

Ofgem Radio Teleswitch (RTS) policy consultation decision and update on phase-out

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Introduction

As Great Britain's independent energy regulator, Ofgem work to protect energy consumers, especially vulnerable people, by ensuring they are treated fairly. In February 2025, in an open letter, we consulted stakeholders on policy outcomes behind our considerations for the introduction of specific licence conditions in relation to the replacement of Radio Teleswitch (RTS) meters.¹ Given the considerable improvements we have seen in the progress of RTS replacements and deeper monitoring into tariff provisions we have decided not to proceed with the introduction of these conditions, at this time.

There are a number of existing provisions in the licence (referred to in this letter) and since the publication of our policy consultation, we have implemented strengthened automatic payment compensation arrangements for consumers seeking metering appointments. These obligations should ensure the consumer outcomes we want to see from the RTS replacement programme including the delivery of fair prices, the quick resolution of any disruption or issues experienced by consumers, and ensuring that consumers receive accessible, timely and appropriate advice and information from their supplier. We will continue to monitor performance against these conditions carefully and review the need for any further strengthening of regulatory obligations should the current arrangements lead to gaps in consumer protection.

Current state of play

The gradual phase out of the infrastructure which supports RTS metering arrangements commenced on 30 June 2025. The RTS phase out involves the withdrawal of the RTS signal to targeted groups throughout Great Britain, on a regional group code basis. This has allowed suppliers to manage the withdrawal process smoothly and ensure that their workforce and Distribution Network Operator (DNO) resource is deployed into appropriate areas to address any issues that arise with speed and efficiency. During the periods of signal switch off, Ofgem and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) monitor the progress of supplier RTS meter replacement and issue resolution activity. This ensures that any consumers who experience disruption to their heating and/or hot water have their issues resolved quickly by their suppliers, and that potentially vulnerable consumers such as those on the Priority Services Register (PSR), or properties such as schools and care homes are given urgent attention should they experience disruption.

In January 2025, there were over 600,000 RTS meters in operation. As of January 2026, there are fewer than 154,000 RTS meters remaining that are still to be replaced. The

¹ 2025. Ofgem. RTS Policy Consultation. Available at: [Radio Teleswitch Service \(RTS\): Electricity Supply Licence changes | Ofgem](#)

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progress made by the sector has been welcome and we thank parliamentarians, housing associations, charities, and consumer groups for their engagement in raising awareness and reinforcing messaging to consumers around the need to secure a replacement meter.

The switch-off of RTS meters paused during the coldest months of winter and recommenced on 2 March 2026 in England and Wales with Scotland switch-off activity due to commence again in early April. We encourage any consumer yet to engage with their supplier to seek a meter replacement appointment without delay. And for those consumers who have been arranging appointments for a meter exchange but either cannot get one within a reasonable timeframe or have had their appointments repeatedly cancelled by the supplier, we would encourage the consumer to be aware that there are Guaranteed Standards of Performance (GSoP) for appointment booking, with £40 per fuel per meter point compensation due if these standards are not met by the supplier.

Seeking stakeholder views

In February 2025, we sought stakeholder views via an open letter on the policy outcomes behind proposals for draft RTS-specific licence conditions which we considered may be necessary to increase the RTS meter replacement rates and improve tariff availability for consumers who receive a replacement meter. This included:

1. After the cessation of support for RTS Meters, supplier use of these meter types will no longer be appropriate for consumers given they are unable to receive radio signals and therefore no longer work in their intended manner. There will be an obligation on suppliers to no longer provide electricity to consumers with an RTS Meter after the cessation of support for RTS meters.
2. Following the cessation of support for RTS Meters, when a consumer with a RTS Meter changes supplier, the gaining supplier should replace the consumer's RTS Meter within thirty working days.
3. Our position imposed in point 1 and 2 may not apply where the supplier is unable to install or arrange for the installation of any replacement metering arrangement at the relevant premises despite taking all reasonable steps to do so.
4. Suppliers should take all reasonable steps to provide a tariff that leaves the consumer 'no worse off' than their existing arrangements as a result of a RTS Meter replacement.

