

## Minutes of Customer Journey Workshop Group held at Ofgem on 3 June 2008

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### Overview

As part of the transition process from energywatch to the new NCC and Consumer Direct, Ofgem and BERR jointly chair fortnightly workshops that bring together representatives from the new NCC, energywatch, other consumer groups, Consumer Direct, the energy retailers and network companies and agencies. The workshops are designed to facilitate a greater dialogue and allow input from all stakeholders on key issues.

### 1. Present

BERR	Paul Bland
BERR	Christopher Guiton
BERR	Steve Warren
British Gas	Philip Arend
Citizens Advice Bureau	Tony Herbert
Consumer Direct	Donna Davis
Cornwell Energy Association	Ed Reed
E.ON	Tina Pearce
Ecotricity	Trevor Saunders
EDF Energy	Ann Neate
energywatch	Audrey Gallacher
energywatch / new NCC	Neil Avery
Energy Retail Association (ERA)	Duncan Sedgewick
Energy Retail Association (ERA)	Russell Hamblin-Boone
Energy Retail Association (ERA)	Frances Williamson
npower	Siobhan O'Loughlin
npower	Chris Johns
npower	Liz Gibson
Ofgem	Maxine Frerk
Ofgem	Marcus Clements
Ofgem	Lisa Taylor
Scottish Power	Grant Tierney
Scottish and Southern Energy	Jacqui Maxwell
Scottish and Southern Energy	Tony Keeling
Scottish and Southern Energy	Frances Muller

### 2. Apologies

Chris Shanley - National Grid  
 Alison Hughes – Bizzenergy  
 Keith Munday – Bizzenergy  
 Robert Eynan – E4B

### 3. Minutes from last meeting

3.1. The minutes from the meeting held on 21 May were agreed and will go on Ofgem's website under Consumers, energywatch transitional arrangements.

3.2. **Duncan Sedgewick** (ERA) had written to Maxine Frerk about 'Supplier's position on the Consumer Direct referral process'. He agreed to **email this letter to the rest of the group for their information**.

3.3. Maxine Frerk had sent papers to the Steering Board about the group's discussions regarding Consumer Direct and Supplier referral process, and the vulnerable customer journey. **Marcus Clements agreed to email the group this paper.**

3.4. Maxine Frerk asked energywatch to review Consumer Direct's processes/procedures (regarding Consumer Direct – Supplier referral handover) and comment on them from their experience. **Audrey Gallacher will speak to Carlene Golightly about doing this.**

#### 4. Agenda Item 1: Future Working Arrangements paper

4.1. There was a good response and suggestions to the draft paper Christopher Guiton circulated for feedback after the last meeting. The update, taking on board these comments, was circulated and discussed. The ownership columns have been filled in and timelines added. There are still a few gaps and a further round of comments is required. A highlight report will be circulated between meetings and a separate paper will be written on top risks.

Action	Person – By
Let Christopher Guiton know if there is anything missing and if what has been suggested is realistic.	All – 06/06/08
Think about risks which could be added to a separate paper and reviewed at future meetings.	All – 17/06/08
Maxine Frerk and Christopher Guiton to meet to discuss the paper before the next meeting.	MF & CG – 13/06/08

#### 5. Agenda Item 2: New NCC presentation

5.1. Neil Avery discussed with the group: energywatch Closedown and Cutover Plans; new NCC Complaint Handling Model; new NCC Information Requirements and new NCC Interface with Advice Agencies.

5.2. energywatch aim to finalise, by the end of June, their cutover plan for implementation on 4 August. In July all live cases will be managed by a 'shadow extra help unit' and interim team, who will aim to satisfactorily close most cases before energywatch closes on the 30 September. From 4 August all new cases will be handled by the energywatch call centre.

5.3. energywatch are keen to balance workload and resources between now and 1 October. Duncan Sedgewick (ERA) asked what measures have been put in place for staff leaving, thus increasing workload. Neil Avery said that exposure to this is mitigated as most new staff are on fixed term contracts, and arrangements were in place to retain existing staff until closure.

5.4. energywatch wish to phase in email referrals, from Consumer Direct to Suppliers, in September (this will be the main referral process between Consumer Direct and Suppliers from 1 October).

5.5. 1 October is a Wednesday therefore in the previous week IT systems and any physical moves will take place. On the 29 & 30 September will operate on the new system but still as energywatch and then on 1 October change to Consumer Direct. The energywatch website will close on 30 September, in its last week information will point to Consumer Direct. energywatch's phone number, from 1 October, will redirect to Consumer Direct national number (no time limit set on this).

5.6. Frances Williamson (ERA) asked if energywatch plan to notify consumers of its closure in September. Neil Avery said probably not as they did not wish to confuse

consumers, although they might put something on their website in the last two weeks of September. ERA would want customers' whose case isn't resolved by 30 September to get a message that explains how their case will be resolved.

