HIES Consumer Code

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INDUSTRY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HOME RENEWABLES

# ANNUAL REPORT

1ST JANUARY 2025 - 31ST DECEMBER 2025

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*"As the Brand Ambassador for HIES, I truly believe it offers the 'real deal' in providing robust consumer protection and, even better, they provide strong support for the installer. I know that HIES is serious about raising standards and ensuring that everybody is treated fairly."*

George Clarke
Brand Ambassador

# STATEMENT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

"HIES is a Chartered Trading Standards Institute Consumer Code operating within the renewable energy sector. Our vision is to transform consumer protection in a rapidly evolving industry. As new technologies emerge each year, we continually adapt and strengthen our consumer protection mechanisms to ensure they remain effective.

Our mission is based on three fundamental principles:

- Protecting consumers;
- Supporting our installer members; and
- Raising industry standards.

## As of 31/12/25, HIES:

- Protected over 539,714 customers;
- Has helped cover over £5.2 billion worth of contract value;
- Received over 55,000 customer surveys on installer performance; and
- Professionally and quickly handled over 6,000 disputes between consumers and members.

## Relationship Building

We actively engage with key stakeholders across the sector, including civil servants, trade bodies, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ofgem, TrustMark, MCS, Flexi-Orb, the Competition and Markets Authority, and UKAS certification bodies. Through these collaborations, we help shape and strengthen consumer protection frameworks within the renewable energy industry.

## This Report

I hope this report provides a clear insight into the breadth and depth of HIES' unique protection and comprehensive approach to consumer protection. Our work is wide-ranging and forward-looking, reflecting the needs of a fast-moving sector."

Faisal Hussain, Chief Executive

# THE RENEWABLE SECTOR - 2025 REVIEW

### Where is the industry?

In 2025, the renewable energy industry has continued to evolve at pace, shaped by the UK's ongoing commitment to net zero and the increasing demand for low-carbon technologies. Government initiatives such as ECO4, the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, and the Great British Insulation Scheme have remained key drivers, alongside continued policy development and funding adjustments aimed at accelerating the decarbonisation of homes.

HIES has seen an increase in registrations for solar PV, air source heat pumps, battery storage and biomass but a decrease in registrations for boilers. The figures below provide you with a snapshot of our experience in the last 12 months:

**20%** increase in Solar PV registrations

**7%** increase in Air Source Heat Pump registrations

**15%** decrease in Boiler registrations

**81%** increase in Battery Storage registrations

**50%** increase in Biomass registrations

# OVERVIEW OF HIES – SINCE OUR INCEPTION

Over 1,700 members recruited

Over 539,000 consumers protected

Over 55,000 returned customer satisfaction surveys

Over £456 million worth of deposits protected via the insurer

Over £5 billion worth of contract value protected via the insurer

Over 6,000 consumer disputes handled

# OUR ETHOS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

**HIES' main mission is to protect consumers. The HIES Code of Practice requires that consumers are dealt with professionally, courteously and sympathetically. Any products installed by HIES members must be installed professionally and come with comprehensive guarantees, underwritten by specialist insurance providing consumers with a high level of protection and peace of mind.**

## Benefits to consumers using a HIES member

- **Vetted and Accredited Installers.** All members have successfully passed our accreditation process for the product (or products) they want to be accredited for.
- **Deposit & Stage Payment Protection Insurance (DPI).** DPI helps protect the money you pay upfront to your installer, covering up to 25% of the contract value with a maximum limit of £5,000. If your installer stops trading before your installation is completed, this cover ensures you're not left out of pocket. DPI helps make sure your installation can still be completed by another installer. If that can't be arranged, you may be eligible for a refund (subject to the policy terms).
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution.** Our expert mediators are always on hand to help resolve any disputes you may have with one of our members.
- **Consumer Advice Line.** We are on hand to answer any questions you may have once you have entered into a contract with a scheme member.
- **Insurance Backed Guarantee (IBG).** An IBG protects you if something goes wrong after your installation is complete and your installer is no longer trading. It ensures your guarantee is still honoured, giving you long-term peace of mind. IBGs provide cover up to the contract value (limits apply) and range from 2 to 10 years depending on the installation.
- **Access to an Ombudsman.** As a consumer, you will have free access to an ombudsman service or an equivalent form of alternative dispute resolution if we can't settle your complaint.

