RECCo Energy Theft Forum
Meeting Minutes

Forum No.	03
Date	27 June 2024
Location	Teams

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the third RECCo Energy Theft Forum.

2. ETTOS Marketing Plan

2.1. An overview was given of the Energy Theft Tip-Off Service (ETTOS) Stay Energy Safe marketing plan. It was explained that during 2023/24, 99.4% of targets set for the year were achieved. During the period there was a 20% growth in reports to the ETTOS, relative to the 2022/23 period. In addition, six personas were defined and a marketing strategy was rolled out using those personas.

2.2. It was emphasized that marketing material is readily available to partners on the Stay Energy Safe website Partner Portal, with screenshots of assets available on the partner portal shown to attendees.

2.3. It was highlighted that as a result of an action taken at the previous energy theft forum, email signatures to promote ETTOS are now available on the portal for use by partners.

2.4. Attendees were encouraged to provide stories of energy theft and statistics for use in future marketing material.

2.5. In terms of the plan for 2024/25, the six personas will continue to be used to drive targeting, messaging and channel selection. The long-term objective is to make energy theft as socially unacceptable as drunk driving, or not wearing a seatbelt. It was explained that some of the challenges faced in terms of this objective include low awareness (at around 7%) and the niche nature of the topic. Tactics to support the Stay Energy Safe messaging include paid social media, radio, podcasts, local and community strategies, and targeting educational establishments.

2.6. It was also highlighted that, with the help of RECCo, work is underway to identify energy theft hotspots, so that focus can be placed on driving up ETTOS reports in those areas.

3. Energy Theft Calculators

3.1. A representative from the Energy Savings Trust (EST), which provides the Energy Theft Calculators presented on the calculators. Attendees were reminded that should they have any issues with the calculators that are not covered within the manuals, they can reach out to the EST support team via theftcalcsupport@est.org.uk. It was highlighted that requests for additional functionality can also be sent to this email address.

3.2. A series of potential improvements to the tool was presented on, namely:

- Adding the ability to add custom appliances to the tool, such that the power output, usage factor and number of hours it is operated can be entered;
- Adding heat pumps to both the domestic and non-domestic elements of the electricity theft tool;

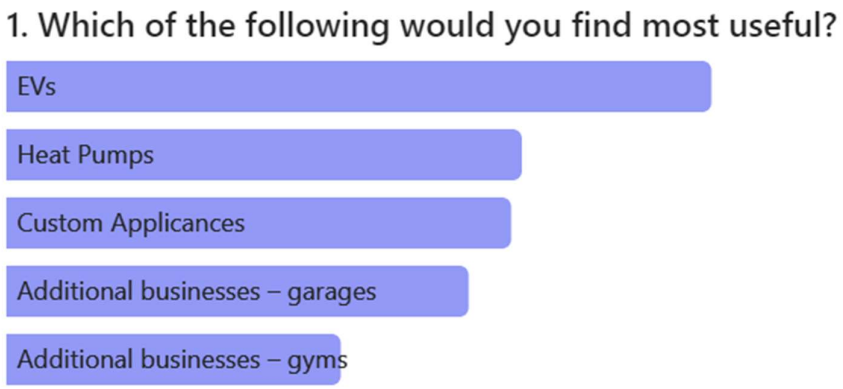
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- Adding a module to estimate Electric Vehicle energy usage: and
- Adding some additional business types, such as residential homes, to the non-domestic tool.

3.3. Attendees were invited to share their thoughts on additional functionality and improvements to the calculators by populating a white board, with the following suggestions made:

- **Improvements to functionality:** the regions could match what region the MPAN relates to in ECOES.
- **New features:** floor area; appliances; opening hours; and combined heat and power (CHPs).
- **Additional Business Types:** gyms; cryptocurrency mining; housing; cannabis farms; landlord/communal supplies; schools, nurseries and universities; sheltered housing groups; and care homes.

3.4. A poll was shared with attendees, inviting them to rank improvements they would find most useful to the calculators. The results of the poll were as follows:



3.5. Attendees were thanked for sharing their feedback on the calculator. It was explained that this feedback will be reviewed and then the next steps agreed with RECCo.