5.7. energywatch plan to withdraw the supplier empowerment response service on 25 September, so suppliers will not need to notify energywatch of the outcome of empowerment cases after this date.

5.8. The New NCC will retain an energy team that will interface with companies, and will take on most of energywatch's current representation at industry group meetings.

5.9. New NCC will take on energywatch's role regarding accreditation of switching sites and producing price comparison leaflets, though the leaflets will be available through Consumer Direct.

5.10. Duncan Sedgewick stated that the new NCC should ensure that the reason why energy companies needed to provide the information listed in the last two slides was transparent. ERA also wanted it noted that the time for implementing any of the necessary changes to provide the information required by new NCC is short, since these requirements have yet to be finalised. Neil Avery will share, in the next couple of weeks, a paper on 'areas for further consideration' in terms of data collection and would seek views from suppliers.

Action	Person – By
Send comments to Neil Avery on the proposal of phasing in email referrals in September.	Suppliers – 06/06/08
Send comments to Neil Avery about consumers writing in being given Suppliers empowerment numbers for further action.	Suppliers – 17/06/08
Maxine Frerk would like to be sent the correspondence between new NCC and BERR on business and domestic consumer and the referral process (statutory requirements)	Paul Bland – 17/06/08
Audrey Gallacher to send link to energywatch's Knowledge Base that agencies will use, group invited to view and comment on.	All
Tony Herbert would like energywatch to give their advice on the support proposed by New NCC to Advice Agencies	Audrey Gallacher
Check statutory requirements on publishing complaints received by companies – does it refer to domestic or business customers as well?	Audrey Gallacher
Send feedback to Neil Avery on his last two slides about 'Company Information Requirements'. What are the issues for suppliers?	Neil Avery to circulate consultation
Company information requirements to be discussed at a future meeting.	Lisa Taylor to add to agenda

## 6. Agenda Item 3: Communications Strategy sub-group, update from Steven Warren (BERR)

6.1. The first meeting of the Consumer Voice Communications Sub-group was held yesterday (02/06/08). Representatives were from: BERR, ERA, EDF Energy, Cornwall Energy Associates, Ofgem, Consumer Direct, Royal Mail, New NCC, Postcomm and the Mail Competition Forum.

6.2. The group will be responsible for strategic overview and co-ordination of communication activities to promote the strands of the Consumer Voice project. Communication activities will largely be public facing, but will also include awareness-raising with stakeholders and partners, i.e. vulnerable consumer groups.

6.3. Each organisation updated the group on their own communication plans and strategy. Consumer Direct will be formulating their marketing and media handling strategy over the next few weeks, the new National Consumer Council start-up body (New NCC) has just appointed a new Head of Communications.

6.4. Industry representatives explained they were awaiting key information on changes to complaints procedure for updating consumer-facing literature in advance of the October 1 commencement date. Both Consumer Direct and New NCC will have a soft launch at first with a hard launch planned for New Year. BERR made clear that it would be important to profile the new changes in consumer advocacy in October to avoid a "message vacuum" and any negative media perceptions of the new structure.

6.5. A core script, containing key messages around the "customer complaints journey" in the postal and energy sectors; in redress, and advocacy will be written by BERR for comment. The aim would be for all partners to refer to this document in their own supporting activity. To help plan ahead, BERR agreed to produce a timeline of activity from end of June to 1 October, which would contain milestones where communication activity by Consumer Direct and new NCC could be built in. This activity would then be supported and complemented by partner organisations.

6.6. The group plans to meet every 2-3 weeks.

Action	Person - By
Circulate "Implementation of Consumer Voice - Communication Strategy" and at next meeting share with the group the timeline for activity.	Steve Warren - 17/06/08

## 7. A.O.B

7.1. Frances Williamson (ERA) briefed the group on the work being carried out by the Coding sub-group. Consumer Direct are confident that they can develop a system. Tom Ballard (Consumer Direct) will circulate early next week a flow chart on the customer journey, the group will meet again on 12 June.

7.2. Jude Cummins was asked to provide an update on the data protection issues, which she has been discussing with the Information Commissioner. *Jude will be on annual leave from 6 - 17 June so will give an update at the meeting to be held on 3 July.*

7.3. **Paul Bland to circulate a paper setting out the proposed definition of micro-enterprise, comments by 11 June.**

## 8. Agenda items for next meeting

8.1. Definition of a business customer. It was agreed at the meeting held on 6 May that a decision on this would be needed by the end of June. **Paul Bland will look into this and advise at the next meeting.**

8.2. Discuss updated 'future working arrangements' paper. Suggestion that there be one single document that has the log and actions from these meetings. **Paul Bland will look into this and advise at the next meeting.**

8.3. Company information requirements for new NCC.

**9. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 17 June at BERR**