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HEAT PUMPS TODAY

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR INSTALLERS

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Heat pumps transform Tameside Hospital in £14m project P27

www.acrjournal.uk/heat-pumps

JUNE 2026

Unrivalled Heat Transfer Fluids & Expert Fluid Management Services

A key objective since **Hydratech's** formation in 1998, has been the establishment of technical partnerships with industry leading renewable energy consultants, contractors, and installers. Working with those responsible for heat recovery system design, installation and operation, **Hydratech's** engineers, chemists and analysts implement a fully integrated approach to thermal fluid selection and management - which in turn, maximises performance, reduces operational costs and delivers significant return on investment.

Hydratech Products

Specified by industry experts, **Hydratech's** innovative non-toxic heat transfer fluids and water treatment products are at the heart of the UK's leading housing, manufacturing and agricultural renewable energy projects.
Hydratech's antifreeze solutions have been formulated to optimise thermal efficiency, reduce pumping energy, extend operational life and provide effective frost protection - for all industrial, commercial and domestic projects.

Hydratech Services

The **Hydratech Services** division provides specialist engineering and maintenance services to customers installing, commissioning, operating or optimising heat pump systems.
By combining expertise in water treatment chemistry, fluid thermodynamics and mechanical engineering, **Hydratech Services** delivers a fully integrated fluid selection - fluid monitoring - fluid management approach to process and hydronic system optimisation. This in-turn helps to ensure long-term system efficiency and deliver significant energy savings.

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Manufactured in U.K

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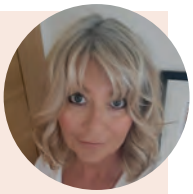
Welcome to the June issue of Heat Pumps Today



It has been another exceptionally busy and exciting period for both the heat pump sector and the Heat Pumps Today team. We have continued to attend a wide range of industry events, all of which have attracted outstanding attendance and provided valuable networking opportunities for professionals across the sector.

The ACR & Heat Pumps Expo, held at Aston Villa Football Club last month, proved particularly popular with both exhibitors and visitors. Following its success, the upcoming events in Leeds and Glasgow are nearing full capacity for exhibition stands. We will shortly be promoting our guest speakers across all ACR & Heat Pumps Journal social media channels. To find out more, turn to page 31.

In this issue, we explore a range of key industry topics, including noise emission control, compressor technology, servicing, and training, alongside several insightful case studies showcasing innovation and best practice across the sector.

In our next issue, we will take an in-depth look at the outstanding winners of the 2026 ACR & Heat Pumps Awards. This prestigious awards ceremony was held at the Midland Hotel in Manchester on 11 June and celebrated excellence and achievement across the industry.

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National Heat Pump Week to launch in October 2026

The Heat Pump Association UK (HPA UK) and Nineteen Group, organiser of InstallerSHOW and elementalLONDON will launch National Heat Pump Week this October, a new national campaign designed to accelerate the UK's transition to heat pumps.

Running from 12th October to 16th October 2026, National Heat Pump Week will provide a pivotal moment for all those in the heat pump sector to share knowledge, insights and expertise. With a combined reach of more than 1,000,000 built environment professionals, the campaign will deliver its impact through a series of webinars, articles, interviews, competitions and market insights from key industry figures.

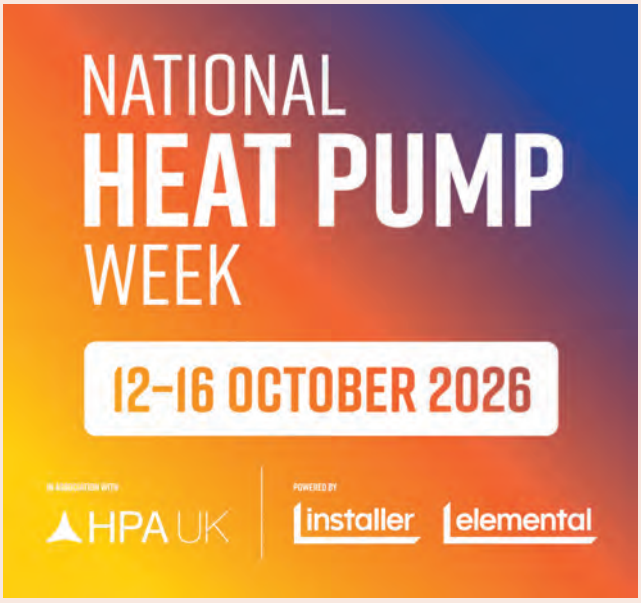
National Heat Pump Week will aim to:

- Increase understanding and confidence in heat pumps
- Showcase real installations, innovation and consumer stories
- Provide a platform for the sector
- Create a coordinated week for media and political engagement
- Provide learning and opportunities for installers and others across the supply chain

Themes for the week include:

- Technology and performance – clearing up the basics and busting the common myths
- Commercial and industrial heat – expanding the opportunity in commercial and industrial markets
- Policy, markets and scale – connecting policy with progress and industry action
- Demand and confidence – bridging knowledge to action and accelerating uptake
- Installation and skills – practical, real-world insight from installers in the field

To read the story in full and find out how to register visit: **www.acrjournal.uk/heat-pumps/national-heat-pump-week-to-launch-in-october-2026/**



Vaillant donates Arotherm plus

Vaillant has reinforced its commitment to supporting the local community by donating an aroTHERM plus heat pump at Europe's largest indoor skatepark, Adrenaline Alley in Corby.

Donated as part of Vaillant's new Growing Communities initiative, the installation provides warmth to a newly constructed spectator lounge at Adrenaline Alley - a registered charity facility that attracts riders from across the world.

Recently launched, Vaillant's Growing Communities supports organisations that align with its values; from grassroots groups to established charities, through company-supported fundraising, volunteering initiatives, and the donation and installation of boilers and heat pumps where they could make a real, tangible difference.

To read the story in full visit: **www.acrjournal.uk/heat-pumps/vaillant-donates-arotherm-plus/**

HPA UK

A UK Parliamentary Reception spotlights heat pumps as key to energy security

HPA UK's 2026 Parliamentary Reception brought together parliamentarians, industry leaders and policymakers at a pivotal moment, with energy security firmly back in the spotlight.

Under the theme 'From Carbon to Competitiveness: The Economic and Societal Benefits of Heat Pumps in the UK', the event built on HPA UK's latest report[1], finding that heat pump manufacturing, installation and use contributed £1 billion to the UK economy in 2025, with the potential to grow to £15 billion by 2035.

Against the backdrop of renewed instability in global energy markets over the past month, conversations focused on the strategic importance of heat pumps in enabling the UK to make greater use of its homegrown electricity, reducing the reliance on volatile international fossil fuel markets while supporting skilled jobs and longterm growth across the country.

Interested in attending events like this one? Find out more about HPA UK membership here: **https://hpauk.org.uk/membership/**

To read the story in full visit: **www.acrjournal.uk/heat-pumps/hpa-uk-parliamentary-reception-spotlights-heat-pumps-as-key-to-energy-/**

Source

1. https://tinyurl.com/wyhfsv6t

The newly updated heat pump range

VITOCAL 150-A

Offering excellent quality and performance, with environmentally friendly, natural refrigerant R290.

- + **Modular** units for systems with a buffer tank and without an integrated expansion vessel
- + **Compact** models with an integrated 190 litre DHW cylinder
- + **Hybrid** range for existing heating systems
- + Output range from 2.1 to 16 kW
- + 5 year warranty
- + Flow temperature up to 70°C
- + High COP up to 5.2 – meaning low operating costs

Find out more:
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VIESSMANN

Heat Pumps galore!

The Heat Pumps Today team were official media partner for the inaugural Heat Pump Show, held on the 22nd of April at Newark Showground.

The show benefitted from over 650 like minded attendees and 29 exhibitors, of which we were thrilled to be the official media partner. There were 4 superb panel talks, with many of the movers and shakers of the industry sharing their opinions and updates on the challenges and opportunities facing the sector right now.

Support by exhibitors and attendance by delegates was so high that the organisers say there is a strong possibility for a 2 day show next year – keep an eye on future issues of Heat Pumps Today for further details.

Programme of discussions

The A-Z of A2A

Panel: Aimee Holloran, Graham Hendra, Nathan Gambling, Scott McBride

The arrival of the Air-to-Air systems within the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) was an interesting conversation. It was suggested that Bungalows could be an ideal fit. Heat Pumps Today will be keeping an eye on uptake and how this will work, practically, for the home owner.

Upfront costs vs running costs

Panel: Russell Murchie, Glyn Hudson, Simon Roberts, Sune Nightingale, James Law

There was also great conversation around upfront cots versus running costs, sharing more practical ways installers and professionals can talk to customers about the real trade-offs.

'Total Bollocks'

Panel: Barry Sharp, Damon Blakemore, Graham Hendra, Leah Robson, Rhiannon De Wreede

The 'Total Bollocks' session was certainly popular. The speakers did well in separating fact from fiction, and explored how the industry can better communicate with the realities of heat pump technology. The conversation started with emphasis on heat loss calculations, and should there be a specific standard set, helping in educating the home owner. There was also consensus on combing a heat pump with a battery, rather than heat pump alone, which can help the homeowner create their own 'spark gap'.

THE HEAT PUMP SHOW

The Holy Trinity

Panel: Simon Roberts, Daniel White, Mick Wall, Sean Hogan, Andy Rankin

My favourite discussion of the day was on the 'Holy Trinity'. The panel shared detail on how exploring the most effective systems combine heat pumps, solar PV, batteries and smart tariffs. Examples provided on how integrating these technologies can deliver the best possible outcomes for the homeowners was, in my opinion, invaluable.

More Heat Pump installations, stricter noise limits: How to stay compliant

Valeria Vezzo, CEO at Soleco Engineering Srl, discusses the Heat Pumps tighter noise rules make controlling vibration essential to ensure compliance and avoid noise issues.

