewables marketplace.

Finally, as I look ahead, one thing is clear: lasting progress depends on us working together. My fellow Office Bearers and Directors are

Duncan Sharp

already turning our focus to SNIPEF's next strategic plan, for 2026 to 2029.

We have a number of key ideas and initiatives in development, aimed at strengthening our profession, supporting innovation and responding to the evolving needs of our members.

But to ensure this strategy truly reflects the realities on the ground, we need your input.

Member engagement will be vital in shaping a vision that is both ambitious and achievable. Whether it is through participating in surveys, joining discussions or sharing your insights, your voice matters. Together, we can build a strong, sustainable future for the plumbing and heating profession in Scotland and Northern Ireland. ■

Duncan Sharp
President

News

LATEST FROM AROUND THE FEDERATION

💡 INDUSTRY

Confidence 'weakening' amid slump

SNIEPF's latest *State of Trade* report warns of mounting pressure on firms as labour shortages deepen and margins tighten

Confidence across the plumbing and heating profession is sliding, with shrinking order books, rising costs and deepening workforce shortages mirroring pressures across the wider construction sector.

The findings come in the Q2 2025 *State of Trade* report, which marks the first clear shift from stability to decline since the survey began. The study's outlook for the profession is now rated 'Stable to Weak'.

While many businesses remain operationally steady, confidence in the months ahead is weakening. Just **17%** of firms expect workloads to improve, while **37%** say order books have fallen below expectations.

Profitability is also under strain, with **49%** of firms reporting reduced margins. Rising input costs, reported by **96%** of respondents, along with continued payment delays and ongoing labour shortages, are adding to the pressure.

Fiona Hodgson, SNIEPF Chief Executive, said: "These are not isolated pain points. They are symptoms of deeper, compounding pressures within our profession, but also the wider construction sector.

"Workloads are softening, margins are continuing to come under strain and employer costs have surged, particularly following the rise in employer contributions in April.

"Firms are struggling to find the people they need and confidence in the months

“These are symptoms of deeper, compounding pressures within our profession, but also the wider construction sector”

● West of Scotland: Weak

More than half of businesses reported quieter-than-expected trading – and 40% expect further declines. Cost pressures are most acute here, with the highest rate of significant price increases (40%) and margin erosion (27% reported significant decreases). Confidence is fragile and while workforce recruitment is slightly less negative than elsewhere, skills availability remains critically low, with 73% reporting shortages.



ahead is weakening. If we do not act soon to ease these pressures, we risk hollowing out both the plumbing and heating profession and the workforce needed to deliver on housing, infrastructure and net zero targets."

The warning follows broader signs of slowdown across the construction sector. The June *Construction Purchasing Managers' Index* (PMI) showed UK activity contracting at its fastest pace in six months. Private housebuilding saw the steepest drop, with output still well below pre-2023 levels, reinforcing concerns about future demand and capacity across the built environment.

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

●North of Scotland: Stable to Weak

Firms here are relatively stable in terms of current and forward trading, with fewer reports of sharp declines. However, confidence is weakest in this group, and businesses are far more pessimistic about both the profession and the economy. This is coupled with the highest reported shortage of skilled workers. The sentiment in the north and northeast is notably subdued, suggesting concern about longer-term sustainability and structural workforce constraints.

●East of Scotland: Stable

A majority of firms (56%) reported trading as expected, with only 28% noting a drop in activity. While forward order books are soft, margin erosion is less pronounced and confidence levels are slightly more positive than the national average. Hiring and apprenticeship recruitment is more active and skills shortages, while still high, are less severe.

SNIEPF is calling on the government to forcefully tackle the persistent issue of late or delayed payments within construction, alongside the growing numbers of unresolved disputes, unjustified



WaterSafe

New chair Mark Hodgens shares his vision for the future / Page 22



Safety campaign

Highlighting the importance of stopping illegal gas work / Page 28



If we do not act soon to ease these pressures, we risk hollowing out both the plumbing and heating profession and the workforce needed to deliver on housing, infrastructure and net zero targets"

retention practices and write-offs that are creating cashflow challenges for many SMEs within the sector.

To address the worsening workforce crisis, SNIEPF has launched a two-part apprenticeship project to explore the root causes behind low recruitment across the profession.

The aim is to identify practical, affordable solutions that help more employers take on and train apprentices, rebuilding the profession's skills base in the process.

In parallel, SNIEPF is working with wider construction sector partners to support a more coordinated response to the UK's deep-rooted trade and technical labour shortages.

Fiona said: "We understand the economy is sluggish and public finances are under pressure. But shifting a couple of per cent between departments in a £1.2 trillion

national budget does nothing to improve productivity. It may chase headlines but it does not change outcomes.

"What our profession and many others are waiting to hear instead is a clear, targeted commitment to skills investment. That means real support for recruiting and retraining, incentives for employers to upskill younger workers and confident backing for long-term productivity growth. These are the signals businesses and markets are looking for.

"For too long, workforce development has been treated as an afterthought rather than a foundation.

"If we want a modern economy that delivers growth, net zero and resilience, that mindset needs to change and it needs to change now."

You can read the full *State of Trade* report for Q2 at sniepf.org/publications

AFFILIATES

Daikin acquires Saltire

SNIEPF affiliate Daikin has acquired Saltire Facilities Management Ltd, a leading heating services company based in Bellshill, Lanarkshire.

The move aims to enhance the company's residential heat pump service network in Scotland and comes after Daikin purchased Robert Heath Heating in January 2024.

It's hoped that both acquisitions will strengthen Daikin's service infrastructure in the UK, supporting the country's growing adoption of heat pumps.

From left, Daikin's Tom Demeire and Mark Dyer, Saltire's Blaire Carling, Leanne Carling, Graeme Carling and Mitchell Carling, Daikin's Tomoji Miki and Anthony Dimou



Stronger together

Fiona Hodgson reveals how we're driving our apprenticeship campaign forward

As we begin the new academic year, I want to extend a warm welcome to all of the first-year plumbing and heating apprentices taking their first steps into what I hope will be fulfilling, successful careers.

Each new intake is a reminder of the vital role apprenticeships play, not only in sustaining our profession but in creating opportunities that transform lives and communities.

I would also like to thank the many employers who have chosen to support apprentices and give them the chance to develop their skills and build a future in our profession.

I am very aware that employers are being asked to carry an ever-growing burden of costs, while public funding has not kept pace with the reality of delivering high-quality training. For many businesses, this creates real barriers. It is also clear that

this subject has sparked a great deal of debate across our social media channels, in our WhatsApp group and in everyday conversations. It is a topic of passion, with some strongly endorsing the current apprenticeship model and others calling for significant change.

Despite these pressures, I firmly believe apprenticeships remain one of the most effective and enduring routes into skilled work.

In Scotland, our model is employer led, shaped directly by those who understand the demands of the profession, and admired by many other countries. Our employers are integral in dictating the path our apprenticeship model takes, participating every five years

in the apprentice qualification and framework review.

This ensures that plumbing and heating apprenticeships in Scotland continue to evolve to meet industry and employer needs. This approach ensures that training is relevant, practical and responsive to change. It is a system built by employers, for employers, and it continues to adapt as new skills, technologies and expectations emerge.

Fiona at the 2025 Scottish Plumbing Apprenticeship of the Year competition



“With the right commitment and investment, apprentices can deliver the skills Scotland needs, support inclusive growth and sustain the future of our profession”



Revamped website launched

The newly revamped needaplumber.org website has officially launched after a six-month development period aimed at improving the service for both SNIPEF members and the public.

The site has gone through a top-to-bottom overhaul, designed to help customers find qualified, local plumbing and heating professionals faster and more easily.

The rebuilt site also gives SNIPEF members a new platform to advertise their business and services – opening the door for more opportunities.

The benefits of apprenticeships extend far beyond training. They provide debt-free, earn-as-you-learn opportunities that open the door to respected careers.

They allow people to build confidence and purpose through real-world experience from the very beginning.

They help retain talent in rural and island communities, where opportunities are often scarce, and they strengthen resilience across Scotland by ensuring vital skills are available in every region.

Throughout this issue of *PlumbHeat*, you will read real-life examples of this – from a business who built their success on apprenticeships, to two career changers who found their calling as plumbing and heating apprentices. I am encouraged that so many employers continue to support apprenticeships. With



the right commitment and investment, they can deliver the skills Scotland needs, support inclusive growth and sustain the future of our profession.

As you may have read, SNIPEF is developing a campaign to highlight both the value of apprenticeships and the critical safety role of our profession, engaging with politicians across all parties to secure greater government

Apprentices gain skills and real-world experience

support for employers who take on apprentices.

You will have seen the recent survey on apprenticeships that was sent to all members.

The findings, together with other evidence we are gathering, will be used to shape a clear policy position that strengthens our ability to influence the government and generate the support that our profession needs.

I also ask for your active involvement in this campaign. We will provide the tools but your participation, whether by hosting an MSP visit to your premises, introducing them to your apprentices, or sharing your experiences, will add invaluable real-world perspective and help bring our message to life. Together, we can ensure apprenticeships remain meaningful, accessible and valuable for generations to come.



SNIPEF Vice President Steve Craig and Steve Park present first-year Modern Apprentices at UHI Perth with toolkits, on behalf of SNIPEF's Dundee and Perth Association

The site comes with a variety of new features, allowing members to:

- Add photos, contact details and links for SNIPEF members in their area
- Choose services and coverage areas
- Add opening hours and availability
- Include reviews.

The new site has also gained additional publicity across football grounds in the Highlands thanks to Inverness and Northern District Master Plumbers' Association.

The local association funded the placement of advertisements at Wick Academy, Brora Rangers, Strathspey Thistle, Nairn County and Clachnacuddin for the 2025/26 Highland Football League season.

Members looking for assistance on accessing their web page, or any other advice, can contact Richard Campbell at richard.campbell@snipef.org

One of the adverts at Nairn County's Station Park



RENEWABLES

Heat pump network for council flats

Renfrewshire Council is to replace the gas supply in two high-rise blocks of flats with ground-source heat pumps – the largest installation of its kind in Scotland.

A network of boreholes will absorb low-grade heat from the ground and transfer it to individual Kensa Shoebox heat pumps in each flat.

Mark Potter, regional manager for Scotland at Kensa, said: "Networked heat pumps offer an effective, energy-efficient solution to help flats transition away from gas and other inefficient heating systems. We look forward to seeing the long-term benefits it will provide for the council, residents and the wider community."

Work started in August and is expected to be completed by next summer.

Renfrewshire Council was awarded £1,788,382 of funding from the Scottish Government's Scotland Heat Network Fund for the project.

SAFETY

Crackdown on deadly alarms

Bill targets online retailers selling carbon monoxide alarms that fail to detect 'silent killer' in our homes

A new Bill aims to halt the sale of dangerous carbon monoxide monitors after a report found more than 1,000 alarms sold online do not detect gas.

The study by *Which?* discovered detectors sold on platforms such as eBay, AliExpress, Amazon and Wish failed product testing, while more generally 66% of products bought from these marketplaces failed safety tests.

In response, the UK Government passed the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill on 21 July, after

its own research found it is too easy for businesses or individuals to sell non-compliant products to UK consumers via online marketplaces and that the existing legislative framework did not allow for the most effective enforcement of product safety.

Scott Sanford, SNIPEF's Head of Technical Services and Certification, said: "This is a truly shocking report but, unfortunately, not surprising."

"For too long the UK Government has failed to enforce the requirements of the British Standards and protect consumers from the silent killer, carbon monoxide. People should be assured that the products they buy to protect them and their families do the job they are supposed to do."



A study by *Which?* found more than 1,000 alarms did not detect gas

MEMBER EVENTS

Sun shines on SNIPEF's annual Golf Day

Members headed to Larbert in August to take part in SNIPEF's annual Golf Day.

The event, at Glenbervie Golf Club, has been an important fixture in the calendar since 1937, bringing together colleagues and friends from across the profession.

