RETAIL ENERGY CODE

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REC CHANGE ISSUES GROUP
I0189 WORKGROUP MEETING MINUTES

MEETING	**RECCHIG_25_18904**
DATE	**18 March 2025, 10:30**
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
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.

The Chair informed attendees that this session would focus on some new survey questions being proposed by the Code Manager. The Chair added that the new questions in this session would focus on switching. They added that each question will be clearly linked to specific parts of REC Schedules to clearly show the obligations.

3. I0189 – VOICE OF THE CONSUMER

A Supplier representative asked about the status of the current Smart Meter Installation Survey (SMIS) questions. The Chair responded that having taken the feedback from the previous I0189 Workgroup on board, the Code Manager have started work on a new draft of the SMIS and added that the current plan is for an extended Party Impact Assessment following the conclusion of the Workgroups, which will include all proposed changes to the SMIS and any new survey questions.

A Supplier representative asked for some more information on why this Change has been introduced. The Chair read out the published problem statement for I0189, advising that part of RECCO's mission is to facilitate the efficient and effective running of the retail energy market, including delivering positive Consumer outcomes. The Chair added that the Code Manager currently receives limited feedback directly from Consumers to determine if this mission is being fulfilled. The Chair advised that any Consumer feedback will be used to target changes to Code directly linked to improving Consumer experiences or provide evidence current parts of the Code are working for the Consumer and do not require a change.

A Supplier representative raised concerns that there may be multiple new Consumer surveys introduced and that may have a negative impact on engagement levels, advising that Suppliers already struggle to get Consumers to engage with the SMIS or other surveys. AM responded that there has to be a balance between ensuring engagement level do not fall with increased Consumer surveying and ensuring that there is enough data to measure whether the Code Manager's goals of industry improvement are being achieved. The Supplier representative asked how this Consumer data would be used by the Code Manager to improve Consumer experience. AM responded that for a Change to be progressed, a business case for the Change will have to pass a threshold. They added that these business cases are based on the best available information, for which the increased Consumer data would feed directly into., allowing the Code Manager to focus resources on the more important issues.

The Chair clarified that the Code Manager made an initial suggestion that Suppliers could send the Survey to 10% of consumers who switched to a Supplier within the reporting quarter, excluding Erroneous Switches, and that there are not currently no plans to put a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on Suppliers to achieve a certain response rate.

A Supplier representative noted that the Code Manager had previously suggested that a centralised survey rather than Supplier-led would be an option and asked if this is still open. The Chair responded that although initially a lot of feedback was received in support of a centralised survey, at the last meeting a lot of Suppliers suggested they would want to add their own branding and personalisation to the survey which may prevent centralisation. AM added that as part of I0189, the Code Manager will be working with Parties to identify how best to operate the SMIS and other surveys. They added that they would be working alongside RECCo on developing a solution and plan to bring back the configurable options to a future Workgroup meeting.

A Supplier representative asked if the focus on the change is on email interviews and not telephone. AM responded that the Code Manager was focusing on a more digitalised survey. The Chair noted that if the surveys cut out any Consumers who only have a phone number, it's restricting the data from a certain sample of Consumers. The Supplier representative added that the Code Manager needs to look into the survey being available in different languages and Braille to ensure a representative viewpoint from consumers.

The Chair advised that as part of the Code Manager's initial suggestions, the survey would focus on Domestic and Microbusiness Consumers and that only Suppliers with a certain number of Consumers will have to send the survey out, with that number to be determined by analytics undertaken by the Performance Assurance team. A Supplier representative asked if

this number of eligible Consumers would be based on those gained by a Supplier in the last quarter, or of the Supplier's total portfolio. The Chair responded that it would be based off total portfolio, but the 10% of eligible Consumers would only apply to Consumers who Switched in the last quarter.

A Supplier representative asked why the Gaining Supplier is the only one sending a survey, when the survey response could potentially highlight only issues concerning the Losing Supplier. The Chair responded that the Code Manager had decided it would only be appropriate for the Gaining Supplier to send a survey to the Consumer in question as the Losing Supplier no longer has a contract with that Consumer. The Supplier representative asked how they could provide any feedback to the losing Supplier that comes from the survey. AM responded that the Switch and thus the Losing Supplier need to be identified. The Chair added that there has not been a proposed survey question on the Losing Supplier objecting for example, as this is out of scope for the REC and thus I0189, and the Code Manager have focused on tying each question to an obligation within the REC. Another Supplier representative raised concerns that the Gaining Supplier should not be collecting information on the performance of the Losing Supplier. AM suggested that this is a big reason for the survey to be centralised by the Code Manager and the Supplier representative agreed. Another Supplier representative due to the complexity of the industry, it may be difficult for Consumers to identify the party at fault during the Switch.

A Supplier representative asked if there is a plan in place to capture information from Suppliers who will not be eligible for the survey. The Chair responded that the current idea was that any Supplier who do not reach the eligibility criteria will not be required to send the survey. AM added that the Code Manager will consider the eligibility criteria carefully as they want to capture as much data as possible but also accepting that there has to be a minimum cut off. Another Supplier representative suggested that the Code Manager could copy the current SMIS approach, where Suppliers either must report quarterly, annually or not at all depending on their total portfolio, with a greater number of Consumers meaning more frequent reporting. AM agreed that this could be a smart approach.

