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I0189 VOICE OF THE CONSUMER WORKGROUP
12 DECEMBER 2024 MEETING MINUTES

MEETING	12 December 2024, 10:00
LOCATION	By teleconference

Presenter	Representing	Initials	Role
Caroline Freimuller	REC Code Manager	CF	Chair/Lead Change Analyst
Anton Moden	REC Code Manager	AM	Performance Assurance Lead
Glenn Sheern	REC Code Manager	GS	Subject Matter Expert
Nathan Chaplow	REC Code Manager	NC	Performance Assurance Expert

Full attendee list available upon request.

1 INTRODUCTIONS

CF welcomed attendees to the work group to discuss REC Issue I0189 Voice of the Consumer.

2 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

CF confirmed the aim of the session was to discuss the practicalities of running centralised surveys (as this was stated to be the preference in the Extraordinary Change Issues Group (CHIG) run on 20 November 2024), and to confirm the in-scope topics of potential new surveys.

3 I0189 VOICE OF THE CONSUMER

AM provided an overview of the two models the Code Manager has identified for running centralised surveys. These were:

- Model one – RECCo designs and distributes the survey and analyses the results.
    - It would be within RECCo's gift to decide whether to do this in-house or contract a Service Provider.
    - This model would involve securely sharing necessary Consumer Contact information to facilitate survey distribution.

- Model two – RECCo designs the survey and provides Energy Suppliers with a link for them to forward to the Consumer. RECCo receives the results directly for analysis.
    - Energy Suppliers maintain control of Consumer interaction and do not need to share Consumer contact data. However, there is no change for them to edit the survey or add their branding.

AM asked for feedback on these models, or any other options the Code Manager had not considered.

A Supplier queried if model two was selected, would Suppliers be able to contact Consumers directly rather than using a third party (as they have to currently for SMIS). AM confirmed yes.

A Supplier confirmed they would not be comfortable picking an option now, as they felt it would be dependent on the questions asked. However, they felt model two would likely be the better option, as Consumers would be more likely to engage with a survey sent from a Party they already had awareness of (e.g. their Energy Supplier).

A Supplier raised that the Code Manager would need to consider Consumer consent for this, both with sharing their data to RECCo in the event of model one but also their marketing preferences for both options. There would also be a need to educate Consumers on who RECCo are and why they're receiving this survey, particularly when it will not come with the Energy Suppliers branding.

A Supplier queried the impact on the costs to REC Parties from this. AM confirmed that the aim of the change was to end up with a net reduction in costs from Energy Suppliers having to outsource their Smart Meter Installation Survey (SMIS) work and there was the potential to do this on an indicative basis. CF confirmed that once we are further through solution development, we would be asking RECCo to complete a Service Provider Impact Assessment which would provide costings and that there will be questions at Party Impact Assessment for Suppliers to confirm if this would provide them with a saving.

A Supplier asked that would be happening with the current SMIS, whether we should now be including questions on how Consumers feel the Smart Meter rollout has gone and potentially adding questions for less engaged Consumers to ask why they haven't opted for a Smart Meter yet. CF confirmed the Code Manager and the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) have a meeting booked to discuss what we can and cannot change with the SMIS questions as DESNZ use this information. CF also confirmed that the Code Manager will investigate the possibility of centralising the SMIS survey, including discussing with DESNZ/RECCo why it was determined Suppliers must use third parties to deliver the survey.

AM confirmed that the Code Manager does not want to cause accidental problems with current contracts with those third parties if the SMIS survey is moved into a different model, and this will be considered as the change progresses.

CF presented on the current proposed in-scope topics for new surveys and confirmed the Code Manager was considering:

- Prepayment – top ups, vend accuracy and data quality.
- Maintenance of accurate meter data – with the potential for this to include non-dialling Smart Meters.

- Consumer Switching – Consumers can Switch rapidly and issues with Switching are resolved rapidly.

CF confirmed this was a reduction in topics that were presented at the 20 November 2024 CHIG. The Code Manager had discussed internally and decided to limit the scope of this change to evidence the surveys were adding value and minimise burden to industry by introducing a large number of surveys at one time. However, the Code Manager would keep all other topics suggested for potential future changes.

AM confirmed that part of the intention of the surveys is to find out what Consumers feel is working and what isn't, so the Code Manager can focus on changes that will bring Consumer benefit. CF added that the surveys will not be "one size fits all", each will have its own target demographic (particularly calling out Domestic and Non-Domestic) and frequency as required. CF also confirmed that the Code Manager does not imagine the surveys remaining static, and that if they received only positive feedback from a survey they would look at reducing the frequency or stopping sending that survey as that area of the market is working.

A Supplier raised that Suppliers already do their own surveys on all three topics suggested by the Code Manager, as do Citizens Advice and Trust Pilot, and asked how duplicating these was useful. CF responded that the Code Manager does not have visibility of these surveys and other than SMIS, receives no direct feedback from Consumers which is the problem this change is trying to resolve.

A Supplier raised that DESNZ are looking at a Consumer Code of Practice that may include directly surveying Consumers and queried whether this work would overlap with that. The Code Manager took an action to add this as an agenda item to their meeting with DESNZ.

A Supplier voiced that they felt this change should only look at reviewing SMIS for now as they did not want to overburden Consumers. AM confirmed this was a potential outcome for this change, and the Code Manager would review the scope after a conversation with DESNZ.

CF confirmed that the next work group would focus on a review of the SMIS questions, and each work group following would focus on each of the survey topics separately (assuming these remain in scope). NC took the group through an overview of the expected structure of the next sessions, including capturing Supplier perspectives and design considerations for each survey topic.

CF confirmed that the Code Manager would send out a poll to decide the date of the next work group meeting to ensure maximum attendance possible, and that this was expected to land in January (or before Christmas if possible). CF confirmed the Code Manager hoped the next work group would occur in January.

4 NEXT STEPS

CF took an action to distribute the slides again, as a slightly updated version was presented than was uploaded to the work group page on the REC Portal 5 Working Days before the work group. This was done on 12 December 2024.

As the Code Manager has taken away several actions for discussion with DESNZ and RECCo, the next work group may not occur in January but instead be held in February. However, the

Code Manager will provide as much notice as possible and will send a poll with several possible dates/times for the group to choose between in January.

5 AOB

CF invited attendees to ask any other questions they had that had not already been covered. None was raised and the meeting was closed, with the Code Manager's thanks to all attendees for their time.