

Fuel Oil News

November 2025

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When is a chocolate bar not a chocolate bar?

When it's "chocolate-flavoured", apparently. The recent revelation that two of Britain's most-loved biscuit bars – Penguin and Club – can no longer officially be called chocolate caused a national outrage.

For many of us, these familiar favourites are wrapped up in nostalgia so, discovering they've become "chocolate-flavoured" stirred feelings not experienced since we discovered 'shrinkflation' – crisp packets and chocolate bars getting smaller while prices stay the same.

It appears a light-hearted story, but when it affects your trusted bar it's time to consider the bigger picture – soaring cocoa costs due to climate impacts that are feeding into broader food price inflation.

Extreme heat, floods and drought have devastated crops in West Africa sending cocoa prices to record highs. Across the board, food prices have climbed, driven by similar impacts. And while the need to tackle those climate challenges is undeniable, the human cost of doing so amid a prolonged cost-of-living crisis cannot be overlooked.

For many households, it's no longer about luxuries – it's about getting through the winter. In our own industry, we're seeing it first-hand: customers delaying or reducing their winter orders, while worrying about what lies ahead.

This is why the long-delayed Warm Homes Plan has taken on such importance. It is needed – urgently. Yet, even more important than publishing it without further delay, is ensuring it's the right plan – one that recognises the reality of rural heating, genuinely supports households through transition, and helps make warmth affordable again, while still driving progress on emissions.

As an industry, and as a community, we've weathered tough times before. With another winter approaching, and a precarious supply picture despite a mild start, that shared resilience will be vital once again.

But this year feels different. Without clear government guidance, there is genuine concern about how secure supply will be if the weather turns and demand surges.

What we can say with certainty is that our industry will, as always, do its very best to keep customers warm – but it cannot, and should not, do it alone.



Margaret Major, Publishing Director

✉ margaret@fueloilnews.co.uk

🌐 www.fueloilnews.co.uk

📞 07786 267527



Claudia Weeks

Community Content Lead

✉ claudia@fueloilnews.co.uk

📞 07436 338241



Rhian Burge

Marketing Director

✉ rhian@fueloilnews.co.uk

📞 07485 372626



Adrian Major

Commercial Manager

✉ adrian@fueloilnews.co.uk

📞 07909 968982

Fuel Oil News

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Optimistic, people-focussed and a master of bad jokes.

On the cover

The newly established, all-female leadership team at Craggs Energy. Read about the company's vision of a good fuel distributor for the future and how they will own and drive the business forward to stay ahead of the curve in a challenging market.



In this issue

Industry Focus on pages 20 & 21 offers valuable guidance on two very different, but equally important, aspects of winter preparedness. Three impressive product innovations feature on pages 24 & 25, and we consider the impacts of delays to key sector legislation on pages 8 & 9.



CMA flags concern over high forecourt fuel margins

The latest report from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) finds forecourt fuel margins remain well above historic levels, with operating costs yet to be assessed in full.

Following publication of its latest monitoring report on UK pump prices, the CMA has again flagged concerns about persistently high forecourt fuel margins.

Between May and August 2025, average petrol prices rose to 133.9 pence per litre (ppl) and diesel to 141.9ppl, up 1.9ppl and 3.5ppl respectively. While international oil markets explain part of the increase, the CMA noted that margins at the pump remain significantly higher than in previous years.

For the first half of 2025, supermarket fuel margins averaged 8.4% with that of non-supermarket retailers averaging 9.8%, both well above 2017 levels of 4% and 6.4%. The CMA's Senior Director of Markets, Dan Turnbull,

described the figures as "deeply concerning", noting that forecourt profits remain elevated.

The report emphasised that these findings do not account for changes in retailers' operating costs, which could be contributing to the increased margins. The CMA plans to examine these costs in detail in its first annual road fuel monitoring report, due at the end of 2025.

Retail spreads – the gap between retail and wholesale prices – averaged 13.3ppl for both petrol and diesel between June and August, roughly double long-term averages seen before 2019.

In parallel, the government is preparing to launch its Fuel Finder scheme by year-end, enabling drivers to compare real-time pump prices via apps and in-car systems. The CMA expects this added transparency to support greater competition across the forecourt sector.

The full report is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Weighing it up – a new Pumpkin King is crowned

Every great rivalry needs its stage – and at Compass Environmental, that stage is a pumpkin patch.

Now in its fourth glorious year, the company's Annual Pumpkin Competition has grown from light-hearted fun into a full-blown saga of pride, rivalry, and horticultural heroics. And 2025 brought everything: wild weather, fierce competition, and one of the greatest comebacks since Liverpool in Istanbul.

The rivalry: Matt vs Harry

This growing season was no picnic – a record-dry spring, a scorching summer, and Storm Amy's autumn rampage tested even the most committed growers.

Two of those are now etched into Compass folklore – Matt Thomas and Harry Ower. Matt took the inaugural title, but Harry's been unstoppable since, reigning two-time champ and chasing a historic three-peat.

But with Harry preoccupied by wedding plans, Matt sensed opportunity. He fought through heatwaves, shielded vines, and engineered a pumpkin of near-mythical size. On weigh-in day, it took four people (and the



removal of fence panels) to get the giant to the scales.

The result

Matt's pumpkin smashed the all-time record, reclaiming the crown and ending Harry's streak in dramatic fashion.

What began as office fun has become a true tradition – a celebration of teamwork, persistence, and a healthy dose of pumpkin madness. Roll on 2026!

For the full story, impressive final weights and more photos, visit www.fueloilnews.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rix expands with AR Fuels acquisition

Rix Petroleum has acquired AR Fuels for an undisclosed sum, adding a 17th UK location to its network. The deal strengthens the company's coverage across North Yorkshire and the North East. All AR Fuels staff will be retained.

Certas opens UK's first dedicated HVO-only bunker

Certas Energy has commissioned what it describes as the UK's first dedicated hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) bunker refuelling facility, located at Tyseley Energy Park, Birmingham.

EET expands retail operations through Harvest forecourt fuel supply deal

The agreement with Harvest Energy (Dealerships) Limited to "assume the existing fuel delivery responsibilities" for 47 Harvest branded forecourts across the UK represents significant progress in Essar Energy Transition (EET) Retail's strategy to expand its national UK footprint.

NWF declares itself "a dominant force" with fourth acquisition this year

NWF Fuels, has made another significant step in its strategy with its purchase of Harrison's Oils, a well-established North-West distributor, continuing its sector consolidation and expansion.

Argent Fuels introduces new brand

Leading waste-based biodiesel producer Argent Energy is introducing a new brand name – 'Dieselite' – to its fuel portfolio. Produced in the UK, Dieselite is a high-quality B+ biodiesel blend, developed to help reduce commercial vehicle fleet carbon emissions.

Greenergy completes acquisition of French fuel and lubricant distributor

Greenergy has completed its acquisition of Armorine, an established French supplier of fuels and lubricants, following final competition clearance.

OFTEC strengthens leadership team

Malcolm Farrow has been promoted to Director of Marketing and External Affairs for OFTEC. The move supports the organisation's commitment to driving the off grid sector's transition.

Read articles in full: www.fueloilnews.co.uk

Standard Fuel Oils acquires Dalston Fuel Terminal, safeguarding key fuel hub

Standard Fuel Oils Ltd has acquired Petroineos Fuel Assets Ltd, more commonly known as Dalston Fuel Terminal – a key distribution point serving Cumbria and the Scottish border region.

Announcing the acquisition, Standard Fuel Oils described it as “an important milestone in our continued growth and investment across the UK” and one which “safeguards a vital piece of national infrastructure.”

A key national asset

Dalston has been closed since the end of 2024. This followed the decision by then owner Petroineos to cease refinery operations at Grangemouth, from where Dalston was fed by rail, and convert it into an import terminal. Petroineos also confirmed it would not be renewing the rail contract after the end of the year blaming “financial losses on supplies into Dalston”.

The closure of Grangemouth refinery raised industry concerns over whether the capacity of the new import terminal would match that of the existing plant.

As the only fuel terminal in Cumbria, Dalston

was a key asset in the UK fuel supply chain and the decision, at short notice, to close such an important supply location led to concern over the logistics of future fuel sourcing.

Alternative supply points included Prax-owned Jarrow, which also closed following the collapse of the Prax Group, and Stanlow – a journey of around 140 miles from Dalston – adding considerable costs to those previously lifting there.

Speaking at the time, Ken Cronin, CEO of industry body UKIFDA, highlighted these concerns saying: “Closing any terminal will be problematic, but doing so with limited notice in the middle of the busiest time of the year is, at best, a risk too far.

“The effective closure of Dalston at short notice, without a plan to mitigate the consequences, is putting the regional supply of liquid fuel at risk.”

His comments underline the importance of Dalston’s reopening under new ownership.

The next chapter

The acquisition of Dalston Terminal by Standard Fuel Oils has been welcomed by



the industry, particularly with the company’s intention to run it as an industry asset.

Standard Fuel Oils says the terminal will strengthen its distribution network while creating new partnerships with businesses and communities across Cumbria.

With Dalston back in operation, Standard Fuel Oils aims to continue delivering exceptional service, reliability and value, while restoring supply resilience and contributing to the region’s economic future. “Our commitment to safety, sustainability and service remains at the heart of everything we do, and we look forward to this next chapter with great enthusiasm,” the company added.



WP Group expands bulk fuel services with new Birmingham depot

Taking their number of strategically located fuel centres to a total of ten, the new depot expands their bulk fuel services into a new region extending the company’s fuel distribution reach.

Communicating the establishment of the new depot, the business stated: “By

placing a vital marker in the heart of the Midlands, we’re building a more connected, resilient and sustainable fuel network for our customers.

“We’re ecstatic to get building strong relationships with both new and existing customers in the region.

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Nolan Oils: Proudly supporting the community



Nolan Oils, the Oxfordshire-based distributor, is proud to be sponsoring sports clubs in their local community. The business is now supporting Ardley United Football Club, Bicester Rugby Club and the Heyford Football Under 10s team!

Luke Nolan, Sales Manager, said: "As a local, family-run business, Nolan Oils is proud to sponsor sports teams in our local

community. Supporting grassroots sports is about more than just putting our name on a shirt, it's about investing in the health, spirit, community and future of the place we call home.

"Our community has supported our company for generations, and this is one way we can show our appreciation and gratitude.

"We've proudly supported these clubs for many years. At Ardley United Football Club, we sponsor the club's kit and the home ground, which is now officially named as 'The Nolan Oils Ground'!

"We wish all the teams every success for the season ahead. We'll be there supporting!"

WCF Changers: Nominated for industry award



WCF Changers, the Lincolnshire-based distributor, has been shortlisted for Business of the Year at the Grantham Journal Business Awards 2025.

Charlotte Carratt, General Manager Sales and Marketing WCF Changers, said: "Being part of the local community means so much to us, with over a century of serving off-grid homes, farms, and businesses across Lincolnshire from our Grantham depot, our company has always been built on strong relationships, reliability, and trust.

"To be recognised with a nomination in the area we proudly serve, is truly wonderful. We look forward to celebrating with fellow local businesses, and with our own dedicated teams who go above and beyond every day at the glittering awards ceremony on Friday, November 21st. We're truly grateful for this honour."

Celebrating excellence

Charlotte continued: "The Grantham Journal Business Awards celebrate excellence and showcase the outstanding achievements of local businesses and the people who make them thrive. Bringing together decision-makers and business leaders from across the area, the awards have become one of the most prestigious events on the local business calendar.

"This award is open to a business trading for more than three years with a minimum of five employees that can show evidence of business growth, a commitment to the local community, a business strategy and vision for the next three to five years, proven success and achievement during the past two years, management with the ability to drive the business forward and a genuine commitment to staff."

Good luck to the team at WCF Changers!



New Era Energy: Launches fuel tank restoration programme

Essex-based **New Era Energy** has launched a nationwide Fuel Tank Restoration Programme, offering a sustainable alternative to new tank purchases by extending tank life by at least five years, and reducing capital costs by up to 75 %

The innovative, sustainable service offers an environmentally responsible and economically efficient alternative to buying new tanks. Customers can expect significant savings while also cutting their carbon footprint and promoting circular resource use.

"At New Era Energy, we're redefining what it means to be a fuel services provider," said Melissa Lancaster, Brand Manager at New Era Energy. "This programme isn't just about prolonging tank life, it's about building a smarter, more sustainable energy ecosystem.

"Restoring tanks prevents unnecessary waste, reduces embodied carbon, and helps our customers stay compliant and cost-efficient.

"Whether you're managing a single site or a national fleet, New Era Energy's restoration programme is a smarter, greener way to manage your fuel infrastructure. The production of a single steel fuel tank produces c.2.5 tonnes of CO2. For one of our customers we're restoring 800 tanks, saving 2000 tonnes of CO2."

