Renewable Energy Consumer Code
30th September 2025

Background Information

Renewable Energy Assurance has operated the Renewable Energy Consumer Code approved under the CTSI Approved Codes Scheme, since 2006. Renewable Energy Assurance administers nine schemes, each designed to address different aspects of the renewable energy industry and the circular economy. These schemes have helped establish best practice, promote ethical business conduct and give consumers confidence in their choices. Renewable Energy Assurance is a subsidiary of the Renewable Energy Association, a not-for-profit trade association.

REAL has a Primary Authority Partnership with Buckingham and Surrey Trading Standards reinforcing their commitment to provide the highest level of support to members and maintain consumer protection in the sector. There are currently over 5,500 members of the Code.

Audit Process

The audit was carried out on-site by a Trading Standards Practitioner from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI).

The audit focused on the following areas:

1. Outstanding actions/observations from last audit
2. Any planned changes to the Code or to the operation of the Code
3. Member application process, including checks carried out on prospective businesses
4. Member auditing - content and process, including general compliance with the code, staff training and dealing with consumer complaints
5. Sanctions for non-complaint member businesses
6. Any disciplinary cases in previous year
7. Consumer complaints process, including ADR
8. Customer satisfaction, information/complaints from enforcement agencies, and how this information is used to develop and improve the Code

Audit Summary

RECC provided detailed information during the audit. The statistics in this report relate to 2024.

Member Application Process

During 2024, 1,421 businesses applied to join the Code and the Membership Team carried out due diligence checks on 1,533 applications (some carried over from 2023).

Since the last audit records relating to all due diligence checks have been included in the RECC CRM system, making the process more streamlined.

Of the applicants checked:-

- 1,284 were accepted as members of the Code
- 10 were accepted for a defined period of Temporary Code Membership
- 4 were rejected due to a connection with a previous code member
- 255 had their applications closed (an application may be closed if the applicant withdraws their application after it is informed of compliance issues by RECC or it has failed to pay the membership fee and/or respond to communications in relation to the application within a reasonable timeframe)

The application process covers:-

- a full check of the business and any individuals associated with it and the authenticity of the declarations made at application. A joining fee of £120 is payable prior to application

- a full due diligence check of the applicant's documentation, including their quotations, model contract, cancellation rights, performance estimates, dispute resolution process, warranty and the content of the applicant's website(s) and any social media pages including LinkedIn and Facebook.

- online reviews for the applicant are checked for any issues of concern.

Where an application does not meet the requirements of the Code, the applicant may be required to make changes to their procedures and documents, before being admitted to the Code.

For example, they may be required to:

- change their advertising and marketing materials
- adopt the model contract or change their contract terms

Following the due diligence check, if there continues to be concerns about an applicant, dependant on the nature and seriousness of those concerns, their application may be:

- accepted subject to conditions
- accepted on a temporary basis, which may include being subject to conditions*
- rejected

*Temporary membership can be granted on a conditional basis for between 6 – 12 months. After the agreed period, the member can reapply.

Unsuccessful applicants are provided with a full explanation for the rejection and are permitted to reapply for membership, any new application will be treated on its merits. Unsuccessful applicants also have the option to have their application reconsidered by the Independent Applications Panel (IAP).

The last time an applicant made a request for its application to be reconsidered by the IAP was in 2021. The IAP is shared by the other Code Sponsor in the sector, HIES.

RECC share a portal with HIES which enables the cross checking of applications for any issues. A memorandum of understanding is in place to prevent a Code Sponsor onboarding a new applicant in certain circumstances to prevent a business moving between codes when there are, for example, ongoing disciplinary proceeding or ongoing complaints.

New Members

An application was reviewed during the audit and was found that RECC continue to maintain a high level of scrutiny.

The documentation provided was a valuable example of how the application process works. It also demonstrated how any prospective member will be challenged about the accuracy of the information they submit and that they will be asked for additional material when necessary.

An application may be refused if they believe the prospective member does not meet the criteria, with the rationale for the refusal being documented in a clear and concise manner.

Withdrawal from membership

During 2024 611 members left the Code (by way of resignation or non-renewal) and 100 members had their Code membership cancelled, 23 of which had their Code membership terminated for non-compliance with the Code and/or Bye-Laws.

Membership resignations must be conveyed to RECC with 14 days' written notice. RECC may refuse to accept a resignation in the interests of consumer protection and/or if their continued membership is fundamental to RECC's role in administering the Code. This may be if RECC is aware that a consumer is shortly to commence an adjudication, if RECC are formally mediating a dispute, or if the business has been allocated for Audit. This is in accordance with the RECC Bye-Laws.

Each member who leaves the Code is provided with an exit letter confirming that they must immediately remove the RECC and CTSI Approved Code logo from all their documentation, their website(s) etc.

Three exit letters were supplied for the audit and the corresponding websites were examined. There was no evidence found of the erroneous display of the RECC/CTSI logo.

Monitoring Existing Members

The monitoring activities allow RECC to gain an understanding of members' compliance with the Code and Bye-Laws. In 2024, 984 members had their businesses assessed for compliance with the Code. This represents 21% of members.

