

PROTECTING CONSUMERS AND PROMOTING RENEWABLES

Welcome to the Summer newsletter

Dear RECC Members,

This warm summer is contributing to a spike in the number of installations being registered on the MCS Installation Database, almost back to the level seen before the COVID-19 restrictions took hold. That's excellent news for our members.

We're also pleased that the Government's Green Home Grants will extend to air-source and ground-source heat pumps along with solar thermal systems. Due to launch in late September, the scheme will be open for all installers who are MCS-certified for the relevant technologies.

You can read more about all of this and more here, in the Summer Edition of the RECC Newsletter. I hope you find it useful. Please also take a few minutes to look at the 2019 RECC Annual Report [here](#).

With best wishes to you and your families, **Virginia Graham (Editor)**.



£2bn for Green Home Grants to include heat pumps and solar thermal

Government is calling for greener, warmer homes as part of its 'Plan for Jobs' which includes £2 billion for Green Homes Grants to homeowners and landlords towards the costs of making their homes more energy efficient. The funding is part of the measures set out to support employment as the Job Retention Scheme and other assistance schemes start to wind down.

The installation of air-source and ground-source heat pumps and solar thermal systems will be eligible for support as 'primary' measures under the scheme, alongside a range of insulation measures. Installers will have to be MCS-certified and Consumer Code members to install them. They will also need to be registered with a TrustMark Scheme Provider.

The Grants, available in 2020-21, will offer at least £2 for every £1 homeowners and landlords spend, up to £5,000 per household.

For the lowest-income households, they will fully fund up to £10,000's worth of energy efficiency measures. The scheme aims to upgrade over 600,000 homes across England, saving households hundreds of pounds per year on their energy bills.

Full details about the scheme, expected to go live in September, will be announced shortly in August. You can apply to become TrustMark registered through RECC.

As a RECC member, you have satisfied our strict criteria for membership. You now have the opportunity to become TrustMark-registered through RECC.

You can find full details of our streamlined process here:
www.recc.org.uk/trustmark



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RECC unveils new Heat Pump Guide for UK installers

RECC and MCS have unveiled a Guide for domestic heat pump installers. It provides them with a single source of best practice guidance on both technical and contractual matters. The Guide is produced by MCS in partnership with RECC, Energy Saving Trust and the Heat Pump Association.

The Guide sits alongside MCS Heat Pump Standard MIS 3005. Sections support certified installers with designing, installing and commissioning heat pumps, as well as with the consumer journey with a focus on the performance claims that underpin contract agreements.

Ian Rippin, MCS CEO said: "Building consumer confidence in low-carbon heat is critical to aiding market growth. Building that trust depends on both technical expertise and contractual best practice. So, we welcome this new Guide which provides all this support to installers in one place."

Virginia Graham, RECC CEO said: "Designing and installing heat pumps systems requires considerable skill. Providing consumers with accurate information about an unfamiliar heating technology is vital but challenging. So, I am delighted that installers can now find accessible guidance on the whole process in one place. I commend it to our members."

Mike Thornton, Energy Saving Trust CEO said: "If Government plans are to be realised then there will need to be a significant increase in renewable heat options including heat pumps. It is vitally important that they are installed effectively so the benefits for the end users including householders can be realised. We believe the application of this guide will go a significant way to ensuring this happens and we encourage all suppliers to use it."

The Heat Pump Guide is available here:

mcscertified.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Heat-Pump-Guide.pdf



Domestic Heat Pumps
A Best Practice Guide

RECC and MCS highlight members' views in Clean Heat Grant response

In early July, RECC responded to Government's consultation on future support for low-carbon heat. RECC drew heavily in its response on the views of its heat-generating technology members.

RECC had asked members for their views in a survey in June. The majority of the one in five who responded stressed that they preferred the existing Domestic RHI to a programme of upfront £4,000 grants paying for just a small proportion of the total cost of a heating system.