This open letter was published at a time when the number of RTS meters to be replaced stood at over half a million and there was a lack of clarity over tariff offerings with concerns that consumers could be significantly worse off as a result of replacing their RTS meter. We believed that whilst replacement rates were increasing steadily, it was

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not increasing at a pace that we deemed acceptable. This is why we made the decision to consider whether existing supplier obligations needed to be reinforced to focus supplier efforts and minimise the potential for mass disruption to consumer heating and/or hot water arrangements. A range of stakeholders responded to this open letter expressing mixed support for the proposals outlined.

Consumer engagement

Respondents to the open letter understood the policy objective of the proposed licence conditions; however, many expressed reservations regarding their implementation. Supplier respondents highlighted that there are many factors outside of their control which act as an obstacle to a successful RTS meter replacement that would inhibit their ability to abide by the proposed licence conditions. Namely, points 1 and 2 relating to a prohibition on the use of RTS meters or providing a replacement meter within thirty working days. The main obstacle cited by near all respondents, in relation to the above, included the ongoing challenge of consumer engagement and acceptance of smart meter replacements.

Appointment availability

Respondents stated that whilst consumer engagement could be seen as a barrier, those consumers that do engage with their supplier and take steps to schedule an appointment are being let down in some cases. This is why Ofgem considered introducing a thirty working day replacement obligation on suppliers to ensure that appointments are provided to consumers within a defined period, with some respondents welcoming such an obligation. There are continued reports of consumers, particularly those located in more remote areas of Great Britain, experiencing delays in receiving an appointment or experiencing repeated cancellations without or with insufficient explanation. This is something we are also continuing to see through our monitoring of supplier replacement efforts.

External dependencies

Suppliers are responsible for each consumer's metering arrangement; however, we understand that there are instances where other external stakeholders are required to facilitate the replacement of a meter. Some respondents to the open letter noted that our proposed licence obligation to prohibit the use of RTS meters does not take into account dependencies on external stakeholders such as DNOs or others such as third-party electricians who may be required to conduct consumer-side remedial work activity. Therefore, any proposed licence condition would have to factor in circumstances outside of a supplier's control.

Tariff availability

In early 2025, Ofgem began to receive reports through correspondence from parliamentarians and consumer groups that consumers with an RTS meter who had secured a smart meter replacement were being placed on an inferior tariff following the installation. Suppliers are obligated to make all relevant tariffs available to consumers

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and where a tariff is withdrawn from the market, they must move the consumer onto the next cheapest tariff based on the consumer's usage and metering arrangement. To address this potential issue, Ofgem considered whether there was a need to further protect consumers in addition to existing obligations by requiring that suppliers leave RTS consumers 'no worse off' in tariff terms following a smart meter replacement. The main objective of this proposed obligation was to ensure consumers were being offered a tariff which best replicated their arrangement prior to having their RTS meter replaced or was cheaper than their former tariff.

Respondents to the open letter, namely from consumer groups, supported this approach and stated that it would ensure that consumers faced minimal detriment following a meter replacement. Furthermore, it would give confidence to consumers who were considering a meter replacement to take steps to engage with their supplier and book an appointment as they would be secure in the knowledge that their tariff would not change following the replacement of their RTS meter with a smart meter.

However, other respondents raised concerns with the terminology included in the proposed obligation around 'no worse off' and how it would be defined should it be implemented within the supply licence. One respondent considered that the term is ambiguous and proposed alternative options such as the tariff following replacement of an RTS meter being 'matched as closely as possible.' This suggestion reflects that smart meters operate on a more modern platform, which differs from some of the bespoke mechanisms used in certain RTS tariffs. A small number of legacy RTS tariffs relied on specialised functionality, such as Weathercall, that have no direct equivalent in the smart metering system. As a result, an exact like-for-like replication is not always possible, however, smart meters do have the ability to allow consumers access to other time-of and type-of use tariffs.

Meters not dependent on RTS functionality

Since 30 June 2025, signals to approximately 20,000 RTS meters have been switched off as part of the RTS phase out. The intention of the managed, gradual phase out is to ensure that any consumer who experiences disruption to their heating and/or hot water can be triaged quickly and efficiently by their supplier. To date, there are significant numbers of consumers whose meter has been switched off that are yet to engage with their supplier to secure a smart meter replacement.

