Smart Metering Rollout Communications consultation response summary and update

Smart Meter Rollout Communications Sub-group

01/04/25

Engaging non-household customers effectively during the smart meter rollout

Summary update

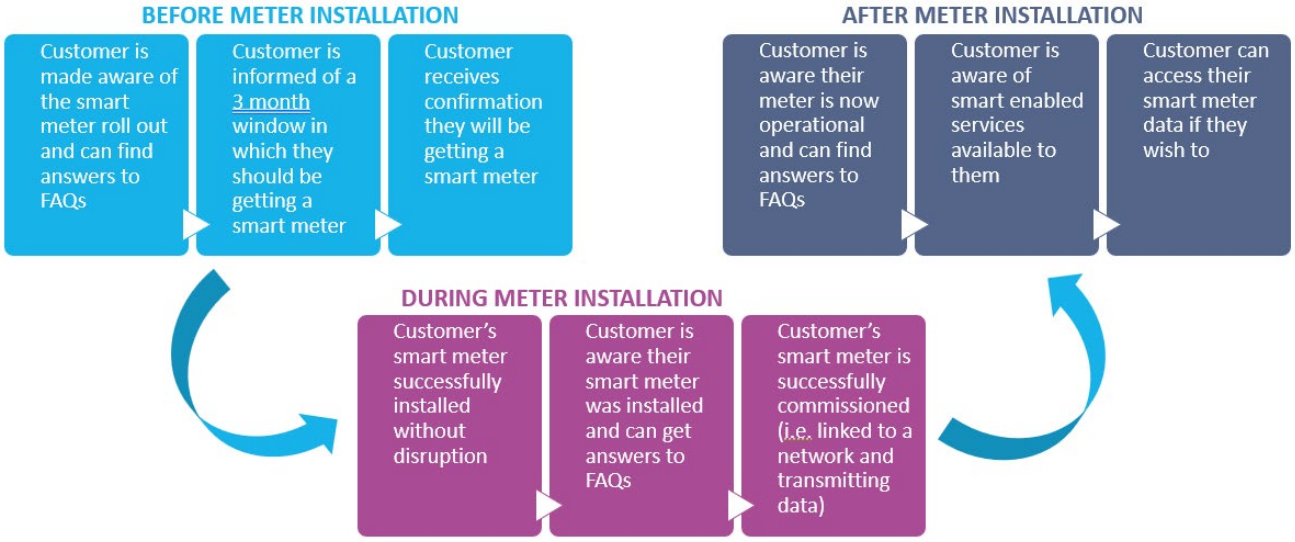
We received a very good response to the RWG consultation about effectively communicating with customers throughout the rollout of smart metering. Thank you to all trading parties who took the time to share their views and experience.

The RWG sub-group set out to publish a good practice guide outlining our customer engagement plan for the smart meter roll out by the end of March 2025. In light of the collective consultation response, we are releasing this interim publication to summarise the market response to the consultation and set out some key actions the RWG now needs to take before publishing the final best practice guide.

The market response to the consultation showed strong support for the customer engagement plan the RWG sub-group has developed. The responses to the questions also revealed a degree of nervousness in the market about committing to delivering a plan with a number of significant dependencies. As the RWG sub-group has reviewed the market's response it has recognised the need to clearly articulate these dependencies within the guide and establish clear ownership for resolving these; recognising that the plan can only be followed in full once enabling actions have been completed.

Based on the response to the consultation, we believe that the fundamental proposals made by the RWG sub-group have the backing of the market and we are not proposing to change these. This should give all parties confidence to start working towards delivering the minimum customer communications and 'happy path' that were published in the consultation document.

