

Welcome to your latest Biomass Suppliers List (BSL) newsletter

Please find the BSL April issue containing the latest news and updates on policy changes, statistics, and ongoing developments and improvements within the Scheme.

In light of the uncertainty surrounding the (COVID-19) Coronavirus outbreak, please be assured the BSL Administrator continues **to operate a full service**. Whether you require help with registration or updating your account, please continue to contact the BSL Helpdesk for assistance.



Please see the 'Coronavirus Update' section for the latest developments.

We always like to hear from you. If you have any feedback on this edition or ideas for future newsletters, please email BSLHelpdesk@gemserv.com.

BSL Enquiry – COVID-19 – Impact on Biomass Supply Chains

The BSL Administrator has issued a survey to all BSL suppliers to assess the impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on demand and biomass supply chains. Your feedback is key in helping to understand the depth and reach of the impact across the industry. Information provided will be anonymised and shared with the UK Government and industry trade associations.

A follow-up survey will be issued in May 2020. Please access the [website](#) for full information on this enquiry, including a link to the survey. We appreciate your support in providing this feedback.

BEIS Publications

Please see below for links to BEIS publications regarding the Renewable Heat Incentive, future considerations in low carbon heat, and biomethane installations:

1. [Changes to the Renewable Heat Incentive \(RHI\) schemes](#)
2. [Renewable Heat Incentive: biomass combustion in urban areas](#)
3. [Renewable Heat Incentive evaluation](#)
4. [Future support for low carbon heat](#)
5. [RHI evaluation evidence report: biomethane installations](#)

Updates to your BSL account and application

If there is a change to your account (e.g. an update to a user email address), you must inform the BSL Administrator immediately. We regularly contact our users regarding their BSL authorisation or account, and contact details must therefore be kept up to date.

Some changes to your application can affect the validity of the fuel's authorisation, for example a material change might mean that the fuel no longer meets the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) sustainability requirements. This may require you to submit a new application.

If there is a change to your fuel authorisation, you must inform the BSL Administrator by ringing 020 7090 7769 or emailing BSLHelpdesk@gemserv.com within one month of the change or at the time of quarterly reports, whichever occurs first. Please see the BSL [BSL Applications and Audit guidance](#) for the full list of what is considered a material change.

Q1 2020 - Quarterly Reports and Membership Fees now due

Quarterly reporting is now due for Q1 2020 (relevant to Producer-Traders, Producers and Traders). To ensure your authorised fuels continue to be included on the BSL, you are required to submit your quarterly reporting data and/or pay your membership fees.

If you haven't done so already, for Producer-Traders, Producers and Traders, please submit the total amount of woodfuel sold between 01/01/2020 and 31/03/2020 for each of your approved fuels on the BSL

Firstly, [click here](#) to log in to your BSL account in the 'Registered Suppliers' section of the BSL website. Then, click on the quarterly reminder, 'Quarterly Report is now due'.

The deadline for submitting your quarterly reports and/or membership fee is **15/05/2020**. If you do not complete these activities by this date, your BSL authorised fuels will be removed from the List and your BSL number(s) will no longer be valid for claiming RHI payments.

Should you have any problems with submitting your payments, please do not hesitate to call or email our helpdesk.

Please note that we are currently still accepting cheque payments, however it will take around two weeks for the payment to be processed. The BSL Administrator will review this process going forward.

Payment Updates

Using the correct Invoice Reference Number for BACs payment

When completing Quarterly Reports or Membership fees via BACs transfer, please ensure to use the unique Invoice Reference Number provided by BSL for the individual payment. This Invoice Reference Number should be emailed to you along with your invoice, once you have accepted all payment term and conditions on your account. If you use an old Invoice Reference Number (attributed to a previous payment you have already made) then we are unable to trace the payment correctly. This could lead to your BSL authorisation being removed.

Ban on selling wet wood

On 21/02/2020, the UK Government announced plans to phase out the sale of wet wood for domestic burning for appliances including wood burning stoves, log boilers and open fires, to encourage the use of cleaner fuels in the home.

The full press release can be [found here](#).

Burning wet wood emits huge amounts of minuscule pollutants known as PM2.5 that can lead to serious health conditions.

To help improve the air we breathe and ensure households choose cleaner fuels, sales of wet wood will be phased out between 2021 and 2023, giving the public and suppliers time to move to cleaner alternatives such as dry wood and manufactured solid fuels.

The BSL does not allow the authorisation of wet wood; instead, the wood will need to undergo a drying process (naturally or force dried) before registration is permissible. Please always refer to your emission certificate and boiler manual document for further information on the fuel type you are permitted to burn.

Domestic RHI extended to 2022

The UK Government has announced that the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) will be extended to **31/03/2022**.

The UK Government published its [2020 Budget](#) on 11/03/2020, outlining the extension of the RHI for a further 12 months.

The extension to the RHI scheme will allow more domestic and commercial homeowners who install heat-generating renewable systems to receive the government tax-free benefit. Additionally, BSL suppliers will be able to continue to sell to RHI customers and/or produce the fuel for their own consumption.

