

## PROTECTING CONSUMERS AND PROMOTING RENEWABLES

## Welcome to the Summer edition of the RECC Newsletter

Valued Members, welcome to the Summer newsletter of 2019!

We open by showcasing the achievements of one of our members: Mole Energy Ltd, winner of the coveted British Renewable Energy Awards Installer Award.

There is an outline of developments in the EV-sector, including the announcement of REAL's Electric Vehicle Consumer Code for electric vehicle home charge points. Elsewhere, you will find further news on the wider renewable energy sector, and national carbon reduction commitments.

You will also find further solar PV-related news, including confirmation of the Smart Export Guarantee.

We would encourage members who provide battery storage solutions to respond to the MCS Battery Storage consultation.

Finally, you will find details of RECC's partnership with Trading Standards' Buy With Confidence (BWC) scheme. We hope that you will join us at Solar & Storage Live between 17-19 September!

Boris Eremin, Editor

### Mole Energy Ltd wins prestigious Installer Award



Mole Energy Ltd was voted Installer of the Year at the British Renewable Energy Awards Gala Dinner on Tuesday, 11 June at the Intercontinental Hotel in London.

The awards recognise and celebrate the achievements of companies and individuals who have done something amazing in renewables and clean technology over the past year and range from community projects to communications agencies.

The Installer Award is for a company that has excelled in the installation of small-scale energy generation systems in homes, offering a high quality experience for consumers wishing to buy or lease. The Award was sponsored by RECC for the fifth year running.

David Stevenson, Director of Mole Energy Ltd, accepted the Award on behalf of his colleagues. He is seen above with Rebecca Robbins (Head of Compliance at RECC), Jeannett Stevenson (wife of David Stevenson), Cathy Newman (host of the British Renewable Energy Awards and presenter on Channel 4 News), and Nadia Smith (Policy Analyst at the Renewable Energy Association).

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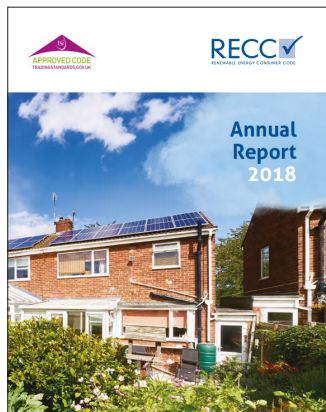
[Click here for the RECC Annual Report 2018](#)

## RECC publishes 2018 Annual Report

Late June saw the publication of RECC's latest Annual Report, a comprehensive overview of its activities and achievements during the course of 2018. The Report includes sections on Code membership and on RECC's work throughout the year in monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Code and in resolving consumer complaints.

Launching the Report, RECC's Chief Executive Virginia Graham expressed pride in RECC members who continue to install and offer high standards to consumers against a challenging backdrop of dramatic cuts in financial incentives for small-scale renewable energy generators.

The 2018 Annual Report can be found: [here](#).



## MCS LAUNCHES BATTERY STORAGE STANDARD CONSULTATION

MCS has issued a draft of their upcoming Battery Storage Standard for Public Consultation.

The consultation period will last for 4 weeks. The deadline for comment submission is 17:00 on Friday 23 August 2019.

The draft standard (MIS 3012) and consultation response form can be found [here](#). Completed forms can be sent to: [mcsmeetings@mcscso.org.uk](mailto:mcsmeetings@mcscso.org.uk).

To find out more about the benefits of becoming a Trust Mark registered business with RECC please see [here](#).



## VAT RATE TO INCREASE FROM 1 OCTOBER 2019

HMRC proposals to raise the VAT rate on some solar PV installations have been passed by Parliament, despite strong opposition.

From 1 October 2019 VAT will rise from 5% to 20% on solar installations where the cost of materials exceeds 60% of the total installation cost. This is not expected to impact the bulk of standalone solar installations, but will likely affect collective purchase schemes and combined-solar and storage installations. The reduced rate of 5% VAT will still be available for residential installations for recipients who are aged 60 or over or receiving certain benefits, and for housing associations.

The VAT rate for separately-installed residential storage has always been 20%. The EU's State Aid agreement which allows lower VAT to be applied to energy saving technologies or materials is based around the concept of 'social good' not 'environmental good', which led HMRC to propose changes to bring the UK into compliance.

You can read a House of Commons library briefing on the background and the changes: [here](#).

## Drivers' views on smart electric vehicle charging published

In June Citizens Advice published its findings on drivers' views on various smart EV charging options, including time-of-use tariffs, Vehicle to Grid, and mandatory managed charging.

The report, *"Smart electric vehicle charging: what do drivers and businesses find acceptable?"*, is based on research by The Transport Research Laboratory involving over 90 private and small business drivers, including EV, hybrid, petrol and diesel car owners. The findings include:

- drivers weighed up many factors when deciding whether they would take up the smart charging options suggested to them, including financial risks and benefits, the time they would need to invest in it, and how much control they would still have over their battery level.
- the prime concern of small businesses that rely on vehicles was to keep their business running, even if that meant charging their vehicles at higher prices. They were not keen on chasing small savings if it cost them a lot of administrative time.

