

Minutes of GIRS Providers Forum



LRQA Tuesday 14th May 2024

Venue: Meetpoint Midlands & Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Attended @ Meetpoint Midlands

Name	Name	Name
Les Thomas (LT)	Steph Marvin (SM)	Charlotte Berryman (CB)
Claire Wilcox (CW)	Alec Bromiley (AB)	Ian Haynes (IH)

Attended Via Teams

Name	Name	Name
Peter Humphries (PH)	Dean O'Dee (DO)	Andy Ginn (AG)
Robert Beavis (RB)	Mark Harrison (MH)	Daniel Scott (DS)
Danny Dunstan (DD)	Ian Mumford (IM)	Andy Holland (AH)
Eric Dodd (ED)	Stephen Maggs (SM)	Kevin Wilkinson (KW)
Andy Bunten(AB)	Sam Coleman (SC)	Joe Howells (JW)
Karl Miller (KM)	Martin Peters (MP)	Dave Morgan (DM)
Paul Surname unknown (P)	Murray Richards (MR)	Alex – Flowaime (A?)
Peter Burnage (PB)	Alan Shaw (AS)	Daniel Worman (DW)
Philip Henderson (PHen)	Louise Boccaccini (LB)	Daniel Briault (DB)
Mark Davey (MD)	Ben Webb (BW)	Andy Jones (AJ)
Hollie Richardson (HR)	Claire Pape (CP)	
Steve Richards (SR)	Sheila Lauchlan (SL)	
Angela Fry (AF)	Dave Wilkins (DW)	

Apologies / attendees at recent meetings:

The meeting request was issued to over two hundred potential attendees. Numerous apologies were received but have not been listed due to the numbers involved.

Minutes of Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

The chair welcomed the new and regularly attending UIP representatives to the UIP Forum at Meetpoint Midlands and using Microsoft Teams. He reminded the attendees that the face-to-face meeting at Meetpoint was arranged because it was agreed that the May forum would be a hybrid meeting from Kegworth. It was noted that only 6 people were in attendance.

He continued by providing an overview of the agenda for the day, as there were 42 in attendance it was prudent to forgo the traditional introductions.

2. Review and acceptance of Previous Minutes Dated 16th January 2024

The minutes were accepted as a true record of events.

a) Matters Arising from previous meeting.

The main matters arising were discussed as follows:

2.a.1 Design Changes Due to Inaccurate Records

At the last GIRSAP Cadent clarified that where site conditions were found to be different than planned, there are two processes that need to be considered.

Design variations and cost recovery:

Cadent seek evidence of the application of the IGEM/TD/101 variation process and accept that Minor variations can be agreed on site and followed up at the Completion file stage. The UIP issue is that obtaining a clearance to proceed where there is a “Minor Design Change” can still be difficult.

The submission of the Minor variation form as part of the RO was suggested as a possible solution as was an extension of the deviation tables in section 4.9.6 of SCO 4 & 5 to include UIP activities. PO agreed to discuss options with Network Control.

JF stated that a new briefing note is currently been finalised and that Cadent would look to see if a Deviation table can be included.

UIP cost recovery:

Cadent have reiterated that the rule is that retrospective costs will not be approved and that Cadent require a call before the work goes ahead to agree compensation where site conditions were found to be different than planned, and this results in additional cost to the UIP.

During discussion there was a consensus that delays will elevate costs and that a pragmatic approach, when operating out of hours, will always be applied provided there was suitable evidence, and the costs were justifiable and reasonable.

JF reiterated there will always be a challenge if there is no call on the day and that if a connection is being undertaken out of hours, if you let the connections team know, staff can be made contactable.

LB raised an issue from a job in London (110054235 - 250 City Road, EC1V 2PU) that required a quick response from Cadent but one had not been forthcoming causing delays and cost issues.

There was a discussion on communication issues with Cadent and it was suggested that it would be a good idea if the Stakeholder Forum was re-introduced. Issues with the portal not working were also raised.

Clare Wilcox stated that timescales of responses from Cadent were also an issue, and Charlotte Berryman cited a project 100036570, Customer Reference: N0023655-1 / AP1979 100035391 001 where delays in digitising by Cadent caused issues with payment.

2.a.2 Safety & Engineering Bulletin No: WWSEB153 Checking of Contingency Valves

LT updated on the conclusions from the GIRSAP meeting.

At the last forum, G Cocksey reminded the panel that if a UIP is unable to find the nominated valve, in this situation the minimum requirement can only be to refer back to the GT and ask for an alternative valve to be nominated.

The response from GIRSAP was discussed. GIRSAP confirmed that there was a consensus that the GDNs have many older assets in the ground that mean valves may have been buried and

are no longer visible. To this end, the minimum requirement is for UIPs is to identify the location of any prescribed contingency valve and safeguard access to the valve on the day of the operation.