RECC stressed that air source heat pumps – the cheapest of the heat technologies covered by the grant scheme – are not suitable for all properties, do not necessarily represent best value for money in terms of CO2 savings, can increase a household's overall energy costs and require adapted radiators, pipework and underfloor heating to work most effectively.

RECC urged Government to ensure that any grants are:

- sufficient to fund heating systems most suitable for consumers' properties and usage;
- linked to adequate levels of energy efficiency improvements; and
- available alongside access to interest-free finance to cover the balance of the cost.

RECC also asked Government to:

- tighten up the proposed voucher redemption system to ensure it doesn't encourage mis-selling and poor-quality installations.
- facilitate consumers' access to independent information on suitability, performance, energy costs and value for money.

MCS also sought views on the consultation from across the sector, concluding in its response that the proposed scheme is inadequate to support any significant growth of low carbon technology. It called for Government to review of the total available funding of £100 million and to reconsider the flat-rate, technology-neutral approach.

MCS called for solar thermal to be included and for the role of biomass to be increased for hard-to-treat properties. MCS also flagged the need for investment in skills, awareness-raising and consumer education to support significant growth.

You can read the full RECC response here:

www.recc.org.uk/images/upload/news_265_RECC-response-to-BEIS-Consultation-on-Future-Support-for-Low-Carbon-Heat-07.pdf

and the full MCS response here:

mcscertified.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MCS-Clean-Heat-Grant-response.pdf

New MCS installer requirements launched

At the end of June, the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) announced changes to the overarching scheme requirements standard as its standards simplification process begins. Certified installers have until 31 March 2022 to comply fully with the standard.

Key changes include:

- simplified requirements around a Quality Management System;
- an integrated partnership with RECC as the Consumer Code of choice;
- strengthened enforcement arrangements;
- reinforced requirements around subcontracting; and
- moving supervision audits away from office systems and towards site inspections.

Ian Rippin, MCS CEO said: "We want to make the schemes we operate stronger, fairer and simpler so the quality of the installers and product manufacturers we work with really shines through. Working in this way is how we'll build consumer confidence."

Chris Roberts, MCS Director added: "This first step simplifies the overarching standards to make the scheme less bureaucratic and more streamlined. This work will be followed by the simplification of the technology specific installation standards and we expect to start releasing these over the next few months."

You can find the revised version of MCS 001 here:

mcs-certified.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MCS-001-1-Issue-4.1_Final.pdf

RECC supporting campaign for a safe return to work

RECC has pledged its support for the 'Work Safe' campaign for a safe return to work. The campaign, co-ordinated by TrustMark and The Building Leadership Council, is aimed at both traders and consumers, emphasising that staying safe is a joint responsibility and that we all have a duty to protect each other.

RECC members can find a consumer-facing guide, a campaign Video and ready-made content and graphics for their social channels in the Resource Hub. You can:

- attach the PDF of the guidebook to any estimates you send out;
- email customers who cancelled work during lockdown to provide added reassurance;
- share tips from the guide across your social media channels using the hashtag #worksafesafework; and
- make use of the campaign graphics to accompany any communications you may be sending out.

You can find the Resource Hub here:

www.worksafesafework.info



Influential Body calls for COVID-19 recovery to focus on Net Zero

The Committee on Climate Change, in its June annual report to Parliament, sets out the urgent steps that must now be taken to initiate a green, resilient COVID-19 recovery.

The report finds that Government's steps 'do not yet sum to meet the size of the Net Zero challenge'; nor do they 'deliver adequate progress in addressing even the unavoidable impacts of climate change'. Overall, UK emissions reduced by 3-4% in 2018-2019, a cut of 30% between 2008 and 2019, largely due to progress in the electricity sector.

The report points out that the urgent need to bolster the economy to recover from COVID-19 presents an opportunity to broaden and accelerate progress towards Net Zero. It also highlights the need for reskilling and retraining programmes to deliver a 'Net Zero workforce'.