Citizens Advice makes a number of recommendations on the basis of the findings, among them that users need to be able to retain a level of control that they are comfortable with, and the companies that manage drivers' charging on their behalf should enable users to set and change preferences and requirements, and give them an override ability.

You can find the full report on the Citizens Advice website: [here](#).

## REAL announces new Consumer Code for Electric Vehicle home charge points



Example of an EV charge point from RECC's [Consumer Guide to EV Charge Points](#)

Renewable Energy Assurance Limited, the company that administers consumer codes and certification schemes including RECC, has announced a new consumer protection offering, the Electric Vehicle Consumer Code (EVCC) for Electric Vehicle home charge points.

The Electric Vehicles (EV) sector in the UK is expected to grow rapidly ahead of the Government's plan to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2040 (and by 2032 in Scotland).

As the market develops, EV drivers are encouraged to install 'smart' home charge points that offer them control of how

and when they charge their EVs as well as the ability to take advantage of favourable electricity tariffs. The charge points may also form part of a greener, smarter home alongside other home systems, including solar PV and battery storage, where these are installed.

REAL, in developing the EVCC, aims to ensure that consumers are given good information to help them decide if an EV home charge point is for them and, if they choose to buy, they can be confident that the product they are having installed has been fitted correctly, is suitable for their property and EV, and comes with a minimum level of guarantees.

The Code sets the standards expected of EV home charge point installers when entering into contracts with domestic consumers. Only OLEV-approved installers will be eligible to join and will have to meet technical standards, and requirements around contract terms, estimates, protection of deposits and access to dispute resolution for consumers.

REAL aims for installers to be able to sign up to the EVCC from September 2019.

### Smart Export Guarantee confirmed

Government confirmed in June that all large energy suppliers will, by the end of the year, have to offer a rate (or export tariff) at which they are obliged to purchase electricity exported from small-scale renewables.

Under the Smart Export Guarantee or SEG, licensed suppliers with 150,000 or more domestic customers must provide at least one tariff offer to any eligible exporter; other suppliers may participate on a voluntary basis. The Government did not set a minimum rate that they must offer, other than that they must provide 'payment greater than zero' at all times of export.

The exported power must be metered, with a meter capable of reporting exports on a half-hourly basis. Suppliers must be satisfied that exporters' installations are suitably safe, which the Government says: "could in practice mean obtaining from exporters evidence that their installation is certified to the Microgeneration Certification Scheme, or equivalent, standards".

Ofgem is expected to issue guidance for suppliers in the run up to the new requirement becoming mandatory and there will also be guidance for exporters.

You can read the Government's full response to the consultation on the SEG and more details of the scheme: [here](#).

### UK SETS TARGET TO BE NET ZERO CARBON BY 2050

In June, the UK confirmed a legally-binding net zero carbon emissions target for 2050 - the first G7 country to do so. The move follows the recommendation of the Committee on Climate Change to set such a goal. The aim ratchets up the 80% cut in CO<sub>2</sub> target in the 2008 Climate Change Act. The government does not indicate how the target might be achieved.

Commenting on the move, Dr Nina Skorupska, the Renewable Energy Association chief pictured below, said:



*"Being the first G7 nation to adopt net zero greenhouse gases emissions target by 2050 is a historic step not only for our industry but for the UK as a whole....What is needed now is clear and consistent policy that will allow for a route to market for renewable and clean technologies that will attract investors."*

More information on the UK emissions target can be found: [here](#).

The full statement from the REA can be found: [here](#).



## Solar Together: 'Register your interest in high volume installs by 16 August'



Solar PV installation. Image courtesy of [Solar Together](#)

Group buying scheme Solar Together is to build on its success in London and the East of England with the launch of further schemes across the UK in September. iChoosr, specialist in group buying schemes, is calling on installers with the capacity to deliver high volume domestic installations to register their interest in being involved.

Solar Together schemes bring together households and local government to get high quality solar panels at a highly competitive price. The new schemes will see iChoosr partner with local authorities in the North, East, and South of England and will for the first time include battery storage where appropriate.

Installers are invited to register their interest before 16 August [here](#), and begin the qualification procedure.

Installers must be MCS-certified and a member of a CTSI-approved Code, such as RECC. Once they have satisfied the strict quality control criteria successful installers will be invited to take part in an auction as a result of which the prices will be set.

For further information about taking part in the scheme contact Ruud Frijstein, Project Manager, Solar Together UK, on [ruud@ichoosr.com](mailto:ruud@ichoosr.com) or +44 2035 144 667.

## LABOUR PLANS SOLAR PANELS FOR 1.75 MILLION HOMES

The Labour Party has announced plans to install solar panels on 1.75 million homes. Under the proposals, unveiled in May, solar panels would be fitted on a million social homes in a bid to tackle fuel poverty, through providing free energy and savings on bills. Other initiatives, including interest free loans and grants, would add a further 750,000 domestic installs to the total.

The plans would also reduce emissions and create thousands of new jobs, the party states.

More information on the proposals can be found: [here](#).

## £5M fund to develop green finance products

Households could cut mortgage rates, save money on their energy bills and reduce emissions from their homes under plans to roll out green mortgages, the Government claims.