**To receive the protection from our scheme:**

- your installer must be a member of the scheme when you enter into a contract with them to carry out the work;
- you must enter into a contract direct with the member and pay the member direct;
- the installation must be on a domestic property;
- the installation must be in England, Scotland, Wales or the Isle of Wight; and
- for policies to be procured and issued, our member must register your installation and its subsequent completion with HIES.

If the above conditions are not met, we may not be able to protect you.

HIES is not the insurer, policies are procured by HIES through an FCA regulated insurance broker on behalf of the installer and issued directly to the homeowner.

# ACCREDITATION

Our multi-step accreditation assessment ensures that only businesses who adhere to our standards are accredited. The following is an overview of our process:

- **Application review:** We assess an application by conducting initial credit and background checks. This includes the applicant's credit rating, payment history analysis, any outstanding county court judgements and the history of the directors/proprietors.
- **Documentation check:** Applicants must also provide documentation related to their business. This includes financial packs (management accounts and bank statements), customer facing documents, business processes and insurances.
- **Reputational analysis:** We go beyond paperwork by looking into the online reputation of the business. This includes evaluating online customer ratings (using sites such as Trustpilot and Google), negative reports with regards to the business phone number, any negative history with Advertising Standards Authority and reviewing business websites.
- **Additional requests and management review:** We may, on occasion, and following the above investigation request further information from applicants to allow a deeper understanding of their business. In some instances, applications may be required to have a higher level of sign-off by the management team. This is to ensure the right outcome for all parties and safeguard consumers.
- **Final decision:** Based on our findings and communications with applicants throughout the process, businesses are either approved for membership or rejected in accreditation.

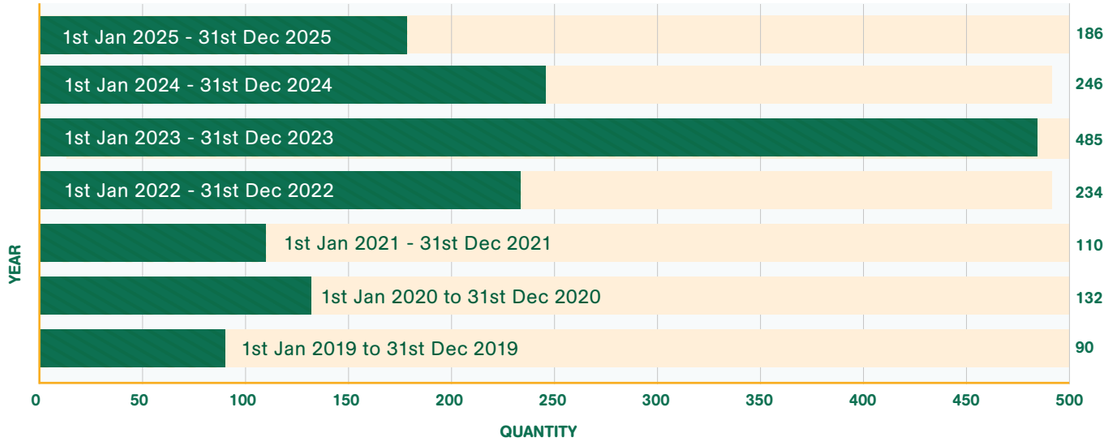
# MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

**Within the last 12 months we have received 537 enquiries from installers interested in HIES membership. We accepted 186 members who met the HIES accreditation criteria. At the start of the year we had 291 installers in the accreditation process from the previous year.**

**Main reasons why installers fail accreditation:**

- Adverse information identified from Credit Reference Agencies
- Ongoing/previous issues with another Code Sponsor
- No response to queries in relation to their application
- Non-submission of required documentation
- Directors' previous trading history
- Mis-selling statements on their website
- Financial stability

