

1. Objectives

The installer research was designed to:

1. Learn what MCS certified installers think of MCS, the associated organisations and the current model, if it is working for installers or if there is a better alternative for installers.
2. Understand the level of compliance amongst installers, which areas installers might be falling down in and why
3. Identify any areas that installers would benefit from more support in, and how this might be achieved
4. Learn what other barriers need to be removed to increase MCS's certified installer base and increase both installer and consumer satisfaction with the sector.

2. Research methodology

The survey was hosted by Survey Monkey and a link to the survey was sent to all companies currently MCS certified. The survey was also marketed through social media and pushed out through the trade associations, Solar Energy UK and REA, and HIES. The survey ran for 5 weeks in total.

Installers were invited, by MCS, to participate in an information gathering exercise, the aim of which was for MCS to learn about the installer's experience of MCS and its Standards, as well as the associated Certification Bodies and Consumer Codes.

MCS aimed to identify what is and is not currently working well for installers and what could be done instead, so that it could better support installers, streamline the installer journey and make standards simpler to comply with.

MCS wanted to encourage as many installers as possible to participate in the survey and so offered participants 3 free credits on the MCS Installer Database (worth £90 plus VAT) which could be used to register MCS certificates in future. To receive these credits participants had to leave their details.

MCS also wanted installers to feel that they could be honest when answering questions, giving MCS more accurate and truthful answers. It was explained before the survey that answers would not be associated with the participant, nor would any answers be used against a company as an assessment of their compliance with the MCS scheme or any of the associated schemes. It was also left optional as to whether or not participants left their details.

In the end MCS received 151 responses to the survey.

3. Survey sample

Total no of contractors who participated in the survey	151
No of participants who answered every question	128
No of participants who install*:	
Solar PV	72
Battery storage	28
Air Source Heat Pumps	107
Ground Source Heat Pumps	65
Solar Thermal	45
Biomass	12
Micro CHP	1
Wind Turbines	0
No of participants who contract directly with domestic consumers	142
No of participants which are registered with TrustMark	92
No of participants which are Code members of:	
RECC	115
HIES	28
No of participant which are MCS certified by:	
NAPIT	70
Certsure	44
OFTEC	9
HETAS	1
APHC	15

*Some installers might install more than one technology.

Where numbers do not add up to the total 151, some participants may have answered 'don't know' or n/a.

4. Key findings

Objective 1. Learn what MCS certified installers think of MCS, the associated organisations and the current model, if it is working for installers or if there is a better alternative for installers.

The principles of MCS and the associated schemes are supported by installers. Installers in the sector support the need for both technical standards and consumer protection standards. However, the existing model is less supported. Installers feel it is too burdensome, complex, and costly, that is focuses too much on paperwork and not enough on the quality of the installations. It is also heavily weighted in the consumers' favour.

Installers believe the existing model is putting others off from getting involved in the market. It is also apparent that installers, and allegedly consumers, do not understand the role of the Consumer Codes, and the reasons behind some of the requirements, and that a portion of installers are only members of MCS to access certain financial incentives.

Opinions were expressed that there are too many organisations involved in the policing of the sector and, as a result, it is overly bureaucratic and not always policed consistently. Responders stated that when installers do not comply with the standards, enforcement action must be taken and shared more widely with the sector to act as a deterrent.

Installers also called for both the existing model and the requirements of the standards to be more streamlined, which could be interpreted as a need for a single body that governs and enforces the standards in full.

Objective 2. Understand the level of compliance amongst installers, which areas installers might be falling down in and why

The compliance levels are high based on the responses received to this survey. However, a survey of this nature is unable to determine actual compliance to the standards. Survey responses indicated that are some of the requirements of the standards are not always complied with.

It is suggested that MCS could introduce mechanisms to support installers with their compliance, making it easier for installers to understand what they need to do. It is further suggested that MCS could carry out market research of its installers on a regular basis to help monitor the areas and levels of compliance.

Objective 3. Identify any areas that installers would benefit from more support in, and how this might be achieved

Several of the options presented via the survey proved popular with responders. A technical helpdesk, online tools and apps, and webinars for installers, all scored highly.

There was also interest in MCS delivering more written guidance to help with navigating the standards, offering one to one support and for the automation of sector related processes through the MID. All of these options are now under consideration for their development in the months to come.

Objective 4. Learn what other barriers need to be removed to increase MCS's certified installer base and increase both installer and consumer satisfaction with the sector.

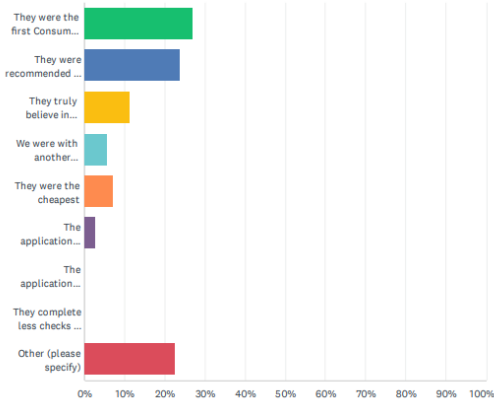
Costs of achieving and maintaining MCS certification, the burden of paperwork (especially for smaller companies in the sector), ensuring processes are in place to help consumers when installers become insolvent and the policing of 'phoenix' companies, were all things responders highlighted as being of concern or frustration for installers.

Electricity installers vs Heat installers

The graphs below show a comparison between participants who install electricity generating technologies and those who install heat generating technologies. Survey results were consistent between the 2 groups, except as indicated below. However, the differences between groups may be too small to draw any real conclusions from.

Q6 Please explain why you chose this Consumer Code

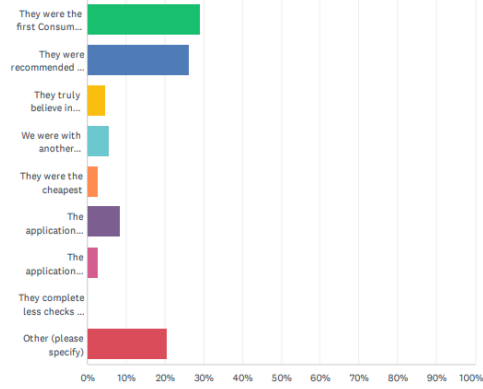
Answered: 71 Skipped: 1



Electricity generating

Q6 Please explain why you chose this Consumer Code

Answered: 107 Skipped: 4

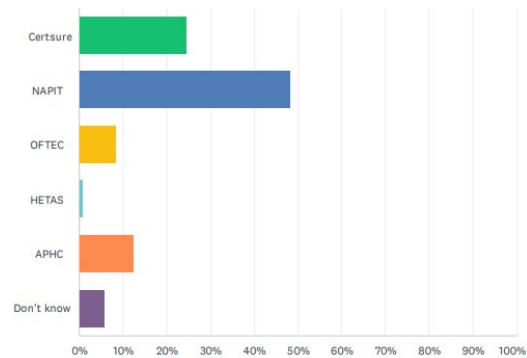
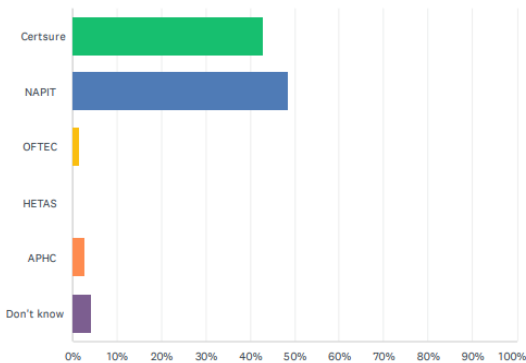


Heat generating

Amongst heat technologies, an installer’s choice of Consumer Code was driven more by the application process being more straightforward or quicker than is the case for electricity technologies. This response could have been because many heat installers have needed to have become certified quickly to be able to take advantage of the Green Homes Grant during the second half of 2021.

