

Welcome to the Summer edition of the RECC Newsletter

It has been another busy three months since our last edition with plenty of developments and important legislation changes. The REA held their annual awards ceremony at the Savoy Hotel last month and TSI held their annual

conference in Harrogate. You can read about these stories, and more, in this edition. As always, do let me know if you have any suggestions for inclusion in future editions.


Mark Cutler, Editor

RECC member wins “Highly Commended Installer”



Krishnan
Guru-Murthy
presenting
at the British
Renewable
Energy Awards

RECC member Ecofurb UK Ltd was highly commended at the British Renewable Energy Awards on 12 June at the Savoy Hotel in London.

Krishnan Guru-Murthy hosted the Awards Dinner and announced the winners. The 300 guests gathered listened to Greg Barker MP, then Energy Minister, and Nina Skorupska, CEO of Renewable Energy Association. The newly-refurbished Savoy Hotel has itself won a number of awards for energy efficiency.

Ecofurb is a family run solar and renewable energy company

operating in the South East. Established in 2008, Ecofurb prides itself on honest advice, the design of bespoke systems and an exemplary level of customer service. Ecofurb believes that these three key elements have been the basis of the company's success.

Also shortlisted were RECC members Henson Heat Pumps and Renewables Ltd and Evo Energy, a previous winner in this category.

The winner of the Installer Award was Marches Biogas a company that specialises in designing, installing, and maintaining biogas plants. At present they are building in excess of 1 biogas plant per month.

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New consumer contracts law affects doorstep sales

New legislation that came into force on 13 June 2014 will affect many RECC members.

The Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 require information to be provided to all consumers wherever a contract is signed. This means that members must now set out the delivery and installation date, any additional delivery charges and the complaints handling policy.

The Regulations also replace other regulations covering 'distance' and 'doorstep' selling. The main changes for RECC members that sell in a consumer's home or place of work are:

1. The cooling off period increases from 7 to 14 days. For contracts including both goods and services the cooling off period extends to 14 days after the day on which the last part of the goods is delivered.
2. Members must provide consumers with the cancellation

form exactly as set out in the Regulations.

3. If a consumer cancels the contract during the cooling off period members must return all funds to the consumer within 14 days.
4. The installation can take place within the cooling off period but only with the consumer's express written request. This means that the consumer must have requested in writing that the installation take place within the cooling off period. Merely ticking a box or signing a pro forma request may not be acceptable.
5. If the consumer has expressly requested that the installation take place within the cooling off period the member may retain the cost of any such services.
6. If a consumer cancels the main contract then all linked (or 'ancillary') contracts – not just credit agreements - will automatically be terminated.

7. Members may only take any additional payments if the consumer first gives express written consent.
8. Members cannot levy any above-cost surcharges on consumers for using payment cards or other payment methods.

You can access the [full regulations here](#). The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has produced guidance which you can find [here](#). The European Commission has produced guidance which you can find [here](#). A compliant RECC model cancellation form is [available here](#).

This communication is provided for general information only and does not constitute legal or other professional advice. You should consult a suitably qualified lawyer about your specific circumstances if you think you are affected by these regulations.

RECC takes part in TSI Conference in Harrogate



Leon Livermore (TSI CEO), Virginia Graham (RECC CEO) and John Peerless (Chairman of TSI)

RECC was part of a joint Consumer Codes Approval Scheme (CCAS) stand at the TSI annual Conference at the Harrogate International Centre from 30 June to 3 July, just two days before the first stage of the Tour de France ended in Harrogate.

Leon Livermore, TSI Chief Executive, visited the stand to celebrate the first anniversary since the CCAS official launch at the TSI Conference in Brighton last year.

Sharing the CCAS stand with RECC were the Motor Codes (new cars, service and repair and vehicle warranty products), Bosch Car Service, the Debt Managers Standards Association, the British Association of Removers and the Institute of Professional Willwriters, while the Property Ombudsman had an adjacent stand.

Clampdown on nuisance calls announced

The Government is planning to clamp down on firms that bombard people at home with nuisance calls. The threshold for imposing fines for unsolicited marketing calls is likely to be lowered from the current “substantial damage” or “substantial distress”.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which is responsible for dealing with firms making these calls, will be able to impose fines of up to £500,000. Between April and November 2013 ICO received 120,310 complaints about unsolicited marketing calls, many of them about solar panels.