The Chair presented the first two proposed questions to the Workgroup. They advised that if Consumers answered "No" to the first question (Did you have an issue with your switch) then they would only have to answer these first two questions. A Supplier representative asked what would constitute an "issue", suggesting that Consumers might highlight "issues" that are not to do with the Supplier or the industry. The Chair responded that the Code Manager were keen to capture all data around Consumer issues but added that they were happy to discuss whether a free text question is appropriate at this point in the survey.

A Supplier representative noted the proposed question asking Consumers how long it took for the Supplier to acknowledge their concern and asked if the Code Manager could clarify what is meant by "acknowledging a concern". The Chair advised that this question is not asking how long it took for the issue to be resolved, but how long did it take the Supplier to contact the Consumer to let them know they had received the issue. AM suggested that there may a balance to be hit in the survey questions between precision and Consumer friendly language. Supplier representatives advised that it was possible for the Consumer to switch without contacting the Supplier, for example non-domestic customers will sometimes only deal with a

broker. AM suggested that the survey would represent a good opportunity to analyse the brokers' role in the Switching process and identify if they are causing problems.

A Supplier representative raised concerns that the proposed questions were too lengthy or complex and suggested that the Code Manager should look at breaking them down to include more questions that are worded in a more straightforward manner.

Supplier representatives advised the language used in some of the questions needed further clarification or amendment, such as the phrase "switching-related problem". The Chair responded that the Code Manager had tried to keep the language as general and concise as possible but agreed that this needed changing. A Supplier representative suggested that a small list of generic switching-related issues to help provide further support to the Consumers.

Questions were suggested by attendees including whether the switching-related issue has been resolved and whether the Consumer submitted a complaint. The Chair responded that these questions would be overstepping or out of-scope for I0189 as the REC does not have any involvement with Supplier complaints.

A Supplier representative advised that Consumers have a long time to raise an Erroneous Switch, and the Supplier would only be able to exclude the cases they are aware of at the time of surveys being sent out. The Chair agreed that there are difficulties with potential Erroneous Switches unknown to the Supplier.

Supplier representatives suggested that drop-down boxes could be utilised in the survey, particularly for splitting up the information on the Gaining and Losing Supplier. The Chair agreed that this would be an effective solution.

A Supplier representative asked if all Suppliers would have an opportunity to review the proposed questions. The Chair responded that the Code Manager are planning to issue both a Party Impact Assessment and a Consultation with the proposed questions.

A Supplier representative asked about the potential timeframe for implementing these survey questions. The Chair responded that they were planning on running further Workgroups until July. They added that once a solution and legal drafting has been fully created, they will be issued out as part of an extended Party Impact Assessment. The Chair advised that one of the questions in the Party Impact Assessment will be how much lead time Suppliers will want to implement the I0189 solution, which will be used to help determine the timescales for implementation.

AM noted that Suppliers may have already contracted out the running of the SMIS to external third party service providers, and that the Code Manager will take note of that as part of the I0189 implementation process, allowing sufficient time for these contracts to be terminated. The Chair added that should the survey be centralised; the new service provider that will run the survey will also need time to prepare for implementation and will have to work alongside RECCo to ensure they are ready. A Supplier representative asked if the Code Manager could confirm whether the third party service providers currently used by Suppliers will no longer be an option, with either the Code Manager or the Suppliers themselves administering the survey. The Chair responded that they had held initial positive conversations with DESNZ about removing this requirement and added that although it is not confirmed yet, the third party service providers is

also the Code Manager's least preferred option. Another Supplier representative responded that if the survey is not centralised, they would like the option for Suppliers to either administer the survey themselves or use a third party service provider.

A Supplier representative asked how the survey will be reviewed once it is implemented to ensure it is achieving the outcomes that the Code Manager have set out. AM responded that the initial plan would be to let the survey run for 12-18 months before determining if the planned benefits have been achieved. They added that changes to the survey itself would be possible, and any amendments would be managed in consultation with Suppliers and other affected parties via the REC Change Process.

A Supplier representative asked if the Code Manager would have decided to centralise the survey prior to the Party Impact Assessment or will a question on centralisation be included. AM responded that by the time the Party Impact Assessment is issued, the Code Manager will have narrowed down to at most two strong solution options. The Chair added that if two solution options are included, Suppliers can impact assess for the costs of each solution and the Code Manager will base their business case assessment off of this feedback.

A Supplier representative noted that at the moment, Suppliers all use different third parties to administer the SMIS, and there are no requirements on accreditation. They asked if the Code Manager decide to centralise the survey, whether the service provider will need to be ISO accredited and whether the same service provider will be used for all Code Manager administered surveys. AM responded that they would be able to provide more detail on a potential centralised solution model against a non-centralised model in the final I0189 Workgroup but added that one of the key upsides to centralisation would be reduced costs, for which it is hoped procuring a single third party service provider would help with this objective. The Chair added that in the event of centralisation, RECCo will make the decision on whether to go out for tender on a service provider or whether they decide to provide the service in-house.

Next Steps:

AM thanked attendees for their feedback in this session and added that this would be used by the Code Manager to update the proposed questions ahead of the next Workgroup. The Chair added that they would aim to continue holding the Workgroups on a monthly basis and would send out a poll to all attendees for potential meeting dates to ensure maximum attendance. The Chair added that the agenda and slides will be made available 5 working days ahead of the next Workgroup meeting as usual.

4. AOB

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