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Our ref

Your ref

Date

-

14 May 2015

Dear Sarah

Review of the Priority Services Register – Update and next steps

I am writing on behalf of Western Power Distribution (South Wales) plc, Western Power Distribution (South West) plc, Western Power Distribution (East Midlands) plc and Western Power Distribution (West Midlands) plc.

WPD welcomes the opportunity to provide further feedback on Ofgem's review of the Priority Services Register (PSR). Below you will find WPD's response to the specific questions posed. WPD also contributed to, and support, the ENA response to this consultation. Our response is not confidential.

Question 1 - Do stakeholders agree that 'families with children under 5' should be added as a specified eligible "core" group to receive additional help during interrupted supply and for the provision of free gas appliance safety checks?

Yes. We welcome the addition of 'families with children under 5' as a "core" group. This group has already been identified as vulnerable by central government and therefore eligible for additional financial support to help keep warm / help with fuel bills, via Cold Weather Payments and the Warm Home Discount payment. Our direct experience over recent years, working closely with other agencies, such as Citizens' Advice, Energy Saving Trust, Centre for Sustainable Energy and National Energy Action, has highlighted that this group is likely to suffer as a consequence of living in a cold home, and therefore when the power is off. We would like to be able to offer our PSR service, which includes our 'Power Up' fuel poverty referrals projects, to this group as well.

Question 2 - Do stakeholders agree that the specified eligibility covering elderly people for the services related to safety should be changed from 'pensionable age' to '75 and over'?

Our experience of working with organisations that support older people, including Age UK, British Red Cross and RVS, demonstrates to us that there is a need to provide a more targeted service for older customers because of the likelihood that their health and well-being will be adversely affected by living in a cold home or being without power. However, we agree it should not be assumed that just because a customer is over 75 that their vulnerability is increased. We also agree that age continues to be just one of

the factors of vulnerability and whilst we are happy with Ofgem's proposal to use '75 and over' WPD would continue to add customers over 60 to our register should they request it.

Question 3 - Do stakeholders consider that pregnant women should be added as a specified eligible "core" group receiving free gas safety checks?

Yes. Although this addition won't affect us directly, we do support the inclusion because it fits in with our attempts to provide the PSR service for customers with a transient vulnerability, i.e. those with a new born baby.

If there are any aspects of this letter that you would like to discuss further then please contact Alex Wilkes at awilkes@westernpower.co.uk or on 01332 827647.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AS', written over a horizontal line.

ALISON SLEIGHTHOLM
Regulatory & Government Affairs Manager