4. Q&A Session

4.1. Attendees were invited to raise any questions they may have. The following points were discussed:

- One attendee asked if there is guidance available on the Theft Calculators. It was noted that there is, and a link was shared to the REC Portal Energy Theft Hub, where this guidance is published.
- It was suggested that there would be benefit in adding holiday parks (caravans and chalets) to the calculators, as they do not have the constant occupation that homes do. It was queried whether this would be whole holiday parks or individual caravans and, in response, it was noted it could be either.

5. Theft Issues Group

5.1. An overview was provided on the work of the Theft Issues Group (TIG), noting that the TIG has been formed to develop solutions to resolve theft issues which may form Change Proposals and alterations to the REC. It was explained that the group holds monthly meetings on the last Wednesday of the month and is open to any theft expert. It aims to foster industry engagement in developing solutions before they become formal change proposals. Meeting agendas, papers, and outputs are available on the REC portal for anyone interested in following the discussions.

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5.2. An overview was provided of the areas under consideration by the group, namely:

- **Improving the Theft Detection Incentive Scheme (TDIS):** amending the existing scheme to allow Suppliers to receive incentive payments for desktop and site visit investigations, not just confirmed thefts. The goal is to implement changes by the next scheme year, with tight timelines to achieve this. The next steps include defining activities qualifying as investigations, determining how to adjust the calculations, and ensuring comprehensive reporting of investigations to minimise the risk of gaming.
- **Mandating ETTOS Follow-Up:** this involves creating guidance likely to become a REC Category 3 document, outlining steps for following up on leads.
- **Schedule 8 Review and Best Practice Guidance:** this is a review of the Unbilled Energy Code of Practice and production of best practice guidance, with the aim to ensure clarity on theft practices across parties.
- **Introducing a Reasonable Endeavour Scheme:** this potential dual-fuel scheme, inspired by the existing scheme for gas distribution networks under the Uniform Network Code (UNC), aims to improve the incentives to investigate energy theft. The feasibility and interaction with TDIS are under exploration.
- **Creation of an Energy Theft Detection and Resolution Body:** this is a potential national scheme which would create consistency in investigatations.

5.3. The importance of industry engagement in TIG was emphasised, with Forum attendees encouraged to stay informed through meeting papers and to reach out to their Operational Account Manager (OAM) with any questions or interest in participating.

6. Secure Data Exchange Portal (SDEP) Update

6.1. It was explained that the SDEP allows energy Suppliers and electricity Networks to exchange consumer personal data securely and resolve specific queries. A recent change proposal (R0121 “SDEP Review Improvements – Process Types”) has been approved, introducing new process types effective from August 23, 2024. For theft-related queries, a new general query process type will be available. Organisations can set up permissions for this the new process type manually within the SDEP tool, or in bulk with an exercise currently underway to gather bulk updates via email.

6.2. It was highlighted that the R0121 theft process type at present can be sent only from Supplier to Supplier under gas, as at present Gas Networks do not have access to the SDEP. R0162 has been raised to facilitate access, with the progression timescales yet to be confirmed due to impact of the MHHS change freeze.

7. Q&A Session

7.1. Attendees were invited to raise any questions they may have. The following points were discussed:

- One attendee asked if there would be a briefing coming out on the SDEP to help those who have not previously used the system. In response, it was noted that the R0121 release would have included information on the SDEP and contract managers would have been contacted about updating their organisations permissions. The presenter agreed to share available guidance.

ACTION 03/01: share guidance on the SDEP for the benefit of those who have not previously used the system.

- More detail was requested on why R0121, a gas issue, is impacted by the electricity MHHS programme. In response it was explained that the MHHS programme impacts on the Electricity

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Enquiry Service (EES) which the SDEP is part of. The provider of the SDEP system, C&C, cannot impact assess R0121 until MHHS go-live as they are impacted by the MHHS go-live.

8. Police Partnership

8.1. It was explained that as part of its Energy Theft Reduction Strategy, RECCo is seeking to provide a holistic, whole-system, approach to energy theft, emphasising not only the detection of theft but also ensuring proper incentives and tools for investigation and prosecution. This comprehensive approach includes industry collaboration and the development of better tools to handle detected cases, especially those involving criminal activities like meter tampering or selling bypasses.

