

**Minutes of the 48th Meeting of the Supervisory Panel
Renewable Energy Consumer Code
Wednesday 13 June 2018**

Meeting held at REAL office: 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0DT

Present

- David Laird- Chairman
- Walter Carlton – Deloitte
- Steve Lisseter- Independent Consumer Expert
- Christine Schams - BEIS
- Carmel Golden - Ofgem
- Damien Morris – Citizens Advice
- Bryn Aldridge - Independent Trading Standards Expert
- Amanda Clark – Certsure LLP

In attendance

- Aida Razgunaite - RECC
- Rebecca Robbins - RECC
- Lorraine Haskell - RECC

Apologies

- Virginia Graham - RECC
- Frank Gordon - REA
- Gemma Stanley – STA

1. Introduction and apologies

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 48th Supervisory Panel Meeting and noted apologies for absence received.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The Executive confirmed that errors noted in the draft minutes had been amended and Panel Members agreed the minutes of the 47th Supervisory Panel Meeting as being an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 General updates

The Executive provided the Panel with the a number of updates:

Recruitment

It had recruited a new team member to the role of Audit Officer, who would have the primary focus of running the desk-based and site-based audit programme to ensure compliance with the Monitoring Strategy.

Trustmark

Trustmark had carried out its first audit of the Executive and taken the time to understand the practices and procedures used to assess businesses for suitability. The Executive will now assess the steps needed to achieve ISO 9001 compliance.

Dispute Resolution Process

Updates had been made to the Dispute Resolution Process, including introducing a trial telephone 'first line response' process which would assist with the quick resolution of more straightforward disputes without the need for full mediation, and updating model documents and guidance to ensure they are audience specific and easy to understand.

Affiliate Membership

It was exploring whether it would be possible to display affiliate memberships on a members' search results on the website to further promote it as a member benefit. At the moment this could include being a Which? Trusted Trader and/ or being Trustmark registered. The Panel raised the question of how the Executive would ensure the information was up to date and suggested considering whether other such memberships could be included, such as being part of a Buy With Confidence scheme.

Electric Vehicles

Electric Vehicles (EVs) had been added to the list of technologies on the CRM database. This means that those RECC members who are also OLEV-approved EV charge point installers (about 60) can now be identified on the Executive's website.

3.2 Agreed actions

The Executive confirmed that some of the actions from the previous meeting would be picked up later in the agenda. The following updates concerned those that would not.

RECC Membership

The Executive confirmed the final membership renewal numbers for 2018 following the end of the renewal period and explained that we had continued to receive a high number of applications. The Executive explained that the number was positive and showed a continued interest in the sector. The Panel asked whether there had been a change in the type of member making applications. The

Executive explained that we continued to receive most applications from businesses looking to install solar PV but noted that there had been a definite increase in applications for heat technologies, and from other types of business models, such as housing associations, and investors interested in the new Assignment of Rights (AOR) model.

The Executive explained that it had met with a provider to discuss options surrounding alternative renewal processes and said that moves were being made to assess their viability. The Executive explained that there was some difficulty finding a process that worked with both its payment processing technology and CRM database. The Panel suggested that this should be something that the Executive puts in place before the next renewal period to ensure the process is as easy as possible for our members.

2019 Changes to the FIT

The Executive reported that it had no further update on the Government's plans post Feed-in Tariff in 2019 but that we were expecting a consultation to be published in Summer 2018. The Panel asked whether the changes would have a serious impact on the Executive. The Executive confirmed that it would report on this once it understood the Government's position.

Monitoring

The Executive explained the work it had been doing to update the Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ). The content had been updated to be more 'consumer friendly' and allow for a response from a consumer who had not necessarily gone on to have an installation completed. The updated online version had gone live and this was shown to the Panel during the meeting. The hardcopy of the form was ready to go to print and certain insurance providers had agreed to share the form either in hardcopy or via an email link. Completion numbers are still low and the Executive asked the Panel to consider ways to incentivise members to encourage consumer completion. The Executive considered whether consumers calling to give feedback could be directed towards the form.

The Executive asked the Panel to consider ways of incentivising members to distribute the CSQs or encouraging consumers to complete it online ahead of the next meeting.

Updates to the Bye-Laws

The Executive explained that the changes to the Bye-Laws had now been drafted by the Executive's solicitors. The Executive suggested that the changes could be circulated to the Panel ahead of the next meeting.