The AL Contracts team claimed the Federation Cup, scoring 117 Stableford points, while the Daikin team finished second with 113 points.

The individual Tommy Thomson Cup went to Colin Clark from the Daikin team, scoring 48 Stableford points. Stuart O'Neill from the AL

Contracts team was the runner-up with 45 points.

SNIPEF thanks all of those who attended and contributed to the day, including Glenbervie Golf Club, Grange Energy Services, First Supplies Scotland, Worcester

Bosch, Altecnic Ltd, North Wealth Management, Aalberts IPS, Daikin UK, City Plumbing and all our local associations.

The SNIPEF Golf Day will return next year, at Monifieth Golf Links near Dundee.



The event took place at Glenbervie Golf Club in Larbert



Scott hosting the first Hydronics Unlocked training course

TRAINING

Sign up for Hydronics Unlocked

SNIEF is continuing its partnership with Warmur Academy to bring our Hydronics Unlocked training to Aberdeen for the first time.

Following the success of our pilot sessions in Edinburgh and follow-up course in East Kilbride, the course is now coming to the North East in collaboration with affiliate Aberdeen Training Centre.

Led by Scott Sanford, SNIEF's Head of Technical Services and Certification, Hydronics Unlocked is perfect for those looking to gain a better understanding of system design. The session offers a structured and easy-to-understand approach to designing a heating system

from scratch. Attendees will also learn about the importance of hydronics, the science behind how water moves through a system, to gain an upper hand when installing efficient heating systems – be it a traditional boiler or renewable technology such as an air source heat pump.

The latest session will be at Aberdeen Training Centre on Saturday 25 October, from 8.30am to 4.30pm, and includes refreshments and lunch. It costs £295 plus VAT and members can access an exclusive £50 discount by using voucher code SCOTLAND50 at checkout.

Book your spot by visiting warmuracademy.co.uk/book

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- Pantan Plumbing & Heating
- S M P Contracts Ltd
- Kerr Plumbing & Heating Ltd
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- John Young (Bellhill) Limited
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From first steps to a bright future

PlumbHeat Editor **Gregor Millar** explores the enduring importance of apprenticeships as we look to secure a positive future for the plumbing and heating profession

They say third time's a charm, so as I complete my third issue of *PlumbHeat*, I hope I'm beginning to get the hang of it!

I have previously highlighted that being afforded the opportunity to share the successes across our profession has been a huge privilege for me personally.

But it has also given me the platform to learn, constantly striving to improve the quality and value of content I provide for our members.

I came into this role somewhat blind, moving to a new industry and changing my career path – and it has been one of the best things I've ever done. These moves don't come without trepidation, but I'm delighted I decided to take the plunge.

These are feelings I'm sure are shared by the apprentices who have just started their plumbing and heating

apprenticeship this month – be they youngsters embarking on their first career or older people (like me!) making a change.

The excitement of these new starts reinforces the fundamental importance that apprenticeships have for our profession – a vital pipeline to forge the plumbing and heating professionals of tomorrow but also, and arguably more importantly, an avenue of opportunity for people of all ages to find their feet and build successful careers.

Unfortunately, recent years have shown that this pipeline has come under strain due to a number of factors, while the industry also faces skills shortages that are limiting our members' recruitment options. But with the right support, our apprenticeship model could be the solution we are searching for.

In this issue I've brought together a range of stories that celebrate apprenticeships and the power they still embody, with a look ahead to SNIPEF's apprenticeship campaign and its aims to secure additional support for employers.

I was fortunate enough to hear from Fiona Hodgson, our Chief Executive, who gives an update on our campaign, reinforcing that the success of our model is that it is employer-led and only together can we influence policy for the good of our profession.

I also travelled to Blantyre to meet member Precise Installs

on the eve of its 10th anniversary, learning about its founders' journey from apprentices to industry leaders and how apprenticeships continue to play a vital role in the business.

I also got to hear from Kirsty Bennett, a former hairdresser from Carnoustie, who took on a plumbing apprenticeship at 39. Now thriving in the role, her career-changing story proves that talent in our industry can come from anywhere.

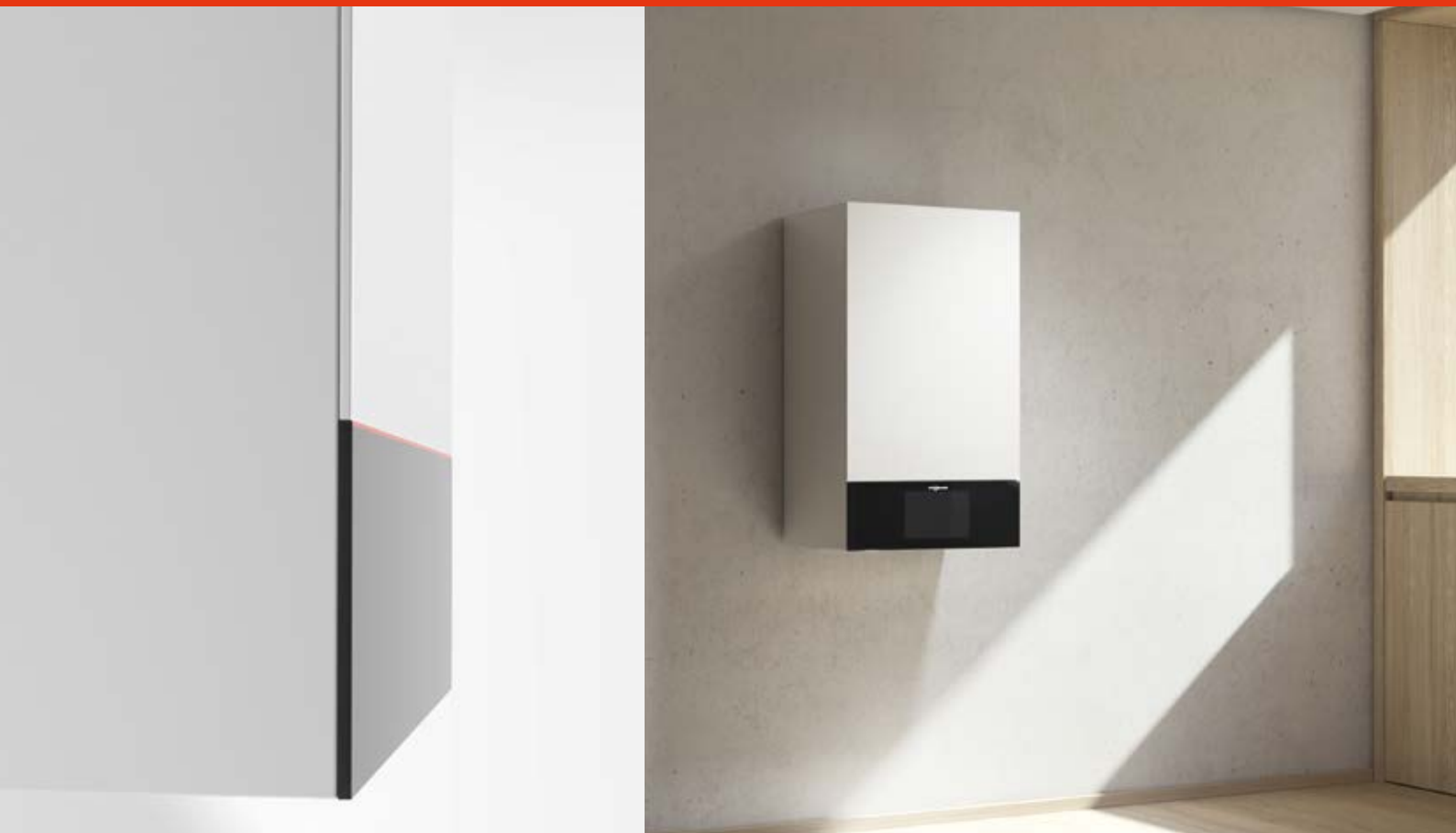
As always, I hope you find inspiration in the stories shared in this edition, whether you're an employer shaping the next generation or a seasoned professional reflecting on your own journey. Our industry thrives when we come together and apprenticeships remain one of the strongest ways we can secure a bright future for the plumbing and heating profession. Here's to learning, growing and celebrating the possibilities that lie ahead. ■

Our industry thrives when we come together and apprenticeships remain one of the strongest ways we can secure a bright future for the profession"



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BOOK TRAINING



Banging the drum for change

As **Precise Installs** celebrates its 10th anniversary, its founders back action to safeguard the future of the plumbing and heating profession

Throughout Precise Installs' decade in business, one thing has been a priority for founders Scott Murphy and William Walker – nurturing the next generation of talent.

They have been committed to taking on apprentices and passing on the skills and expertise that will secure our profession's future.

Scott said: "Apprentices are the foundation of our business because they grow with us, learn how we like things done and become part of the culture. They also keep the trade alive because if companies don't train apprentices, there won't be anyone coming through."

William added: "It's a really good feeling to take someone from a school-leaver to a qualified plumber and see them develop, not just in skills but as a person learning responsibility, confidence and pride in their work."

Scott and William embarked on slightly different journeys before forming Precise Installs. William left school at 16, starting his Modern Apprenticeship with SNIPEF member T Clarke Contracting Limited before going out on his own. Scott stayed in school until sixth year and could have gone to university but preferred the idea of working in a more hands-on environment.

The pair met at college in 2007 before their paths crossed again when they were worked together at T Clarke.

Scott spent some time in Australia but returned in 2014, when he linked up with William to start the business that would eventually become Precise Installs.

Launching a business is never easy but the pair felt the time was right. They brought together both their skill sets to offer a range of services that improved on what they had learned in previous roles.

William said: "I came from a farming background where everyone was self-employed,

so that was normal for me – it felt natural to run my own business. When Scott came back from Australia, it made sense to work together – we trusted each other and had similar values about how to run a business and treat customers."

Scott added: "With the experience we had gained from other roles we were well-placed to start our own business. We didn't have huge commitments in our lives, so it felt the right time to take the risk."

Fast-forward 10 years and Precise has gone from strength to strength, expanding and developing its services year-on-year. Reaching that 10-year milestone is no mean feat and the pair are proud of what they have accomplished – even though it hasn't been easy.

Scott said: "It's gone really quickly! It's been busy and stressful at times but it has also been amazing. You don't take the time when you're in it to stop and think about it but now that we're at 10 years, it's nice to look back and reflect on how far we've come."

William added: "Looking at the business now, with the staff we have, the vans we have, the customers we have, it's a lot more than I thought we would achieve back then. It still feels like there's a lot more to do."

The company has been forced to adapt to an industry that's evolving, with new technologies

“Apprentices are the foundation of our business because they grow with us, learn how we like things done and become part of the culture. They also keep the trade alive”

By Gregor Millar,
PlumbHeat
Editor





Scott, left, and William with their Precise Installs team

Precise Installs snapshot

Precise Installs is based in Blantyre and was founded in 2015. The team offers a range of services, including:

- Domestic heating installations (gas, oil, electric)
- Renewable technologies
- Bathroom installations (private and grant-funded)
- Home improvement grant work for seven council regions
- Service and maintenance for landlords (private and commercial)
- Commercial installation and servicing
- New-build contracts.

and changing demand on services. This has meant upskilling to stay ahead of the curve.

Scott said: "The biggest change has been the rise of renewables, such as air source heat pumps, along with underfloor heating and more electric-based systems. In terms of materials, we've gone from copper and lead being standard to using more press fit and plastic, which speeds things up but also changes the skill set you need."

William added: "In some ways it's gone full circle because we used to do a lot of combi boilers but now we're seeing more systems with hot water cylinders and bigger pipework with more complicated controls. The installations are more complex, so we need to keep learning and upskilling all the time."

Given the nature of the plumbing and heating profession, predicting what's ahead will never be easy, but the pair have laid the groundwork for the future and are keen to see how the next 10 years will pan out for their business.

