

Minutes of the 77th NERSAP Meeting

Microsoft Teams 10am 28th July 2026

Attendees:

Ephie Chalakateva (EC)	NGED	ephie.chalakateva@nationalgrid.com
Paul Costelloe (PC)	LRQA	paul.costelloe@lrqa.com
Karl Miller (KM)	LRQA	karl.miller@lrqa.com
David Ellis (DE)	Power On	david.ellis@poweron-uk.co.uk
Danny Beer (DB)	UKPN	danny.beer@ukpowernetworks.co.uk
Elliot Dixon (ED)	NPg	elliott.dixon@northernpowergrid.com
Mick Beeby (MB)	Last Mile	mick.beeby@lastmile-uk.com
Tom Radford (TR)	Harlaxton	tomr@harlaxton.com
Jevan Laxen (JL)	SSE	jevan.laxen@sse.com
Tracey Taylor (TT)	SP-ENW	tracey.taylor@enwl.co.uk
James Barker (JB)	UCCG	jbarker@etl.ltd
David McDonald (DM)	AEN	david.mcdonald@advancedelectricitynetworks.co.uk

Apologies:

Apologies had been received from:

Symon Gray	IDCSL	symongray@idcs.co.uk
David Jones	HEA	david@joneslighting.co.uk
Keith Montague	Matrix	keithmontague@matrixgroup.co.uk
Mel Swift	GTC	mel.swift@gtc-uk.co.uk
Paul Thomas	SPEN	paul.thomas@spenergynetworks.co.uk
Louis Elia	MUA	luayelia@muagroup.co.uk
Matt Anderson	ESP	matt.anderson@espug.com
Bob Fearnley	Leep	bfearnley@leeputilities.co.uk
Will Cass	EA	willcass@energyassets.co.uk

1. Introductions

Introductions were made and PC thanked those deputising for members not able to attend and advised that there had been no requests for changes to the proposed agenda for this meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from those identified above.

3. Review of Minutes & Actions from NERSAP Meeting 24th March 2026

3.1 Presentation by EUSR

PC advised that a large part of the last NERSAP meeting was taken up by the presentation given by EUSR on the forthcoming 'Right Card' scheme. Since the last meeting EUSR have postponed introduction to 1st October 2026. There are ongoing discussions about exemptions to the card requirements (e.g. auditors). PC requested any queries on the new scheme to be routed via PC or KM as LRQA are working closely with EUSR presently.

3.2 Content of NERS Requirements Document v11

PC had invited comments from the ICP community on v10 and any suggested areas that needed addition/revision/deletion or clarification for the future version v11. No comments were received. PC extended the invitation for comments to the NERSAP meeting and advised that clarification was planned concerning Project Management scopes, in particular whether a customer should hold PM scopes when they are simply introducing a client to a primary provider and not materially affecting the execution of the works or entering into an adoption agreement with a network operator. A decision-making flow-diagram will likely be implemented in v11 to assist. PC confirmed that where a primary provider holds an adoption agreement directly with a network operator there is no need for that provider to be project-managed by their client. EC had previously confirmed this, and DE confirmed his understanding that the requirement for an ICP not holding an adoption agreement does not fall under the Project Management requirements of NERS.

3.3 NERS Staffing

PC advised that a new starter had commenced with LRQA in January 2026 and that Dave Ellis had left LRQA in March 2026. The new starter has however since left LRQA. A further new starter is due to start 1st September 2026 and LRQA are still looking to recruit an additional Assessor.

3.4 Substations (earthing and civil works)

PC advised that the INA had been seeking a meeting with LRQA to discuss their concerns about the standard of design and construction competence with regard to substation earthing but had cancelled the arranged meeting the day before it was due to take place. PC advised that there was a general opinion that Substation civil works should come under the remit of NERS and LRQA are considering this. DM commented that more detailed examination of substation earthing was necessary still.

3.5 Memorandum of Understanding

PC advised that all current NERSAP members had now signed the MoU on behalf of their organisations. TT asked if the MoU Schedule 1 detailing NERSAP members could be reviewed at the next and subsequent NERSAP meetings. PC agreed to update the schedule with ED's details as NPg representative.

