

Minutes of GIRS Providers Forum



LRQA Tuesday 16th January 2024

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Name	Name	Name
Amie Norton	Claire Wilcox	Joey Clark
Andrea Wright	Jerry Cowling	Kevin Wilkinson
Andy Bunten	Daniel Scott	Les Thomas
Andy Holland	Dave Wilkins	Karl Miller
Andy Jones	Derek Muckle	Paul Mason
Angela Fry	Eric Dodd	Peter-Jon Cowe
Ben Brownbill	Gary Fisher	Ken Rauer
Benjamin Lois	Gavin Sidhu	Rupinder Sandhu
Cassie McCaffrey	Philip Henderson,	Sarah Parker
Charlotte Berryman	Ian Mumford	Alan Shaw
Chris Lee	Ian Wilson	Sheila Lauchlan
Christian Crackle	James Cladd	Stephen Maggs
Claire Pape	Joe Howells	Steph Marvin

In addition eleven representatives attended under the Teams “Guest” facility.

Apologies / attendees at recent meetings:

The meeting request was issued to over 200 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 11th UIP Forum to be held using Microsoft Teams. He continued by providing an overview of the agenda for the day, as there were 49 in attendance it was prudent to forgo the traditional introductions.

The format for the meeting was outlined with the use of Chat / Raise your hand etc for any questions.

2. Review and acceptance of Previous Minutes Dated 12th September 2023

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

Addendum to meeting

Graham Cocksey had technical issues with his computer microphone and could not actively partake in the meeting. Following the meeting closure he provided an email seeking clarification from GIRSAP on minuted items which have been included as an addendum here and below.

Following statements made by Paul Aldridge, 3.2 of the UIP forum minutes, Para 2 states ...when minor variations are identified on site, these can be agreed on site... Graham is seeking clarification – agreed by whom, the UIP and Cadent, or the UIP team and its management?

The next paragraph is also vague, saying contact can be made with the Design Team... when is this contact expected to be made and by whom?

2.a.1 Safety & Engineering Bulletin No: WWSEB153 Checking of Contingency Valves

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.

Ideally, if the UIP can lift the cover and identify if the spindle is visible this is beneficial as the GDN can arrange for a maintenance team to attend in advance.

Addendum to Meeting:

G Cocksey wants to remind the panel that if a UIP is unable to find the nominated valve, such as in a carriageway, where there is no sign of the valve due to probable re-surfacing works, the GT has failed in its duty to maintain its valve assets. In this situation the minimum requirement can only be to refer back to the GT and ask for an alternative valve to be nominated.

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.1 LRQA Reports to be issued to the Technical Advisors not just the UIP Contacts.

At the last UIP forum, LRQA believed that all findings were being issued to the Technical Advisors, however, Sheila Lauchlin reiterated she was not always receiving them either in Scotland or England. LRQA to reiterate the requirement with LRQA Assessors. LRQA asked if the Technical Advisors were receiving them? Most Confirmed they were, but Graham Hill and Dave Wilkins stated they were receiving some but not all.

LT agreed to circulate their email addresses to the Assessors and remind them that all reports Partial, Full, Recertification and SVS should be issued to both the UIP contact and the Technical Advisor if different.

There were no further matters arising.

3. Review of GIRSAP Minutes 26th September 2023

3.1 Frialen Electrofusion couplers

At GIRSAP, Geoff Harle (GH) NGN clarified that the Technical Standards Forum (TSF) had discussed the issue in the August meeting and had agreed that the requirements for diameters and lengths of electrofusion sockets in PL2-4 is to be revised such that for electrofusion

sockets, the socket “Shall conform to” rather than “should conform to” the nominal diameter in Table 3, to prevent the deviation from the standard by means of a risk assessment.

GH reminded the panel that this was likely to take some time to be fully implemented.

3.2 Bulletins Issued / Info raised Since Last GIRSAP

The UIP forum queried the certification structure proposed for <7bar works compared to the previous process, as it appears that Cadent are insisting on a lot more than was previously required for GIRS registered companies.

The issue was raised at GIRSAP to consider if the route for GIRS companies is being made more complicated than it should be given the LRQA audit process i.e. aspects audited by LRQA should not have to be rechecked on a job-by-job basis by the adopting GT which might incentivise UIPs to take a non GIRS route.

Leigh Keegan has provided the original AV1 form as part of the consideration. However LRQA have not had a response from Cadent yet but AV1 (attached) has been provided. This will be discussed further at GIRSAP.

It was queried whether the information required on AV1 was in fact being duplicated and if this was a specific scenario related to Biomethane projects. During discussion it was explained that the briefing note relates to above 2 Bar and therefore there is no duplication in reality. GIRSAP is requested to comment.

4. LRQA Report 2023

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

Company Info

178 Companies Listed on the Web site (+1) (One is duplicated).

5 New Companies.

5 Companies have closed their accreditation.

10 Companies are suspended (+4).

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

47 companies are currently at Partial.

In 2023 LRQA have completed

257 on site Surveillance Visits (196 in 2022)

15 Recertification visits

22 Partial Assessments

22 Partial to full Assessments

Deficiencies Identified

7 Major Deficiencies (7 in 2022)

118 Minor Deficiencies (97 in 2022)

104 visits with no deficiencies (37 During 2022)

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

- Competency assessments have not been carried out on the Design Manager and Gas Design Trainee, with the review of the Design Engineer out-of-date.