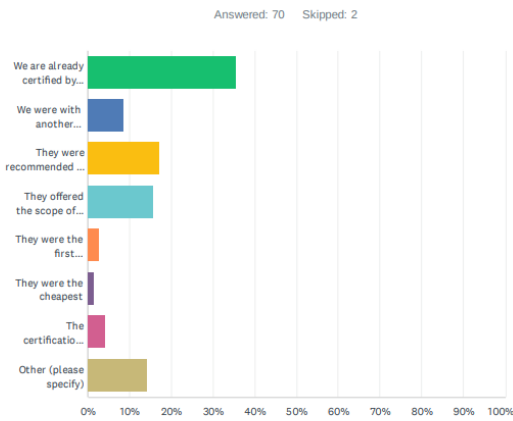
Q10 Which Certification Body are you certified by?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 2

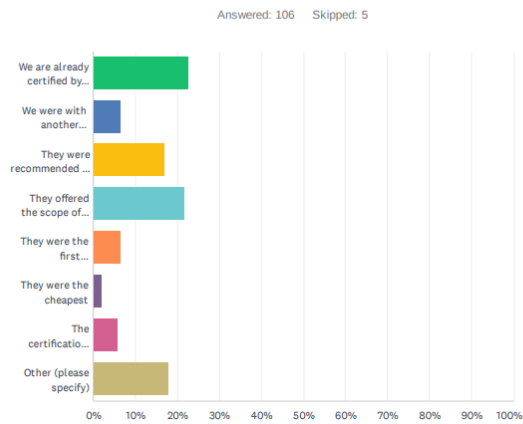


Certsure is more popular amongst those installing electricity technologies, whereas OFTEC and APHC are more popular amongst those installing heat technologies.

Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?



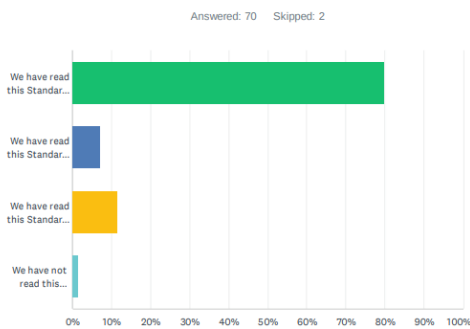
Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?



More heat installers chose their CB based on technologies they cover, but also more heat installers chose their CB because they were the first CB they came across and because their application process was quicker.

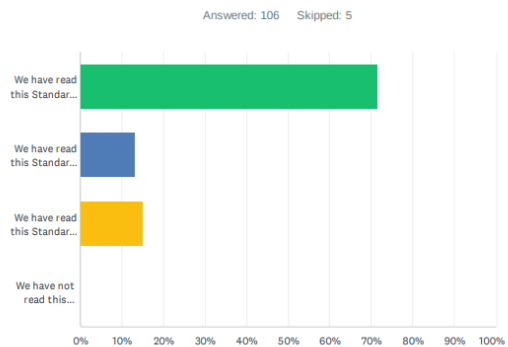
MCS Survey - The Installer Experience

Q12 Have you ever read MCS 001-1 - The MCS Contractor Standard?



MCS Survey - The Installer Experience

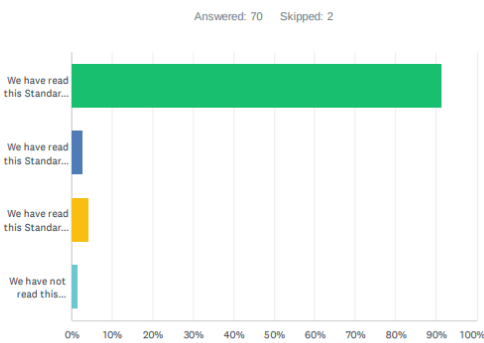
Q12 Have you ever read MCS 001-1 - The MCS Contractor Standard?



Slightly more heat installers admitted to only understanding some of MCS 001-1 or only reading part of it.

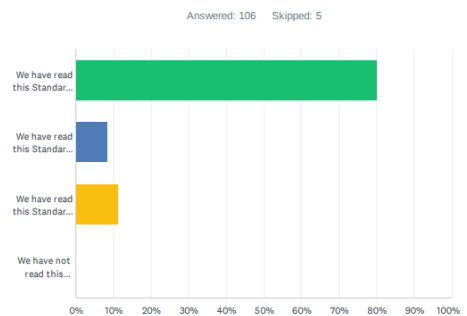
MCS Survey - The Installer Experience

Q13 Have you ever read the relevant MCS installation standards for the technology or technologies you install?



MCS Survey - The Installer Experience

Q13 Have you ever read the relevant MCS installation standards for the technology or technologies you install?



Likewise, slightly more heat installers admitted to only understanding some of or reading some of the relevant MCS standards for the technologies they install.

MCS Survey - The Installer Experience

	I STRONGLY AGREE	I AGREE	I NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	I DISAGREE	I STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The MCS Standards provide enough flexibility for companies to be innovative	6.25% 4	35.94% 23	21.88% 14	26.56% 17	9.38% 6	64	2.97
The MCS Standards are too complex	15.63% 10	37.50% 24	18.75% 12	25.00% 16	3.13% 2	64	2.63
The MCS Standards are clear and easy to understand and follow	4.69% 3	29.69% 19	32.81% 21	25.00% 16	7.81% 5	64	3.02
There is too much room for interpretation of the MCS Standards	7.81% 5	15.63% 10	39.06% 25	34.38% 22	3.13% 2	64	3.09
There is a need for a higher level of training to be an MCS certified installer	12.50% 8	37.50% 24	31.25% 20	14.06% 9	4.69% 3	64	2.61
We don't have the resources to complete all the paperwork required for each installation	15.63% 10	34.38% 22	14.06% 9	25.00% 16	10.94% 7	64	2.81
The organisations that regulate this sector effectively regulate and enforce the standards as and when they are required to	4.69% 3	29.69% 19	26.56% 17	20.31% 13	18.75% 12	64	3.19
When there are changes to the MCS Standards these are communicated effectively and we know exactly what we need to do to comply	3.13% 2	46.88% 30	18.75% 12	18.75% 12	12.50% 8	64	2.91

	I STRONGLY AGREE	I AGREE	I NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	I DISAGREE	I STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The MCS Standards provide enough flexibility for companies to be innovative	8.25% 8	29.90% 29	30.93% 30	20.62% 20	10.31% 10	97	2.95
The MCS Standards are too complex	16.49% 16	44.33% 43	22.68% 22	15.46% 15	1.03% 1	97	2.40
The MCS Standards are clear and easy to understand and follow	5.15% 5	25.77% 25	34.02% 33	29.90% 29	5.15% 5	97	3.04
There is too much room for interpretation of the MCS Standards	4.12% 4	24.74% 24	40.21% 39	29.90% 29	1.03% 1	97	2.99
There is a need for a higher level of training to be an MCS certified installer	20.62% 20	41.24% 40	21.65% 21	13.40% 13	3.09% 3	97	2.37
We don't have the resources to complete all the paperwork required for each installation	10.31% 10	40.21% 39	17.53% 17	22.68% 22	9.28% 9	97	2.80
The organisations that regulate this sector effectively regulate and enforce the standards as and when they are required to	5.15% 5	39.18% 38	27.84% 27	18.56% 18	9.28% 9	97	2.88
When there are changes to the MCS Standards these are communicated effectively and we know exactly what we need to do to comply	4.12% 4	42.27% 41	18.56% 18	24.74% 24	10.31% 10	97	2.95

Slightly more heat installers consider the MCS standards to be too complex and that there is too much room for interpretation. Heat installers feel there needs to be a higher level of training to be MCS certified, but also feel the industry is slightly more effectively regulated.