Industry data for legacy metering infrastructure such as RTS is widely accepted as being incomplete or in some cases inaccurate. Respondents to the open letter noted that they know there are significant numbers of RTS meters that are no longer reliant on the RTS signal for heating and/or hot water functionality, a statement which appears substantiated through the lack of consumer-to-supplier engagement occurring amongst those who have had their RTS meter switched off during the phase out so far. As such, there are likely to be large numbers of RTS meters that are still operating which do not require imminent replacement, as the risk to the consumer's heating/hot water arrangement is low.

Our response and progress

Mandating replacement (Point 1/Point 3)

Eleven months ago, we increased pressure on suppliers to replace RTS meters at pace ahead of the 30 June 2025 phase out date. This proposed obligation was considered to mandate the replacement of all RTS meters by a specific date in time represented as ‘following the cessation of support for RTS.’ The overall intention of this obligation was to set a hard-stop for the use of RTS meters by suppliers, in that suppliers would no longer be permitted to use RTS meters which relied on supporting infrastructure to service consumer heating and/or hot water arrangements. After the publication of the open letter, DESNZ announced that suppliers had agreed that a widespread switch-off of RTS meters would not occur on the 30 June 2025; rather a gradual and carefully managed phase out would be conducted over a longer period.

Since this draft proposal was published, we have leaned heavily on our existing powers to force suppliers to significantly expedite their rate of RTS meter replacements. This has included implementing a formal monitoring framework whereby suppliers are required to report to us on a fortnightly basis the number of RTS replacements completed, waiting times and aborted appointment rates. We undertake careful analysis of this monitoring data, and we have intervened and acted where suppliers have failed to increase the speed and efficiency of their replacement programme.

Ofgem has consistently taken action against suppliers who have been slow in rolling out smart meters with some of the largest energy suppliers paying redress after failing to meet smart meter targets in previous years. We have been clear with suppliers that failing to perform at an acceptable level in terms of RTS meter replacements will be taken into consideration when we assess their wider smart meter rollout performance and action will be taken in line with our compliance and enforcement guidelines, where applicable, until there are zero RTS meters left to replace that are required to control a consumer’s heating and/or hot water.

Whilst we recognise the challenge of engagement acting as a barrier to an RTS meter replacement, consumers must have their RTS meter replaced or else risk the loss of control of their heating and hot water. While consumers can refuse a smart meter under the current rollout framework, other metering solutions are available and should be looked to if necessary. Suppliers are expected to apply learnings from the smart meter rollout and RTS transition programme and adopt proven engagement strategies to increase RTS meter replacement rates. While consumer disengagement continues to present challenges, suppliers should be able to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable, proportionate steps to engage consumers effectively before citing disengagement as a barrier. Our expectation is that suppliers manage known structural and behavioural challenges proactively, using evidence-based strategies to mitigate them wherever possible.

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For those suppliers who are lagging behind in replacements, we are using commercial incentives to drive individual supplier improvements in RTS replacements. Ofgem approved urgent Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) modification P491 ‘Amendment to the RTS Funding Mechanism’ which has amended the way in which RTS infrastructure costs are allocated across suppliers in line with their RTS portfolio, rather than divided equally between suppliers regardless of how many RTS meters they have – generators would also cover a proportion of these costs under previous funding arrangements.² By shifting RTS infrastructure costs onto suppliers and linking these costs explicitly to the supplier’s share of RTS meters, this modification acts as a positive incentive for suppliers to accelerate RTS meter replacements. Those with larger RTS portfolios now bear higher costs, encouraging those suppliers with meters remaining to engage their consumers, book appointments and replace RTS meters at pace ahead of any additional supporting infrastructure costs that they may be due to incur next year. This decision by Ofgem ensures that the burden of RTS costs will be placed on those suppliers who do not provide consumers with an RTS meter with a quick and successful replacement appointment.

Ofgem has reviewed in detail the regulatory tools at our disposal to complete RTS meter replacements and is content that powers under SLC 39 and other relevant conditions provide us with the ongoing ability to maintain pressure on suppliers to reduce the number of RTS meters remaining throughout Great Britain or be at risk of compliance action. The introduction of the draft licence conditions in respect of the obligation outlined in point 1 is therefore not required at this time and Ofgem will continue to utilise its existing powers in relation the expediting of RTS replacements.

