



Department for
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Darren Jones MP
Chair, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee
House of Commons
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Dear Darren,

IMPROVING BOILER STANDARDS AND EFFICIENCY CONSULTATION

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee. I am pleased to inform you that the Government will publish a consultation on Improving Boiler Standards and Efficiency on 13 December 2022.

The Hydrogen Strategy, published in August 2021, committed the Government to consulting on the introduction of hydrogen-ready boilers from 2026 alongside testing proposals on the future of broader boiler and heating system efficiency. The Net Zero Strategy and Heat and Buildings Strategy, published in October 2021, reaffirmed this commitment. This consultation delivers on these commitments.

Context

The Heat and Buildings Strategy set out the Government's plans to accelerate the decarbonisation of heat in buildings, which is responsible for 23% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and half of the UK's total natural gas consumption.

The Government's intention is to phase out the installation of new and replacement natural gas boilers from 2035 to ensure that almost all domestic heating systems used in 2050 are low carbon. However, even with a large growth in the heat pump market, we expect a minimum of 10 million further domestic gas boiler installations between 2025 and 2035.

The war in Ukraine and high global gas prices have also underlined UK exposure to volatile energy markets and re-emphasised the need to reduce our gas consumption and, in the long-term, move away from natural gas for heating. Current rising energy

bills illustrate the importance of consumers benefitting from efficient boilers and heating systems.

In this context, the consultation sets out proposals for furthering two objectives:

1. Reducing domestic gas consumption to lower consumer bills and carbon emissions, and improve our energy security: by ensuring new boilers meet the highest standards of efficiency.
2. Preparing for the transition to low carbon heating: ensuring new boiler installations prepare for low-carbon heating, by preparing for a potential hydrogen conversion and exploring the role of hybrid heating systems.

Consultation Overview

Firstly, the consultation sets out proposals aimed at ensuring domestic gas boilers run as efficiently as possible. This includes requirements, to be introduced from 2025, aimed at improving system optimisation through suitable controls and ensuring systems can efficiently modulate down their output.

Secondly, the consultation proposes mandating that from 2026 onwards all new domestic sized gas boilers are to be 'hydrogen-ready', meaning such boilers will be easily convertible to use 100% hydrogen gas. This is subject to sufficient evidence that this will not result in higher upfront costs for consumers and that such systems can meet performance and safety standards equivalent to those for natural gas boilers.

Finally, the consultation sets out the positive role hybrid heat pumps can play in decarbonising existing on-gas-grid homes between now and 2028, including within the target of 600,000 heat pump installations per year by 2028, on the road to net zero. It also sets out the potential benefits of widespread deployment of hybrids from the late 2020s onwards – and explores the developments that may be required to realise such a substantive role for this technology.

I will place a copy of the Improving Boiler Standards and Efficiency consultation and a copy of this letter in the Libraries of the House.



Lord Callanan