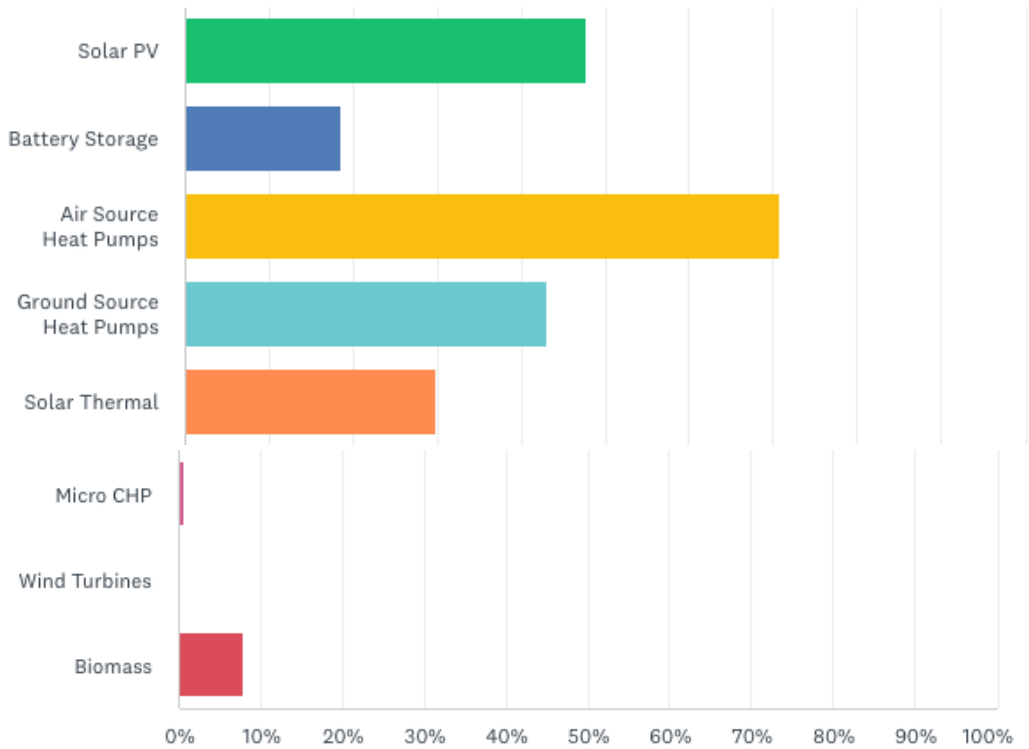
	YES, ALWAYS	YES, SOMETIMES	NO, NEVER	I WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS REQUIREMENT	N/A	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL
Insure all deposits and advanced payments you take	54.55% 36	13.64% 9	4.55% 3	0.00% 0	27.27% 18	0.00% 0	66
Insure all workmanship warranties	88.06% 59	4.48% 3	1.49% 1	1.49% 1	4.48% 3	0.00% 0	67
Notify the DNO of all installations (N/A for solar thermal or biomass)	80.88% 55	8.82% 6	0.00% 0	1.47% 1	8.82% 6	0.00% 0	68
Notify Building Control of all installations (England and Wales only)	86.76% 59	1.47% 1	1.47% 1	0.00% 0	10.29% 7	0.00% 0	68

	YES, ALWAYS	YES, SOMETIMES	NO, NEVER	I WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS REQUIREMENT	N/A	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL
Insure all deposits and advanced payments you take	55.10% 54	12.24% 12	7.14% 7	1.02% 1	24.49% 24	0.00% 0	98
Insure all workmanship warranties	92.86% 91	6.12% 6	1.02% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	98
Notify the DNO of all installations (N/A for solar thermal or biomass)	66.33% 65	20.41% 20	3.06% 3	1.02% 1	9.18% 9	0.00% 0	98
Notify Building Control of all installations (England and Wales only)	77.78% 77	10.10% 10	3.03% 3	1.01% 1	8.06% 8	0.00% 0	99

Compliance among heat installers is marginally lower when it comes to notifying the DNO and building control of an installation.

5. Research questions and responses

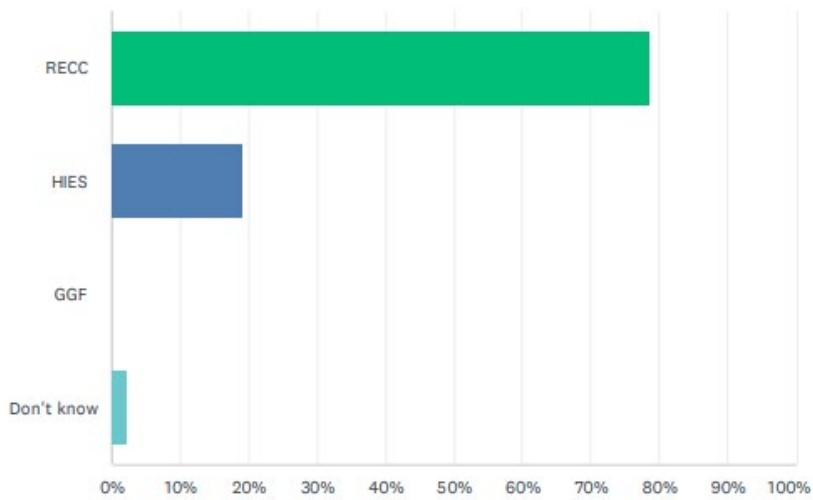
Q1 What technologies does your company install



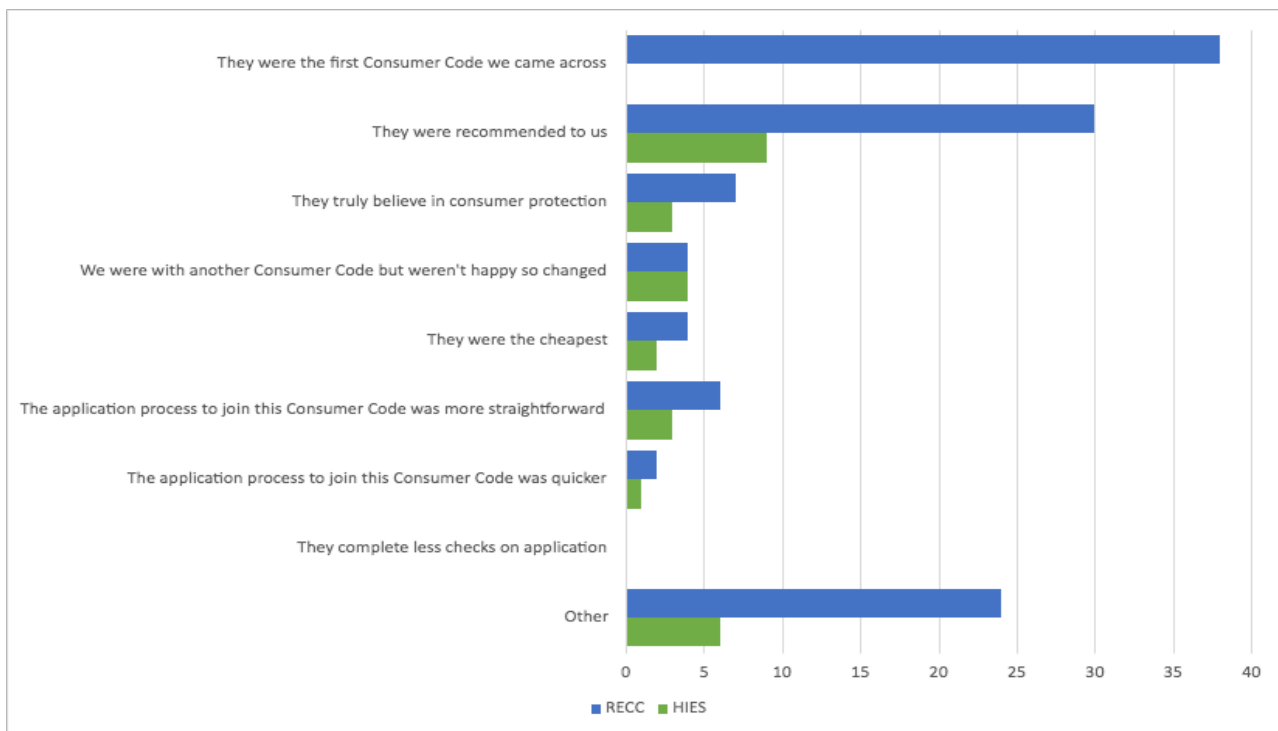
Objective 1. Learn what MCS certified installers think of MCS, the associated organisations and the current model, if it is working for installers or if there is a better alternative for installers.