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Revision to the UK Risked-Based Regional Assessment (RBRA) form

The UK Risk-Based Regional Assessment form (RBRA) is being updated to provide additional guidance for suppliers completing the form.

The RBRA allows woodfuel buyers and suppliers to provide Category B evidence, as defined in the [Timber Standard](#), for compliance with the woodfuel land criteria without the use of certification (UK suppliers only). These suppliers upload a completed RBRA at the time of applying to the BSL to demonstrate a low risk of them not complying with the land criteria in the future.

Once the updated form is available on the website, UK suppliers should use this template if Category A and Category B (Forestry Woodland Plan and Felling Licence) is not available.

Revision to Applications and Audit Guidance

In addition to the update of the UK RBRA, [the Applications and Audit Guidance](#) has been updated to align with other guidance documents.

Definition of virgin timber and Producer-Trader has been updated to align with [the Supplier Type Overview guidance](#) document and the [RBRA form](#).

Frequently Asked Questions – Application Processing

To support you in completing your BSL application, please see below for clear answers to frequently asked questions.

The BSL application is available on our website [here](#). You must create an account before you can submit a fuel application.

Q. Where can find the user-guides for completing a BSL application

A. Application User Guide for Self-Suppliers can be [viewed here](#). Application User Guide for Producers and Producer-Traders can be [viewed here](#). Application User Guide for Traders can be [viewed here](#).

Q. Please can you confirm when my application will be authorised?

A. For UK applications, the processing time is ten working days. Regarding applications including the [B2C2 carbon calculator](#), we are unable to specify the timescale of when your application will be authorised as these require a longer processing time. We are working as hard as possible to ensure that these waiting times are minimised.

Q. I am a Trader sourcing fuels from a Producer who is undergoing its BSL application. Is it possible to start my own application as well?

A. You must wait for your supplier to obtain its BSL authorisation. You will need to input your supplier's reference when submitting your own application.

Q. How can I amend my application?

A. Please send a written request to BSLHelpdesk@gemserv.com for us to update your application. If you require an amendment to an authorised application, a new application may be required if the amendment affects the validity of the fuel's authorisation (i.e. a change causing the fuel to no longer meet the RHI sustainability requirements). Please read the [Application and Audit guidance](#) document for further information regarding material changes.

Q. How can I remove an application?

A. Send your request to remove the application in an email from the account's email address to the [BSL helpdesk](#).

Frequently Asked Questions – Application Processing

Q. Do I lose my incomplete application when I log out of the BSL portal?

A. Click 'Save and exit' to save the information entered on your application. This can be returned to when you enter the application at a later time.

Q. I have submitted my application, when will I receive my BSL authorisation number?

A. It takes up to ten working days for the BSL Administrator to process an application. Application feedback is communicated via the response email.

Q. Why is my application status, 'Approved pending payment?'

A. To receive your BSL authorisation number, you must pay your membership fee (new and existing suppliers) or submit your quarterly report (existing suppliers). [The BSL charges - Questions and answers](#) document lists out all BSL charges.

Q. I have logged into my BSL account, but I can't find my BSL application/authorisation number

A. Click 'Clear Filter' below the 'Filter application' field. If you are a new supplier, you need to submit an application before you will be allocated a BSL authorisation number. Simply click 'New fuel application' to start your application.

Coronavirus Update

Please refer to this section for full information around the Coronavirus outbreak and how the BSL Administrator is responding.

Helpdesk Opening hours

We are continuing to run the usual BSL Helpdesk service (phonenumber open Monday – Friday from the hours of 10am – 2pm). You can send your enquiry BSLHelpdesk@gemserv.com and a response will be provided within five working days.

Audits

Following the Government's advice to reduce travel, the BSL Administrator is currently operating only desk-based audits. This will be reviewed in line with ongoing Government advice.

Request for Feedback – COVID-19 – Impact on Biomass Supply Chains

In April 2020, the BSL Administrator issued a survey to all BSL suppliers to assess the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on demand and biomass supply chains. Your feedback is key in helping to understand the depth and reach of the impact across the industry and will be used to inform future actions. Information provided will be anonymised and shared with the UK Government and industry trade associations.

We thank those who have provided feedback; a follow-up survey will be issued in May 2020. Please access [the website](#) for full information on this enquiry, including a link to the survey. We appreciate your support in providing this information.

Preparation for BSL Desk-Based Audits

Following guidance issued by the Government, it has been decided to **conduct only desk-based audits** until further advice is provided.

If you are selected for an audit, you will be contacted, usually with two weeks' notice to schedule in the audit. Depending on the circumstances, we can be flexible and reschedule the audit date.

The audit usually takes a few hours during which the auditor (Woodsure) will ask for evidence to be provided. Once the audit is completed, you will be emailed a list of actions that are outstanding for you to complete.

