RETAIL ENERGY CODE

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REC CHANGE ISSUES GROUP
I0189 EXTRAORDINARY CHANGE ISSUES GROUP MEETING MINUTES

MEETING	**RECCHIG_25_18903**
DATE	**10 February 2025, 13:00**
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
Harry Firth	REC Code Manager	HF	Secretariat

Full attendee list available upon request.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed attendees to the REC I0189 Working Group meeting.

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The Chair invited any additional items of business for consideration during the meeting, but no items were raised.

3. I0189 – VOICE OF THE CONSUMER

The Chair informed attendees that this session would be used to review the current questions on the Smart Meter Installation Survey (SMIS). The Chair noted that certain demographic questions on the SMIS are out of scope for I0189 as they are used by Ofgem and DESNZ for various reporting purposes.

The Chair noted an action taken from the previous I0189 Workgroup meeting in December for the Code Manager to speak to DESNZ about the 'Voice of the Consumer' initiative. The Chair confirmed that discussions had been held since, with DESNZ expressing support for I0189, seeing it as complimentary to their ongoing 'Consumer Codes of Practice' initiative. The Chair

added that DESNZ had no issues with the centralisation of the SMIS as proposed by the Code Manager and were also keen to be given regular updates on I0189.

The Chair advised that DESNZ had requested for the core survey questions to be prioritised, with all proposed changes submitted to them for review. They added that DESNZ had also requested for certain demographic questions to be left unchanged to maintain consistency with DESNZ reporting. AM advised that the Code Manager had reached out to DESNZ to confirm which questions cannot be changed but had not received a response prior to the meeting.

A Supplier representative asked if the scope of I0189 include review of the Consolidated Metering Code of Practice (CoMCoP). The Chair replied that there is a separate change currently focusing on a review of CoMCoP, R0152, which has a consultation open until 11 April. They added that any stakeholder feedback directly relating to CoMCoP should be sent in through a consultation response to R0152. They added that if it is decided to change how Suppliers are able to procure the SMIS, then changes to CoMCoP may become necessary.

AM presented the current questions on the SMIS relating to Domestic respondents, noting the overlapping questions in the current Microbusiness SMIS. A Supplier representative advised that the questions had been tailored towards Consumers who had been engaged within the process, but this is not the case for most new installs now from their view, with many Consumers being forced to accept a Smart Meter in their home. They added that it is hard to get the Consumer engaged and they are not keen to answer the SMIS, suggesting that the wording for certain questions probably needs to be altered to tailor more to these types of Consumers. CF advised that the questions on added technology such as the In-House Display and energy efficiency guidance are mandatory for Suppliers to ask Consumers on site under CoMCoP, and the SMIS questions are used for monitoring those obligations. The Supplier representative asked if it would be possible to allow the Suppliers to re-word these mandatory questions to allow for the conversation to flow better with the Consumer.

Supplier representatives advised that they felt some of the existing questions were unnecessary and again not very well tailored to the current group of Consumers receiving Smart Meters, particularly Question 1 about being informed prior about the installation. CF responded that this survey is only to be carried out for Consumers having a Smart Meter install for the first time. A Supplier representative responded that Suppliers which have changed both the gas and electricity Meters for a Consumer have to carry out a survey for both installations and suggested that the ComCoP rules could be looked at to amend this. AM agreed.

A Supplier representative suggested that poor uptake of the SMIS could be partly because of Consumers having a negative association with Smart Meters and whether this is worth looking into. AM responded that it would be good to ask DESNZ how they currently measure this population who are against or not keen on Smart Meter installs in their homes as it may add further insight. Another Supplier representative asked whether it would be useful to ask whether the individual answering the SMIS is the same as the one who booked the Smart Meter install as a way to monitor engagement. AM agreed.

A Supplier representative advised that the Monitoring and Compliance Customer Survey Specification is no longer available on the REC Portal, and the document was useful for Suppliers in informing which parts of each question could be worded differently. AM agreed and

said if the SMIS stays under Suppliers' responsibility, then better guidance would be required. The Supplier representative added that if the SMIS is centralised, then a document showing the most common or effective wording for each question would be really useful. They added that currently Suppliers are using different market research companies, some of which are not ISO accredited which they feel needs to be amended. AM responded that whether the SMIS is centralised or not, the delivery mechanisms of the survey will need to be worked through as part of this Issue.

A Supplier representative suggested some new questions which could be adopted to help provide more context to how the Consumer answers the SMIS. They added that Suppliers could ask "Why did you want a Smart Meter", which could include responses such as customers saying I did not want one, or I was not allowed to have a legacy Meter. They also suggested another potential question is whether Consumers "found the advice given by the installer on the day useful", allowing Suppliers to tailor their wording or approach based on these results. AM agreed that this could be useful additions, altering the survey to receive more relevant outcomes.