Consumer Codes

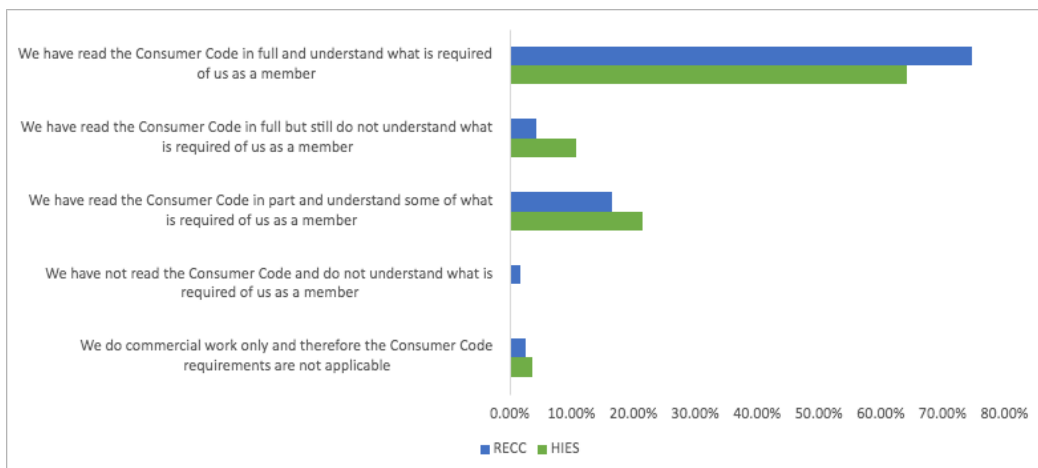
Q5 Which Consumer Code are you a member of?



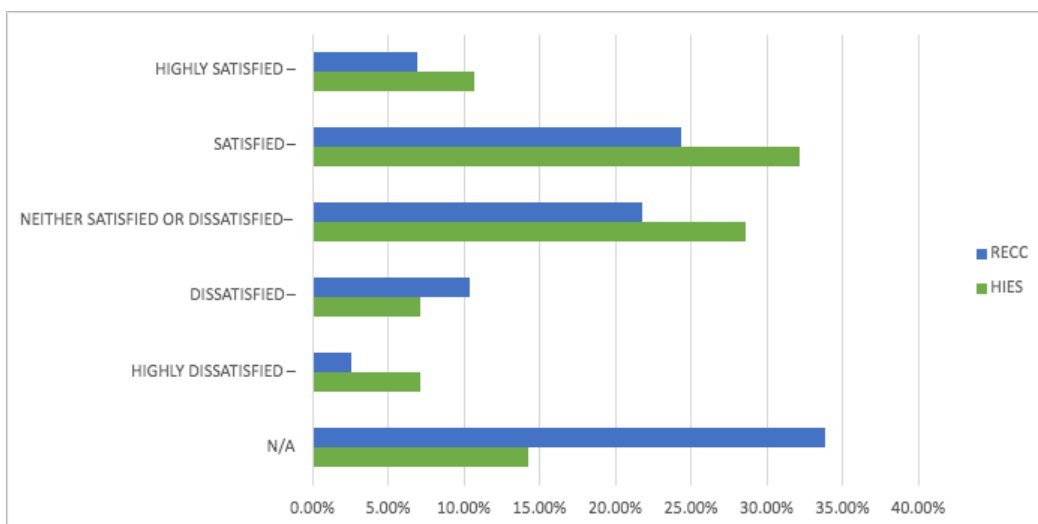
Q6 Please explain why you chose this Consumer Code



Q7 Have you ever read the Consumer Code and do you understand fully what is required of you to comply with it?



Q8 If you have ever interacted with your Consumer Code, how satisfied were you with the service you received?



RECC members only:

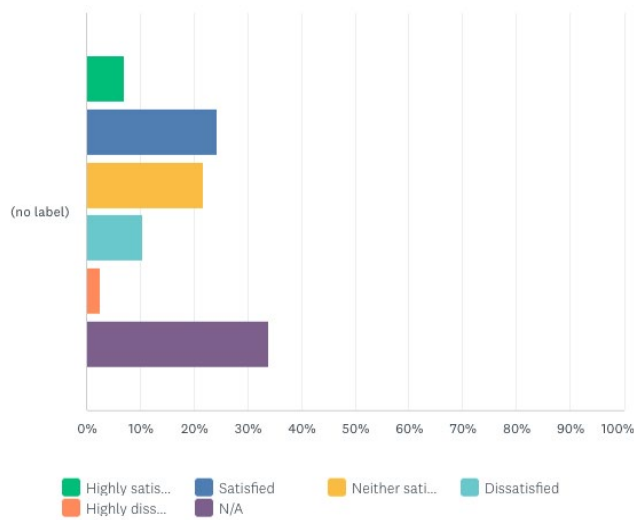
Q6 Please explain why you chose this Consumer Code

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES (%)	RESPONSES (Count)
They were the first Consumer Code we came across	33.04%	38
They were recommended to us	26.09%	30
They truly believe in consumer protection	6.09%	7
We were with another Consumer Code but weren't happy so changed	3.48%	4
They were the cheapest	3.48%	4
The application process to join this Consumer Code was more straightforward	5.22%	6
The application process to join this Consumer Code was quicker	1.74%	2
They complete less checks on application	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	20.87%	24
TOTAL		115

Q7 Have you ever read the Consumer Code and do you understand fully what is required of you to comply with it?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ We have read the Consumer Code in full and understand what is required of us as a member	74.78%	86
▼ We have read the Consumer Code in full but still do not understand what is required of us as a member	4.35%	5
▼ We have read the Consumer Code in part and understand some of what is required of us as a member	16.52%	19
▼ We have not read the Consumer Code and do not understand what is required of us as a member	1.74%	2
▼ We do commercial work only and therefore the Consumer Code requirements are not applicable	2.61%	3

Q8 If you have ever interacted with your Consumer Code, how satisfied were you with the service you received?