Compliance Survey - This monitoring activity is for low/no risk members. These members have installed a very low number of systems, have no complaints or are selected at random. The survey asks members a short set of questions relating to their business model and activities to help RECC understand their level of compliance in key areas of the Code. This survey is carried out via Survey Monkey.

In 2024, 625 members were asked to respond to the Compliance Survey, 405 responses were received – a response rate of 65%.

Of the 405 responses received:

- 301 demonstrated compliance with the Code, no further action required.
- 104 required further actions to achieve compliance, all of which have since been resolved.

The RECC view these results of the Compliance Survey as being very positive with 74% of responses confirming compliance.

The 104 non-compliant responses showed a range of potential issues, including inadequate deposit, inadequate workmanship warranty and/or public liability insurance arrangements and using contractual documentation that does not comply with the Code.

The 220 members who did not respond to the survey within the prescribed timeframe were then made the subject of a Compliance Check.

Compliance Check - These consist of a top-level risk assessment analysis and generally the member is not involved in this process. The members for Compliance Checks are selected on a weekly basis, the selection is largely risk-based with small number of members selected on a random basis. During 2024 531 members were the subject of a Compliance Check, an increase of 51% compared to 2023 (351).

The members are selected for several reasons, including:

- 129 members who would fall within the regular monitoring requirements;
- 35 members about whom two or more complaints were received over a particular period or about whom one complaint of particular concern was received;
- 28 who had their technical certifications suspended or withdrawn; and

- 80 who were selected at random.

Some of the most common areas of non-compliance were:

- failure to display the RECC and/ or Chartered Trading Standards Institute logos on websites.
- unsourced or unsubstantiated claims made in online marketing materials, or using logos incorrectly and/or without authority.
- incorrect or inconsistent information about workmanship warranty insurance provided on the MID. Issues related to insurance were, in most cases, found to be administrative issues rather than a member's failure to provide consumers with insurance.

The Compliance Team meets weekly to discuss the outcome of Compliance Checks and decide on next steps. If a Compliance Check identifies a low to medium risk, the member may be allocated for a Desk-Based Audit, a further Compliance Check in 3 to 6 months or it may be notified in writing of issues found. If the Compliance Check identifies a high risk, the member may be allocated to a Site-Based Audit or put into RECC's disciplinary process where there is a real risk of consumer detriment.

Audits - When a member is allocated for an audit, the majority will be desk-based, with just two on-site audits carried out in 2024. Both types of audit are assessed against the same compliance areas though the questions asked may vary and in both cases the member is asked to submit some documents for review and complete a pre-audit compliance assessment, this includes a set of important legal declarations. Of the 48 audits completed in 2024, all failed in the first instance, 44 of which subsequently passed after demonstrating compliance, one was referred to non-compliance, and three remained open at the end of 2024 with minor outstanding issues. In most cases, RECC do not consider failing an audit as an indication of serious problems or consumer detriment. They feel that the audit is an opportunity for members to learn and make improvements in their day-to-day practices. Most issues found at audit were easily remedied, 86% of members that were subject to audit activity where non-compliances were identified, were subsequently brought into compliance.

RECC reviews and analyses the data gathered from their monitoring activities and sends communications to members about emerging trends or concerns and what can be done to mitigate these and prevent breaches of the Code.

Members in the Disciplinary process

In 2024, 360 members were invited to respond to evidence of potential breaches though RECC's informal process (compliance notices) and 13 were asked to respond in accordance with the RECC disciplinary process.

Of the 360 compliance notices sent, 312 were able to resolve the issues identified, two were escalated to RECC's disciplinary process, 27 had their membership terminated or cancelled and 19 were ongoing at the end of 2024.

Of the 13 compliance notices sent

- 4 members had their Code membership terminated
- 4 cases were closed after the necessary action was taken to resolve the issues
- 5 were on-going at the end of 2024

In total, 23 members had their Code membership terminated in 2024 for non-compliance with the Code and/or Bye-Laws.

Marketing and Advertising by Member Businesses

During application and again during all monitoring relevant activities, marketing and advertising by members is checked. Most issues arise from claims and statements made, which are not adequately sourced or where there is not enough information explaining where the claim or statement has come from. Members are told how such claims should be amended.

It is mandatory for members to display the RECC and the CTSI Approved Code logo on all customer-facing marketing materials, including websites, and the RECC logo on all contractual documentation provided to domestic customers. The requirement is made clear to new members and all logos are provided in various formats to make it easy for them to comply. Compliance with this requirement is checked as part of the Compliance Check and Audit process and members are required to take action where either logo is found to be missing from the relevant materials.

Following the 531 compliance checks made in 2024, 160 communications were sent to those found not displaying the required logos. This has been recognised as a common theme of non-compliance.

Terms and Conditions and other Pre-Contractual Information

RECC provides extensive advice and guidance to members in relation to the drafting of contracts that are fair and transparent for consumers. RECC also provides a set of model consumer terms and conditions for members to use or adapt to their business needs.

All model documents have been approved by Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards Department, the Primary Authority for RECC.

RECC also offers advice to members concerning consumer contracts.