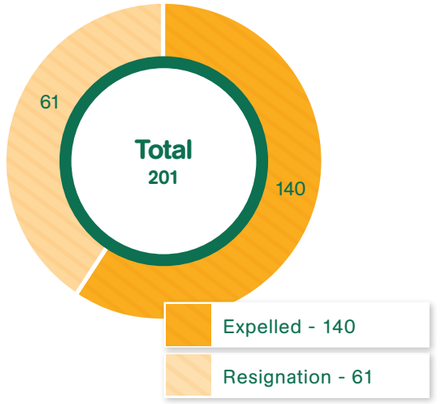
## NEW MEMBERS RECRUITED TO HIES



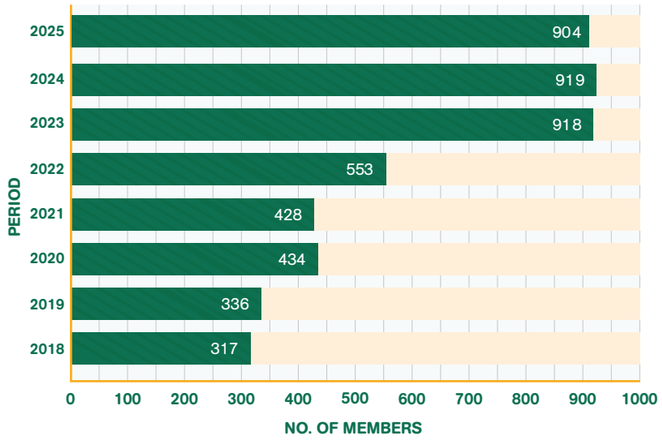

# MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

**Within the last 12 months there were 201 installers whose membership ceased with HIES. Our current membership stands at 904 (as of 31/12/25). This compares to 919 members at the same period last year (31/12/24).**

## WHY MEMBERSHIP CEASED




## TOTAL HIES MEMBERSHIP




**Main reasons for resignation of membership:**

- No longer operating in the sector
- Switched to another consumer code
- Annual health check process

**Main reasons for ceasing to trade:**

- No longer trading in the sector
- Insolvency
- Voluntary liquidation
- Retirement
- Moving into a new sector

**Main reasons for expulsion of membership:**

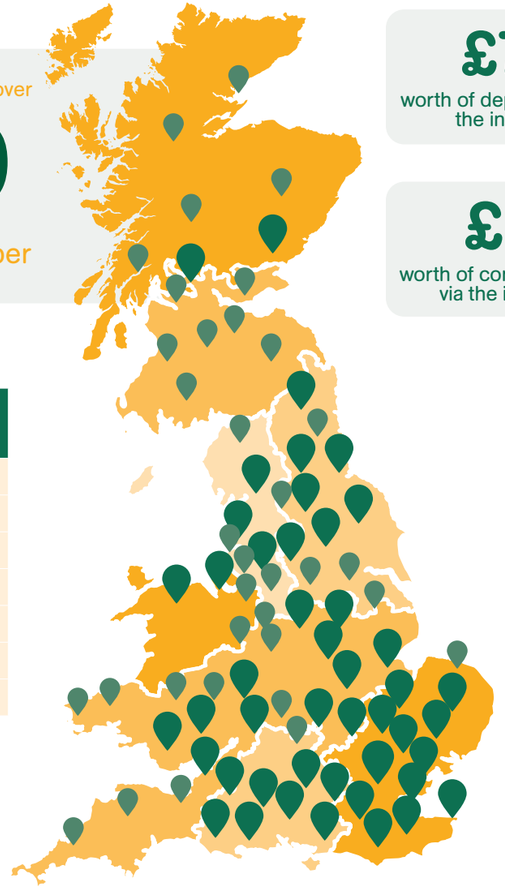
- Financial stability
- Failure to follow scheme rules
- Cease to trade risk

# CONSUMERS USING A HIES MEMBER

Within the last 12 months we have seen over

**104,000**

consumers use a HIES member



**£72m**

worth of deposits protected via the insurer in 2025

**£1bn**

worth of contract value insured via the insurer in 2025

| Type of Product Installed by HIES Members | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Solar PV | 56,779 | 68,148 |
| Boilers | 761 | 646 |
| Air Source Heat Pumps | 24,178 | 26,022 |
| Battery Storage | 2,534 | 4,605 |
| Biomass | 6 | 9 |
| Other | 6,729 | 9,689 |
| **Total** | **90,987** | **109,119** |

Please note: Multiple products may be registered in a single submission, which can result in some discrepancies in the product registration figures.



# DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a service designed to resolve disputes between consumers and traders without the need for court proceedings.**

- **Mediation** - We appoint professional, trained mediators to assist in resolving disputes at an early stage. Where necessary, mediators may commission an independent inspection to support the resolution process, typically at no cost to either the consumer or the member.

  If a dispute cannot be resolved through Stage 1 mediation, it will be escalated to Stage 2, where the process becomes more formal.

- **Ombudsman** - Consumers have free access to an Ombudsman service, with the associated costs covered by HIES. The Ombudsman provides an independent determination of the dispute, and their decision is binding on the member.

Our ADR process is designed to ensure transparency and the timely resolution of complaints, where the customer agrees to participate. HIES takes ownership of complaints within our remit and investigates them in accordance with the requirements of recognised oversight bodies, including MCS, TrustMark, and Flexi-Orb.

This approach helps protect consumers while maintaining confidence in the industry.

### The Dispute Resolution Ombudsman

HIES use The Dispute Resolution Ombudsman to investigate and settle any disputes between members of our schemes and their consumers that may not have been settled at an earlier stage. The Dispute Resolution Ombudsman are an independent, not-for-profit, government approved organisation set up to help resolve disputes and raise standards.

Their decisions are binding on members, but are not binding on consumers, so using the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman does not prevent a consumer from using the Courts.

DRO Dispute Resolution Ombudsman

**The table below is a breakdown of the Dispute Resolution statistics for 2025.**

1st stage

| 1st stage | |
|---|---|
| No. of new complaints received | 487 |
| No. of complaints from 2024 carried over | 3 |
| No. of complaints resolved by 1st stage ADR | 272 |
| % 1st stage ADR success rate | 56.08% |

2nd stage

| 2nd stage | |
|---|---|
| No. of complaints resolved by 2nd stage ADR | 162 |
| % 2nd stage ADR success rate | 33.40% |

| Ombudsman | |
|---|---|
| No. of complaints referred to the Ombudsman | 51 |

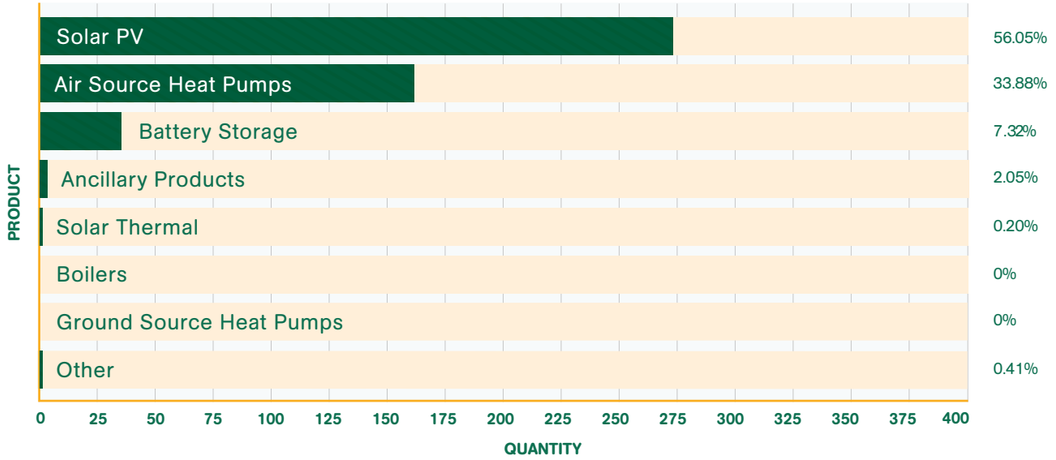
## Main reasons for complaints in 2025

- **Poor workmanship:** The work completed is of substandard quality.
- **Performance estimates:** Projected energy output, efficiency, and savings are not met.
- **Mis-selling:** Negligently selling a product or service by providing misleading information, failing to disclose important details, or recommending something unsuitable for the customer's needs.
- **Customer service:** Issues such as poor communication, lack of responsiveness, or unprofessional behaviour.
- **Compensation:** The customer is seeking a payment to make up for a loss, damage or suffering.
- **Cancellations:** Disputes arising from cancelled contracts.