Customer happy path

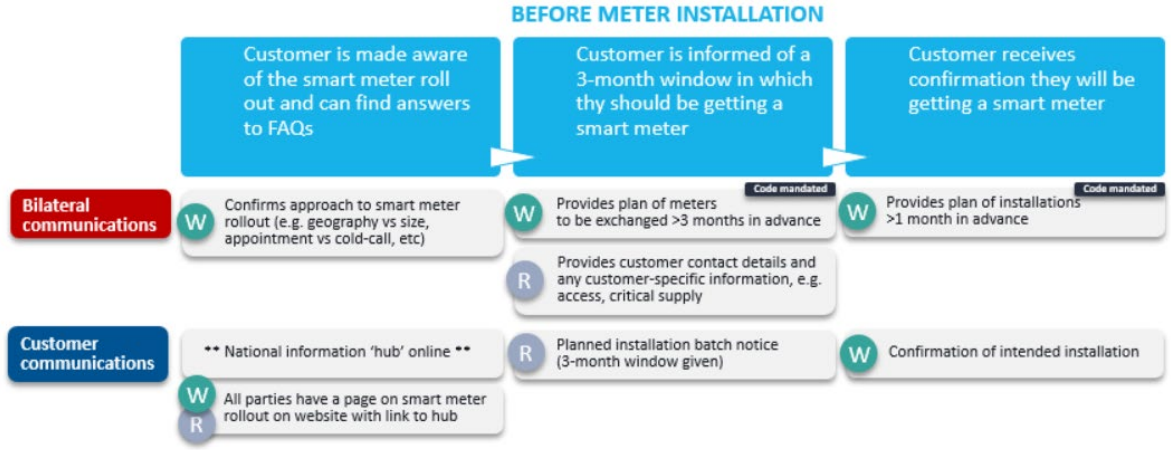


The diagrams below expand on the above, taking each of the three stages of communication in turn. Each stage identifies minimum communications proposed by the RWG subgroup. The 'bilateral communications' will need to take place in the background to enable trading parties to meet the minimum standards around communications to customers. The minimum communications to customers are set out alongside the label 'customer communications'.

Smart metering rollout communications

Communications before meter installation

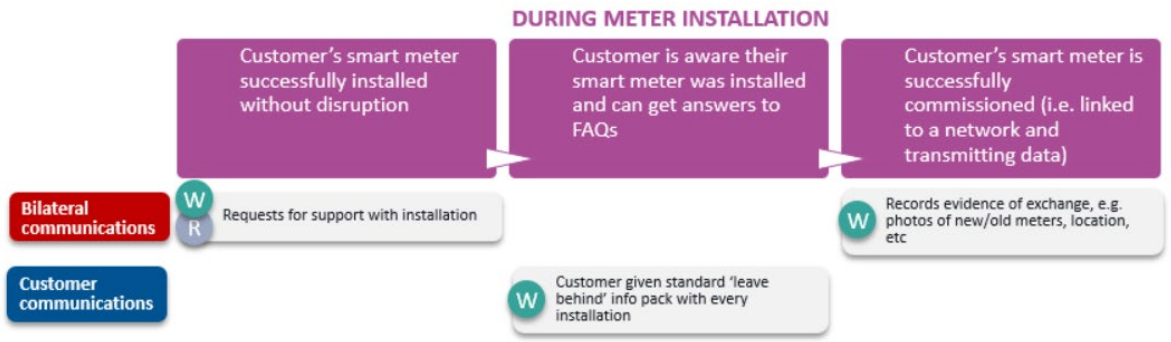
W Wholesaler responsibility
R Retailer responsibility
Code mandated Code requirement



Smart metering rollout communications

Communications during meter installation

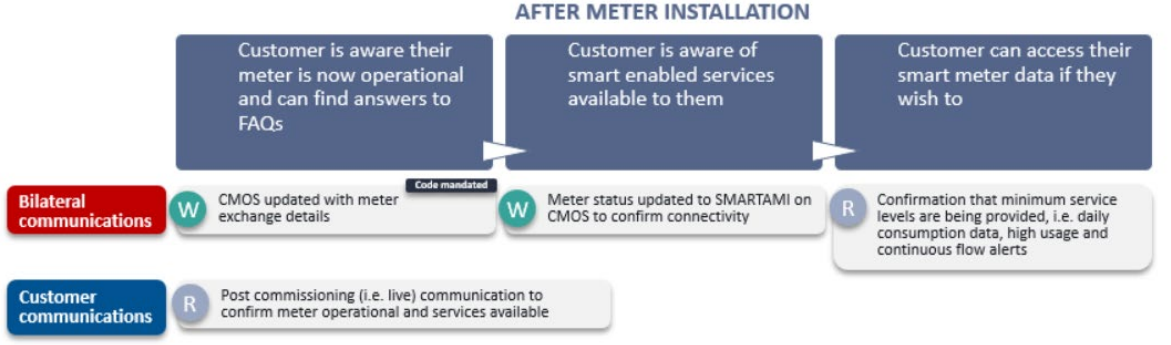
W Wholesaler responsibility
R Retailer responsibility
Code mandated Code requirement



Smart metering rollout communications

Communications after meter installation

W Wholesaler responsibility
R Retailer responsibility
Code mandated Code requirement