William said: "We've already split into three divisions – bathrooms, heating and renewables and contracts. The aim is that each division will be able to grow with its own teams and managers, so Scott and I can step back from the day-to-day and focus more on the bigger picture."

"We don't want to be on the tools ourselves forever, we want to build something that can keep going and growing."

Although Precise has flourished over the past 10 years, the industry continues to wrestle with numerous challenges, including an active skills shortage. The rising costs associated



William with PlumbHeat's Gregor

Image: Gordon Bell Photography

with apprenticeships have also meant this vital pipeline is becoming strained for businesses such as Precise.

William said: "Apprentice wages have gone up quite a lot recently but the help from the Government hasn't gone up in line with that, so it's becoming a real challenge.

"Industry-wide, the biggest thing is the skills gap, both in terms of the number of engineers available and the quality of training. It's getting harder to find people who have the right skills for what we do."

Scott added: "We've trained 10 apprentices in 10 years but the costs are becoming too high for businesses to sustain. The government has raised apprentice wages to make the trades more attractive but they haven't thought about the cost implications on the business. If that continues, fewer firms will take on apprentices and the skills gap will only get worse."

The pair strongly support the apprenticeship model, having gone down that pathway themselves, and have provided opportunities to the next generation every year they have been trading. But both believe there is room for improvement in the current system.

William said: "It should stay as a four-year apprenticeship but there needs to be more funding, especially in the first two years when the apprentice is less productive. The training should also be more modular, so we can focus on what's relevant to our work."

Scott added: "The government should pay for the wages of apprentices while at college because that falls on the employer. Apprentices could also be allowed to specialise earlier. If a company is focused on renewables or gas, they could train more in that area." Precise has worked closely with SNIPEF to raise awareness on a range of issues, most recently conducting an interview with STV to highlight workforce shortages.



We need to keep banging that drum in support of the profession. If we don't, we'll feel the effects in years to come"

William, left, and Scott founded Precise Installs in 2015

William and Scott are determined to see positive change for the industry but they know they cannot achieve this alone.

They maintain that it is vital for members across Scotland to be vocal about the challenges facing their businesses, as only together can the industry create

a voice loud enough to enforce change.

Scott said: "If we all sit back, nothing will change. It's only the loudest voices that are heard, so we need to keep banging that drum in support of the profession. If we don't, we will feel the effects in years to come."

The issues raised by Precise are being noted across the industry, spurring the creation of our new campaign, which will aim to challenge the government and policymakers ahead of the Scottish election.

SNIPEF's campaign aims to highlight the key role played by plumbing and heating apprenticeships in supporting public health, energy efficiency and hitting net-zero targets, while showcasing the diverse, accredited career opportunities in the profession and mobilising partners to advocate for government support.

We hope that this campaign will be the starting point for the implementation of new policies that will support business and reinvigorate our profession, while also giving our



Image: Gordon Bell Photography



Image: Gordon Bell Photography

Precise Installs apprentices Ben Vallance, Ross Steven, Robbie Hughes and Andy Williams

members a platform to raise their concerns with the powers that be.

Scott and William stressed that our campaign is "vital" if we are going to see the change required but emphasised that everyone needs to work together for success.

William said: "Whether it's a competitor, a friend or another business, it's vital that everyone comes together. As a collective, we are going to have a much louder voice. We're continually trying to raise awareness online, reach out and talk to other people in the profession – and we would never turn away a conversation with a competitor. The skills shortage in the industry is so vast that there's no such thing as a competitor."

Scott added: "When the challenges are the same, we need to be unified, with a unified voice. We at Precise are happy to lead from the front."

Recognition of the pressure points affecting our profession and a shifting government attitude towards apprenticeships are key to what SNIPeF hopes the campaign can achieve – but for businesses such as Precise, they want to see change.

William said: "Businesses should be rewarded for training the workforce of the future – we shouldn't be penalised. Net-zero is such an important target that businesses bringing through the workers that are going to support this need the recognition and support. But right now, that support is just not there."

Scott concluded: "We need recognition. We need the hierarchy at government level to be talking about our profession – and the more we talk about it, the more awareness we are going to bring.

"Fundamentally, we need change and we need it drastically. Businesses will only act when it financially affects them – and often that's the bottom line because money doesn't grow on trees. But that's not how it should be. We should know that we are supported and we should be encouraged to bring through the next generation." ■



Apprentice Ross Steven

Image: Gordon Bell Photography

Apprentice case study

**Ross Steven, 20,
South Lanarkshire College**

"I did a City and Guilds course then my lecturer recommended me to Precise. I did a trial at first and everyone was so helpful and answered all my questions. I felt like it was a really good place to work.

"From a personal side, the learning has been the most important. I thought I knew quite a bit coming into this – but not nearly as much as I do now. The amount I've learnt in such a small space of time has been quite incredible really.

"From a skills perspective, I have learned so much about communication and working with other trades. It's not just plumbers we work with, we have to know how to work with other trades and plan jobs accordingly, so communication has been vital for this.

"My Modern Apprenticeship has been so important for me and to others I would say there are so many paths you can take by entering this profession. There's something for everyone – if bathrooms aren't for you, there's heating or there's renewables or gas.

"The other important point to add is how involved William and Scott have been for my development. They don't just want someone who is working hard, they want someone who is actually learning – they encourage me every step of the way. They want us to be the best plumbers we can possibly be."

“We need change and we need it drastically... we should know we are supported and be encouraged to bring through the next generation”

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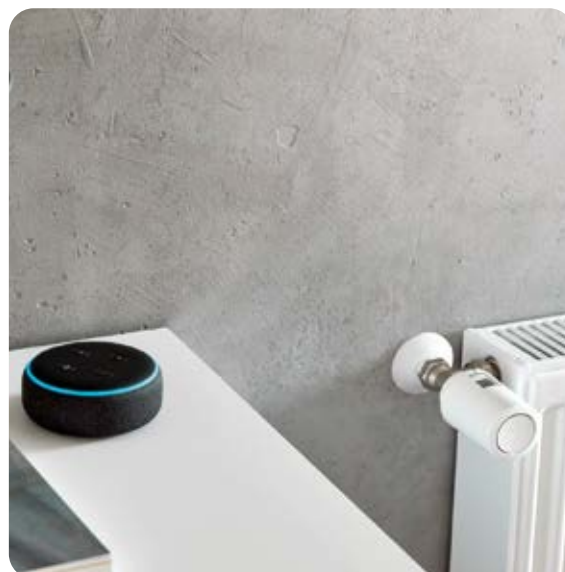
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Exploring sprinklers

IPS Flow Systems explains why learning more about sprinklers could boost your business



By James Millar, Business Development Manager – Scotland, IPS Flow Systems

The fire safety landscape across the UK and Ireland is changing at pace. With legislation driving the need for sprinklers in new-builds, social housing, nursing and care homes, as well as other high-risk environments, the ability to install compliant sprinkler systems is no longer an optional extra – it is becoming a core requirement.

At IPS Flow Systems, we are committed to equipping our customers with the skills and support they need to succeed. That's why we are developing a series of sprinkler training courses, facilitated by SNIPEF, where IPS is proud to be an affiliate.

This collaboration ensures training is delivered to the highest standards, while IPS remains your dedicated partner for all things fire protection.

WHY DIVERSIFY INTO SPRINKLERS?

Sprinkler installation represents one of the most significant growth opportunities for installers. If you already work in heating, plumbing or mechanical services, you are perfectly placed to build on your existing expertise and take advantage of the rising demand.

The training is particularly valuable if you:

- Work with national housebuilders that increasingly specify sprinklers in new developments
- Partner with developers or smaller builders requesting sprinkler systems
- Focus on the landlord, housing association or social housing sectors.

By expanding your services to include sprinklers, you will strengthen your existing customer relationships and open up entirely new markets.

BUILDING ON SKILLS, CREATING CAPABILITY

Sprinklers are a natural extension of the skill set many installers already hold. Our courses are designed to take those core skills, such as pipework, reading drawings and working to standards, and develop them into a specialism that is both marketable and future-proof.

For apprentices and labourers, the training provides an excellent foundation for understanding how projects come together, from drawings to installation.

IPS FLOW SYSTEMS

IPS Flow Systems is a leading supplier of specialist plastic piping systems, valves and fire protection solutions. With more than 35 years' experience, IPS provides expert advice, next-day delivery from UK stock and ongoing training and support to help customers succeed.

TECHNICAL



IPS Flow Systems is bringing sprinkler training courses to Scotland in collaboration with SNIPEF

To maintain best practice, a refresher course is recommended every two years, ensuring your business remains at the forefront of compliance.

COURSES COMING UP THIS YEAR

IPS has a strong programme of sprinkler training courses scheduled for this year. Delivered locally and cost-effectively through SNIPEF, the courses will be practical, hands-on and directly aligned to legislative requirements.

This is not simply training. It is an investment. By upskilling, your business will be ready to meet current and future requirements with confidence, while you position yourself ahead of competitors.

For more details, contact IPS Flow Systems or SNIPEF's technical team (technical@snipef.org).

WHY IPS?

When it comes to fire protection, IPS Flow Systems is your strategic partner. We offer:

- Local, cost-effective training and technical support
- Stock held in the UK, with next-day delivery
- Decades of experience and expertise in fire protection systems.

With IPS, you gain products and training plus the confidence of working with an industry leader. ■

IPS Flow Systems' FlameGuard range of products



William Wilson Celebrating the first 125 years of serving Scotland's plumbing and heating sector

Business has a proud past
and an exciting future

William Wilson (yes, there was an original Willie Wilson) started the business in 1900 from premises in Carmelite Lane in Aberdeen. William had experience in the trade as he'd been an employee of Turnbull Brothers, a Plumbers' Merchant based in Union Row, Aberdeen.

The business, initially with a staff of three, established itself quickly and was very soon becoming known as "Willie Wilson's". It wasn't long before the business outgrew the premises at Carmelite Lane and moved into larger premises at 74, 76 and 80 College Street, Aberdeen.

The business continued to flourish and, in around 1910, a brass shop was opened in the College Street buildings. This brass shop would

assist with the war effort during both world wars, manufacturing shell casings and alloy casings for radios among other things.

The business became a limited company in 1927 and the 1920s and 30s were a period of expansion and consolidation during which close associations with the Master Plumbers' Associations in Scotland were formed, which continue to this day.

During the 1930s William Wilson also became an electrical wholesaler.

Business was good during the 1930s and in 1939 the company relocated to 62 Bridge Street, Aberdeen. Willie Wilson's successfully traded through the Second World War, but obviously it wasn't a time for major changes or developments within the business.

It's probably fair to say the "modern" history of William Wilson began in 1955 with the appointment of Graeme J Wilson as Managing Director. The first expansion out of Aberdeen came in 1956 when a branch was established in Inverness, followed by Elgin in 1967.

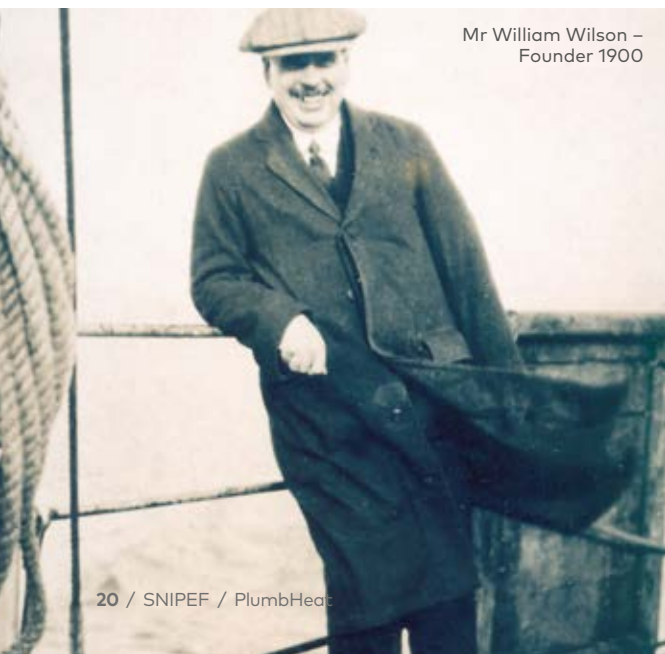
The seventies saw major expansion and acquisitions:

- 1972 Deebridge Power Units

The first Brass shop



WORKS & SHOWROOMS



Mr William Wilson –
Founder 1900

We are passionate about customer service and have a proven track record of providing best-in-class service to our customers”

- **1973** Dundee and Arbroath
- **1974** DE Duncan
- **1976** Fraserburgh
- **1979** Northern Heating
- **1977** New offices and warehousing at Altens.

