

Welcome to your latest Biomass Suppliers List (BSL) Newsletter

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

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.

Q4 2020 Payments for Commercial Suppliers due

If you have not done so already, Producer-Traders, Producers and Traders are required to submit their total amount of woodfuel sold for Q4 2020 between 01/10/2020 and 31/12/2020. Please provide this information for each of your approved fuels on the BSL.

To ensure your authorised fuels continue to be included on the BSL, all Commercial Suppliers are required to submit their quarterly reporting data and/or pay their membership fees.

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

Coronavirus Update

Helpdesk Opening hours

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

Audits

The BSL Administrator continues to conduct both site and desk-based audits. This will be reviewed in line with ongoing Government advice.

Payment Information

Credit and debit card payments

Recent helpdesk queries have advised that some Suppliers are being asked to sign up to PayPal when they select to pay using the debit or credit card method. Please note, neither of these payment methods should require you to sign up or log in to PayPal.

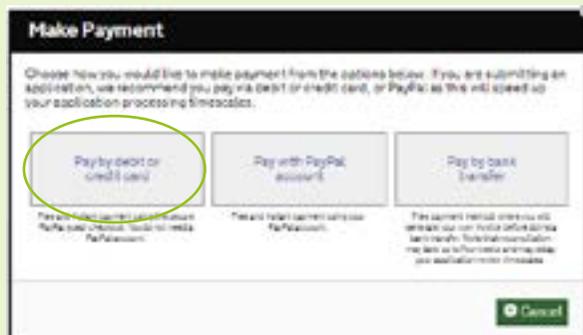
Please follow the steps below to successfully pay your fee with your credit or debit card.

Step 1

Login to your BSL account via the BSL website (<https://biomass-suppliers-list.service.gov.uk>).

Step 2

Once logged in, complete all required data and then click 'Make Payment'. Choose 'Pay with Debit or Credit Card' as the payment method.

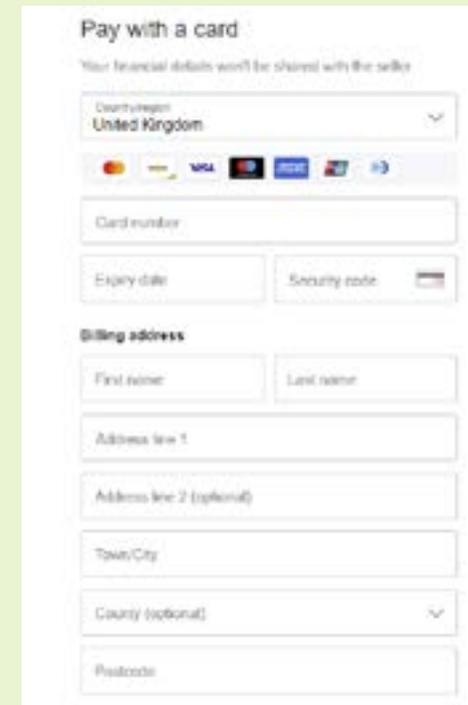


Step 3

If you are asked to sign up before submitting your payment, click into the URL link box and replace the word 'signup' with 'guest'. Leave the rest of the URL the same.

Following these steps will allow you to bypass signing up with PayPal. **Alternatively, you can use BACs as the payment method. When you get to step 2, select 'Pay with Bank Transfer'.**

If you have any questions, please contact the BSL Helpdesk via BSLHelpdesk@Gemserv.com or on 020 7090 7769 between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday.



If you are asked to sign up, click into URL box and remove `/signup` and change it to `/guest`. You do not have to sign up to PayPal

Changes to Non-Domestic RHI (NDRHI) Support and COVID-19 Response: Further Government Response

On 17th August 2020, the Government set out its intention to aid non-Tariff Guarantee (TG) eligible Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (NDRHI) installations impacted by COVID-19 related delays. Industry feedback was invited until September 2020 on whether applicants are able to provide evidence that NDRHI installations have been affected by COVID-19 delays. Following this, the Government released its [further response report](#).

