HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sarah Cardell
Chief Executive, Competition and Markets Authority
[By Email]

9th March 2026

Dear Ms Cardell,

We are writing to ask the Competition and Markets Authority to launch an urgent investigation into the heating oil supply market.

As Conservative MPs, we represent rural communities where many families have no choice but to heat their homes with heating oil. These households are disproportionately rural, often elderly and vulnerable, and we believe there is evidence of longstanding consumer harm which warrants a CMA investigation under Section 131 of the Enterprise Act 2002.

1. PRICE GOUGING DURING THE IRAN CONFLICT

We have been contacted by constituents who have experienced behaviour from suppliers that can only be described as blatant profiteering. Families have had existing delivery bookings cancelled, only to be called back the same day and offered delivery of the same oil, to the same address, on the same day, at twice the original price. With typical minimum order quantities of 500 litres, families have faced sudden bills of several hundred pounds simply to keep their homes warm.

2. LOCAL MONOPOLIES AND LACK OF PRICE TRANSPARENCY

In many rural areas, households are served by a single local supplier with no realistic alternative to compete with. Suppliers are under no legal obligation to publish their prices, and most require customers to request an individual quote by telephone, making meaningful price comparison particularly difficult. This price opacity allows suppliers to exploit this lack of competition to charge customers inflated prices with few opportunities for consumers or regulators to compare prices.

3. SYSTEMATIC OVERCHARGING OF CUSTOMERS ON AUTOMATIC DELIVERY SCHEMES

We have received concerning reports regarding automatic top-up delivery schemes, which are disproportionately used by elderly customers who cannot monitor their own tank levels. In these schemes, a supplier remotely monitors the customer's oil level and delivers without the customer first confirming or accepting the price. Payment is taken automatically by variable direct debit, and customers may only discover what price they have been charged through an annual summary.

After proactively chasing their supplier, many of our constituents have discovered that they were charged up to 50% or more above the prevailing market rate. When challenged, suppliers have attributed the overcharge to a 'mistake' or 'system error' and immediately reduced the price. We are concerned that this is a deliberate attempt to exploit customers in the absence of any requirement to disclose prices before delivery or obtain consent before charging the customer.

We therefore urge the CMA to launch an urgent investigation into pricing practices in the heating oil supply market, with particular focus on the three areas set out above.

In some parts of the country, more than half of all households depend on heating oil. They do not have a powerful consumer lobby to stand up for them and we believe they have been overlooked for far too long. We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP
Leader of HM Opposition

The Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Energy

The Rt Hon Victoria Atkins MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP
Daventry

Charlie Dewhirst MP
Bridlington and the Wolds

Andrew Griffith MP
Arundel and South Downs

Jerome Mayhew MP
Broadland and Fakenham

Rebecca Smith MP
South West Devon

The Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
Beverley and Holderness

Greg Smith MP
Mid Buckinghamshire

The Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MP
Tonbridge

Kevin Hollinrake MP
Thirsk and Malton

The Rt Hon Dame Priti Patel MP
Witham

The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP
Tatton

David Reed MP
Exmouth and Exeter East

The Rt Hon Sir David Davis MP
Goole and Pocklington

Helen Whately MP
Faversham and Mid Kent

Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
Chingford and Woodford Green

The Rt Hon Laura Trott MP
Sevenoaks

The Rt Hon Sir James Cleverly MP
Braintree

Harriet Cross MP
Gordon and Buchan

Sir Ashley Fox MP
Bridgwater

Dr Kieran Mullan MP
Bexhill and Battle

Ben Obese-Jecty MP
Huntingdon

Gregory Stafford MP
Farnham and Bordon

Nick Timothy MP
West Suffolk

Robbie Moore MP
Keighley and Ilkley

Richard Fuller MP
North Bedfordshire

Mark Garnier MP
Wyre Forest

Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst MP
Solihull West and Shirley

James Wild MP
North West Norfolk

Nigel Huddleston MP
Droitwich and Evesham

Alberto Costa MP
South Leicestershire

Lincoln Jopp MP
Spelthorne

Mark Pritchard MP
The Wrekin

Saqib Bhatti MP
Meriden and Solihull East

Andrew Snowden MP
Fylde

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP
West Worcestershire

Dr Luke Evans MP
Hinckley and Bosworth

Dr Caroline Johnson MP
Sleaford and North Hykeham

John Lamont MP
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk

The Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith MP
Skipton and Ripon

The Rt Hon Sir John Whittingdale MP
Maldon

The Rt Hon Sir Alec Shelbrooke MP
Wetherby & Easingwold

Bradley Thomas MP
Bromsgrove

The Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
North West Hampshire

Sarah Bool MP
South Northamptonshire

John Cooper MP
Dumfries and Galloway

The Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley MP
Staffordshire Moorlands

Aphra Brandreth MP
Chester South and Eddisbury

Richard Holden MP
Basildon and Billericay

David Mundell MP
Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale

Rebecca Paul MP
Reigate

Joy Morrissey MP
Beaconsfield

Note: Greg Smith MP's home is heated using heating oil.