The 80s continued in a similar vein:

- **1980** Kirkcaldy and Smith & Cookson
- **1982** Roy J Cottrell
- **1984** Glasgow
- **1985** Sellers of Leeds
- **1985** P & E Supplies
- **1989** Ayr and Edinburgh.

The 90s were a challenging time for the construction industry, and it became clear William Wilson had to change and consolidate. In 1993 Freddie Craig was appointed as Group Managing Director.

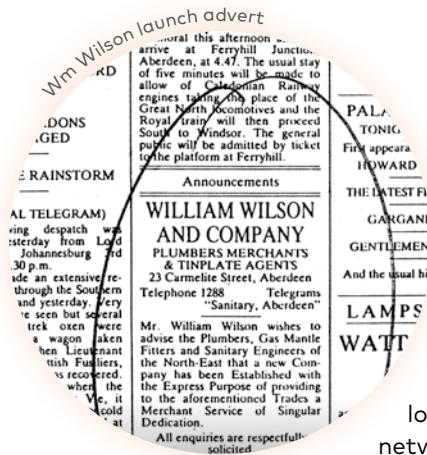
It's fair to say Freddie brought an outsider's eye to William Wilson. Gradually, one company was created with strong central purchasing, a vigorous finance team with good management accounting and financial information, cash management and credit control.

During the 2000s William Wilson continued to grow, strengthening its presence in Dundee and Tayside and opening new branches in Thurso, Fort William, South Street Glasgow and Inverurie.

During November 2005, William Wilson was acquired by Wolseley UK. Wolseley UK has always been supportive of William Wilson's plans for growth and they continued as follows:

- **2005** Hillington Glasgow
- **2008** Portree
- **2011** Aviemore
- **2012** Bathroom showroom Inverurie
- **2013** Bathroom showroom Kirkwall
- **2017** Kingston Bridge Glasgow
- **2018** Showroom development at Edinburgh, Skye and Ayr
- **2019-2021** Covid 19 hits.

Organic growth and business development got back on track in 2022 with the relocation of the Stornoway branch. And in



2023, there was an extensive refurbishment of the Elgin showroom.

In January 2024, William Wilson completed the purchase of Highland Plumbing and Heating Supplies (HPHS). This brought the number of locations in the branch network to 22. In May that year,

the showroom in Altens was also extensively redeveloped.

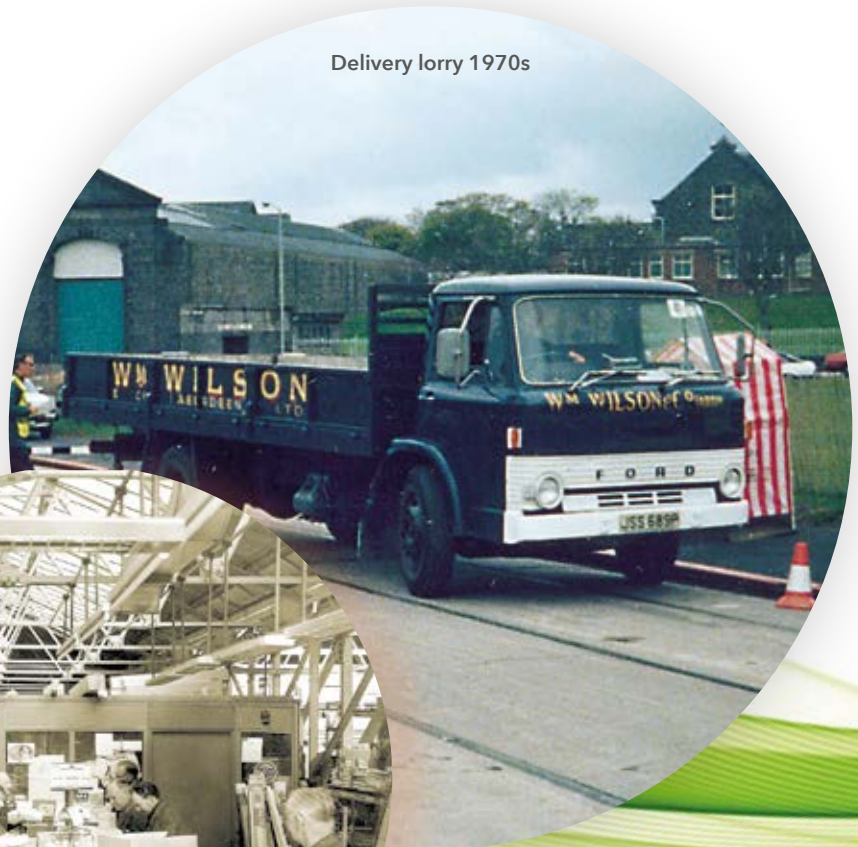
Today, William Wilson is still a Scottish-based business with 125 years of trading experience in supplying plumbing, heating and bathroom supplies.

Managing Director Steven Hay said: "We are passionate about customer service and have a proven track record of providing best-in-class service to our customers.

"We have 22 trading locations throughout Scotland, with an ambition to further increase our branch and showroom network."

William Wilson is part of Wolseley UK, the country's largest plumbing, heating and cooling trade specialist merchant and aims to be the first-choice specialist merchant for trade customers. ■

Delivery lorry 1970s



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)

Mark Hodgens,
WaterSafe's
new Chair

WaterSafe welcomes new Chair

Mark Hodgens reveals his vision for the future of the organisation

WaterSafe is delighted to welcome Mark Hodgens as its new Chair. Mark brings with him extensive leadership and commercial experience from international companies including Novar, Grundfos and Talis, a supplier of water company products and services such as valves, house connection and boundary boxes. Here he shares his first steps with WaterSafe and his hopes to add value for members.

WHAT DREW YOU TO WATERSAFE?

I finished a major project earlier this year as chief executive with Talis, which involved selling the company and its subsidiaries around the world, and then I thought 'what do I do now?' I decided it was time to give something back. I thought if I have an imaginary tombstone, what would I want it to say – beyond working hard at my profession, being a good husband and father. I've recently become a trustee for Citizens Advice and I was looking for other opportunities to put something back into an industry that has been good to me. The opportunity to apply to become Chair at WaterSafe arose and I thought that's an interesting role at a challenging time in the water sector.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?

WaterSafe's previous chair, Ceri Jones, and the team have done a great job of getting WaterSafe to where it is now. I'm very much in my induction phase and for me this is about meeting the directors, talking

“We've done a really good job to get where we are, and I want to continue to find more ways to add value and raise the profile of WaterSafe and its members”

to WaterSafe members and gathering input. I have no pre-conceived ideas and I want to hear everyone's thoughts.

It's the part of a job I've always enjoyed, being honest, listening and talking. I'm excited – I see my role as facilitating and bringing the strategy together for the next three years. We've done a really good job to get where we are, and I want to continue to find more ways to add value and raise the profile of WaterSafe and its members.

I'm hoping to bring a voice to WaterSafe. We need a loud voice and to work with partners to help raise that voice. We have to find a way to raise the topic of approved installers to a higher level with government and regulators and it's a good time to do this. Water is such a hot topic right now and people are thinking about water more in their daily lives.

WaterSafe is a not-for-profit organisation that's primarily for its members and they need to tell us what's important so we can develop and protect the things we are already doing well. I encourage everyone to share their thoughts with me.

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BRING TO WATERSAFE?

I've spent 30 years promoting competent installers in a variety of industries and it's this experience I bring to WaterSafe.

What everyone in the industry needs is professional, competent installers and plumbers to optimise the manufacturers' product and protect customers.

During my career I worked with many of the big distributors, such as Wolseley, and got to know them and their needs well. Manufacturers also recognise the need for high-quality engineers who can install products properly. The bane of our lives was people installing products when they weren't sure how to as the resulting poor performance of the product then reflected badly on the brand. I think we can get manufacturers more engaged with what we're trying to do – their motivation is the same.

I'm coming at things from a slightly different angle as I have a commercial background and I believe we can now move up to the next level to increase member numbers and the value of their WaterSafe membership to them. ■

Mark is happy to hear members' thoughts and ideas for the future of WaterSafe. You can get in touch by emailing info@watersafe.org.uk

OPT IN TO WATERSAFE

If you're a plumber in Northern Ireland or Scotland registered with SNIPEF, you are eligible to join WaterSafe at no extra cost. Eligible members must opt to sign up for WaterSafe – you will not be registered automatically.

Contact the Schemes department on 0131 357 2440 or email schemes@snipec.org for details. For more about WaterSafe, visit www.watersafe.org.uk/howtojoin

Is your plumber using lead solder?



A new 10-minute podcast explains why you should ask the question.



Podcast is packed with good advice

WaterSafe has launched a new podcast calling on all plumbing and heating professionals to make the switch to lead-free solder.

The podcast features Julie Spinks, WaterSafe Director, and Ruben Duggan, a WorldSkills silver medallist plumber. They discuss how, despite

regulations, lead solder remains a risk due to its continued presence in plumbers' toolkits for non-drinking water applications, leading to potential accidental misuse.

Listen to it here: www.watersafe.org.uk/advice/is-your-plumber-lead-free

Getting the best out of boilers

Scott Sanford explains boiler efficiency and reliability, how it works and how to improve performance for your customers

Most domestic properties in the UK have a heat loss of under 8kW, yet every day we see new installations of massively oversized boilers being fitted into our homes. For years this has been the norm, having a negative effect on the performance, efficiency and reliability of boilers that results in higher bills and more regular breakdowns – most of which goes unnoticed by both the installer and the consumer due to a lack of knowledge.

So what exactly I am talking about? Any new boiler we fit must be a minimum 92% ERP, meaning they are A-rated appliances for efficiency, with most manufacturers exceeding this and claiming up to 98% efficiency on their boilers. Pretty good, right?

In theory, yes, however, the numbers stated by the manufacturers are the efficiencies the boiler could achieve, not what they deliver out of the box.

The efficiency of the appliance is dependent on several factors – the appliance size, the system design and the controls being

used. If you are not sizing the boiler or designing the system correctly, you could be achieving as little as 75% efficiency making the new boiler no more efficient than the one it has just replaced! Quite shocking in comparison to the 92% efficiency or above capability of the new boiler.

It is worth noting though that new boilers will likely have better technology making them slightly more efficient than the previous boiler, however this new



By **Scott Sanford**,
SNIPEF Head
of Technical
Services and
Certification

technology will not improve the efficiency by much unless the correct design process has used, meaning the customer does not get the full benefits of a brand-new high efficiency boiler.

DELIVERING EFFICIENCY

To understand boiler efficiency, we need to understand how the condensing process in the boiler works.

Condensing boilers only condense when the return temperature from the central heating system coming back to the boiler is at 54°C and below, meaning the flue gases from the boiler will be cooled below the dew point. The dew point

No pluming from the flue, meaning a high efficiency boiler in a condensing state



is the temperature to which air needs to be cooled to achieve a relative humidity of 100%. At this point, the air cannot hold more water which has to come out of the atmosphere in the liquid form – the boiler's condensation.

