

WESTERN POWER 
DISTRIBUTION

Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

Distributed Generation Forum

Cardiff

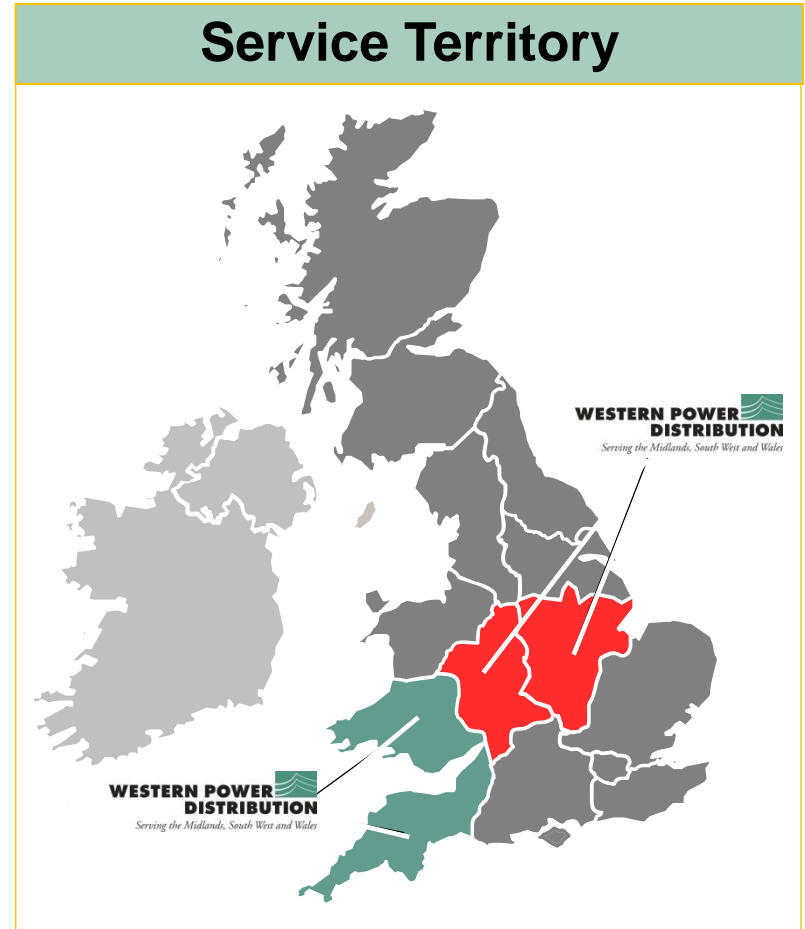
Tuesday 30th October 2012

Robert Symons

Chief Executive

WPD overview

WPD	South West / South Wales	Midlands	Combined
Service area	26,200 km ²	29,300 km ²	55,500 km ²
Utility customers (m)	2.7	5.1	7.8
Network km	85,000	135,000	220,000
Overhead Network (%)	54%	34%	42%
Transformers	92,000	91,000	183,000



DG customer satisfaction

- As part of Ofgem's 'Broad Measure', customers are surveyed across a range of services every month, and companies are ranked according to their performance.
- WPD commissioned Accent to conduct surveys for DG connections quotations and DG connections completed work, modelled on the Broad Measure.
- Objectives were to obtain:
 1. A high-level gauge of WPD's performance relative to the UK connections picture.
 2. A more in-depth understanding of improvement areas for WPD.

DG customer satisfaction survey

- Covered DG work from May 2011 - May 2012.
 - Enabled comparison against Broad Measure data for same period.

- 374 surveys conducted across 4 WPD licence areas.
 - Delivered statistically robust results.

- Surveys comprised of:
 - Quantitative questions: e.g. *“On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied were you with the time it took to get you the quotation?”*
 - Related qualitative questions: e.g. *“What would have been the ideal time taken for you to receive the quotation?”*

Key findings

- WPD (DG) ranked 1-4 relative to the industry Broad Measure connections survey.
 - Overall professionalism of the workforce (mean score of 9.33).
 - The time in which the work was completed (mean score of 9.02).
 - How well the requirements were understood (mean score of 8.91).
- Satisfaction is high – 53% (DG quotations) and 60% (completed work), gave at least 9 out of 10.
- On the whole, DG satisfaction is slightly higher than satisfaction for all connections work.
- 28% did not go ahead after the quote because the costs were prohibitive.
- The ideal timescale to receive a quotation is 5 working days/1week.

