



UNITED KINGDOM REVENUE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

UKRPA Newsletter # 7

Q3 2014

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November 25th

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A Word from the UKRPA Chairman...

It gives me great pleasure to see our ranks swell following the joining of Utilita – we are now 15 members strong (and growing). With the ongoing energy market transformation reaching unprecedented levels of activity for market players, coupled with the increasing focus on regulatory measures on theft, now is a good time to join forces with the UKRPA. Sharing knowledge and best practice, to help shoulder some of the pain for those wrestling with day to day operational energy theft matters, has to be the right way forward.

Against that backdrop, the Association provides a good forum and sounding board to help with compliance matters, as well as being on the receiving end of key updates and information drawn from across the various UK-wide meetings that take place.

Over the last quarter, the UKRPA has again been courted by various media journalists. More recently, we have provided interviews to the production team for Fake Britain and

members have provided valuable input to the filming. We look forward to the final product, and hope this continues to maintain the spotlight on energy theft matters.

The Association steams ahead with the development of another UKRPA Seminar (scheduled for November). I recommend you book early to avoid disappointment as we had to turn away attendee requests for the last one. These continue to prove popular and we are always looking to evolve the agenda and approach to meet different needs. If you require any particular aspects for energy theft examined in this way, please do get in touch with your ideas for future events.

We continue to work closely with the Home Office. We have proposed the setup of a focused group (e.g. police, fire, UKRPA and the Home office) to deal more directly with the need for greater collaborative practices. In that vein, we have agreed to gather information

from among our members on cannabis detection. We shall update you as we make progress on all this work.

I sign off this quarter, knowing that UKRPA work continues at a pace. The level of activity underway makes it difficult to decide what to include for each Newsletter. We need your feedback on what you find useful and where you would like more information. Space is limited, but we shall try to ensure the right focus is maintained on key note issues/updates.



Tony Thornton
UKRPA Chairman

UKRPA Welcomes Utilita

The UKRPA has become the 'go to' place for revenue protection matters, making good use of its relationships with a wide range of key stakeholders.

Utilita becomes the 15th UKRPA member, enhancing the UKRPA's ability to represent an ever broader spectrum of industry-wide concerns and perspectives.

Tony Thornton said: "It is pleasing when organisations such as Utilita believe in the value of co-operation, and shared industry experience and intelligence that can take place under the auspices of the UKRPA".

Jim Garrett, Operations Director for Utilita, added: "We pride ourselves on striving to continuously improve the services we offer for our

customers. It is right that we take steps to help ensure a safe supply environment for all".

The UKRPA will be stepping up to forge ever stronger links with key stakeholders in its endeavour to help detect and prevent utility theft.

News In Brief

Tony Thornton was interviewed for the BBC 'Fake Britain' series, for a special on energy theft due to be televised in early 2015. The programme is also anticipated to include features with UKRPA Members British Gas and Western Power Distribution.

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On the subject of television appearances, vice-chairman Mike Wilkinson has been interviewed by a separate production company, looking at the safety impacts of energy theft - the programme is due to air in November, and includes footage of an electricity meter register being tampered with. Once the programme is aired, follow up work will be carried out to ascertain the extent of the operation in Northern England.

The UKRPA has initiated a regular roundtable meeting with various national strategic partners including the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and the Crown Prosecution Service. We look forward to increasingly positive dialogue as we work towards our aim of closer collaborative working practices.

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The UKRPA will be engaging with its members over the coming months to gather and correlate some key metric data with respect to the current position of illegal gas and electricity abstraction throughout the UK. We hope to be able to publish some headline statistics towards the end of 2014.

Revenue Protection Abroad 23 Year Jail Terms in Benin?

The Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) has urged the country's Senate to help it curb power theft by enforcing huge 23 year jail terms for offenders—quite a departure from the Sentencing Council's guideline one year's custody for even the worst offenders in the UK.

Funke Osibidu, Managing Director of BEDC, disclosed that 60% of electricity consumers in the West African republic do not pay electricity bills; an estimated annual cost to

the industry of XOF 66 billion (£80.2 million).

The Benin Senate Committee has responded by decrying the level of theft amongst consumers, vandalism on the network and the reluctance of some communities to pay bills.

To date, no word on whether the 23 year jail terms will come to pass, but the BEDC is planning major investments across the country's distribution network.

Date For Your Diary UKRPA Seminar, 25th November

The date for the second UKRPA Seminar has been confirmed. Join us in London on 25th November 2014 and learn how suppliers meet their Revenue Protection obligations.

Plus, learn how to spot the key signs of metering tampering, and participate in Q&A sessions with our expert speakers, including representatives from across the spectrum of the industry.