The water in the air is produced by the water vapour from the boiler's combustion process and is expelled in the flue gases as condensation which holds latent heat. Latent heat is effectively a hidden heat where the energy absorbed or released during a phase change at constant temperature and can be transferred as sensible heat therefore improving boiler efficiency. In a nutshell, the condensation from the products of combustion holds hidden heat energy which can be used by the boiler to gain up to 10% extra efficiency.

KNOW THE FACTS

One of the common myths about condensing boilers is that if we see steam coming out of the flue, known as plumbing, the boiler is condensing. This is incorrect!

When we see this plumbing from the flue, it means we have a high-temperature, inefficient boiler where the latent or hidden heat is escaping to the atmosphere rather than condensing back through the boiler where the boiler can use this heat to increase its efficiency. A boiler, when in a high-efficiency state, should have little to no steam exiting the flue.

RETURN TEMPERATURES

As I mentioned, boilers only condense when the return temperature is 54°C or lower and to help explain how the return temperature affects the efficiency of the boiler, I have included three examples relevant to the chart at the end of this article. It shows a boiler's performance in both the condensing and non-condensing modes, revealing how the return temperature affects the boiler's



Plumbing from the flue showing a high temperature, inefficient boiler

efficiency, and is shown with the red lines.

1. If we fit a boiler with an 80°C flow temperature and manage to correctly balance the system with a 20°C ΔT (which is very difficult to do), the return temperature will be 60°C (shown on the x axis of the graph). The return temperature is above the dew point meaning the boiler will not condense and following the line across the graph to the y axis, we only achieve around 87% efficiency. Nowhere near the 92% efficiency or anywhere near the potential of the boiler.
2. If we reduce our flow temperature to 70°C with a 20°C ΔT , the return temperature will be 50°C. We are now in condensing mode, increasing the boiler's efficiency to 90% but still not at the 92% or above.
3. To achieve 92% or more, the return temperature must be 45°C or lower.

Now that we understand the condensing theory and how return temperatures affect efficiency, how do we correctly size the boiler and designing the system?

All heating design, whether a gas boiler, oil boiler, electric boiler or heat pump, should start by carrying out room by room heat loss calculations. Sadly, most heating installers don't do this at all, or do it improperly, with many either using a rule of thumb or guessing at the size of boiler needed. There are also times where the hot water flow rate via a combi can be a deciding factor of a boiler size. Installers then end up overlooking the heating requirements resulting in oversized heating outputs.

Why does this matter? Well, when we don't size the boiler correctly it can produce too much energy, which is wasted, costing our customers more money. The boiler will also cycle on and off more often than it should if the system isn't designed to take the load of the boiler, meaning it can't cope with the demands, leading to greater wear and tear and therefore more breakdowns.

Think of a car when you drive in town. Your fuel economy reduces because of constant stopping and starting. There is

“The water in the air is produced by the water vapour from the boiler's combustion process and is expelled in the flue gases as condensation which holds latent heat”

also more wear and tear on the car's components due to the constant stopping and starting. Compare that to driving on a motorway where you get to 70mph and hit the cruise control. Your fuel economy can increase dramatically and the wear and tear on the car is much less as it is in a constant state, meaning less chance of a breakdown.

Now think about the engine size of cars. A two-litre car will get to 70mph on the motorway quicker than a one-litre car because it has more power, however it will use more fuel because of the engine size. The one-litre car still gets to 70mph, taking a few seconds longer but uses less fuel.

Do we always need a two-litre engine car? No, but there are times we need more power, and it may be nice to have. Boilers work in the same way – more power is only needed for greater demands, however having more power than is needed doesn't benefit our customers, it costs them. Having the correct amount of power, a gradual increase in temperature, and the ability to maintain the flow temperature or even reduce it via controls, reduces energy use, costs and wear and tear.

Heat loss calculations are time consuming when done manually so I recommend apps such as our affiliate member Heat Engineer or other approved software. Heat Engineer provides free training, the app is easy to use, it includes system design information saving you additional time and effort and it's the only platform that I'm aware of (at time of print) that allows heat loss and energy calculations for all types of fuel boilers as well as for heat pumps.

SNIEPF members can now also receive a 5% discount off Heat Engineer's monthly subscription service for 12 months. Contact technical@snief.org for more information.

Once we have completed our heat loss calculations, we can

choose a suitable boiler. When choosing your boiler, there are of course several factors which affect our choices – preferred manufacturer, cost, ease of installation and more. Two factors which are often not realised or spoken about enough is what the minimum modulation of the boiler is in terms of the power it produces, and can the boiler be range rated. Range rating means the power output of the boiler can be altered by the installer to meet the needs of the property, helping to prevent or at least reduce overpowering.

The minimum power output of the boiler is important to meet the heat loss requirements and plays its part when the heat loss of the property changes with the outside temperature. While a property might be a 6.4kW heat loss at -3.4°C outside, the heat loss will reduce as the temperature increases, so if the temperature is 10°C outside, the same property might have a heat loss of just 2.9kW. To combat this, we would look for a boiler which can be set to only produce a maximum of 6.4kW and ideally modulate as low as possible. So, if we had

A graph demonstrating how boiler efficiency is affected by the return temperature in relation to the dew point

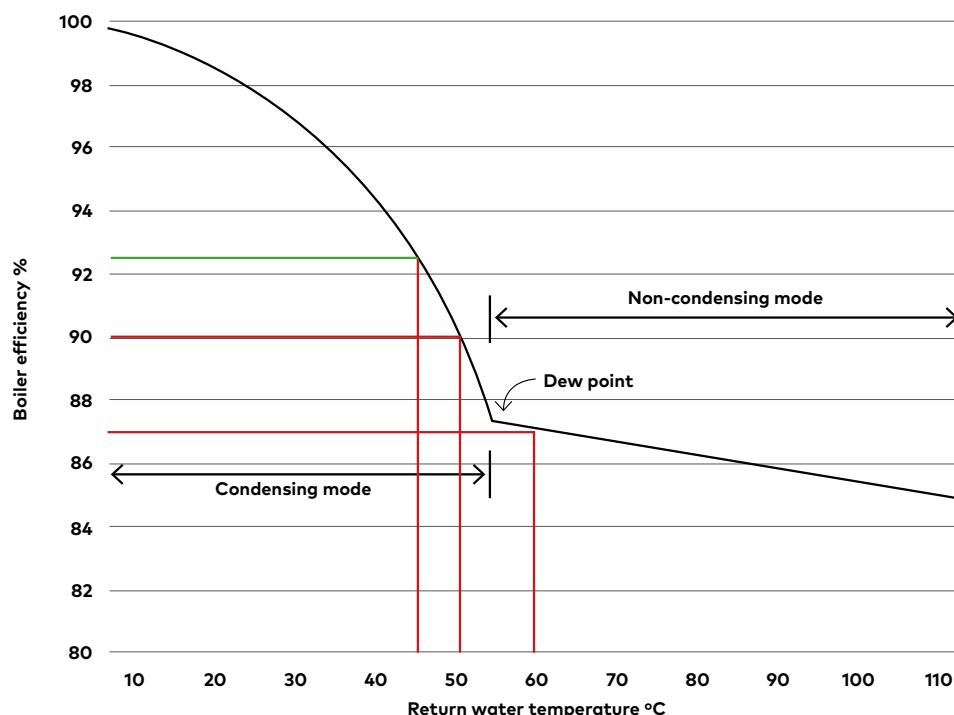
a 28kW combi boiler sized for the hot water, the heating side of the boiler may produce 24kW and modulate down to say 8kW, then this boiler is oversized for the heating requirements. We need to look for a boiler that be range rated to 6.4kW and modulate to less than that.

We'll never stop cycling and energy wastage, however we can decrease it significantly by choosing our boilers carefully.

When it comes to range rating, it works well for combi boilers as they are designed to prioritise the hot water with maximum power output and most boilers (not all) can be range rated to deliver less power to the heating.

This leaves the question of how does this work with open vented or system boilers?

All will be revealed in part two of this article which will be available in our winter issue of *PlumbHeat*. In the meantime, if you want to improve your boiler and heating installations then you can join us on one of our Hydronics Unlocked courses in partnership with Warmur Academy. Book your spot by visiting www.snief.org/hydronics-unlocked



Fittings will make **your** life easier

LBP fittings are designed to give installers peace of mind and reduce callbacks. They will be available from Instantor in November

New installation is designed to stop small issues developing into major and potentially expensive problems for plumbers

SNIEF affiliate Instantor has recently announced a Leak Before Press (LBP) option for its Press System solutions, which will be available from November. Here, Managing Director Neil Gaffney reveals the reasons behind this latest innovation and how it is a smart, fail-safe feature that gives installers peace of mind on every job...

Every installer understands the challenges of working to tight deadlines and the risks posed by missing a single pressed joint. One unsealed fitting can lead to water damage, customer complaints and costly callbacks. With this in mind, in water-based applications, LBP fittings are designed to visibly leak under low pressure if they haven't been pressed. This creates an immediate visual alert, allowing plumbers to identify and correct any missed fittings.

It's no secret that there is an ongoing skills shortage within the construction industry, including the plumbing and heating sector. According to the UK Trade Skills Index 2023, 73,700 new plumbers are needed by 2032. SNIEF's *State of Trade Report* for Q2 2025 also confirms that across Scotland and Northern Ireland, 69% of firms report low availability of

skilled plumbing and heating engineers. This is a key consideration in our product development. Since 1926, we've been manufacturing high-quality plumbing products, with innovation at the centre of our business. Instantor is focused on designing solutions that streamline and accelerate installation, while reducing callbacks, enabling the existing workforce to complete more projects in shorter timescales.

The new LBP fittings are an alternative option to the original, trusted, Instantor press fittings, with no compromise on the quality or durability expected from an Instantor product. Manufactured from CW617N brass and 304 stainless steel, these fittings are built to last and deliver a reliable, corrosion-resistant seal. They will be available from November in sizes up to 32 mm and pair perfectly with the Instantor Pex-Al-Pex pipe. We also take product reliability very seriously. Our portfolio has been developed by installers for installers to provide assured long-term performance. The new LBP fittings are backed by a 50-year warranty (when used with the Instantor Pex-Al-Pex pipe).

In addition to developing high-quality products, we are great believers that the industry should be doing everything possible to encourage apprenticeships and help facilitate upskilling of existing engineers. This is one of the reasons Instantor invested in a new Mobile Training Academy last year, to provide hands-on training at merchant trade counters, colleges and trade association events. We also offer training at our dedicated training centre in Dublin and it is our aim to collaborate with installers to support best practices and improve installation quality across the industry. ■



By Neil Gaffney,
Managing
Director,
Instantor

LBP fittings were one of several new innovations unveiled by Instantor at InstallerSHOW 2025



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Speak up and stay safe at work

Jimmy Hendry, Fellow at the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineers and former Chair of the SNIPEF complaints board, discusses the importance of stopping illegal gas work as a new safety campaign launches

By Jimmy Hendry

Jimmy, with SNIPEF Past President John Doherty, receiving recognition for his work on the complaints panel at the 2025 AGM

The modern world can sometimes feel incredibly bureaucratic – so many forms to fill out, so many hoops to jump through – but often these perceived barriers are essential, especially in relation to the plumbing and heating profession where safety is paramount in potentially hazardous conditions.

