

# News story: Results of first survey of thousands of heat network consumers

The government has today published the findings of the [first survey of heat network consumers](#). It asked about their satisfaction with their heating system, price and transparency of billing, and customer service.

A heat network takes heat from a central source and delivers it to a number of buildings. There are around 17,000 heat networks in the UK, with some of the largest networks at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London, Sheffield and Nottingham.

Expansion of the heat networks market is a key part of the government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#), but strong consumer protections are needed to ensure that customers can be confident in their heating supply as the market develops.

Our survey was carried out by independent researchers between April and July 2017 and received over 5,000 responses. The survey results suggested that, while there was significant variation in the prices paid by heat network consumers, on average they were likely to pay less than non-heat network consumers.

The survey also shows that while there are issues affecting the sector that need addressing, heat network consumers were just as satisfied overall with their heating systems as non-heat network consumers.

Consumers on [Heat Trust](#) registered schemes (the voluntary industry-led consumer protection scheme) in general received more comprehensive billing information, and service interruptions tended to be rectified quicker, in line with the Heat Trust's service standards.

Claire Perry, Minister for Climate Change and Industry said:

As we set out in our Clean Growth Strategy, encouraging the uptake of heat networks is an important way to reduce carbon and cut heating bills for customers.

This survey of consumers provides an important evidence base as we seek to expand the use of heat networks from now to 2021.

The projects that the government supports through the [Heat Network Investment Project](#) must meet Heat Trust equivalent standards, comparable to those provided to customers of gas and electricity, as well as meet minimum technical standards in terms of performance and efficiency of systems. Membership of these schemes is voluntary for existing heat networks.

The government will feed in the results of the survey to the Competition and Markets Authority which announced today that it is carrying out a market

study into the heat networks sector. The heat networks industry is also developing proposals to protect consumers and lower risk for investors which will be published in 2018.

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## **News story: Christmas drink drive campaign uses friends' influence to help save lives**

Tell your friends not to drink drive this festive period – says latest THINK! campaign starting today (7 December 2017).

For this year's campaign, which runs to January 1 (2018), THINK! has teamed up with Kiss FM duo Rickie and Melvin, who will be urging young adults to encourage their friends not to get behind the wheel after drinking.

The radio presenters will also front videos for Kiss FM's social media channels, with its audience almost a third more likely than the average person to enjoy a night out in a pub.

A further radio advert, which will run in England and Wales, uses the message "mates don't let mates drink and drive", playing on the fact friends will say anything to each other, except to stop them from drink driving.

Road Safety Minister Jesse Norman said:

Driving even while below the legal limit is becoming increasingly socially unacceptable, with more and more people choosing to turn down drinking any alcohol when they plan to drive. But even so there are still some drivers who are willing to take the risk.

Friends, colleagues and family members can positively influence those around them. So we are calling on them to stop potential drink drivers from getting behind the wheel and risking tragedy this Christmas.

Rickie Haywood Williams said:

We feel we owe it to our audience to share such an important message. Me and Melv grew up together, we look out for each other and we want to spread the word to our listeners to do the same.

Melvin Odoo continued:

Rickie will always be there for me on a night out and vice versa. Drink driving awareness is something that needs to be out in front at all times. The campaign is designed to shine a light on the issue and we want to help us much as we can to stop people making the wrong decision.

Police forces across England and Wales are also taking part in enforcement action throughout December and on January 1.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing, Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said:

Every year police forces deal with cases of drink or drug driving that directly result in families facing Christmas without loved ones. Even a small amount of alcohol or drugs in your system can affect your ability to drive safely – don't let your friends and family pay the price.

Police forces are running targeted operations across the country to enforce the law on drink and drug driving: you can face an unlimited fine, disqualification for driving, and a long prison sentence.

In October, it was the 50th anniversary of the breathalyser test. Last December (2016), 89,138 motorists were tested and 5,869 were found to be over the drink drive limit.

In England last year, more than half of car drivers who were involved in a crash and failed a breath test were aged up to 34.

THINK! has also teamed up with a number of partners including Arriva Buses, which is offering free bus journeys to either home or work the morning after a night out, and Budweiser, which is launching a new alcohol-free beer to coincide with the campaign.

LADbible will also be creating videos for its social media channel and Diageo will be marking the 5 millionth person to sign up to its drink drive pledge.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is also promoting its cold water shock film, which delivers a hard-hitting message designed to make people think twice before entering the water. Coastguard statistics reveal that on average around 50 people die of alcohol-related drowning around the coast of the UK each year. Of these, a significant percentage are young men who end up in the water as they make their way home.

Network Rail, British Transport Police and Rail Safety Standards Board will also be launching an alcohol awareness campaign next week reminding the public to "keep a clear head" when they are around the railway. The organisations will also be targeting Christmas revellers at the busiest railway stations as well as in pubs and clubs located near railway stations

and level crossings.

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## **News story: Nortrader report and flyer published**

MAIB's report on 2 explosions of gas released from a cargo of unprocessed incinerator bottom ash on Nortrader while at anchorage in Plymouth Sound on 13 January 2017 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#).

A [safety flyer for the shipping industry](#) summarising the accident and detailing the safety lessons learned has also been produced.

### **Press enquiries**

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

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## **News story: PM statement on US decision to move embassy to Jerusalem: 6 December 2017**

We disagree with the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem and recognise Jerusalem as the Israeli capital before a final status agreement. We believe it is unhelpful in terms of prospects for peace in the region. The British Embassy to Israel is based in Tel Aviv and we have no plans to move it.

Our position on the status of Jerusalem is clear and long-standing: it should be determined in a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and Jerusalem should ultimately be the shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states. In line with relevant Security Council Resolutions, we regard East Jerusalem as part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We share President Trump's desire to bring an end to this conflict. We welcome his commitment today to a two-state solution negotiated between the parties, and note the importance of his clear acknowledgement that the final status of Jerusalem, including the sovereign boundaries within the city, must be subject to negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

We encourage the US Administration to now bring forward detailed proposals for an Israel-Palestinian settlement.

To have the best chances of success, the peace process must be conducted in an atmosphere free from violence. We call on all parties to work together to maintain calm.

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## **Press release: PM call with with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: 6 December 2017**

Prime Minister Theresa May and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar discussed the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, and UK commitment to restoring devolved Government to Northern Ireland.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

"The Prime Minister spoke with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar on the phone this afternoon.

"They both agreed about the paramount importance of no hard border or physical infrastructure at the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister said how she recognised the significance of this issue to the people of Northern Ireland and Ireland and how this remained a joint priority for both Governments, and the EU, to resolve.

"The Prime Minister said we are working hard to find a specific solution to the unique circumstances in Northern Ireland that respects the integrity of the UK, the European Union and the Belfast Agreement.

"She added that we are committed to moving together to achieve a positive result on this as well as restoring devolved Government to Northern Ireland. Both leaders looked forward to continuing relations as close neighbours and allies as the negotiations progress."