Cadent explained that for IP projects, they now appoint a Project Manager to look at the location of contingency valves upfront and Ops & Maintenance teams can provide the support required, however it was confirmed that this is not the case on LP or MP projects.

For the IGTs it was explained that as the assets were much newer, the expectation is that the UIP locate a suitable location to squeeze off rather shut off a valve.

2a.3 LRQA Reports to be issued to the Technical Advisors not just the UIP Contacts.

It was confirmed these are now being received. Clarification was given to Sheila Lauchlan that the reports are only issued by the Assessor and not also by the LRQA admin team.

2a.4 LRQA Bulletins Issued before the Last GIRSAP

LT updated on the conclusions from the GIRSAP meeting.

At the last UIP forum CNG queried the certification structure proposed for <7bar works compared to the previous process, as it appeared that Cadent are insisting on a lot more than was previously required for GIRS registered companies. The forum queried whether the information required on AV1 was in fact being duplicated and if this was a specific scenario related to Biomethane projects.

At GIRSAP it was confirmed that the document was intended to provide guidance on the structure for compiling quality assurance (QA) records for entry connections and exit connections to Cadent's 2bar ≤ 7 bar Network and does not generally apply to Low Pressure. Consequently, this is not a request for additional information, it is guidance on how to comply with the existing CAD/PM/G/17 (IGEM/GL/5) procedure.

JF clarified that, should there be an above ground crossing or complex structure then the requirements could be applied on a Low-Pressure network.

2a.5 Wask Mark 1 Base and Spares Obsolescence

LT updated on the conclusions from the GIRSAP meeting.

Previously, the forum raised the issue of the group letter posted on WASK website regarding the MK1 base being made obsolete from 1st September 2023. This would not have been an issue had their alternative base, the Mk 2, not developed a fault forcing its withdrawal from use for MP operations in November 2022.

Cadent were asked to confirm the current status of EB/756 that was due for review on or before 11/11/2023.

Response

- WASK Should have made people they knew who bought MKII tee sets aware of the fault when working in excess of 1.8bar.
- Cadent prohibited the use internally of the sets until they had been reviewed and remediated by a competent maintenance technician and marked with an “&” on the set.
- The MKI can still be utilised for LP and MP as they are drill clamps for the main and can be re-utilised.
- The MKII can be used on low pressure and needs to be reviewed and remediated to work on MP.

Mark Harrison asked about the use of spares from companies other than Wask. LT reiterated that those companies would have to give their own assurances about the spares used and any maintenance work carried out.

There were no further matters arising.

3. Review of GIRSAP Minutes

3.1 SCO Notifications

The consensus was that all seems to be working ok now, with no delays now that the system has become embedded.

3.2 Bulletins Issued / Info raised Since Last GIRSAP

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JF clarified that, should there be an above ground crossing or complex structure then the requirements could be applied on a Low-Pressure network.

3.3 Requirements for Network Analysis

Previously, the Forum had questioned the fact that Cadent's briefing note stated that Network Analysis is mandated for LP >6" /180mm, all MP/IP and within 50m of pressure reduction equipment.

At GIRSAP, JF confirmed that Network Analysis is not required for non-invasive connections.

LT asked the meeting if anyone was still experiencing any issues and there were no responses.

3.4 Contingency Plans

LT Updated the meeting on the response from Cadent at GIRSAP. A discussion was had regarding Cadent asking the UIP to excavate for a contingency squeeze-off. SM to provide specific project details.

During discussion, it was stated that if the valves have not been maintained and a squeeze-off hole is required then the network should be paying for that as it was not for a UIP to experience additional costs due to a network owner not maintaining its assets.

A discussion ensued on S50's and their validity for this work as it is classed as maintenance.

3.5 Designing Networks when there are properties with no gas supply within 23m of the main.

LT updated the meeting of the discussions at GIRSAP and the consensus that the statutory obligation to provide supplies to properties within 23m of a relevant main lies with the GT's. UIP's need to design their offering based on the client request but need to provide

information to the adopting GT detailing the number of properties within 23m not being supplied. This will then be subject to analysis by the GT who may then request the UIP to increase the pipe size at their cost or may chose to leave the design unchanged and deal with any future request at that time.

4. LRQA Report 2024

The full LRQA Report is attached but is summarised as follows.

Company Info

176 Companies Listed on the Web site (-2)

5 New Companies.

5 Companies have closed their accreditation.

3 Companies are suspended (-7).

Generally, these are companies that have let their Partial Accreditation Status Lapse

45 companies are currently at Partial.