Stanlow coffee morning raises £1,735 for Macmillan Cancer Support

A recent coffee morning at **Stanlow's Road Terminal** has brewed up an impressive £1,735 for Macmillan Cancer Support, thanks to the generosity of staff and road tanker drivers.

Organised by colleagues Vicky Owens and Sally Buckley, the event saw team members from across Essar Energy Transition come together over coffee and cake to raise funds for people living with cancer.

The terminal was filled with the scent of homemade bakes and the sound of friendly chatter, as the community rallied around a cause close to many hearts.

The coffee morning raised £735 through donations and cake sales, with Essar Energy Transition contributing an additional £1,000 to boost the total. The company's support reflects its ongoing commitment to social value and community wellbeing.



Success for TEC Ltd at prestigious business awards

TEC Ltd, one of Ireland's leading suppliers and distributors of a wide range of industrial and hydraulic hoses, fittings, and adapters, are proud award winners after success at the South Dublin County Business Awards 2025.

At the prestigious awards, hosted by Irish broadcasting legend Marty Whelan, TEC was announced winner of the 'Best Medium-Sized Business Award'. The award, sponsored by Thorntons Recycling, recognises organisations that demonstrate exceptional performance, sustainable growth, innovation and commitment to their people and customers.

An innovative, digitally driven and sustainable business

Simon Van Lonkhuyzen, CEO, said: "We're incredibly proud to receive this award. It's a recognition of the hard work and commitment of every member of our team. Over the past few years, we've transformed TEC into a more innovative, digitally driven, and sustainable business – without losing the customer focus and technical excellence that defines us.

"The judges were impressed with TEC's consistent growth trajectory, culture of innovation, and strategic transformation. TEC's recent growth has been powered by investment in digital transformation, export development, and sustainability, including the rollout of its TECOIL reeling hose, new Biofuel compatible BIOTEC hose, AI-enabled ERP integration, and solar energy initiatives at its Clondalkin facility."



A business fit for the future

"I'd like to thank Thorntons Recycling for sponsoring this category, and the South Dublin Chamber for their continued support of local enterprise," continued Simon. "It's fantastic to see so many great companies, organisations and not-for-profits being recognised for the difference they're making in our community.

"This award reinforces that our strategy is working," added Simon. "We're building a business that's fit for the future – innovative, customer-focused, and proudly rooted in South Dublin."

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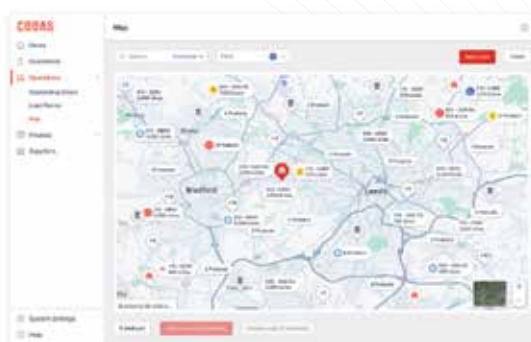
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Clean Energy Jobs Plan: Opportunity and uncertainty for fossil fuel workforce

The Government has unveiled its Clean Energy Jobs Plan – the first national blueprint to expand the clean energy workforce and support the transition away from fossil fuels. The plan aims to create 400,000 new energy jobs by 2030, setting out how existing and emerging skills will underpin the UK's net zero goals.

Key measures

- **Five new Technical Excellence Colleges** to train young people
- **£2.5 million in regional skills pilots** funding new training centres and career support.
- **A veterans employment programme** matching ex-military personnel with jobs in solar, wind and nuclear sectors.
- **Tailored entry pathways** for ex-offenders, school leavers and unemployed individuals.
- **£20 million retraining fund for oil and gas workers**, jointly supported by the UK and Scottish governments.
- **An expanded Energy Skills Passport**, now

covering nuclear and electricity grid sectors.

The plan also sets out new fair work measures, including:

- the extension of minimum-wage protections offshore
- a Fair Work Charter between wind developers and trade unions
- new workforce criteria attached to Clean Industry Bonus and Great British Energy contracts.

Sector response: cautious optimism

Reactions from within the fossil fuel sector have been mixed. While the inclusion of retraining funds has been broadly welcomed, industry leaders remain wary about the pace and framing of the transition.

Offshore Energies UK (OEUK), which represents many of the North Sea's operators, noted that while its members are already investing heavily in the energy transition, "taxing existing oil and gas operations yet harder... diverts capital that could be better

invested to accelerate the transition."

Trade bodies and local MPs have also warned of the risk of job losses – parliamentary research suggests that up to 15,000 positions could be affected as production declines – underscoring concerns about how effectively the plan can bridge workers into equivalent roles.

Nevertheless, the sector acknowledges the plan's recognition of its workforce as a vital part of the UK's energy transition story. The Clean Energy Jobs Plan signals a clear intent to build a "just transition", but questions remain about whether funding and timelines will match the ambition.

Key takeaways

- The plan positions fossil fuel workers as key beneficiaries of reskilling and transition support.
- Industry bodies stress that continued investment in existing operations is crucial to fund and enable that transition.
- The government's expansion of clean energy policies, alongside forthcoming DESNZ consultations and legislative changes, will directly impact the fuel distribution industry.



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Delay to the Warm Homes Plan: Why, and why it matters

The Government's decision to postpone publication of its long-awaited Warm Homes Plan is more than a bureaucratic inconvenience. The plan will detail how Britain intends to deliver affordable, reliable and lower-carbon heat to millions of households. If decarbonisation is to maintain the broad support it currently elicits, ministers cannot afford to lose momentum now, especially in the area that touches people most directly: their homes. .

For the fuel distribution community – which has kept homes and businesses warm for decades – this pause signals both challenge and opportunity.

Why the delay?

The Warm Homes Plan is reportedly delayed following a row over energy costs. Originally due for publication in October 2025, the £13.2 billion scheme is now expected after the Chancellor's Budget on 26 November 2025.

Energy cost disagreement: Balancing fiscal restraint with ambitious climate investment has proven politically delicate at a time of tight public finances and high household bills.

Ongoing scheme failures: An October 2025 NAO report exposed “*unacceptable, systemic failings*” in earlier energy-efficiency programmes. Faulty installations, cases of damp and mould in tens of thousands of homes and weak oversight have made ministers cautious about repeating past mistakes – and rightly so.

The politics of net zero: The delay comes amid increasingly toxic politics around net zero. Once a point of cross-party consensus, climate action has become entangled in a culture-war narrative with politicians and commentators framing green policies as an elite imposition, despite, as we have previously reported, clear evidence of a strongly supportive public.

In a conversation with Big Issue, Becca Massey-Chase from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) commented: “Britain is one of the most green-supporting countries in the world across demographics. Political fracturing doesn't reflect a shift in public mood.”

Research from the IPPR shows that voters in every constituency, bar two, want the government to move faster on tackling climate change. Those taking an oppositional stance are out of step with public opinion – and increasingly with the economic realities of the energy market.

Large-scale success and the next frontier

That disconnect is striking, given progress already made. Globally, renewable electricity generation overtook coal for the first time in 2025 – a milestone that proves decarbonisation works when policy, investment and delivery align. The UK's success in offshore wind and large-scale solar shows what stable frameworks can achieve.

But the next phase moves closer to home. The shift from fossil fuels to cleaner heat and higher-efficiency domestic heating systems will directly impact millions. Unlike turbines or solar farms, this transition will be felt in living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens.

For our community, this is familiar ground. Home heating may not be the hottest ticket in Westminster, but it remains central to public trust in the transition – and to the livelihoods of those who have long-ensured Britain stays warm. As the sector diversifies into renewable liquid fuels, technology, and energy-efficiency services, clarity from government is essential.

Why getting it right matters

Industry observers – including many within the wider heating and energy supply chain – have

voiced frustration, warning that hesitation risks eroding confidence. Investing businesses need clear signals from government. Wavering commitment could stall private investment and undermine job creation in one of the UK's most promising growth sectors.

The government now faces a pivotal moment. A credible Warm Homes Plan must:

- **Be bold but practical:** showing how investment today lowers bills and boosts comfort tomorrow.
- **Demonstrate fairness:** ensuring help for those most at risk of fuel poverty or rural exclusion.
- **Restore trust:** by learning from past programme failures and improving oversight.
- **Provide market certainty:** so suppliers, distributors and installers can invest with confidence.
- **Connect climate policy to everyday benefit:** emphasising warmer homes, lower bills and national energy security rather than abstract carbon targets.

Above all, the plan must take a pragmatic and just approach. Climate action will only retain public support if people feel it is working for them rather than being imposed on them.

Risk and opportunity

The longer the delay, the greater risk opponents fill the vacuum, turning home heating into another front in the “net zero culture war.”

Decarbonising homes is not easy. It requires technical skill, political courage and honest communication about costs and benefits. The Plan could anchor the next phase around the public priorities that matter most: reducing bills, improving comfort and health, creating jobs, and strengthening UK energy resilience. The potential reward is a cleaner, fairer and more secure energy system that serves the public while supporting sector businesses.

For the fuel-distribution community and wider heat sector, that alignment is key. The transition will not happen without the infrastructure, logistics and technical expertise of these businesses that reliably meet energy needs nationwide. Government must *work* with the industry, not around it, to ensure that lower-carbon heating remains affordable, accessible and practical for all households.

If ministers publish the plan soon, fund it properly and deliver it fairly, they will find both the public and industry ready to respond. Because warmer, cheaper-to-run homes aren't just good climate policy – they're good politics, and good business.

DESNZ – What's coming next?		
Timeline	Policy / Publication	Relevance
Late 2025	Warm Homes Plan – and hydrogen for home heating consultation	Will shape future off-grid heat policy and domestic fuel demand.
Autumn 2025	Future Homes Standard published	Requires rooftop solar on new builds; signals further electrification of heat.
Oct 2025	Carbon Budget & Growth Delivery Plan	Updated climate action plan. Detailed policy to meet carbon budgets and net zero 2050.
Late 2025	Response to North Sea Energy Future consultation	Clarifies fossil fuel licensing and transition support.
Late 2025	Local Power Plan	Expands local generation and storage, potentially altering regional fuel demand.
Feb 2026	Decarbonisation Readiness legislation	All new combustion plants must be “decarbonisation ready.”
2026	Circular Economy Roadmap for Clean Energy Industries	Will influence recycling and materials requirements for energy infrastructure.

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M A B A N A F T



Steve Little, formerly Managing Director for **Certas Energy**, has taken on the role of Chief Operating Officer, DCC

Energy GB.

Steve will be supporting the growth of the DCC group of businesses – Certas Energy Solutions, Flogas Britain, and Energy Management Systems (EMS).

Commenting on the move Steve said: “I want to take a moment to sincerely thank all my colleagues at Certas for your incredible support over the last three and a half years in my role as Managing Director. I am immensely proud of what we have built together.

“I look forward to this new chapter and to concentrating on how we can collaborate across all businesses to achieve our ambitious growth goals.”



Julie Stephens has joined **Craggs Energy** as Regional Director (North-West).

Julie has worked for market leaders, both independent

and larger distributors, for over 20 years, resulting in an excellent understanding and experience of the fuel industry.

She began her career in sales, working closely with customers to provide the best possible solutions and service to them.

Speaking about her new role, Julie commented: “My role as Regional Director will deliver operations and sales performance, and create an energy to deliver results.”

Emphasising her passion for leadership and continuous improvement, Julie added: “There will be strong focus on driving sustainable growth working within a one-team culture, establishing and building robust partners and customer relationships.”

Prema Energy has been joined by **Rebecca Cavanagh**. Previously at Prax Lindsey,



Rebecca is joining as Key Accounts Manager.

A spokesperson for Prema commented: “Rebecca is a dedicated and motivated sales negotiator with a strong track record of exceeding sales targets. Experienced in oil and gas sales, she is a high-achieving, person-centric leader who delivers first-class customer service.”



Following 16 years with Petroineos, **Alex Mcrae** has joined **Johnston Oils** as Operations Manager.

Having held the role of Liquid Renewables Manager, **Cathy Bailey** has now taken up the role of Energy Transition Manager for **Certas Energy**.



Formerly Commercial Sales Manager, **Danny Almond** has moved to a new position as Strategy & Growth Manager at **Craggs Energy**, while **Daniel Lynch** has been promoted to the company’s **Business Technology Lead**, having joined as Data Analyst three years ago.



William Everington has joined **Greenenergy (Flexigrid)** as Business Development Manager.



Sophia Haywood has joined the Board of the **Renewable Transport Fuel Association** commenting:



“I am happy to become a Board Member ahead of an incredibly critical period for the UK renewable fuels industry. I’m looking forward to working with fellow board members, the

RTFA team and membership on the huge opportunities and challenges ahead.”



Logistics UK has appointed **Ben Fletcher** as the organisation’s new CEO.

Ben will join 1st December, taking on full responsibilities from the start of the new year.

