

Press release: Major retailers help consumers be greener by burning cleaner

Some of the UK's leading retailers are taking important steps to encourage their customers to buy cleaner fuels to heat their homes and reduce the impact on their health and the environment.

Around 38% of particulate matter emissions in the UK come from burning wood and coal in the home, a major contributor to air pollution.

But it is possible to reduce emissions significantly by burning drier, cleaner, more efficient products. Retailers including ASDA and B&Q have been encouraging and incentivising customers to purchase 'Ready to Burn' wood and 'smokeless' products.

More than fifty companies are now signed up to the 'Ready to Burn' scheme and firewood and briquettes with the Woodsure 'Ready to Burn' logo are available from local stove stores through to large outlets, including Tesco, Sainsbury's, B&Q and Wickes.

Following the launch of the ambitious Clean Air Strategy, the government held a consultation on proposals to phase out the most polluting fuels. This closed on Friday and the government will be analysing the responses and announcing next steps in due course.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Burning dirty fuels to heat a home is a huge contributor to air pollution and I warmly welcome this commitment from retailers to help move consumers to burning cleaner fuels for this winter.

I encourage all stores to follow their lead, and for all users to stop using wet wood and smoky coal to reduce the amount of harmful pollution to which they unwittingly expose themselves, their families and the environment. Dried wood and smokeless coal make for a better fire both heatwise and healthwise.

Retailers are carrying out a wide range of actions to help consumers switch to cleaner, alternative fuels:

- Lidl have committed to only sell wood that adheres to Woodsure conditions, meaning consumers have a guarantee that the fuel meets specified standards, including having the right moisture content and being sourced from sustainably managed woodland.

- B&Q has trained store colleagues on the benefits of cleaner fuels and more efficient stoves and heaters to help educate their customers.
- Asda has removed non-kiln dried wood logs and house coal from all of its London stores, guiding customers towards making better choices.
- Tesco has produced in-store advertising promoting the benefits of “Ready to Burn” solid fuels and where to find them in store.
- Booker, which provides stock for newsagents and convenience stores across the country, has confirmed it will be including “Ready to Burn” products as part of their autumn/winter range.

The commitments come during the first ever Green GB Week – celebrating the UK’s progress in tackling climate change while galvanising support for further action to protect our environment.

Ryan McDonnell, Lidl UK’s Commercial Board Director, said:

At Lidl UK we take our environmental responsibilities very seriously and are proud to source and sell dry wood which adheres to the quality specifications set out by Woodsure.

As well as an intention to phase out the most polluting fuels, the government’s Clean Air Strategy sets out that only the cleanest stoves will be available for sale by 2022. Stove retailers are clear that quality fuels are an important part of ensuring that modern stoves work as efficiently as possible, helping to minimize emissions.

Mark Smith from the Whitstable Stove Shop said:

If there’s one thing I’ve learned as a stove retailer, it’s that the quality of the wood burnt in a log burner is all important and it’s a false economy to do otherwise.

The consistency of ‘Ready to Burn’ approved logs has ensured our customers have been happy with the performance of their stoves.

Together, burning cleaner fuels and using modern efficient appliances produces less smoke, soot, and more heat, protecting consumers and the environment. burnright.co.uk include tips on what more you can do such as upgrading your appliance, getting your chimney swept regularly by a registered chimney sweep, and avoiding slumbering appliances overnight.

Many urban areas are Smoke Control Areas, in which it is only legal to burn using an exempted stove, or use an authorised fuel. This means burning wood or coal on an open fire is not permitted. Check the requirements for smoke control areas in your local area, then make sure you are burning clean, high quality fuel on your Defra Exempt stove by looking for the Defra-supported ‘Ready to Burn’ logo on wood fuels.