Highlights from the consultation response

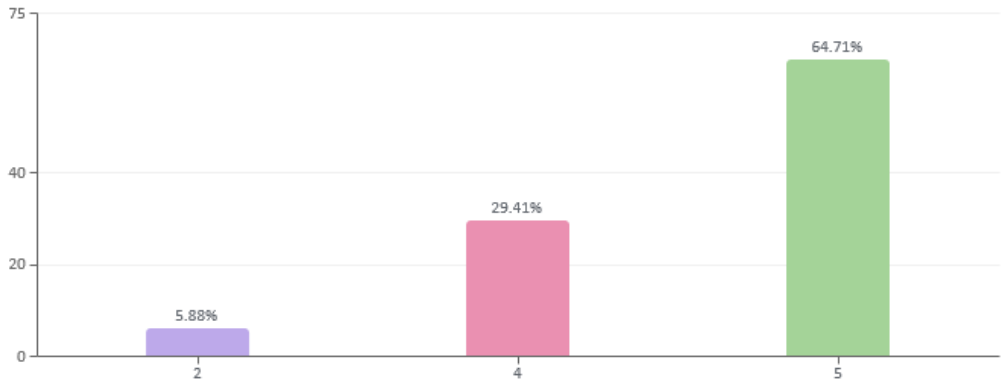
We had a very good response to the RWG consultation, with 11 wholesalers, six retailers and two other organisations responding. The key findings are summarised here.

Trading parties were asked whether they agreed with the need for standardisation of customer communications in the smart meter rollout. Answers were given on a scale of 1-5 and the majority selected five meaning the respondent strongly agreed with the need for standardisation.

QUESTION 05 | OPINION SCALE

To what extent do you agree with the need for some standardisation of customer communications in the rollout of smart metering?%

Answered: **17** Skipped: **1** Average: **4.53**

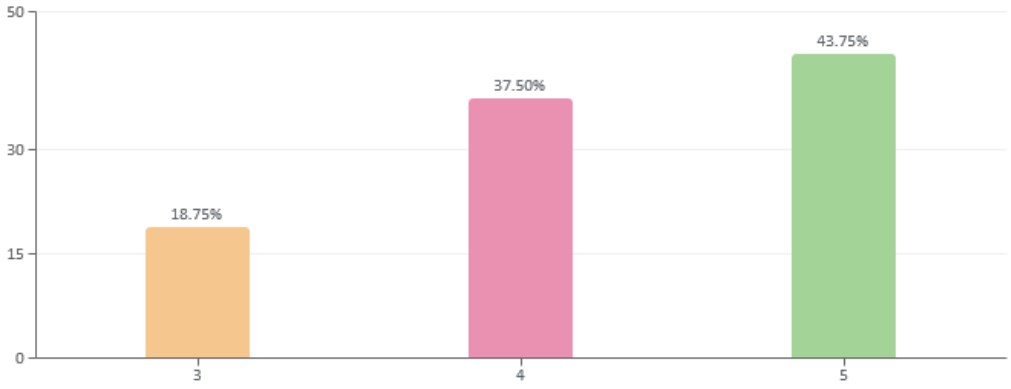


Support for the plan the RWG smart meter roll out sub-group has developed to meet the need for standardisation of customer communications was also strong. Answers were given on a scale of 1-5 and the majority selected 4 or 5 indicating support or strong support for the RWG plan.

QUESTION 07 | OPINION SCALE

To what extent do you agree with the communications stages and roles and responsibilities identified in the proposal (also linked in introduction)?

Answered: **16** Skipped: **1** Average: **4.25**

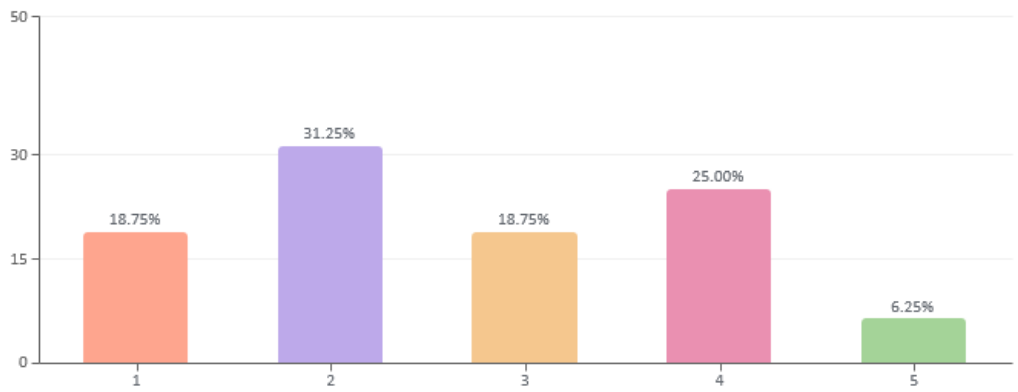


A key message that came through the combined market response is that it will be challenging for organisations to align their operations to the proposed customer engagement plan. It is clear from examining the responses in detail that trading parties are concerned about the deliverability of the plan in light of a number of dependencies and actions that will need to be taken by others in the market.

QUESTION 09 | OPINION SCALE

How challenging do you currently think it will be for your organisation to align with the proposed approach?