Customer Service Provisions

RECC provides an exclusive comprehensive on-line training resource, including interactive training, for its members. These training resources cover the essential elements of consumer protection legislation and the Code. They are set out clearly and in a user-friendly format, with real examples from the sector making it relevant to members. Any updates are communicated to members via publicity campaigns.

The RECC training is CPD Certified, therefore, members who pass the RECC online training resource exam will qualify for Continuous Professional Development credits.

RECC held series of webinars for members to engage with them on key aspects of the consumer journey. RECC feel it is important to provide members with the necessary tools to deliver a high level of service to consumers. The webinar series consisted of five modules following the consumer journey and ran over the course of 2024. Each session was presented by an RECC expert and was made available afterwards in the Members' Area of the RECC website. RECC have more recently worked with West of England Centre for Inclusive Living to gain insight and prepare guidance for RECC Members on Consumers in Vulnerable Circumstances. The learnings from this were used to support training for the RECC Dispute Resolution Officers in relation to working with consumers in vulnerable situations.

Dispute Resolution Process

Mediation is the first stage of the RECC dispute resolution process. It's undertaken in-house by the team of highly experienced and trained Dispute Resolution Officers who mediate between consumers and members to resolve a range of single issue and complex disputes. It incorporates a process for consumers who may be in vulnerable circumstances whereby a variety of extra measures can be implemented to support them throughout the process.

The final stage of the process is the Renewable Adjudication Service which was launched on 5 July 2023. RECC transitioned to adjudication to keep pace with changes within the consumer redress landscape. To ensure its independence, the service is administered on RECC's behalf by the CEDR Services Ltd. A consumer can apply for adjudication if their dispute has not been resolved through mediation or in some instances without use of mediation.

In 2024, 394 complaints were registered with RECC. Of these, 219 fell within RECC's remit. 307 were about businesses who were members in 2024, 76 were about former Code members who were members when the consumer signed the contract and 11 related to businesses who had never been members of the Code. Complaints against current or former members were handled through the dispute resolution process, except for complaints about former members where the business is no longer trading or where the business has become a member of another CTSI approved consumer code.

To fully capture the help provided to consumers and members in addition to resolving complaints, RECC now records all queries resolved by their Dispute Resolution Team. After resolving the query, the outcome is recorded in four categories: issued advice; advised to register a complaint; signposted to industry body or signposted to non-industry body. In 2024, the total number of queries resolved by RECC was 648.

Of the 5,026 Code members in 2024, only 5% had a complaint registered against them, meaning that 95% of members did not have a complaint registered against them in 2024.

In 2024, RECC resolved 127 disputes via it's Dispute Resolution Process..

The means of resolution were:

(a) 87 by mediation (69%)
(b) 39 by adjudication (31%)

Disputes resolved through mediation took an average of four weeks. In total RECC recovered a total of £217,797 for consumers through mediation.

Adjudication

In 2024, 68 consumers were offered the option of achieving a resolution to their dispute through this final stage of the process. Of this number 43 consumers applied for adjudication and 39 progressed to final decisions. This total represents 31% of the total disputes resolved in 2024.

A total of £92,682 was awarded to consumers with successful claims at adjudication. Of the 39 decisions, 35 claims succeeded and four failed. Of the 35 successful claims the average amount awarded per claim was £2,648, and the highest amount awarded was £19,950. Most of the decisions were solely financial whilst in a small number of cases consumers were awarded a financial and non-financial remedy. Non-financial outcomes include the removal of an installation, the repair/replacement of faulty products, as well as the completion of an unfinished installation. In some cases, members were required to issue the complainant with an apology.

Customer Satisfaction and Feedback

Customers of RECC members can leave feedback via the Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire available on the website: https://www.recc.org.uk/feedback.

The questionnaire enables consumers to express the level of satisfaction with the service received from the RECC member. It covers all aspects of the Code, including selling techniques, customer service, cancellation rights, warranties, and insurance arrangements. All responses are confidential and are analysed by RECC to identify emerging trends and ensure that members comply with the Code.

RECC previously acknowledged that they needed to explore ways to encourage consumers to find the questionnaire and complete it. RECC already review Google reviews during the application process and their monitoring activities, and are now considering appraising those reviews to fulfil their Code requirements in relation to customer feedback.

RECC's Dispute Resolution Team sends consumers a Consumer Satisfaction Survey at the end of the dispute resolution process. The aim is the use the survey to gather feedback identifying what consumers think RECC does well and any areas for improvement. The survey contains thirteen questions which cover the key areas of the dispute resolution process, including complaints registration form, information given about the dispute resolution process, the mediation process and the resolution reached. Consumers are also asked to provide general comments about their experience at the end of the survey. They are invited to provide feedback via a link which is included in the final email.

Conclusion

RECC continue to be diligent and demonstrate admirable commitment to the Code and reducing risks of consumer detriment. Applications for membership have continued to increase and RECC have taken steps to ensure that they can continue to monitor applications and members to their usual high standards.

RECC uses a variety of communication channels to share information with members, four newsletters were published for 2024. They provide members with the latest innovations, policy updates, news in the industry and other matters relevant to renewables and consumer protection.