



Name of Group: Smart Meter Roll Out

Meeting Number: 1

30 October 10:00-12:00

Attendees:

Meeting Chair: Lois Gill (LG) Everflow

Members: Cillian McCarthy (CM) Everflow, Mark Ashford (MA) Wave Utilities, Jamie Johnson-Mitchell (JJ) Thames Water, Michelle Thompson (MT) Anglian Water, Paul Baker (PB) Business Stream, Mark Whittall (MW) Water Plus, Sam Byrom (SB) Yorkshire Water, Liz D'Arcy (LD) MOSL, Lucy Byrnes (LB) CCW, Stan Petrov (SP) Ofwat, Paul Heron (PH) Castle Water, Robbie Smith (RS) Pennon Water, Tim Mead (TM) Waterscan, Adrian Smith (AS) MOSL

Secretariat: Sam Mawby (SM) MOSL

Agenda Item	Meeting Minutes
1. Welcome and Apologies	LG welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Smart Meter Roll Out subgroup. Apologies were received from Kye Smith (United Utilities), Simon Bennett (MOSL), Simone Bhagat (DEFRA).
2. Purpose of Subgroup	LG outlined the background and context for the subgroup. The subgroup agreed its purpose: 'To document an agreed approach to customer engagement before, during and after the Non-Household (NHH) smart meter roll out which clearly set out the role and responsibility of retailer and wholesaler, with the aim of achieving national consistency.' Trading Parties recognised the importance of customer engagement as critical to leveraging the benefits of smart meters. A clear consistent plan was required to deliver this. It was important to ensure that the NHH customer experiences of the smart meter roll out were positive and well managed or the anticipated benefits would be diluted. The subgroup acknowledged that some wholesalers already had plans in place to roll out smart meters.

	<p>Members recognised the National Metering Strategy and the foundation it provided but noted that the subgroup would not revisit or look to rework the content of the strategy.</p> <p>Proposed Approach/Timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ‘task and finish’ approach (anticipated that most of the work would take place at the 13 November workshop with follow up virtual meetings arranged to work on any specific issues/points of contention as needed) • Develop written draft guidance by mid Jan 2025 • Consult on guidance with market end Jan/Feb 2025 • Aim to publish guidance by April 2025
<p>3.Scope of Work</p>	<p>The subgroup discussed the scope of its work noting the following points:</p> <p>Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to have commonality but there will need to be some flexibility to allow for Trading Party preferences. • Aim to create one customer journey with a defined list of exceptions and how these might be approached e.g. customer size, multi-site, vacant customers, disengaged customers. • Aim to develop minimum standards that all Trading Parties would be prepared to commit to. • Acknowledged importance for customers to have the same, seamless experience wherever possible. • Develop a common language for communication for a process that should be clear and easy to follow for customer and Trading Party alike. <p>Design/Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider lessons learned from the energy sector smart meter roll out. • Consider how Bilaterals Hub could be used to make the customer journey smoother. • Consider potential to look at quick start/early opportunities to move agreed areas forward in advance of guidance being published. • Potential need for three stages in terms of customer communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre-installation communication regarding what will happen/myth busting. ○ Communication during installation. ○ Communication following installation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to ensure a customer understands who to contact if there is an issue. • Need for clarity around customer data and how wholesalers and retailers could work together to share customer information e.g. for installation purposes, to deliver a good customer experience and be better equipped to meet individual customer needs. • Need to articulate the minimum standard essential communication points in that customer journey. • Potential for using standardised wording in customer letters to help to minimise complaints while still being mindful of competition element. • Noted that effective communications might include graphics and videos. It could be helpful to develop a common set of materials to avoid duplication of effort. • Need to consider that retailers of different sizes may have different appetites for customer engagement depending on their resources or priorities. • Broad agreement that a separate approach for different sized customers was not needed although there was recognition of the different challenges e.g. a multinational operation with one retailer across multiple wholesaler regions compared to a single small business. • Acknowledged that for larger customers the process was not as personal as it might be for smaller customers. If the engagement was not managed well for smaller customers that was likely to drive complaints. • Noted a number of issues including internal/external meters, LUMS, unmetered customers and primary charges. Care would need to be taken not to over complicate any guidance or inadvertently widen the scope of the work whilst still acknowledging that these were identified issues. The subgroup considered that these issues would be referenced with the exceptions. <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subgroup considered voluntary vs mandatory mechanisms to achieve its aim. • The subgroup agreed that developing a good practice guide (voluntary mechanism) was the most appropriate solution at this stage noting, that these had been very successful in the past. • A mandatory option via a Code Change could be considered in the future if necessary.
<p>3. Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p>13th November 2024 10:00-16:00 Everflow Offices, Peterlee</p>