



Minutes of the NERS Provider Forum

Microsoft Teams Meeting on 11th March 2025 10:00am

Attendees:

Paul Costelloe	Andrea Moir	Oliver Owens
Roy Smith	Mark McGovern	Rob Bailey
Stuart Curwen	Neil Hodgetts	Lee Hewett
Ernie Walker	Richard Park	Josie Grant
Viki Woolcock	Steve Owen	Rob Peters
James Barker	Andrew Hoare	Benjamin Tegerdine
Mark Russell	Bob Fearnley	Sarah Cameron
Andy Bunten	Michael Waller	Paul Ingram
David Richards	Richard Yates	Andy Barnes
Steve Harvey	Alan Beynon	Taylor Murdoch
Julia Cotogno	Paul Wragg	
Mark Bryant	Jonathan Hopkins	
Jetmir Leka	Divyesh Jansari	
Russell Davies	Alex Searle	
Stephen Hindle	Ephie Chalakateva	
Gavin Mckechnie	Charmaine Boddington	
Dave Morgan	Sinead Nelligan	
Alan Marshall	Lee Mason	
David Butler	Kyle Morgan	
Kevin Wilkinson	Stirron Seaborn	
Garet Duncan	Davie Callaghan	
Kai Smith	Steven Reid	
Peter Salmon	Graham Commons	
Katie Yates	Paul Swift	
David Daniels	Mick Beeby	
Bill Robertson	Stephen Pieron	
Paul Brunsdon	Bill Jones	
Steve Mander	Julie Tyrrell	
Daniel Miller	Andy Billings	
Vicky Meredith	Ian Stoneham	
Chay Rees	Jake Pariente	
Rachel Williams	Coral McFarlane	

1. Introductions

Paul Costelloe (PC) of LRQA introduced himself and thanked everyone for their attendance and reiterated that due to the number of attendees, formal introductions were foregone. The agenda was reviewed and the arrangements for this Teams Meeting were described. PC advised that the meeting was being recorded on Microsoft Teams for the purposes of accurately capturing discussions for the meeting minutes.

As this was a Teams meeting and there were no restrictions to numbers, over 400 invitations had been sent and there had been 72 acceptances and 25 declined. With 74 attending on the day, due to the nature of the open invitation, only attendees are identified in the minutes.

2. Acceptance of Previous Minutes

The minutes were accepted as a true record of that meeting and a brief overview of the various topics documented in the minutes was provided in Section 3 of these minutes.

3. Matters Discussed at Previous Forum Meeting on 12th Nov 2024

A brief overview of the various topics documented in the minutes was provided and the actions discussed below.

.3.1 Content of v10 NERS Requirements

Paul Costelloe advised that v10 was released on March 1st 2025 with the main changes being to describe the requirement to hold Project Management scopes where work (other than 'labour-only' arrangements) is sub-contracted. and invited any comments regarding this.

3.2 Combined CoC/NERS Passport

Graham Commons commented that the newly proposed NERS passport was not in v10, and PC explained that it was likely to appear in v11. However, it would not be a mandatory requirement. Graham Commons expressed thanks to Dave Ellis of LRQA for producing this. Paul Costelloe agreed to send this out with the minutes of this meeting.

3.3 HSE Position on Live Working

Paul Costelloe advised that there had been a talk by the HSE at this meeting in July 2024 and that the Energy Networks Association document SHE01 regarding live working had been revised and is now with the HSE for consideration. As a non-commercially sensitive subject, this would be shared with the wider industry. Stirron Seaborn commented that HSE are placing responsibility on designers and that the number of properties switched off does not necessarily equate to the same number of people inconvenienced by an outage where properties are empty. Mick Beeby stated that a written justification would be required for EVERY circumstance where live working is proposed. Richard Yates reiterated that DNO/IDNO procedures needed to reflect a robust justification for live working and ICPs advised on what their policies/procedures are. Bill Robertson advised that customer minutes lost perspective needs to be taken into account as there is a conflicting requirement between making the network dead and the requirement to 'keep the lights on'. Bob Fearnley advised that the service levels for maintaining supplies would not be applied strictly where properties were not occupied. Mick Beeby advised that

supply interruptions would need to be taken in to account when justifying live working but that the requirement of EAW Regulations (Reg 14) and ESQC Regulations need to be carefully considered. Bob Fearnley advised that working dead and being unable to prove a neutral could lead to other, unforeseen hazards such as a reversed polarity, and that this should be part of any justification to work live.

3.4 'Right Card' Scheme Being Introduced by EUSR

Paul Costelloe advised that the CSCS logo would disappear from the SHEA Power/Gas/Water cards and that the respective SHEA card would be a pre-requisite for applying for the appropriate CSCS card which EUSR would issue as a CSCS Alliance Partner. LRQA had raised the issue of workers with no formal qualifications where a minimum Level 2 qualification is required for an appropriate CSCS card. Mick Beeby advised that the prospect of competency management systems already in existence had been proposed as acceptable evidence for confirming competence when applying for a CSCS card. Paul Costelloe confirmed that LRQA had proposed that the Certificate of Competence issued by the ICPs Assessing Officer should be acceptable. Mick Beeby advised that Network Operators also have robust competency management processes which should be acceptable. Graham Commons advised that 1st June 2025 was too short a time period to introduce these new requirements and that all operatives currently working in the industry should have 'grandfather rights' to a CSCS card where they have been assessed under a NERS accredited management system.

