

The Questionnaire – For customers

Hello. Thank you for taking the time to complete our questionnaire.

We hope all the questions are clear, but if you have any difficulties please email connections@ofgem.gov.uk.

Once you have completed the questionnaire please send it back to us to the email address above. You need to return the completed questionnaire to us by 31 July 2014.

After we have read your answers we might want to have a chat with you to understand a bit more. We'll try and do this in August.

Part 1 - About you

Question	Your response
What is your name?	
What is your position?	
What are your contact details?	

Part 2 - About your business

Question	Your response
What is your company's name?	Sunderland City council
What is the nature of your company's business?	Local Authority
Why do you need to make new connections to the electricity distribution network?	New buildings, regeneration and street lighting

What past experience does your business have in getting new connections to the electricity distribution network?	This can be varied dependent on the type of supply. We have not used IDNO's because of the timescales involved
What areas of the country does your business have facilities in that have required new connections to the electricity distribution network?	North East, Northern Power Grid area
What type of connections do you make to the distribution network?	Unmetered and metered LV and HV

Part 3 - About how you get a new electricity connections to the local grid.

Question	Your response
Does your business manage the process of getting a connection using your own staff, or do you use a consultant to guide you through the process?	We would normally manage this process ourselves or in the case of unmetered supplies we could use our PFI Provider for street lighting
What issues are important for you when getting a connection? Please rank in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 7 the least important.	<div>4 The cost of connection</div> <div>5 Customer service</div> <div>2 The time it takes to issue a connection quote</div>

	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 The time in which a connection can be made <input type="checkbox"/> 1 The certainty around the cost of connection and the timetable for delivery <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Ability to offer innovative connection solutions <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Other _____(please specify)
In the past have you had quotes for connection(s) from a range of companies, or solely from the local DNO? Please tick one box.	<input type="checkbox"/> A range of quotes – <u>please go to part 4</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x Just a quote from the local DNO – <u>please go to part 5</u>

Part 4 – About how you choose between a range of quotes.

Question	Your response
You've indicated that you normally receive a range of quotes for connection, both from your local DNO and other independent connection providers. When deciding which quote to accept, what factors do you consider?	
Please rank these factors that you described in the previous question in order of importance to you, with 1	1. 2. 3.

being the most important.	4. 5. Etc.
Please give an indication of who you have tended to award work to.	<p>Please tick one box only.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always the DNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mainly the DNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> About half and half between the DNO and others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mainly an ICP or IDNO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always an ICP or IDNO</p>
What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?	
How has your view on who to award work to changed with experience?	
When would you only seek a quote from the local DNO?	

Part 5 – About why you chose to use the local DNO

Before engaging with this process, were you aware that you could use a company other than the local DNO to complete your connection?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What do you think are the benefits in using a company other than the local DNO to provide a connection?	Achieving competitive prices and timescales
What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?	In the event of a problem the customer may be left in limbo due to responsibilities not being clearly defined. This could be delays during the works or uncertainty regarding who to go to if a problem occurs later.
What would need to change in order for you to use a different connections provider?	Increased certainty and transparency throughout the process

Part 6 - About how the cost of connections informs the location of new business development

How much opportunity is there for you to freely choose the location of new business developments?	Limited
How big a factor is the cost of connection in your decision on where to locate your business?	Usually small but costs associated with improving the network could potentially be significant on larger developments

Part 7- Other comments

The questions we've asked are designed for you to give us important information for our review. We'd also welcome any other comments about the market for new electricity connections, or problems you've experienced.

There is an ongoing issue regarding supplies and whether they should be metered or unmetered and the "500 Watt" rule. Clarity on this would be appreciated. Normally this issue affects supplies to street lighting and traffic signals installation. If a meter is required then a mandatory smart meter should be installed. We recently have had a dumb meter installed on a busy roundabout and the meter operator is refusing to read the meter on the grounds of Health and Safety. This seems bizarre when it was they who installed the meter!