

Minutes of GIRS Providers Forum



LRQA Tuesday 10th September 2024

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Name	Name	Name
Andrea Wright	Daniel Scott	Louise Boccaccini
Andy Bunten	Danny	Mark Davey
Andy Ginn	Dave Morgan	Mark Harrison
Andy Holland	Dave Wilkins	Mick Coleman
Angela Fry	David Mulcahy	Murray Richards
Alec Bromiley	Dean O'Dee	Paul Mason
Ben Brownbill	Derek Muckle	Robert Beavis
Ben Webb	Eric Dodd	Sarah Parker
Carl Blezard	Hollie Richardson	Sheila Lauchlan
Carl Evans	Humphries, Peter	Simon Brown
Charlotte Berryman	Ian Mumford	Steph Marvin
Claire Pape	Joe Howells	Stephen Maggs
John Cooper	Lee Windsor	Steve Richards
Jerry Cowling	Les Thomas	

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. He continued by providing an overview of the agenda for the day, as there were 41 in attendance it was prudent to forgo the traditional introductions.

2. Review and acceptance of Previous Minutes Dated 14th May 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

LT informed the panel of the discussion at the last GIRSAP. Project references where specific issues had been experienced were tabled and there was a discussion on communication issues with Cadent. Various Cadent specific issues had been raised including the UIP forum suggestion that it would be a good idea if the Stakeholder Forum was re-introduced and that there were issues with the portal not working.

The UIPS are reminded that should there be no response from the 0845 number that Peter O'Neil could be contacted directly. He also informed the panels that the portal is an application that is no longer within the management of the design and completions team and that this was because the portal was not used by many UIPs. DM had asked that if the Portal is no longer used, why is the link still there. PO agreed to discuss the portal issues with the application team and remove the shortcut. He reiterated that as the portal relied on core systems that were over 10 years old there was little desire to update something that is due to be replaced.

LB reminded the UIP Forum that there were discounted rates for those using the Portal. During discussion it was confirmed that when the UIPS that used the portal receive the charges at the higher rate, these are being challenged to apply the reduced rate as if the portal were in place, the UIP would use it. Reductions are being agreed but this should not need to be negotiated every time charges are received.

PO to confirm if the portal is being removed that the reduced rates are to be retained?

2.a.2 Breathing Apparatus Face Fit – Facial Hair

LT fed back the results of the discussions at the last GIRSAP meeting as follows:

- There was a consensus that the GDNs are in a different place to the UIPS in that they have operatives whose role is to undertake emergency repair in gaseous atmospheres. Consequently, it was stated that NGN for example have a clean shave policy and if people refuse to shave, they are sent home.
- UIPs and iGTS are in a slightly different position in that they do not carry out emergency operations in Gaseous atmospheres. However, KJ reminded the panel of HSG(53) Respiratory Protective Equipment at work (see attached) and that the law requires that as an employer, you have a legal responsibility to control substances hazardous to health in your workplace, and to prevent and adequately control your employees' exposure to those substances.
- The Employee also has a duty to use the equipment provided correctly.

There was a useful discussion relating to the use of Breathing apparatus and UIP Emergency Procedures. Topics for discussion were

- the need for a clean shaved policy,
- the issue of other airborne hazards that exist in construction sites,
- changes being witnessed in the wider emergency services, and
- If we are considering emergency procedures, then is there a need for teams to consist of 3 men if one has to go in the excavation to rescue a colleague?
- The level of training and refresher training for operatives

There was a general consensus that UIPS should not "dumb down" the need for BA and that the need to ensure that operatives provided with BA should be clean shaven to the extent that a face fit test results in a positive seal. There is however a need for a measured response in that the UIPS are not an emergency service provider and should not be considered as such. CB informed the forum that Aptus has now adopted the clean shaved policy and had carried out

their own training exercise that had proved very worthwhile and with interesting results, especially relating to the younger operatives.

Consequently, it was agreed that all UIPS should have a method statement that describes the Deployment of Breathing Apparatus and the completion of a "Face Fit Test" and that this method statement should be part of the mandatory Method Statements in Section 6.1 of GIG 2 required for all UIPS holding an operational scope. This is to be confirmed with GIRSAP.