Sometimes they may feel overbearing, but many restrictions are already in place to ensure that only the most competent are working in dangerous situations and, most importantly, paying customers

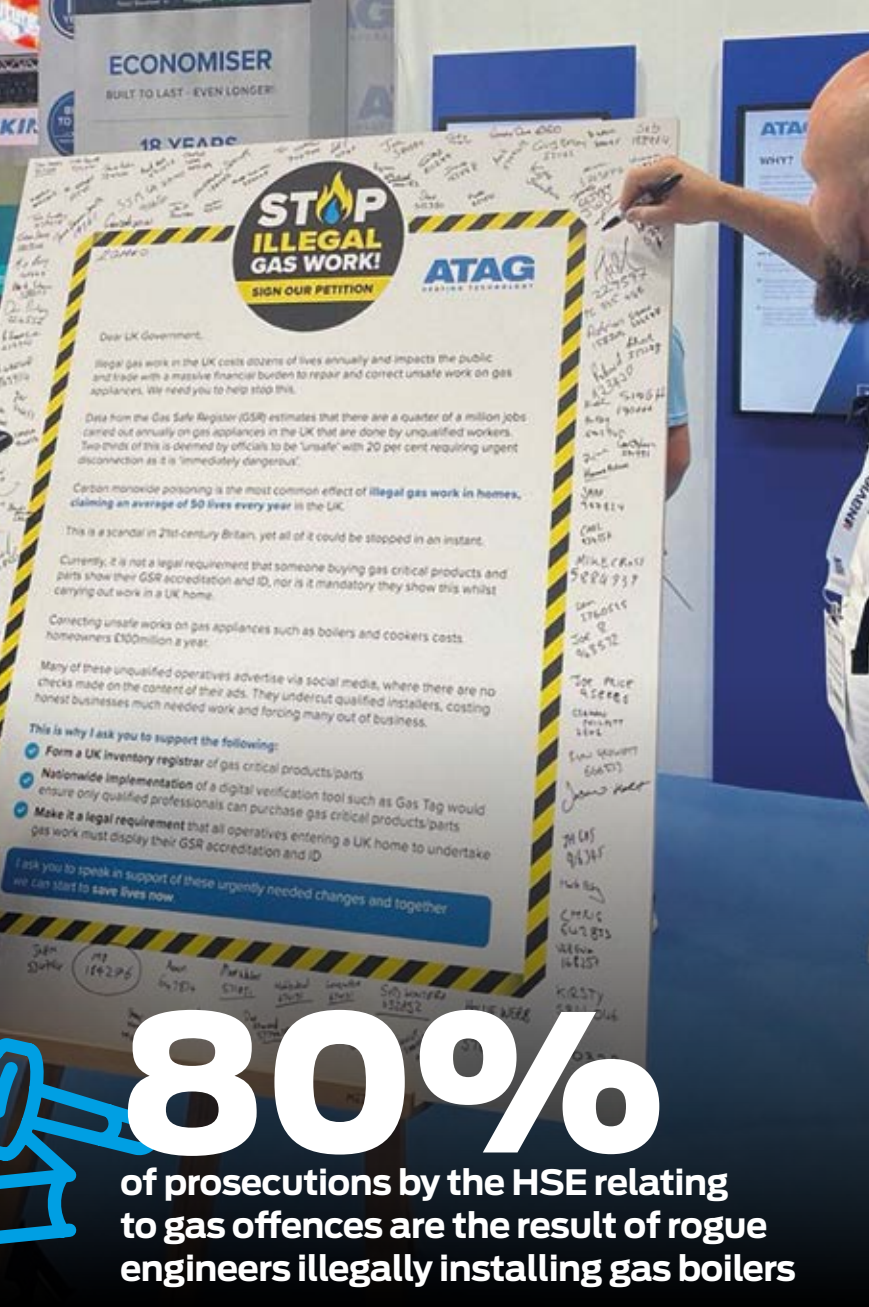
are protected from physical and financial harm.

So, when it comes to gas, there must be suitable checks and balances in place, right? Unfortunately, the answer is no, and the problem starts at the point of sale. At present, it's easier to buy a domestic gas boiler than it is to buy many other less dangerous items from your local hardware store.

Despite the existence of the Gas Safe Register, it is not a requirement to ask these details from customers buying domestic gas boilers. The result is a market flooded with products that are being installed by people without the relevant qualifications – this is not only incredibly dangerous, but also illegal. However, the system currently has no safeguards in place to stop unregulated and rogue traders from purchasing gas boilers.

“Despite the existence of the Gas Safe Register, it is not a requirement to ask these details from customers buying domestic gas boilers”





80%

of prosecutions by the HSE relating to gas offences are the result of rogue engineers illegally installing gas boilers

The stats show this is a massive problem for the profession. Figures reveal that 80% of prosecutions by the HSE relating to gas offences are the result of rogue engineers illegally installing gas boilers. To think that the unregulated sale of gas boilers continues on the back of these figures is mind-blowing – especially when we all know the harm gas can cause when safety measures are overlooked.

In 2021, I started my own campaign with a simple slogan: “No Gas Safe Register card = no sale”. Despite regular media coverage, positive reception and support from parliamentarians we have not seen the change in policy that would eradicate the unregulated sale of gas boilers.

But I am glad to see that my efforts were not in vain, as ATAG Heating Technology launched its own campaign at InstallerSHOW in Birmingham earlier this year. Its proposal would mean that every time you visit the merchants to buy a boiler, the counter staff will be legally obliged to check that you are on the Gas Safe Register.

Once the boiler is purchased, it will be logged against the engineer’s name and the address where it is to be fitted. This will create a vital

The launch of the ATAG campaign at this year’s InstallerSHOW

“At present, it’s easier to buy a domestic gas boiler than it is to buy many other less dangerous items from your local hardware store”

paper trail, detailing the who and where, and hopefully discouraging those already trading and installing illegally.

The plan is in place, but it falls on you to influence policy as we need to work together as an industry to deliver positive change. You can start by contacting your local MSP and MP, highlighting why change needs to be implemented, urging stronger enforcement and penalties for illegal gas work.

Raising awareness more widely is also vital and it’s essential that you keep the conversation going with your industry colleagues, suppliers and clients so that they are well versed in the dangers of unregistered gas work.

Getting the message beyond the industry is also important as the general public may not be aware of the dangers. Talking to friends and family to raise awareness could be key as we look to build support for our cause.

The stakes are simply too high to ignore. Gas safety is not just an industry issue – it’s imperative to preserve public safety. Without proper regulation at the point of sale, we risk putting lives in danger and undermining the standards that so many professionals work hard to uphold. By uniting as an industry and pushing for accountability, transparency, and common-sense safeguards, we can close the gaps that allow rogue traders to operate unchecked.

Change won’t come unless we demand it – so let’s keep pushing, keep speaking out, and ensure that gas safety is treated with the seriousness and oversight it urgently requires. ■

Make your voice heard by visiting bit.ly/ph-illegal-gas

Why illegal gas work must stop

- It endangers lives: Poor-quality installations can cause fires, explosions and deadly gas leaks.
- It breaks the law: Only Gas Safe registered engineers are legally allowed to work on gas appliances.
- It puts homeowners at risk: Unregistered work can invalidate insurance and lead to costly repairs.

From torpedoes to thermostats

Why apprentice Kris ditched the Royal Navy for a career in plumbing and heating



By Clare Harris and Gregor Millar

Kris in the Royal Navy



Kris Main spent the first two years of his working life fixing torpedoes at HM Naval Base Clyde at Faslane. Now, he fits heating systems – and says he'll never go back to the Royal Navy.

Kris, 23, competed in the UK Heating Installer Awards at the InstallerSHOW in June. He was the only Scot nominated for the Rising Star award, in recognition of his apprenticeship work with SNIPEF member IMS Heat Pumps.

"I always wanted to be a plumber," said Kris, who was talking to *PlumbHeat* during his lunch break on a job just outside Cupar in Fife. "I used to be a torpedo engineer in the Royal Navy and

I think that's given me good discipline. I'm a perfectionist.

"I've been at IMS for two-and-a-half years, as part of my four-year apprenticeship with Perth College. It's about getting myself a good career and being somewhere that keeps me right."

Kris works with his best friend, Cameron Martin, who has been with IMS for six years. They've been friends since S1 at their local high school.

Cameron said: "Kris has been nominated for Rising Star because he has a whole different way of looking at work. He's a quick learner and any task

I want him to do he gets on with. He's a bit older than some of the other apprentices and being put forward for the award gives them all something to aim for."

For Kris, working on heating systems gives him a chance to problem-solve because every job is different.

He said: "I like this job because I like taking control of a situation. I don't panic and I think that's to do with my training.

"I enjoy working with the heating engineers because I get a chance to put my views across and what I say is listened to. It's really exciting."

Kris isn't the only heating engineer who is making the most of the demand for new types of home heating.

Since April 2024, Scotland's New Build Heat Standard has required all new buildings applying for a warrant to use climate-friendly heating systems instead of direct emission boilers such as gas or oil.

The work shares some similarities with traditional installations but the technologies – and the skills needed to fit them – are different.

"It's all about the design when it comes to heat pumps," Cameron said. "It's about making sure your whole heating system has been designed well and that the customer knows how

Emma Bohan, MD at IMS Heat Pumps, said:

"Kris's success highlights the strength of the apprenticeship model and the opportunity our industry offers. He is not alone – we have welcomed trainees from

teaching, kitchen fitting and many other careers into IMS. Each brings unique skills and perspectives and together they strengthen our business and our sector. The next

outstanding apprentice could come from anywhere and that is what makes this pathway so important for the future of low-carbon heating."



“I feel part of a team that wants to do better for the world. There’s no chance I’m going back to the Royal Navy”

to make the most of it. You get a comfortable temperature all year round and people are really pleased with the ones we fit.”

For Kris, working in a growing industry that’s also good for the planet is a major motivation.

“When I was at Faslane there were always protests at the gate about the environment, so I became a lot more aware of it there,” he said.

From engineering torpedoes to now mastering heat pumps, Kris has shown how quickly skills can be transferred and transformed into a career with purpose.

His story is not just about leaving behind the Royal Navy but about building a career that is essential to Scotland achieving its sustainable ambitions.

He added: “I feel part of a team that wants to do better for the whole world. There’s no chance I’m going back to the Royal Navy!

“This is just the start for me. I’ve got a trade for life and I’m glad it’s in a profession that’s doing something good for the future.” ■

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Kirsty has now entered her second year as an apprentice

Cutting a new path

Kirsty Bennett reveals how she made the change from a career in hairdressing to starting an apprenticeship in plumbing and heating

The plumbing and heating profession is always evolving, with new technology and regulations, but one thing has been slow to change – the make-up of its workforce.

Traditionally, the industry has been male-dominated, with apprentices starting shortly after finishing school. But amid skills shortages, diversifying our search for new recruits could be essential to building a stronger future.

Apprentice Kirsty Bennett, of Carnoustie, is one of the

By Gregor Millar

next generation of talent who proves it's never too late to change career after spending many years as a hairdresser.

The 39-year-old completed a City and Guilds course in hairdressing after she left school, working at salons in Broughty Ferry and Dundee city centre for several years to further develop her career.

But over time, she started to lose her passion for hairdressing and, at the back of her mind, she always had a desire to try something

different. "I'd been saying to myself for the last 10 years that I really want to change career," Kirsty said. "I approached Dundee and Angus College and met a careers adviser. I said I'd always been good with my hands, always tinkering about.

"My dad was the gas coordinator for Dundee City Council and I remember asking him when I was younger if I could do work experience with him. He said, 'Not a chance, this isn't a job for a woman'.

“For me, the big change has been moving and adapting from the salon environment to a building site”

“I told the adviser my dad was a gas engineer but I would really like to do plumbing – luckily enough there was one space left for pre-app at the college.”

Kirsty started her course in 2023, initially dividing her time between college during the day and working as a self-employed hairdresser at night to help pay the bills.

She applied for a variety of roles but missed out due to lack of experience, so studied mechanical engineering systems at West College Scotland in Paisley for a year, while continuing to travel back and forth from Carnoustie three days a week.

Upon completing this course, she resumed her job search, spotting an opening for an apprentice plumber at Emtec.

Kirsty said: “Lots of people had applied but I was really driven to prove I could do this – and I got the job.”

“Even though I’d been knocked back a few times, I was always eager to prove people wrong and prove to my dad that I was able to do this.”

“It hasn’t been easy but I’m so glad I did it – I just wish I’d done it sooner.”

