

Out with the old, in with the new

HVP followed the installation of a Potterton Promax HE Plus combi boiler to find out about some of the common problems that installers face when fitting new boilers to existing systems

After buying their one-bedroom ex-local authority flat in south London, one of the first jobs on the to-do list of Arun Marsh and Sam Gardner was the replacement of their old combi boiler.

Although the Potterton Puma in place was fairly reliable, it had already been going for approximately 12 years. Issues with the circuit board and diverter valve convinced them that a new unit would be the most cost-effective option.

Happy with the previous performance of the Puma, they decided to stick with Potterton and went for a Promax HE Plus.

The flat has four rooms, including one bathroom, and a hallway, each with one radiator, and they decided that a 24kw system would be enough to meet their needs.

After choosing an

appropriate boiler, the next step was to find an installer.

"We used Potterton's website to find their preferred installers in our area," said Marsh.

"We looked at the top three in terms of location, and then searched for them online to check any reviews and also rang them all to get a quote."

After their research, the couple chose Complete Plumbing & Heating Services (CPHS), based in Tooting, because of their good online reputation and friendly approach.

"Nick from CPHS came round promptly and put us at ease," said Gardner.

"He knew what he was talking about and was upfront with all the work that was involved and the costs that entailed.

"He also helped us decide that the Promax was the best

A new Potterton Promax HE Plus 24kw boiler was fitted



option for our flat."

Nick Cotton, director of CPHS, provided the pair with a quote for all the work and, because they were installing a vertical flue, advised them to

also bring in a roofer to make good the roof.

For the installation to go ahead access was needed to the roof space to run through the flue, and as the couple are



The old Potterton Puma in situ



CPHS installer Krystian in the loft when fitting the flue



The installation guide provides the correct clearance dimensions



A flue extension was fitted because the flue outlet was in a different place on the new boiler



The old boiler and fridge was removed to gain access to the copper pipework

leaseholders this needed to be arranged by the block freeholder – in this case the local council.

"It's always worth checking with tenants and leaseholders how to get access to any communal areas and make sure it is easily available, to save any wasted journeys," advises Cotton.

"In this case, access was provided by a hatch in the central stairwell of the block from which we could reach the area above the flat. Arun had to ring the council patrol team, who came round to unlock the hatch within 20 minutes."

Once up there, the CPHS installers, Tony and Krystian, fed a light on an extension into the loft to make sure it was a safe working environment and that there would be no complications with where they wanted to take the flue.

Satisfied everything was okay, they got to work flushing and cleaning the system, removing the old boiler and moving the fridge to gain access to the copper pipework which would need some work to fit to the new boiler.

One issue previously identified was that the flue outlet on top of the boiler was set to the right-hand side of the unit, whereas on the Puma this had been in the centre.

This meant that the hole in

the ceiling had to be moved, and a pair of 45s and a flue extension were required to put a bend in the flue and allow the terminal to be sited in the same position as before.

The roofer fitted a new lead and rubber cone flashing plate on the pitched roof, which creates a seal around the flue pipe, and passed the flue terminal through into the roof space for the gas installers to connect.

With the Promax being a condensing boiler, a plastic pipe was installed to feed the condensate into the drainage system.

It's important to use a plastic pipe for this, as the condensate can be acidic and attack metals.

The rest of the pipework, such as the flow and return, was fairly straightforward.

Once the new unit was in place and piped up, it needed the electrical side of things connected.

The couple stuck with the trusty Honeywell room thermostat placed in their hall, but decided to replace the old timer with a new digital model from Drayton, as it allowed a lot more flexibility with its settings.

Installer Tony was impressed with the layout of the Promax, saying: "I like the way the electrical components are all located together in a sealed area of the unit. It keeps the wiring fairly simple."

After all the wiring was in place came the moment of truth as the boiler was switched on and fired up.

Of course it worked first time, and now Arun and Sam can get back to enjoying their flat, no matter the conditions outside.

With thanks to Potterton and Complete Plumbing & Heating Services.

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POTTERTON PROMAX HE PLUS: KEY FEATURES

- The Potterton Promax Combi HE Plus A range of high-efficiency boilers includes three wall-mounted models, with outputs of 24kw, 28kw and 33kw
- The outputs are fully-modulating from 6.8kw to 33kw, being suitable for a wide range of installations
- They are supplied complete with a wall-mounting jig for easy installation
- Built-in two-stage frost protection has been designed to prolong the appliance's lifespan and save time during installation
- There is a comprehensive range of fluing options for easy siting, with flue lengths of up to 20 metres available
- The 24kw output model is also available as an LPG-compatible version
- An optional space frame kit is available to allow pipes to be routed behind the boiler
- The unit is compatible with the Potterton single channel wireless programmable room thermostat
- The range is suitable for use with the Multifit GasSaver, which can also give annual DHW gas savings of up to 37%, according to the company
- The unit is supplied with a one-year manufacturer's warranty
- The range is SEDBUK Band A rated
- It can be situated in an unventilated cupboard
- NOx emissions are classified as Class 5.