Phil Roe, President at Logistics UK said: “In appointing Ben we are building upon the successful team we have at Logistics UK and looking to further improve our delivery for members in both public affairs and our business services. In particular, we expect to build our influence amongst policy makers and regulators to deliver improved outcomes for the whole logistics sector.”

Accepting the new role, Ben commented: “I am proud to be leading Logistics UK, one of the country’s most powerful trade associations and the driving force behind the world’s best logistics industry.”



The **World Liquid Gas Association (WLGA)** announced DCC plc Chief Executive, **Donal Murphy**, to the position of WLGA

President for the next two years.

Responding to the appointment, Donal said: “It’s an honour to serve as President of the WLGA at such a pivotal moment for our industry. Liquid gas – and particularly renewable liquid gas – has a vital role to play in the global energy transition.

“Over the next two years, I look forward to working closely with our members and partners across the energy ecosystem to strengthen regional engagement, and foster collaboration that drives real-world decarbonisation. Together, I’m confident we can ensure our sector is recognised as a key contributor to a cleaner, more resilient energy future.”

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Head of Operations at
MechTronic

WELCOME TO OUR FEATURE WHERE PEOPLE FROM MANY DIFFERENT ROLES IN THIS INDUSTRY TAKE YOU THROUGH A TYPICAL DAY IN THEIR WORKING LIFE. THIS MONTH, FUEL OIL NEWS SPEAKS WITH **CHRIS WILKIE**, HEAD OF OPERATIONS AT MECHTRONIC, TO FIND OUT HOW CHRIS SPENDS A TYPICAL DAY.



MY ALARM GOES OFF AT...

It's either 5:30 am if I'm heading to the office in Leeds, or 6:30 am if I'm working from home.

THE FIRST THING I DO IS...

Have a much-needed coffee.

I PREPARE FOR THE DAY AHEAD BY...

Spending quality time with my children before school. It's important to me to have that family time to switch off before I check in with the office, emails, and the day's priorities.

I CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT...

My phone and keys, naturally!

MY TYPICAL DAY...

It genuinely sounds like a cliché, but no two days are the same at MechTronic – and that's why I enjoy my role. As Head of Operations, my responsibilities are broad – covering service, sales, purchasing, and production. This means priorities can change quickly, often driven by seasonal shifts in the industry or sudden technical demands.

I typically begin the day by conducting a thorough review of the previous day's service jobs. Checking that every customer request was completed to our high standard, and that any potential issues were fully resolved. Following that, a critical part of my morning is the check-in with the team to see what's scheduled and address anything that needs immediate attention. Our collaborative culture means we tackle problems quickly and collectively.

I run a regular planning report to forecast demand for the innovative products we're building, ensuring we always have the right parts available. The rest of my day is spent talking to our customers, ensuring their needs are met, and supporting our amazing team who make it all happen.



MY MOST MEMORABLE WORK MOMENT...

Without question, it was in 2020, when the Wilkie family, alongside our Technical Director, Simon Haigh, successfully completed the management buyout. That moment was about far more than just a business transaction; it was about securing the future and solidifying MechTronic's identity as a strong family business.

To operate under that umbrella of family values – trust, long-term commitment, and mutual respect – is a source of immense pride. The passion, drive, and stability that the family ownership brings flow through the entire business. However, it's vital to stress that the MechTronic team is part of that wider family. Every single person in the company contributes to our shared success and innovation, and it is a genuinely fantastic, collaborative place to work. To stand alongside my family and watch this amazing team grow and thrive is truly rewarding.

THE WORST PART OF MY JOB...

Genuinely, I don't have a worst part. I feel very fortunate in my role. I work with amazing people every day, and because we operate as a family business, there's an inherent level of motivation and passion that is self-sustaining. We are in such a fast-paced, forward-thinking industry that there's simply no time to dwell on minor setbacks; we move forward and innovate.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB...

Seeing the team come together is the absolute best part. We have worked hard to foster a healthy, positive company culture, and when you see that collaboration translating into exceptional service, it's highly rewarding. Receiving positive feedback from our customers – particularly when they go out of their way to praise a specific member of the team – is what motivates us all.

Knowing that the team is happy, engaged, and performing at the highest level makes this the best job in the industry.

I RELAX AFTER WORK BY...

Family and friends are incredibly important to me. I love stepping away from operations to enjoy watching my kids play football and compete in various dance shows. It provides that essential distance and allows me to recharge completely.

MY FAVOURITE MEAL IS (Breakfast, lunch, or evening meal)...

I love a good Indian meal – my favourite has to be a chicken bhuna!

ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE IS...

Charger, phone, and a bottle of water. Nothing too exciting!

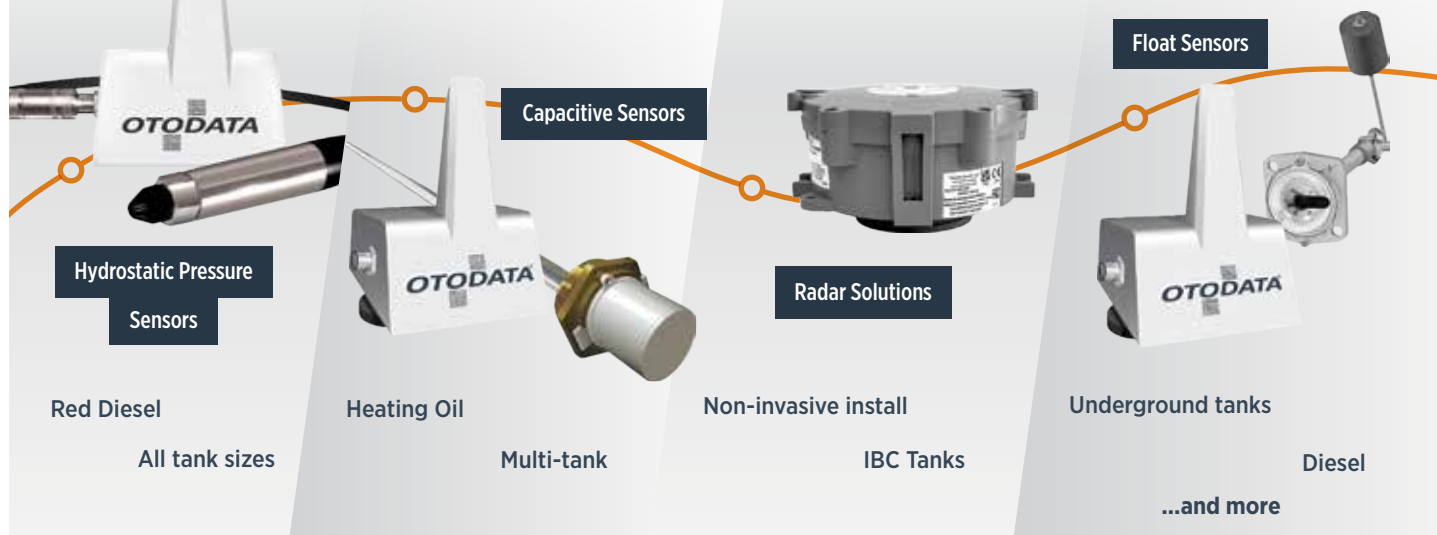
THE LAST THING I DO EACH DAY IS...

Say goodnight to my wife.

I'M NORMALLY IN BED BY...

11:00 pm.

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ESL Fuels Biofuel Market Update – Q3 2025

IN ASSOCIATION WITH PORTLAND ANALYTICS



Feedstocks

UCO prices remained relatively flat through July, ranging between \$1,075-\$1,090/mt (69.8-71.8ppl), on subdued trading activity as a result of regulatory uncertainty, as market participants waited to assess the impacts of changes to the US 45Z Clean Fuel Production Tax Credit on supply flows. Prices then rose into August, as Indonesia increased export levies on bio feedstocks, including UCO, with prices rising to \$1,120/mt (73.3ppl). A combination of limited product availability in Europe (a result of reduced Chinese output and ongoing Indonesian export curbs) and high demand for HVO and SAF produced from UCO, saw prices reach a three-year high in September, rising to \$1,160/mt (76.3ppl) mid-month. Prices remained high throughout the remainder of the month, ending the quarter at \$1,155/mt (75.7ppl) supported by increased trade.

Biodiesel

Despite an increase in Low Sulphur Gasoil Futures, the primary reference benchmark for biofuel grades, biodiesel prices declined at the start of July, with feedstock prices suppressed due to potential increased UCO availability from China (a result of changes to the 45Z) and production forecasts for rapeseed (the key feedstock in RME, which makes up 90% of the price of FAME-10) being revised upwards as the harvest season began. Prices then remained flat through much of July, on a lack of trading activity, before trending upwards in August, as feedstock prices began to rise. Biodiesel prices peaked in September, driven by volatility in the underlying gasoil benchmark due to geopolitical tensions, with an escalation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, following failed peace talks, disrupting oil supply. Additionally, exports of rapeseed from Ukraine, which usually peak in Q3, have been dramatically reduced, due to a combination of poor harvest and issues with new export procedures, with August exports down 35% year-on-year.

FAME-10 and UCOME

The UCOME premium to FAME-10 averaged \$97.50/mt (6.4ppl) across July and August, peaking at \$120/mt (7.8ppl), with UCOME prices supported by a combination of higher

Wholesale NWE Prices (\$ per Metric Tonne)



summer blending and upcoming regulatory changes in Europe. UCOME is favoured over FAME-10 as a tool to meet biodiesel targets as it is incentivised through double counting, however poor cold weather performance limits its use in winter. Suppliers therefore optimise UCOME blending in summer, which increases demand. Upcoming revisions to European biofuels policies, which include the expected scrapping of double counting, have compounded this, as suppliers look to maximise the benefit of this incentive before the changes come into effect. The differential declined in September, reaching a low of \$34.50/mt, as UCOME prices fell relative to FAME-10, with demand shifting to winter grade biodiesel as summer ended. Outright prices for UCOME and FAME-10 ended Q3 at \$1,488/mt (97.5ppl) and \$1,435/mt (94.1ppl) respectively, a difference of \$53/mt (3.5ppl).

Market outlook

Looking ahead to Q4, the key factor likely to affect biodiesel pricing remains regulatory demand, with amendments to national biofuels policies across Europe set to come into legal effect from the first of January 2026. Although markets have been adjusting to these changes throughout the summer, with high demand forecasts for low-GHG fuels such as HVO leading to multi-year price highs, delays

would likely impact pricing. For example, it is now widely expected that Germany will meet the deadline to transpose its updated biofuel mandate into national law, following continued pressure from industry to finalise the process and provide clarity for investors. As a result, the phase-out of double counting rules is likely to proceed as planned, which would reshape European biofuels demand by reducing incentives for waste-based biodiesel in early 2026. On the supply side, refinery shutdowns due to planned maintenance may impact short-term supply, with turnarounds at Neste's HVO facilities in Rotterdam and Singapore scheduled for Q4 – in an already tight supply market, additional product scarcity will likely lead to inflated prices.

HVO

HVO produced from UCO saw sustained price gains throughout Q3, supported by high demand projections following the expected tightening of double counting rules and increased targets within several EU biofuels mandates, including Germany, France, and the Netherlands, which will limit the ability to meet obligations using first generation biodiesels, thereby increasing demand for HVO. After opening July at \$2,130/mt (121.2ppl), wholesale prices gradually rose across the quarter, peaking at \$2,555/

mt (148ppl), the highest level since January 2023, on a combination of high demand, increased feedstock prices and expected production shortages as a result of planned refinery maintenance. Prices net of RTFCs, i.e. the price available to UK end users, rose from 70.5ppl to reach 96.1ppl by the end of Q3, with the increase in wholesale prices tempered slightly by rising RTFC costs. Waste RTFCs gained around 1ppl over the quarter, increasing from 25ppc to 26ppc (equivalent to 2ppl in benefit to UK HVO buyers as a result of double counting) in line with rising biodiesel markets. Mineral diesel prices faced downward pressure through much of Q3, largely driven by increased output from OPEC+ and record production in the US. Combined with the increase in HVO prices, this resulted in a significant opening of the HVO-diesel differential across Q3 from 27ppl to 52ppl, the widest level since September 2023 (excluding temporary supply outage in November 2024).

