

Consultation name: Consumer Standards – Supplier 24/7 Metering Support Statutory Consultation

Issued by: Ofgem

Territorial extent: Great Britain

Response author: SGN

Deadline for responding: 20th December 2024



SGN

St Lawrence House

Station Approach

Horley

RH6 9HJ

Jemma Baker
Domestic Retail Policy Team
Ofgem
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

By email to: futureconsumers@Ofgem.gov.uk

20th December 2024

Dear Jemma,

Consumer Standards – 24/7 Metering Support Statutory Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above statutory consultation¹. Our response should be considered alongside Ofgem's Request for Information (RFI) regarding supplier-related emergency calls, issued in June 2024.

As discussed in our response to the RFI, the 0800 National Gas Emergency Service (NGES), operated by Cadent on behalf of all Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs), has come under pressure recently due to an increased call volume typically occurring out of hours, and relating to supplier-driven issues. All calls to the NGES must be answered and triaged to dispatch field operatives as quickly as possible – a process which can be hindered by high volumes of non-emergency calls.

As such, SGN supports Ofgem's intention to activate the currently dormant supplier licence condition in relation to 24/7 support for customers experiencing a loss of supply due to meter faults. We agree that activation of this condition should improve customers' experience of out-of-hours supplier-related issues, and we are also reassured that it is a positive step to preserving the critical and efficient operation of the NGES.

¹ [Consumer Standards - Supplier 24-7 Metering Support statutory consultation | Ofgem](#)

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While we are overall supportive of the licence activation, we do wish to make three key observations;

Firstly, the drafting appears to explicitly relate to customers who are off-supply due to a meter fault. We would highlight that there are other scenarios in which a customer may be off supply, which would not constitute a gas emergency to be directed to the NGES, but would not fall into the 'meter fault' definition.

Secondly, whilst we welcome the Contact Ease Guidance updates, plus the expected outcomes articulated in the statutory consultation document, we consider that there are opportunities to be more prescriptive regarding elements of the 24/7 service – for example by defining the inclusion of Key Performance Indicators to ensure delivery standards are maintained, in order to protect the overall customer experience.

Lastly, we note that Ofgem has not been specific regarding the expected solution to deliver 24/7 support, retaining the option to build a centralised service. While there could be benefits to a centralised service in terms of customers' ease of access and overall experience, we would highlight that such a service will require careful and collaborative definition. It is critical that the NGES is protected as the emergency service, rather than either deliberately or inadvertently expanding to include a centralised non-emergency supplier provision.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me on Hilary.Chapman@SGN.co.uk

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Chapman
Regulation Manager
SGN

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