



Meeting Notes

Consumer Bills and Communications Roundtable

Seventh meeting of the Consumer Bills and Communications Roundtable Group	Date and time of Meeting Location	3 rd April 09:00 – 11:30 Ofgem, 9 Millbank
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The meeting note below lays out the main discussion points, agreements and action points for the seventh meeting of the Consumer Bills and Communications Roundtable Group (CBCRG).

Attendees

Anne Pardoe	- Citizens Advice
Gillian Cooper	- Consumer Focus
Dave Manley	- SSE
Mark Sommerfeld	- LoCO2
Alun Rees	- Energy UK
Jemma Baker	- Ofgem (Chair)
Stew Horne	- Ofgem
Victoria Volossov	- Ofgem



Meeting Notes

Key discussion and action points

The group updated action points from previous meetings, established a long-term framework to evaluate new proposed content requirements for communications, and discussed comments on a list of terms for standardisation. Louise van Rensburg has moved to a new role, and will no longer act as chair. Jemma Baker will act as an interim chair.

Please see below for more details.

Actions from previous meetings

- **Action** – complete: Ofgem to research the flexibility of the implementation of the EU directive(s) on consumption comparison information.
- **Action**– complete: Ofgem to follow up with the Networks division whether providing a postal address for the distributor and rota disconnection information is still appropriate.
- **Action** – complete: Ofgem to follow up with the team conducting the change of supplier work and provide more details on the regulatory requirements for MPRN/MPAN numbers.

The group's next meetings will be on 1 May 2013 and 29 May 2013.



Meeting Notes

Consumer Bills and Communications Roundtable Group (CBCRG) 3 April 2013

Energy UK confirmed one of its members is currently conducting new consumer research on caloric value information on bills.

Energy UK agreed to send the template created by Ofgem on the bundling of communications to its members to complete.

Ofgem confirmed the inclusion of MPAN/MPRN numbers and the formatting requirements are currently set out in the relevant code processes and suppliers can raise a modification if they consider necessary.

Ofgem confirmed a representative from the Distribution Network Operators will be joining the next session of the working group to discuss issues raised on postal addresses and rota disconnection.

Ofgem confirmed that Louise van Rensburg, former chair of the group, had moved on from her role. Acting chair for this meeting was Jemma Baker, Senior Economist in Ofgem's Retail Markets Team.

1. Group work on purposes of supplier communications

In previous meetings the group worked on a table that maps the purposes, sub-purposes and regulatory content of supplier communications. The group continued consideration of elements of the bill and their usefulness. Specifically we discussed the calorific values, the consumption comparison, postal addresses, rota disconnection numbers, MPAN/MPRN numbers and groupings of information across supplier communications. See actions at the end of this document.

2. Future framework to evaluate new proposed legislation

The group discussed the role of the CBCRG over time. The group decided it should reconvene when its members feel that this can add value to other, ad-hoc future market developments or policy proposals. It also decided to establish a framework based on its experience, which can be used by DECC or Ofgem to evaluate new proposed legislation.

The group considered this framework can be used by Ofgem/DECC as a checklist when developing policy. One participant thought the framework could serve as best practice guidance for government and regulators considering information related requirements on communications. The members of the CBCRG stressed that the framework itself should be able to adapt to change, ie should be open for periodic reviews.

Framework	Factors to consider
Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a need for a new communication? Or is it a change to an existing communication?• Does the primary purpose of the communication align with the purposes of the proposed new information on the communication?• If not, does the communication have sub-purposes? If yes, do they align with the proposed new information on the

	communication?
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whose behaviour does this communication or proposed new information aim to influence? How do you intend consumers to interact with the new information?
Assessing success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will we evaluate the success of this new information if introduced on the communication? If implemented, what lessons have we learnt from the introduction of this information? How will the proposed new information and/or new rules adapt to future change of communications?
Holistic approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan how the communication will look following the introduction of the new content and how it is intended to interact with other communications. Consider bundling information as an effective alternative to creating new communications. Produce visual examples. Pay special attention to existing prominence requirements, how the introduction of new information would interact with those, and whether a wider review of priorities of information within the communication would be necessary.
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would the presentation of the information on this communication fit with the presentation of information on other channels? After content changes, is the communication still consistent? Ie do the format, location of the pieces of information, and the language still fit together?
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weigh costs of the introduction of the information against the benefits of the change.

3. Standardisation of Terms discussion¹

Participants commented on an initial list of about 25 possible terms for standardisation. They strongly agreed that this was an important piece of work. In addition, they suggested including some other terms (ie bill/statement of account, DTS, Time of Use, meter readings). The group decided that for now, it would be better to leave dual fuel undefined and to first examine the impact of new RMR rules. Participants agreed to standardise tariff terms, such as evergreen, standard, fixed term etc. They thought a definition of kilowatt-hours might need to evolve over time, in particular if it included a practical example. They believed this may be easiest to update if included in an existing industry code of practice.

The group discussed whether bills could use Value Added Tax (VAT) inclusive pricing as standard, which could reduce the number of lines needed for calculations on bills. We

¹ For an updated list of terms discussed, please see the separate document.

reached no conclusion but participants might explore this issue individually. Also, it was unclear if “managed credit” under proposed final RMR rules would be classified as a tariff or payment method.

The group agreed that a list of standardised terms would agree the term and the definition of the term, but not the exact wording of that definition. The aim is to create a uniform list of terms used consistently across industry, which at the same time is flexible enough to adapt to future changes.

Some suppliers are carrying out consumer research which will be available over the coming months. This might usefully inform the list of terms for standardisation.

Actions

- **Action – Ofgem** to check how suppliers present calorific value on their bill
- **Action – Ofgem** to clarify whether ‘managed credit’ under proposed final RMR rules would be classified as a tariff or payment method.
- **Action – Suppliers** to consider whether they would like to take forward work on MPANs/MPRNs through the Code process
- **Action – Ofgem** to invite a representative from DNOs to the next CBCRG on 1 May to speak about postal addresses and rota disconnection numbers on bills
- **Action – EnergyUK**, to find out how large and small suppliers package their communications, according to the table template contained in the minutes from 26 February
- **Action – EnergyUK** to send out a proposed outline for the group report before the next CBCRG on 1 May
- **Action** – Standardisation of terms: **group members** will email their comments to Ofgem
- **Action – Ofgem** Standardisation of terms: Ofgem will examine current practice on how suppliers distinguish between customer readings and supplier readings (ie what different names do they use)
- **Action – Ofgem** Standardisation of terms: Ofgem will check if there is an existing list for smart metering terms
- **Action** – Standardisation of terms: **EnergyUK** to ask suppliers for current practice and existing consumer testing. In particular the terms prepayment/ pay-as-you-go; current practice on meter readings (supplier, estimated, customer reading etc)
- **Action** – Purposes of supplier communications document: **Ofgem** to update the table setting out purposes to ensure it maps regulatory requirements to the content items.