

**Renewable Energy Consumer Code
Two Yearly Activity Report 11 June 2017 - 10 June 2019
11 July 2019**

<p>Please tell us the total number of disputes you have received as well as the types of complaints to which the disputes relate (Provide us with data using whatever categorisation system you use for 'types' of dispute. For example, you may have major and sub categories in relation to the 'types' of goods and services in dispute, such as: Electrical goods (Major), with televisions, laptops etc as sub-categories. You may also have multiple categorisations, for example, a goods & services category and also the legal 'type' of dispute, for example, not as described, not fit for purpose. In addition you may have no category system at all if you are very specialist or only deal with a very small number of disputes. If your categorisation system changes during the year let us know the information up to the change and afterwards explaining what has changed and how in a footnote).</p>	<p>Disputes type</p> <p>ENERGY GENERATORS Air Source Heat Pump Biomass, Gas Absorption Heat Pump Ground Source Heat Pump, Solar Assisted Heat Pump Other (Non-MCS energy generators) Solar PV, Solar Thermal Wind turbine, Battery Storage</p> <p>CATEGORIES OF DISPUTES Awareness of RECC / Consumer Protection (including staff training) Microgeneration Certification Scheme Marketing and selling Estimates / quotes, including performance estimates and financial incentives Finance agreements Contracts and cancellation rights Taking and protection of deposits and advanced payments Completing the installation After-sales (guarantees, workmanship warranties and warranty protection, after-sales support: customer service) Complaints (numbers, handling, procedures)</p>	<p>Number received: 1670</p>
	<p>Total number of disputes received</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1670</p>
<p>Please tell us about any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders of which you have become aware due to your operations. In addition, tell us about any recommendations you may have as to how these problems could be avoided or resolved in future. (Your recommendation should be based on the objective of raising traders' standards and to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices).</p>	<p>Systematic or significant problem(s) occurring frequently</p> <p>The issues are specific to the small-scale renewable energy sector:</p> <p>(1) Mis-selling of energy generators, related products (battery storage, voltage optimisers, smart pv system, solar boost) and services in relation to savings and financial benefit.</p> <p>(2) Consumers not qualifying for financial incentives (feed in tariff and RHI) or obtaining a lower tariff rate than the figure expected at the point of sale for various reasons including missing application deadlines and lack of information provided about the procedures.</p> <p>(3) Ofgem suspension of consumer's RHI application (biomass installations) due to issues with the original payment arrangements when the RHI application was submitted.</p> <p>(4) Technical faults with installations in cases where the original installer is no longer trading and the insurance backed workmanship warranty has either expired or was not supplied.</p> <p>(5) Significantly higher running costs for biomass than figures stated in contract and the maintenance requirements being more complicated than the information given when the contract was entered into.</p>	<p>How can this problem be avoided or resolved in future</p> <p>RECC address these issues through the standards set out in the Consumer Code and Bye-Laws. We provide extensive support to our members to ensure that they comply with requirements of the Code when signing contracts with consumers to prevent and minimise instances of miss-selling. For example, as part of our Primary Authority arrangement with Hampshire County Council, we provide members with approved and compliant model documents to use free of charge. These documents include contracts with terms and conditions, quotes, performance estimate and cancellation forms – the all the information required at the pre-contractual stage. Members are also able to assured advice through this arrangement. Furthermore, in order to ensure that members are up to date with changes which may affect contracts signed with consumers, we keep them on updated legislative changes via our webinars and CPD-certified consumer protection training. We have also prepared guidance documents specifically for consumers in relation to related products and how they work alongside a solar PV system.</p> <p>In relation to complaints about not qualifying for financial incentives due to various reasons; with regard to solar PV, the feed in tariff ended in March 2019 so we are receiving less of these types of complaints. However, consumers can now access the smart export tariff under the Smart Export Guarantee whereby their energy provider will pay a fixed rate for the surplus energy exported to the grid. Some energy providers already offer consumers a tariff and the government will launch the Smart Export Guarantee in January 2020 which will make it mandatory for large energy providers to offer consumers the Smart Export Guarantee.</p> <p>We prepared and issued a FAQs document to consumers which provide detailed information why their RHI payments have been suspended and the actions they must take to comply with Ofgem's requirements in order for payments to be re-instated.</p> <p>In case where consumers have report technical faults with their installation and the original installer is no longer around, we provide as much useful information as possible (FAQs document is available on our website) and suggest that the consumer contacts a local MCS certified company for assistance to resolve the matter.</p>
<p>Please tell us the percentage of ADR procedures that were discontinued before an outcome was reached. (Please take this to mean for operational reasons, Operational reasons means, for example, issues with an ADR official and a conflict of interest. It does not include consumers and traders dropping out of the process nor when a consumer has lied to gain access to the process. These occurrences would be part of the numbers of 'refused to deal with' data).</p>	<p>Total number of discontinued ADR procedures /Total number of ADR procedures initiated x 100</p>	<p>None</p>