This outlines the Government's intention to proceed with the following:

1. Opportunity to apply for an 'extension application' for projects that have invested resource into NDRHI project development prior to publication date of the original notice (17th August 2020). These projects will be afforded an **additional 12 months** after scheme closure (on or before 31st March 2022) to commission their plant and submit a full application for accreditation.
2. Those who have applied for an extension application are required to submit evidence that resource was invested prior to 17th August 2020. One piece of primary evidence or two pieces of secondary evidence is required. Details of this evidence is summarised in the report under ['Primary Evidence'](#) and ['Secondary Evidence'](#) pages 9 and 10.
3. This mechanism is not available for TG eligible installations.
4. This mechanism excludes the following technologies:
 - Solid biomass CHP, geothermal, biomethane applications of all sizes;
 - Biomass greater than or equal to 1MWth;
 - Biomass greater than or equal to 600kWth; and
 - Ground source and water source heat pumps greater than or equal to 100kWth.

Please click [here](#) to find out more.

NDRHI: Ensuring a Sustainable Scheme – Government Response

Earlier this month, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) published the Government response following its [‘Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive: ensuring a sustainable scheme’](#) consultation.

The NDRHI scheme has helped fund over 54,000 GWh of renewable heat and will officially close for new applicants on 31st March 2021. By this date, new applicants must have submitted an application, met the NDRHI eligibility criteria, and have had their project(s) commissioned.

Extending the deadline for the second allocation of Tariff Guarantee (TG) projects and issuing the NDRHI application extension for non-TG eligible projects will ensure a smoother transition to future schemes including the [Green Gas Support Scheme](#), [Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme](#) and [Green Heat Network Fund](#).

BEIS intends to proceed with the following proposals outlined in the consultation:

- Participants for biomass must comply with a fuel quality standard and carry out annual maintenance checks on biomass boilers.
- BEIS will not restrict burning of waste wood in biomass boilers as existing schemes provide a good enforcement regime for pre-consumer waste wood.
- Modification of capacity for shared group loop systems will be allowed, so participants can claim NDRHI payments even if the whole system is not commissioned.
- Fluidity in biomethane will be introduced to allow transfer of registration of production.
- Provisions on fossil fuels in anaerobic digestion will be introduced to ensure accurate carbon savings.
- NDRHI participants will be permitted to claim [Department for Transport’s Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation](#) for biomethane.

bsl Biomass Suppliers List

What are the land criteria requirements?

- The land criteria requirements are a set of sustainability requirements laid out for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). For the Biomass Suppliers List (BSL), they are sustainable forest management measures for woodfuel.

How much of the fuel has to be legally sourced? And what does this mean?

- 100% of the BSL registered woodfuel must be legally sourced.
- This means the wood must be harvested in accordance with the applicable legislation in the country of harvest.

How much of the fuel has to be sustainably sourced?

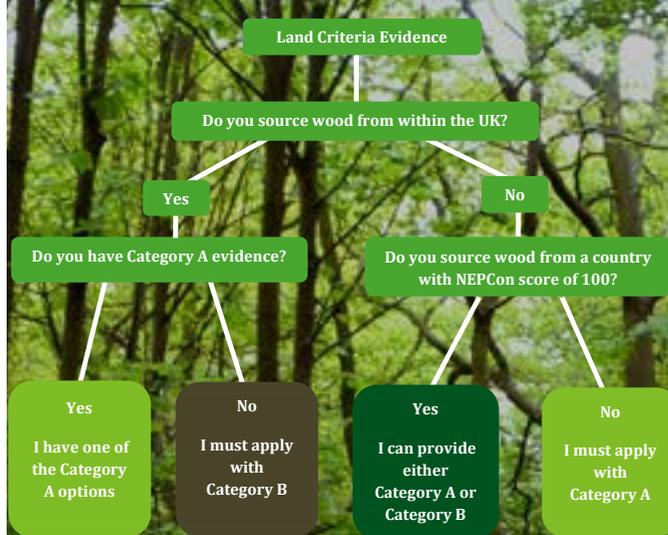
- A minimum 70% of the BSL registered woodfuel must be sustainably sourced.