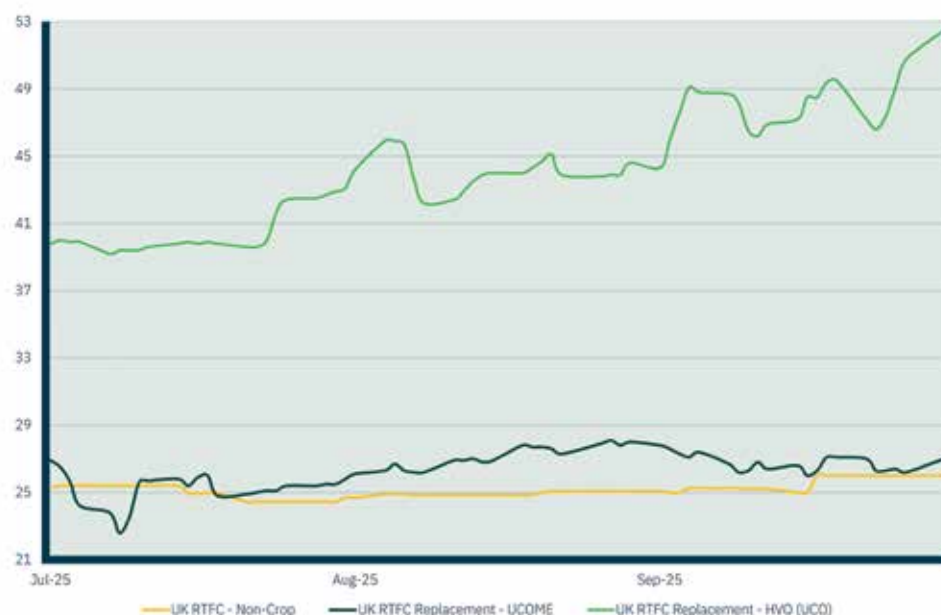
Certificates

Non-crop RTFC prices for the 2025 compliance period, remained relatively flat at around 25ppc through July and August, due to subdued trading activity in biodiesel markets, with UCOME, the primary price-setter for RTFCs, trading in a narrow window through the first half of the quarter. Although UCOME prices picked up mid-August, RTFC rates lagged behind, likely partly due to a surplus from voluntary HVO demand. Rates did however increase by 1ppc in mid-September, rising to 26ppc following a stronger uptick in UCOME prices, driven by increased feedstock costs and a rise in the underlying gasoil benchmark. HVO prices may have also contributed slightly to the rise – with demand for HVO in the UK being voluntary, higher prices are likely to impact interest, thereby reducing the amount of RTFCs generated through HVO supply, leading to a tighter certificate market.

HVO vs ULSD (UK Pence per Litre [PPL])



RTFC and Replacement Prices (UK Pence per Certificate [PPC])



News and policy

As part of its ongoing review into the RTFO, the DFT published responses to an initial Call for Evidence in August, outlining potential plans for the future of the scheme. Notably, respondents favoured a general increase to obligations, and some advocated a move to GHG reduction targets, rather than the current volume-based system, bringing the UK RTFO in line with several other European schemes. A consultation on proposed changes will likely be announced next year, with a view to introduce legislation to come into effect in 2027 at the earliest.

At the beginning of Q3, the UK Trade Remedies Authority issued a notice directing HMRC to register imports of HVO from the USA, as part of an investigation to determine whether US HVO is being subsidised or sold at unfairly low prices, threatening the commercial viability of the UK biofuel industry. The TRA is expected to release a Statement of Initial Findings in the coming months outlining its preliminary conclusions in order to guide the decision on whether anti-dumping or countervailing duties should be applied to protect domestic biodiesel producers.



A new chapter for Craggs Energy and Moorland Fuels

100% EMPLOYEE-OWNED CRAGGS ENERGY AND MOORLAND FUELS HAVE RECENTLY UNVEILED A NEW BOLD, UNIFIED BRAND REINFORCING THEIR ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITIES OF YORKSHIRE AND THE NORTH-WEST, AND DEVON AND CORNWALL.

AS PART OF THIS NEW CHAPTER, **MATTHEW CROCKETT, CEO**, HAS ESTABLISHED AN ALL-FEMALE LEADERSHIP TEAM THAT WILL OWN AND DRIVE THE BUSINESS FORWARD.

CLAUDIA WEEKS, COMMUNITY CONTENT LEAD, SPOKE WITH MATTHEW TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

Reviewing the business

"It's an exciting time for both Craggs and Moorland," began Matthew. "We have had two great regional businesses operating within the South-West, and North-West for several years now, both of which are underpinned with strong values.

"I have personally had the pleasure and honour of working within our industry for a long time (so I have been told!), and along the way I've met some amazing people who have been truly invaluable, and who have helped shape the focus of our fuels business.

"Earlier this year, we took the decision to review both the businesses. We looked at where they had been, where we are, and what the future looks like for a good fuel distributor within the UK, which also enabled us to embed our nationwide business Tank Topper.

"The starting point was aligning our

brands, our look, to create a purpose and a platform for all staff to work within, live our values and produce a manifesto for all. It was the foundation of a strategic plan so we would remain at the front of the curve in our challenging market."

A pivotal moment

Matthew continued, sharing more insight into the company's exciting plans: "Certainly looking ahead, there is a dynamic and evolving market landscape, so it was essential we embarked on a strategic restructuring plan of our business.

"I believe this marks a pivotal moment – a reset that allows us to realign our operations, sharpen our focus, and strengthen our foundation for sustainable growth, ensuring we have embedded happy employees that see the benefits working for an 100% employee-owned company."

A clear vision for the future

"Our vision is clear: to build a long-lasting organisation that delivers exceptional value through operational excellence and a relentless focus on customer success. By streamlining processes, reviewing our structure and enhancing collaboration, we aim to become more agile, more efficient, and more aligned with the needs of our clients and partners.

"This transformation is not just about change, it's about progress, and that allowed us to review the senior management structure that we had – we wanted to grow together whilst driving excellence that will define our next chapter.

"This new structure and approach – 'what matters to you, matters to us,' – has reignited the business and allows our new appointments the opportunity to navigate the exciting future ahead.

The new Commercial Leadership team will consist of:

- **Lisa Bennett:** Managing Director
- **Abby Turner:** Regional Director (South-West)
- **Julie Stephens:** Regional Director (North-West)

A dynamic new team

Fuel Oil News will be hearing more from Lisa, Abby and Julie as they share their thoughts on the industry, ideas and future plans in much more detail in our January issue, but for now, here is a brief introduction to the new senior management team at Craggs Energy and Moorland Fuels.



• **Lisa Bennett –
Managing Director**

Lisa is the new Group Managing Director at Craggs Energy. With over 20 years' leadership experience across FMCG, manufacturing, SaaS, and now energy, she has built a reputation for delivering transformation in business performance, culture, and operations.

Her career has always centred on people, innovation, and growth. She has led businesses

through periods of major change, helping them adapt, modernise, and thrive. At Craggs, she will now be applying that experience to the energy sector – guiding the business through today's challenges in fuel distribution, while preparing for the future with renewable fuels, innovation, and a strong focus on community.



• **Abby Turner –
Regional Director
(South-West)**

Abby joined Moorland Fuels in 2011, after several years in the United States working in public relations, where she gained a broad experience across a range of industries. This enabled her to develop strong communication and relationship-building skills, which she now brings to the fuel distribution sector.

Moorland Fuels, which was founded by her parents in 2003, has always been close to Abby's heart. On returning to the UK, she was selected to participate in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK programme, further developing her leadership and strategic skills.

Prior to Moorland Fuels joining the Craggs Energy Group in 2020, Abby had already built a

good working relationship with the Craggs team through sharing best practice and industry insights.

Passionate about delivering results, Abby is dedicated to ensuring every customer receives exceptional care, attention, and the highest level of service from Moorland Fuels.



• **Julie Stephens –
Regional Director
(North-West)**

Julie has worked for market leaders, both independent and larger distributors, for over 20 years, resulting in an excellent understanding and experience of the fuel industry.

She began her career in sales – working closely with customers and understanding their needs, to provide the best possible solutions and service to them. Over time she has extended her responsibilities, developing into managerial roles with an added focus on operations, compliance, and customer service.

As Craggs implements this exciting restructure, Fuel Oil News looks forward to sharing more insights from Lisa, Abby and Julie in the January issue.

Reduce your boiler's greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90%

Greenflame, our renewable heating oil, is helping fuel distributors offer a sustainable solution to meet the growing demand for lower-carbon heating fuels. Greenflame provides an easy way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90%.

It can be used as a replacement for oil and dual fuel burners, with technical input available to support gas-only setups.

Contact us to learn more about how Greenflame can work for your customers.



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How FORS fleet accreditation benefits distributors

As previously discussed in our August issue, fleet accreditation is quickly becoming a key competitive advantage, as the demand for safe and sustainable delivery operations continues to grow across the UK.

The Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) offers a clear route to demonstrating operational excellence, and achieving FORS accreditation signals a commitment to high standards, improved efficiency, and a stronger position in the marketplace.

What is FORS?

Originally developed to improve freight safety and emissions, FORS is now a UK-wide voluntary scheme structured around three levels of accreditation:

- **Bronze:** Focused on legal compliance and basic operational policies.
- **Silver:** Builds on bronze but with stricter safety equipment standards (e.g., vehicle cameras, sensors), robust driver training, and compliance with Work-Related Road Risk (WRRR) principles.
- **Gold:** The highest standard, requiring operators to demonstrate measurable improvements over time, as well as a culture of continuous development.

The WP Group – gold status

With the WP Group celebrating achievement of FORS gold status, Fuel Oil News spoke with Donald Mackay, Head of Operations, to discuss what this means for the business.

“We have held the FORS bronze award for several years now,” Donald began. “And



Dominic Stanaloff, WP Group Operations Manager, and Donald Mackay, WP Group Head of Operations



we were awarded the silver status in December last year. We are now delighted to say we have achieved gold status.

“It takes a lot of work to move through each level, but, at the WP Group, high standards,

structure, process and procedure is in our DNA. That meant that we already do a lot of what each level requires. The work we needed to do was linking what we do to each level. That is where we spent our time.”

Business impact

Donald went on to explain what the gold status means in business terms for the WP Group.

“It differentiates us in the markets we service, showing existing and new prospective customers that we operate to the highest standards and are focused on continuous improvement.

“Achieving FORS Gold is a clear statement that the WP Group is a leader in safety and operational excellence, environmental sustainability, caring for and developing our people and has a dogged determination to continually improve.

“The impact is extremely positive and hugely rewarding for all of those involved. Our people are the beating heart of what we do, and it is the work that they do that has helped us on our journey to FORS Gold.

“As a business it shows investment in our operation and our service to our customers, which is why people come to work each day.”

FORS is not just accreditation – it’s a competitive edge.

For distributors of all sizes, it safeguards road safety, reduces costs, unlocks vital contracts, and raises environmental credentials.

FORS offers a proven framework to help distributors not only meet current expectations, but lead the way in safe, sustainable, and smart fleet management.

Whether you operate five tankers or fifty, FORS is more than a badge – it’s a business investment that can pay dividends in safety, efficiency, and trust.

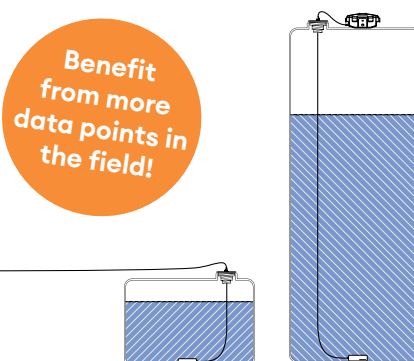
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From “The enemy of a good plan is the pursuit of a perfect one” to “Getting it done over getting it right”

Now is the time for leadership

As we move into winter, I've been reflecting on the political party conferences and the weeks leading up to them. The takeaway? Sobering.

There is now one clear, unequivocal fact – the consensus on climate policy is fractured. While broad support for tackling climate change remains, we're now witnessing a clear divide between net zero vs not zero, which some are calling net zero-ish.

Unfortunately, this leaves everyone in a position where they are forced to guess and gamble on what may be the most consequential set of energy decisions in a generation. Which net zero technologies will prevail? Is it safe to invest? Do we back option X or Y, knowing full well the policy could be reversed within three years?

This isn't just political posturing – it's a fundamental shift. For the first time, investors are being actively discouraged in areas where there once was consensus. This is unprecedented.

Across the UK, the picture is patchy:

- In Northern Ireland, the climate action plan advocates switching from oil to gas – yes, gas – with no mention of consumer cost.
- In Scotland, Parliament has voted through a carbon budget without discussing or publishing the plan to deliver it.
- In Westminster, we wait for the Warm Homes Plan. With recent ministerial reshuffles and upcoming elections in Scotland and Wales, I expect this will be delayed and possibly diluted.

A few months ago, I cautioned against chasing a technically perfect solution that was simply unaffordable for consumers. Today, my concern has shifted. We now risk moving towards a plan that values speed over substance.

It's no longer about doing it right – it's about getting it done. And that's a dangerous trade-off. The recent news that over 90% of External Wall Insulation (EWI) installations under certain government schemes have major issues is not only shocking – it significantly highlights these concerns.

Time to redouble our efforts

Whatever the Warm Homes Plan reveals, it won't be the end of the story for rural customers. They deserve real, affordable choices – not a one-size-fits-all mandate. UKIFDA and its partners continue to advocate for one such option – the use of a renewable fuel blend.

