

SIA comment on Global Action Plan affordability study



The Stove Industry Association (SIA) has reviewed the findings of a recent study by Global Action Plan/Impact on Urban Health [Relight my fire? Investigating the true cost of wood burning stoves](#) and makes the following comments and observations:

1. The model scenarios used in the study artificially inflate the costs associated with using a wood burning stove and decrease the costs associated with an ASHP because;
 - Model B (see page 4 of the study) is based on ***“Newly¹ Defra-compliant woodburning stove led heating (80%) with gas secondary heating (20%)”***. In footnote 1 at the bottom of the page it reads: ***“New” includes the cost of purchasing the item and installation, while all options include maintenance and replacement costs.*** The SIA questions why if the purchase and installation costs have been factored in for the stove led heating in Model B, they have not been factored in for the gas boiler led heating, Model A?
 - Model B also assumes the installation and operation of TWO new stoves (see page 17 of the study). The SIA argues that this is a highly unlikely real-world scenario as a dry stove is a space heating appliance not a central heating system.
 - Similarly, Model E ***“Newly installed Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) providing 100% of heat”*** underestimates the actual running costs of the ASHP in the reference dwelling used (a Victorian mid-terrace of single skin, uninsulated solid brick construction, see page 15). Heat pumps are not suitable for use in badly insulated housing stock; they will not run optimally in these conditions and therefore won’t give a 3.5 seasonal CoP which the report uses to reach its conclusions.
 - The calculations used in the study’s modelling assume that the efficiency and operational considerations of the heating system are met in situ. We know from studies on installed heating systems that the overall efficiency is negatively affected by the system it uses to distribute the heat within the property, e.g. the age and condition of pipework and radiations. The gas boiler and heat pump are affected by this whereas a direct heating appliance like a stove is not. The lack of consideration of this in the energy consumption calculations will positively skew the running costs for the boiler and ASHP against the more accurate running costs of the stove.

2. The energy efficiency of the appliance must also be considered when assessing cost-effectiveness. All solid fuel stoves manufactured since 1st January 2022 must conform to the [Ecodesign Regulation](#) which, as well as setting emissions levels, also states that the appliance must have a minimum efficiency of 75%. Many of the stoves manufactured by members of the SIA far exceed this, with tested efficiencies of over 80% and some achieving 85%. This is comparable with the most efficient gas roomheaters. While new gas boilers sold today achieve c.89% efficiency in practice, many older models will be less than 70% efficient. Local spaceheating is a key part of many individual's heating strategy as you do not need to consider heating the whole house, just the space you want heating. Stove owners value the off-grid, low carbon heat that is provided by their stove.

3. The SIA uses a range of sources to verify the comparative costs per kWh of various domestic heating fuels including the data presented by [Nottingham Energy Partnership](#) which is updated each month. The Partnership's October 2023 data currently states the price per kWh of an ASHP as 12.37p, kild dried logs as 11.18p, mains gas at 8.64p and electricity at 33.40p. Between November 2022 and June 2023, kild dried wood logs were cheaper than mains gas per kWh.

ENDS

Editor's Notes:

- The Stove Industry Association was formed in 2008 and is a trade association of stove manufacturers, distributors and retailers, wood fuel suppliers, flue and component manufacturers and other interested industry bodies.
- With over 110 members, the SIA represents the stove industry in discussion with government departments such as Defra and DESNZ, Welsh Government, Scottish Government, and the Greater London Authority.
- The SIA represents the UK in CEFACD, the European Committee of Manufacturers of Domestic Heating and Cooking Appliances and engages openly with all stakeholders.
- Please contact Erica Malkin SIA Communications Manager on 07891 097842 or erica@stoveindustryalliance.com for further comment on this press release.
- Further information on the work of the SIA can be found at www.stoveindustryalliance.com

SIA Top Tips:

- Choose an Ecodesign compliant sustainable solid fuel stove such as a [clearSkies](#) certified appliance. If you currently use an open fire or an older, very basic stove, consider upgrading. A modern Ecodesign compliant sustainable solid fuel stove releases up to 90% less emissions than an open fire and can be up to 80% less than some older stoves. Your local [SIA Retail Group member](#) can help advise on the best stove for you and your family.
- If you live in a [Smoke Control Area](#), your stove will also need to be Defra exempt. All clearSkies Level 3 and above models are certified as Defra exempt.
- Visit your local stove retailer for guidance on choosing the right size stove for your property and for a detailed installation quote. You can find your nearest [SIA Retail Group member showroom here](#).
- Ensure your stove is fitted by an appropriately qualified competent person such as one who is [HETAS](#) or [OFTEC](#) registered.
- Ensure you use quality fuel. Look for the [Ready to Burn](#) logo to ensure your wood logs are at or below 20% moisture content. Never use chemically treated wood or burn waste on your stove.
- Ensure your stove is serviced and your chimney swept at least once a year – the SIA recommends NVQ qualified sweeps for the ongoing maintenance and servicing of your stove and chimney. The [Federation of British Chimney Sweeps](#) has links to all the main sweep associations. Chimney sweeps are a valuable source of information for good practice and advice.