Places are limited by availability, and are charged at the following rates:

UKRPA Members: One free place

Additional Members: £200

Non-Members: £300

To reserve your spot at this event, please contact UKRPA@gemserv.com, and for more details, visit the UKRPA Website.

Next Day Switching Consultation Response

In August the UKRPA submitted its response to Ofgem's consultation: *Moving to Reliable Next-Day Switching*.

We are supportive of Ofgem's intention to deliver a faster, more effective change of supplier process. But we caution against any belief that smarter markets will be the panacea for gas and electricity theft—of course not all theft is associated with a meter.

We believe that reducing the switching period will amplify the challenges and time constraints that energy companies face in dealing with theft situations.

Those who are intent on stealing may find an opportunity to avoid detection by switching more regularly to avoid action instigated through alerts and intelligence to the supplier.

The UKRPA recommends that Ofgem should carefully consider the unintended consequences of moving to next-day switching, and that companies should be incentivised to take action against thieves, even when no longer a customer.

The UKRPA response to the consultation can be found [here](#).

Ofgem Guidance on Suppliers' Rights

Ofgem has published an open letter providing guidance on rights and obligations for suppliers disconnecting premises following the detection of theft. The letter also considers the ways in which suppliers may offer new contractual terms to customers suspected of theft.

Ofgem is particularly keen to ensure that prepayment meters are only being fitted with the consent of the customer.

The letter clarifies the grounds on which supply can be discontinued, i.e. on grounds of safety, in the event that the customer refuses either to



provide a security deposit or have a prepayment meter installed, or where it would not be reasonable to continue supply (providing seven days notice is given by the supplier prior to disconnection).

The open letter, which also includes guidance on varying contractual terms, can be found [here](#).

Cannabis Cultivation Awareness Week

On 1st September 2014, UKRPA Conference speaker Detective Chief Superintendent Bill Jephson launched the ACPO-led "In Focus: Commercial Cannabis Cultivation" week.

Police forces around the country undertook a mixture of communications and operational activity to encourage public awareness of cannabis farms in tandem with cracking down wherever they are found, including warrants being executed within some force areas.

DCS Jephson made reference to the part that cannabis farms play in

supporting modern slavery, and the devastating effect that this can have on the lives of those forced to work on these criminal operations.

"Cannabis cultivation not only feeds a multi-million pound black market in increasingly potent and dangerous cannabis, which can have lasting physical and mental health effects on users, but it is also a key driver in modern slavery. We are hopeful that the incoming Modern Slavery Bill and continued work by law enforcement partners will aid us in our work in this area.

"Commercial cannabis cultivation is a

problem which affects all areas of our country and it is important that we work with communities to make sure that everyone knows what to look out for – from screened-off windows and unusual amounts of heat emanating from a property to signs of bypassing electricity meters".

Cannabis cultivation has been estimated by Ofgem to be responsible for around one-third of the cost to the energy industry caused by the illegal abstraction of electricity.

UKRPA Donation to Jimmy Mizen Foundation

Generous guests at the UKRPA Conference raised over £650 in aid of the Jimmy Mizen Foundation, through this year's charity raffle.

The Foundation was established following the murder of 16 year old schoolboy Jimmy Mizen in 2008. Its mission is to make young people safer; by promoting participation within the community, increasing young people's awareness of the potential outcomes of actions and supporting development into independent and responsible individuals.



The Mizen family opened a café, in 2010, close to the bakery where Jimmy was killed. All proceeds from *The Café of Good Hope* go towards running various

charity and community projects, and to provide local youngsters with work experience at the café.

Many thanks to all UKRPA Members who donated raffle prizes ranging from bottles of whiskey, department store vouchers, an iPod and a rugby shirt.

Congratulations to all prize winners, and a grateful thank you to all who bought tickets, supporting this great cause.



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The energy industry operates within a regulatory framework that seeks to strike a balance between consumer protection at one end of the spectrum (such as vulnerability), and a desire to drive increasingly proactive theft investigative practices. The approach to theft detection, investigation and resolution has historically been fragmented across the industry with varying industry practices and no real joined up approach between electricity and gas.

Against this backdrop, the UKRPA is uniquely positioned to provide a UK industry wide input to the evolving market arrangements, ensuring that the experiences and expertise of its members is brought to the forefront of the revenue protection industry's discussions.

UKRPA Membership

Full and Associate membership opportunities are open to companies working in the revenue protection arena, in and around the United Kingdom. For more information regarding benefits of membership, please visit our website www.ukrpa.co.uk

UKRPA Members



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Tony Thornton