<p>Please tell the average time you take to resolve disputes you have received; (See Appendix A for guidance on how to obtain the 'average time to resolve disputes' calculation).</p>	<p>Average time to resolve disputes</p>	<p>18 weeks (please note that some of these disputes were resolved via independent arbitration rather than RECC's mediation process)</p>
<p>Please tell us the percentage rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes of the alternative dispute resolution procedure. (Please express compliance as a percentage relative to the number ADR procedures where an outcome has been achieved).</p>	<p>Percentage rate of compliance with ADR procedure outcomes</p>	<p>100% Disputes are only closed at the end of the mediation procedure when the resolution agreed between the parties has been complied with.</p>
<p>Where you are a member of a network of ADR entities which facilitates the resolution of cross-border disputes, please give us an assessment of the effectiveness of your co-operation in that network.</p> <p>Assessment of the effectiveness of your co-operation with cross border dispute ADR network</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>If you provide training to your ADR officials, please give us details of that training. (No individual ADR official training record is needed. We are looking for the training provided overall to ADR officials. This would not include training provided on matters not specifically related to ADR work, for example, how to use Excel spreadsheets. If a course title does not obviously say what training has been provided, please provide a very brief explanation of the training).</p>	<p>Training provided to ADR officials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable Energy in the Home Level 3 Award City and Guilds Consumer protection Negotiations Skills Communications Skills Influencing Skills Time Management Skills 	<p>Brief explanation (where necessary) Renewable Energy in the Home Level 3 Award City and Guilds covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An explanation of how renewable energy technologies work in the home - Details of government incentives for energy technologies (feed-in tariff and Renewable Heat Incentive) - Costs associated with renewable technology (installation and running costs) - Identifying which renewable energy options might be appropriate for different circumstances
<p>Please tell us how effective your ADR procedure has been and what ways you can improve your performance in future.</p>	<p>Effectiveness of your ADR procedure.</p> <p>List of ways your ADR procedure performance can be improved in the future.</p>	<p>The effectiveness of our ADR procedure is demonstrated by the range of successful financial outcomes achieved through our dispute resolution process which consist mediation and arbitration. In 2017, consumers successfully recovered a total of £43,000 through the use of mediation procedure. While in 2018, for the first time, we started to use an informal mediation procedure which led to an increase in the number of resolutions to disputes; consumer obtained a total of £21,820 via formal and informal mediation. Financial outcomes which range from as little as £100 compensation to about £3000 compensation.</p> <p>We have improved our process to ensure that disputes are handled as effectively as possible. The length of our mediation procedure has been reduced to 30 working (compared to 60 days previously) and in case where the dispute is straightforward we increasingly make use of informal mediation to achieve a swift resolution between the parties. These changes should lead to an overall decrease in the average time taken to resolve a dispute next year.</p> <p>Furthermore, in order to ensure the continuous effectiveness of our process we have updated all our documents, in particular the information we supply to consumers and RECC members when we process new complaints. This is to ensure that both parties have a clear understanding of the process and their expectations are managed well from the outset. We have also prepared a new Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure which outlines how we will deal with a conflict between a Dispute Resolution Caseworker and any party to a dispute.</p> <p>As explained above, we recently implemented a number of changes to improve the performance of our ADR procedure. We will review how effectively the changes are working after a period of time and identify further areas where progress can be made. At present, I envisage that improvements can be made in these areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Making more use of informal mediation in straightforward disputes (2) Improving our communication between the parties to a disputes through the ADR procedure (3) In cases where it is evident from an early stage that mediation is unlikely to succeed because the relationship between the parties has broken down, promptly advise the consumer of their options to pursue the dispute. (4) Make some of the key documents we use more accessible and user friendly for consumers to read.