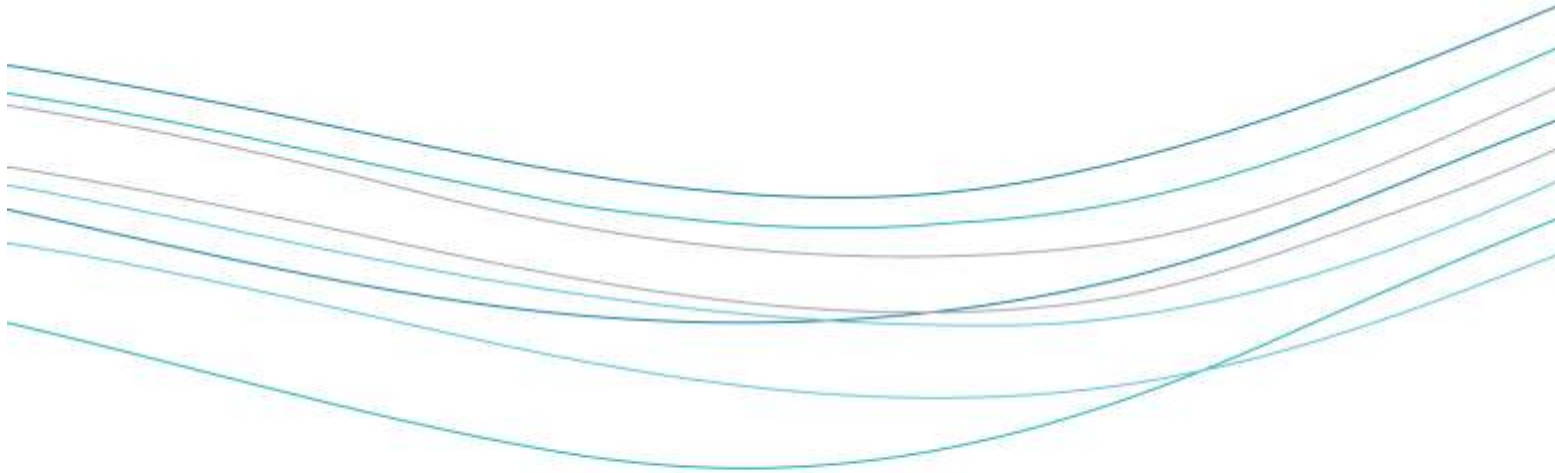


Operational Advisory Group (OAG)

21 September 2021 meeting

Minutes



Operational Advisory Group Minutes of 21 September 2021 meeting

Attendees

OAG Members and Guests

- ◆ Tom Wells (TW), Wholesaler
- ◆ Matthew Garfield (MG), Wholesaler
- ◆ Frances Lickley (FL), Retailer
- ◆ Jon Fuller (JF), Wholesaler
- ◆ Deborah Morton (DMo), Wholesaler
- ◆ Sian Forward (SF), Wholesaler
- ◆ Louise Durbin (LD), Wholesaler
- ◆ Julie-Ann Anderson (JAA), Retailer
- ◆ Patricia Quintana (PQ), Wholesaler
- ◆ David Buchan (DB), Retailer
- ◆ David Moss (DM), Retailer
- ◆ Onkar Singh (OS), Wholesaler
- ◆ Helen Bennett (HB), Wholesaler

Apologies

- ◆ Ashley Connors (AC), Wholesaler
- ◆ Lewis Orr (LO), Retailer
- ◆ Michael Floyd (MF), Wholesaler
- ◆ Paul Baker (PB), Retailer
- ◆ Rosie Rand (RR), Wholesaler
- ◆ Laura Morgan (LM), Wholesaler
- ◆ Kat Grimley (KG), Wholesaler
- ◆ Gavin Shirtcliffe (GS), Wholesaler
- ◆ Jenny Ansell (JA), Wholesaler
- ◆ Madeleine Moores (MM), Retailer
- ◆ Greg Fry (GF), Wholesaler

MOSL

- ◆ Evan Joannette (EJ), Chair
- ◆ Chris Dawson (CD)
- ◆ Matthew Weaver (MW)
- ◆ Chris Chiorean (CC)
- ◆ Kevin Fearn (KF)
- ◆ Mayuresh Tamboli (MT)
- ◆ Oliver Robins (OR)
- ◆ Ivy Mandinyanya (IM)
- ◆ Angie Bennett (AB) – Secretariat

Agenda

- ◆ Minutes and Actions (15 mins)
- ◆ B3 (SLA) (30 mins)
- ◆ F5 (SLA) (30 mins)
- ◆ C2/C3 (process) (30 mins)
- ◆ AOB (15 minutes)
 - Jeopardy Management
 - B10 and G4 – in scope?
 - G2 update

Meeting notes

1. Minutes & Actions

EJ welcomed members and confirmed agenda.

