

Minutes of GIRS Advisory Panel Meeting



Microsoft Teams Meeting

24th September 10:00 am

Attendees

Les Thomas (LT)	kayanel@btinternet.com (Secretary)
Leigh Keegan (LK)	leigh.keegan@sgn.co.uk (Chairperson)
Paul Leighton (PL)	Paul.Leighton@fulcrum.co.uk
Richard Welsby (RW)	richard.welsby@lastmile-uk.com
Dean O'Dee (DO)	dean.odee@me.com
Keith Johnston (KJ)	Keith.Johnston@gtc-uk.co.uk
Steven McGill (SM)	stevenmcgill@energyassets.co.uk
John Fellows (JF)	john.fellows22@cadentgas.com
Alex Green (AG)	alex.green@espug.com
Jemima Mitchell (JM)	Jemima.Mitchell@cadentgas.com
Maria Kirkness (MK)	Maria.Kirkness@wwutilities.co.uk
Geoffrey Harle (GH)	GHarle@northerngas.co.uk
Rachel Whitelock (RW)	Rachel.Whitelock@wwutilities.co.uk
Dave Morgan (DM)	dave.morgan@fincherutilitiesltd.co.uk

1. Welcome introductions and apologies for absence.

LK welcomed everyone to the 3rd GIRSAP meeting of 2024 and thanked everyone for the good turnout.

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Karl Miller (KM), Gareth Arnold (GA) and Peter O'Neil (PO)

2. Acceptance of previous minutes & matters arising

The previous minutes dated 21st May 2024 were accepted as a true record of events.

2.1. The outstanding Actions from Previous Meeting were discussed as follows

2.1.1. Reviewing Managers Questionnaire

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

The UIP forum had commented that the completion of the form was simple, but once complete, the survey just ended with a statement Your response was submitted. Which feels incomplete.

It was stated that the Cadent were just gathering information, so the response is appropriate.

Link - <https://forms.office.com/e/1pksz5eMqk>

ACTION BY

2.1.2. Design Changes due to Inaccurate Records

Cadent’s responses from the last GIRSAP meeting regarding where site conditions are found to be different than planned, were discussed at the UIP Forum and there was a consensus that portal was useful.

PO had 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 and there was little desire to update something that is due to be replaced .

The UIP Forum has identified 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.

Cadent are asked to confirm if the portal is being removed and if so are the reduced rates to be retained?

JF Explained that the charging rates are being reviewed as part of the periodic review and a single charging rate was likely to be applied shortly. JF agreed to investigate further.

JF

2.1.3. Safe working with Coil Trailers

The interpretation of the requirements documented in the recently issued briefing note were discussed at the UIP Forum, 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.

During discussion it was confirmed that Dave Morgan had forwarded the information for dissemination via LRQA as it had been received from HS2 and was an issue for the UIP community.

JF stated he had some information which might support document understanding and would confirm if he was able to circulate.

JF

2.1.4. Cadent Weekly Whereabouts

JF informed the last GIRSAP meeting that Cadent were experiencing issues with the information being provided as weekly whereabouts the dates of the various activities being undertaken is not being provided. The UIPS had responded that there were issues with the process.

During further discussion JF clarifies that cadent were only seeking whereabouts in line with the requirements of TD101. He continued by stating, he did not think Cadent were rejecting weekly whereabouts as it is a notification process and not an approval process. DM confirmed rejections had been received and quoted examples such as when easement letters were still being negotiated.

Finally JM suggested there was some miscommunication on the whereabouts and there may be a “Crossover Process” Issue. JM/JF to take offline.

JM/JF

2.1.5. Design Variation and procedure the SCO Deviation process

At the last GIRSAP DO'D reminded the panel of the issue raised in January 2023 where Cadent were asked to consider if the principles of the Major / Minor Design Variation process as applied internally by Cadent under their Engineering Bulletin EB347 could applied for the UIP Community.

