

Trying to make people buy things they don't want

Heat pumps are not great sellers. Many think they do not work well. Many cannot afford the high cost of adapting their homes to take them, even allowing for the taxpayer grant available to help with the costs. Some like me who would be willing to have one in my flat are told there is not one that could be fitted.

From next month gas boiler suppliers will face a tax or fine if they fail to meet certain arbitrary targets for selling heat pumps. This is a disgrace. It will mean higher prices for gas boilers for the many who still want them. It will not necessarily sell more heat pumps.

Nor will it save the planet. On cold windless days it will take plenty of gas burned in a fossil fuel power station to work the heat pump. Plenty of the gas is wasted in generating the electricity and more energy is lost in routing the electricity to the home. Why not burn the gas in the home so more of the energy produces heat in the right place.

Governments need to let innovation and product development in the market develop products people want to buy. Electric cars are dear and not popular enough. Developing synthetic or sustainable petrol might prove to be a cheaper and better choice. Then they would not need to scrap all petrol and diesel vehicles and the plants that make them.

Putting more green hydrogen or synthetics into natural gas so we can all keep our gas boilers might be a better answer for heating. Just stop taxing and annoying us.