The UK heat pump market is growing faster than at any point in its history. MCS recorded nearly 58,000 certified heat pump installations in 2024 — a new annual record and a 75% increase on the previous year, and 2025 saw a further rise, with the total number of retrofit installations now more than four and a half times higher than five years ago.

With the government targeting hundreds of thousands of installations per year by the end of the decade, the pressure on installers to deliver high-quality, compliant work has never been greater.

Alongside this rapid growth, the regulatory framework has been evolving continuously. Recent changes to permitted development rules have made it easier than ever to site heat pumps across a wider range of UK properties. At the same time, noise compliance requirements have been progressively tightened, and MCS-certified installers are now required to carry out formal acoustic assessments before every installation. The standard — MCS 020(a) — has undergone significant revision, with limits becoming increasingly stringent as deployment accelerates into denser residential areas.

Why vibration is the hidden factor

Heat pump outdoor units contain compressors and rotating components that generate mechanical vibrations during operation. When units are mounted on hard surfaces — concrete bases, patios, lightweight frames or wall brackets — those vibrations travel directly into the building structure, producing structure-borne noise that is often more disruptive than airborne sound and significantly harder to resolve after installation.

This is a challenge that Soleco Engineering, an Italian company with over 50 years of experience in vibration isolation and seismic protection, understands well. Experience across international markets suggests a consistent pattern: structure-borne noise is frequently underestimated at the installation planning stage, and invariably more costly and disruptive to address once the unit is in operation.

Correct installation includes proper vibration isolation at the support level

The engineering approach to noise compliance

The most effective way to prevent vibration transmission is to isolate the unit mechanically from the supporting surface at the point of installation. Properly selected anti-vibration mounts — whether spring-based or elastomeric — absorb the mechanical energy generated by the compressor before it can enter the building fabric. The choice between mount types depends on factors including unit weight, operating frequency, mounting configuration and exposure conditions.

For residential applications, elastomeric mounts in thermoplastic elastomer are particularly well suited: compact, durable and effective across a wide frequency range, they perform reliably in the outdoor conditions typical of UK installations — including resistance to UV, ozone and temperature extremes. Spring-based mounts, including wind-resistant patented designs, offer additional isolation depth for installations on lightweight structures or in more demanding acoustic environments.

Increasing installation density raises the risk of structure-borne noise

Outdoor units in residential settings require careful noise and vibration control

In both cases, correct selection is essential. A mount chosen for the wrong load range will underperform regardless of its design quality. Like others Soleco Engineering provides technical guidance to help installers identify the appropriate solution for each application. This service has become increasingly valuable now that acoustic assessments are a mandatory requirement.

For MCS-certified installers, incorporating anti-vibration isolation at the planning stage is one of the most effective steps towards a compliant, high-quality installation. It reduces the risk of failing a noise assessment, protects the building structure from long-term mechanical stress, and extends the operational life of the equipment itself.

As noise standards continue to evolve, anti-vibration isolation is increasingly recognised not as an optional extra — but as a fundamental component of responsible heat pump installation practice.

https://www.solecosrl.com/en/

ADVERTORIAL

Why now is the time to become a STIEBEL ELTRON installer

For today's heat pump installers, staying competitive means working with technology that is not only efficient, but also easier to install, commission and support. That's exactly why more professionals are turning to STIEBEL ELTRON—and why you should consider making the switch.

At the heart of their latest offering is the upcoming **hpnext generation**, a major step forward in heat pump innovation. Designed with installers in mind, this new range promises STIEBEL ELTRON's most efficient and quietest systems yet, utilising R290 refrigerant alongside a host of design and functional upgrades. These improvements are not just incremental—they're transformational, making installations faster, smoother and more reliable on-site.

Re-imagined portfolio

But performance is only part of the story. STIEBEL ELTRON has reimagined its entire renewables portfolio to provide a truly comprehensive solution. With both air and ground source systems available, as well as integrated air source and MVHR units for internal installation, installers gain the flexibility to meet a wider range of project requirements with confidence.

Support package

What really sets STIEBEL ELTRON apart, however, is its installer-first approach. The company's full-service support package is built to simplify every stage of your workflow—from specification and quoting through to installation and handover. These tools and services are designed to reduce friction on-site and improve efficiency across the board. In fact, installers can potentially save up to a full day per installation thanks to streamlined processes and proactive support.

If you've ever experienced delays, uncertainty or poor manufacturer support, you'll understand the value of having a partner that works with you, with easy access to technical support on site and by phone. STIEBEL ELTRON aims to remove those frustrations, offering a complete ecosystem that helps you deliver high-quality outcomes for your customers, every time.

Additional discount

To make the move even more compelling, installers who sign up now and for the rest of 2026 can take advantage of a **5% discount on your first order*,** helping you get started with confidence while boosting your margins from day one.

With cutting-edge products, time-saving support and a clear focus on installer success, STIEBEL ELTRON is positioning itself as a partner for the future of heat pump installation.

To find out more

Email **projects@stiebel-eltron.co.uk** to request a callback and take the first step toward becoming a certified STIEBEL ELTRON installer.

offer applies on orders placed for delivery prior to 31st December 2026

Reimagining heat: How advanced compressor technology powers the Net-Zero transition

A look at advanced compressor technology which is central to helping heat pumps deliver efficient, reliable and future-ready low-carbon heating across commercial and industrial applications.

James Graham, Managing Director at BITZER

Across Europe and beyond, the drive to decarbonise heating is accelerating. With space and process heating accounting for a substantial share of energy consumption, industries, municipalities and commercial operators are increasingly turning to heat pumps as a low-carbon alternative to traditional fossil-fuel systems.

From large commercial buildings and district heating networks to industrial facilities in the food, beverage and pharmaceutical sectors, heat pumps are being deployed at scale. Yet the performance and efficiency of these systems ultimately depend on one critical component: the compressor.

James Graham, Managing Director at BITZER, explains this is where advanced compressor technology makes a real difference. It determines how efficiently a heat pump can operate under varying loads, deliver high-temperature outputs and remain compatible with evolving refrigerant choices, including those outlined in the EU FGas Regulation. Ensuring that compressors deliver both reliability and efficiency is central to enabling the next generation of future-ready heat pump solutions.

Meeting the challenge of high-temperature heat

Many modern heat pump applications require supply temperatures well above those typically associated with traditional comfort heating. District heating networks, industrial process applications and retrofit projects often require temperatures between 70 °C and 90 °C or higher.

Many district heating networks and retrofit heat pump applications typically operate at supply temperatures in the range of 60–70 °C, particularly where existing building systems must be accommodated. However, in new-build developments and low-temperature heat networks, lower operating temperatures can be used to significantly improve system efficiency compared with conventional gas boilers.

Advanced compressor platforms, such as those developed by BITZER, are designed to handle these conditions. Through robust mechanical design and optimised operating envelopes, they enable heat pumps to deliver high temperatures without compromising system reliability. This capability is particularly important for industrial applications, where consistent heat delivery is essential for maintaining process integrity.

Efficiency across real-world operating conditions

Heat pumps rarely operate at full load continuously. Seasonal demand, variable building occupancy and process fluctuations mean that systems spend much of their operating life at partial capacity. As a result, part-load performance is critical to achieving high seasonal efficiency and reducing operating costs.

Modern compressor technologies combine mechanical capacity control with inverter-driven speed regulation to allow precise modulation of output. This approach enables systems to closely match heating demand in real time.

Technologies such as those developed by BITZER support this level of control, helping operators achieve:

- Improved seasonal coefficient of performance (COP)
- Reduced mechanical stress and longer equipment lifespan
- Stable output temperatures across changing load conditions
- More flexible design to adapt to the outdoor conditions and heating conditions

Over the lifecycle of a heat pump installation, these efficiency improvements can deliver energy savings while lowering overall carbon emissions.

Refrigerant strategy in a changing regulatory landscape

Alongside efficiency considerations, refrigerant selection has become an increasingly important factor in heat pump design. As regulatory pressure on high-GWP refrigerants intensifies, system designers are exploring a wider range of alternatives.

Other refrigerant being used more commonly are HFOs, Hydrocarbons, ammonia and CO2. Compressor manufacturers must therefore provide solutions that can operate effectively with multiple refrigerants. BITZER compressors are designed to support a broad refrigerant portfolio, enabling system designers to choose options that balance efficiency, environmental performance and regulatory compliance.

This flexibility allows operators to future-proof their installations as regulations continue to evolve.

Unlocking the potential of waste heat recovery

Heat pumps are also playing a growing role in recovering and upgrading waste heat. Industrial processes, refrigeration systems and data centres often generate large volumes of low-grade heat that would otherwise be rejected into the environment.

By using heat pumps to upgrade this heat to useful temperatures, operators can significantly improve overall energy efficiency while reducing fuel consumption. In some cases, recovered heat can be fed into district heating networks or used to support neighbouring facilities.

Efficient compression technology is essential to making these systems viable. Compressors must operate reliably across varying temperature levels while maintaining efficiency during heat recovery cycles. Advanced compressor solutions from BITZER help enable these applications, supporting both sustainability targets and operational cost reductions.

Intelligent control and system integration

As energy systems become increasingly connected, digital monitoring and intelligent control are becoming key elements of modern heat pump installations. Integration with building management systems (BMS), SCADA systems and energy management platforms allow operators to optimise performance, detect faults early and plan maintenance more effectively.

Compressor-integrated control technologies provide real-time monitoring of operating parameters including pressures, temperatures and load conditions. This data can be used to support predictive maintenance strategies, helping operators identify potential issues before they lead to system downtime.

By embedding intelligence at the compressor level, heat pump systems gain improved transparency and operational reliability.

Supporting the retrofit transition

While new installations are driving much of the heat pump market growth, retrofit projects represent a significant opportunity for reducing emissions from existing buildings and industrial facilities.

Replacing entire heating systems can be capital intensive, but targeted upgrades can deliver meaningful improvements in efficiency and performance. Modular compressor solutions and retrofit options allow existing systems to be enhanced without complete plant replacement.