Note, the BSL requires you to keep a record of the following, which you will be asked to provide prior, during or after an audit:

Producers, Producer-Traders and Traders

- The figures for your quarterly returns
- Test records (these should be done even if using them yourselves) for the moisture content of your raw material (except Traders) and your wood fuel
- The distance the fuel travels to your customer(s) and the information you used to calculate this in your application(s) (if applicable)
- Copy of your Land Criteria evidence
- Invoices/receipt produced for your customers (if applicable)
- Invoices for your raw material supply (if applicable)
- Invoices for any fuels being bought in (if applicable)
- A copy of your emissions certificate for your boiler (if applicable)

Self-Suppliers

- A copy of the emissions certificate for your boiler (if your boiler was installed before 24th September 2013)
- Records showing the amount of fuel used in your boiler
- Records of your moisture content
- A copy of your felling licence/management plan/alternative evidence to prove that you have the legal right to harvest the biomass
- If using waste wood - any permits/exemption certificates that you have and a description of your fuel

Meet the Team: Hannah

Hello BSL! I'm Hannah and I have been working in the BSL Team since I started at Gemserv in September 2019.

When beginning my role within the BSL Team, my focus was on payment communications via emails and letters received. I have been answering phone call and email queries via the BSL Helpdesk and processing your applications! I also generate monthly activity reports and provide support to the administrative governance of the BSL Panel.



I am passionate about sustainability and re-directing our habits and behaviours to contribute to a well-functioning society that works in harmony with our environment, so the latter (eventually) heals and hopefully flourishes!

I studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at the University of Manchester and my desire to enact social/environmental change was sparked a few years ago when climate change started to become one of the major topics in the public eye.

To work on the BSL, which allows users to legally and sustainably burn woody biomass over other more harmful fuels as a source of heat, is exciting. Every day I learn more about the Scheme, the wider industry and the operational side of managing a sustainable fuels contract, such as including how we calculate total carbon emissions from overseas to the UK via our B2C2 calculator. I look forward to understanding more within the BSL and getting to know you all better!

Meetings

The Advisory Panel provides recommendations to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to ensure the BSL provides value for money and continuous service improvements to support BSL suppliers. It consists of elected supplier members as well as representatives from the Government and relevant industry bodies.

Panel Meeting 14 Summary

The second Panel meeting of 2020 was held on 15/04/2020 and included operational updates from BEIS and Ofgem, in addition to discussions regarding the impact of Coronavirus on biomass demand and supply chains.

The following topics were addressed:

- The first responses to the BSL survey assessing the impact of COVID-19 on biomass demand and supply chains were discussed. In the initial period of the UK-wide lockdown, a surge in demand was observed as customers panic bought fuel. However, the first survey responses suggest the impact on biomass demand and supply chains may be smaller than originally anticipated. The BSL Administrator continues to monitor the feedback provided and will issue a follow-up survey in May.

- BEIS provided an update on the extension of the RHI scheme and the Non-Domestic RHI Tariff Guarantee. BEIS continues to focus on the impacts of COVID-19 on the industry. Ofgem has also supported BEIS in passing emergency Feed-In-Tariff legislation and continues to support businesses through the RHI.
- The Panel discussed issues with Traders selling to/from multiple depots, and how the BSL may need to respond.
- Consideration took place around Waste Wood guidance and the RBRA template.

The Decisions and Actions reports for the April meeting will be accessible via the [BSL website](#) 20 working days following the meeting.

Total Authorised Fuels

Table 1 presents a breakdown of the total authorised suppliers in March 2020 by supplier type.

Table 2 presents a monthly overview of the total number of applications authorised over 12 months.

The reduction in authorisation in December 2019 was mainly due to the removals of suppliers that had outstanding membership payments.



Producer-Traders	3,047
Traders	2,860
Self-Suppliers	3,107
Producers	267

Month	Total Authorised Fuels
Apr 19	10,110
May 19	10,153
Jun 19	10,191
Jul 19	10,099
Aug 19	10,188
Sep 19	10,181
Oct 19	10,010
Nov 19	10,018
Dec 19	9,171
Jan 20	9,222
Feb 20	9,257
Mar 20	9,281

BSL Audits

The objective of an audit is to validate a supplier's ongoing eligibility to gain or retain its status as BSL authorised. To ensure that you are following your ongoing BSL obligations, records must be kept, and comprehensive documentation must be made available during a BSL audit. The full list of required documents is available on your authorisation letter and within the Applications and Audit Guidance.

The table presents the total amount of audits carried out in the first quarter of 2020 with the total amount of removals due to non-compliances at an audit.

	Number of Desk Based Audits	Number of Site Audits	Major Non-Compliance Identified at audit*
January 2020	12	5	4
February 2020	14	3	4
March 2020	31	4	4

*Major Non-Compliances result in removal of BSL fuel number

Newsletter Feedback?

Please send your thoughts to BSLhelpdesk@gemserv.com

Contact the Biomass Suppliers List for further information

8 Fenchurch Place,
London,
EC3M 4AJ

+44 (0)20 7090 7769
(Mon-Fri 10-2pm)

bslhelpdesk@gemserv.com

biomass-suppliers-list.service.gov.uk