8.2. Under consideration is the potential to enter into a partnership with the City of London Police (which has GB wide coverage and remit that covers economic crimes including fraud). The partnership would seek to emulate successful collaborations in insurance, intellectual property, and banking industries and would harness law enforcement expertise and resources to tackle the issue of energy theft. The unit's establishment is projected to cost around £1.6 million per year, with a minimum commitment of three years.

8.3. By creating the unit, it is hoped that it will raise awareness of the issue through promotion in the media, creating a deterrent effect as well as giving the industry a new tool in its kit.

8.4. The intent is not to pass everything to the unit but rather target organised crime type activities. To ensure the unit is given the best possible chance of success, referrals to it will need a strong evidentiary standard. This will need to be engineered backwards, for example, provision of guidance and proformas to the energy industry to enable quality information to be collected and passed to the force. To support this, RECCo is proposing that there would be a referral unit which would gather data and take steps to maximise the chances of success for those items passed to the police unit.

8.5. It was highlighted that a consultation on the strategic outline case closed on 14 June, with around 12 responses received. Based on the level of support received to date, RECCo is now developing the Outline Business Case, and aim to invite views on that in September. Subject to continuing support, a REC Change Proposal will be raised to give effect to the necessary governance and funding arrangements.

9. Data Sharing and Analysis

9.1. It was highlighted that as part of the benefits case for the roll out of smart metering, the richness of smart meter data and the analytics it could drive was identified. RECCo has initiated a project to unlock the smart meter data for use in theft insight (including next iteration of Theft Estimation Methodology). In addition, RECCo has been working with a company called DeterTech to bring in analytics from other sources too. A full update on this will be given at a future forum.

9.2. It was explained that RECCo has a remit to make a decision on a replacement of a central theft analytics and lead generation service, previously delivered as the Theft Risk Assessment Service (TRAS). The intention is to do this differently to the TRAS by testing the effectiveness of data driven leads and building it into an analytics service only if proven effective.

9.3. RECCo has set up data sharing agreements with a handful of Suppliers and Distributors to support analysis in this area, including doing back testing of smart meter alerts against confirmed thefts to identify if there are specific patterns associated with instances of theft.

9.4. The next step is the creation of a strategic outline case, which is targeted for July which will give much more detail on RECCo's activities in this area.

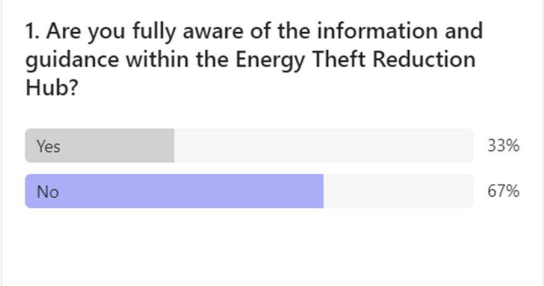
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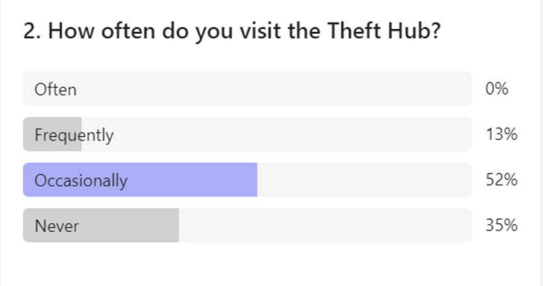
10. Energy Theft Reduction Hub

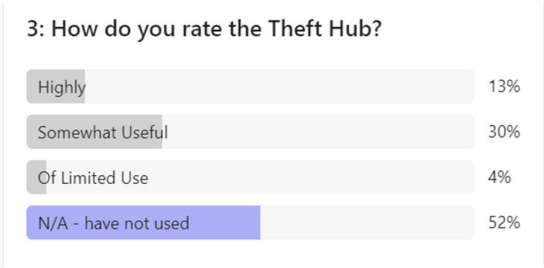
10.1. An overview was provided of the Energy Theft Reduction Hub, which sits on the REC Portal, noting that the hub includes the following:

- **My Energy Theft Reduction Obligations** - REC Schedules 7 & 8 and Ofgem licence conditions;
- **Information and Guidance** – the theft calculators, calculator guidance and ETTOS guidance;
- **News and Events** - previous events, Energy Theft Reduction Expert Group (ETREG) minutes, webinars, new proposals and upcoming events;
- **Collaboration Forum** – this tool is has not as of yet been used but provides a space to collaborate online; and
- **Stay Energy Safe Website link** - news and information on marketing campaign and reporting, plus access to the Stay Energy Safe Partner Portal.