2.a.3 UIPs requested to model the existing network at design submission

LT reported on the discussion undertaken at GIRSAP where the requirements of TD101 were presented 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."

GIRSAP agrees that TD101 needs to be complied with as UIP's modelling existing networks is not acceptable as there needs to be a level of independence between the asset owner and the designer

2.a.4 Safe working with Coil Trailers

LT reported that GIRSAP membership had no further information relating to the Lessons Learned briefing note issued by Balfour Beatty, but that a working group had been set up to look at the safe use, with a new GIS to come out in the near future.

The interpretation of the requirements documented in the recently issued briefing note were discussed, with various opinions on the definition of the Safe Zone, Amber Zone and Yellow Zone presented. Clearly the fact that there were different opinions as to what each zone represents and that there were no measurements for the width of the amber or yellow zones meant the briefing note was not sufficient to disseminate the good practice learning points.

LRQA are asked to discuss with the originator of the briefing note to request clarification on the zones and dimensions

2.a.5 Wask Electrofusion saddles for use on PE Bagstops

LT fed back the response from GIRSAP which were that the panel was concerned as to why there was a such a response to only one failure and was there a possibility of issues at installation as the photos provided were not conclusive. NGN have agreed to discuss with Wask.

During discussion CB confirmed that there have been a number of failures, which was the reason for raising the concern, and that Wask have said tooling is required for ensuring an even load is applied that will be issued with the saddle in future. However, to date none have been received. CB also informed the forum that Wask have stated strap clamps to be used.

The forum was asked if any other organisations had experienced any issues. None were described but most had used strap clamps.

DM of Radius explained that they had no quality alerts from Wask saddles but have had issues with a competitor's saddle due to distortion at the base of the fitting. He also reiterated to the forum that the type of clamp should make no difference as long as the correct force of 1500 Newtons is correctly applied

2.a.5 iGT Approval of Design Submission

At GIRSAP, Alec Green of ESP confirmed that the email response was from ESP and that the reason for the informality was that at the time, the UIP had not in fact signed the network connections agreement and therefore, no formal approval could be issued. (they have now, and a formal approval has been issued).

EEMU Confirmed that formal approval had now been received and new process is being implemented by the GT. – The issue closed.

There were no further matters arising.

3. Review of GIRSAP Minutes May 2024

3.1 Cadent's internal F7 supplement document

Cadent have responded at GIRSAP that there are no further supplements to F7 and that everyone needs to comply. It was also reiterated that suppliers had been consulted prior to publication of the new document

The Issue is closed

3.2 Reviewing Manager's Questionnaire

LT confirmed he had followed the link and commented on the simplicity of the form. Numerous attendees confirmed they had also completed the form.

The link is included for reference Link - <https://forms.office.com/e/1pksz5eMqk>

3.3 Design Changes due to inaccurate records

Discussed in 2.a.1 above

3.4 Cadent weekly whereabouts

At GIRSAP Cadent explained that they are experiencing issues with the information being provided as weekly whereabouts and that the dates of the various activities being undertaken is not being provided.

During discussion it was conformed that the Connection activities are provided as part of the Start Date Notification/RO/NRO process, but the construct activities cannot be separated out as it is difficult to determine the rate of excavation etc. DM had provided an example where whereabouts had been rejected on three occasions. Consequently, PO and JM would consider what is being sought and provide some clarity.

Once received, this will be distributed.

3.5 GF Small diameter fittings with screwed attachments and the use of clamps

At GIRSAP KM raised an issue where a WIRS assessor had opened a GIRS assessment document and identified that a finding had been raised as a team had screwed down the clamps on the George Fischer fitting and did not use a clamp. The LRQA Assessors were seeking clarification amongst themselves.

The forum is reminded that, as has been minuted previously, the screws shall not be used for Gas electrofusion and all joints shall be clamped, with the fitting rotated to confirm alignment. This does not apply to Water.

LRQA will remind the Water assessors that this is a GIRS requirement even if not a WIRS requirement.