Solutions such as performance kits enable additional capacity control and monitoring capabilities to be integrated into existing compressors, helping operators improve performance while managing investment costs.

Compressors at the centre of the energy transition

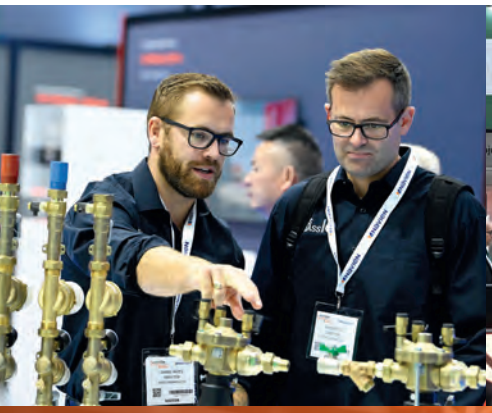
As electrification of heat accelerates across commercial and industrial sectors, heat pumps will continue to play a central role in delivering low-carbon heating. However, the success of these systems ultimately depends on the engineering within them.

Compressor technology influences efficiency, operating flexibility, refrigerant compatibility and long-term reliability. By combining advanced mechanical design with intelligent control and refrigerant flexibility, manufacturers are helping to ensure that heat pumps can meet the growing demands of decarbonised heating.

In the transition to net-zero energy systems, compressors may operate quietly in the background - but their role in enabling efficient, reliable and sustainable heating solutions is anything but small.

www.bitzer.de/gb/en/

"INDUSTRIES, MUNICIPALITIES AND COMMERCIAL OPERATORS ARE INCREASINGLY TURNING TO HEAT PUMPS AS A LOW-CARBON ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL FOSSIL-FUEL SYSTEMS."



InstallerSHOW 2026: a deep dive into the biggest and best show yet

InstallerSHOW 2026 arrives as a truly transformative event for the installation, trades and built environment sectors.

InstallerSHOW 2026 on 23-25 June, NEC, Birmingham will have 40,000+ visitors, more than 900 exhibitors, and 11 CPD-accredited live content streams across three action-packed days, this year's edition is shaping up to be the biggest yet – not just in size, but in breadth of subjects and practical value.

More than a traditional trade show, InstallerSHOW 2026 combines hands-on demonstrations, future-focused discourse, international collaboration, and thousands of opportunities to strengthen skills, grow business and influence the future of heat, water, electrics and construction.

Here's a closer look at what some of the key themed zones and content areas have in store.

InstallerPLAZA

The InstallerPLAZA, found in hall 5, is unmissable for visitors.

Sponsored by Vaillant & Glow-worm, the PLAZA combines product launches, hot topics and debates, celebrity appearances, challenges, award winners, live entertainment and more.

Don't miss out on the buzz of the PLAZA, which captures the spirit of the event: collaborative, professional and always focused on the biggest topics affecting the heating and plumbing sector.

InstallerBUILD

InstallerBUILD has emerged as one of the show's most dynamic areas. This dedicated space for builders, roofers, carpenters, flooring installers, kitchen fitters and RMI professionals doubles down on real-world issues like safety, sustainability, retrofitting and practical innovation.

It is more than a collection of exhibitors – it's a live learning experience. At its centre is The HAUS, a full-scale, two-storey demonstration build designed by award-winning architects and assembled with regenerative materials that debuted at the show last year. It is back in 2026 showcasing circular material systems, resilient construction methods, and modern insulation and cladding solutions.

Visitors can expect:

- Expert demonstrations from top manufacturers and suppliers.
- Building Safety Forum tackling the latest safety regulations, materials compliance and industry best practice.
- NHIC Knowledge Hub, with a focus on building safety, competence and training for those trades delivering retrofit and home improvement to the UK.
- FITA flooring demos and competitions spotlighting craftsmanship and innovation.
- Brand Ambassador Hub – sponsored by ITS – is a bustling multitrade networking space featuring all your favourite tradespeople.
- Roofing demos from NFRC and SIG Roofing.
- Bricklaying competition Super Trowel hosting a regional heat LIVE at InstallerSHOW.
- A heritage trades showcase, with live demos from stonemasons and those working on preserving traditional buildings.
- The Kitchen Fitter Arena – sponsored by Howdens – with talks and demos for the installers delivering top notch kitchens.

This combination of hands-on learning and exciting showcases makes this area a must-see for any forward-thinking tradesperson focused on the latest products, solutions and building methods, and innovative ways to grow their businesses.

InstallerELECTRIC

Electrical trades, renewables and evolving smart-tech landscapes are a cornerstone of InstallerSHOW. Under the InstallerELECTRIC banner, this area brings:

- Electrical system manufacturers and suppliers showcasing the latest in wiring, distribution, automation, EV charging, smart home integration and renewable energy interfaces.
- Live product demos, giving sparky professionals the chance to see new tools and solutions in action.
- Expert talks on upcoming regulations, safety protocols and skill development – all critical as electrics become more integrated with energy and building-management systems.

This area isn't just about tools; it's where electrical professionals can prepare for future demands – from electrification to energy optimisation.

Painting & Decorating Show

One of the biggest expansions in 2026 is the inclusion of the Painting & Decorating Show as a co-located attraction at InstallerSHOW. Previously a standalone event for professional decorators and designer-craftspeople, this show within a show brings:

- Live demonstrations of painting tools, spraying systems, coating technologies and finishes.
- Workshops and practical skill sessions led by industry veterans, focused on real-world tradecraft — from surface prep to specialty finishes.
- Supplier showcases from leaders in paints, wallcoverings, brushes, rollers and accessories.
- The TradesTalk theatre, with a must-see programme of inspiring talks and debates relevant for ALL construction trades.

This integration broadens InstallerSHOW's appeal into the finishing trades and offers cross-disciplinary inspiration – for example, how decorating trends and technologies intersect with broader interior installation evolutions.

Professional Woodworking Expo

Another major addition in 2026 is the Professional Woodworking Expo, now co-located with InstallerSHOW and the Painting & Decorating Show. This is the UK's only dedicated woodworking tradeshow, uniting carpenters, joiners and wood-craft professionals with the tools and technologies redefining the discipline.

Visitors here can expect:

- Latest machining and fabrication tools from leading manufacturers.
- Software and workflow demos tailored for cabinetmakers, joiners and bespoke furniture builders.
- Live cut-and-assemble workshops showcasing advanced techniques and CNC integrations.
- Networking with global suppliers solidifying this as a go-to for woodworking pros.

For any installer whose work involves wood-based finishing, bespoke joinery or precision fabrication, the Professional Woodworking Expo bridges traditional skills with cutting-edge technology.

World Plumbing Conference

For the first time ever, the World Plumbing Conference will be hosted alongside InstallerSHOW, making 2026 a landmark event for the global plumbing community.

In collaboration with the World Plumbing Council and the Chartered Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineering (CIPHE), the conference gathers global leaders, innovators and policymakers to address the sector's biggest challenges under the theme Worldwide Problems – Global Solutions.

Key areas of focus include:

- Skills development to tackle workforce gaps and elevate professional standards.
- Supply chain resilience and conservation strategies for water and material sustainability.
- Sustainability in plumbing technologies and techniques.
- Public protection, including tackling risks like Legionnaires' disease and non-compliance hazards.

Kitchen Fitter Arena

Kitchen installation has become one of the most competitive and technically demanding areas in the trades. In response, InstallerSHOW 2026 includes an expanded Kitchen Fitter Arena, delivered in partnership with Howdens.

This arena focuses on hands-on workshops, live demonstrations and installer-led sessions designed for real-world kitchen projects. Sessions will cover installation best practices, practical solutions for site challenges, and business growth insights for kitchen installers.

A standout feature is the inclusion of the first-ever Kitchen Ambassador Hub, guided by an expert team of industry ambassadors including names like Gavin Tutton, Andy Snelson, Tom Easter, Emily Kitchin and Victoria Prirozzolo. These ambassadors bring deep trade experience in kitchen design and installation, helping visitors explore:

- Tips and tricks for efficient workflow on site.
- Advice on choosing materials, fixtures and appliances.
- Guidance on business strategy, pricing and client engagement.

This arena promises to be one of the most content-rich areas for installers looking to sharpen their craft and grow their business acumen.

Brand Ambassador Hub

InstallerSHOW's Brand Ambassador Hub – in partnership with ITS – is a dynamic gathering point where influencers will connect with our visitors.

As well as grassroots conversations about the issues that matter most to tradespeople, this area will feature Top Picks for 2026, which as the name suggests, will highlight the products and solutions to watch out for this year.

Bathroom Theatre

InstallerSHOW's Kitchen & Bathroom zone also includes a dedicated Bathroom Theatre – a space curated by the Bathroom Association, focusing on innovation and best practice in bathroom installation.

As bathrooms increasingly blend aesthetics, technology and sustainability, this theatre becomes a critical stop for installers and designers alike.

Why InstallerSHOW 2026 Matters

InstallerSHOW 2026 isn't just another exhibition; it's a three-day extravaganza of trade disciplines, business growth opportunities, and future-focused thinking. The addition of co-located events like the Painting & Decorating Show and Professional Woodworking Expo, alongside the global platform of the World Plumbing Conference, means three days packed with learning, inspiration and new pathways for professional advancement.

If you're an installer, builder, carpenter, electrician, decorator or business owner connected to any aspect of installation or the built environment, InstallerSHOW 2026 promises to be the most practical, innovative and rewarding edition yet.

For more information and to get your free tickets, head to **www.installershow.com**.

Why installed heat pumps underperform and the role of servicing in system efficiency

Heat pump installations in the UK are increasing, but many systems underperform due to poor setup – not the units themselves. **Daniel McCowan**, Director at ServiceMy, discusses how better servicing and adjustments can improve performance and reduce costs.