Our proposal is proven, practical and politically supported. It has strong backing from the Governments of Ireland, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and is gaining momentum among rural MPs in Westminster. We're not here to chase perfection at the expense of progress – we're here to deliver what's good and what's right.

And rural voices are being heard. Over 1,000 letters have been sent to MPs at Westminster in the past month alone, backing our plans.

Recent comments from readers of this publication say it best:

“There's no way we could afford to replace our oil heating system with an eco-friendly option, and if the Government subsidies are anything like they were for the electric car scheme, it would still be unaffordable for the average person living in the UK.”

“The energy transition is a difficult challenge for the Government. I don't think enough support is being offered to help people so they can make a positive change.”

“We're in favour of net zero – but not at any price.”

This is why we're doubling down on our efforts, as I firmly believe now is the time to show leadership.

Winter is here – time for calm heads

By the time this edition lands, the clocks will have changed, and winter will be upon us. With ongoing disruption in the refining sector, the starting point this year is far from ideal. UKIFDA continues to work closely with government to anticipate and mitigate supply challenges. I'm grateful to distributors for the real-time insights they're providing – these are vital.

Earlier this year, UKIFDA shared guidance with its members on the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCC Act), a landmark piece of legislation that sets new expectations for how businesses engage with customers. This will be very important during the winter months, if we experience supply issues.

At its core, the legislation encourages us to communicate with clarity, fairness and responsibility. It's about helping customers make informed decisions, especially during busy or high-pressure periods.

The Key Principles:

- Ensure all information is clear, accurate and complete
- Avoid overstating risks or creating undue pressure to buy
- Consider how messaging may affect vulnerable customers
- Be cautious with claims about stock levels or availability
- Use urgency-based messaging responsibly

These guidelines apply across all channels – written, verbal and visual – and align closely with UKIFDA's Code of Conduct, which states: “Members will provide consumers with accurate marketing, information and advice on the products and services they provide for domestic customers.”

We know that many of our members are already working hard to meet these standards. However, if any member requires further guidance, please do not hesitate to contact UKIFDA.

With the Warm Homes Plan, shifting government priorities and new legislation all in play, this winter brings more uncertainty than most. It also brings an opportunity to lead. UKIFDA will continue to support members, advocate for rural customers and offer clear guidance as the landscape evolves.

Winter resilience: keeping people and product moving

THIS MONTH, FUEL OIL NEWS LOOKS AT TWO VERY DIFFERENT BUT EQUALLY VITAL, ASPECTS OF WINTER PREPAREDNESS: THE PEOPLE WHO KEEP DELIVERIES MOVING, AND THE EQUIPMENT THAT KEEPS THOSE DELIVERIES SAFE.

As temperatures drop and demand climbs, winter puts every part of the fuel distribution chain under pressure – from the availability of skilled drivers to the ability of vehicles to stay safely on the road.

For distributors, readiness is about more than supply, salt and schedules; it's about forward planning, flexibility, and being prepared for every eventuality

Resilience through resource planning: Is your team winter ready?

As the temperature drops, the reliability of the UK's fuel distribution network becomes more critical than ever. Winter pressure, driven by supply and demand, exposes every weakness in the chain – from driver availability to terminal capacity – and throws an intense focus on forward planning, workforce resilience, and effective contingency management.

A successful approach to these is the difference between spending the month troubleshooting or mobilising your team to maximise revenue.

In our first feature, we speak with **Noz Miah of AIM Recruit** about proactive workforce planning and how strategic resourcing can protect business continuity during peak winter demand.

Understanding the dynamics

Each winter brings a relatively predictable, yet complex, mix of challenges:

- **Weather volatility:** The potential for prolonged cold spells with localised flooding and ice that disrupt both road access and delivery scheduling.
- **Peak demand surges:** Domestic, agricultural, and commercial customers all compete for fuel in compressed time windows.
- **Resource fragility:** A combination of seasonal illness, driver fatigue, and an ageing workforce leads to higher rates of short-notice absence.
- **Operational bottlenecks:** Terminals and depots experience congestion, while turnaround times extend just as customers need rapid response.



These stress points are part and parcel of a sector that operates with little slack and a shrinking pool of ADR-qualified professionals. The key to resilience is not merely having drivers available but having a workforce strategy that anticipates disruption rather than reacts to it.

Why workforce strategy is critical to supply continuity

“WE APPROACH WINTER READINESS AS A STRATEGIC LOGISTICS FUNCTION, NOT SIMPLY A STAFFING EXERCISE,” NOZ MIAH.

“Our planning process begins months before the season starts, identifying regional demand patterns, analysing previous years’ deployment data, and mapping the available pool of compliant, experienced ADR drivers.

“More often than not, as the season finishes, our clients are securing the same driver to come back in a few months – it’s the pragmatic short-term solution – until we can encourage the next generation of workforce to choose driving or logistics as a career choice.

“Until that time, we maintain a real-time readiness model, allowing distributors to scale capacity quickly while remaining compliant with driving hours, rest periods, and safety protocols. This data-led approach transforms workforce management from a reactive cost centre into a proactive risk-mitigation tool.”

Case study: Restoring stability post-Covid

In September 2021, the UK experienced an early onset of winter conditions just as the country was emerging from lockdown. Normal life had only recently resumed, and distributors faced the dual challenge of surging demand and severe workforce shortages.

During this period, a leading UK fuel distributor, World Fuel Services, required 39 additional drivers to stabilise nationwide delivery schedules across its depots. The combination of post-Covid volatility, a reduction in available workforce, and an abrupt rise in demand placed significant strain on operations.

Aim Recruit responded by deploying 22 fully trained, compliant ADR fuel delivery drivers on three- and six-month contingency contracts.

“This rapid intervention provided immediate operational relief,” Noz shares. “It enabled World Fuels to maintain continuity, safeguard revenue, and prevent delivery backlogs while we simultaneously recruited suitable permanent staff to fill the remaining positions.”

The result was a dual success: not only did the business maintain delivery performance through one of the most challenging economic periods in recent memory, but it also emerged stronger, with a fully resourced and stable permanent team ready for long-term growth.

This example highlights how strategic workforce planning and timely contingency

support can preserve operational performance as the industry prepares for another demanding winter season.



Resilience through people

“OPERATIONAL SUCCESS THROUGH THE WINTER SEASON DEPENDS ON THE ABILITY ADAPT TO UNPREDICTABLE CONDITIONS.”

Drivers who understand the importance of safe loading, route risk awareness, and customer urgency and can work under those pressures have a level of professionalism that cannot be improvised; it can only be cultivated through consistent engagement and retention.

By building long-term relationships with drivers and understanding their seasonal working patterns, Aim Recruit has created a flexible workforce that can be redeployed swiftly, with minimal induction friction.

Industry evolution and the next generation

Beyond immediate operational challenges, the industry faces a deeper issue: an ageing talent pipeline and limited inflow of new entrants into ADR-qualified roles.

Through initiatives such as Youth in Trucks, Aim Recruit is a company advocating for a new generation of logistics professionals, as Noz explains.

“We want to encourage younger candidates to pursue vocational qualifications and to see driving as the skilled, sustainable career it is.

“The future stability of fuel delivery depends on investment not just in assets and systems, but in the skilled professionals who keep the network moving.”

Looking ahead

Winter will always test the resilience of the UK’s fuel logistics network, but it also showcases the professionalism of the people who keep

it moving. The difference between disruption and delivery often comes down to foresight, preparation, and having the right people in the right place at the right time.

“Our philosophy is simple,” Noz concludes. “Anticipate pressure before it arrives, plan with precision, and execute with consistency. That’s how we help our clients, and their customers, stay supplied, safe, and operational – whatever the weather brings.”

From planning to traction: staying in control with AutoSock

Of course, even the best-prepared teams need the right equipment to face what the season throws at them.

From workforce resilience to road grip, the second feature takes a look at AutoSock – a simple yet ingenious product designed to help vehicles maintain traction in snow and ice – enabling drivers to stay in control. A small item that can make a big difference.

Winter driving? Be prepared to move safely

AutoSocks are textile tyre socks that slip over vehicle wheels to provide instant extra grip on snow and ice. They always make a difference – even in slush – and can be used both after a vehicle has got stuck, or as a safety precaution before tackling a steep hill.

No specific training is required. They’re quick and easy to fit and remove, reusable time and again, and compatible with all electronic systems.



We all know that it doesn’t take much snow to bring the country to a halt, and snowfall can happen unexpectedly – often when we’re far from base or home. Being prepared is the key to winter resilience.

Keeping business vehicles moving in severe weather is a vital part of that strategy, as is getting key staff safely to and from

work. AutoSock solves these problems straightforwardly and cost-effectively, although it is important to note that they are intended for short-term use only and not as a substitute for winter tyres.

Developed for real-world reliability

Developed in Norway over 20 years ago, AutoSock’s grip comes down to dry friction science: the hard-wearing road contact fabric absorbs and removes water optimally, while its fibres maximise the friction available.

The technology works so well that AutoSock are now supplied as original equipment to numerous car manufacturers.

One tanker driver who keeps AutoSock in the cab told Fuel Oil News:

“It’s down to the driver’s discretion when to use them, but they certainly gave me confidence and reduced the stress levels when operating in extreme winter conditions.”

An operations manager for a regional distributor echoed this feedback commenting:

“When temperatures drop, we’re often delivering to elderly customers or families in rural areas who can’t afford to be without heat. If one of our tankers can’t make it up an icy lane, it’s not just a delay – it can leave someone vulnerable.

That’s why we have to keep moving, even when the weather isn’t on our side.”

Compact, practical, and ready to go

The compact soft packaging – about the size of a folded shirt – means AutoSock can always be kept on hand. The waterproof storage bag expands to hold wet socks after use, and fitting gloves are supplied.

This winter, truck sizes will be available in High Performance specification, featuring additional straps for improved stability under cornering forces. With a larger tyre fit list than ever, almost all vehicles – cars, vans, HGVs, buses, coaches, and forklifts – can now be equipped.

Prepared for anything

For fuel distributors, resilience this winter depends on readiness in every form – from strategic workforce planning to the simple, smart products that help keep operations moving when the weather doesn’t cooperate.

Whether it’s having the right people in the right place, or the right traction on the right road, winter success comes down to one thing: being prepared.

This winter, resilience will again depend on the forward planning that keeps fuel moving when demand peaks.

A charter and a cup: How NWF Fuels built a safer culture

LAST YEAR, NWF FUELS LAUNCHED THEIR SAFETY CUP – AN AMBITIOUS INITIATIVE TO STRENGTHEN SAFETY CULTURE. THE CUP ENCOURAGED DRIVERS TO BUY INTO THE COMPANY'S SAFETY CHARTER THROUGH A REWARD PROGRAMME. WITH THE RESULTS NOW IN, **MARGARET MAJOR** CAUGHT UP WITH THE TEAM BEHIND THE INITIATIVE AS THEY PROUDLY REFLECT ON JUST HOW TRANSFORMATIVE THE INITIATIVE HAS BEEN.

A culture of safety, driven by our people

The true success of the Safety Cup lies in the overwhelming buy-in from our drivers. From depots across the country, drivers wholeheartedly embraced the competition, engaging with the Safety Charter and utilising our reporting systems with unprecedented consistency.

The results speak for themselves:

- **25% reduction** in collisions per million kilometres.
- **59% surge** in hazard reporting, proving proactive use of safety systems.
- **45% decrease** in contamination incidents.
- **17% drop** in spillage frequency.
- **3% improvement** in Lost Time Injury Frequency.

These statistics translate directly into safer, happier drivers, significant cost savings that can be reinvested into further safety improvements, and less downtime for our tankers – allowing us to maintain consistent delivery to customers and even increase capacity

A company-wide commitment

This transformation was a team effort in the truest sense. Senior leadership provided the vision and resources, transport managers embedded safety into daily routines, and our sponsors offered invaluable support. Most importantly, our drivers have been the real champions of this culture shift.

Rewarding excellence

A celebration, held at Oulton Park, was a fitting finale for our top-performing drivers. The event delivered thrills on the track, while offering a valuable opportunity for drivers, managers, and suppliers from across the country to connect.

Conversations about best practice, safety innovation, and operational efficiency



continued long after the engines cooled – running on through dinner and into the evening at the hotel. From refining safety practices to sharing ideas on efficiency, the event strengthened unity within NWF Fuels and reinforced our shared commitment to continuous improvement.

Voices from the day

Luke Armitage Operations Director: “The Driver of the Year Awards event was a true celebration of excellence, brought to life by Alan Greenhalgh, Fleet Manager, who transformed the idea of recognising drivers performing safely and at the highest level into a fantastic spectacle.

“A huge thank you goes to all the drivers who attended, whose phenomenal performance throughout the past year truly set the standard for success. It was a pleasure to spend the day and evening together, not only celebrating achievements but also gathering valuable feedback and ideas on how we can continue to improve the business moving forward.”