The key issues – “Top 5” WPD improvements

Improvement	Evidence / detailed service aspect
1. Better communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent & proactive contact (22%) • Providing updates (8%)
2. Breakdown/explain the costs in more detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full breakdown of costs (20%) • Full explanation of what charges comprise (11%)
3. Make the quotations simpler/easier to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simpler terminology/less jargon (18%)
4. Make it clearer who to contact initially / quicker to speak to relevant person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A direct line/connections number (16%) • A single point of contact (14%) • Clearer contact details on website (5%)
5. A quicker overall process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quicker to provide quotation (10%) • Quicker response to communication (11%) • Arranging/completing work (14%)

The key issues

WPD's satisfaction surveys

A quicker overall process

Make the quotations (and process) simpler/easier to understand

Breakdown/explain the costs in more detail

Better communication



DG forum (2011) messages

The application and connection process is long winded and complicated.

Customers do not feel there is enough information available to them to understand how best to go about applying for a connection, and the ways in which they could minimise the cost of their connection.

Customers do not feel they get enough detail in the connection quotes to allow them to challenge DNO costs.

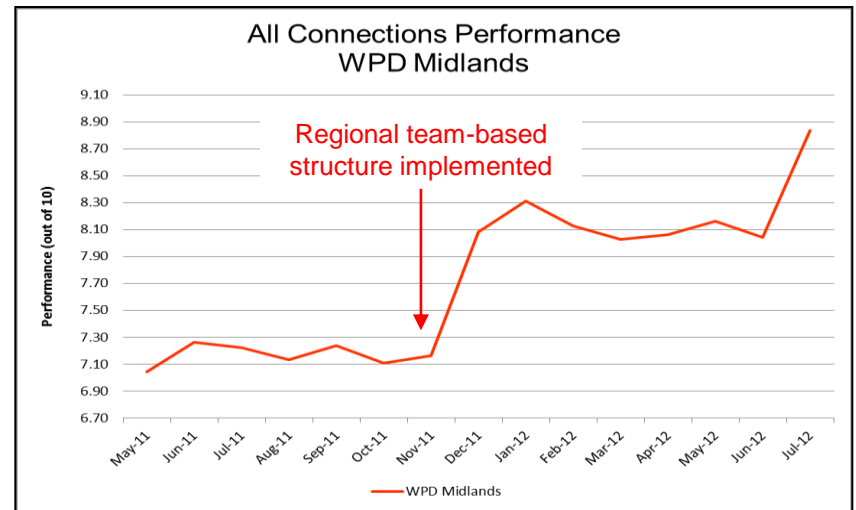
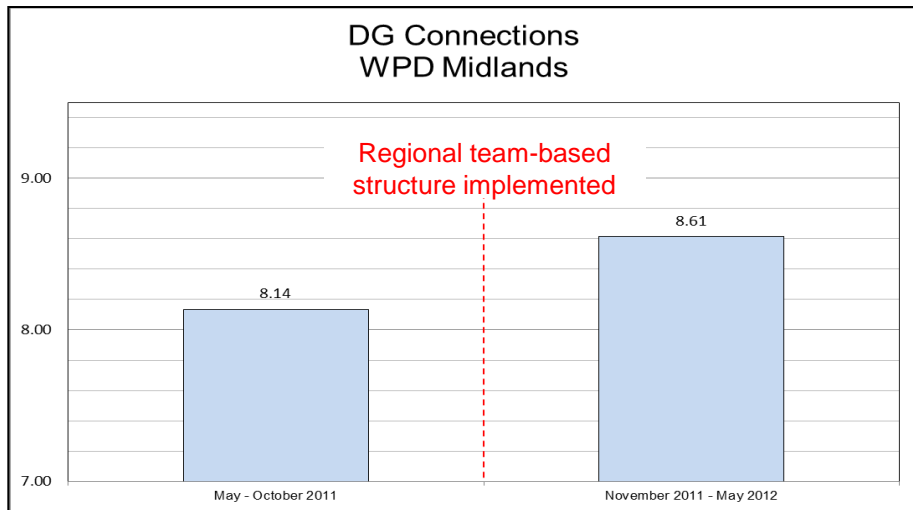
With a few notable exceptions, the service provided and efforts made to engage with DG customers falls well below expectations.