Heat pump installations have increased quickly across the UK over the last few years. With funding support and a wider push towards low carbon heating, more systems are now being installed across homes, housing stock and commercial buildings. While that growth is positive, it is becoming clear that not all systems are performing as expected once they are in use.

From a servicing point of view, there is a noticeable gap between installation and how systems perform over time. Many systems are running, but not efficiently. Some struggle to heat properties properly, others run at higher costs than expected, and some operate continuously without delivering the level of comfort the customer was expecting. In most cases, the heat pump itself is not the problem. It is the wider system around it.

Why heat pumps underperform on site

One of the most common issues found when attending properties is emitter sizing. Radiators are often too small for low flow temperature systems, particularly in retrofit homes where existing emitters have been retained. The system may eventually reach temperature, but it does so slowly and has to work harder to get there. This often leads to higher flow temperatures being used to compensate, which reduces efficiency and increases running costs.

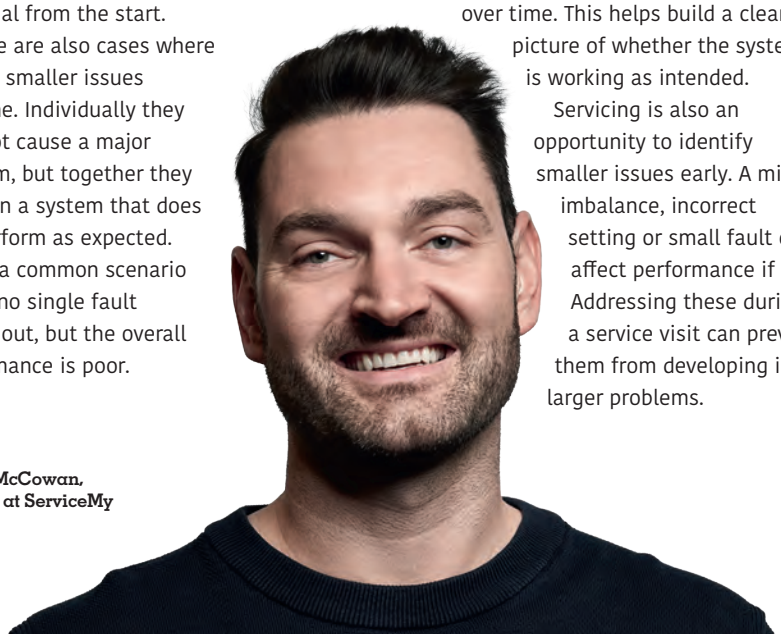
Heat loss assumptions are another factor. If the original calculations do not reflect the actual condition of the property, the system can be undersized from the outset. This becomes more noticeable during colder periods, where the system has little capacity to deal with increased demand.

Flow temperature settings also play a key role. Many systems are left on fixed flow temperatures rather than being set up with weather compensation. This means the system continues to run at the same output regardless of external conditions. During milder weather, this results in unnecessary energy use, while colder conditions can expose the system's limits.

Controls are another regular issue. It is not unusual to find zoning that does not reflect how the property is used, thermostats positioned in poor locations, or schedules that do not match occupancy patterns. In some cases, controls are present but have not been set up correctly, or the end user has not been shown how to use them. These issues are often overlooked at handover but have a direct impact on both comfort and efficiency.

Commissioning can also vary. While systems may be signed off, the level of detail in commissioning is not always consistent. Flow rates may not be fully balanced, and system settings may not be fine-tuned to suit the property. This can leave the system operating below its potential from the start.

There are also cases where several smaller issues combine. Individually they may not cause a major problem, but together they result in a system that does not perform as expected. This is a common scenario where no single fault stands out, but the overall performance is poor.



Daniel McCowan, Director at ServiceMy

What this means for the end user

For homeowners, these issues tend to present in similar ways. Rooms not reaching temperature, particularly on upper floors. Systems running for long periods without achieving the desired result. Higher than expected energy bills. Or uncertainty around whether the system is working as it should.

This often leads to frustration, especially where expectations have been set around efficiency and running costs. In many cases, the heat pump itself is blamed, when the issue lies elsewhere within the system.

For landlords, housing providers and facilities management companies, the impact is more operational. Increased call outs, repeat visits and ongoing complaints can put pressure on maintenance teams. Without properly identifying the cause, these issues can continue over long periods and lead to unnecessary costs.

The role of servicing

Servicing is often treated as a routine requirement, focused on checks and basic maintenance. In practice, it should be used to assess how the system is performing and make adjustments where needed.

A well carried out service goes beyond standard checks. It includes reviewing flow temperatures, checking control settings, and assessing how the system is operating over time. This helps build a clearer picture of whether the system is working as intended.

Servicing is also an opportunity to identify smaller issues early. A minor imbalance, incorrect setting or small fault can affect performance if left. Addressing these during a service visit can prevent them from developing into larger problems.

Another important part of servicing is engaging with the end user. Heat pumps operate differently to traditional heating systems, and not all customers are familiar with how they should be used. Simple guidance around controls, scheduling and expectations can often resolve issues that might otherwise result in further call outs.

Servicing also allows for performance checks against the original design. If the system is not operating within a reasonable range, further investigation can be carried out.

A more proactive approach

There is still a tendency within the sector to respond to issues once they have been raised by the customer. By that point, the customer has already had a negative experience.

A more effective approach is to review systems regularly and make adjustments over time. This helps keep systems running efficiently and reduces the likelihood of problems developing.

For larger portfolios, such as housing associations or facilities management contracts, this approach can make a noticeable difference. Fewer reactive call outs, improved system performance and better customer satisfaction all contribute to smoother day to day operations.

It also allows for trends to be identified across multiple properties. If the same issue is being seen repeatedly, it can be addressed at a wider level rather than on a case-by-case basis.

Closing the gap

Improving heat pump performance requires a joined-up approach. Installation, commissioning and servicing all play a part.

Getting the initial design right is important, but it is equally important to review how the system performs once it is in use. Servicing provides that opportunity and helps ensure the system continues to operate as intended.

There is also value in feeding back what is found on site. Common issues identified during servicing can help improve future installations and reduce repeat problems.

Conclusion

Heat pumps can deliver reliable and efficient heating, but only when the full system is set up and maintained properly. The issues being seen across many properties are generally related to system design, commissioning and operation, rather than the heat pump itself.

Servicing should be used to maintain and improve performance, not just to carry out basic checks. With installations continuing to increase, making sure systems perform properly in real conditions will be key to maintaining confidence in the technology and supporting wider adoption across the UK.

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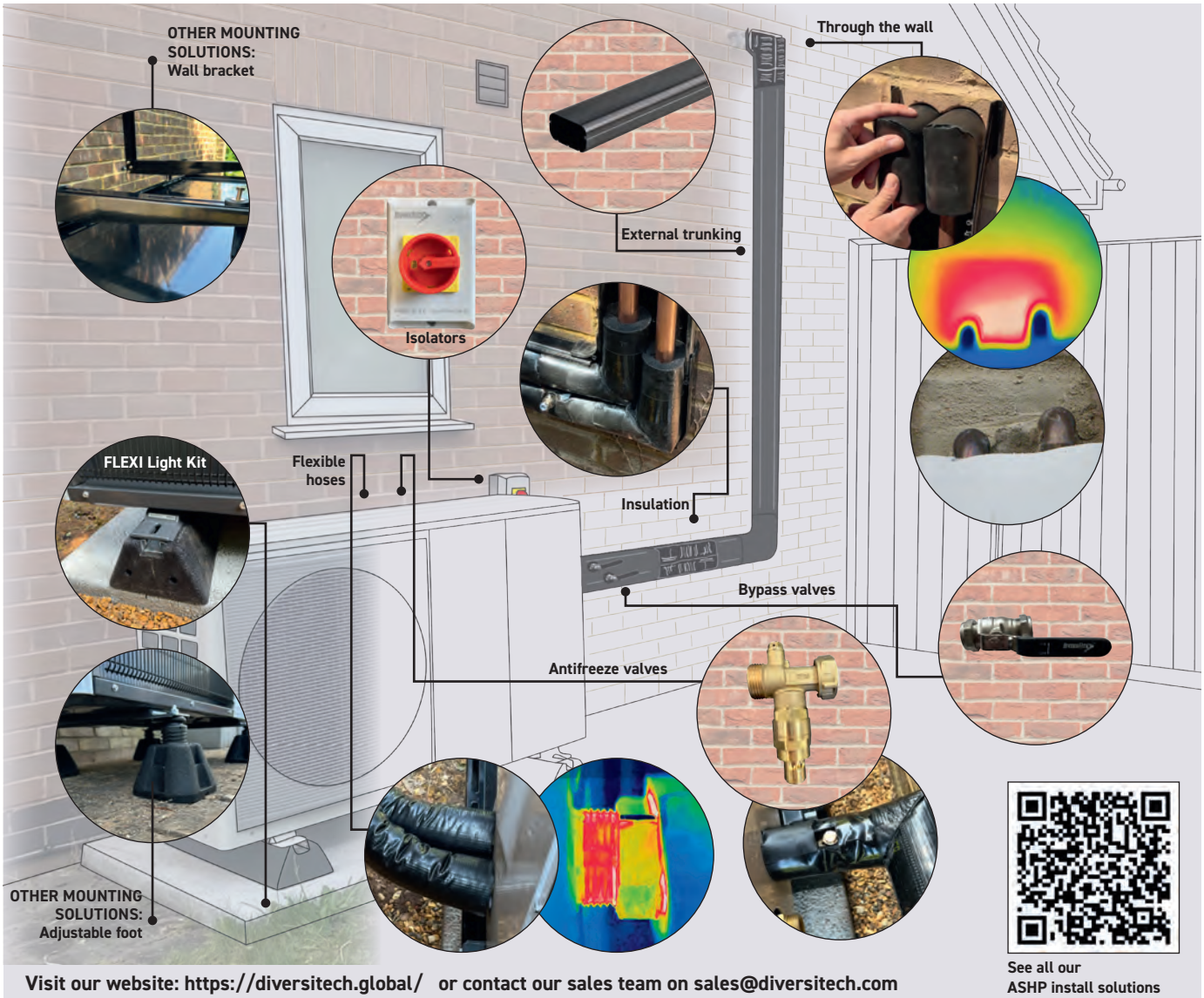

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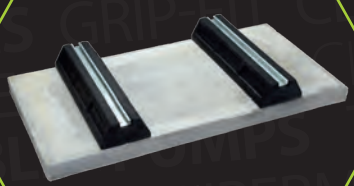

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PUMP HOUSE

Chemical-free heating water treatment for heat pumps and underfloor heating

Alpesh Trivedi, Director at Magnetic International UK LTD, shares his thoughts on the practical route to compliance, performance, and installer simplicity.