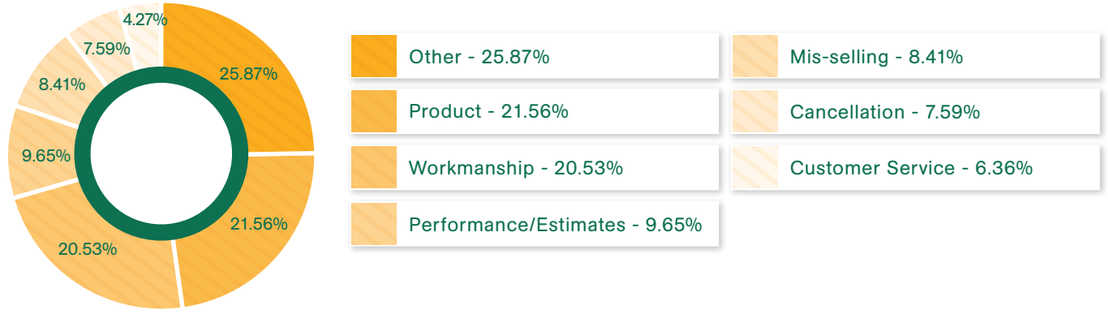


DISPUTE RESOLUTION STATISTICS

## TYPE OF PRODUCTS COMPLAINED ABOUT IN 2025




## TYPE OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN 2025



# DISPUTE RESOLUTION STATISTICS

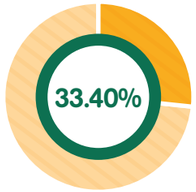
HIES' dispute resolution process achieved the following results in 2025:

Stage 1

**Initial mediation**

56.08% of complaints were resolved at this stage

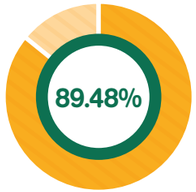
Stage 2




**More formal mediation**

33.40% of complaints were resolved at this stage

Resolution rate




**HIES resolution**

In total, 89.48% of complaints were resolved in-house

Ombudsman

**Ombudsman**

10.52% of consumers where deadlock was reached were provided free access to the Ombudsman

**2.74 days**

was HIES' 2025 average dispute resolution time for Stage 1

**14.50 days**

was HIES' 2025 average dispute resolution time for Stage 2

# AUDITING OUR MEMBERSHIP

**Auditing ensures that members are complying with the Scheme Rules & Code of Practice. The four types of audits undertaken are:**

- **Lite**

  A HIES member will complete a Lite audit if they have 0 jobs registered with us within the last 12 months of their membership.

- **Standard**

  All members that have registered a job with HIES within the last 12 months of their membership will be subject to a Standard audit unless they have been randomly selected for an Enhanced audit (see below). If defined risks are identified during the Standard audit, it will be upgraded to an Enhanced audit.

