Energy Theft Reduction Expert Group

Headline Report

Meeting 09 (31 January 2024)

This Headline Report provides an overview of the discussion points of the Energy Theft Reduction Expert Group (ETREG) at its meeting on 31 January 2024.

- Reasonable Endeavours Scheme: it was explained that RECCo has been looking into the Reasonable Endeavours Scheme operated under the UNC, which was designed to off-set the transportation and investigation costs that Shippers could be exposed to in the event they find theft and are unable to recover the costs from the customer. It is being considered whether a Reasonable Endeavours Scheme should be created under REC, extending to Suppliers and electricity. ETREG members took an action to consider the proposal and provide their feedback to RECCo.
- Scottish Warrants: ETREG discussed the incorrect rejection of some Scottish Revenue Protection (RP) warrants due to confusion with the rules in the Involuntary Prepayment Meter Code of Practice. It was noted that the courts are not appreciating the safety aspects associated with energy theft and are incorrectly applying rules such as the minimum number of contact attempts for debt warrants, which is 10. It was noted that potentially the wording of the Code of Practice will need to be refined by Ofgem to reduce the risk of it being misinterpreted. As a next step, the ETREG member who raised the matter will be exploring the issue through the UKRPA forum.
- Theft Movement in 2024: at the December 2023 ETREG meeting attendees discussed where they would like to see movement in the reduction of energy theft in 2024. It was explained that the points put forward have been added to a Miro board which can be accessed outside of ETREG meetings and used as a collaboration tool to track outcomes ETREG wish to see driven forward.
- Forward Work Plan 2024/25: it was explained that the RECCo has recently delivered a webinar on its Forward Work Plan which is available to view on the RECCo website. A high-level overview was given on the Theft Reduction Strategy elements of the forward work plan, noting that the strategy will continue to focus on preventing, detecting and responding to energy theft. Strategy activities are being delivered under five key strands, namely engagement, awareness, data & insight, incentives and enforcement.
- Theft Amnesty: it was explained that, in the context of energy theft being a safety issue, RECCo is exploring how to address those safety risks as quickly as possible through a theft amnesty. Points raised in regards to a potential amnesty included:
  - It was explained that potentially a trial could be held in a specific geographical region, noting that all Suppliers and networks with customers in the region would need to be part of the trial for it to be effective.
  - It was noted that if the amnesty is successful in bringing instances of theft forward, there could be significant resource challenges in making these sites safe. Attendees agreed that careful consideration of the design of the amnesty was needed to address resource concerns.

It was noted that in terms of next steps, RECCo has initiated an information gathering phase to obtain industry input on the proposal, with a number of questions issued to UKRPA members.

- Forum Planning: ETREG members were invited to put forward suggestions for the April Energy Theft Forum. Topics put forward included changes to the incentive schemes and warrant challenges.
- Stay Energy Safe Website Upgrade: ETREG members were invited to complete a survey on upgrades to the Stay Energy Safe Website by 6 February.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for **28 February 2024.**

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