As heat pump adoption accelerates across the UK, particularly in new-build residential developments, attention is increasingly turning to system design, sizing, and controls. However, one critical factor continues to be underestimated: heating water quality.

In a closed-loop systems such as heat pumps and underfloor heating (UFH), water quality plays a direct role in system efficiency, reliability, and long-term performance. Poor water conditions can lead to scale, corrosion, and sludge formation — all of which impact heat transfer and increase the likelihood of component failure.

For installers, this creates both a challenge and an opportunity: how to ensure compliance with manufacturer requirements while delivering systems that perform reliably from day one.

Why water quality is critical in heat pump systems

Heat pumps operate at lower flow temperatures than traditional boilers, which makes them more sensitive to inefficiencies caused by poor water quality. Even minor scaling on a heat exchanger can significantly reduce heat transfer, lowering overall system efficiency and coefficient of performance (COP).

In addition, modern systems often contain a mix of materials — including steel, brass, and aluminium components — which can be vulnerable to corrosion if water chemistry is not properly controlled.

For this reason, most manufacturers of heat pumps, specify strict requirements for system water quality. These typically include limits on:

- Conductivity
- Total hardness
- Chloride and sulphate levels
- pH range

Failure to meet these requirements can result in reduced performance, increased maintenance issues, and in some cases, invalidated warranties.

Meeting industry standards

Alongside manufacturer requirements, installers are expected to follow recognised guidance for closed-loop heating systems. Key references include:

- VDI 2035 – widely adopted for controlling scale and corrosion through limits on hardness and conductivity
- BG29 – covering system cleanliness at commissioning
- BG50 – outlining best practice for system water treatment

These standards are increasingly being specified by consultants and incorporated into project requirements, making water quality compliance a core part of system delivery.

The installer challenge on residential developments

On multi-plot residential developments, maintaining consistent water quality can be particularly difficult. Installers often face:

- Variability in local mains or borehole water quality
- High hardness levels in many regions of the UK
- Tight commissioning schedules

The need for repeatable, scalable & sustainable solutions across multiple properties.

Traditional approaches using chemical inhibitors can introduce additional complexity. These typically require accurate dosing, ongoing monitoring, and periodic maintenance. Incorrect dosing or lack of follow-up can lead to inconsistent system protection.

There is also growing awareness of environmental considerations, with some developers and clients seeking to reduce reliance on chemical additives.

Alpesh Trivedi, Director at Magnetic International UK LTD

A practical alternative: Demineralised water at initial fill

One approach gaining traction is the use of demineralised water during the initial filling of heat pump and UFH systems as well as for refill/ top up, delivered via mobile demineralised filling stations and cartridges.

The term Demineralised water originates from the everyday use, and it is argued that the correct technical term is deionised (desalinated) water, commonly referred to as demineralised water.

Deionised water is produced using a mixed-bed ion exchange resin, which removes both cations and anions, resulting in water with very low ionic content and low electrical conductivity.

By filling the system with demineralised water from the outset, installers can create a clean, controlled water environment that aligns with both manufacturer specifications and industry guidance. Thus, reducing the risks of scale & corrosion in the system and that it operates within the recommended water quality parameters.

Importantly, this approach eliminates the need for chemical additives during commissioning, simplifying the process while still meeting performance requirements.

Case study: Residential heat pump development

A recent residential development in Newcastle upon Tyne provides a practical example of this approach in action.

The project involved the installation of 15 kW heat pump systems across multiple new-build properties, each incorporating underfloor heating.

The installer, Bill Hewison Bespoke Homes Ltd, identified early on that local water conditions posed a risk to system performance. With hard water prevalent in the area, there was a clear need to address potential scale and corrosion issues from the commissioning stage and also for future refill or top up of heating water.

At the same time, the project required a solution that would:

- Meet manufacturer water quality requirements
- Be simple to apply across multiple plots
- Avoid the complexity of chemical dosing
- Support long-term system reliability

Implementation on site

Demineralised filling stations were used for initial filling and cartridges were then installed for refill or top up of both the systems.

The process was straightforward:

- Mobile filling stations were used for initial filling and Cartridges were then installed inline during for refill/ top up of the system
- Water was treated as it entered the system
- No additional dosing or chemical handling was required

The cartridges also provided a practical advantage for installers, with clear visual indicators showing when replacement was needed, making them easy to manage on site. This allowed for a consistent approach to be applied across all properties within the development.

Results and installer benefits

By filling the systems with demineralised water, the installer was able to:

- Achieve water quality in line with manufacturer specifications
- Eliminate scale-forming minerals from the outset
- Reduce conductivity to a controlled level
- Provide stable system conditions at commissioning

From an installer perspective, the benefits were clear:

- Simplified commissioning process
- No need for chemical dosing or balancing
- Reduced risk of installation errors
- Consistent results across multiple plots

For the client and end user, this translated into:

- Lower risk of corrosion and component failure
- Improved system efficiency and performance
- Reduced likelihood of maintenance call-outs
- Protection of manufacturer warranty

Looking ahead: Water quality in a low-temperature future

As the UK transitions towards low-temperature heating and electrification, the importance of water quality is only set to increase.

Heat pumps and UFH systems are inherently more sensitive to water conditions than traditional systems, making correct commissioning practices essential.

Demineralised water treatment offers a practical, installer-friendly solution that aligns with:

- Manufacturer requirements
- Industry standards such as VDI 2035, BSRIA BG29
- The need for simple, repeatable processes on site

It also supports a move towards chemical-free system management, which is increasingly relevant in both residential and commercial applications.

Basic mobil plus

Conclusion

For installers working on heat pump and UFH systems, water quality should be considered a fundamental part of system design and commissioning — not an afterthought.

Using demineralised water during initial filling provides a straightforward, compliant, and reliable method of ensuring systems operate as intended from day one.

By removing the variables associated with local water quality and chemical dosing, installers can deliver systems that are:

- Easier to commission
- More efficient in operation
- Less prone to failure
- Fully aligned with manufacturer expectations

In a rapidly evolving heating landscape, getting the basics right — starting with the water — remains one of the most effective ways to ensure long-term system success.

Info
www.magnetic-online.de

WOMEN IN THE HEAT PUMP INDUSTRY

Adele Watson, Apprenticeship Programme Lead at Carrier, shares her inspiring journey from working in her father's appliance store in her early teens, to leading HVAC apprenticeships across the UK&I, driving talent development and tackling the industry's skills gap head-on. She also offers powerful encouragement for women considering a career in the sector.


Adele at work at Carrier

My first job was actually working for my dad at our third-generation domestic appliance store when I was in my early teens. It might not have been the most glamorous working environment at the time, but it taught me a huge amount.

My dad had me doing everything from cleaning appliances and sourcing spare parts to serving customers, and eventually even getting involved in sales. As I got older, I even ended up running my own Saturday market stall selling appliances, which definitely helped build my confidence and work ethic from a young age.

How did you get into the heat pump industry?

I didn't intentionally set out to join the heat pump industry; it happened quite organically. I originally started at a fire and security company in a Learning & Development (L&D) role before transferring to Carrier, where I continued working within Talent.

It was only around two years ago, when I moved into my current role as Apprentice Programme Lead, that I really became immersed in the HVAC industry. Since then, I've gained a much deeper understanding of both the opportunities within the sector and some of the challenges we face, particularly around skills and attracting new talent into the industry.

What does your current role involve?

My current role involves overseeing the apprenticeship programme across UK&I, including standardising processes, recruiting our annual apprentice intake based on business requirements, supporting mentors and providing pastoral care to our apprentices throughout their journey.

The role draws together my background in both recruitment and L&D really well, which is one of the reasons I enjoy it so much. Over time, it has become much more than just a job for me; it genuinely feels like a vocation. I truly love what I do. Working with young people and their mentors is incredibly rewarding, and I am constantly impressed by their attitude, resilience and willingness to learn. They inspire me just as much as I hope I support them.

With the industry facing an ongoing skills gap, roles like mine are becoming even more important. A huge focus for us is building and upskilling the future workforce across RACHP (Refrigeration, Air Conditioning & Heat Pump), electrical, gas and plumbing qualifications, ensuring we have the skilled engineers needed to support the industry both now and in the future.

What do you see as the challenges facing the industry?

From my perspective, one of the biggest challenges facing the industry is the skills gap and the impact of an ageing workforce. A significant amount of experience and technical knowledge is set to leave the sector as experienced engineers retire, and that creates a real urgency to attract and develop new talent now.

Alongside this, there is also a shortage of training providers and qualified tutors, particularly within RACHP qualifications, which adds further pressure on the pipeline of skilled engineers entering the industry.

For me, this really reinforces why the work we are doing is so important. There is a clear need to focus on building capability now, ensuring we are not only attracting new people into the sector but properly supporting and developing them so they can step into those critical roles in the future.

Did you have any mentor's or anyone in particular who inspired you?

Carrier has been really strong in promoting its mentoring scheme within the workplace, and I've been fortunate to take full advantage of that. I've been mentored by some incredibly knowledgeable and experienced people within the industry, which has been both supportive and hugely developmental.