- **Enhanced**

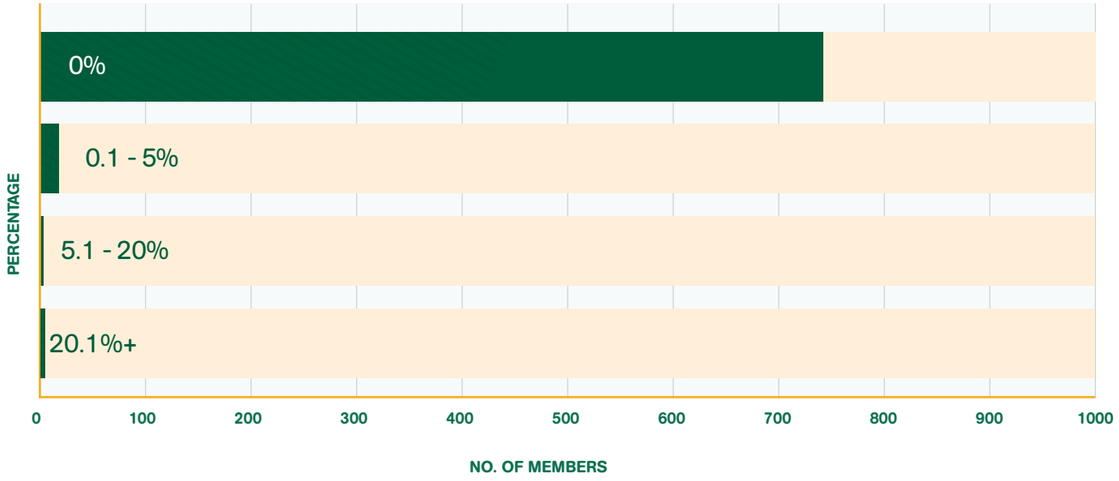
  HIES will randomly select 1% of the members due an audit to complete an Enhanced audit. The criterion for this selection is that they have been a member for at least 12 months and not had an Enhanced audit in the previous 24 months.

- **Onsite**

  An onsite audit is where HIES (or an external audit team appointed by HIES) visit the member's premises to complete an onsite audit. This will generally be undertaken on a risk-based approach. The onsite audit involves visiting the member's premises and gathering the information needed.

**We analyse the number of complaints our members received within a 12 month period compared to the number of installations registered with HIES. This then gives us a 'complaint ratio' for each member. Members who have a complaint ratio of less than 5% are considered within tolerance. However, all complaints are taken extremely seriously and any complaint may result in the member being referred to Monitoring for investigation. The graph below shows the results of our analysis across the membership:**

## COMPLAINT RATIO






MONITORING CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

### Analysis of Results

- **87.4%** of members had 0 complaints
- **9.3%** of members had a complaint ratio between 0.1 - 5%
- **1.1%** of members had a complaint ratio between 5.1 - 20%
- **2.2%** of members had a complaint ratio more than 20%

### The next step

The Alternative Dispute Resolution team inform the Monitoring department of any concerns identified in relation to members, including elevated complaint volumes or emerging complaint trends.

The Monitoring department along with the Membership team will then engage directly with the member to review the concerns in detail and assess any underlying issues. Where necessary, appropriate monitoring or corrective action will be implemented in line with the Scheme Rules.

# MEMBERSHIP REVIEW PANEL

**During the last 12 months, 6 installers were referred to the Membership Review Panel (MRP) after formally appealing a decision to terminate their membership of the Scheme.**

**The MRP provides an independent review of these appeals, with panel members who have had no prior involvement in the original decision-making process. By following a structured, fair, and transparent process, the MRP ensures each appeal is considered objectively, promoting consistency and confidence in the decision it reaches.**

| Results of the MRP |
| --- |
| 5 rejected appeals |
| 1 accepted appeal |

There were no members referred to the Appeals Panel for a further appeal in 2025.



# POLICY REVIEW

In 2025, the renewable energy sector continued its strong growth, supported by a sustained demand for air source heat pumps.

The Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) remained a key driver of low-carbon heating adoption, continuing to support households in transitioning to more energy-efficient solutions. The Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) also remained in full operation throughout 2025, continuing its role in delivering energy efficiency improvements across the UK.

We remain committed to working closely with key decision makers to ensure that consumers who choose our members can make informed and confident purchasing decisions. Throughout 2025, we continued to collaborate with:

- Various government departments
- Ofgem
- The National Home Improvement Council
- The Chartered Trading Standards Institute to keep in place our schemes approval and provide consumers with advice
- TrustMark
- Trading Standards Services to provide technical advice and support with enforcement work
- MCS
- RECC
- Flexi-Orb
- EPVS

Our ongoing commitment to these relationships continue to strengthen transparency, and excellence across the industry.

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