

Ofgem Establishing a harmonised prioritisation process in the Industry Codes: statutory consultation

Citizens Advice response



January 2026

This response is not confidential and may be freely published.

We support Ofgem's code reform agenda, including harmonising prioritisation criteria and processes across the codes. We agree that allocating certain modifications to a high priority level is appropriate to rapidly achieve aims relating to the Strategic Direction Statement (SDS) and other important matters. However, we believe that there also needs to be a focus upon ensuring that there are sufficient resources within the Code Managers and Ofgem to allow for standard priority modifications to proceed in a timely manner. We are aware of existing delays in decisions for some non-urgent modifications in some codes (e.g. outstanding decisions in Connection and Use of System Code from 2024). There is a risk that there may be unacceptable delays for decisions for standard priority modifications either within the Code Manager or within Ofgem if there is insufficient capacity to manage both high priority and standard priority modifications. Such lower priority proposals may still be valuable for consumers and industry parties in matters such as increasing competition or raising consumer standards and such modifications should be moved forward without undue delay.

We do not support allowing differences in code prioritisation procedures for the Retail Energy Code (REC) and Smart Energy Code (SEC), and for different appeal processes across various codes. It is not clear why certain codes should have different processes when compared to others and there does not appear to be strong justification for these differences. The aim of this code reform should be consistency in process unless there is an overwhelming reason for differences. We believe that harmonisation of processes in prioritisation and appeals would avoid complexity and confusion. Maintaining differences in process would waste the opportunity of this code reform to align all the codes and would set a precedent for further divergence between codes in the future.

Questions

Q1 Do you agree with the policy and associated code modifications proposed in Section 2. Prioritisation process?

We are supportive of the proposals including retaining current urgent modification processes, and that code panels are the decision makers.

While we understand that it would be valuable for the proposer to provide an assessment of their proposal against the prioritisation criteria, it may be difficult in practice for the proposer to be able to assess relative importance or relative complexity of a modification proposal against others. However, we would expect that the Code Manager would provide assistance in this task.

Q2 Do you agree with the policy and associated code modifications proposed in Section 3. Prioritisation criteria and governance?

We support having only the two priority levels (high and standard).

We do not agree that there should be divergence in procedure for the REC and SEC with respect to allocating priority levels to modifications. We believe that this code reform process offers a rare opportunity to harmonise the industry codes. We do not believe that there is sufficient justification for differing procedures. Requiring aligned procedures would avoid unnecessary complexity and confusion in the processes for parties and Ofgem.

Q3 Do you agree with the policy and associated code modifications proposed in Section 4. Prioritisation reporting and governance?

We support the harmonisation of prioritisation review processes and the points at which they will be triggered (e.g. bi-annual, publication of the SDS, changes in government policy, etc.). We also support harmonisation of reporting processes across the codes as proposed.

We do not agree that there should be divergence in appeals procedure between the codes. Harmonisation of processes should be the aim in this code reform

and we do not believe that there is substantial justification for some codes to operate differently from others.

Q4 Do you agree with the policy and associated code modifications proposed in Section 5. Policy implementation?

We support the allocation of the new prioritisation criteria to those modification proposals that are 'live' and to new proposals on the date of implementation of the code reform. We agree with the revised methodology for determining a 'live' proposal.

Q5 Do you agree with our proposed implementation date of 28 days from the publication of the related prioritisation policy decision notice?

We support the proposed implementation timetable, however, we recognise that the existing code panels and bodies will be better placed to determine whether the timetable is realistic. We are aware that many code bodies are already looking to align their prioritisation and processes with proposed code reform proposals so that the timetable would be achievable.

Q6 Do you agree with the proposed guidance in 'Annex A: Proposed Authority guidance on code modification prioritisation'?

We agree with the guidance as outlined in Annex A, subject to the comments above where we have views on specific aspects of process and governance.

Q7 Do you agree with the proposed code text drafting published in annexes B-L?

No response.

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