- Designs are completed by the Gas Design Trainee and submitted to the GT's without reviews taking place. Drawings are signed off prior to handover to construction but this does not constitute a review. The design staff were not fully aware of the requirements and a review process had not been established.
- Excavation 1.5m deep and unstable. No permit to work in place and no control measures implemented.
- Multiple deficiencies relating to missing, out-of-date, and non-dated equipment
- The anchor bracket installed on a riser was not installed in compliance with the design. The Bracket was replaced.
- Method statements available on site were dated January 2021 and needed to be replaced. The replacement method statement was dated January 2022. The company need to review their audit processes to identify why this situation has not been identified earlier.
- Appendix 3 of IGEM/GL/6 Edition 3 states that Hydrostatic or pneumatic test with a test pressure ≥ 3 bar is a Mains and service construction activity that requires a permit to work. The PtW requirement is in addition to existing NRO requirement. There is no such requirement in the Method statements.

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 UIPs but will be redacted for the individuals.

5. Availability of Wask Mk1 and Mk2 Bases

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

With the declining availability of Mk 1 bases which cannot realistically be repaired due to certification problems and the issues raised with the Mark 2, the Forum is seeking any advice steering us towards a solution.

6. Cadent's recent SCO changes

The following issues were raised:

1. Delays in response times outside the NRO notification period.

UKD/418555NRO

- CMU requested Network Analysis. Requested and returned 3rd January.
- The NRO was submitted 5th January with proposed start date 15th January.
- Chased clearance 10th January - no response.
- Chased clearance once again 12th January.
- Response received 13:41 15th January.
 - Section v – please can this be updated with Aaron Beardsley & Brent Tattam
 - Contingency
 - Close MP Valve 85308 @ E:486231 – is this accessible?
 - 250mm PE is required – is the materials available?

Clarification is required. Who is this request for? The UIP doesn't know what the Emergency service provider is going to do. How much 250mm pipe etc?

During discussion it was identified that other UIPS are experiencing delays in their responses and questions that appear to be aimed internally (250mm PE question) are being passed to the UIP.

2. Aptus Utilities raised a question regarding AP2082 125mm x 315mm Branch saddle LP CSEP Connection AP2082 - UKD418850 - 100037178 - N0023971-1 - POC NEW DEV @ LAND AT WAYMILLS WHITCHURCH URBAN WHITCHURCH SY13 1RU (002).

Briefing note states that Network analysis mandated for LP >6" /180mm, all MP/IP and HP [1] and within 50m of pressure reduction equipment. Does this mean network analysis is required for a top tee or branch saddle connection? UIPs are receiving conflicting responses. Is Network Analysis required for non-invasive connections?

3. Briefing note states that a 63mm Service connection within 50m of a PRI requires an RO. This is outside the requirements of IGEM/GL/6.
4. Where Network Analysis suggests that the contingency is to squeeze off the main. Clarification is sought, are Cadent expecting the hole to be open? Charlotte Berryman has sent numerous emails with no response.

Cadent is reminded that contingency Squeeze offs and excavations to valves remote from the connection cannot be done under a Section 50 road opening notice which is for installing apparatus in the highway and not maintenance work.

7. Bulletins Issued / Info raised Since Last GIRSAP

SEB395 - NGN Network Control Contact Details Change

People who contact NGN Network Control must use the new central telephone number 0191 511 4545.

The NGN Network Control email address remains the same: netcontrol@northerngas.co.uk

To register any RO's or NRO's email the above address.

To log any RO's or NRO's on as live please contact 0191 5114545.

8. AOB

a) NCO(G) Distribution and Self Lay

PM queried if the EUSR Mapping exercise currently underway is the cause of extraneous issues where experienced main layers are not being recognised as distribution or to the correct diameter and are being asked to complete mini portfolios due to missing units of historic qualifications. AF of EUSR agreed to take this up with PM to check that the information provided is correct.

b) Pressure Gauges

PH reminded the UIPs of the need to send the correct pressure gauges to site as on two occasions recently the team has had the wrong gauge on site and had to request a gauge be delivered to allow work to continue or the correct gauge was on site but the operative was about to use an incorrect version. PH suggested that the NRO briefing sheet be specific as to the gauge required.

c) Face to face meetings

KM asked the forum if they would like at least one meeting a year to be face-to-face. It was agreed that the May forum would be a hybrid meeting from Kegworth.

d) Addendum to meeting

Whilst this was not raised at the forum AB requested GIRSAP be asked to consider the way forward in the following circumstance.

When designing housing developments there can now be a mix of properties supplied with gas and others "electric only".

Where a design is made and the main runs outside "all electric" properties, to supply other parts of the site which are being supplied with gas, we should take the potential loads into account as currently the GT/iGT has a statutory obligation to supply gas to properties within 23 yards of a relevant main under the Gas Act as it stands.

If there is a cul de sac of "all electric" properties then we don't need to account for any that are more than 23 yards away from a relevant main if the design doesn't require the mains to run past them.

However, including any properties can have associated costs larger pipes, fittings, connection types etc.

It also raises issues with the submission and approval of the FM forms v asset value numbers, 200 house site, say 120 gas & 80 "all electric", the IGT will give a gas asset value for the 120, but should the FM and CSEP include the full 200, etc.

9. Next Meeting Details

The proposed dates for 2024 meetings are:

GIRS UIP	14th May, & 10th Sept 2024
GIRSAP	30th January, 21st May, and 24th September 2024