

Solid Fuel Burning consultation (UK)

March 2026

About the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF)

The Institute of Chartered Foresters is the Royal Chartered body for foresters and arboriculturists in the UK. We represent over 2,300 members working across forestry, arboriculture, and related disciplines in the private and public sectors, academia, and research institutions. Our mission is to uphold professional standards, provide guidance, and support sustainable management of trees and forests.

Acknowledgement of Consultation

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to this consultation. While this topic falls outside the Institute's core area of expertise, we support the overarching objectives of evidence-based policymaking and integrated approaches to land and resource management.

The ICF has not submitted a response via the Citizen Space portal but requests that the consultation team accepts this statement as our response. This statement has been produced in consultation with our membership.

Position Statement

- The Institute does not intend to provide detailed technical input on this matter.
- Where relevant, we advocate collaboration across sectors to ensure holistic outcomes that benefit society and the environment.

Response

1. Emission limits for new appliances

ICF supports the introduction of tighter smoke-emission limits for new solid-fuel appliances, as outlined in Defra's consultation proposals. These measures target future emissions at source and align with the UK-wide objective of improving air quality. A phased introduction over **3–5 years** is appropriate to ensure manufacturers and installers can adapt without unintended diversion to non-compliant appliances.

2. Mandatory labelling for appliances and fuels

ICF supports mandatory labelling, provided it is clear, consistent and supports informed consumer choices. Labels should complement existing schemes such as **Ready to Burn**, which already play a crucial role in identifying dry, compliant fuels. Earlier forestry sector evidence emphasised the effectiveness of consumer education and the importance of steering users towards properly seasoned wood; ICF endorses building on this approach. Labels should also encourage **locally sourced, UK Forestry Standard-compliant woodfuel**, supporting sustainable woodland management and reducing biosecurity risks associated with imported firewood.

3. Enforcement and penalties

ICF supports stronger penalties for non-compliant fuel sales, particularly wet wood and banned fuels, provided new burdens on local authorities are pragmatic and funded. Previous consultation responses highlighted the limited capacity of local authorities to enforce additional regulations without resourcing. If penalties increase, a proportion of revenue should support consistent guidance, training, and enforcement across the UK.

4. Importance of sustainable, local woodfuel markets

Sustainably sourced woodfuel provides vital revenue streams that bring under-managed woodlands back into productive management, delivering benefits for biodiversity, carbon, resilience and rural employment. Past sector evidence emphasised that increased demand for well-seasoned local firewood has driven a renaissance in woodland management. Policy should avoid dampening legal, sustainable woodfuel markets and instead integrate a **“buy local, burn local”** message into national communications.

5. Education, behaviour and user support

Defra documents consistently highlight that real-world emissions depend on proper appliance use, dry fuel, and maintenance. ICF supports expanding consumer guidance, including moisture meters with stoves, clearer retailer information, and digital resources, to ensure households understand how to minimise emissions safely and effectively.

6. Fairness and transition

Where households rely on solid fuel for affordability, measures must be equitable and include targeted support for upgrades or improved practices. This ensures improved air quality is achieved without unintended negative impacts on vulnerable groups.

Summary Position

ICF supports Defra’s overall direction of travel: tighter appliance standards, clearer labelling, stronger enforcement against poor-quality fuels, and improved public information. To succeed, the final policy package must also:

- Strengthen and promote sustainable local woodfuel supply chains;
- Consider local authority capability in implementing enforcement;
- Integrate forestry and biosecurity priorities, including reduced reliance on imported firewood;
- Reinforce consumer education to ensure meaningful real-world emission reductions.

Closing Remarks

ICF stands ready to support Defra in refining guidance, evidence, and implementation to ensure policies deliver cleaner air while supporting the sustainable management of UK woodlands.