Adele at a Scottish assessment day at Glasgow College

In terms of inspiration, I would say it comes most strongly from my parents. My dad is 75 and still refuses to slow down, constantly starting new projects and getting involved in sustainability initiatives aimed at supporting a greener world. His energy and determination are relentless and really inspiring.

At the same time, my mum brings a very different but equally important influence. She provides balance and perspective, reminding me how important it is to enjoy life as well as work hard and not let work consume everything. Between them, they've shaped a mindset that values both ambition and balance.

What would you say to other women who are considering coming into the heat pump industry?

I am very supportive of encouraging more women to consider a career in this industry. There is so much opportunity within HVAC and the wider engineering and technical sectors, but it is still heavily underrepresented in terms of female talent.

From my own experience, once you are in the industry, you quickly realise it is far more about capability, attitude and problem-solving than it is about gender. There are real opportunities to build a long and varied career, whether that is in technical, operational, commercial, or development-focused roles.

I would encourage any woman considering this path to go for it. Get involved, ask questions, and don't be put off by it traditionally being seen as a male-dominated sector. There is a real need for different perspectives, and the industry is improving in how it supports and develops diverse talent, but there is still work to do.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Outside of work, I keep things fairly simple and enjoy the usual reset activities like travelling, reading and going for long walks. I also don't mind a cold dip now and again, although I tend to question my life choices halfway through it!

Adele at a Careers Expo with James Mees, Andrew Flint and Matthew Mayes

Adele at the top of Westfield London, accompanied by Ethan Byrne and Andrew Flint.

Info

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Why the heating sector needs to get hands-on if it wants to close the heat pump skills gap

BBC News has highlighted that UK heat pump rollout is slowed by a skills gap. **Madeleine Gabriel**, Director of Sustainable Future at Nesta, shares how Nesta's hands-on training boosts installer confidence, which is key to scaling adoption.

Recent reporting by BBC News[1] has underlined the scale and urgency of the UK's home energy challenge, as developers from 2028 will be required to install heat pumps in all new homes in England as part of updated planning requirement published by the government. But while it is promising to see this policy ambition is accelerating, delivery on the ground is struggling to keep pace and will only succeed if there are enough skilled workers to carry it out.

The answer lies – in part – in addressing the urgent skills gap. While thousands of engineers are being trained to install heat pumps, only 27% of newly qualified installers[2] go on to complete an installation within a year of receiving training. That's not due to a lack of motivation or consumer demand, but of confidence and experience. Engineers need more than classroom knowledge; they need hands-on practice and the assurance that they can deliver high-quality installations in real-world conditions.

Madeleine Gabriel, Director of Sustainable Future at Nesta

"THE GOVERNMENT MADE CLEAR WITH THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS 'CLEAN ENERGY SUPERPROWER' STRATEGY, JOB CREATION AND A MORE CONFIDENT, SKILLED WORKFORCE WILL NOT ONLY HELP US MEET OUR CLIMATE TARGETS BUT ALSO DRIVE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS."

The power of getting hands-on

This is where initiatives like Nesta's Start at Home[3] programme come in. By enabling heating engineers to install a government-funded heat pump in their own homes, our programme is designed to build confidence and help develop practical skills – a simple idea with powerful results.

In our recent pilot, in partnership with the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation, we provided heat pumps to heating engineers across Scotland; 100% of participating engineers reported improved understanding of system design and installation, and 61% experienced a large boost in confidence in the technology and in talking to customers about it (66%).

The reason for this is simple: If you want engineers to feel confident installing heat pumps for others, let them start by installing one in their own homes. This approach not only builds technical fluency but also gives installers a personal stake in the technology. They experience the benefits first-hand, understand the challenges and teething issues involved in the installation process intimately, and become more effective advocates for heat pumps among their customers and in their communities.

A golden opportunity for engineers and industry

The economic opportunity for installers is significant. Heat pumps represent a growing market, and engineers who upskill now will be more likely to future-proof their businesses. As demand accelerates, those with the right expertise will gain a competitive edge, positioning themselves as leaders in a low-carbon future.

The shift is already underway. Consumer demand is quickly rising, especially as energy prices fluctuate and environmental awareness grows. According to the latest findings from the Heat Pump Association, nearly 100,000 heat pumps sold in the UK in 2024, a 63% increase from 2023.

The wider business case for heat pumps is compelling. They need less maintenance than traditional boilers, have a longer lifespan, and offer consistent performance. For consumers, this can translate into lower lifetime costs and greater peace of mind. For installers, it means fewer callbacks and more satisfied customers. As the market matures, these advantages will become increasingly clear and valuable.

All hands to the pump

To seize the opportunity, coordinated action across the sector is needed. Manufacturers, training providers, and policymakers must work together to close the skills gap and support engineers through their transition. That means investing in high-quality training, creating more opportunities for hands-on experience, and ensuring that funding schemes are accessible and well communicated.

Government support is also crucial. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme and other incentives are helping to make heat pumps more affordable for households, but uptake remains uneven. Clearer messaging, streamlined processes, and targeted outreach – especially to installers – can help unlock the full potential of these programmes.

After all, it's installers who are on the frontlines of this transition. Their confidence and capability are pivotal to accelerating the shift to low-carbon heating in a way that's practical, inclusive, and sustainable.

Turning up the heat on jobs, growth and climate

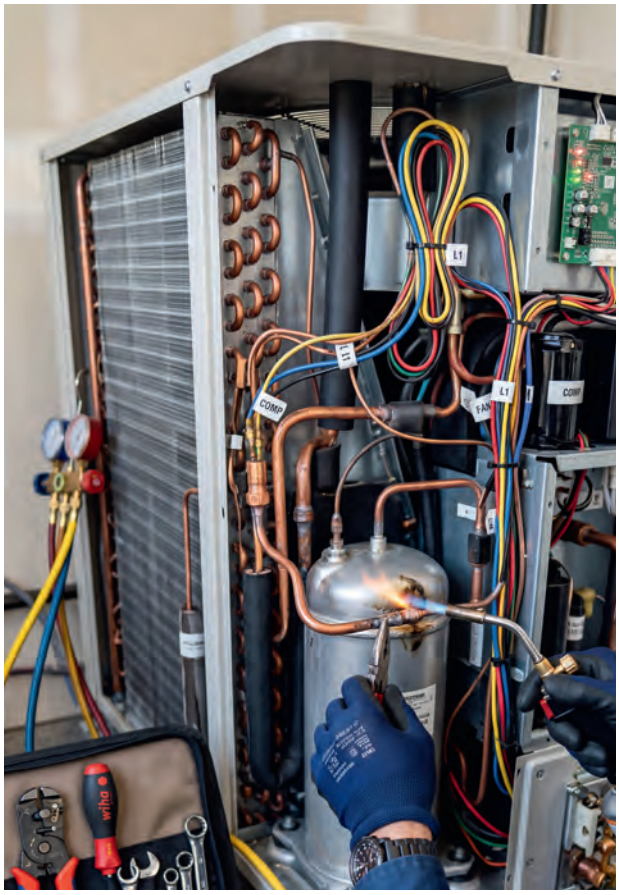
The benefits of getting this right are enormous. As the Government made clear with the recent announcement of its "clean energy superprower" strategy[4], job creation and a more confident, skilled workforce will not only help us meet our climate targets but also drive long-term economic growth and competitiveness.

This strategy will rely heavily on the Government's Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which aims to create over 400,000 new green jobs by 2030. Thousands of new jobs will likely be created in the heating sector alone, from installation and maintenance to manufacturing and support services. Communities across the UK stand to benefit from cleaner air and lower bills to greater energy security and resilience.

The heating sector doesn't need to wait for change – it can start at home. We want the industry to grasp this opportunity and ensure that every engineer has the tools, experience, and confidence to deliver the future of heating. With winter approaching, consumer interest rising, and government funding available, the time to act is now.

By bridging the skills gap, we can make the heating sector one that works for everyone – creating more jobs, cutting carbon, and making homes warmer and more affordable.

Info
www.nesta.org.uk/



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Market in motion

Jason Tinsley, Vice President of Blue Star Global, explains why heat pump design is becoming a critical differentiator in this shifting market.

In the UK and across Europe, heat pumps are now central to national energy strategies, decarbonisation targets and long-term energy security.

The UK government recently boosted its support of heat pumps by announcing early moves to de-couple electricity pricing from gas which should eventually reduce the price of operating a heat pump. In addition, households on LPG and oil heating systems were offered extra support through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). And the Future Homes Standard has set a clear pathway to use of heat pumps in new homes from 2028.

At a European level, initiatives such as REPowerEU are targeting tens of millions of new heat pump installations by 2030, supported by regulatory measures, incentives and manufacturing investment.

A market shaped by uncertainty

Despite this growing momentum to low-carbon heat, the market itself is far from straightforward for manufacturers. Market growth has not followed a smooth upward trajectory, and as a result they are navigating a landscape shaped by uncertainty, complexity and rapid change. Yet, without a steady flow of heat pump product development and manufacturing, no amount of grants or policy will deliver the low-carbon future.

Those in the market recognise this issue. For example, the HPA UK has called for greater policy certainty to accelerate heat pump adoption in residential and commercial buildings, stating: “Without a clear strategy and stable policy framework, the retrofit market risks underperforming, putting these vital supply chains, including UK companies and employment, at risk.”

It’s a call that highlights the key challenge in the heat pump sector across the UK and Europe. There is opportunity ahead for heat pump manufacturers (and installers), but getting there means navigating risk.

In our work with international clients, Blue Star sees three interconnected challenges that define the sector: volatility, fragmentation and acceleration. Together, they are reshaping how manufacturers must respond to the market.

Volatility in the heat pump sector is clear. The past two years have demonstrated that demand for heat pumps is highly sensitive to external factors. Periods of rapid growth have been followed by slowdowns, often linked to changes in subsidy regimes, energy pricing and consumer confidence.

In the UK, for example, annual sales have continued to rise, reaching over 125,000 units in 2025, but this growth remains heavily weighted towards the domestic sector, with non-domestic adoption still lagging, as UK HPA highlights.