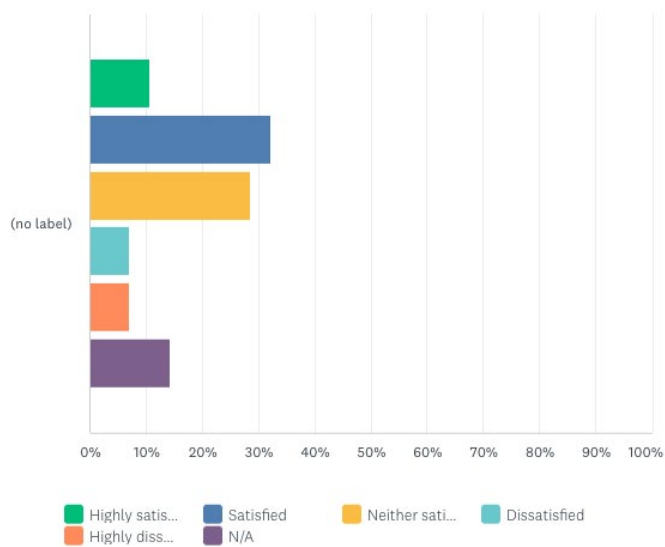
HIES members only: Q6 Please explain why you chose this Consumer Code

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
They were the first Consumer Code we came across	0.00%	0
They were recommended to us	32.14%	9
They truly believe in consumer protection	10.71%	3
We were with another Consumer Code but weren't happy so changed	14.29%	4
They were the cheapest	7.14%	2
The application process to join this Consumer Code was more straightforward	10.71%	3
The application process to join this Consumer Code was quicker	3.57%	1
They complete less checks on application	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	Responses 21.43%	6
TOTAL		28

Q7 Have you ever read the Consumer Code and do you understand fully what is required of you to comply with it?

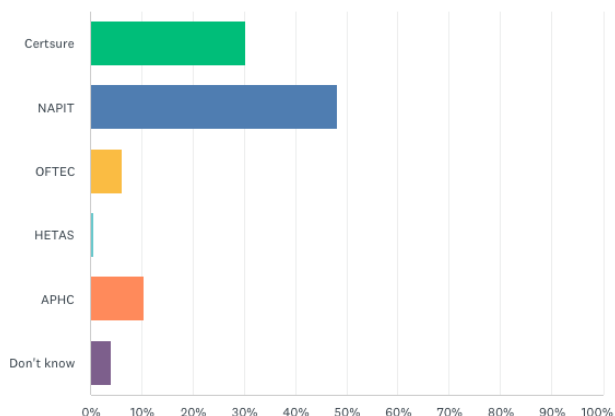
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
We have read the Consumer Code in full and understand what is required of us as a member	64.29%	18
We have read the Consumer Code in full but still do not understand what is required of us as a member	10.71%	3
We have read the Consumer Code in part and understand some of what is required of us as a member	21.43%	6
We have not read the Consumer Code and do not understand what is required of us as a member	0.00%	0
We do commercial work only and therefore the Consumer Code requirements are not applicable	3.57%	1
TOTAL		28

Q8 If you have ever interacted with your Consumer Code, how satisfied were you with the service you received?

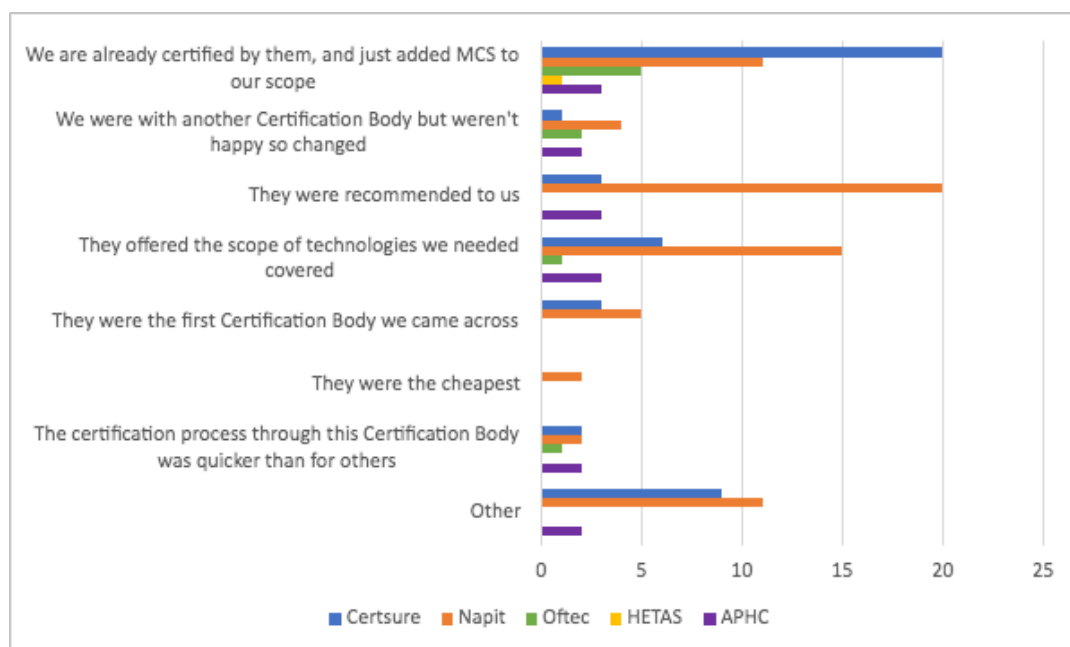


Certification Bodies

Q10. Which Certification Body are you certified by?



Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?



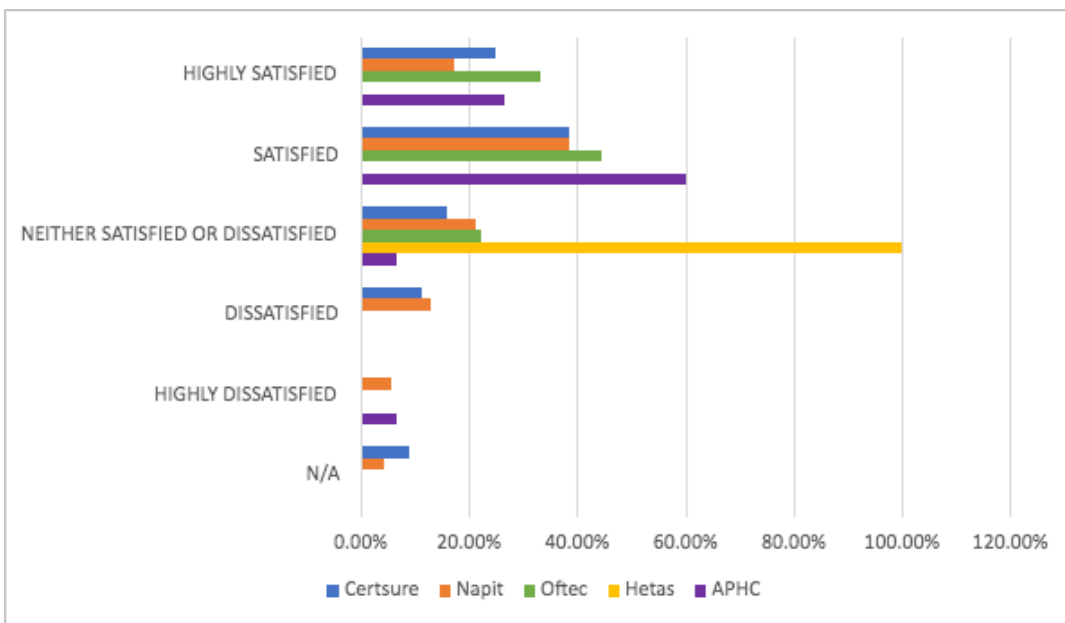
Q12 Have you ever read MCS 001-1 - The MCS Contractor Standard?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ We have read this Standard in full and understand what is required of us	75.17% 109
▼ We have read this Standard in full but still do not understand what is required of us	10.34% 15
▼ We have read this Standard in part and understand some of what is required of us	13.79% 20
▼ We have not read this Standard and do not understand what is required of us	0.69% 1
TOTAL	145

Q13 Have you ever read the relevant MCS installation standards for the technology or technologies you install?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ We have read this Standard in full and understand what is required of us	82.76%	120
▼ We have read this Standard in full but still do not understand what is required of us	6.90%	10
▼ We have read this Standard in part and understand some of what is required of us	9.66%	14
▼ We have not read this Standard and do not understand what is required of us	0.69%	1
TOTAL		145

Q14 If you have ever interacted with your Certification Body, how satisfied were you with the service you received?