10.2. Attendees were invited to compete a series of polls on the hub, the responses of which were as follows:







10.3. Forum attendees were then invited to share the main reasons they visit the hub and what could be done to improve it. In response, the following points were raised:

- The hub can be challenging to navigate, for example, when trying to find things like the calculators and obtain guidance, it is text on a white background and a few links.
- The collaboration forum is unused but has the potential to be useful. It was noted that how this can be exploited needs to be looked at. As a first step, encouraging usage of the hub is needed.

10.4. Attendees were thanked for their feedback and it was noted that this will be taken on-board by RECCo as it considers how to take forward the hub.

11. Q&A Session

11.1. Attendees were invited to raise any questions they may have. The following points were discussed:

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- One attendee suggested that with staff turn-over at parties and the relative newness of the hub, there might be benefit in a communications plan for the hub. In response, it was noted that RECCo is looking at engaging with the OAMs on promotion of theft activities and this could form part of this work.
- It was also noted, that to access the hub, users need to request access which they may not have realised.

12. Successes and Challenges

12.1. Attendees were invited to share their successes and challenges, with the points raised as follows.

Warrant Challenges

12.2. It was noted that RECCo had been made aware of challenges in Scotland with regards to obtaining warrants, and queried if any forum attendees were still experiencing this issue. In response, an attendee flagged a concern that as debt warrant volumes ramp up and are booked weeks in advance, it is going to become increasingly challenging to obtain slots in Scottish courts for shorter notice theft warrants. It was noted that each court in Scotland has its own processes which makes it more challenging. RECCo encouraged the raiser to let them know if this anticipated issue materialises as debt warrants levels increase.

12.3. Another attendee noted that within England, their organisation was experiencing application processes that range from 30 minutes to two hours depending on the magistrate. The magistrates are requesting to see individual letters; dates and times of visits; whether guidance has been sought from housing associations; and reviewing every item of information. It was noted that if there needs to be wider engagement with court services then this can be flagged to RECCo.

Resource Limitations

12.4. An attendee highlighted that resource constraints limit their proactive measures against energy theft. However, it was noted that increasing focus on energy theft might drive more business attention to this area.

MPAN Disconnection Queries

12.5. Clarification was sought on the process for MPAN (Meter Point Administration Number) disconnection after confirmed theft and meter removal. In response, it was explained that for MPAN termination, a physical disconnection of the service cable is necessary, which Suppliers can request. This process involves costs and is handled by the disconnections team, similar to customer disconnection requests. It was noted that for specific scenarios, such as disconnections from a distribution board in a shopping centre or block of flats, the Distributor may not need to take any action, with the Supplier able to disconnect.

Police Partnership

12.6. It was questioned what the proposed police unit's potential role would be in assisting with warrant issues. In response, it was noted that police are unlikely to be able to help with right of entry warrants, and the effectiveness of involving police with local magistrates is uncertain.

Theft Data and Back Charging

12.7. An attendee queried how far back they can go where there is evidence from smart meter data that shows theft occurring that is over 12 months old. In response, it was noted that it is possible to go beyond 12 months back when seeking to recover costs from the customer, however, this will depend on being able to provide substantiated evidence and being the supplier for the full period.

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13. AOB

13.1. It was noted that in November 2024, it will be two years since the Energy Theft Accelerated Solutions Environment (ASE) event and there may be value in holding another face-to-face event. As such, the post forum feedback form will seek views on whether people would like the next forum, scheduled for November, to be face-to-face.

14. Close

14.1. The Chair thanked attendees for joining the event. A request was made for discussion topics for the next energy theft forum to be sent to technicalenquiries@recmanager.co.uk.

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