Timely replacements (Point 2/Point 3)

With regards to point 2, the initial proposal outlined in the open letter sought to ensure that when a consumer switches supplier, the supplier must replace their RTS meter in a timely manner within thirty working days (six weeks). This is because we were seeing unacceptable waiting times between consumers seeking and securing a meter replacement.

From our monitoring data, it appears that 25% of cancelled or aborted appointments are due to the supplier making the cancellation. Ofgem’s view remains that it is unacceptable that consumers who have engaged with their supplier and have taken steps to arrange a date for a meter replacement, often at personal inconvenience, are experiencing cancellations at late notice or seeing appointments rescheduled without very strong reasons. We would remind suppliers of their existing obligations under the Electricity and Gas (Standards of Performance) (Suppliers) Regulations 2015, as amended, which provide for consumers to receive compensation should suppliers fail to provide or fulfil a timely appointment.³ Ofgem expects suppliers to have robust

² Ofgem. 2025. BSCP491 Authority decision. Available at: [Decision notice for BSC Modification Proposal P491.pdf](#)

³ The Electricity and Gas (Standards of Performance) (Suppliers) Regulations 2015. Available: [The Electricity and Gas \(Standards of Performance\) \(Suppliers\) Regulations 2015](#)

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processes in place to meet these obligations consistently regardless of where the consumer resides.

Regarding external dependencies prohibiting quick replacements, this is something we considered in our proposed obligations where we built in the acknowledgement under point 3 noted above, that our expectation on suppliers is that they should take ‘all reasonable steps’ to adhere to the proposed obligations. Whilst we understand that suppliers may be reliant, in some instances, on third party stakeholders to enable the successful replacement of an RTS meter, they should have existing robust processes in place to manage relationships with these parties in the minority of cases where this is the case to ensure that meters continue to be replaced in a timely and efficient manner.

Our current monitoring of supplier waiting times suggests that the average wait in Great Britain between a consumer securing an appointment and RTS meter replacement currently stands at 20 working days. We know that there are instances where consumers are waiting longer for an appointment which is why, since the open letter publication, we have now implemented changes to the 2015 Regulations on GSoPs in relation to the installation of smart meters and these came into force on 23 February 2026.⁴ The new GSoPs seek to implement automatic compensation for domestic consumers who are not offered an appointment within 30 working days for a smart meter installation appointment. Micro-business consumers will also receive automatic compensation when they are not offered an appointment within 60 working days of the request. This obligation would directly address delayed RTS meter replacements and ensure consumers are rightly compensated when their supplier fails to provide a quick replacement. Ofgem considers that given ongoing work to implement these GSoPs an additional RTS specific condition is not required at this time, as it would be covered under the new GSoPs.

Tariff availability (Point 4)

To strengthen our evidence base on tariffs offered to RTS consumers, Ofgem collected both actual and forecasted data from large suppliers who make up approximately 97% of RTS meters still to be replaced. This evidence demonstrates that in most cases, consumers who have had their RTS meter replaced are being offered tariffs that mirror (taking into account inflation and price cap changes) what they would have received if they had remained on a legacy RTS arrangement.

However, we acknowledge that not all smart meters can replicate RTS arrangements such as Weathercall or certain Total Heat Total Control systems. That is why we have launched a further investigatory exercise to gather real-world information about consumers’ energy usage before and after an RTS meter is replaced with a smart meter. The data collected enables us to:

⁴ 2025. Ofgem. Statutory consultation on smart meter guaranteed standards of performance. Available at: [Statutory consultation on smart meter guaranteed standards of performance | Ofgem](#)

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- Assess the financial impact of tariff changes on RTS consumers who have transitioned to smart meters.
- Identify any patterns of consumer detriment across different suppliers or tariff types.
- Evaluate supplier compliance with SLC 0 (the overarching requirement to treat customers fairly), SLC22B and SLC 22D where a tariff has been withdrawn.

This information will help us better understand what the financial impacts of exchanging an RTS meter are across different tariff types and usage profiles. By undertaking live analysis of real-world consumption data during the Winter 2025/2026 period before and after an RTS meter replacement, we aim to build a comprehensive picture of how tariff changes affect domestic consumers, particularly for those consumers who previously benefitted from legacy RTS tariffs with favourable off-peak rates.