3.6 Design Variation and procedure and the SCO Deviation process

At GIRSAP Cadent explained that they are looking at the specific process requirements over the next few months but currently, when records are found to be inaccurate, these are to be managed by the Location Team. Cadent are yet to provide an update on this.

During discussion it was explained that the issue has been raised under the TD101 panel review group, Cadent had not accepted the major/minor variations explanations and wanted to be informed of all variations. There was also a discussion relating to the difference between a Deviation and a Design Variation.

SM stated that Peter O'Neil was to take the issue away and feedback to the next TD101 meeting being held on Monday.

There was a consensus that this needs to be raised at GIRSAP as UIP's work to TD101. LT asked to be updated of any response received prior to the next GIRSAP meeting.

4. LRQA Report 2024

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

Company Info

175 Companies Listed on the Web site (-1)

2 New Companies.

3 Companies have closed their accreditation.

4 Companies are suspended (+1).

These are companies that have let their Partial Accreditation Status Lapse

44 companies are currently at Partial.

To date in 2024 LRQA have completed

140 on site Surveillance Visits (257 total in 2023)

16 Recertification visits (15 total in 2023)

15 Partial Assessments (22 total in 2023)

12 Partial to full Assessments (22 total in 2023)

Deficiencies Identified

8 Major Deficiencies (7 total in 2023)

101 Minor Deficiencies (122 in 2023)


38 visits with no deficiencies (104 During 2023)

The eight 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.
- Multiple issues found with key items of equipment required for the RO found to be missing with other items out-of-date.

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. Bulletins Issued / Info raised Since Last GIRSAP



TECHNICAL BULLETIN



GG-TGI-TB0138-Vn1.00


TITLE: Fire rated gate valves (Donkin 555/401-004 Softseal Valve)	DATE: 19 TH AUGUST 2024
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BACKGROUND: IGEM/G/5 Ed3 introduced the requirement to ensure all isolation valves do not aggravate a building fire. To date all gate valves from the Donkin 555 range have not been fire rated, and therefore where required as an Inlet Isolation Valve (IIV)/Branch Isolation Valve (BIV)/Lateral Isolation Valve (LIV) it has been necessary to apply mitigation measures such as installing an upstream Thermal Cut Off Valve (TCO) as per IGEM/G/5 Ed3 and GG-ASM-ES-0093-Vn4.00. AVK have recently released a new range of gate valve which is fire rated for use in occupied buildings. This complies with GIS/V7-1. Cadent have recently evaluated and approved the use of Donkin Mk4 Series 555 Gate valve & FIRESAFE valves.

DETAIL:
Donkin 555 series gate valves where installed within or attached to buildings will ordinarily require installation of an upstream TCO as the valves are not fire rated and therefore not suitable for use without TCO. However, AVK have released the Donkin 555/401-004 Softseal Valve which is rated as Firesafe. Tested to GIS V7-1 & PP1547 – for use in occupied buildings the valve is tested to BS EN 1775 Annex A Procedure A. Ball valves to GIS V7-3 are fire tested to BS EN 1775 Annex A Procedure B.


- The testing requires a rise of 821°C from ambient, so up to around 830-840°C (depending on the start temp.). This is in accordance with Building Regulations which refers to 800°C in the definition of 'high melting point metal' pipe in the section of the document addressing 'Protection of Openings and Fire Stopping'. This is referenced in IGEM/G/5 Ed3 Appendix 5.
- The valves are available in 2" - 6".
- Revised location of Body Vent Plug – now situated on the side of the main body, not the bonnet as before.
- Red markers applied as FIRESAFE visual indicators. (See picture below).
- 'FIRESAFE' stated on product label located on the valve bonnet.

ACTIONS:
Firesafe valves are to be used on all IIV, BIV and LIV, and where not used appropriate mitigating measures are to be applied such as fitting an upstream TCO



Employee Assistance Programme is available to all BUUK employees free of charge, 365 days a year.