Certsure only: Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ We are already certified by them, and just added MCS to our scope	45.45%	20
▼ We were with another Certification Body but weren't happy so changed	2.27%	1
▼ They were recommended to us	6.82%	3
▼ They offered the scope of technologies we needed covered	13.64%	6
▼ They were the first Certification Body we came across	6.82%	3
▼ They were the cheapest	0.00%	0
▼ The certification process through this Certification Body was quicker than for others	4.55%	2
▼ Other (please specify) Responses	20.45%	9
TOTAL		44

NAPIT only: Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ We are already certified by them, and just added MCS to our scope	15.71%	11
▼ We were with another Certification Body but weren't happy so changed	5.71%	4
▼ They were recommended to us	28.57%	20
▼ They offered the scope of technologies we needed covered	21.43%	15
▼ They were the first Certification Body we came across	7.14%	5
▼ They were the cheapest	2.86%	2
▼ The certification process through this Certification Body was quicker than for others	2.86%	2
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 15.71%	11
TOTAL		70

HETAS only: Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ We are already certified by them, and just added MCS to our scope	100.00%	1
▼ We were with another Certification Body but weren't happy so changed	0.00%	0
▼ They were recommended to us	0.00%	0
▼ They offered the scope of technologies we needed covered	0.00%	0
▼ They were the first Certification Body we came across	0.00%	0
▼ They were the cheapest	0.00%	0
▼ The certification process through this Certification Body was quicker than for others	0.00%	0
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 0.00%	0
TOTAL		1

OFTEC: Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ We are already certified by them, and just added MCS to our scope	55.56%	5
▼ We were with another Certification Body but weren't happy so changed	22.22%	2
▼ They were recommended to us	0.00%	0
▼ They offered the scope of technologies we needed covered	11.11%	1
▼ They were the first Certification Body we came across	0.00%	0
▼ They were the cheapest	0.00%	0
▼ The certification process through this Certification Body was quicker than for others	11.11%	1
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 0.00%	0
TOTAL		9

APHC only: Q11 Please explain why you chose this Certification Body?

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
▼ We are already certified by them, and just added MCS to our scope		20.00% 3
▼ We were with another Certification Body but weren't happy so changed		13.33% 2
▼ They were recommended to us		20.00% 3
▼ They offered the scope of technologies we needed covered		20.00% 3
▼ They were the first Certification Body we came across		0.00% 0
▼ They were the cheapest		0.00% 0
▼ The certification process through this Certification Body was quicker than for others		13.33% 2
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	13.33% 2
TOTAL		15

Objective 2. Understand the level of compliance amongst installers, which areas installers might be falling down in and why

These questions are mainly in regard to the administrative requirements of the standards and what the installer must physically provide a consumer. These are areas that have been identified as particular areas of concern by stakeholders and research previously conducted by MCS. It is also important for MCS to understand how well installers comprehend the requirements of the Codes and meet these.

Q16 As an MCS certified installer, do you complete the following requirements for every install you complete?

	YES, ALWAYS	YES, SOMETIMES	NO, NEVER	I WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS REQUIREMENT	N/A	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL
Insure all deposits and advanced payments you take	52.94% 72	12.50% 17	5.88% 8	0.74% 1	27.94% 38	0.00% 0	136
Insure all workmanship warranties	90.44% 123	5.88% 8	0.74% 1	0.74% 1	2.21% 3	0.00% 0	136
Notify the DNO of all installations (N/A for solar thermal or biomass)	69.12% 94	16.18% 22	2.21% 3	1.47% 2	11.03% 15	0.00% 0	136
Notify Building Control of all installations (England and Wales only)	79.56% 109	7.30% 10	2.19% 3	0.73% 1	10.22% 14	0.00% 0	137

Q17 Before installation, which of these do you provide a consumer with? (choose all that apply)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
A written, formal quotation	94.12% 128
A bespoke system design	71.32% 97
A contract	86.03% 117
Information on your Consumer Code and Certification Body	77.94% 106
A hard copy of a performance estimate (using an MCS template)	57.35% 78
A hard copy of your own performance estimate	44.85% 61
Information on what to do should something go wrong with the system	53.68% 73
N/A, I don't do domestic work	2.21% 3
Total Respondents: 136	

Q18 After installation, which of these do you provide a consumer with? (choose all that apply)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Commissioning records and test certificates	94.89%	130
▼ Written instructions on how to use the system	86.86%	119
▼ All manufacturers' warranties	92.70%	127
▼ A workmanship warranty	92.70%	127
▼ Any maintenance or service agreements, if applicable	72.26%	99
▼ MCS certificate	94.16%	129
▼ N/A, I don't do domestic work	2.19%	3
Total Respondents: 137		

Objective 3. Identify any areas that installers would benefit from more support in, and how this might be achieved

Q21 What services should MCS offer to better support installers? (choose all that apply). Note, some of these services are already offered by MCS.

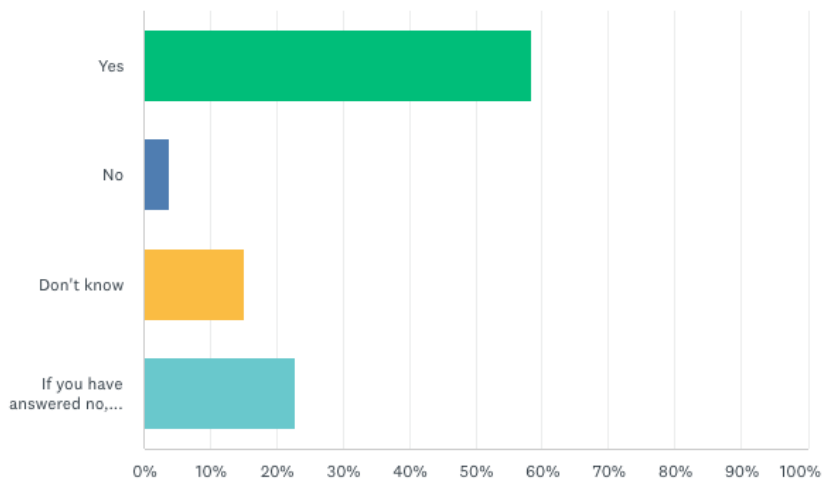
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Written guidance on how to comply with standards	35.61%	47
▼ Webinars for installers on complying with standards and updates	43.94%	58
▼ Workshops	29.55%	39
▼ One-on-one support	37.88%	50
▼ Online tools and apps to help with designing systems and complying with standards	51.52%	68
▼ More automated processes through the MID	34.85%	46
▼ MCS Forum	23.48%	31
▼ Live chat	24.24%	32
▼ MCS to offer a technical helpdesk	59.09%	78
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 17.42%	23
Total Respondents: 132		

Objective 1. Learn what MCS certified installers think of MCS, the associated organisations and the current model, if it is working for installers or if there is a better alternative for installers.