The Panel asked whether the use of the term Bye-Laws was potentially too archaic and did not clearly signpost the fact that they govern the Executive's contractual relationship with members. The Panel asked whether, at the point of application, the importance of these terms was brought to the attention of the applicant, and suggested making it clearer that the Bye-Laws include terms which bind the member. The Executive agreed to look into this further.

Primary Authority

The Executive explained that its Primary Authority partnership with Hampshire County Council Trading Standards was now fully set up and that it had met with its supporting officers in April. The Executive explained the benefit members can get from the Primary Authority arrangements and how they will need to 'opt in' to do so.

CTSI

The Executive confirmed that it was due to have a CTSI audit at the end of June and that the results would be discussed at the next meeting.

Compliance with GDPR

The Executive explained that it had updated and published a new Privacy Policy and the amendments to the Bye-Laws will incorporate the necessary GDPR changes. Members and stakeholders were contacted ahead of the appropriate deadline regarding any news or marketing information sent by the Executive and invited to opt in. Those who did not opt in prior to the deadline have been removed from the distribution list accordingly.

4. Highlight Report

The Panel considered the content of the Highlight Report.

Membership activity

Regarding membership, the Panel agreed that data could only be presented from the preceding 12 months. The Executive confirmed that the percentage fallout from the sector was close to the level expected and took the time to explain why such fallout was expected to new Panel members. The Panel agreed that it could be beneficial to understand more about the types of businesses that were leaving the sector.

Monitoring

The Executive reported that it had already seen a higher success rate in auditing since the end of the renewal period but that members still seemed to be finding it difficult to return the audits within the time period specified. It would be difficult to simplify the process further without limiting the scope of the compliance assessment. The Executive reported that it was 12 months on from when the desk-based process was first imagined and the Panel recommend that it would be a good opportunity to consider the original aims and goals of the process compared to the results.

The Executive explained that site-based audits were generally reserved for instances where members who were the subject of disciplinary procedure would pay the cost themselves, and the Panel agreed that a more cost-based monitoring programme could be beneficial to the Executive.

The Executive reported that it had resumed its Mystery Shopping programme but that results so far had been difficult to obtain.

Complaints

The Panel wanted to understand the relationship between the number of complaints received by the Executive about battery storage products and the number of batteries being installed within the UK. The Executive explained that this would be difficult as there was no central registration database for batteries unlike the MCS certified technologies. The Executive commented that this was being highlighted as a problem across the whole of the industry. The Panel suggested that the Executive should consider who may hold information on batteries and to consider trying to get a general idea of numbers installed in the UK. A discussion was had about what changes may be introduced in the future which would require notification or registration of a retrofit battery.

The Executive suggested that complaints figures may not represent the level of potential consumer detriment caused by members as the statistics included non-members. The Panel agreed that it would be interesting to see a comparison between complaints totals versus complaints about current members.

5. Assignment of Rights

The Executive confirmed that the new regulations would come into force on 27 June 2018 and explained the preparation work being done within RECC and with industry. Along with BEIS and Ofgem, the Executive was drafting a model contract which members would be strongly encouraged to use. Where the model was not used, the Executive would have to approve the contents of the contracts.

New members were expected to be a mix of investor/ installer models and investor-only models, both of which would require further due diligence checks and the Executive explained that it was already receiving applications from businesses intending to use a range of models. The Executive was drafting guidance for investors, installers and consumers. The Panel asked what impact AOR would have on the Executive and what risks were involved. They voiced particular concern about the potential costs involved in assessing contracts, and the ability to do thorough due diligence on larger financial businesses structures.

6. 2018 Annual Report

The Executive invited comments from the Panel on the updated 2018 Annual Report which had been drafted in light of previous discussions about content, and highlighting the true positives of the Executive's work.

Whilst the Panel agreed that the changes made had improved the current format of the report, it invited the Executive to consider who this report was for and what needed to be in it. It suggested that the report in its current format should remain, for CTSI and other relevant stakeholders, but

that the Executive could, as a form of marketing, produce consumer and member focused short documents showing our successes and results, alongside our aims and hopes for the next year. The Panel suggested collating feedback on the report once published to see whether recipients and readers found it useful and interesting.

7. A.O.B and date of next meetings

Date of next meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Supervisory Panel would take place at 2.00 p.m. on **Wednesday, 19 September**. The following meeting will take place at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 December.

A.O.B.

There was no further business raised.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked those who had attended and closed the meeting.