To date in 2024 LRQA have completed

70 on site Surveillance Visits (257 in 2023)

8 Recertification visits

11 Partial Assessments

8 Partial to full Assessments

Deficiencies Identified

7 Major Deficiencies (7 in 2023)

33 Minor Deficiencies (122 in 2023)

38 visits with no deficiencies (104 During 2023)

The seven Major deficiencies identified during this year's surveillance visits were identified as:

- Multiple issues found with missing or out-of-date plant and equipment.
- No underground plans available. Escalation - Last visit this was a minor but still no plans whilst digging.
- No evidence was available that the work being carried out by the provider had been notified to the Adopting Network Owner of the work being undertaken.
- Branch Saddle on MP main tested at 1.5 bar instead of 3 bar.
- There was no evidence that the subcontractors have been inducted into the company management procedures.
- The team had not completed a Site-specific risk assessment at the time of the assessment.
- Team started work on pipework that was subject to a 3-bar test.

The Forum was reminded that details of all deficiencies identified are listed in the new Excel Deficiency Report Spreadsheet that is to be presented to GIRSAP that includes the names of the UIPs but is redacted for the individuals.

5. Breathing Apparatus Face Fit – Facial Hair

Charlotte Berryman presented the meeting with details of the issues Aptus Utilities were having with operatives having the need to have satisfactory BA with positive face-fit tests but refusing to shave beards. She had details of several different options for possible alternate BA and hoods, and the meeting was asked for comment and any advice or experiences.

Options for suitable Breathing Apparatus were provided (see attached) and this prompted a useful discussion within the meeting. LT agreed to raise at GIRSAP to see if the DN's were experiencing the same issues and what, if any, solutions have been found.

6. AOB

a) UIPs requested to model the existing network at design submission.

CP raised an instance where a network had requested the designer to carry out network analysis on the existing upstream network laid previously by another UIP. During discussion there was a clear consensus that the UIP should not be doing this as it is a GT obligation to provide the connection pressure and the UIP may not have all the relevant information.

During discussion it was stated that the network should be referred to TD101 section 5.2.5 of which states

“Where required, the upstream GT shall provide information on connection pressures for system extensions and for any services with a pressure drop greater than 2 mbar, together with details of any reinforcement required. The method of connection shall be agreed between the upstream GT, the adopting GT and the UIP.”

Reference should also be made to figures 1, 2 and 3.

b) Safe working with Coil Trailers

SL asked if more detail and clarification could be provided on the safety zone requirements set out in the recent safety bulletin on the use of coil trailers that had been issued following an incident. KM and DM agreed to take the issue away and try and get more information from the company involved.

Ian Mumford informed the meeting that Keith Johnson was involved in carrying out a review on the use of coil trailers. GIRSAP are asked for any information that would be useful for the UIPS.

c) Recent request from a solicitors for inclusion at the forum.

KM had received a letter from a solicitor asking to be involved in a GIRS meeting. This was put to the attendees on the basis they may find the contact useful to their business, however, this was declined. It was agreed that the solicitor's details be issued should anyone wish to speak to them directly.

Her contact details are:

Phillippa Holcroft Phillippa.Holcroft@mchaleandco.co.uk

McHale & Co Solicitors

19-21 High Street, Altrincham, WA14 1QP

T: +44(0)161 928 3848

F: +44(0)161 928 8545

www.mchaleandco.co.uk

d) Battery powered fusion boxes.

KM also raised a discussion point on battery powered fusion boxes that he had observed used in USA. Pros and cons were discussed by the group. The consensus was that for service installations they can be useful with up to 80 joints being available, but some had experienced reliability issues.

e) Wask Electrofusion saddles for use on PE Bagstop

CB raised concerns over failures of Wask electrofusion saddles for use in PE bagstop. She gave details on the issues they had when trying to fuse saddles on site caused by the lack of pressure being exerted by various tooling options. Wask had attended site and carried out their own investigations leading to them producing a new adapter for the clamps. They have also stated that only strap clamps should be used. CB presented a Concern Report produced following the investigation, and also a bulletin from WASK on the new tooling and requirements.

Note: The Concern Report and bulletin has been queried at GIRSAP and LRQA are awaiting further information before issuing the two documents.

f) Approval of Design submissions

CW raised an issue when a design has been submitted to an iGT where the network had responded in an email stating that the design '*should be fine*' and this was to be taken as the design approval.

The discussion centred around the need for formal responses from networks when giving design approvals. Alec Bromiley also re-iterated that this has also been raised as a concern by a design house in a letter to LRQA. LT to take the issue to GIRSAP.

7. Next Meeting Details

The agreed dates for 2024 meetings are:

GIRS UIP	10th Sept 2024
GIRSAP	21st May, and 24th September 2024