Cadent has responded that EB 347 could not be applied, as the internal document has been withdrawn. Cadent were 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.

DO reiterated that EB347 has been embedded in SCO4 and 5 but that where minor design variations are identified, the process should allow the submission of a DR8, and a minor design variation with the completion file. When the UIPS do this they are receiving completion file rejections.

JF clarified that where the design changes resulted in the same connection type, then this can be agreed that the UIPs can use the Complex.box to notify Cadent via the Technical query process. During discussion, it was confirmed that the Technical Query process and the Complex.box has never been issued to the UIPS.

JF/JM to chase up the current contact document

JF/JM

3. LRQA Report

3.1. Surveillance visits Report Year to Date 2024

The surveillance visit detailed results are included as an attachment to these minutes. There are 175 active companies listed on the web site four of which are suspended having left their Partial Accreditation Status Lapse and 44 remain at partial accreditation.

3.1.1. Discussion of Findings raised – 2024

- 140 on site Surveillance Visits.
- 16 Recertification visits.
- 15 Partial Assessments.
- 12 Partial to full Assessments

During the surveillance visits the following deficiencies have been identified:

- 8 Major Deficiencies (7 in 2023)
- 101 Minor Deficiencies (122 in 2023)
- 38 visits with no deficiencies (104 During 2023)

The Major deficiencies identified on site during 2024 were described and breakdown of the sections with the highest findings was provided that demonstrated most findings are raised under section 7 of GIG 2 Work Issue and Control and Section 6 Methods of Working.

During discussion LT raised the issue of the time taken to isolate leakage on test equipment and there was a useful discussion on the fact that UIPs purchase Test Bull horns in accordance with ENA Specification GIS/TE/P6.3. There are currently better options available but these arguably, cannot be used.

4. Review of UIP Forum Minutes 14th May 2024

The minutes had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting. It was noted that attendance remained strong with 41Attendees.

The key areas of discussion were highlighted as follows:

4.1. Design Changes Due to Inaccurate Records

Discussed in 2.1.2 above.

4.2. Safe working with Coil Trailers

Discussed in 2.1.3 above.

4.3. Wask Electrofusion saddles for use on PE Bagstops

LT reported to the panel that during the UIP forum, Charlotte Berryman confirmed that there have been a number of failures, which was the reason for raising the concern. She reiterated 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.

For information, 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.

4.4. Cadent Weekly Whereabouts

Discussed in 2.1.4 above

4.5. Design Variation and procedure and the SCO Deviation process

During discussion at the UIP forum 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.

Steph Marvin had clarified that PO was to take the issue away and feedback to the next TD101 meeting. There was a consensus that this needs to be raised at GIRSAP as UIP's work to TD101

JM confirmed that the deviation is required only when mains need to be laid shallow. LT queried his understanding that the deviation process is applied when something does not meet a national standard. AG reminded the meeting that TD3 states that Minimum depths of cover should be as given in Table 7 and therefore for a main to be laid Shallow, is not against the specification provided appropriate design decisions are applied.

The next TD101 panel meeting is next week where the issue is to be debated further however, there was a consensus that TD101 is the industry standard, however where a GT wishes to impose more stringent requirements, it is in their gift to do so.

4.6. Bulletins Issued / Info raised Since Last GIRSAP – Fire Rated Gate Valves

The presentation of the BUUK Technical bulletin Fire rated gate valves (Donkin 555/401-004 Softseal Valve) at the UIP forum prompted a discussion as to its absolute use as an internal valve. It was 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. GIRSAP are requested to confirm if these valves are to be used for internal ECV's.

During discussion it was confirmed that it is for the individual GTs and IGTs to publish their own bulletins but that there is a Technical Panel that has been working on products for use in MOB's. JF and LK agreed to confirm with their Policy section of their requirements, but once again, there was tacit agreement that now there is a firesafe valve available, it was prudent that these should be used for all valves installed inside an occupied building whether commercial or domestic.