Kirsty is now entering her second year as a plumbing apprentice with Emtec, completing her Modern Apprenticeship through SNIPEF Training Services at Dundee and Angus College.

Moving from the salon environment to the world of plumbing and heating has been quite a change, especially as the only woman in the team.

Kirsty explained: “When I first joined, some of the guys found it difficult because they thought they would have to change how they were. But they soon got to know me – and my strong personality! The guys in my team have

been brilliant and I really enjoy working with them.

“For me, the big change has been moving and adapting from the salon environment to a building site. From a fitness standpoint, it’s a big physical change but I’ve got to grips with it quickly and have loved every second.”

Kirsty might not describe herself as a trailblazer but her story is certainly inspiring to people with similar ideas about making a change in their life.

As someone who has gone through the process, Kirsty is keen to share advice with others looking to follow a similar journey.

She said: “I know I’m not the only person who has spent a lot of time wishing they had done something different. I didn’t want to reach 10 years down the line and regret not making that decision. So, I’d say to others, go for it, life’s too short not to.”

“I’d also advise people to visit their local college. If it wasn’t for me going in and speaking to that adviser, this maybe wouldn’t have happened. Sometimes you just need to

Eddie Fergus



Eddie Fergus, Business Support Manager at Emtec Building Services, said:

“There was no hesitation in offering Kirsty an apprenticeship. She demonstrated passion and determination, underpinned by the ability and commitment she had already shown through pre-apprenticeship and engineering courses.

“Since then, she has received nothing but praise from college and her colleagues, moving into her second year with the same dedication that Emtec Building Services has shown to her. This mutual commitment is building a partnership we hope will last throughout a long, successful career.”

James Hendry



James Hendry, Operations Manager at Emtec Building Services said:

“Kirsty has brought the same professionalism and dedication that served her well in her first career.

“From day one she has given her very best to every project, leading by example and earning praise not only from her team but also from clients, who consistently commend her positive attitude and strong work ethic.

“We have no doubt that Kirsty will complete her apprenticeship to the highest standard and grow into a real asset for our business.

“Beyond her own achievements, her journey is an inspiring reminder that plumbing is a career open to all and we hope her story encourages more women to consider joining our industry.”



Kirsty started her career in a hair salon in Broughty Ferry

➤ speak to people and unlock a passion you have for something that you never knew you had.

"But I would also say to those similar ages to me that you're not too old to make a change. Age is just a number. It's never too late to change your career but you've got to want to make these changes yourself.

"Jobs won't come and find you but if you are driven to make a change, there are wonderful opportunities out there for everyone."

EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

As we continue to see workforce shortages impacting businesses, with skilled workers being in short supply sector-wide, it may be the time for employers to think out the box when it comes to recruitment.

Kirsty provides an interesting example of two new avenues that employers could explore when bolstering their teams.

Firstly, our profession often favours apprentices based on their youth. This makes sense as you have time to train and develop them into a skilled professional perfectly suited to your business.

But it shouldn't be the only option and Kirsty proves there are older people out there with the drive, determination and life experience to succeed in another role. They won't all be



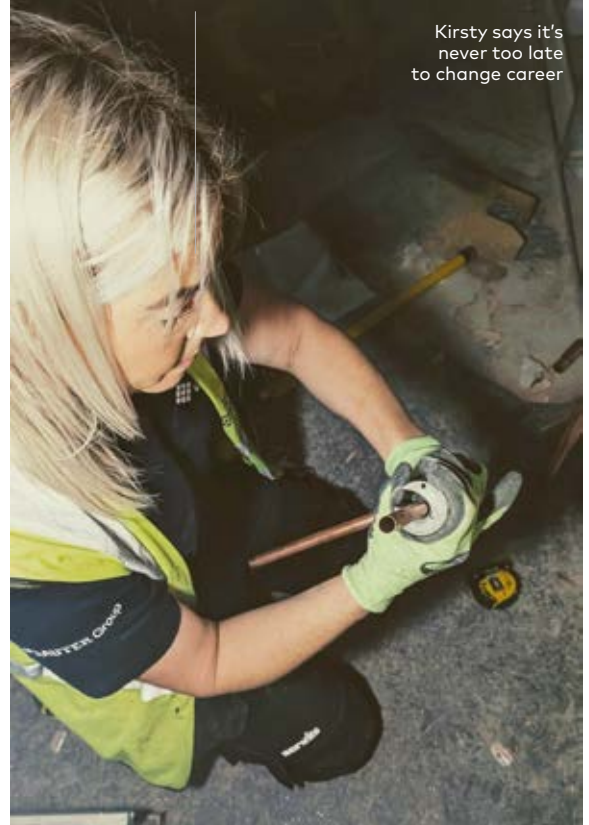
Kirsty discusses a project with an Emtec colleague

hairdressers – but there must be many people working in other professions within the construction sector who also have the skill set to succeed in our industry.

Kirsty also represents a group still underrepresented in our industry – women.

The plumbing and heating profession, and construction in general, has long been male-dominated, which means employers naturally see fewer female applicants. But that makes it more important to recognise the talent and perspective women can bring.

Rather than seeing sex as a barrier, employers should see it as an opportunity to broaden the skills and strengths within their teams. Stories such as Kirsty's show how much value can be added when women are given the chance to thrive. ■



Kirsty says it's never too late to change career



The physical aspect of plumbing has been a big change



Jobs won't come and find you but if you are driven to make a change, there are wonderful opportunities out there for everyone"

On the record

Clear and comprehensive record-keeping is crucial if a contractual claim arises. The CICV's latest guide will help you follow best practice and avoid lengthy disputes



By Len Bunton

The Construction Industry Collective Voice (CICV) has published the second in a new series of best practice guides to help SNIPEF members with the commercial management of construction projects.

Authored by consultants Len Bunton, Sean Bradley and Mark Holden-Smith, the guide highlights a common mistake in failing to maintain comprehensive records of contract events. These become crucial if a contractual claim arises or if an employer seeks to impose liquidated damages.

As highlighted in Practice Note 1, ensuring contractual notices are issued in compliance with the agreement is essential. This is particularly important when pursuing claims for extensions of time, or loss and expense – failure to provide proper notice may invalidate a claim.

A recurring issue in disputes is the loss of project knowledge when key personnel – such as site managers – leave their roles. Additionally, poor management of electronic files, including missing documents, can create significant challenges.

To mitigate these risks, project records should be securely stored and readily accessible from the outset of the contract.

Failure to maintain adequate records can undermine a contractor's ability to pursue contractual claims, defend against employer allegations and support adjudication or legal proceedings.

Without comprehensive records, a contractor pursuing an adjudication may face unsuccessful claims due to lack of evidence, liability for adjudicator and consultant fees and serious financial repercussions for the business.

FINAL ADVICE

"If you fail to prepare, then prepare to fail." By following these best practices, you can improve project management, avoid disputes and ensure contractual compliance.

The CICV is a collaboration of trade and professional bodies that gather intelligence, share advice and engage with the government to benefit people across the construction sector. ■



Find out more and download the Notes at www.cicvforum.co.uk

Key records to maintain

1. ESSENTIAL CONTRACT DOCUMENTATION

- All tender documents.
- Emails and electronic communications.
- Hard copies of key correspondence.

2. MEETING AND SITE DOCUMENTATION

- Pre-start meeting and progress meeting minutes.
- Meeting records with subcontractors.

3. PROJECT EXECUTION RECORDS

- Site diaries outlining daily progress.
- Site instructions.
- Requests for information, with a tracker showing request dates and response times.
- Records of variations to the contract.
- Construction drawings and a drawing register.

4. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- Tender programme.
- Contract programme and any progress updates.
- As-built programme (critical for extension of time claims).
- Additional programming documents.

5. DEFECTS AND QUALITY CONTROL

- Snagging lists.
- Defect resolution records, including dates of client acceptance.

6. VISUAL EVIDENCE

- Weekly photographs with date stamps and annotations.
- Video recordings of progress and site conditions (helmet-mounted cameras can be used to document delays and inaccessible areas).

7. SUBCONTRACTOR DOCUMENTATION

- Ensure subcontractors maintain detailed records, as their support may be needed for claims.


“These records become crucial if a contractual claim arises or if an employer seeks to impose liquidated damages”



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Apprentices are eager to learn and bring the latest methods from their training

Steps to success

Thinking of hiring an apprentice? Take these three simple steps to make it happen

Taking on a plumbing and heating apprentice is a great way to strengthen your workforce – but navigating applications, college places and paperwork can feel daunting. That's where SNIPEF Training Services (STS) steps in.

As the only industry-approved provider of the Modern Apprenticeship in Plumbing and Heating in Scotland, STS has supported employers since 1983 by streamlining the process, securing college placements and covering off-the-job costs such as college fees, registration fees and CSCS cards, as well as providing Regional Training Officers to guide you and your apprentice through the journey.

By bringing in an apprentice, you're not only helping to secure

the future of the profession, you're also investing in long-term benefits for your company.

Apprentices are motivated, eager to learn and they bring the latest methods and knowledge from their training, while you provide the hands-on experience they need. This creates a valuable exchange of skills, fresh enthusiasm and measurable improvements in service quality and productivity.

If you're ready to harness these benefits, take these simple steps to recruit an apprentice.

STEP ONE

Find a plumbing and heating apprentice by contacting one of our Regional Training Officers (RTOs), who can advise on individuals looking to start an apprenticeship, or people seeking an employer to complete their apprenticeship.

RTOs have strong links with plumbing pre-apprenticeship classes, which provide an excellent recruitment pool of candidates who have already



By Dale Thomson, Apprentice Training Manager at SNIPEF Training Services

For more information, employers can also visit snipef.org/apprenticeships

had a taster of the industry. You can also contact our Training Services team, who can share details and CVs of individuals who have expressed an interest in apprenticeships.

STEP TWO

When you have found an apprentice, contact us to request a New Start Application Pack, which will be emailed to you. Complete the relevant sections, including the SNIJIB training agreement and Industry Aptitude and Selection test for apprentices to undertake.

Alternatively, you can request our 'external application pack request form' from **becomeaplumber.org**

Once this form has been completed you will automatically be sent an email with a link to our online application pack.

STEP THREE

Return the forms and information to us. We will send you an acknowledgement email once these have been received. The forms will be passed to your local RTO, who will arrange the apprentice's induction onto the training programme.

College places can be limited, so send applications as early as possible. Most colleges start between August and October although, if there is demand, we sometimes have classes starting in January. All paperwork should be received by STS before the college year commences.

And it's as easy as that. If you have any other queries, please contact **training@snipef.org** or **0131 524 1245**. ■

Regional Training Officers

● ELAINE WHITEHEAD

elaine.whitehead@snipef.org
07801 741349, Borders College,
Fife College, Edinburgh College

● EMMA LAVERY

emma.lavery@snipef.org
07795 174770, Glasgow Clyde,
West College Scotland (Greenock),
West College Scotland (Paisley)

● JULIE RANKIN

julie.rankin@snipef.org 07801 741348,
Ayrshire College, Dumfries & Galloway
College, South Lanarkshire College

● MICHELLE CROLY

michelle.croly@snipef.org
07718 424453, Forth Valley College,
Glasgow Kelvin College, West College
Scotland (Clydebank)

● NEIL FOXCROFT

neil.foxcroft@snipef.org 07795 314271,
UHI Inverness, UHI Moray

● VANESSA DOCHERTY

vanessa.docherty@snipef.org
07801 741344, Dundee & Angus
College, North East Scotland College
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ProZone

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

Find everything you need for renewables projects and save time and hassle at dedicated solar site in Coatbridge

City Plumbing has opened a dedicated solar hub in Coatbridge to help installers across Scotland get what they need faster, and keep solar projects on track.

The new solar hub, based at the PTS Coatbridge site, offers a variety of essential solar products, including solar PV modules, mounting systems, inverters, cables, and switches. All products are available for customers to collect meaning they can pick up last-minute items to complete installations and avoid costly delays.