3.5 Level 2 Apprenticeships

Paul Costelloe advised that at a previous meeting it had been stated that the UK Government were keen on introducing more Level 2 apprenticeships and are providing grants to companies participating in such schemes. Paul Wragg confirmed that for many organisations dealing with plastic (e.g. waveform) cables it would be useful where specialised jointing such as PILC was not involved. Richard Yates advised that apprenticeships were a good thing and were driven by the Network operators. Bill Robertson advised that EA Technologies had a very comprehensive apprenticeship scheme.

3.6 Fire Suppression in Cupboards

Paul Costelloe advised that at a previous meeting this had been brought to participants' attention and advised that it was possible that some BS EN documents were inconsistent with each other. Bob Fearnley advised that ENA were looking at this from a risk-based perspective of balancing the risks to people from fire and smoke versus the risk of electrocution.

4 Matters Discussed at Previous NERSAP Meeting on 26th Nov 2024

Paul Costelloe advised that was some overlap of issues discussed at the previous ICP Forum and the NERSAP meeting following shortly after that.

4.1 ENA Live Working Guidance SHE01

Paul Costelloe advised this was currently with HSE for consideration and would be shared with the industry.

4.2 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Paul Costelloe advised this was currently being revised following some suggested changes by one of the DNOs who, to date, have not signed it.

4.3 Review of Design Competency Document

This is a document hosted by EUSR following its production some years ago involving NERSAP members and was now in need of review. NERSAP are looking towards assembling a Working Group to carry out this review. Paul Costelloe invited volunteers to assist.

4.4 EUSR 'Right Card' Scheme

This was discussed while covering the points discussed at the previous ICP Forum and is minuted above in section 3.

4.5 NERS Staffing by LRQA

This had previously been raised and Paul Costelloe advised that a new NERS Assessor had been employed since the last meeting and LRQA were seeking one in Scotland.

5 Update on NERSAP Strategic Working Group

5.1 Level 2 Apprenticeship Scheme

This has been covered above in previous meetings.

5.2 Memorandum of Understanding

This has been covered above in previous meetings.

5.3 HSE Stance on Live Working

This has been covered above in previous meetings.

5.4 Governance of Design Competence

This has been covered above in previous meetings and a link to the document is below:

<https://www.eusr.co.uk/schemes-programmes/our-industries/power/>

6 NERS Requirements Document

Paul Costelloe confirmed that this was issued on 1st March 2025 and that ICPs were given 3 months to comply although there was nothing other than Project Management scopes that ICPs with these scopes would need to comply with.

It was also requested that any proposals for v11 be forwarded to Paul Costelloe.

Divyesh Jansari asked if contractors should be issued with NERS passports where 'bought-in' labour is utilised. Paul Costelloe confirmed that this was indeed a requirement.

Julia Cotogno asked if it was still permissible to use bought-in labour under an ICPs own NERS accreditation. Paul Costelloe confirmed that this is still permissible.

Daniel Miller asked where the NERS requirements could be found. Paul Costelloe advised that Appendix 3 covers Project Management.

Paul Swift asked if there was a transition period for compliance with new NERS requirements and Paul Costelloe advised that it was 3 months.

7 LRQA Report

Paul Costelloe confirmed that the LRQA report will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting and proceeded to present the data.

Mick Beeby suggested that it might be worth LRQA recording the adopting network operator and the upstream operator as the number of visits to DNO areas did not reflect the majority of connections being carried out in IDNO locations. Also, the number of surveillance visits might be the same for a very small company as for very large organisations. Paul Costelloe advised that for two such companies the NERS Requirements do allow for more surveillance visits for the larger company who would likely be carrying out more work.

Paul Costelloe advised that thought was being given to producing 'frequency rates' since simple numbers of deficiencies were not indicative of the industry's performance as the greater the number of visits, the greater the number of deficiencies were likely to be noted.

There are now 463 NERS ICPs with at least 10 more yet to be assessed. Paul Wragg commented that it was useful to see the growth in number of ICPs/

8 Any Other Business

Divyesh Jansari asked about the prospect of 'in-person' meetings in future. Paul Costelloe advised that while this had been trialled there was very little attendance due to pressure on invitees' time and hence a reluctance to travel. Mick Beeby suggested that the ICP Forum and NERSAP could perhaps be held on the same day at the same venue albeit at different times (e.g. am and pm) but recognised that people are busy and travelling time would be an obstacle. Stirron Seaborn stated that the Teams option is better for his business.

Sinead Nelligan asked if the invites had been sent out for the next meeting and Paul Costelloe advised that he was intending to send future invites earlier.

9. Dates of Next Meetings

Dates for 2025 Meetings

- NERS Provider Forum 15th July, 11th November
- NERSAP 25th March, 29th July, 25th November