There is inconsistency in the approach taken by different DNOs, both to the connection process and to the application of technical standards associated with a DG connection.

Speed

The application and connection process is long winded and complicated.

- 'Contact Customer' initiative.
 - All customers contacted within two days of applying for a quotation.
 - Explain the process and next steps, gather all requirements, give approx. timescales.
- Performance monitoring and increased staff levels.
 - Monitor average time to quote and overall work volumes.
 - Increased staff levels to produce connections offers in response to increased volumes (e.g. S.West)
- Geographic team-based structures.
 - Ensure contact with the local team responsible for the work from the outset.
 - Any issues or queries can be quickly dealt with by the Team Manager.



Clarity of information

Customers do not feel there is enough information available to them to understand how best to go about applying for a connection, and the ways in which they could minimise the cost of their connection.

- New micro-generation guide produced with Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE).
- CSE training for WPD Contact Centre staff to handle renewable generation enquiries.
- Information online for small and large-scale embedded generation.
- DG Generation Capacity Map on our website.
 - Provides indicative generation capacity data to assist developers form initial plans before submitting formal connection request.
 - Currently covers WPD Midlands, with plans to extend to all WPD areas.

The screenshot shows a website titled "Connecting Microgeneration and other new technology". A prominent orange banner asks, "Why does WPD need to know if I wish to install and connect microgeneration?". Below this is a "Technology overviews" section. It includes a sub-section for "Solar photovoltaics" with text explaining that PV systems use solar cells to generate electricity directly from sunlight. It notes that a typical domestic-scale system may be rated at 2kW and with high efficiency 'monocrystalline' silicon cells would cover an area of around 16 square metres. It also mentions that most systems are grid-connected and use an inverter. Other forms of PV technology, such as solar tiles, are also mentioned. A photograph of solar panels on a roof is included. Another sub-section, "Small scale wind", explains that wind turbines convert wind energy into rotational motion, which is then converted into electricity by a generator. It notes that small scale turbines are most commonly used on buildings and trees.

Explanation of costs

Customers do not feel they get enough detail in the connection quotes to allow them to challenge DNO costs.

- Currently developing detailed connection offer cost breakdowns.
 - Itemised costs, explanations and cost apportionment.
- WPD provide a single point of contact for customers who are able to explain in detail the breakdown of the quotation.
- Currently developing technical specification website pages (for Competition in Connections (CiC) & DG connections).
 - Information on technical requirements for work we do not carry out.

Customer Engagement

With a few notable exceptions, the service provided and efforts made to engage with DG customers falls well below expectations.

- 'Connections surgeries' at WPD local offices.
 - Six month trial in S.Wales supported by Country Landowners Association (CLA).
 - First surgery mid October 2012. Advertised via CLA and on WPD website.
- Landowner & DG developer engagement.
 - CLA and NFU sponsored Renewable Energy Exchange events at Builth Wells and Exeter. Midlands planned in 2013.
 - WPD hosted stand, Q&A session, one-on-one and roundtable discussions.
- Face-to-face meetings for customers with multiple connections.
 - Meeting with Distribution Manager and Planner.
 - Explain end-to-end process (including system capacity discussions and approximate costs), with direct contact details given to senior WPD manager.



Workshop discussion topics:

- Connection process and timescales.
- What drives connection costs.
- Connection requirements (technical, consents needed etc) for different types and sizes of generation.
- What is driving increase in DG connections activity and volumes.
- Challenges to connecting increasing amounts of generation.
- Obligations, regulations and standards WPD need to meet.



Inconsistency across DNOs

There is inconsistency in the approach taken by different DNOs, both to the connection process and to the application of technical standards associated with a DG connection.

- Consistent application information
 - Adopted ENA's industry standard DG application form.

- Consistent technical application and connections processes
 - Small-scale DG: Co-working with all DNOs has led to new engineering recommendations G83/2.

- Consistent commissioning requirements
 - Large-scale DG: Co-working with all DNOs and generators underway on G59/2.

Summary

- We're not perfect.
- We know how we can improve.
- Work is already underway to address the issues.
- Happy to take feedback.