Similarly, in Europe, after a decade of expansion, the market dropped in 2023 and 2024, raising concerns about the impact on planned investments in manufacturing and research.

This creates a difficult planning environment for manufacturers. Product development cycles in HVAC are typically long, and require significant upfront investment in engineering, testing and certification. When demand fluctuates, the risk associated with those investments increases.

The result is growing emphasis on flexibility in product design. Systems need to be adaptable to different price points, installation scenarios and levels of performance without requiring complete redesign. Modular architectures, scalable platforms and configurable components are becoming more important as manufacturers look to respond quickly to changing market conditions.

If volatility reflects change over time, fragmentation reflects difference across geography.

Jason Tinsley, Vice President of Blue Star Global Ltd

Different markets, different requirements

Although often discussed as a single market, Europe is of course a collection of distinct national and regional ecosystems. Building stock, climate conditions, regulatory frameworks and installer capabilities vary widely, creating very different requirements for heat pump systems.

In the UK, much of the opportunity lies in retrofit, where systems must work within the constraints of existing buildings, often with limited space, legacy emitters and varying levels of insulation. Hybrid systems and high-temperature performance can be important considerations in this context.

Northern European markets place a strong emphasis on cold climate performance and efficiency at low ambient temperatures. Meanwhile, in Southern Europe, cooling capability can be just as important as heating, shaping system design in different ways.

Overlaying climate issues are regulatory differences. The implementation of the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive in the EU, alongside different national boiler phase-out timelines, and differing incentives across borders all influence how systems are specified and installed.

The implication is clear: a one-size-fits-all product strategy is increasingly difficult to sustain for manufacturers. This requires a deeper understanding of local conditions and closer collaboration with distribution partners, engineers and installers.

User experience of heat pumps is also key to success. For homeowners, ease of use, cost of operation and system reliability are critical. For installers, simplicity, familiarity and ease of commissioning can be decisive factors. Designing systems that balance these requirements across different markets is a complex task.

The third defining factor is acceleration. Across both the UK and Europe, regulatory change is happening at pace. The phase-down of F-gases, stricter energy performance standards, and ambitious decarbonisation targets are compressing the timelines in which manufacturers must develop and deploy new products.

While policies to support heat pump adoption are needed, the pace of change creates pressure. Products must not only meet current standards but anticipate future requirements, often within shortened development cycles. Decisions around refrigerants, system architecture and performance characteristics must be made with an eye on evolving regulation.

In addition, the technology of heat pumps is advancing. Improvements in compressors, controls, system integration and digital connectivity are opening new possibilities for efficiency and performance. But integrating these innovations into robust, cost-effective products at speed is a significant engineering challenge.

Taken together, volatility, fragmentation and acceleration point towards a broader shift in the heat pump sector. Historically, success in HVAC manufacturing has often been linked to scale and standardisation. Today, those factors remain important, but they are no longer sufficient on their own.

Design-led strategies for the future

There is growing recognition that product design must sit at the centre of strategy. The ability to develop heat pumps that are tailored to specific markets, adaptable to changing conditions and aligned with future regulatory requirements is becoming a key differentiator.

This does not necessarily mean developing entirely new products for every scenario. More often, it involves combining core technologies with flexible design frameworks that allow systems to be configured for different applications and regions. Design characteristics such as manufacturability, 'installability' and usability are just as important as designing for performance.

From a UK perspective, this has particular relevance. The success of heat pump deployment is heavily reliant on policy support and consumer demand, but it's equally critical to think about the availability of systems that are suited to the realities of British building stock and installation practices.

The direction of travel for heat pumps is set. Across Europe and the UK, they will play a central role in the transition to low carbon heating. What is less certain is how smoothly that transition will unfold. Market fluctuations, regional differences and rapid regulatory change will continue to shape the landscape in the years ahead.

For manufacturers and their partners, this reinforces the importance of a design-led approach. Heat pumps must be developed to perform in a market that is evolving quickly and often unpredictably.

Approaches such as custom design and manufacturing models, like those offered by Blue Star, address this shift, enabling greater alignment between product development and market needs. By focusing on how heat pumps are designed rather than simply how many are produced, the industry is better placed to navigate the challenges ahead and deliver on the significant opportunities that lie beyond them.

Info
www.bluestarindia.com

Copper industry positioned as critical backbone of green heating systems

Heat pumps will be standard in new UK homes from 2028, with government support increasing adoption, though some upgrades are still needed. **Andrew Surtees**, Co-Founder of the Copper Sustainability Partnership, provides his thoughts on why copper is promoted as the preferred piping for efficiency and sustainability.

Heat pumps are set to become the new standard in homes built from 2028 onwards as part of the Future Homes Standard, a government scheme set to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in homes. To support this rollout, the Copper Sustainability Partnership (CuSP) is highlighting the importance of installing with copper for safer, longer lasting infrastructure.

The popularity of heat pumps in the UK is increasing, with more people becoming aware of their environmental benefits. New data shows applications had increased by 54% year on year, during the first half of 2025, with 22,344 people taking advantage of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme between January and June 2025, compared to 14,555 in the same period last year.

However, to reach the UK's climate obligations, there is still a long way to go – a new report from innovation charity Nesta has found that many people are hesitant about heat pump installation due to the work that may need to be done beforehand to prepare a home for a heat pump.

With some homes possibly needing new radiators, or new pipework to accommodate the water pressure differences, should homes be making the upgrades now? How can copper help?

Andrew Surtees, Co-Founder of the Copper Sustainability Partnership

Introduction of the 'Warm Homes Plan'

One initiative key to the uptake of heat pump installation is the government's 'Warm Homes Plan' which came into effect in January 2026.

The Warm Homes Plan promises to provide £15 billion to households across the UK over the next five years, to upgrade to greener technology and help cut energy bills.

Included in the plan is the extension of the Boiler Upgrade Scheme to 2029/30, offering up to £7,500 in grants per household for air-source or ground-source heat pumps, and expanding the scheme to include a £2,500 discount on air-to-air heat pumps that also cool your home.

While upgrading a home's plumbing system in advance of installing a heat pump will come with extra costs, Nesta and green energy charity, MCS Foundation, have estimated the average home could save more than £1000 a year on energy bills.

Why should heat pumps be made with copper piping?

Heat pump installations are the next big step towards the UK reaching its climate goal, and copper must be at the heart of this change over damaging materials like plastic.

Copper is suitable for supplying heating, water and gas into homes. As an excellent conductor of heat, it allows for rapid and efficient heat transfer, making it the standout choice for supplying the heat generated by low-carbon heating systems.

The material also possesses a host of environmental benefits over plastic piping for heat pumps. Not only is it an infinitely recyclable material but is favourable because of its thermal resilience and ability to withstand fluctuating temperatures; an area where plastics can crack very quickly.

Copper pipes can be integrated with air-source heat pumps, transporting the heat extracted from outside air to radiators, electric heaters and other outlets. As well as improving efficiency, copper pipes are also infinitely recyclable, helping to reduce carbon emissions associated with the design of air-source heat pumps.

With the construction industry in desperate need to improve its sustainability, single use plastics must be eliminated and replaced with an infinitely recyclable alternative like copper, in order to make homes fit for the future.

To find out more about the recyclability of copper and its importance in heat pumps, visit: **https://www.cuspuk.com**

Heat pumps transform Tameside Hospital in £14m project

Vital Energi has partnered with Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust on a £14m decarbonisation project that will cut carbon emissions at Tameside General Hospital by over 2,000 tonnes a year.

Having designed and developed the scheme, Vital Energi will construct a new energy centre housing a 2MW heat pump system, comprising four air source heat pumps and two water source heat pumps, supported by two efficient low temperature hot water boilers.

A new air source heat pump will also be installed within the Pathology block, replacing the old and inefficient gas boiler.

The project includes de steaming the site-wide heating and domestic hot water systems to improve temperature control and eliminate heat losses, enhancing overall energy efficiency.

A range of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) will also be installed. These include cavity and pipework insulation, hydronic optimisation of secondary systems, EC fan upgrades, upgrades to the building management systems, and roof mounted solar PV. More than 500 light fittings across the site will be upgraded to LEDs, including 170 emergency lights.

The Trust's collaboration with Vital Energi represents a significant step toward improving the efficiency and sustainability of the estate. The project will significantly reduce the Hospital's energy bills, savings that can be reinvested into frontline patient care.

John Runniff, Account Development Manager at Vital Energi, said: "We're proud to be working alongside the Trust on a project that will make a real difference to carbon reduction, energy efficiency and ultimately patient care. By integrating innovative heat pump technology, de steaming ageing infrastructure and delivering a comprehensive package of energy saving measures, we're transforming the estate in a way that will deliver long term operational and environmental benefits.

"This investment represents a major step in the Trust's decarbonisation journey, and we're delighted to support them in delivering this scheme which reduces carbon emissions, cuts energy costs, and strengthens the resilience of healthcare services."

Ian Hinitt, Head of Estates at Tameside Hospital, said: "We are delighted to be working with Vital Energi on this milestone project to de-steam the heating infrastructure, whilst improving reliability and resilience of our engineering plant."

The project is being delivered through the Carbon and Energy Fund (CEF) Framework, which has been specifically created to fund complex energy infrastructure upgrades for public sector organisations.

Mark Kay, Project Manager, at the CEF, said: "Through the Carbon and Energy Fund framework, we developed the procurement route and provided programme management to support Tameside Hospital in moving from ambition to delivery. The project demonstrates how well planned investment can cut carbon emissions, modernise essential infrastructure and create more efficient, resilient healthcare environments, while ensuring value for money and continuity of patient services."

This project has been made possible through grant funding from Phase 4 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), which prioritises reducing direct carbon emissions from public buildings by supporting projects that deliver the highest carbon savings.

The scheme is run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix Finance.