Alan Greenhalgh, Fleet Manager: “I couldn’t be prouder to spend the day with our Safety Cup winners and sponsors. Their dedication to safety and compliance has really paid off, and they truly deserved their recognition as ambassadors for their depots and regions. Each showed professionalism throughout the event, and the message of safety will now spread even further across the business.”



Adam Whitehead and David James



Pete Rich

Drivers also felt the impact as **Damien Jones from Babbinswood**, shared: “To reach the top of the league table after only three years as a tanker driver is an incredible achievement.

“Being recognised for safe and efficient driving has given me the reassurance and confidence that I am doing a great job. This experience has motivated our entire depot, and we can’t wait to compete again next year.”

The support, partnership and shared values of our sponsors have been instrumental to the success of the Safety Cup:

Gordon Hyland, Head of Sales at Touchstar, said: “Driver safety is one of our core values, so it was a perfect and natural alignment. It was great to hear such universally positive feedback from the drivers about the FuelStar system.”

Brad Wilkie, MD at MechTronic, echoed this: “It was a great pleasure to support such a fantastic cause – one we are more than happy to support moving forward.”

His colleague, **Ben Firth**, added: “It’s always rewarding to hear that what we are doing is really making a difference... it was great to catch up with the drivers and hear how OptiMate has helped improve their daily tasks.”

Together, these voices highlight the strength of collaboration across our industry, reinforcing that the Safety Cup is not just a competition but a movement that benefits drivers, partners, and the business alike.

The road ahead

The Oulton Park event wasn’t the end – the momentum is only building. With the success of the inaugural Safety Cup creating a buzz, planning is already underway for the next one.

It has evolved from a simple competition that helps to reward and communicate our Safety Charter, into a cornerstone of our culture



Gavin Spriggs



Josh Levy



Martin Darch



Rich Trowbridge

but the Safety Cup really fine-tuned my driving and encouraged me to make sure my teammates are staying safe too." **Pete Rich.**

"It felt really good to be recognised; the event was brilliantly organised. To next year's winners, I'd say enjoy it and throw yourself into it. These experiences don't come along often." **Martin Darch.**

"I was really glad to see some proper recognition for the hard work drivers put in. It's a great initiative that encourages every delivery to be carried out to a high level of safety. it was brilliant

and is driving us forward as a safer, stronger and more united company as the winning drivers testify.

"Winning felt really good and reassuring. It's definitely sharpened up my driving, and I check my mirrors non-stop now! I'm aiming for another win next year and will encourage other drivers too." **Gavin Spriggs.**

"I was very proud to be chosen for being a safe and competent driver. I've always been careful, but the extra training was useful to help guard against complacency." **Josh Levy**

"Winning felt like I'd achieved something to be proud of, and it was great to be recognised for it. I've always been a conscious, safe driver,

meeting drivers from across the country and people from our partner companies and I'd thoroughly recommend everyone gives their best to win the Safety Cup!" **Adam Whitehead.**

The message is clear: at NWF Fuels, safety is not just a priority – it's a core value that we celebrate and reward.



Keep your vehicles moving safely on snow!

Winter driving - Be prepared!

AutoSock are reusable textile socks, sold in pairs, which are easily pulled over the driving wheels when extra grip is needed on snow or ice

AutoSock give tyres outstanding grip



Cars - Vans - HGVs - 4x4s



Sales and fleet enquiries - please visit the website:

autosock.co.uk



Tested on the track: How Kässbohrer's new facility raises the bar for tanker design

When tanker manufacturer Kässbohrer cut the ribbon on its new outdoor test track earlier this year, it marked a turning point not just for its own product development, but potentially for the wider fuel logistics sector. Located in Europe and developed in partnership with IDIADA, the 12-lane facility is the first of its kind – owned and operated by a trailer OEM.

Until now, the process of tanker validation was spread across a patchwork of independent centres across the continent. With the new track, Kässbohrer can consolidate durability, safety, and manoeuvrability testing in-house. A shift that is not simply about engineering convenience – it has tangible implications for the specification, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of vehicles destined for UK fuel distribution.

Why a dedicated test track matters

For fuel oil tankers, design is as much about risk management as it is about payload. Vehicles are expected to cover vast distances, operate on constrained road networks, and carry hazardous materials safely under all conditions. Kässbohrer has set acceptance criteria equivalent to one million kilometres of normal use – a benchmark designed to capture the realities of fleet operation.

By running accelerated lifecycle testing under controlled but challenging conditions, engineers can model fatigue, stress, and failure points more quickly. This compresses the development cycle while yielding designs that are more robust, lighter, and easier to maintain. For UK operators, this translates into improved vehicle uptime, lower maintenance costs, and confidence in safety compliance across ADR and SLP standards.

The 45ft fuel oil tanker – engineered for UK roads

An example of the test track's impact is Kässbohrer's re-engineered 45ft cylindrical fuel oil tanker, the K.STB E 45. Designed with the UK in mind, the model balances stability and manoeuvrability to suit narrow roads, urban delivery points, and low bridges.

Key features include:

- Low tare weight (5,400 kg): increases payload efficiency and reduces fuel use.
- Low centre of gravity and roll-over protection: enhances stability on twisting routes.
- Dual-circuit electro-pneumatic braking with



Kässbohrer Silo on the Test Track

EBS and integrated roll stability support: meets the latest safety expectations.

- Flexible compartment configurations (1, 6, or 8): supports single or multi-fuel delivery operations.

The combination of alloy aluminium chassis profiles and proven component choices (such as BPW axles and air suspension) reflects a design ethos focused on both durability and fleet familiarity – important for operators who need reliability without complexity.

Efficiency and financial implications

For distributors, specification choices often come down to operational economics. By shaving weight without sacrificing strength, the tanker enables operators to carry more product per journey, improving cost-per-litre delivered. Lower tare weight also brings fuel efficiency gains and helps reduce carbon output – increasingly relevant as decarbonisation pressures grow across logistics.

Meanwhile, the six-year standard tank warranty (extendable by a further year) indicates confidence in lifecycle durability, which can help reduce long-term replacement planning and support better total cost of ownership (TCO) calculations.

R&D, validation and skills investment

The test track does not stand alone. It forms part of a broader R&D infrastructure spanning 22,000 square metres and employing nearly 200 engineers. Recent innovations include VECTO-based CO₂ simulations and lightweight modular designs – both with direct application in fuel haulage.

Crucially, Kässbohrer combines product design with investment in people. Its welding academy, established in 2013, provides TÜV and DEKRA-certified training for welders.

This focus on skills and certification ensures consistent build quality – a detail UK distributors may value given the safety-critical nature of tanker manufacture.

What it means for the UK fuel distribution market

For UK operators, the appeal of Kässbohrer's latest developments lies less in the headline of "new test track" and more in what that facility enables:

- Faster product iterations tailored to specific UK infrastructure challenges.
- More efficient and flexible tankers, supporting both cost control and environmental targets.
- Confidence in safety validation backed by in-house testing and third-party certification.
- Manufacturing consistency underpinned by formalised skills development.

In a sector where safety margins are narrow, operating costs are tightly scrutinised, and distribution demands are evolving, these elements combine to offer tangible value. Kässbohrer's investment signals an intent to align its product development more closely with the operational realities of distributors – a move that could resonate strongly in the UK market.

Sentinam introduces a new range of filtration systems to tackle diesel contamination and guarantee uptime

FoxPressure 10m: Created to handle the pressure

FoxInsights has extended its FoxPressure range with a new 10-metre variant, designed to support level monitoring in taller tanks and more demanding installation environments.

The development responds directly to user feedback from the liquid fuel distribution and storage sector, where tank height and installation layout can limit the practical use of hydrostatic level sensors.

The new variant meets that need. Building on the established 3m and 5m models the FoxPressure 10m combines a reinforced pressure probe with an extended 10m cable length. The result is a reliable, self-contained level sensor suitable for diesel or heating oil tanks up to 10 metres in fill height.

Filling the gap

In many distribution depots and commercial fuel applications, high-capacity tanks or below-ground storage systems pose challenges for both installation and signal performance. The 10m FoxPressure variant offers:

- Reliable measurement in tall tanks – accurate hydrostatic monitoring up to 10 m level height.
- Flexible installation – the transmitter can be located further from the tank, improving connectivity and service access.

- Extended monitoring capability – enables remote measurement in previously unsupported installations – useful in cases where a remote location ensures better connectivity, accessibility, or protection from environmental factors.



Fox Pressure 2022

Engineered for practical use

As with all models in the range, the FoxPressure 10m operates independently of external power and supports NB-IoT (LTE Cat NB1), Cat-M, 2G, and Wi-Fi, ensuring strong network coverage in both urban and remote environments.

Its integrated GPS function provides precise location tracking – an advantage for mobile or relocatable tanks – and the intuitive app-based setup simplifies commissioning in the field.

Summary

With the introduction of the 10 m variant,

SPECIFICATION

Measuring principle: Hydrostatic pressure measurement

Maximum measured value: 10 m for heating oil/diesel (cable length does not increase measurable level)

Measuring accuracy: ± 1 cm

Connectivity: NB-IoT (LTE Cat NB1), Cat-M, 2G, Wi-Fi (802.11 b/g/n)

Protection rating: IP68 (suitable for outdoor use)

Display: Two LED status indicators (device and radio status)

Housing material: ABS

Operating temperature: -20°C to $+45^{\circ}\text{C}$
Dimensions: $\varnothing 112 \times 48$ mm casing, 10 m cable length

Weight: Approx. 442 g (without battery)

Battery life: Up to 10 years (typical, depending on interval and signal conditions)

Adapter compatibility: $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 1", $1\frac{1}{4}$ ", $1\frac{1}{2}$ " or 2" threaded connections

FoxInsights has extended the FoxPressure range to cover a wider scope of tank configurations, from compact on-site tanks to large commercial installations.

The combination of extended depth capability, robust sensor design, and flexible connectivity makes the FoxPressure 10m a practical choice for distributors and operators seeking dependable level data across diverse fuel storage applications.

The new GT range of fuel filtration skid systems has been launched by Sentinam, a specialist in fluid management solutions. Designed for both transport and stored, land-based diesel applications, the GT range offers the fuel distribution industry a robust, scalable, and automated solution to combat the critical threats of solid particulates, water, and microbial growth ("diesel bug").

For industries reliant on stored fuel, from backup power generation to major transportation hubs, fuel reliability is non-negotiable. Contamination rapidly compromises fuel quality, leading to clogged system components, corrosion, and significant operational downtime and financial liability.

The GT range is specifically engineered to ensure fuel meets or exceeds critical industry standards, including ISO 4406 and EN590.

Utilising a multi-stage filtration process, the GT range features a bolt catcher, a magnetic filter, a 3-micron filter, and a coalescer, to remove all major contaminants.



GT Dual Channel Filtration System

The systems are designed to deliver exceptional fuel cleanliness, boasting performance data of 12/9/6 per ISO 4406 during the kidney loop process. The scalable range includes models from the GT1 to the GT5, supporting flow rates from 30 L/min up to 150 L/min to accommodate varying tank sizes.

Dual channel design facilitates continuous operation

A key feature of Sentinam's new range is the innovative GT dual channel design. Unlike single-channel systems that are vulnerable to failure when filters become blocked, the

dual-channel solution provides uninterrupted, continuous use. If the filters on the main channel (A) become inactive or blocked, the filtration flow automatically switches to the alternative channel (B), maximising performance and eliminating downtime during filter changes.

A partnership with Pollard Pumps, utilising their highest quality positive displacement pumps, also ensures the system can reliably draw fuel from tanks located several meters below ground.

"We recognise that for our clients, clean fuel is mission critical. Downtime caused by contamination or a blocked filter is simply not acceptable," commented Neil Turnbull, Managing Director at Sentinam.

"The GT range, particularly the OEM Owned Test Track system, represents a significant step forward in operational resilience, giving our customers total peace of mind that their fuel polishing process is continuous and guaranteed."

Cyber Awareness Month: Prepare for the when, not if, of a cyber attack

In our October issue, we explored the vital importance of business continuity planning – how organisations can maintain operations when digital systems go down, and the practical steps needed to stay resilient during disruption. As we move on from October – the month dedicated to Cyber Security Awareness – we turn our focus to prevention. In this issue, Karl Jones of OAMPS examines how businesses can strengthen their cyber defences to avoid an outage in the first place, and why proactive cyber resilience is now an essential part of every continuity plan.

With so many big brands falling victim to crippling cyber attacks in the past few months alone, 2025's Cyber Awareness Month arrived at a time when cyber security was a more prominent issue than perhaps ever before.

Britain's largest automotive employer, major manufacturer Jaguar Land Rover, may have dominated those headlines for the past month, ever since it halted production back on 1 September, but the retail giants of M&S, Harrods and Co-op, as well as numerous aviation-related incidents, have all received widespread media attention too.

