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REGULATORY UPDATE

RECC regularly posts news items on its website (www.recc.org.uk/news) to update members about Government and MCS announcements.

- In March the Government announced an extension to RHPP and May saw an increase in voucher levels.
- In May the new MCS solar PV guide came into force.
- On 1 July the solar PV FiT for <4kWp systems dropped from 15.44p to 14.90p per kWh.
- Government will shortly publish its decisions on the domestic RHI.
- MCS will shortly publish revised heat pump performance requirements and a revised small wind standard.

Welcome to the RECC Newsletter

Welcome to our first newsletter for members. We plan to publish the RECC newsletter once a quarter to bring you up to date with the latest developments within the Code and the small scale renewable sector. We hope you will find the newsletter both interesting and helpful. If there are any topics you would like us to cover in future issues do please let me know.



Virginia Graham, Editor

TSI launches Consumer Code Approval Scheme

RECC is delighted to have been one of the first Codes to be approved under a new scheme launched by The Trading Standards Institute (TSI) at its annual conference and exhibition in Brighton on 18 June.

The Consumer Codes Approval Scheme (CCAS), which has official Government backing, is designed to give consumers greater confidence in trade associations and businesses organisations that operate codes of practice.

It replaces the scheme run by the Office of Fair Trading. Welcoming the launch of CCAS, RECC Chief Executive Virginia Graham said: "We are delighted to be going forward in partnership with TSI in the 'new consumer landscape' that we are now part of. We are confident we can successfully build on the many synergies we have with enforcement agencies around the UK and learn more from our future association"

Consumers will be able to look

for the TSI Approved Code logo or search a dedicated database at www.tradingstandards.gov.uk for a member of an approved code in their area.

TSI Chief Executive Leon Livermore said: "We are confident more members will come on board as they recognise the power of the TSI Consumer Codes Approval Scheme logo in attracting consumers to their business"

To illustrate how Consumer Codes can help consumers TSI used a case study from RECC.

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Mark Cutler accepting RECC's Code Sponsor Certificate from Jo Swinson MP, minister for consumer affairs.

TSI launches Consumer Code Approval Scheme - continued

A retired physicist, John Eaton, contracted with a RECC member to install six solar panels on the roof of his home near Glasgow. When he found that the panels generated just half the electricity he had been promised he complained to the company. When they ignored him he approached RECC, and the case was later referred to the independent conciliation scheme. The

conciliator recommended the company repay Mr Eaton almost £5,000, which it did over six months.

Mr Eaton commented: "The important thing is that RECC is there to negotiate on behalf of the customer and the company."



Baroness Crawley (centre), President of the TSI, at the Brighton Conference with all the CCAS Code Sponsors.

NEW NAME NEW LOGO

We hope you all like our new name and new logo. We decided to rename the Renewable Energy Consumer Code to differentiate more effectively between the Code and the company's many other activities.

Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd (REAL) remains the name of the company responsible for running both consumer codes and certification schemes.

The new logo is available in the members' area of the website. We are gradually updating our materials to reflect the change. As members you are free to update your own materials as and when it is convenient for you to do so. We hope that by the end of the year most members will be using the new logo.



Online training expanded

Renewable Energy Consumer Code's online training resource for members has recently been updated and expanded. Complying fully with the Code and making sure that all employees understand the requirements of the Code and the law is essential. The training resource is designed to help you to do this.

It covers all areas of your business from advertising and marketing through to sales, contracts, installations and after-sales service.

The training resource can be read

online or sections can be printed off to read offline. It is designed to be read alongside the Consumer Code and the RECC model contract, model quotation and other model documents.

It also provides useful links to other organisations which can help in running your business and keeping within consumer protection law.

The training is regularly updated. The next stage will be the introduction of some interactive questions and answers so you can test how well you and your staff have understood the information.

We hope you find this resource useful. It is entirely free for you and your staff to use. If you have any suggestions as to how it could be improved do please let us know.

2.2.1 Sales staff training in the Consumer Code



Key Point: The Consumer Code requires your company to put in place arrangements to ensure that your sales representatives know how to use the code and how to comply with the code on your behalf (for sales work, for example) must also follow the code.

Training snapshot

RECC member wins Installer Award



Gaynor Hartnell (REA) congratulates Ecohill on winning the Installer Award

Ecohill, a family run company with an impeccable customer service record, was a worthy winner of the Installer Award, one of the ten prestigious British Renewable Energy Awards this year.

The awards were presented in London on 13 June by Peter Ainsworth, former Conservative politician. He said: "Good customer service is a key element in building up consumer trust in what is a relatively new industry. Ecohill have shown how well this can be done and thoroughly deserve their award."

Accepting the award on behalf of the company Dean Hill, Managing Director, said: "We want our customers to be completely satisfied with their installation and are always willing to go that extra mile to make sure that we maintain the highest standards. This award is a very welcome recognition of our commitment to good customer service."

Another small installer, Feed It Green, based in Liverpool, was highly commended in the same category.

Also shortlisted were Bright Green Energy and British Gas for its work with Walsall Community Housing Trust.



Michael Portillo speaking at the REA awards.

Annual report shines light on solar PV complaints

RECC submitted its annual report for 2012 to the Office of Fair Trading on 28 March.

The report highlights the ways in which we encourage, monitor and enforce compliance with the Code, work to resolve complaints and promote the benefits of the Code to members, consumers and other stakeholders.

Among the many statistics in the report is a breakdown of the number of complaints we received in 2012, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of total installations. The chart on the right, below, shows how the number of complaints registered with RECC has grown over time; the chart on the left shows which technologies those registered in 2012 related to.

The report shows that, despite the enormous growth in the absolute number of complaints registered, as a proportion of total solar PV installations for domestic consumers, the number of complaints registered has remained

New Arbitration Scheme for micro business consumers

If members adhere to the high standards of service set out in the Code we hope that few problems will occur.

However, things do occasionally go wrong and, until now, our independent arbitration scheme has only been available to domestic consumers, central to the Code.

As part of our aim to support our members as effectively as possible we have devised a new arbitration scheme specifically for very small commercial or 'micro business' consumers who have a complaint against a member.

You can find further information, and the eligibility criteria, on our website.

www.recc.org.uk/consumers/how-to-complain-micro-business

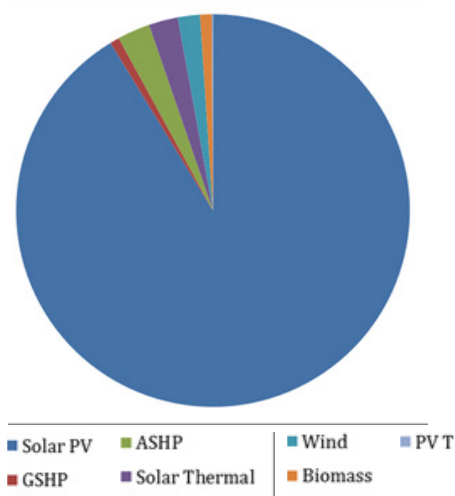
broadly constant.

- in 2012 0.5% of all domestic solar PV installations were the subject of a complaint registered with RECC (1,051 out of a total of 201,178 installations (687 MW));
- in 2011 0.4% of all domestic solar PV installations were the subject of a complaint registered with RECC (439 out of a total of 124,385 installations (381 MW)).

The annual report is available in hard copy on request and on the website:

www.recc.org.uk/scheme/annual-report

Total complaints registered in 2012



Total complaints registered 2007- 2012