Director of Public Sector Decarbonisation at Salix, **Ian Rodger** said: "Every unit of energy saved in the NHS is a step toward cleaner air, better health outcomes, and a more resilient healthcare system, proving that energy efficiency is as vital as any treatment.

"This is about creating better buildings for the future, and healthier environments for the patients, the teams and everyone who visits a hospital."

Alongside Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, Vital Energi successfully guided eight clients through the Phase 4 application process, securing a total of £55.6 million for sustainable projects and contributing to the continued acceleration of the NHS Net Zero Strategy.

Info
www.vitalenergi.co.uk

Silent operation: Why MCS 020 raises the bar for heat pump design

As MCS 020 becomes the sole noise standard under Permitted Development, **Shane Cox**, Managing Director at Itherme, explains why the change places greater emphasis on system design, not just compliance.

Gypsumdek

From 28th May 2026, MCS 020 becomes the sole standard for demonstrating compliance under Permitted Development, replacing the long-standing 1m from boundary rule.

On paper, that is a positive move. The previous approach massively limited the homes in which heat pumps could be installed. Whereas a more sophisticated methodology based on predicted acoustic levels should allow for better system design and wider deployment. However, it also raises the stakes.

Under the new framework, if a system fails to meet the required noise limits, it falls outside Permitted Development. That brings with it planning applications, delays, redesigns and, ultimately, additional cost. For installers and designers operating at scale, that risk is not theoretical, it's operational and financial.

And the consequences go beyond compliance alone. As heat pumps continue to scale across the UK, poor acoustic outcomes have the potential to undermine confidence in the technology itself. A system that meets the standard on paper but generates complaints in practice does little to support long-term adoption.

That is why this change matters more than you might think. It shifts responsibility away from simple rules of thumb and places it firmly with those designing, specifying and installing systems.

Calculation is not the same as performance

One of the risks with any standard is the assumption that compliance equals performance. In reality, acoustic performance is not solved at the point of calculation. MCS 020 provides a methodology: it allows installers and designers to predict likely sound levels based on unit data, distances, barriers and environmental factors. But it is only ever as good as the assumptions that sit behind it.

What happens on site is shaped by a far broader set of decisions. Unit selection, for example, plays a significant role. Two systems with similar output capacities can have very different acoustic profiles, particularly at part load or during defrost cycles. This means that selecting a unit based purely on headline performance or cost can introduce issues that are difficult to mitigate later. Positioning is equally critical: a unit placed close to reflective surfaces, within confined spaces, or directly facing neighbouring properties can behave very differently to one installed in a more open environment. But an often-overlooked consideration, is the broader system.

Flow temperatures, emitter sizing and system balancing all influence how a heat pump operates. A system designed to run at lower flow temperatures, with appropriately sized emitters, will typically operate more efficiently and, as a result, more quietly. Conversely, systems forced to work harder to meet demand due to inappropriately sized emitters can experience higher fan speeds, increased cycling and greater noise output.

These are not marginal considerations, they are central to how a system performs in the real world.

The risk of "compliant but problematic"

The introduction of MCS 020 should, in theory, improve consistency. But there is still a risk that systems are technically compliant, but problematic in practice. And often, that comes back to emitter strategy.

A heat pump may satisfy the required noise calculations at design stage, but if the emitters are undersized or poorly configured, the system itself can still become acoustically problematic once operational. When heat cannot dissipate efficiently into the property, the heat pump is forced to work harder to compensate, in turn, increasing flow rates, ramping up fan activity and cycling more aggressively.

That is where "compliant" systems can quickly become unpopular ones.

This is particularly relevant in retrofit projects, where existing radiators are frequently retained despite being designed for far higher operating temperatures. Once flow temperatures drop into the low-temperature range required for efficient heat pump operation, those emitters can

Shane Cox, Managing Director at Itherme

struggle to deliver sufficient output. The response, too often, is to push the heat pump harder rather than to address the underlying system design.

In practice, that can create exactly the kind of issues MCS 020 is attempting to avoid: excessive operational noise, dissatisfied occupants and neighbour complaints.

A system-level approach is no longer optional

What MCS 020 effectively does is formalise something the industry has known for some time: heat pump performance cannot be separated from emitter performance.

Acoustics, efficiency and reliability are all outcomes of system design. That means considering how the entire system behaves together. While unit selection matters, so do emitter sizing, flow temperatures, room-by-room heat loss calculations and the ability of the system to deliver stable heat output without forcing the heat pump into excessive cycling. Because when emitters are correctly designed for low-temperature operation, systems tend to run more consistently and more quietly.

This is where underfloor heating can change the dynamic significantly. Because UFH operates across a much larger surface area, it can dissipate heat more evenly and efficiently at lower flow temperatures. Rather than relying on spikes in temperature, the system is able to maintain stable comfort with reduced operational strain, allowing the heat pump to settle into a steadier operating rhythm instead of continually ramping up and down to satisfy demand. The result is not just improved thermal comfort, but quieter operation too.

We recently assessed a heritage property where the heat pump installation itself was technically sound, yet the system had become unpopular due to noise concerns. After recalculating the emitter surfaces and optimising system flow, sound levels reduced considerably while overall energy performance improved at the same time. Cases like this are relatively common but highlight an important point: a “loud heat pump” is rarely just a product issue. More often, it is the symptom of a system that has not been properly engineered for low-temperature operation.

At Itherme, this principle sits at the centre of our underfloor heating approach. Systems such as Gypsumdek 18 are specifically designed to support efficient low-temperature operation while also integrating effectively with acoustic floor build-ups, particularly in retrofit and multi-storey environments.

Because noise is usually not an isolated acoustic issue, but a warning sign that the wider system has not been optimised correctly.

Designing for quiet is designing for performance

There is a tendency to treat acoustics as a standalone compliance issue. Yet, in reality, quieter systems are usually better-performing systems.

When emitters are properly sized and systems are designed around low-temperature operation from the outset, heat pumps settle into a far more stable operating pattern. Cycling reduces, fan speeds remain lower, and strain on the system decreases.

Too often, the focus remains fixed on the outdoor unit itself. But the way heat is distributed throughout the property is what determines how hard the unit needs to work in day-to-day operation.

And, ultimately, quiet performance is not achieved through noise mitigation alone. It is engineered through stable, balanced system design.

Info
https://itherme.com/

The Innovation Zone

The guide to what's new for Heat Pumps Today readers, offering vital industry news.
To advertise your product in 'The Innovation Zone' section please contact **grace.darrow@warnersgroup.co.uk**

Explore Fernox's residential, commercial and renewable solutions at InstallerSHOW 2026

Fernox will be attending InstallerSHOW from the 23 to 25 June 2026 at the NEC in Birmingham. The leading manufacturer of chemical water treatment products and filters will showcase its residential, commercial and renewable solutions. A trusted partner with over six decades of experience and in-house testing capabilities, visitors can discover and discuss the company's products, services as well as the training options available via The Fernox Experience, all of which provide professionals with a wealth of valuable support.

For the first time, installers can view the enhanced Fernox Commercial Solutions range, developed to extend the lifespan and improve the efficiency of HVAC systems. Designed to work optimally together, the range comprises air and dirt separators, vacuum degassers, side stream filters and chemicals, which are all suitable for retrofit and new build applications. On the stand will be the new CC1 Side Filter Air & Dirt 90, which provides advanced magnetic and fine particle filtration, air removal, and chemical dosing. **Rob Jacques**, Commercial Manager at Fernox will also be at the stand every day to discuss the enhanced commercial solutions range with visitors.

The trusted Fernox product portfolio is extensive, and the stand at InstallerSHOW will also highlight the best-selling TF1 Sigma Mini Installer Pack, which includes the F1 Protector and F3 Cleaner in 265ml, designed to work together to keep residential systems performing as intended.

Visitors can also learn more about the water testing options available along with the Fernox App. Engineered to save time and enhance efficiency, the app features real-time tools for water testing, treatment recommendations and gives users access to a range of technical documents.

Visit Fernox at InstallerSHOW from the 23 to 25 June on stand 5G45 at the NEC Birmingham.

To find out more about the Fernox range, please visit: **www.fernox.com**

Passiv Smart Thermostat expands compatibility to 17 heat pump manufacturers as smart control becomes standard

Passiv UK has expanded compatibility of its Passiv Smart Thermostat to 17 leading heat pump manufacturers, marking a significant step towards making smart controls a standard feature of UK heat pump installations.

As heat pump deployment accelerates, manufacturers and installers are increasingly recognising that system performance depends not only on the unit itself, but on intelligent control. The Passiv Smart Thermostat uniquely enables heat pumps to respond automatically to time-of-use tariffs and respond to wider electricity network signals by temporarily reducing heat pump demand – all while using smart preheating to ensure homes remain comfortable without any noticeable drop in temperature.

With growing alignment to the UK's Smart and Secure Energy Systems (SSES) framework and the Future Homes Standard, intelligent automation is becoming central to compliance, optimisation and long-term system performance. By embedding smart controls as part of standard installation packages with a growing number of partners, Passiv is helping ensure heat pumps are optimised from day one.

Ian Rose, Sales and Strategy Director at Passiv UK, said: "Smart controls and automated flexibility are the missing layer that allows today's policies and technologies to work together effectively. As heating systems evolve, households are becoming active participants in the energy system, with new opportunities to benefit financially through flexibility and time-of-use tariffs. Smart controls are what makes that possible."

Passiv also provides a web-based monitoring portal, enabling installers and housing providers to remotely monitor and optimise performance across multiple properties, improving oversight and helping to reduce call-backs.

For homeowners, smart control ensures improved comfort and lower costs. The thermostat's ecoHeat function has been verified by the Energy Saving Trust to improve heat pump efficiency by 17%, with additional savings available through tariff optimisation, solar integration and participation in demand-side response via Passiv's flexibility service, Greener Grid Payments.

The thermostat is available nationwide through plumbers' merchants and renewable distributors in one- and two-zone kits, with wired and wireless thermostat options.

For more information, visit: **www.passivuk.com**

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