Whatever the motivation for these attacks, or the specific tactics used, the most important thing to remember is that it's not just these well-known names that are being targeted. SMEs are also in the firing line. Statistics show cyber attacks are fast becoming more a question of when not if, and yet levels of cyber insurance take-up remain relatively low.

Research earlier this year by cyber insurance specialist Pen Underwriting, found that firms in the UK and Ireland are five times more likely to be the target of a cyber-attack than suffer flood damage, and yet less than half (47%) have dedicated cyber cover. Of those targeted in the past five years, 81% said the attack posed a serious threat to their business, 74% had suffered disruption and financial loss – and 80% had been targeted more than once.

The picture is starker for SMEs. UK Cyber security statistics also show that 43% of cyber-attacks target SME businesses, and 60% of these SMEs that fall victim to a cyber-attack, go out of business within six months.

Business owners barely need a reminder that cyber security matters when high-profile attacks on critical infrastructure have rippled across the globe in recent years, leaving communities, corporations and countries

without access to resources like gas, goods, transportation and more. It's more important than ever that steps are taken to improve cyber resilience in the event of an attack.

Ransomware is the biggest cyber threat that UK organisations face, and phishing is a common route for cyber criminals to infect networks. We know that phishing emails are getting harder to spot, but there is guidance available on what to look out for, and how to improve your organisation's resilience. The UK government's Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2025 found that phishing accounted for 93% of all cyber-crime in the UK.

We'd encourage all organisations to familiarise themselves with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) advice on mitigating malware and ransomware attacks.

So, how can SMEs protect themselves?

For many small- to medium-sized businesses, it's just not feasible to spend a significant proportion of their profit on a Cyber protection strategy. However, here are some things they can do:

- Educate your employees about their role in your organisation's cybersecurity
- Use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)
- Ensure regular software/security updates are carried out
- Sign up to Cyber Essentials (<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberessentials/>)
- Implement a strong password management system (including hardware/firmware system-set passwords)
- Control access to sensitive data or systems
- Take daily backups that are kept off-site

What about Cyber insurance?

According to the UK Government's 2025 Cyber Security Breaches Survey, around 43% of UK businesses currently buy Cyber insurance, although the number that have a specific Cyber insurance policy is only around 18% for SMEs. This is despite 43% of the businesses surveyed stating they suffered an attack in the previous 12 months.

Here's a sample of some of the reasons businesses don't believe they need Cyber Insurance:

- **We've never been hacked before**
- **We're compliant with GDPR, PCI DSS and other regulations, so we're secure**
- **We've invested in IT Security, so we don't**

need Cyber insurance

- **We outsource IT, so our provider will cover any costs if they're hacked**
- **We don't collect or store any sensitive data, so Cyber insurance isn't necessary**
- **We're too small to have a Cyber attack**
- **We're already covered under other insurance policies**

For many businesses, the reality is that they were targeted; their systems weren't robust enough to prevent a breach, and there was no insurance cover in place to help cover the costs.

It's important to remember that specialist cyber insurance policies offer much more than simple indemnification of costs incurred. They can offer firms not only the proactive risk management tools and training to maximise their resilience, but also immediate access to a range of breach response expert services should the worst happen. This post-incident provision will seek to maximise speed of data and systems restoration and thus minimise any downtime. Typically, both risk management and breach response services are provided at no additional cost.

Cyber insurance is therefore a valuable tool to consider in your Cyber strategy; the better policies now include:

- Vulnerability scans and ongoing monitoring
- Browser firewall
- Inbox protection
- Phishing simulations
- Tailored training for employees
- Access to specialist support in the event of a system breach

These policies can be also tailored to provide cover for the areas that most businesses are concerned about – social engineering, phishing, and ransomware.

For more information get in touch with the OAMPS team: www.oamps.co.uk/contact

The sole purpose of this article is to provide guidance on the issues covered. This article is not intended to give legal advice, and, accordingly, it should not be relied upon. It should not be regarded as a comprehensive statement of the law and/or market practice in this area. We make no claims as to the completeness or accuracy of the information contained herein or in the links which were live at the date of publication. You should not act upon (or should refrain from acting upon) information in this publication without first seeking specific legal and/or specialist advice. Pen Underwriting Limited and OAMPS Hazardous Industries (part of Pen Underwriting Limited) accepts no liability for any inaccuracy, omission or mistake in this publication, nor will we be responsible for any loss which may be suffered as a result of any person relying on the information contained herein.



PORTLAND MARKET REPORT

OCTOBER
IN VIEW

IS THERE METHOD BEHIND OPEC'S APPARENT MADNESS?

Do Turkeys ever vote for Christmas? Well, in the case of The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), that might well be the case! Having shown considerable discipline, over the last 5 years, in maintaining production cuts to shore up global oil prices, this year has seen a complete reversal of this strategy. The first step was to restore the 1.6m barrels per day (bpd) of previously halted production and release this onto global markets. Then in October, the cartel went even further with the announcement that it would actually be increasing oil production by another 150,000 bpd. All of this despite the world being awash with new crude from the likes of Guyana, Brazil and the USA. Why would OPEC deliberately open the flood gates and create a price war, when the economies of member states can barely breakeven when prices are at \$100 per barrel, let alone the kind of predictions that are currently being forecast (sub \$60)? Has OPEC lost its mind like a headless chicken turkey, or is there method behind the madness?

“THE CHEATERS AND CHANCERS DAMAGE THE CARTEL'S REPUTATION.”

The answer is no; OPEC has not gone totally mad, and there is some logic behind these moves. Generating a price war drives internal discipline amongst members. The likes of Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait are deliberately looking to punish the “production cheaters” and the “production chancers” within OPEC's membership. The “production cheaters” are those countries that do not / did not join in the collective sacrifice of other members when production cuts were introduced. Instead, they seized the opportunity to maximise production and enjoy high volumes at high prices, whilst everyone else was pulling back from the marketplace. The “production chancers” (those members with expensive production costs and who can thus only survive when oil prices are high) were also able to continue extracting oil from fields, that really should no longer be producing. To the Machiavellian minds at the

top of the OPEC pyramid (Saudi et al), the cheaters and chancers damage the cartel's reputation, and to encourage natural attrition amongst these weaker members aligns well with the organisation's long-term aim of market control.

The external factors of a price war also play to OPEC's longer-term strategic position. OPEC producers are sitting on vast reserves of crude that they definitely want to tap into over the next 100 years. The worst situation for OPEC is that these reserves become stranded (i.e., the oil stays underground) and to prevent this from happening, OPEC needs to maintain the attractiveness of oil as a low-price energy source. Periodically, low prices are required to maintain the price advantage of oil over alternative forms of energy and in a world of rapidly cheapening alternative energy (batteries, solar panels etc.), this is an important tactical goal for OPEC. The unattractive truth is that a worsening global climate is of secondary importance to the economic self-interest of OPEC, and whilst cartel members want high prices because of the immediate riches generated, a low oil price can also be beneficial because that will ensure underground assets do not become stranded.

The most obvious impact of a price war is on OPEC's competition. By deliberately sinking the market, massive pressure is immediately put on the US shale oil producers. Shale has much higher exploration costs than OPEC production, and the American industry has benefitted greatly from the constraint shown by OPEC members over the last 5 years. At the same time that the cartel was removing oil from the market (as part of their cuts programme), the USA was simply stepping into the fray and increasing production from 10m bpd in 2020 to 13.5m bpd today. No surprise then, that the US shalers are clearly first in OPEC's firing line. When prices tanked in 2014, the US shale industry went into melt-down with well-capping, project cancellations and bankruptcies, and this is clearly what the cartel is hoping for this time around. They would also have reason to be hopeful in this area as most producers remain heavily indebted, partly as a result of reacting with such gung-ho enthusiasm to Trump's “drill,

baby drill” mantra. And increased production from the shale patch only adds to the problem of over-supply, whilst at the same time it is Trump's tariff programme that has weakened demand and helped cause the over-supply problem in the first place.

“A WORSENING GLOBAL CLIMATE IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO THE ECONOMIC SELF-INTEREST OF OPEC.”

The stage is set then for a fascinating few months ahead. The US President has staked his reputation on taming inflation and, therefore, OPEC's tactics of glutting the market should in theory be welcomed, as “gas” (i.e., gasoline) prices will drop for US consumers. However, at the same time, Trump is a huge champion of home-grown oil producers, and they categorically do not want oil prices to fall. Furthermore, the last time we saw a price crash, employment levels plummeted in the largely Trump supporting areas of the American shale patch, which won't translate well into electoral support. No doubt, the President will come up with the usual verbal gymnastics to glorify the situation, but behind the scenes, the Administration must be hoping that any drops in the oil price are relatively short-lived. On this point, there may be more alignment with OPEC policy than one might initially think. There is no getting away from the fiscal imperative that exists within OPEC member states for high oil prices, so a deliberate strategy to push oil prices down can surely only last for a few months. Enough time to damage OPEC cheaters, chancers and competitors, but before any real damage is done to the long-term economies of OPEC Member States.

For more pricing
information,
see page 30

Portland
www.stabilityfromvolatility.co.uk

Biofuels, HVO and the microbial frontier: Delivering the promise of a cleaner fuel transition

The global race toward decarbonisation is reshaping the fuel landscape. Governments, corporations, and consumers alike are demanding alternatives to fossil fuels that can reduce emissions, enhance energy security, and support the urgent push toward net zero. Among the most prominent contenders in this transition are biofuels, particularly biodiesel (FAME) and hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO).

As with all energy solutions, biofuels come with both opportunities and challenges. Their chemistry makes them a beacon of sustainability but also introduces the need to consider any operational risks, notably the potential for microbial contamination. Understanding these dynamics is key – to not only embrace the promise of biofuels, but to manage them effectively in order to deliver their full potential.

Conidia Bioscience, a company that develops and manufactures innovative solutions for fuel system maintenance, has evaluated the leading transition contenders in laboratory conditions. In this article they share the outcomes, exploring the reasons behind surging demand for biofuels, why HVO is poised to lead the charge, and how careful vigilance and good fuel management can help to ensure successful adoption.

Why biofuels are surging

The case for biofuels is both environmental and pragmatic. Unlike fossil fuels, which release carbon that has been sequestered underground for millions of years, biofuels can operate within a closed carbon cycle. The CO₂ emitted during combustion is offset – at least in part – by the CO₂ absorbed during the growth of the biomass feedstocks, whether those are sugarcane, corn, soy beans, or waste fats.

Biofuels also offer something many renewable technologies struggle with: Compatibility. Whereas electrification requires new infrastructure, and hydrogen demands new distribution networks, biofuels can often flow seamlessly into existing engines and supply chains.

Market forecasts tell a clear story. Today, biofuels account for a small slice of global energy demand, but their share is expected to



double to 6 % by 2030. Transport fuels will be the largest driver, with biofuels meeting roughly 9 % of demand within the decade. Aviation, traditionally a hard-to-abate sector, is set for even faster growth, with sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) expected to cover 10 % of demand by 2030.

Behind the statistics lies a powerful narrative: biofuels are no longer niche. They are climbing the energy ladder into mainstream relevance.

The two faces of biofuels: FAME and HVO

Not all biofuels are created equal. Two, in particular, dominate the diesel-replacement conversation: biodiesel (FAME) and hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO).

FAME: A double-edged sword

Biodiesel, technically known as fatty acid methyl ester (FAME), is derived from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled greases. It is widely used in blends (B7, B20, or even B100), and on paper, it represents a renewable, sustainable solution.

But FAME carries vulnerabilities, especially around water. Research shows biodiesel can hold 15 to 25 times more water than conventional diesel, creating favourable conditions for microbes. This hygroscopic nature, combined with biodiesel's oxygenated chemistry, means that microbial contamination can quickly become a problem in storage and distribution systems.

HVO: The drop-in disruptor

HVO, by contrast, is structurally different. Produced by hydrogenating vegetable oils or animal fats, it emerges as a paraffinic hydrocarbon that looks and behaves remarkably like petroleum diesel. The implications are profound:

- HVO contains no oxygen, making it less prone to oxidation and microbial attack.
- It has low water affinity, behaving more like fossil diesel in storage.
- It burns cleaner than biodiesel.
- It requires no engine modifications as a drop-in fuel.

HVO's stability is another strength. Properly stored, it can last up to 10 years, compared to biodiesel blends that often degrade within months. For fleet operators, shipping companies, and backup power providers, this long shelf life is a game-changer.

It is little wonder, then, that HVO adoption is expected to accelerate sharply over the next decade. As governments tighten emissions targets and industries seek practical decarbonisation tools, HVO stands out as a bridge between today's infrastructure and tomorrow's sustainability goals.

The microbial challenge: Water, biofilms, and breakdown

Biofuels may be renewable, but they are also biologically inviting if conditions align. Microbes are omnipresent in the environment, lying dormant until fuel, water, and time create an opportunity.