A Supplier representative asked if it would be possible to ask Ofgem how they utilise the SMIS results to help understand the significance of the questions. They added that this would potentially help with Suppliers being able to change the wording of some questions, which is the biggest issue currently. AM responded that the Code Manager have had several conversations with DESNZ and Ofgem about the SMIS and there is willingness to make changes to the questions, although the wording must remain fairly aligned to ensure fair comparisons can be made across Suppliers. An Ofgem representative added that they are in support of changes to the SMIS, recognising that that certain questions such as the one on energy efficiency measures/advice needs working on to achieve better outcomes.

A Supplier representative suggested that Question 5 is irrelevant, as customers are never asked to pay for any goods or services, and the data is not used as it is almost 100% "no" responses. CF responded that this question stems from a current CoMCoP obligation. AM added that the Code Manager has all of the historical answers to this question and would look into whether these results are the same for all Suppliers, which then would make this question redundant. A RECCo representative advised that this question was included as it was a very strong policy point for DESNZ back when the SMIS was first introduced, and the Code Manager would have to prove to DESNZ and Ofgem that the question no longer needs to be asked before it can be removed.

A Supplier representative suggested that the survey could be amended so that if Question 6 is answered "Yes", then questions 6A and 6B are asked as a follow-up, because the questions are intrinsically linked and reducing the number of questions down if appropriate could help with customer engagement for the rest of the survey. AM agreed that the design of the SMIS could be looked into.

AM presented the current questions on the SMIS for Microbusiness Consumers to attendees. A Supplier representative advised that an important note for Microbusiness surveys is that often the Consumer present for the installation is not the one who answers the survey, and potentially that should become an additional question. AM agreed.

A Supplier representative added that a similar clarification could be made to Question 5, potentially adding in that if it was you who arranged the installation, did you indicate any specific operational business needs when scheduling the appointment? Another Supplier representative added that Questions 5A and 5B could also be refined, and all that needs to be asked if whether these needs were taken into account. AM responded that these were good suggestions that the Code Manager would look into. Another Supplier representative asked CF what was the obligation that this question is trying to monitor, adding that for some of the operational business needs, Suppliers are not able or obliged to consider. CF responded that the obligation is that the Supplier will accommodate any reasonable requests regarding the operational business needs of a Microbusiness Consumer. The Supplier representative suggested that the wording of the question may need to be amended, as they believe there are differences between what the Supplier and customer think are reasonable requests. They asked if there is better way to monitor this question that does not need a free text box for Consumers to enter their reasonable requests. AM agreed and said potentially the word "reasonable" may need to be amended.

A Supplier representative advised that they believed Question 5 is useful in its current format, adding that Consumers would only answer one of Question 5A or 5B depending on their answer to Question 5. They added that the free text box is useful as it allows Suppliers to reflect if any of the needs of the Consumer that weren't considered by the Supplier can be taken into account in the future.

AM presented some potential additional questions that focus mainly on the post-installation experience and overall satisfaction and asked attendees for feedback. Supplier representatives responded many Suppliers would probably not agree with these additions, and if anything, the SMIS should be reduced and some of the compliance questions should be investigated into whether these can be monitored differently. They added that the Supplier already gains insight on certain aspects of the smart installation process in different ways and wondered if these could be used by DESNZ and Ofgem, to avoid duplication. They added that given that Suppliers already struggle with engagement from some Consumers on answering the SMIS, the focus needs to be on rewording the existing questions rather than adding more. AM responded that these potential questions were aiming to include more direct wording of some of the existing questions, particularly the energy efficiency question.

CF noted that the SMIS is sent out to customers a maximum of three months after the installation date. They asked attendees if they felt this was enough time for Consumers to accurately answer some of the questions, noting a previous suggestion from a Supplier representative about whether Consumers have seen the benefits of a Smart Meter that they were expecting. A Supplier representative agreed that potentially not enough time would have passed for Consumers to accurately answer.

A Supplier representative advised that the question on whether Consumers were informed how their smart meter data will be used and protected, that they would prefer to put that in writing to the Consumer rather than include it as a question.

4. AOB

The Chair invited attendees to provide AOB. None was raised and the meeting was closed.

POST-MEETING NOTE: This was not specified in the Working Group meeting, but the Code Manager would like to clarify post-meeting that the scope of the R0152 CoMCoP review is not to change any obligations on Parties. Changes to obligations on Parties in CoMCoP can either be addressed under I0189 or via a separate change/issue, as most appropriate.