

Confidence Collapses to All Time Low as Plumbing and Heating Firms Brace for Autumn Budget

Chancellor urged to deliver a Budget that rewards enterprise, supports skills and restores confidence in small firms.

UNITED KINGDOM, November 12, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Confidence in the UK economy among plumbing and heating firms has dropped to its lowest level since SNIPEF began tracking sentiment. Only 6% report optimism about the UK economic outlook, while pessimism has climbed to 64%, compared with 49% in Q2 and 46% a year ago.

The sharp deterioration comes just weeks before the Autumn Budget, with many firms now calling for clear signals from government on business investment, support for skills, and action to ease the cost-of-living crisis.

These are the headline findings of the Q3 2025 State of Trade report from the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF), the principal trade association representing plumbing and heating businesses across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Fiona Hodgson, Chief Executive of SNIPEF, said: "Although I am relieved to see confidence in our industry has remained relatively steady over the last quarter, the collapse in optimism for the wider UK economy is striking. It reflects a deeper malaise being felt across construction,



Fiona Hodgson, Chief Executive of SNIPEF

especially in housebuilding, where repeated government promises of a renaissance have yet to materialise.

The State of Trade report also shows signs of resilience within the profession. Trading activity in Q3 improved, with 37% of firms saying they were busier than expected. Forward order books have also strengthened, with 32% reporting higher or much higher workloads over the next six months. This is a confident rise from 17% in Q2 and 18% in Q3 2024.

However, these gains risk being short-lived. Growing speculation around income tax rises in the Autumn Budget is fuelling concerns that household budgets will be squeezed even further. Any such move could hit consumer spending hard and push many public-facing sectors, including plumbing and heating, into renewed stagnation.

Fiona Hodgson added: "When people are unsure about their disposable income, they delay spending on planned home upgrades and essential maintenance. That has a direct impact on our members, many of whom work in domestic settings and rely on customer confidence. The profession is doing its part to stay resilient, but the government must now do its part to support it.

"We need a Budget that backs working people, builds business confidence and invests in the skilled workforce that will drive recovery. Without it, we risk pushing stability further out of reach."

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About SNIPEF:☐

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation is the trade association for plumbing and heating businesses based in Scotland and Northern Ireland. It has just over 700 member firms employing more than 3500 plumbers. Since its establishment, SNIPEF has been providing professional and practical assistance to plumbing and heating businesses in both jurisdictions. It continues to meet member needs by developing relevant and practical services.☐☐

About the State of Trade:

The State of Trade survey is conducted quarterly by the Plumbing and Heating Federation (SNIPEF) to assess trading conditions, business confidence and workforce trends across the

plumbing and heating profession. The Q3 2025 edition reflects the views of SNIPEF's membership and is based on responses from over 700 businesses, collected between 10-20 October 2025.

You can read the full State of Trade report at www.snipef.org/publications

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