Wisdom
Learn, grow, thrive
brought to you by Health Assured

<https://wisdom.healthassured.org/login>
App Code - Metlife - BUUK
24/7 freephone number 0800 389 0285

Email: SHEQ@bu-uk.co.uk
Telephone: 01359 240363

The presentation of the bulletin prompted a discussion as to its absolute use as an internal valve. SR clarified that whilst the valve obviated the need for a TCO immediately up stream of any IIV. It did not obviate the need for a TCO on manifolds etc. as, subject to a designers' risk assessment, these may still be required on manifolds etc. The need for these valves when designing Internal meter positions on I&C installations was discussed and whilst there was a consensus that these should be used, Dean O'Dee agreed to take to GIRSAP for clarification that this is the valve to be used for internal ECV's.

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6. AOB

a) Cadent Quotations for Mains cut Offs.

LT raised a concern regarding Cadent quotations for abandonment of single supply points to commercial customers. The Jaguar Land Rover quotation was tabled where Cadent had quoted Circa £29000 for a 180mm PE MP Isolation. Table 3 of the Cadent's Connections Charging Statement states a disconnection of a 180 mm pe /6" MET is £2810. This has been queried, and a response was provided that "Mains are different to services."

This has also been queried and chased but there has been no response. During discussion, it was stated that the connections team have stated this is an operations problem, but no sensible response can be obtained. LT asked if others had experienced similar issues.

DM quoted an issue where a quotation of £21,000 for isolating 90m of 63mm feeding a few services.

During discussion, several ideas were raised such as when there is only one MPRN supplied then Cadent can be asked to correctly classify the pipe as a main, and historically UIPs have been given a deviation to isolate. The UIP forum was informed that there appears to be a reluctance to do this. The general consensus was that the situation should be raised with OfGEM.

b) SCO registration with Wales & West Utilities

LT raised an issue regarding the difficulties being experienced with W&WU network approval for the annual review of registrations and the changes following the recent W&WU Change in SCO personnel. The issues involved:-

- The information required to register an individual with a new company (that has been registered with the network for 20 years or more)
- The removal of existing approvals (e.g. Above 180) if they have no evidence of the work being carried out on their network (without checking with the UIP).
- The need for a personal statement and a Managers' Statement in addition to a 1PQ (which is a statement of experience signed by both the candidate and the reviewing manager)

A discussion was had with the following contributions:-

Dave Wilkins – met with W&W yesterday as he was also having issues getting approval. He also confirmed that W&W remove people off the register if they had not carried out the type of work in the last 12 months, although will accept evidence it has been done for another network. (the evidence required is a RO/NRO and audits).

Steph Marvin – has recently experienced the same issues having taken two months to register 3 people, who are already registered on their system.

During discussion there was a consensus that the SCO is a demonstration of an individual competence and therefore an individual's registration should apply to all companies. The only limitation from a UIP perspective is the scopes held would limit the registration areas.

SL informed the meeting that NGN have recently adopted the Mineral Blue Integrated Safe System of Work system which is intended to be a central database to coordinate the SCO qualifications of competent persons and Authorising Engineers. If this system were adopted by all GTS for the management of UIP SCO registrations, this could resolve the issue as once the qualifications are input they could be applied to all companies.

c) EUSR NCO(G) qualifications and registrations

MC questioned if any other UIPS were experiencing issues with the EUSR Registration of Mainlayer 400mm and above, as there seemed to be inconsistency in its application. There were no comments from others. LT reminded everyone that if registered before expiry qualifications will continue, but if they expire the process requires starting over.

d) Surveillance Visit Reports

SL confirmed that the SV reports are being supplied but the TAs do not get issued with the Partial, Full and Re-certifications that they need. LT Apologised as these are not issued by the Assessors. He would arrange with the Utilities Team to copy in when they are issued. It was also highlighted that the TAs do not receive reports from the Water Assessors.

7. Next Meeting Details

The proposed dates for the 2025 meetings are:

GIRS Forum – 14th Jan 2025, 6th May 2025, 9th September 2025

GIRSAP – 28th Jan 2025, 20th May 2025, 23rd September 2025.

During discussion LB reminded the forum that the 6th of May is the day after the May Day Bank Holiday. LT asked if that would be an issue for people as to move the date means the GIRSAP would need to move to the Spring Bank Holiday period. The 6th of May was agreed.