3.6 Acceptance of Designs by Network Operators

PC advised that his understanding is that all Network Operators will accept designs for acceptance from 'design-only' ICP and that any anomalies previously encountered by ICPs had now been resolved. This understanding is supported by the minutes of the Competition in Connections Code of Practice (CiCCoP)

panel meetings. EC commented that the quality of some designs especially for HV projects is 'very poor' with some requiring iterations of 30-40 submissions and resubmissions and asked whether there should be a point at which the ICP concerned should be referred back to LRQA for re-assessment. PC advised that they could only assess for compliance with the NERS requirements and not designs themselves. TT advised that in the NERS Requirements there is a requirement for designs to be signed off at a senior level within the ICP organisation and suggested that this is something that should maybe be considered for the forthcoming v11 of the NERS Requirements. DE asked what the main problems in general are and EC replied that there are problems encountered from basic to complex. This causes a problem if construction is commenced before design acceptance from the DNO is received and reinforces the need to stipulate that construction should not commence before design acceptance is received from the DNO/IDNO. DM commented that there should be more scrutiny of competence in design by LRQA especially EHV and whilst there may always be 'staged' design acceptance, 30-40 resubmissions is unreasonable. ED agreed with EC and DM and commented that staff were being replaced at ICPs with designers of lesser competence. DE commented that LRQA don't currently require notification of a change in senior designers in the same way that Assessing Officers are notified, and maybe this should be a change for v11. TT asked if there was a way that all participants could share thoughts.

3.7 Voting for Deputy Chairperson

PC advised that voting concluded with 9 votes to 8 in Favour of Dave Ellis and that 3 members did not vote.

4. Review of Minutes & Actions from NERS Providers Forum Meeting 14th July 2026

PC summarised the content of the meeting as follows:

4.1 Use of AI Note-Taking Bots in Teams Meetings

PC advised that during the last NERS ICP Forum meeting he had commented about previous attendees having expressed concerns about artificial intelligence (AI) note-taking apps operating during the NERS Forum meetings. These apps have been known to record audio and video without participants' permission and would then automatically invite themselves to all future meetings (not just the NERS ICP Forum). PC advised that he would be removing any such apps from the participant list during meetings. KM commented that he was aware of an instance where an AI note-taking app had completely mis-represented what had been said at a meeting. PC asked everyone to rely on the LRQA generated minutes rather than such AI apps as there is a risk of exposing businesses to risks that they are not aware of.

4.2 EUSR "Right Card" Scheme

Already covered above in section 3 of these minutes

4.3 NERS Staffing by LRQA

Already covered above in section 3 of these minutes

EC confirmed that pressure exists from developers on ICPs to make connections quickly but believed that a mandatory step in the NERS Requirements document of obtaining design approval before construction starts would be helpful, but that starting before approval is obtained would be at the ICP's risk.

JB confirmed that he had seen this pressure a lot but that his company would not start construction work without first receiving design approval and supported a mandatory step of obtaining design approval before construction work commenced.

4.4 Internal Meter Positions

PC confirmed that since ICPs were advised not to install services to internal meter positions this subject was now closed.

4.5 Work Commencing Before Design Approval Obtained

PC advised that a comment in v11 was proposed advising that any construction work taking place before design approval was obtained would be entirely at the construction ICP's risk. However, the ICP Forum had responded by stating that even though design approval was often obtained, such approval (or aspects of it), were, on occasions subsequently rejected by network operators. General consensus is that even if something had been missed it still needed to be put right. EC commented that the ICP is ultimately responsible. EC also commented that work should not be commenced at all without design acceptance and NGED are producing a series of guidance documents aimed at preventing work commencing. The network operators have standards and timescales for delivery of design acceptance which the ICPs and developers should be able to plan for. TT commented that SP-ENW had recent cases where multiple cases of no approval obtained had led to other non-compliances such as non-submission of weekly whereabouts meaning the network operator has no opportunity to audit. DE mentioned that on more complex schemes where staged approval is agreed and asked if such practice was still relevant on EHV projects, but nevertheless if there is no approved design then there is nothing to inspect against. DB commented that some ICPs have self-approval status and that revised designs need to be to current network operator standards. Often changes are not highlighted which is inefficient. DM commented that he often has to advise ICPs of methods of highlighting changes which make it easier for the network operator to review. EC stated that NGED's policy NC2F available on NGED's website gives guidance on the format and layout of submitted designs. PC asked if this could be shared amongst NERS assessors and EC agreed to email PC with it. KM expressed concern about making design approval an absolute requirement before work commences as this would impact the ICP Forum who should be given an opportunity to comment. EC advised that this may help ICPs by referring developers to the NERS requirements as the reason for non-commencement of construction work. JB agreed and MB confirmed that the ICPs should be consulted. PC agreed to discuss with the other LRQA NERS assessors.

5.6 Network Operator Audit Failure Rates

PC confirmed that the UKPN document regarding ICP compliance had been circulated with a view to reducing the number of instances of non-compliance,

5.7 Substations (earthing and civil works)

Discussed in agenda item 3 above.

5.8 NERS ICP Forum Invites

PC had reminded the Forum that an invite list of more than one person per ICP would be more difficult to manage than at present and that it was incumbent on the invitee to forward the invite to others in their organisation as necessary.

5. Update on NERS Strategy Working Group

PC advised some proposed dates for the next meeting and would poll members on their availability for several dates with a view to settling on one where the majority of members are available. EC asked the purpose of this group and PC advised that issues such as the NERS Requirements document would be an example. KM advised that it was for working up the details of more general proposals by NERSAP. PC suggested the first meeting should determine the framework of the meetings going forward. TT confirmed that the group had been useful in the past on subjects such as the MoU, ICP competency etc.