If our analysis identifies that certain suppliers consistently leave consumers notably worse off following an RTS meter replacement, whether through inferior tariff offerings or a lack of transparency, we will engage directly with those suppliers on what remedial activity can be undertaken to ensure the effective protection of these consumers. This may include asking those suppliers to reassess their tariff structures and improve communications. Where such practices breach existing licence conditions, we will consider formal regulatory action in line with our compliance and enforcement powers.

Since publication of the open letter, we have seen tariff availability for RTS meter consumers who seek an upgrade improve in general. The recent launch of Market Wide Half Hourly Settlement is also encouraging suppliers to create new flexible time-of-use tariffs, which will enable former RTS consumers to save money on their bills. Historically, the ability of consumers with an RTS meter to switch supplier and tariff was limited for those with complex metering arrangements, so consumers who upgrade to a smart meter can benefit from accessing new suppliers and new tariffs. If a former RTS consumer has replaced their meter but is dissatisfied with their new tariff arrangement, we would urge them to review the market for other tariff offerings that better reflect their needs.

We believe, following further investigation and evidence gathering, that suppliers are taking steps to ensure that consumers are left 'no worse off' in terms of tariff following a successful RTS meter replacement and thereby adhering to SLC22B and SLC22D when no comparable tariff is available. It is with respect to this finding that we believe that a wholesale market-wide change to the supply licence is not required, at this time, to ensure consumers can access equitable tariffs following an RTS replacement. The approach outlined instead will allow us to undertake targeted supplier-specific regulatory intervention where necessary and allow us to swiftly identify and rectify and potential instances of consumers detriment.

Conclusions and next steps

Ofgem recognises that there has been a considerable interval between the initial publication of the RTS open letter and this response. This allowed us time for meaningful observation of supplier performance, consumer outcomes, market developments, and the introductions of new GSoPs related to RTS to smart replacements.

We are also mindful of the need to avoid introducing any overly prescriptive rules that may disrupt supplier operations, reduce flexibility in consumer engagement or conflict with the principles of consumer choice which are embedded in the smart meter rollout. Based on the progress with RTS meter replacements since the open letter and the effectiveness of existing regulatory tools, we do not believe that the introduction of RTS specific licence conditions as outlined in the open letter would be appropriate and instead will continue to utilise existing protections in the standard licence conditions, which include:

- 0/0A requires suppliers to treat their consumers fairly.
- 4A requires suppliers to ensure it has and maintains robust internal capability, systems, and processes to enable them to service their consumers and identify and mitigate against any risk of consumer harm.
- 22B requires suppliers to make all tariffs available to new and existing consumers.
- 22D states that where a supplier withdraws a tariff from the market, they must take steps to put the consumer on the next relevant cheapest tariff.
- 25 requires suppliers to ensure that the structure, terms, and conditions of its tariffs are clear and easily comprehensible.
- 26 requires suppliers to offer enhanced support for consumers who have been added to the Priority Services Register.
- 31F requires suppliers to encourage their consumers to consider their tariff and supplier options and ensure that they understand and have the ability to manage their existing tariff.
- 31G requires suppliers to ensure that their consumers are provided with information that allows them to identify and contact them about a problem, question, or any other request for assistance quickly and easily.
- 39 requires suppliers to take all reasonable steps to ensure that they replace RTS meters with a smart meter.

By allowing time for improvements in performance across the market, through the RTS Taskforce and elsewhere, we have been able to make a more informed judgement about the necessity and appropriateness of further licence changes. At this stage, we believe that existing obligations combined with targeted regulatory pressure and commercial incentives can continue to be utilised to support the RTS phase out and protect consumers.

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That said, whilst improvements have been made by suppliers, it is critical that suppliers ensure that consumers who are yet to have their meter replaced or have had their meter replaced are adequately supported, be that through the provision of timely appointments, time-switch/contactors provision, a communicating smart meter or providing bills based on actual meter readings.

We will continue to monitor supplier performance and consumer outcomes closely, engaging with suppliers where we identify instances of unacceptable practice. Should material risks re-emerge, we reserve the right to revisit licence changes or take other regulatory action. Ofgem remain committed to ensuring a smooth and fair transition and phase out process for all RTS consumers.

Thank you again for your contributions to this process.