Does a Trader have to register on the BSL if their Producer is authorised? A Trader purchases and fuel sells it to a third party (either BSL Registered Traders or RHI participants)

- Yes, the Trader must register to demonstrate they are handling and transporting the fuel correctly and with the relevant applicable permits. If a Trader is sourcing all of their fuel from a BSL authorised Producer, it is the responsibility of the Producer to comply with the land criteria and not that of the Trader.

Does land criteria apply if I source waste wood or I am a Self-Supplier? A Self-Supplier does not purchase raw material for fuel but supply their own fuel to their boiler.

- No, those who source waste wood or are registered as a Self-Supplier are exempt.



Category A:
If the fuel you are selling is certified by one of the following:

- Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)
- Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP) Certification
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Category B: (UK Only)
If the raw material has the following for a Producer or Producer-Trader:

- Felling Licence AND UK Forestry Standard Compliant Management Plans
- UK Risk Based Regional Assessment (RBRA)

Category B: (Overseas)
If the raw material has the following for a Producer or Producer-Trader:

- Bespoke Risk Based Regional Assessment (RBRA)

Who is affected by the land criteria requirements?

- Traders** – purchases fuel and sells this to a third party (either BSL Registered Traders or RHI participants).
- Producers** – processes woody biomass into a fuel and sells this onto a Trader only.
- Producer-Traders** – converts a raw material into fuel and can either sell or use themselves.

These suppliers affected, are responsible for virgin and/or waste virgin blend fuels, not waste fuels.

What do I need to do if I source wood from outside the UK?

- If you are sourcing wood from outside the UK from a country with a [NEPCon Timber Risk Score of 100](#), you can either provide Category A ([PEFC/SBP/FSC](#)) or Category B (a Bespoke RBRA).
- If you are sourcing wood from a country with a [NEPCon Timber Risk Score of less than 100](#), you can only provide Category A ([PEFC/SBP/FSC](#)). You cannot provide Category B (a Bespoke RBRA).

Can I use Category A evidence (PEFC or FSC Certification) that is not in my name?

- No, all Category A evidence must be in the name of the applicant; if it is not, then Category B evidence must be provided.

Where can I find more information about land criteria and the BSL?

- Information can be found on the BSL website (<https://biomass-suppliers-list.service.gov.uk/>) where further guidance documents are available to download.
- You can email the BSL Administrator at bslhelpdesk@gemserv.com

What Land Criteria Evidence do you Need?

If you are unsure which evidence you need to support your BSL application, the infographic to the left provides more information on the relevant requirements based on from where you are sourcing your woodfuel.

Optiwood Project Improving Performance of the UK Biomass Boiler Fleet

As the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme approaches its 10th year, the biomass boiler fleet now comprises more than 30,000 systems. While these have had significant benefits for many users, studies supported by BEIS and the EU (Best Practice Guidance for Biomass Boiler Operation', KIWA Gastec, March 2018 - Funded by BEIS) show that a number of these boilers do not operate as efficiently as possible. While the RHI Audit scheme identifies projects which are in breach of RHI regulations, there is no current mechanism to help owners improve boiler performance, receive more value from their wood fuel and reduce emissions. With an increased Government focus to improve standards through regular servicing, now may be the right time to review boiler system performance.

[Optiwood](#) is a 24-month, joint UK-French project which is funded by the EU and is focused on developing solutions for the estimated 25% of the boiler fleet which is under-performing. The project has developed an innovative low-cost data logging solution for 12 pilot projects across many sectors to identify areas of poor performance. From the findings, the project has developed an Operator training and dissemination programme. The results could have significant benefits for existing biomass boiler users and the wood fuel market.

Action plans developed with clients, based on clear trends identified by data loggers, have led to efficiency improvements from 5% to 30%. Some improvements have been low cost such as improving existing boiler cleaning and servicing regimes, modifying boiler controls, and adjusting Building Management Systems programmes. Ensuring the 'right wood fuel for the right boiler' has become key. The project found that more support for Operators improved confidence and, together with the identification and resolution of chronic technical issues, led to increased responsiveness to issues and less down-time.

