

Taking up the e-challenge

David Parker of HWA member Valliant Group looks at how manufacturers and installers can promote unvented hot water systems in the replacement market

The real benefit of unvented hot water systems is that it delivers high performance hot water when it is needed.

There has been a substantial growth in the use of such systems in both the domestic and commercial markets.

The newbuild sector of the market has embraced the unvented hot water system, but for the homeowner in the replacement market it can be difficult to know what system to choose.

The internet is a great tool for homeowners to compare products, seek advice, read reviews and have access to installers.

However, the selection of products and the advice available is not always that helpful to homeowners in making a decision.

It is time for homeowners to be given the chance to select the right product and see the benefits of unvented hot water systems.

This is especially true in larger properties where hot water demand may be the highest.

It is the responsibility of both manufacturers and trade associations to ensure that the casual browser becomes the next informed customer with advice on sizing and specification readily available.

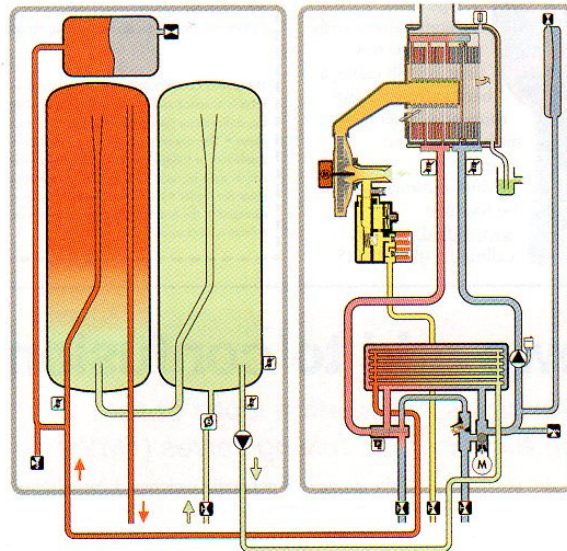
In much the same way, it is the responsibility of the installer to ensure they promote their business as competent and qualified.

As the Code for Sustainable Homes begins to influence the newbuild sector, the current standard for developers today is to build a property to level 3.

Any installer operating in the replacement market will have to demonstrate that Part L1 of the building regulations are being adhered to.

Training is readily available to obtain a Certificate in Energy Efficiency.

Unvented hot water systems



A wall-hung unvented storage package has less than 15 litres capacity but will also deliver central heating.

Traditionally, the stand-alone cylinder, water safety group and expansion vessel, internal (bubble top) or external vessel, is recognised.

A thermal store with primary water being stored and then transferred by an internal or external heat exchanger is also not uncommon.

Manufacturers of gas appliances have been creative in combining gas boilers and both these types of unvented hot water systems in a single package.

These are not immediately recognised as unvented hot water storage systems and they

do come in various shapes and sizes.

Similar to a traditional stand-alone unvented cylinder, a combination of a boiler and an unvented hot water cylinder, or thermal store and packaged unit, will not only provide high performance hot water delivery,

increasingly incorporating renewable energy systems such as solar thermal hot water and heat pumps (ground or air source), and they are often combined with a back-up of electric or gas.

This indicates recognition by the unvented hot water community to embrace new technologies and take up the challenge of a cleaner future.

Installers need to promote their knowledge, qualifications and case studies in all their promotional literature, especially their websites where they have the freedom to show their work to attract customers.

It is satisfying to know that qualifications obtained from certification bodies, such as logos, can be used with permission and even individual registration numbers can be displayed.

It is important when trying to attract future business that professional accreditation is not just left collecting dust in the drawer.

It is true that the more credible installers appear in the first instance, the more likely it is that homeowners will take guidance on the products they install.

In the unvented market, it is about demonstrating added value for money with no compromise in performance.

Many manufacturers do offer help and advice to installers braving the world of e-promotion and it is an added cost to any business.

So why not take up the e-challenge and promote business where many consumers make their first move – the internet.

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