

**Minutes of the 61st Meeting of the Supervisory Panel  
Renewable Energy Consumer Code  
Wednesday, 15 September 2021**

**Present**

(Meeting held on the Microsoft Teams Meeting platform)

- Steve Lisseter - Chairman
- Bryn Aldridge - Independent Trading Standards Expert
- Chris Avgherinos – Domestic RHI, BEIS (part)
- Walter Carlton - Deloitte
- Chris Jackson – Environmental Programmes, Ofgem
- Gretel Jones – Independent Consumer Expert
- Zoe Guijarro – Citizens Advice (part)
- Sarah Howard – MCS
- David Laird - Independent Energy and Consumer Codes Expert

**In attendance**

- Virginia Graham – RECC
- Colin Meek – RECC (part)
- Abena Simpey – RECC

**Apologies**

- Atif Iqbal - Certsure
- Kevin McCann – Solar Energy UK

**1. Introduction and apologies**

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 61st Supervisory Panel Meeting. He noted that two apologies had been received, and that the meeting was being held online for the seventh successive time.

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

Members agreed the Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> Supervisory Panel Meeting as being an accurate record of the meeting and agreed that they could be made available on the RECC website.

**3. Matters Arising**

Virginia went through the summary of actions agreed at the last meeting. She explained that all the actions were either complete or on the agenda for the current meeting, other than three. She explained that there would be a further update on the Memorandum of Understanding between CTSI-approved Codes in the sector and the Lenders' Handbook at the next meeting. She also confirmed that there would be a presentation at the next meeting outlining the work being carried out on flexible energy and demand-side response. Panel Members thanked her for the update.

Colin Meek introduced a brief paper in which he had outlined the meetings and stakeholder contacts he had engaged in since presenting his analysis of in situ heat pump performance at the previous meeting. He reported that he had:

- given a presentation and Q&A to several Scottish Government officials led by the Energy and Climate Change Directorate working on policy implementation on heat decarbonisation;
- given a presentation and Q&A to several BEIS and Ofgem officials, some of whom are coordinating the UK Government Future Support for Low Carbon Heat;
- discussed his analysis findings with BEIS Head of Heat Modelling;
- was holding on-going discussions with MCS and members of its Heat Pump Working Group with a view to updating MIS 3005 in respect of the SCOP data forecast;
- discussed his analysis findings with Professor Robert Lowe from UCL who is Leader, EPSRC Decarbonisation of Heat Challenge and Chair of the UCL Energy and Building Science at the Energy Institute.

Colin emphasised that these engagements had been positive and that there was widespread interest in the analysis findings. It was not possible to confirm what outcome might be achieved. However, he said he was encouraged that there were some moves to re-examine the role of the SCOP data forecast within the MCS performance estimate as well as a determination to ensure that all heat pumps were performing adequately in situ.

Panel Members asked various questions about his discussions. For example, they asked whether it was possible to compare results from poor-performing installers with those from high-performing installers. Colin explained that the analysis had not allowed for this comparison to be made, but that it was an issue of which Professor Lowe was mindful. They also asked whether there was any possibility of publicising Colin's analysis more widely in the media to give it a higher profile. Virginia expressed her reluctance to become embroiled in the political struggle currently being waged between hydrogen and heat pumps as alternative solutions to decarbonising domestic heating. However, she agreed to discuss this further with Colin and the Marketing Assistant.

Panel Members thanked Colin for his presentation and asked to be kept up-to-date at the next meeting as to any further progress made.

#### **4. Highlight Report**

On behalf of Aida Razganaite Virginia reported on RECC membership activity. She explained that, during June, July and August 2021 RECC had gained 131 new members and that, at the end of August 2021, RECC had a total of 1878 members. This reflected the continuing strong demand for RECC membership and MCS certification in the sector. Virginia reported that a further staff member had been recruited to assist with the membership applications and that a further staff member had been seconded to the membership team on a temporary basis. In addition, external auditors were continuing to carry out the due diligence checks on a proportion of the applications.

On behalf of Rebecca Robbins Virginia reported on RECC compliance and enforcement activity. She explained that, during June, July and August 2021, RECC had carried out 50 compliance checks and had allocated 13 new audits. Of the 12 audits allocated in the previous quarter, 5 had been closed

out, 2 had had their membership terminated for non-response, 1 had been transferred to the disciplinary process and 4 were still being processed. Further, she explained that, during the period, RECC had sent out 3 compliance notices and 28 insurance non-compliance letters, 11 of which had since been resolved.