Centrally located, the Coatbridge solar hub also offers a same-day collection point for a wider range of solar products and a next-day delivery service for its full solar range throughout mainland Scotland.

City Plumbing's first solar hub opened in St Albans, with additional hubs now operational in Salford, Sheffield, Gloucester, Exeter, Birmingham Aston, Sidcup and Southampton Portswood.

The hubs are part of the merchant's wider support for solar following the



City Plumbing launches new solar hub for easy access to solar essentials

appointment of four specialist Key Account Managers. The highly experienced team are on hand to help contractors of all sizes with a range of services, including in-house design and feasibility assessments.

"Time and flexibility are crucial for solar projects," said Hemal Morjaria, Managing Director for Renewables and Electrical at City Plumbing. "Now, customers can walk into a hub and get essentials there and then, or order online for click and collect or free next-day delivery*. We also time the delivery of our PV panels for morning drop-offs to

help installers avoid issues with weather and site security while reducing project downtime.

"By understanding the specific challenges solar installers face and tailoring our service to suit, we've had fantastic customer feedback and repeat business."

To further simplify solar installation, City Plumbing offers a solar PV kit builder that helps users identify all the components needed for a correct installation. Products can be added directly to the customer's basket for a fast checkout, saving time and hassle. ■

For more information, visit www.cityplumbing.co.uk

*Free delivery subject to terms and conditions.

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know-how and knowledge with the people who matter most.

✉ **Contact David Hughes**

07767 407 402
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Republic of Ireland leads the way on renewable heating fuels: Will the UK follow?

The Republic of Ireland has taken a bold step towards cutting carbon emissions from home heating with the planned introduction of a Renewable Heat Obligation (RHO) in 2026. Running until 2045, the scheme will require fuel suppliers to include a proportion of renewable liquid fuels in what they sell in a move that could reshape the market.

The targets are relatively cautious: 1.5% in the first year, moving to 3% in the second. But industry voices, led by The Alliance for Zero Carbon Heating (TAZCH), argue that Ireland can go much further, much faster. They have put forward more ambitious proposals with a 5/10/15% stepped approach to 2030, using a renewable fuel blend such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO). The



Malcolm Farrow, Head of Public Affairs at OFTEC

opportunity is substantial. Around 700,000 homes in the Republic of Ireland rely on heating oil, the majority in rural areas. Switching them onto renewable blends would deliver carbon savings equivalent to fitting 160,000 heat pumps – without the disruption and cost that

By Malcolm Farrow, Head of Public Affairs at OFTEC



comes with replacing a whole heating system. Encouragingly, Irish officials are now considering higher blend levels. If adopted, it would be a powerful demonstration that renewable liquid fuels can cut emissions quickly, affordably and at scale.

This matters beyond Ireland. There are around 1.7 million oil heated homes in total across the UK. Labour in Westminster needs to learn from Dublin's pragmatic approach and adopt similar schemes to support decarbonisation of the UK's off-grid homes.

OFTEC continues to work with industry partners to engage the Labour Government and urge them to follow Ireland's lead. ■

To find out more about OFTEC's work, please visit www.oftec.org

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www.oftec.org



Back to basics with sealed systems

Altecnic explains more about the vital components that make up sealed systems and why it's easy make the switch to one

Sealed systems are now seen as the norm for domestic heating systems. They offer better running costs, ease in installation and long-term savings compared to an open vented system.

A sealed system is closed to the atmosphere, eliminates the feed and expansion tank as well as associated pipework. For a sealed system to operate, it must include an expansion vessel, a safety relief valve (or pressure relief valve) a pressure gauge and a filling loop.

EXPANSION IN THE SYSTEM

Lack of expansion leads to unnecessary wear on the pump and other components. Expansion vessels allow for a higher volume of water to be stored. The maintenance of an expansion vessel is important, however, this is made easier when vessel design and quality are prioritised. For example, choosing a nitrogen-filled vessel rather than a compressed air-filled vessel significantly increases the life span of the vessel. This is because oxygen within a vessel can cause the membrane of the vessel to corrode, and any air through the membrane can reduce the pre charge pressure. With a nitrogen-filled vessel (like the Reflex range of expansion vessels), this issue is eliminated.

THE FILLING LOOP

Although filling loops are a key element to a sealed system, they are not to be connected permanently to a boiler. After the system has been filled and pressurised, the service valves must be closed, the system isolated and the flexible hose removed. To meet Water Regulations requirements, the filling loop must be WRAS approved and made up of:

- WRAS approved backflow prevention device (a double check valve conforming to BS EN 13959 that can protect against a fluid category 3 risk)
- Temporary connecting pipe
- Service valve (two isolating ball valves)
- Four-bar pressure gauge (optional).

The Reflex expansion vessel comes with a five-year warranty



SAFETY RELIEF VALVES

Safety relief valves (or pressure relief valves) are typically used for controlling pressure. In a sealed heating circuit, building regulations state, where possible, a safety relief valve should be installed close to the heat source on the flow circuit. It should be installed in the cold water supply before the water heater ensuring there are no other fittings or narrowing of pipework between the water heater and the valve.

Valves should not be connected directly to a drain – the discharge should pass through a visible tundish with an AUK3 air gap and be adjacent to the safety relief valve, to allow vented water to escape. The discharge pipe must be the same size as the valve discharge outlet and must not be longer than 2 metres or have more than two elbows. The safety relief valve should be located at a maximum distance of 1 metre from the boiler.

FINDING A COMPLETE SOLUTION

Altecnic makes converting from an open vented to a sealed system of any size easy by packaging all the key components an installer needs into a handy 'Robokit Extra®' available from 8 – 80 litres capacity. The kit's key components are:

- Nitrogen-filled Reflex expansion vessel with five-year warranty
- WRAS-approved ALT-ST0035 filling loop with gauge
- WRAS-approved safety relief valve
- Mounting bracket
- Quattro four-way manifold fitting.

By providing the highest-quality products in a single kit, Altecnic makes converting open vent systems to a sealed system easy. ■



By Ed Morris,
Technical
Manager,
Altecnic

To find out more
about Altecnic's
solutions, visit
www.altecnic.co.uk



The Ancona Electric is a stylish heat solution

Discover the difference with Ancona Electric radiators

The Radiator Company has introduced more options for the Ancona Electric radiator. The Ancona Electric combines the classic Ancona design with the flexibility of a newly designed, fully controllable electric element, offering more choice when specifying heat emitters.

This multi-column steel radiator is now available in a wider range of dimensions. Another new feature is the option to colour match the element to the radiator to ensure a seamless finish. Available in 188 RAL colours and 36 special finishes, it's created with design in mind.

The element included is Eco compliant and offers eight function modes. The Open Window function also detects an open external door or window and turns the radiator off to prevent heat wastage. ■

To find out more, visit www.theradiatorcompany.co.uk

Getting the right advice

Monument Tools has released a Best Practice Guidance booklet on safe operation, storage, transport and disposal of Bernzomatic Propane and Pro//Max Cylinders.

This follows Liquid Gas UK's publication of Guidance Sheet 40: Guidance on Storage, Marking, Transportation and Disposal of Non-Refillable Cylinders (GS40).

The Guidance booklet includes:

- LPG/Propylene properties
- Safe operation of gas and torch
- Supply chain responsibilities
- Disposal of cylinders
- 12 steps to minimise risk.

Bernzomatic is America's number one

torch and fuel brand, which is now available to customers in the UK and Ireland from Monument Tools. The Bernzomatic T757T and TS4000 torches, as well as Propane and Pro//Max Propylene gas cylinders, have been sold into the UK under a private label for 20+ years. ■

To find out more, visit www.monument-tools.com/downloads



The booklet provides information on working with cylinders

RA Tech marks ten years of hotun success

In 2025, RA Tech UK Ltd is celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the launch of its hotun dry trap tundish.

It was back in 2015 that husband and wife Russell and Ally Armstrong brought the revolutionary product to the UK market. It led to a whole new

method of boiler installation opportunities and is recognised as the leading and best-known dry trap in the UK. It is still the only dry trap tundish on the market that is fully diagnostic friendly for PRV discharge.

This open sided construction allows the homeowner or diagnosing engineer to easily see any residual water left in the tundish after the PRV has stopped dripping, an essential need for properly diagnosing PRV water loss due to over pressure (or temperature).

Russell and Ally's company, RA Tech UK Ltd, has developed the world's first automatic audible and active diagnostic fault indication for PRV discharges. The in-tundish hotun detect alarm unit, with its thermistor sensing tip, can detect and alert the homeowner immediately to any PRV discharges.

This will prevent unwanted boiler lockouts due to low pressure at awkward times or the loss of heated hot water flowing literally down the drain. ■

To find out more, go to bit.ly/42x4a90



These products will prevent unwanted boiler issues



The SaniMHP range boasts ten models

Saniflo launches Clear Water pump range

Whatever task you're taking on, the new line-up of products has a high-performance solution that's reliable, efficient and easy to install, above or below ground

Saniflo has launched the new Clear Water range – a line-up of innovative pumps designed for the collection, distribution and pressurisation of clean water. Building on more than 70 years of expertise in wastewater management, Saniflo's Clear Water range offers robust, sustainable solutions for clear water applications, including jet pumps, booster pumps, submersible pumps and underground lifting stations.

Whether it's for rainwater collection, garden irrigation, draining basements or boosting water pressure in domestic systems, the Clear Water range has a high-performance product to suit every need.

Sanijet is a range of five stainless steel centrifugal surface pumps optimised by a Venturi (jet) system for

increased suction up to 8m. Automated for on-demand and self-priming for a simple start, the pumps have a max head between 50 and 54m and max flow rate from 3.6m³ up to 5m³.

SaniMHP is a ten-strong range of multi-stage surface pumps ideal for irrigation, rainwater use and water supply. From the 4-40 to the 9-50 PC4 model offering max head ranges from 40m to 52m and max flow from 4m³ to 8.7m³, there's one for pretty much every clean water movement requirement.

With four models in the range and max head capacities between 40–54m, the new **Saniboost** range is a domestic booster pump ideal for optimised and smooth water supply. Max flow from 3.6m³ to 5m³ ensures there is a model to increase and regulate the

pressure of water collected in most sizes of domestic water tank and the units operate automatically and are particularly suited for low-flow consumption. A Saniboost includes a buffer tank that limits the frequent starts and stops of the pump to which reduces noise disturbances and wear on the product. Each model offers guaranteed service pressure on drip irrigation installations or automatic flush mechanisms.

Sanisub is a family of submersible pumps designed for a variety of applications including flood recovery, basement drainage, rainwater re-use and, in some cases, light commercial operations.

With flow rates between 9–15m³/hour and heads up to 11m, Sanisub models like the ZPK, 800 Rainkit, and Steel + Emergency Kit provide powerful, reliable water management for challenging environments.

The **Sanifos** range offers two pre-assembled lifting stations with 110L and 280L capacities for the management of grey or treated water. With four inlets, flow rates up to 14m³/hour and heads of 7-10m the robust Sanifos can be discretely installed underground to move water from buildings, garden rooms and multiple small units – such as pods.

From a sustainability perspective, the Clear Water range promotes responsible water reuse and offers eco-conscious solutions that support the full water cycle. By enabling the reuse of grey water and alternative water sources such as rivers, pools, and rainwater, the pumps help reduce demand on treated mains supply.


The addition of the Clear Water means Saniflo is now a one-stop-shop for all water management requirements; offering complete solutions for both wastewater and clean water applications. Whether you need to flush, drain, or pump – above or below ground – Saniflo provides easy-to-install, reliable systems designed to perform automatically with minimal maintenance. ■

To learn more or download the Clear Water brochure, please visit www.sfaniflo.co.uk



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If you're looking for underground solutions for removing waste water from extensions or buildings, clearing flood water from car parks or adding extra toilets to offices, Saniflo have the ideal product.

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