Answered: **16** Skipped: **1** Average: **2.69**

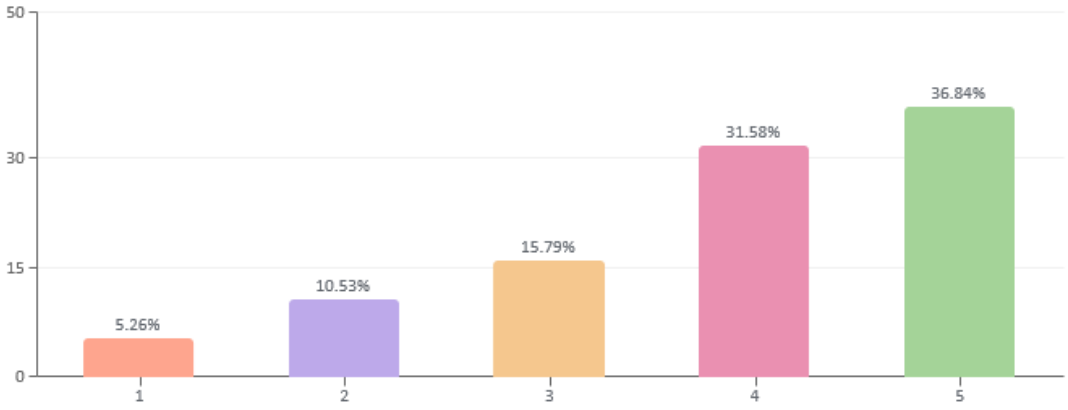


Responding trading parties were supportive of the RWG sub-group's proposal to develop a central information hub, focused on presenting the water efficiency challenge and smart meter rollout from a national perspective (including rollout mapping) – and to do this on an independent website.

QUESTION 13 | OPINION SCALE

To what extent do you support the creation of a central 'hub'?

Answered: **19** Skipped: **0** Average: **3.84**

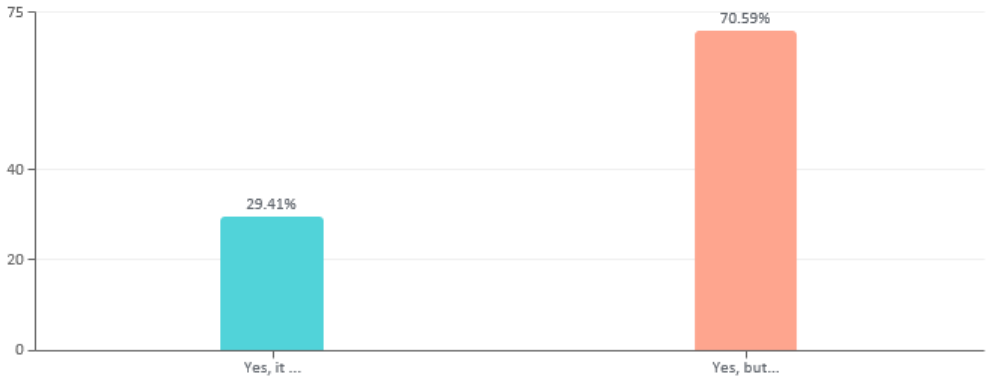


A majority of trading parties were supportive of the RWG sub-group's proposal to develop a central information hub for customers – and to do this on an independent website. The good practice guide will address the concerns raised by some respondents. All trading parties intend to have pages dedicated to the smart meter roll out on their website. The majority have not yet developed these.

QUESTION 18 | MULTIPLE CHOICE

Will your website have pages dedicated to the rollout of smart metering?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



Next steps

The RWG sub-group recognises that the customer engagement plan we are developing is not yet deliverable. Support for the plan is strong, but it will take at least 12 months to get to the stage where the market can fully deliver on these minimum standards of customer engagement because of a number of dependencies.

For trading parties to start working towards delivering this engagement plan, the good practice guide needs to address the dependencies and provide assurance to trading parties that solutions will be developed to enable delivery of the customer engagement plan. We have delayed publication of our good practice guide in order to ensure we have addressed this properly.

We have identified three main dependencies that need to be addressed:

1. The national website needs to be in place for several of the minimum communications to be delivered
2. Information sharing from wholesaler to retailer on planned installations requires improvement to enable the advance notices to be delivered with

accuracy

3. Centralised access to granular data from operational smart meters is not yet available

There needs to be clear ownership for ensuring these dependencies are addressed and our aim is to identify owners before publishing the good practice guide, and ideally include timelines by which we expect the dependencies to have been addressed. The good practice guide will also look to provide guidance on managing the interim transition period.

We are working towards publishing the good practice guide, with the additional content around dependencies on other work and their timescales for delivery, by June 2025.