How water sneaks in

Water infiltrates storage tanks through multiple pathways:

- Condensation from temperature fluctuations.
- Leaks through corroded fittings or poor seals.
- Hygroscopic absorption, particularly in biodiesel.

Once inside, water stratifies. Free water pools at the tank bottom, while emulsified water disperses throughout the fuel. Both forms create risks. Warmer temperatures increase water solubility, feeding microbial growth, while colder conditions reduce – but never eliminate – the threat.



Conidia's Laboratory

Biofilms: The hidden saboteurs

When microbes encounter fuel-water interfaces, they form biofilms – sticky, gelatinous layers composed of polysaccharides, proteins, and lipids. These biofilms cling to tank surfaces, clog filters, corrode metal, and degrade fuel quality.

The risk lies in their resilience. Microbes in biofilms can be up to 1,000 times more resistant to biocides than free-floating cells. Once established, they are notoriously difficult to eradicate, requiring both chemical and physical intervention.

For operators, the consequences can be significant: pump failures, nozzle fouling, sluggish servo-valves, engine stalling, and corrosion of tanks and pipelines, all of which can be costly and disruptive if not addressed. In sectors where uptime is critical – aviation, shipping and emergency services – operational reliability is essential.

Laboratory lessons: Testing the limits

To better understand these risks, Conidia Bioscience evaluated FAME, HVO, and SAF in controlled laboratory conditions. Fuel samples were inoculated with a blend of common microbial species, then monitored over several weeks.

The results confirmed what industry has long observed:

- FAME is highly susceptible to microbial growth, owing to its chemistry and water affinity.
- HVO is far more resistant, though not immune, particularly when excess water is present.
- SAF sits between the two, with risks

dependent on storage and handling conditions.

To monitor such threats in the field, rapid lateral-flow tests have been developed that can detect biomarkers of microbial presence and biofilm formation.

Conidia's solution, FUELSTAT® One is an example of how technology is supporting operators in balancing sustainability goals with operational reliability. Unlike traditional culturing, which can take days, this tool delivers results in 20–30 minutes using a simple test kit and a smartphone app.

Managing the microbial risk

Mitigating microbial contamination is not about eliminating microbes – an impossible task – but about controlling the conditions that allow them to flourish.

The first line of defence: Water control

Keeping tanks dry is paramount. This means:

- Regularly draining free water.
- Maintaining seals and gaskets to prevent ingress.
- Using water-removal technologies that can absorb emulsified water before microbes can exploit it.

Testing and monitoring

Routine testing is the second safeguard. Rapid diagnostics like FUELSTAT® allow operators to catch contamination early, before biofilms harden into entrenched problems. By embedding such checks into regular maintenance schedules, operators can reduce downtime, extend equipment life, and minimise costly cleanups.

The strategic context: Beyond chemistry

The biofuels story is more than a technical debate over molecules and microbes. It reflects a deeper question: how do we decarbonise without disrupting the backbone of global mobility and trade?

Electric vehicles dominate headlines, but they will not power container ships across oceans or aircraft across continents anytime soon. Hydrogen holds promise but faces infrastructure bottlenecks. Nuclear and renewables are reshaping power grids, not diesel engines.

In this landscape, biofuels – particularly HVO – offer immediacy. They leverage existing infrastructure, reduce lifecycle emissions, and buy time for the broader energy transition. But success depends on ensuring that any vulnerabilities are acknowledged and addressed. Microbial contamination is one such issue; it is an operational risk that requires proactive management to deliver full confidence in biofuels.

Conclusion: A fuel for the future, if we get it right

Biofuels stand at a crossroads. On one side lies enormous promise: carbon savings, energy security, compatibility with today's infrastructure. On the other lies a microbial challenge, that became apparent during early FAME adoption. Left unchecked, it could undermine reliability and slow adoption – but with proper management, it is highly controllable.

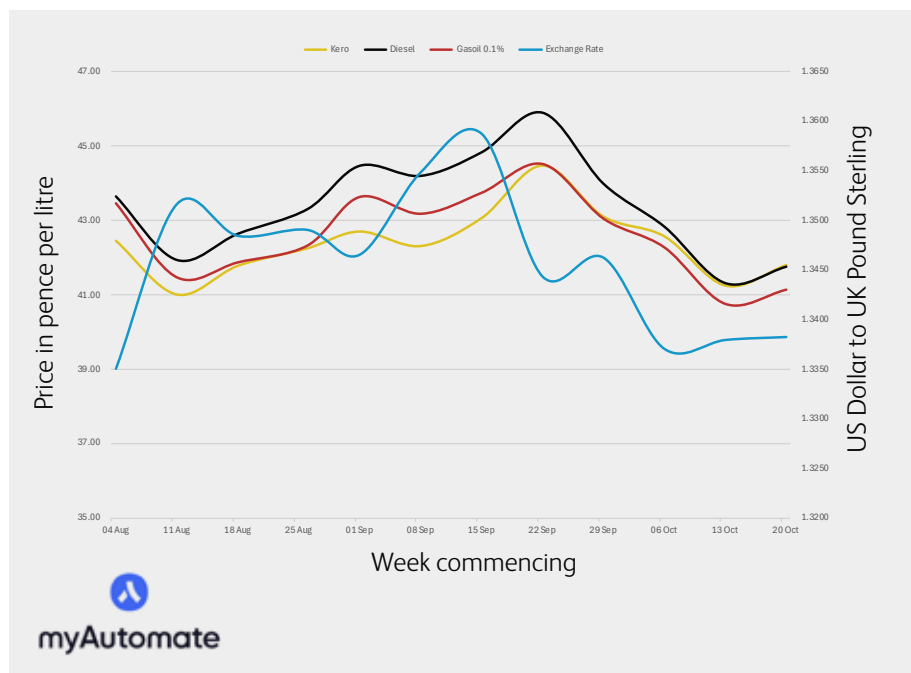
The rise of HVO suggests the market is learning fast – prioritising fuels that balance sustainability with stability. But even HVO requires the good fuel management that has always been an essential aspect of the industry and continues to be so with biofuels. Vigilance in water management, routine testing, and investment in contamination-control technologies will be essential to keep renewable fuels clean, engines running, and the energy transition on track.

The energy transition will not be won in laboratories or policy papers alone. It will be secured in the real-world storage tanks, pipelines, and engines where fuels meet microbes. There is no question whether biofuels will play a role in the future of energy – they already are. The challenge now is to manage them effectively so that they can deliver fully on their promise.

Wholesale Price Movements: 19th September 2025 – 22nd October 2025

	Kerosene	Diesel	Gasoil 0.1%
Average price	42.70	43.24	42.44
Average daily change	0.58	0.70	0.58
Current duty	0.00	52.95	10.18
Total	42.70	96.19	52.62

All prices in pence per litre

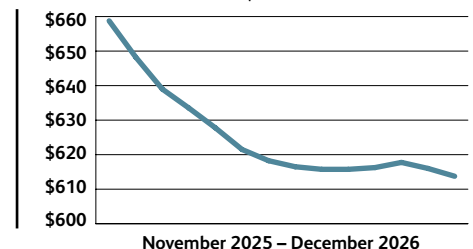


Highest price 45.73 Fri 26 Sep 25	Biggest up day +0.93 Wed 22 Oct 25
Kerosene	
Lowest price 40.68 Fri 17 Oct 25	Biggest down day -2.09 Mon 29 Sep 25

Highest price 47.21 Fri 26 Sep 25	Biggest up day +1.07 Wed 22 Oct 25
Diesel	
Lowest price 40.54 Fri 17 Oct 25	Biggest down day -2.06 Mon 29 Sep 25

Highest price 46.08 Fri 26 Sep 25	Biggest up day +0.98 Thu 25 Sep 25
Gasoil 0.1%	
Lowest price 40.17 Fri 17 Oct 25	Biggest down day -1.98 Mon 29 Sep 25

Gasoil forward price
in US\$ per tonne



The Fuel Oil News Price Totem

	Trade average buying prices			Average selling prices		
	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD	Kerosene	Gasoil	ULSD
Scotland	44.82	55.38	99.26	51.10	59.17	103.15
North East	43.77	54.01	98.34	52.47	57.53	101.19
North West	45.34	56.61	100.73	51.38	59.92	103.29
Midlands	43.84	54.54	98.80	49.72	58.01	101.90
South East	43.94	54.50	98.78	56.08	60.56	101.47
South West	44.29	54.34	98.62	52.13	57.80	101.08
N. Ireland	44.40	55.71	n/a	50.19	59.98	n/a
Republic Of Ireland	58.16	61.14	100.20	63.58	64.76	103.37
Portland	42.15	52.06	95.49			

The price totem figures are indicative figures compiled from the Portland base rate using calculated regional variances.

Buying prices are ex-rack. Selling prices are for 1000 litres of kero, 2500 litres of gas oil and 5000 litres of ULSD (Derv in ROI). Prices in ROI are in €.

Wholesale prices are supplied by Portland Analytics Ltd, dedicated providers of fuel price information from refinery to pump.

For more information and access to prices, visit www.portlandpricing.co.uk

WELCOME TO NOVEMBER'S EDITION OF OUR SPECIAL MONTHLY FEATURE WHICH GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO 'MEET' AN INDUSTRY FIGURE AND, HOPEFULLY, TO DISCOVER ANOTHER SIDE TO THEM BEYOND THE WELL-KNOWN FACTS. THIS MONTH, WE CHAT WITH **NOZ MIAH**, FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF AIM RECRUIT.

“NEVER STOP WORKING HARD AND NEVER LOSE THAT BELIEF IN YOURSELF.”

NOZ MIAH

Sum up your working life in 28 words or fewer:

A journey built on persistence, relationships, and trust, connecting people, solving problems, and learning that success is less about luck and more about turning up when others don't.

Describe yourself in 3 words:

Driven. Loyal. Passionate.

Any childhood ambitions?

For much of my childhood, I wanted to be a footballer like everyone else. Later, I had ambitions of becoming a lawyer in the military, I absolutely love A Few Good Men.

What would be your superpower of choice?

The ability to slow time, not to get more done, but to think before reacting.

The best advice you've had?

“Oil your own machine.” It's what my dad used to say to us as kids, his way of teaching us to take responsibility for our actions, regardless of what others do.

Top tips for business success?

Never stop working hard and never lose that belief in yourself.

What's the last photo you took on your phone?

A picture of my tortoise, Kylian, lazing about in the garden, he's got life figured out.

If you could have dinner with any person, living or dead, who and why?

Has to be my late father. That would be a brilliant catch-up, I'd be filling him in on all that he's missed out on. He'd probably tell me I've spent too much on the dinner, and how we should have just eaten at home.

You can only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what is it?

My mum's lamb akhni (biryani). Simple, layered, and never disappoints, a bit like a well-planned operation.

The best thing about your job?

Seeing people thrive in roles they genuinely enjoy, and knowing our work quietly keeps the country running.

The quality that you most admire?

Consistency. It's not exciting, but it's what separates professionals from pretenders, showing up, delivering, and doing it again tomorrow.

What are you most likely to say?

You can do this.

What are you least likely to say?

It's impossible.

Describe your perfect day.

A Saturday! Family breakfast with my three children, a BBQ for lunch, followed by cheering on our beloved Spurs from the North Stand as they beat Arsenal 4-0.

Your favourite sports team?

Tottenham Hotspur, proof that loyalty and optimism can coexist.

If you could be any fictional character, who and why?

Ted Lasso – optimistic, funny, and always trying to bring out the best in people. Proof that a bit of belief (and the occasional bad joke) goes a long way.

Share your greatest personal achievement.

Building Aim Recruit from scratch and seeing it recognised as a trusted name in a niche industry I care deeply about, while raising three brilliant kids who remind me every day what really matters.

Share your pet hate.

People who don't take responsibility. Without it, you can't improve.

What would your Mastermind specialist subject be?

World history in the 20th century.

If you were PM, what would be the first law you'd pass?

Fund driver and logistics training for young people. If we don't invest in the next generation, we'll all be running on empty.

If you had a time machine, would you go to the future or the past?

The past, life felt slower, football was better, and so was music. No social-media addicts, no filters, just mates with dodgy haircuts and baggy jeans. The times when you couldn't text someone that you'd be 15 minutes late, you'd just turn up on time.

What is number 1 on your bucket list?

Actually taking a proper break and travelling across South America, Africa, and Australasia in one swoop with my kids. No deadlines, no emails, just time to see the world properly for once.

If you were Editor of Fuel Oil News magazine, what's your first article?

“How the Next Decade Will Define the Future of Fuel Logistics.”

What 3 things would you take to a desert island?

A football, a cold drink, and a boat!

Something about you people would be surprised by?

I speak fluent Greek, and my karaoke song of choice is Roza by Dimitris Mitropanos.



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