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Cc: Matthew Harnack[Matthew.Harnack@ofgem.gov.uk]
From: Edmund Ward
Sent: 2013-06-21T15:30:41Z
Importance: Normal
Subject: FYI: Brief feedback on NI RHI event including feedback on DETI (very negative) and Ofgem RHI (generally very positive)
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Teri, Jacqueline, Morag, Claudia cc: Matthew to flag reputational observations in yellow below

Some brief readouts from my attendance at the Action Renewables event in **Northern Ireland** yesterday.

[Attendance around 150 was a mixture of suppliers, installers, fuel suppliers, and potential end users – on a show of hands around 15 expecting to apply in next 6 months, plus quite a few councils/public bodies looking at a c.2-year timeframe. Based on discussions, the installers/suppliers in attendance represented a significant fraction of the relevant supply chain in NI].

Key points:

- Speakers did *not* include the Minister in the end, but was a high-profile event with speakers including hereditary peer **Lord Brookeborough (one of our NIRHI participants)** and Gaynor Hartnell (currently CEO of the REA – she did confirm she will be stepping aside from CEO role at REA; no news on who will be replacing her).
- DETI were not present, and **their lack of attendance was addressed and heavily criticised by all speakers** (except me!) – we may wish to **feedback to DETI on the reputational impact of this**
- Some key Ofgem messages were disseminated correctly by other speakers (e.g. importance of keeping fuel records), but **some key Ofgem messages were mis-represented and/or were not made by other speakers** (e.g. availability of targeted Guidance materials and resources; importance of *full and accurate* applications; eligibility of legacy installations; *limited* options to repay grants; importance of *meter installation requirements*)
- We received some **very positive Ofgem feedback**:
 - Ofgem RHI staff received extremely **glowing praise** from Lord Brookeborough, including that we were “the best individuals to deal with – **extremely helpful, efficient and approachable**”. In his presentation he ‘name-checked’ **Berta** [Paniagua] and **Chris** [Haworth] in particular for their exceptional service and support during the application process and periodic data submission.
 - We received **several positive comments from the floor** regarding the applicant/installer experience, mainly from installers had been involved in the process for GB installations
 - Many attendees commented on the value of having Ofgem attendance
- There were also some critiques of the **complexity of the Ofgem accreditation process** – discounting the ‘usual feedback’, and the policy-related queries/concerns, **the following were two themes worth revisiting** as part of our wider piece of work on the end-to-end RHI:
 - The application form (and indeed the scheme) was regarded as being too complex for the owner to understand, but that under our systems the owner is still responsible for signing it off, even if they have relied on a 3rd party to fill in parts on their behalf – i.e. there is no easy way for the owner to contract responsibility for the application form to a 3rd party – this is in some respects **revisiting DECC’s “no agents” policy** intent but from another angle which may be worth exploring with DECC
 - Given the perceived ‘limited number of products’ on the market, it was generally felt that our application process could be **linked into other data sources such that we could reduce the number of questions we would need to ask/technical evidence we would need to gather**, for those products with which we are already familiar [e.g. boilers on MCS or ECA approved technology lists, or meters on industry-hosted certified lists]

I can provide further verbal update next week as required.

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