The project is now in the dissemination phase and the Optiwood results are available [via the website](#) and webinars. This includes case studies and an Operators' Manual.

Can Optiwood help you; would you like to attend a webinar? If you are a biomass system owner-operator, an installer or servicing company or a fuel supplier and think a biomass heating system could be working better, get in touch via project_admin@optiwood.org.

BSL Past, Present and Future

With heating accounting for the largest proportion of [UK Greenhouse Gas emissions at 37%](#), the renewable heat industry has seen significant investment and growth over the last few years in both the public and private sectors. The BSL has played a crucial role in supporting the transition, by ensuring that wood fuel meets the eligibility requirements for the RHI scheme.

Since 2014, the BSL has encouraged the sustainable use of biomass for heat generation and has processed over 23,000 woodfuel applications. As of January 2021, the BSL currently has over 8,000 authorised fuels which demonstrate the sustainability and legality requirements for the RHI, ensuring RHI payments are only issued to compliant fuels. By inviting industry feedback, understanding Government requirements, and adapting our processes, Gemserv has continued to support and improve the BSL, achieving efficiencies whilst ensuring compliance and meeting customer requirements.

Early Successes

The first year of BSL's operation saw the launch of the Land Criteria as well as the scheme's first association with the RHI. The introduction of user-friendly applications reflected the importance of accessibility and user centricity for BSL; shown again through the introduction of multiple payment methods to support all users the following year.

The operation of the scheme has changed substantially since its inception. In 2016, the BSL application process was transitioned to an online platform. That year also observed the introduction of an Advisory Panel made up of industry representatives, created to provide strategic advice and direction to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

By regularly reviewing feedback received, we recognised that a significant volume of enquiries and errors within applications related to the use of the UK Solid and Gaseous Biomass Carbon Calculator (B2C2). Based on the feedback received, Gemserv adapted the BSL portal in 2017 to embed the carbon calculations into a step-by-step process to improve the user journey and reduce the time required to review applications. The same year the team also introduced the Sustainable Biomass Programme as another way to demonstrate sustainability compliance.

Over time, the BSL Administrators have developed and applied our in-depth understanding of the industry and how the scheme could evolve to provide a greater level of support. This has included tailoring our communications to engage with different stakeholders, ensuring that those already on the scheme remain compliant and helping new market entrants meet the scheme requirements.

Maturing the scheme

In order to improve the accuracy and depth of data the scheme collects, the BSL team enhanced the portal's reporting function in 2019 to clarify how much was sold to other suppliers compared with consumers, to obtain a better insight into the true market reach of the scheme. Multiple workshops were held with industry experts to develop a fuel quality framework, demonstrating to BEIS and stakeholders how new stringent requirements could be incorporated into the scheme to ensure compliance, whilst minimising the surrounding administration. That year also saw the launch of the BSL newsletter to keep our Suppliers up to date on scheme changes.

One of the biggest events to have impacted the scheme since its inception was the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. As the scheme manager, Gemserv ensured that the scheme continued to run uninterrupted throughout the pandemic, conducting several surveys in 2020 to understand the impact of the virus on the biomass industry and help inform policy decisions. Despite the ongoing pandemic, successes continued to be achieved, such as the recent updating of the Land Criteria Policy to strengthen the quality of fuel imported.

In the future, multiple solutions will be required to manage the UK's carbon emissions and significantly reduce its climate change impact. The BSL is committed to contributing to the Government's target of net zero by 2050 and will continue to adapt, evolve, and improve its processes to support the biomass industry in registering sustainable fuels.

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Meet the Panel: Julian Morgan-Jones



Happy New Year to all our BSL Suppliers!

I am currently the Chairperson for the BSL Advisory Panel, a role I have been honoured to hold since the Panel's inception in 2016. It has proven to be an interesting vantage point from which to watch the industry develop over the last few years.