On behalf of Abena Simpey Virginia reported that, during June, July and August 2021, RECC had registered 70 complaints, up from 63 in the previous quarter. Of these, 31 had fallen within RECC's remit. 35 complaints were about solar PV, up by 13 from the last quarter, while 22 complaints were about air source heat pumps, the same as the last quarter. Further, she reported that, during the period, RECC had resolved a total of 11 disputes, 2 more than in the last quarter. Of these, 6 had been resolved by informal mediation, 4 had been resolved after RECC's initial involvement while 1 had been resolved by formal mediation. As a result, consumers had recovered a total of £29,969, double the figure of £14,896 recovered in the last quarter.

Virginia explained that, during the period, 6 arbitration awards had been published. In four of these the consumers' claims had succeeded while in two they had failed. The consumers whose claims had succeeded had recovered a total of £23,425.49 through arbitration.

Virginia explained that next there would next be a further item on the agenda, presented by Abena, looking in more detail at how individual complaints had been resolved. Panel Members thanked Virginia for her reports. They said they had found the information helpful and particularly appreciated the summary section at the start of the Highlight Report.

## **5. RECC dispute resolution**

Abena Simpey presented a set of slides providing further details of the steps taken to resolve disputes in 2021 to date. She explained that, of the 44 disputes resolved to date, 68% had been resolved by RECC's own Dispute Resolution Process whereas the remaining 32% had been resolved by the independent Arbitration Service. During the year to date a total of £86,420 had been recovered for consumers: £52,753 through RECC's own Dispute Resolution Process and £33,667 through the independent Arbitration Service.

Abena went on to identify some trends from the year to date. She explained that disputes involving multiple technologies were becoming more common. In terms of single technology disputes she explained that solar PV numbers had remained stable, whereas air source heat pump numbers had increased and were now close to equalling solar PV numbers. In contrast biomass boiler dispute numbers had continued to decline. Finally, she reported that RECC had seen some disputes about EV chargepoints, though none of them had involved EVCC members.

Panel Members thanked Abena for her presentation and congratulated her on the successful work to reduce consumer detriment during the year to date.

## 6. Arrangements for return to work from the office

The Chairman asked Panel Members to outline the arrangements their organisations were taking to make it safe to return to work. Virginia explained that, having consulted staff during the summer, REA and REAL was conducting a four-month trial during which staff members were required to attend the office for a minimum of two days each week. Individual teams could decide which two days they would attend. Within the office Perspex screens, hands-free sanitiser and water dispensers and a one-way system had been installed. She reported that initial reactions were positive, and that the trial would be evaluated at the end of the year.

BEIS and Ofgem representatives described the different approaches their organisations were taking. While staff were returning to their offices they were not required to attend for a set number of days each week. The majority of Ofgem staff were still working from home while a higher number of BEIS staff had returned to the office. The Deloitte representative described a global approach being taken to enable flexible hybrid working for all permanent staff.

Finally, the Chairman described his experience as a Citizens Advice Bureau volunteer at two centres. He explained that, due to the high incidence of vulnerability among the clients, most meetings were continuing to take place virtually although safe meeting rooms were made available in each Bureau where they were needed.

Panel Members thanked participants and asked for a further up-date to be provided at the next meeting.

## 7. AOB and next meetings

Chris Avgherinos explained that it was still not certain when the Government's Heat and Buildings Strategy would be published. It was likely that it would be published during the autumn, linking to the COP26 UN Meeting taking place in Glasgow in November. Virginia agreed to notify Panel Members as soon as it was published.

Virginia confirmed that the final 2021 Supervisory Panel Meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 15 December at 2.00 p.m.** and that the first 2022 Supervisory Panel Meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 16 March at 2.00 p.m.**

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting would be online. Further information about the 2022 meetings would be decided following that. It was hoped to work towards hybrid meetings. Panel Members noted that ensuring full participation might require additional technology. Virginia confirmed that REA and REAL were exploring hybrid meeting technology.

There being no further business, he thanked Panel Members for their attendance and closed the Meeting.