Committee Chairman, Lord Deben, said: "The steps that the UK takes to rebuild can accelerate the transition to a successful and low-carbon economy and improve our climate resilience. Choices that lock in emissions or climate risks are unacceptable". The report highlights five clear investment priorities, including:

- incentivising low-carbon retrofits and buildings that are fit for the future, with a system of 'green passports' for all properties; and
- strengthening energy networks to support electrification of transport and heating, including fast-tracked electric vehicle charging points.

You can download the full report here:

www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2020-progress-report-to-parliament/

Industry views sought on 'Skills for Climate'

A major new consultation has been launched to explore the necessary skills base for a low carbon economy and how to deliver it.

Open to 14 August, the poll is being run by ECA with the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technologies (REA), Building Engineering Services Association (BESA), the Solar Trade Association (STA) and The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership, and supported by other bodies from across industry including MCS.

ECA Energy Advisor Luke Osborne commented:

"It's vitally important that the skillbase exists to deliver ambitious plans for a green recovery and a low carbon economy in the UK."

Dr Nina Skorupska CBE, REA CEO said:

"The pace of deployment needs to ramp up this decade and the skills need to be in place to facilitate the transition. The outputs of this an important and timely survey should be carefully considered by Government as they develop plans for a green economic recovery."

You can find the consultation here:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3SGC7K5

Octopus Energy launches EV charging payment option

Octopus Energy's Electric Juice brand is to allow EV drivers to pay for their charging, whether at home or at public chargepoints run by partner charging networks, via a single bill.

Drivers will pay via their Octopus account where they charge on a partner network, the first of which is lamppost charging company Char.gy, with plans to add others.

Richard Stobart, Char.gy CEO, said the company is 'delighted' to be working with Octopus to allow its customers to have one consolidated energy bill.

You can read more about it here:

octopus.energy/business/electric-juice/

Record-breaking month without coal power

National Grid reported in May that the UK has seen a record-breaking full month without any input from the country's coal-fired power stations. This follows April's all-time peak record for solar PV generation.



Scottish householders encouraged to consider biofuels

Trade association UK and Ireland Fuel Distributors Association (UKIFDA) launched a campaign to encourage off-grid oil-heated homes in Scotland to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by switching to biofuels.

The switch would allow lower carbon emissions straightaway without making large scale changes to their home heating systems. The campaign is part of UKIFDA's vision for reaching Net Zero, the first stage of which would see Government incentivise all homeowners to make energy efficiency improvements. **For more information see:**

ukifda.org/ukifda-encourages-homeowners-to-start-the-transition-to-biofuels/



RECC celebrates 5 years of Alternative Dispute Resolution with CTSI

In July, RECC joined Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) in celebrating 5 years of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). RECC is an approved ADR provider under the Scheme.

The ADR Regulations were launched in 2015 to create better relations between consumers and traders and to encourage dispute resolution without the need for court. In the five years since, over 68,000 UK businesses have joined the Scheme, administered by CTSI for Government, and £12.7 million has been recovered for consumers.

In April, a report revealed that the Consumer Code Approval Scheme (CCAS), RECC's approval body, also run by CTSI, now protects almost £135bn worth of consumer transactions, a 62% year-on-year increase. **You can read more here:**



www.recc.org.uk/images/upload/news_268_CCAS-celebrates-five-years-of-ADR.pdf

Spike in installations as lockdown lifts

The UK's domestic renewable energy installation market showed strong signs of recovery over May and June, according to figures released by MCS. In the last weeks of June installation numbers reached levels last seen before the COVID-19 restrictions (see chart).

The average number of installations for May was up 37% compared with April, while June showed a huge spike, up 167% compared with May. On a technology basis, solar PV showed the strongest rise, up 185% in June compared with the previous month.

Ian Rippin, MCS CEO said: "It is reassuring that we are seeing a consistently improving picture. Having spoken to several contractors they tell me that, not only have they

managed to hold on to some of the pre-lockdown work that they had secured, but enquiries have also improved dramatically. We'll continue to monitor the installation data closely".

