

# Energy Team Update



**citizens  
advice**

Supplier liaison meeting  
12 February 2020

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# Recent publications

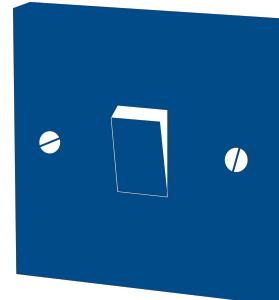
[Zero Sum](#) explained how prioritising consumer protections would be crucial to ensure a successful transition to a low-carbon future.

[Clear and in control](#) looked at consumer attitudes to data and smart devices, and made recommendations that consumer choice and data options are central to the smart meter rollout and accessible to everyone.

[When the cap no longer fits](#): a discussion paper which considers how to protect energy consumers when the price cap ends.

Our recent [decision document](#) outlined new customer service metrics and other updates to our supplier star rating. We also published the [latest version](#) of the star rating.

The Picking up the Pieces report outlined the consumer harm from supplier failures. In December we [revised](#) our cost of failures to £225m.



# Recent blogs

## On the future energy market:

We outlined the steps needed to improve the current market, and the investment needed for the future.

We discussed the opportunities and risks posed by new types of tariffs.

We outlined how consumer control over data will be central to achieving net zero.

We outlined the 5 steps needed to be ready for more electric vehicles.

## Other blogs:

We proposed 3 new year's resolutions for the retail energy market.

We explained how organisations can influence network company business plans.

# Consultation responses

We responded to Ofgem's Supplier Licensing Review, and responded to a consultation on the DCC Price Control.

# Future Energy Services Team: updates

## Current policy/advocacy work

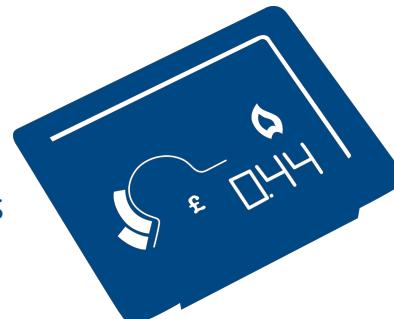
- Advocacy focused on the need for consumer protections to be built into plans for net zero (following launch of [zero sum](#)) and presenting to the Climate Assembly
- Ongoing work with BEIS, Ofgem and SEGB on the smart meter rollout and impact on consumers
- Regularly monitoring contacts to Citizens Advice about energy issues that are not supply/network related - eg insulation, solar panels, other renewables, EVs etc

## Coming soon

- Consumer comprehension testing for benefits of smart appliances

## Current research in the field

- Consumer choice in the transition to low carbon heating systems
- Consumer experience and perceptions of home energy technology installations (efficiency and low carbon heat)
- Understanding the consumer impacts and costs of heat regulation



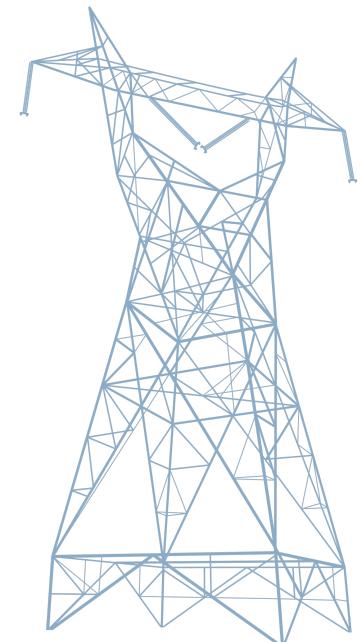
# Energy Networks & Systems Team: updates

## Current policy/advocacy work

- Submitted response to Ofgem's Call for Evidence consultation on RIIO-2 (to be published on our website soon)
  - This is supported by Cost of Capital consultancy work provided HMK Advisory Ltd
- Winding down roles on Ofgem's RIIO-2 Challenge Group, gas CEGs and User Groups (ETs, GT and GDNs)
- Sit on two DNO Customer Engagement Groups and engaging with DNOs on their Business Plan ideas
- Contribute to the ED-2 workshops run by Ofgem
- Preparing for the RIIO-2 Open Hearings in March/April
- We blogged about how organisations can get involved in the Call for Evidence/Open Hearings process

## Research

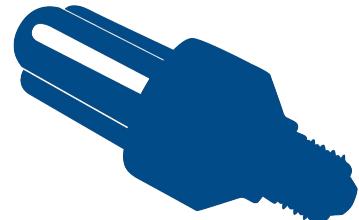
- Conducting primary research with end-consumers about how they use electricity to inform the Access and Forward Looking Charges review



# Energy Retail Markets Team: updates

## Recent work (excluding reports)

- We published a [decision document](#) outlining new customer service metrics and other updates to our supplier star rating, and published the [latest version](#) of the star rating.
- We continued to work with BEIS and Ofgem on the future retail market review and white paper.
- Engagement with Ofgem's supplier licensing review.



## Coming soon

- TPI research looking at consumer experience and options for regulation.
- Research looking at current and future customer service challenges, with Institute of Customer Service.
- New and updated Good Practice Guides.

# Remote mode changing

## Issues:

Over 2019, we've continued to see cases from multiple suppliers that are not always checking for vulnerabilities and/or properly notifying customers before remotely switching to prepay.

## Obligations:

- Only install prepayment meters to collect debt where it is appropriate.
- Customer's must be given an active choice before remotely switching to prepay
- Suppliers must use the remote switching facility fairly and appropriately.

The Safe and Reasonably Practicable guidance (p4) states proactive steps should include the supplier taking reasonable steps to visit the customer at their premises, which could include making visits at various times of day.

## Anonymised case study examples

1. Large supplier customer with four young children was remotely switched from credit to prepayment, due to debt, was left disconnected as a result. She had not been responding to contact from the supplier and they were unaware that there were young children at the property. The supplier did visit the property before the mode change - no one was at home.
2. Electricity smart meter was remotely switched from credit to prepayment mode. The consumer had not received any prior notice and was unaware the meter needed to be topped up. The consumer faced self-disconnection as she was not due any income for a further 2 weeks.
3. A vulnerable consumer with young children was disconnected from her gas & electric after she was transferred to another supplier under the SoLR process. She was previously a credit customer with the original supplier, the new supplier set up the account as prepay. She had no means of crediting the meter and not told about the change.