2. B3 process (flow chart in supporting materials)

CD guided members through the latest B3 process flow which now included the standard or non-standard installation which is similarly included for B1 and B7. CD questioned members on their preferred SLA preference:

2.1 SLAs

Option 1

Standard route –merge CMOS updates with operational work to create a single SLA as per processes that have already been designed with OAG. If a wholesaler is late in submitting the site visit dates they do not get extra time in regards to meter exchange CMOS update.

Non-standard route –SLA 2 paused at the point at which the quote is sent. If the wholesaler was late in submitting, they would only have the days that remained (i.e if submitted on day 8 they would only have 17 days left to complete meter exchange). If the quote is rejected the wholesaler will have another 10 days to decide. SLA 2 will continue if the quote is accepted.

A member noted that this gives Wholesalers lots of time to update CMOS if the exchange was completed early. **CD** noted that Retailers/customers are most concerned about when they can get a bill sorted out, not just the physical work. Processes are being re-designed with SLA that capture when ALL work is done. If we think the wholesaler is outperforming the SLAs then we can adjust in future.

A member noted that previously OAG preference was for a month for retailer to accept or reject a quote. The member also notes that quote timeframes seem to vary across processes and we should consider if/why we should vary from a norm.

EJ pressed OAG to come to a conclusion about a new one month or current three month quote time frame for the retailer to make a decision – either accept or reject.

Several retail members stated that three months is too long. Practices are in place to get this sorted within a month with the customer and where more time is needed, with communication, the Wholesaler could be asked to defer. **CD** noted the deferral would not work that way because the

step in question is awaiting a retailer action but he would check on the practicality of using a deferral CD to check.

ACTION: MOSL to investigate technical feasibility of the Wholesaler deferring a quote timeframe if the Retailer/customer cannot reach a B3 quote decision within a month.

An OAG member asked if this would conflict with MPS. CD stated there is a duplication with MPS (as there was for B5) and that MPS was a workstream that needed to be dealt with separately via discussions with MPC.

OUTCOME: On balance OAG members agreed to trim quote period down to 30 business days which was in line with the maximum deferral period.

Option 2, Creates two separated SLAs – an 8 day and a 19 day.

if a non-standard is sent on day 8 then SLA will be re-set to 27 business days. This process is already quite elongated, up to 60 days potentially.

OAG members thought it is long total day count, but should re-set again after acceptance. Some TPs use an independent company for tests.

A member asked if why not align processes and standard SLAs. One process a site visit SLA is 12 days and one is 8 days. CD advised that with supply verification there is a lot more work, whereas identifying is whether it is standard or non-standard is not. There is possibility that a site visit is not required depending on data wholesaler holds in their system.

On the basis of OAG feedback, CD will redraft this into an option 3 which follow the same flow as B1 – reset SLA and SLA2 and update business requirement document.

OUTCOME: Members proposing an option 3. CD to return to next meeting with a new proposal.

2.2. B3 Quotations: What happens when the Retailer rejects the quote

CD discussed two follow-on options – Wholesaler could Reject the service request or complete it.

Proposing that there is still option for retailer to resubmit where it would start again or cancel/close. When we move to complete of any process, the retailer has the final say in regards as to whether they are happy or not with that completion and have a choice to renegotiate or not. OAG members okay with this.

Members prefer that from the Wholesaler's side, the request is Completed even if the quote is not agreed. Rejection implies that the requests as not taken up and worked through, where it clearly is in the case of a quote being generated. Rejection gives wrong conclusion message.

A member looked for clarification on reasons that a 'retailer can re-submit or cancel'. **KF** agreed it should look at reason codes to ensure they are fit for purpose for the B3 process.

EJ noted that the language may be something that the CAG has concerns over. Rejection of a quote is not the same as rejecting a service request. Potentially could explore alternative wording like "decline" rather than "reject".

OUTCOME: The OAG preference is for a service request to Complete with status “quote not agreed” rather than be rejected by the Wholesaler.

3. F5 Process – Complaints (SLAs in supporting materials)

CD reminded members about previous changes to F5; ability for wholesalers to submit requests; removing F5B SLA and other SLA changes, and removing five day acknowledgement (in lieu of accept and reject built into the hub); linked follow-on process to follow complaint to completeness; response template; and new data items.

CD noted that in discussions with Ofwat they challenged to ensure the process was compatible with TPs meeting GSS, though to make the distinction that some process behaviours, like deferrals wouldn't prevent GSS from applying. Proposing to change language away from “substantive response” referenced in GSS and changing wording to “complaint response”.

Proposing a new data item which we are proposing which is complaint start date (date received) on which other SLA activity would be based. A reminder that F5 currently requires a retailer to submit request within one business day of complaint. Wholesaler to acknowledge within five business days and respond within eight business days.

Option 1 proposes that when wholesaler raises a complaint, their SLA will start on the date entered in complaint received date, not the submission date, to encourage quick entry onto the hub and maximising the nine days they have to respond to retailer. This leaves retailer one day to respond to customer (if necessary).

For retailer raised complaints have to raise within 1 business day. However, the wholesaler's OPS SLA won't start until the Retailer submits the complaint. In this way, the Wholesaler is not penalised if the retailer submits late.