4.7. Cadent Quotations for Mains cut Offs.

A concern has been raised regarding Cadent quotations for abandonment of single supply points to commercial customers. A 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."

The response was also queried and chased but to date there has been no response. In conversation, the connections team have stated this is an operations problem, but to date no sensible response can be obtained.

Other examples have been experienced, by other UIPs, where others state they have agreed with Cadent that the Mains should be re-classified as a service if there is only one MPRN. – This is inconsistent.

The general consensus of the UIP Forum was that the situation should be raised with OfGEM. Discussions have commenced and OFGEM who have declared their interest.

During discussion , JF agreed to take the issue away to see if a resolution can be obtained prior to an OFGEM submission, and there was an understanding that when quotations are issued by the “diversion team”, they may include contingencies over and above that considered for mains isolations.

There was also a consensus that any submission to OFGEM should the need arise should come from the client or the UIP and not from GIRSAP or LRQA. During discussion there was confirmation that this was already understood, but there may be a need for a joint submission by numerous UIPs if required. It was reiterated that all the UIPs who have raised the issue are seeking, is a resolution for their clients

4.8. SCO registration with Wales & West Utilities

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)

Numerous UIP’s have experienced the issues with significant time delays in the approval process. It was clarified that following recent organisational changes within Wales and West there have been training issues which are being addressed, however, the situation provides an opportunity for the industry to review the SCO administration process, as clearly STC is an individual competency and to trawl through numerous forms each time an individual registers for a different company is onerous, not only for the individual and the new company, but also for the network controllers.

A useful discussion ensued where it was explained that work is underway to combine SCO10 and 11 in an attempt to reduce the administrative burden. It was also explained that the use of a common database for registrations has been considered previously without success so there is a reluctance to try again.

The frustrations are understandable, but this is work in progress and it is hoped that the new SCO10 will be published, at the end of this year or by the end of Q1 2025. Obviously, there can be no conformation as to when IGEM/GL/6 will be reviewed

5. AOB

5.1. TD101 Network Extensions to existing CSEPS

Paul Leighton sought clarification on behalf of the TD101 panel who are seeking clarification on a section of the process dealing with load increases or load decreases to established existing CSEP's. The Panel is seeking confirmation that any load increase or decrease application to the upstream network should be undertaken by the IGT and not via their UIP agent requesting a load change on the IGT network.

It appears that some DN's are receiving these applications direct from a requesting UIP agent under instruction from the incumbent IGT. It is the understanding of the panel this should be carried out by the Incumbent IGT.

During discussion, there was agreed that the amendment to any existing CSEP following the addition of a nested CSEP is the primary iGT responsibility as any variation to the CSEP will require an amendment to the Emergency Service Provision for that CSEP etc. The contractual relationship for the primary CSEP is also with the first iGT and not the downstream iGT.

5.2. SGN's review of AV1

SGN are beginning to look at replacing their T/PM/AV/1 - THE ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION OF DATA AND INFORMATION PROVIDED BY UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDERS FOR NEW MAINS AND SERVICES (INCLUDING SERVICE ALTERATIONS AND DISCONNECTIONS) BELOW 7 BAR TO BE ADOPTED BY TRANSCO, dated Sept 2004! Some of the DN's wanted to be involved.

5.3. Cadent are updating NP14

Cadent have reviewed and will be publishing a new T/SP/NP/14 - Specification for the design of system extensions, connections and services to below 7 bar Cadent systems, document which should also improve the communication lines and areas of misunderstanding.

LK thanked everyone attending and for participating in what was again a very useful discussion.

6. The following dates for the 2025 Meetings were agreed

GIRS Forum – 14th Jan 2025, 6th May 2025, 9th September 2025
GIRSAP – 28th Jan 2025, 20th May 2025, 23rd September 2025.

LT is to send out Placeholder invites in advance

LT