

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?	Cumbria County 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?	Services to new and replacement street lighting and illuminated signs.

What past experience does your business have in getting new connections to the electricity distribution network?	Considerable, the Council manages in the region of 50,000 street lights and illuminated signs. In addition we manage over 200 traffic signal installations and additional highway power supplies. This results in several hundred service alterations annually.
What areas of the country does your business have facilities in that have required new connections to the electricity distribution network?	We are restricted to the county boundary of Cumbria.
What type of connections do you make to the distribution network?	New service, disconnection of service and transfer of service for both metred and unmetered supplies.

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?	In general this process is managed in house by our operational teams. On some larger scale contracts and schemes this function may be transferred to the Contractor.
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>1 The cost of connection</div> <div>4 Customer service</div> <div>5 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"/> 2 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"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> X A range of quotes – <u>please go to part 4</u> <input type="checkbox"/> 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?	Cost of connection Timescale for connection Customer service
Please rank these factors that you described in the previous question in order of importance to you, with 1	1. Cost of connection 2. Timescale for connection 3. Customer service

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Always an ICP or IDNO</p>
What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?	We do not feel there are any risks associated with using an ICP and are considering entering into additional agreements to secure greater savings and improved service. However, we do not use or encourage the use of IDNOs for service connections due to the increased financial and administrative burden they impose on the Council.
How has your view on who to award work to changed with experience?	Yes, never ever, ever use the DNO (ENW) under any circumstances! They are over priced, under perform and in my experience obstructive and unhelpful (with a few exceptions).
When would you only seek a quote from the local DNO?	When my body lays lifeless and smouldering (probably from coming into contact with a defective DNO cut-out).

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?

☐

Yes

☐

No

What do you think are the benefits in using a company other than the local DNO to provide a connection?

What do you think are the risks/problems with using an independent connections provider?

What would need to change in order for you to use a different connections provider?

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?

n/a

How big a factor is the cost of connection in your decision on where to locate your business?

n/a

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.

A very real issue for Cumbria as part of the ENW region is that ENW are very "Manchestercentric" which is reflected in the rates they charge for connections and the quality of the service they provide. It is quite clear from discussions our operations teams have with ENW that they are not really interested in providing a connections service in Cumbria in general and especially the more rural areas of the county.