Option 2 proposes that there is still a complaint received date for both trading parties but we start OPS SLA from date submission for both parties. It is simpler but doesn't incentivise the Wholesaler as Option 1 does.

CD also questioned if there was any desire to make an SLA for eight days from receipt for Wholesaler to respond. OAG suggests that the current 9 days is fine. Shortening by a day seemed unfair to Wholesalers.

OUTCOME: OAG consensus is a preference for Option 1 is best and that the nine day response SLA for Wholesaler-raised F5s is appropriate. Also agree that there should be tracking from date complaint is received.

4. C2/C3 process. Recommendation to merge the two processes. (flow chart in supporting materials)

KF asked OAG members to consider a proposal to merge these processes. They differ by a single outgoing letter to the customer, depending if a Retailer is identified or not. This could be handled through process conditionality. KF walked the group through the process flow.

CD notes that customers who appoint a retailer can end the 21 day SLA sooner. If the SLA expires then at that point the appointment or decision will be made as per existing rules.

Some members noted that C2/C3 can discover that what was assumed to be a gap site is actually an illegal connection which needs disconnection and this may need trapping as a completion outcome. **CD** asked if this could be accomplished with a follow-on process. OAG members did not support that the process is a mandatory follow-up, but in fact is a different process altogether, one that Wholesalers can initiate. However, they agreed ORID linking would help.

A member noted that guidance might help to make clear when a new process needed to be initiated. The member also noted that the process should allow for multiple visits if a disconnection investigation is necessary.

A member noted that if the premise is a legitimate gap site, but also illegally connected, TPs would be compelled to create a SPID, only to disconnect it. Makes more sense for temporary, rather than permanent disconnection. Another member noted this might be something to consider as the front end of the I3 or I4 process. OAG members agreed that for now, C2/C3 only needs to end with a completed outcome of “disconnection required”, either temporary or permanent.

A member asked what happens if a site visit happens before the Wholesaler sends a gap site letter? Another member noted that OPS triggers are hung off a letter, rather than a visit. Some wholesalers have historically had to make a second visit to satisfy OPS. Several OAG members supporting the idea of decoupling the letter from the OPS makes more sense. The letter becomes a non-OPS KPI.

A Wholesaler member asked whether any Retailers routinely do an initial gap site visits. A retailer mentioned that occasionally these arise as part of a vacancy trace. The Wholesaler member suggested that we consider some parity between the processes in terms of visit requirements.

A Wholesaler noted that a C2 is often raised on the back of another process or is a household with extensive history, so sometimes site visits are not necessary.

A Wholesaler noted that where meter is installed, this creates more work than when a meter is not required. Another member agreed, as this requires another visit and a reading to satisfy MPS7.

A wholesaler proposed 22BD to complete confirmation of gap site and any remedial work, including meter install. But you have another 8BD SLA to provide confirmation via a letter. Resolves the two visit scenario. **CD** noted this sounds similar to the standard / non standard scenario in regards the wholesaler has 8 days to decide whether it is a gap site or not and then send letter within those 8 days. So the 22 days is started from when the request is submitted. Either starts at submission or after eight days. If you have the eight day SLA, then you have two SLAs which are 22 days, one is operational requirement and one is the letter requirement.

A wholesale member asked how valuable a letter is, after hearing from other members they're rarely responded to. **EJ** noted that it gives the customer choice, even if not acted upon. Another member suggested that customer just get assigned to a retailer and then given a choice after. A retailer member noted that customers probably wouldn't be keen on being compelled to join the retailer who ratted them out to the GAP site process.

OUTCOME: OAG members generally supported a combined C2/C3 process. Disconnection processes should be ORID linked but not be a mandatory follow-on. Strong views from OAG members that the letter to customers is de-coupled from site visit and the OPS measure.

A member asked how a retailer who's selected links back into the process. **CD** explained that it could be done via the ORID if this is included on the letter.

5. AOB

5.1 Jeopardy management reports

EJ reminded members that we'd considered jeopardy reporting very briefly and need to revisit. Some member suggestions for reports included; inactive (ie. no activity on service request) jeopardies – the ability to set a jeopardy countdown specific to your company, specific “time left” for red/amber/green; On the interface, at least basic OPS1 to say here is everything with you and expires in one, two days; preference to have data extracts to push into reporting suite to accommodate HVI users.

EJ proposed that programme development these reports were not imminently being developed so suggested that OAG had some time yet but he would look to get diarised at a future meeting

ACTION: EJ to diarise jeopardy reporting at upcoming OAG meeting

5.2 B10 and G4: A member questions if these are still in scope

EJ advised yes, but not in the immediate next phase.

5.3 G2 process update.

EJ noted that G2 was already considered by some OAG members and should be presented to the group at an upcoming OAG meeting in October. EJ noted that technological developments for G2 like re-editable form for customers and digital signatures needed to be considered.

5.4 Member temperature check

EJ asked OAG members if they felt that the form and content of OAG conversation was pitched where they expect. General consensus was yes. EJ asked a few new members specifically to confirm if they felt comfortable, which they did.