First, a little bit about me. I started in biomass heating in 1999 when a housing project with which I was involved installed a wood fired district heating system. Those were times without grants let alone the RHI, when a very simple 200kW wood chip boiler cost £16,000 fully installed! From this connection

I was approached to start a wood fuel company in 2004, South East Wood Fuels Ltd., of which I am still the MD, before going on to jointly found and chair the Wood Heat Association (WHA) from 2014. As such I have been involved, hands on, with wood heating for over 21 years and wood fuel supply for the last 16. Humanity has been utilising wood heating since ancient times and I feel it is 'built into our bones'. I am glad to be associated with the modern re-introduction and revitalisation of something which has provided more value to people than any other renewable heating source in history.

For those who may not be aware, the BSL Advisory Panel consists of industry, Government (BEIS, Ofgem, Defra, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission) and the Administrator (Gemserv and Woodsure) representatives. The Panel meets quarterly to review the ongoing BSL service, oversee value for money on behalf of Suppliers, and to advise Government (BEIS) on enhancements to the scheme and wider issues concerning the wood heating industry.

Since 2016 we have advised on several areas including:

- Maximising value for money and improving BSL and RHI scheme governance for members, the industry and Government through considering the best use of the large amount of data collected by BSL and Ofgem and encouraging shared thinking and reporting.
- Safeguarding the industry's reputation through input to the refinement of wood fuel and sustainability guidance, use of RHI for wood fuel drying, risk-based assessments, and the appropriate use of waste wood in RHI funded heating plant. This has extended to RHI scheme changes to incorporate quality standards for wood fuel under the umbrella of the BSL scheme later this year.
- Ensuring the continued awareness of influential Government officers to the advantages of wood heating and the issues the industry faces through holding meetings at different Supplier and boiler sites around the country.
- Reviewing in detail how the BSL, underpinned by its legislative framework, could be developed to support not only fuel quality but also industry standards for fuel and boiler hardware and installation.

I am looking forward to a busy 2021 where the Advisory Panel will work hard to support major changes initiated by the closure of the RHI scheme to new projects, including the incorporation of fuel quality standards within the BSL and their association with new boiler maintenance standards. We will also navigate the BSL's progression following the retender of the Administrator contract.

Lastly, we must meet the challenges of an industry which needs to re-establish itself as a significant player in renewable energy in the minds of current and future policy makers. As a trusted Government advisor, the Panel is well situated to support this. From being involved for so long, I know we have been here before and feel confident we can rise again, bigger and better, based on the last few years' hard-won experience and lessons.

I wish you all a prosperous New Year and cold but sunny heating seasons. Exciting times ahead!

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Total Authorised Fuels

Table 1 presents a breakdown of the total number of BSL authorised Suppliers in 2020 by Supplier type.

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



Producer-Traders	3,103
Traders	263
Self-Suppliers	2,247
Producers	3,103

Month	Total Authorised Fuels
Dec 19	9,171
Jan 20	9,222
Feb 20	9,257
Mar 20	9,281
Apr 20	9,320
May 20	9,349
Jun 20	9,355
Jul 20	9,381
Aug 20	8,697
Sep 20	8,718
Oct 20	8,741
Nov 20	8,759
Dec 20	8,716

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BSL Audit Statistics

Audits aim to validate a Supplier’s ongoing eligibility to gain or retain its status as BSL authorised. To ensure 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 below presents the total numbers of audits carried out in 2020, in addition to the total numbers of fuel removals due to Non-Compliances at an audit.

	Number of Desk Based Audits	Number of Site Audits	Major Non-Compliance Identified at audit*	Fuels Audited	Fuels Removed due to Audit	Fuels Removed from BSL
Jan	12	5	4	25	2	31
Feb	14	3	4	24	8	39
Mar	31	4	4	40	6	20
Apr	23	0	5	25	6	19
May	19	0	1	20	3	25
Jun	14	0	5	14	9	40
Jul	11	0	5	9	2	31
Aug	5	1	2	6	12	722
Sep	7	13	1	20	1	18
Oct	18	12	14	31	1	17
Nov	12	13	16	28	6	16
Dec	16	5	16	22	3	151

*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

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