The Nuisance Calls Action Plan is a co-ordinated effort bringing together Government, regulators, consumer groups and industry. Among the actions being taken are those by Ofcom (see right), which deals with silent and abandoned calls and will look into how it can more easily share information with the ICO, and by Which?, who will review how consumers agree to receive calls from specific firms.

Although people have the right to opt out of receiving marketing calls by registering with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and members of the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) undertake to respect their wishes, not all companies belong to the DMA and many of the calls come from overseas. So people continue to get unwanted calls which are often pre-recorded.

Number of solar nuisance calls soars

Figures published in both a recent Ofcom survey and in the monthly Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) report reveal a worrying soar in the number of nuisance calls relating to solar panels.

While in January 2014 ICO received 973 complaints about solar panels calls the number had nearly trebled by June to 2855. Solar panels were fourth in the list of categories in January making up 13.8% of the total, they were second in June with 17.5%. The

vast majority of these calls were automated rather than live with only five being text messages.

The Ofcom survey, carried out over a four-week period, confirmed a substantial increase in nuisance calls about solar panels.

Ofcom has produced a series of leaflets and videos to help consumers know where to get advice about nuisance calls and how to complain. In the first instance consumers should ask who is phoning them and make a complaint to ICO.

QANW 'DAWWI' Scheme restructured

The recent introduction of the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive has seen a significant increase in the installation of renewable heat generating technologies. In light of this Quality Assured National Warranties (QANW) has reviewed its Deposit and Workmanship Warranty Insurance Scheme (DAWWI) and announced the following changes which come into effect on 1 August 2014.

- 1 -** Insurance premiums will be based on the type of renewable technology installed as well as the term of insurance applied for. The premiums will reflect the different risks presented by each renewable technology.
- 2 -** The contract value caps will also differ according to the type of renewable technology installed.
- 3 -** From September 2014 QANW will collect payment on or around the first rather than the middle of each month. There is no need to change current direct debit instructions.

A detailed breakdown of the insurance premiums and value caps will be available on the QANW log-in page shortly. When you first log on to the QANW website on or after 1 August you will be asked to agree to a new set of terms and conditions reflecting these changes.

EU CHALLENGE TO 5% VAT RATE ON ENERGY SAVINGS

Discussions are continuing with officials at HMRC to help the Government defend the 5% VAT rate on energy saving equipment against a challenge by the EU in the European Court of Justice. It is still hoped to persuade our European colleagues that the reduced rate should be kept as part of a social policy.



SOLAR SALESMEN JAILED

Solar panel salesmen David Diaz and his brother Vic Black were jailed in March 2014 for contempt of court and breaching a restraining order.

The two who ran SAS Fire and Security had been convicted of unfair commercial practices in 2012 and have since failed to cooperate with a proceeds of crime action. They were reported to have used high pressure selling techniques to sell solar panels and to have tricked homeowners into paying up to £6000 for cheap alarm systems that local councils supplied free of charge.

e-POWER auctions for FIT export

For medium to large scale producers e-POWER auctions have begun auctioning Feed-in Tariff exports. The cost of using the auction is £1/MWh subject to a minimum of £50 a month so it is only worth recommending to large-scale consumers who export at least 50 MWh a month.

Customers should be advised to put 4.77p/kWh as a reserve price to ensure that they do not make a loss. To check whether opting out of the administered price and on to the auction makes sense consumers can use the simple online revenue comparator tool which can be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet from [here](#).

DECC launched its Domestic RHI calculator at the end of July. This interactive tool is aimed at consumers considering installing renewable heat generating technologies in their home. The calculator will give consumers an indication of the likely RHI payments they will receive. It will not calculate any associated savings.

You can find a [link to the calculator here](#).

**DECC
launches
RHI
Calculator**

Hearing determinations added to RECC website

Two new sections have recently been added to the RECC website. One gives details of the Non-Compliance Panel Hearing determinations in respect of members alleged to have breached the Code. The other gives details of the Appeals Panel determinations. You can find them [here](#) and [here](#).

MCS Biomass Calculator

The Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) has launched a biomass calculator.

The calculator enables installers to carry out the design calculations required by MIS 3004 v.4.0 appendix C. It is not compulsory and installers may still choose to use their own calculations as long as these comply with the MIS 3004 requirements.

MCS state that the calculator is intended as a beta version and welcomes any feedback so that the calculator can be improved and made more user friendly.

You can download the calculator [here](#).