Ahead of the launch of the Green Finance Strategy, July's government announcement included:

- a £5M fund to help the financial sector develop green mortgages and other home finance products. Green mortgages offer discounted mortgage rates for households that upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes.
- a £10M innovation fund for companies who design innovative ways of reducing the cost of retrofitting the UK's old housing stock.

Government measures to improve the energy efficiency of 17 million homes form part of the UK's commitment to become a net zero emissions economy (see "UK sets target to be net zero carbon by 2050" on page 3).

## PROSPECT UNION ASKS: WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE GREEN JOBS?

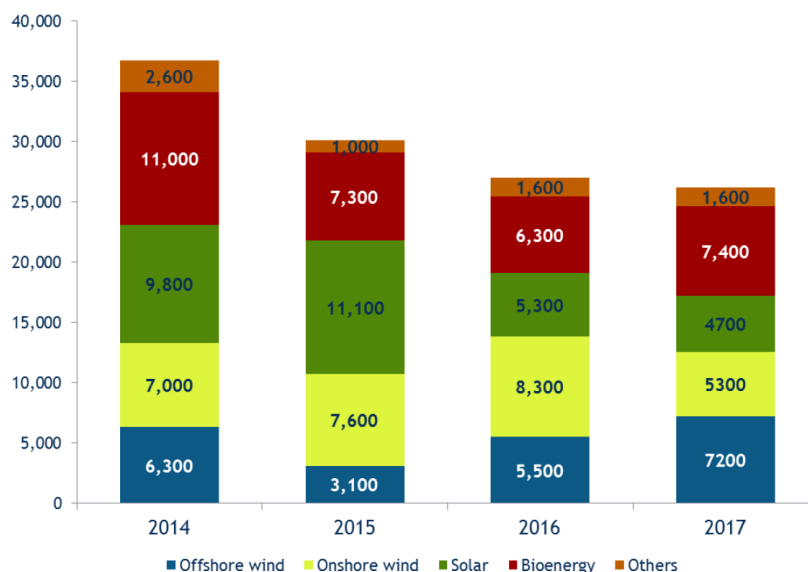
Direct employment in renewable electricity in the UK fell by around 30% between 2014 and 2017, according to a Prospect trade union briefing. The report, 'What happened to all the green jobs?', highlights Office for National Statistics figures that suggest declines in job numbers in every sub-sector except offshore wind, with solar the worst hit.

Prospect highlights changes to government subsidies and to planning rules for onshore wind as among the causes, and calls for a "real green industrial strategy" going forward.

Within days of the report's publication the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in a statement to Solar Media's Current News, counters that it has seen green collar jobs "soar to approximately 400,000". The Prospect briefing acknowledged discrepancies in figures arise because there have not been consistent criteria about what counts as a "green job".

The Prospect briefing can be downloaded: [here](#).

Direct UK employment renewable electricity (FTEs)



Direct UK full time employment in renewable energy by technology type 2014-2017  
Source: [Prospect](#)

## RECC and Trading Standards work closely together to support good business practice and protect consumers

RECC has joined forces with the Trading Standards-run Buy With Confidence (BWC) trader approval scheme to give customers the best reassurance that the business they are using is professional, reputable and committed to good customer service.

All members of the BWC scheme are vetted and approved by Trading Standards. It is not-for-profit and is the largest local authority-run scheme in the UK. The initiative began nearly 20 years ago and aims to help consumers find businesses they can trust. It is now a national scheme supported by over 50 local authorities.

In the same way that RECC does, BWC aims to support and promote responsible, reputable businesses, at the same time as providing assistance to consumers looking for businesses they can trust. All BWC members have passed a stringent audit process, including a face-to-face meeting with a Trading Standards Officer.

In recognition of the extensive vetting that RECC Members go through, BWC is offering RECC Members a discount should they wish to join. This means that RECC Members will get 25% off the BWC application fee plus 25% off their first year's BWC membership.

When consumers see the BWC logo combined with the RECC logo, they will know they are buying from a business that they can count on and trust. Small-scale energy generation systems are a significant purchase for consumers, so why not give your customers and potential customers this reassurance?

If you would like to know more, please visit the website: [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk).

To take advantage of this offer just quote the code RECC when you complete the BWC application form.



**SOLAR & STORAGE**  
**LIVE** Empowering the energy transition

17 - 19 September 2019  
The NEC, Birmingham

**RECC**   
RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSUMER CODE

MEET US AT  
STAND #P17a

We are pleased to announce that RECC is partnering with Solar & Storage Live this year.

It is the UK's largest renewables exposition, this year with over 200 speakers, over 100 exhibitors, and an all-new start-up Innovation Zone.

It will provide a cross-sectoral experience, bringing together the entire energy value chain and has a particular focus on solar, storage and EVs as key enabling technologies for the energy transition.

Best of all, in its efforts to truly unite the energy industry and widen participation, attendance to both the conference and expo is completely FREE OF CHARGE.

You just need to sign up for your free pass: [here](#).

We hope to see you there, at booth P17a!

**RECC**   
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**APPROVED CODE**  
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