Q19 Do you agree with each of the following statements?

	I STRONGLY AGREE	I AGREE	I NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	I DISAGREE	I STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
▼ The MCS Standards provide enough flexibility for companies to be innovative	8.33% 11	31.82% 42	29.55% 39	21.21% 28	9.09% 12	132	2.91
▼ The MCS Standards are too complex	15.91% 21	43.18% 57	21.21% 28	17.42% 23	2.27% 3	132	2.47
▼ The MCS Standards are clear and easy to understand and follow	6.82% 9	25.76% 34	34.09% 45	27.27% 36	6.06% 8	132	3.00
▼ There is too much room for interpretation of the MCS Standards	5.30% 7	21.21% 28	40.15% 53	31.06% 41	2.27% 3	132	3.04
▼ There is a need for a higher level of training to be an MCS certified installer	19.70% 26	36.36% 48	25.76% 34	13.64% 18	4.55% 6	132	2.47
▼ We don't have the resources to complete all the paperwork required for each installation	14.39% 19	34.85% 46	17.42% 23	24.24% 32	9.09% 12	132	2.79
▼ The organisations that regulate this sector effectively regulate and enforce the standards as and when they are required to	6.06% 8	35.61% 47	27.27% 36	18.94% 25	12.12% 16	132	2.95
▼ When there are changes to the MCS Standards these are communicated effectively and we know exactly what we need to do to comply	4.55% 6	42.42% 56	19.70% 26	21.97% 29	11.36% 15	132	2.93

Q20 The MCS model means that the Consumer Codes deal with the contractual relationship between installer and consumer, whereas Certification Bodies deal with the technical requirements. Installers are expected to comply with both aspects. Does this model described above work well for the industry?



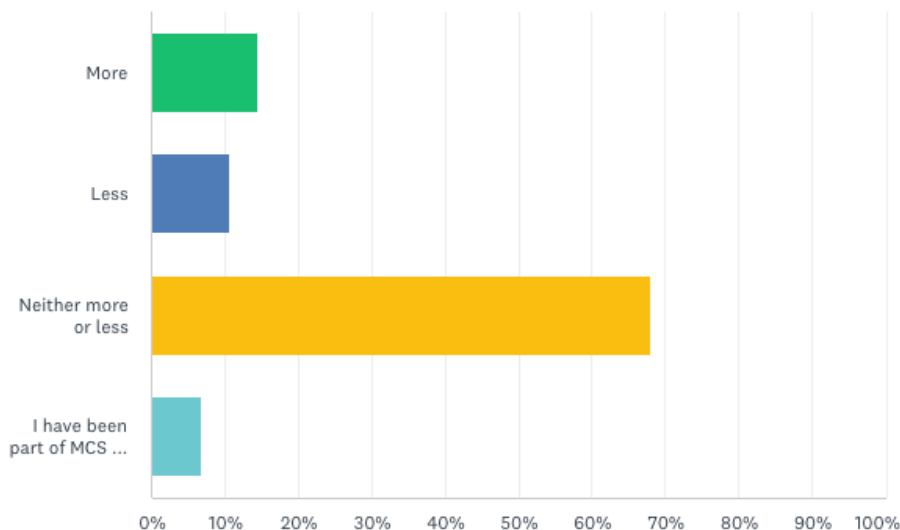
Q23 Please rate each of the following statements?

	I STRONGLY AGREE	I AGREE	I NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	I DISAGREE	I STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
We only joined MCS to be able to claim the financial incentives offered by government	19.08% 25	22.14% 29	18.32% 24	22.90% 30	17.56% 23	131
We believe there is a need for technical standards in the sector	52.67% 69	40.46% 53	3.82% 5	0.00% 0	3.05% 4	131
We believe there is a need for consumer protection in the sector	42.75% 56	38.93% 51	11.45% 15	6.11% 8	0.76% 1	131

▼ We believe by being MCS certified this shows that we are committed to high standards of work	48.85% 64	29.77% 39	7.63% 10	8.40% 11	5.34% 7	131
▼ By being MCS certified it has won us more business	36.64% 48	29.01% 38	17.56% 23	12.21% 16	4.58% 6	131
▼ Consumers recognise and look for the MCS logo when searching for an installer	12.98% 17	30.53% 40	27.48% 36	16.03% 21	12.98% 17	131
▼ The service provided by Certification Bodies offers value for money	5.34% 7	26.72% 35	29.77% 39	24.43% 32	13.74% 18	131
▼ Consumer Code membership offers value for money	5.34% 7	21.37% 28	31.30% 41	22.90% 30	19.08% 25	131
▼ TrustMark offers value for money	1.53% 2	8.40% 11	36.64% 48	27.48% 36	25.95% 34	131
▼ The fee to register an MCS certificate offers value for money	5.34% 7	24.43% 32	35.11% 46	19.85% 26	15.27% 20	131
▼ MCS takes an active role in driving consistency and high standards	6.87% 9	45.80% 60	25.19% 33	14.50% 19	7.63% 10	131

Objective 4. Learn what other barriers need to be removed to increase MCS's certified installer base and increase both installer and consumer satisfaction with the sector

Q25. Are you more or less satisfied with MCS than you were a year ago?



Q26 Is there any other feedback about MCS or the associated standards or organisations you would like to provide?

About 60 respondents wrote something for this question, which is 40% of the total number of respondents. Some of these comments have been grouped below to help sort comments and identify correlations.

10 comments were regarding the current model, covered in question 20:

- *'Here's a thought why not provide a full end to end scheme that is 1 accreditation fee and 1 lodgement fee that encompasses everything.'*
- *'Streamline it for goodness sake with one registration satisfying every interested party.'*
- *'I think MCS should focus on inspecting the quality of the installations and allowing businesses to push to be better for their customers. I'm concerned that the certification bodies (NICEIC) are more concerned with selling their own new courses rather than quality installations. If MCS started a certification body, I'd switch immediately.'*
- *'MCS should design the standards, enforce the standards and protect the consumer. Having 3 arms to this doesn't help anyone.'*
- *'The system has too many bodies involved which elevate both costs for the consumer and business.'*
- *'It would be great if somehow the Consumer Code and Certification bodies were linked so that there was only one audit.'*
- *'Step aside their should be alternatives to MCS.'*
- *'Throw what you've away & rebuild'*
- *'MCS when queried will refer to accreditation bodies who then refer us back to MCS.'*
- *'There should be an alternative to MCS it isn't appropriate in all circumstances and the MCS Body's approach is often heavy handed.'*

On industry growth:

- *'In my 11 years as an MCS installer I have hired both permanent and casual staff. None want to work to these standards. Looking around I see other 'MCS' approved ' companies working to less than the minimum standards and getting away with it year on year. I also see gas engineers inspected once every 5 years; against our annual inspection regime. They put a bomb on the wall 2 to 3 times a week. We install an electric heater and have all these rules. The nett effect is increased costs for the customer to enable us to comply. I see a few new MCS companies appear locally, some last, most don't. After they realise how unforgiving the rules are they revert to gas where its simpler and higher turnover. I am very disillusioned with the process, the constant addition to the already onerous rules. Time to join the throng, leave the MCS for a manageable business opportunity.'*
- *'I just wonder how we are going to achieve enough installers to complete our drive for net Zero. Most installers I know think I am mad paying for all MCS, RECC, APHC, and Trustmark to enable a consumer to gain access to grants. They have stated that they would not be interested while all the bureaucracy and red tape surrounding renewables installation is in place. I have to say that being Gas Safe registered company its easier for me to install and register systems than it ever is with this overblown juggernaut called MCS and all the associated bodies. My risk is far higher installing a gas appliance than it is with renewables yet I have none of the Mountains of hours spent online registering a system four times in effect when being a member of MCS Oh and this doesn't even include my QMS which takes up even more time . Utterly ridiculous.'*
- *'The complexity and unnecessary paperwork and requirement is restricting the adoption of alternative technologies.'*
- *'Too expensive, too complicated and counterproductive to the idea of the renewables industry.'*
- *'I have been an engineer for over 40 years and I have never seen as many qualified good engineers leaving this industry due to all the organisations wanting money from them for doing nothing . I tell my regular customers to be careful who they contract for work from these organisations as they let anybody join as long as they are getting money from them . This is why there is not enough engineers and there never will be.'*

On the state of installers and installations:

- *'Over many years we have had to do a lot of trouble shooting for badly installed Solar and Biomass systems by MCS accredited installers that very soon went out of business. It has been like the Wild West at times. This has proved incredibly costly for consumers. We have at least 4 biomass boilers customers who are looking at removing appliances installed by other installers now their RHI has come to an end. We are receiving calls from unhappy Heat Pump customers. Sadly a lot of customers were unaware of any warranty/protection offered so missed the opportunity to have issues rectified under terms of any warranty.'*
- *'It provides little consumer protection against cowboy here-today gone-tomorrow companies. Many of these companies re-emerge, same people, same shoddy work, different name.'*
- *'We get called out to deal with some pretty shocking workmanship from some installers who are no longer trading. Some of these have "phoenixed" but are no longer looking after their former customers and basically left a train of destruction with shoddy installation techniques. MCS should ban directors who have a long list of failed companies in the sector on their record.'*
- *'We have worked with several MCs approved companies before we became MCs approved and cannot believe how bad they were, (apart from their paperwork) they're installation works were rubbish and dangerous, and did not comply with 18th edition regs, water regulations or G3.'*
- *'You need to spot check installers on site with knowledgeable and experienced inspectors (experienced in the practical side of the job) so that you can weed out the bad installers and then you must remove some from the scheme and you must advertise this so that it is clear that you have some teeth. There may not be so many bad installers now as there once were but I still see a lot of very shoddy installations where installers have not complied with even the simplest things.'*
- *'The customer will always take the cheaper quote, which, as evidence has shown to us, sometimes results in them being left high and dry with a system that has not been designed, installed, or set-up properly, and sometimes all three. Sometimes we can help, but sometimes we can't, unfortunately. Lack of legitimate MCS registration led to one installer's customer having no recourse because the installer had used an umbrella scheme, then fell out with the umbrella company who then would not certify the system.'*

- *'We are carrying out service and repair works and the quality of work we have seen is most times horrendous.'*
- *'To effectively deal with customers complaints, you need to police the industry and to stop sitting on the fence, DO SOMETHING POSITIVE.'*
- *'I would like to see a better crackdown on the cold call companies who are telling our customers that we have gone out of business (and then fleecing the ones who fall for it). I would also like to see a better crackdown on companies who go out of business (often leaving dreadful systems behind them), only to reappear with the same director under another MCS company name. We spend a lot of our time rectifying other companies' substandard work.'*

On the standards:

- *'There are too many holes in heat pump standards especially around DHW and legionella protection.'*
- *'Standards uploaded in a poor format, unable to search documents or copy extracts, makes finding specific information in standards difficult.'*
- *'I think the new calculations for domestic power consumption fail to give an accurate use, most of our clients are interested in saving the planet as well as their energy bills, your assumptions take no account of how most clients with solar change their use of power consumption.'*
- *'All need to be doing more to support the more specialist renewable heat options - such as Open-Loop GSHP systems. The standards are well designed and thought out, but fail to encompass the intricacies of a specialist installation. We understand that these system types are not the most prevalent, but they are an option for homeowners and so should be appropriately considered and included in the standards.'*
- *'Sticking to just the mandatory shading procedure can really damage an installations output.'*
- *'look up tables for GSHP horizontal pipes does not refer to 40mm pipe, my impression is that this is most commonly used pipe, no confidence in absorption rate data.'*
- *'There are too many holes in heat pump standards especially around DHW and legionella protection.'*

On paperwork and simplification of the standards and admin:

- *'The amount of documentation, certification, assessment etc is overwhelming for small operators. The MCS guides are not particularly user friendly and the certification body not particularly helpful in assisting with the understanding of the requirements.'*
- *'We find that the vast majority of our customers are just not interested in all the paperwork we produce in line with the MCS scheme which is disappointing due to the Hugh effort that goes into that part of any job.'*
- *'Make them simpler, less time consuming, less encompassing, less paperwork, less expensive and make the process of quoting against other fuels a level playing field.'*
- *'We need to keep things simple, efficient and reduce costs - and standards high.'*

Other helpful comments:

- *'The long winded emails sent mean I don't read them, they need to be short, specific and to the point not waffle as they currently are.'*
- *'I would like to think when we need support on the phone this will always happen and not go down the root of being a robot. Customer care and direct contact is always a must.'*
- *'Things are getting better but there's still a massive lack of support for installers.'*
- *'The guidance is extremely unclear and asking simple questions takes many days for a reply.'*
- *'More recognition/awareness required by the general public.'*
- *'The MCS scheme from the outset has always been overly bureaucratic tick boxing scheme trying to catch out installers rather than starting from the other end and supporting installers with help and advice and then looking at OUTCOMES (installations) not PROCEDURES (checkboxes). But thanks for this questionnaire which from memory is the first time I've been asked for my input in 11 years! So hopefully this is the start of something new and better.'*
- *'Would just like a tick sheet that gives information on the clear requirements of the scheme. I.e. have you completed an EPS? Have you asked for planning permission? Etc.'*
- *'There is no real enforcement for the bigger companies that sub out all the work. As someone trying to do the right thing and produce quality work it just feels like barriers to entry to ensure the sales guys get their cut.'*
- *'Should be a lot more time invested monitoring those new to MCS rather than companies like ourselves who have been in the industry for many years and have proven track record.'*

New ideas:

- *'How about your team notifying the DNO's about installations, you know where they are because you have all of the certificates.'*
- *'Appreciation of size - tiny companies like mine... a family business based at home and care about our work. we thoroughly know our customers, who are our neighbours, friends, families and colleagues - this is a completely different relationship to a corporate internet based installer company using subcontractors who are there to make money and disappear.'*
- *'The cost is too high. Before the government green deal we were going to stop doing ASHP installs because we only did 1-2 a year and it wasn't worth all the admin time and costs. Consider the costs are for RECC and MCS because you need RECC to have MCS. A more fair way would be to set fee's around the amount of installs we do. We may have 20 staff members but only 3 take part in installing ASHP. Additionally the parts that give installers the headache are contacting the DNO - change this to make the customers responsible.'*

And there were also some positive comments:

- *'Simplifying the QMS requirements has been a huge help.'*
- *'I feel you are approachable and have been very helpful'*
- *'Any dealings had with the MCS have found them very helpful, professional and clear with the information.'*
- *'I have been given excellent advice & help from MCS ~ particularly from David Banner. Additionally, our certification body OFTEC have been very supportive in helping us reach our compliance goals'*