

## Written evidence submitted by OFTEC (CAUK0011)

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### **About OFTEC**

Established in 1991, OFTEC is a 'not for profit' trade organisation for the liquid fuel heating and cooking industries in the UK and Republic of Ireland. We also manage a competent person scheme for technicians working on a wide range of non-gas heating technologies. Our aim is to promote the highest professional and technical standards for technicians and businesses working in the industry and, by doing so, support the needs of heating users.

### **Response**

1. Has Climate Assembly UK (both its process and recommendations) been helpful to your work (or the work of your organisation), and if so, how?

The work of the Climate Assembly has been extremely useful in confirming our views in relation to how the transition to low carbon heating should be managed. The strong support for fairness, freedom of choice, minimisation of disruption, and regional solutions, suggests that rural households are likely to welcome and support the introduction of cheaper low carbon solutions – and are likely to resist the imposition of expensive ones.

This is particularly true for hard-to-treat rural homes where excessive cost and disruption are likely to be a factor for many households. Consequently, we are pressing ahead with our plans to introduce a low carbon liquid fuel called HVO as an alternative to heat pumps for oil heated households.

2. What impact has Climate Assembly UK had across your sector, and more widely?

See answer to question one above.

3. How do you perceive Climate Assembly UK to have affected the work of Government since the Assembly's report was published (10 September 2020)? To what extent do the Government's actions since then reflect Climate Assembly UK's recommendations?

Until the publication of the new heat in buildings strategy it is uncertain to what extent the Climate Assembly's recommendations have influenced this area of policy. However, both the Prime Minister's 10 point plan, and the Energy White Paper, appear to place a stronger emphasis that previously on the need for a fair transition.

4. What would a good response to Climate Assembly UK from the Government look like? What would a good response from Parliament look like?

We hope that the design of policies in the forthcoming heat in buildings strategy reflect the concerns and views of the Assembly. For example, "on home retrofits, assembly members emphasised the need to minimise disruption in the home, put in place support around costs, and offer flexibility and choice to homeowners". The policy approach to date fails to deliver on these priorities and needs to change.

We also hope that that Government takes note that 94% of assembly members 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'people in different parts of the country should be offered different solutions to zero carbon heating.' While only a narrow range of options (heat pumps, heat

networks and hydrogen) were discussed with assembly members, we feel this is an important principle. For off gas grid households in rural areas that currently use high carbon fuels, the future choice of low carbon heating solutions should include the use of bioliquids such as HVO, which address the need for choice and to minimise cost and disruption while delivering a carbon reduction of up to 88%.

OFTEC has long been concerned that the design of schemes to support the deployment of low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures has tended to effectively exclude the involvement of small installer businesses. These make up the overwhelming majority of heating installation businesses. Consequently, we welcome the Climate Assembly's support for smaller organisations to offer energy services (94%) and simpler consumer protection measures (92%). We hope that Government will take account of this and ensure that the design of future schemes is improved – particularly in the light of the recent failure of the Green Homes Grant scheme – thereby encouraging the involvement of small businesses, rather than excluding them, and making schemes simple for consumers to engage with and industry to deliver.

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