6. Update on Management of Design Competency Review

PC advised that LRQA were encountering difficulty in obtaining an editable copy of this document and whilst they had initiated a consultation on proposed changes but despite a number of requests, LRQA had still not had sight of the comments received as a result of the consultation. PC asked for proposals on how this could be progressed with EUSR. TT suggested that the DNOs could add weight by asking EUSR about progress. DE agreed to follow this up with Mel Swift who has the ear of EUSR and KM agreed to do the same.

7. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

PC reported that all signatures had now been obtained and that Schedule 1 of the MoU would form an agenda item at each NERSAP in future to confirm NERSAP contact details.

8. NERS Report

PC presented the data concerning visits and findings and this will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting as they contained quite detailed data which can be scrutinised by members.

PC advised that there are now in excess of 500 ICPs with NERS accreditation.

MB had suggested at the Forum meeting two weeks ago that it would be useful to have some kind of frequency rate to determining performance was improving or not. This could be a rolling 12-month graph of deficiencies per surveillance visit.

9. Installation of new Deputy Chairperson

PC confirmed that following a vote Dave Ellis is elected as Deputy Chairperson.

10. AOB and dates of 2026 meetings

JL commented that regarding NERS suspension notices to NERSAP members, where ICPs were suspended and quickly re-instated and asked if there was a way in which communications could not be sent out where a quick re-instatement was envisaged. PC asked the meeting if NERSAP members should be immediately advised of suspension and re-instatement as quickly as possible as had previously been requested or not. This would require more thought and would likely be the type of subject for the NERS Strategic Working Group.

EC asked if suspensions should be for a minimum period of 3 or 6 months regardless of the reason for suspension and regardless of how quickly the reason for suspension was remedied. This would give more incentive for ICPs to remain in compliance. In other words, more punitive measures are required. PC advised of a recent case where an ICP had been suspended for a period of only one week which had significantly affected the business. PC advised that the DNOs could still take a view on suspensions e.g. for non-safety issues and how long they refuse to engage with a suspended ICP. TT questioned thoroughness and punitive measures of a recent suspension where it appeared LRQA had been too lenient. DE asked for confirmation that DNOs would not allow work to continue where an ICP is suspended. MB asked if there was a system in place for LRQA to be reimbursed for time spent and reviewing the remedial actions where an ICP was suspended. PC responded that there was an investigation process, but this is only instigated at the request of a Network Operator, and not, as in the most recent case, where deficiencies had been discovered by LRQA. KM commented that in cases where an ICP has not paid LRQA are usually remedied quite quickly and that where a genuine mistake had been made, then this should be treated differently to an ICP willingly not paying. KM further commented that where an ICP is found not to be at fault, following a network operator requested investigation, then LRQA bears the cost of investigation, and some thought should be given to whether this is right. EC commented that NERSAP members being advised immediately of non-payment issues leading to suspension is useful as this may be an indicator to the network operators that the ICP is encountering financial difficulties and hence pose a risk to the network operators in terms of indemnity for constructed assets.

EC asked if ICPs should be notifying LRQA where work is being carried out for which the ICP holds 'partial' accreditation and if the network operators should be checking that LRQA has been informed. PC responded that it is incumbent on the ICP to inform LRQA and not doing so would likely lead to suspension as was the case recently where LRQA only found out about the work from social media. PC advised that it was nevertheless helpful when DNOs ask LRQA if arrangements are in place for LRQA to attend where they are aware that an ICP holds "partial" accreditation.

MB asked about the frequency of website updates when an ICP's accreditation status changes since the website is relied upon by network operators for checking accreditation status. PC advised that there is an inevitable delay between a site visit and the website being updated while the resulting report is written and reviewed. MB commented that the network operators have no visibility of accreditation status during this interim period.

***Post -meeting note – the website is in fact updated immediately and prior to review of a report so there is**

a minimal delay in updating the website (i.e. less than the 7-10 days mentioned during the meeting). KM commented that LRQA would need to see the value in changing the workflow to address what is only a 'potential' problem.

TT commented that the scope descriptors used on the website do not always align with the descriptors in the NERS Requirements document. TT advised that there is ongoing confusion. PC advised that scope descriptors had been advised to all assessors. PC asked for examples of the perceived problem and TT agreed to provide examples.

JB advised that he had been asked by UCCG to comment on apparent inconsistencies in interpretation by ICPs of the NERS requirements document and whilst clarity on the Project Management function requirements had already been proposed, there were still other improvements required, particularly concerning those who are "materially affecting the work". JB agreed to provide further examples.

PC thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Dates for the remaining 2026 meetings are:

NERS Provider Forum 10th November

NERSAP 24th November