

Minutes of GIRS Providers Forum



LRQA Tuesday 06th May 2025

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Name	Name	Name
Alec Bromiley (AB)	Deborah Keedy (DK)	Murray Richards (MR)
Alex Christie (AC)	Derek Muckle (DM)	Paul Claydon (PCn)
Andy Ginn (AG)	Eric Dodd (ED)	Paul Mason (PM)
Andy Holland (AH)	Graham Cocksey (GC)	Peter Burnage (PB)
Ben Brownbill (BB)	Grant Britnell (GB)	Peter Tootell (PT)
Carl Blezard (CB)	Hollie Richardson (HR)	Richard Kibbler (RK)
Cassie McCaffrey (CM)	Paul Costelloe (PC)	Sarah Parker (SP)
Charlotte Berryman (CBn)	Peter Humphries (PHs)	Sheila Lauchlan (SL)
Claire Pape (CP)	Philip Henderson (PHn)	Stephen Maggs (SM)
Claire Wilcox (CW)	Katie Yates (KY)	Steve Richards (SR)
Daniel Briault (DB)	Kevin Wilkinson (KW)	
Daniel Scott (DS)	Lee Hewett (LH)	
Dave Morgan (DM)	Les Thomas (LT)	
Dave Wilkins (DW)	Louise Boccaccini (LB)	
David Gronow (DG)	Mark Davey (MB)	

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 extended a welcome to the new and regularly attending UIP representatives at the UIP Forum. He then proceeded to outline the agenda for the day, noting the presence of 40 attendees and thus deciding to forgo the customary individual introductions.

2. Review and acceptance of Previous Minutes Dated 14th January 2025

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 forum that Cadent's IS team is working to fix the Portal, but due to old technology and a change in service provider, progress is slow. A new CRM system is being considered but will take time.

LB noted that the portal was not functioning the last time she checked but has not tried recently.

Finally, it was confirmed that the annual Charging statement review for all Gas Distribution Network Owners involves OfGEM consultation. Since no challenges were raised during the consultation period, Cadent's charges were published.

GIRSAP considers the matter closed, with no further comments from UIPs.

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

LT informed the forum about the discussion at GIRSAP on the need for caution when specifying BA deployment, as different operations have varying requirements. UIPs are not emergency service providers so the need for such a method statement was doubted. However, it was agreed following a unanimous vote, that a method statement for BA deployment and the completion of a Face Fit test should be added to the method statements required by section 6.2. effective by May 2025.

LT apologized to the forum that the revised GIG 2 document has not been hosted yet but will be available with the meeting minutes for implementation by September 2025.

Finally, LT reminded the forum of the HSE Face Fit Respirator Demonstration (FFRED) information circulated via email on 31/01/25.

2.a.3 Safe working with Coil Trailers

The interpretation of the requirements outlined in the recently issued briefing note was previously discussed at a UIP Forum, where various opinions regarding the definitions of the Safe Zone, Amber Zone, and Yellow Zone were presented.

GIRSAP had been requested to provide any additional information that could assist in disseminating the good practice learning points and JF mentioned that he possessed some information that might aid in understanding the document and would verify his ability to distribute it.

During the discussion, it was confirmed that there is an ongoing review of the GIS guidance documents by a working panel in collaboration with the HSE and manufacturers; however, no further information is currently available.

The main focus of the discussion was JF's offer to confirm whether he could circulate the information that might support document understanding. JF has since transitioned to a different role. Consequently, PA is seeking further discussion within Cadent, and we are awaiting a response.

2.a.4 Cadent Weekly Whereabouts

During the GIRSAP meeting, a discussion took place about the content and format requirements for the weekly whereabouts information.

The option of creating a central repository on a SharePoint site was raised and KM was tasked with exploring the feasibility of such a site that allows universal access for submitting whereabouts while restricting access to the adopting network owner and the submitting UIP.

KM sends his apologies but is currently there is no update on this matter.

Finally, GC raised a concern that having a central repository would mean the site would need to be managed, which could be onerous

2.a.5 Design Variation and procedure and the SCO Deviation process

At GIRSAP, JM informed the panel that the Cadent contact list had been issued to the UIPs in December. This has been since circulated.

JM had also asked if LRQA could provide the contact list used for the UIP forum as this would ensure the information provided got to the right people. This was sent 29th January.

2.a.6 Cadent Quotes for Mains Cut-Offs

At GIRSAP, PA confirmed he understood the frustrations and gave the Cadent response regarding disconnections within the competitive arena and confirmed that Cadent do recognise changes to mapping systems etc. can result in incorrect attributes on certain mains units and consider each request on a case-by-case basis.

As required by the UIP Forum, A letter has been issued to OfGEM on behalf of the affected companies with no reference to LRQA or GIRSAP, we await a response.

2.a.7 EUSR SHEA – CSCS relationships

In December 2024, EUSR shared the planned changes to their EUSR CSCS card schemes, including the removal of the CSCS logo from SHEA cards. They also announced plans for this change to be effective from 1 June 2025.

In the January UIP forum, Carole Bishop (CaB) of EUSR gave a detailed description on the forthcoming changes with regards to the issue of Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards.

In summary, CSCS registration is job related and consequently, NCO(G) (W), Mainlaying, Service laying, and Assistant will continue to hold CSCS status. Whereas SHEA (Gas, Water and Power) being a safety passport, whilst being part of the qualification required to obtain the CSCS registration, are not job related and consequently are not CSCS job roles. It was stated that the changes are being mandated as an outcome of the Grenfell Enquiry, and there are 38 CSCS partners involved to ensure the right cards for the job roles, and the applicable qualifications to obtain those cards are in place.

Since that time there has been no clarity as to the requirements with a June 1st date rapidly approaching, LT undertook an exercise to obtain a CSCS card as a Professionally Qualified person and gave a brief overview of the process. He explained that currently, CSCS do not recognise the SHEA cards as a suitable safety qualification to obtain the CSCS and require the CITB Safety test to be completed. It was clarified for anyone considering undertaking this route, the CITB example questions need to be obtained beforehand as some of the answers are construction specific.

CB clarified the current position and contributed with examples of correspondence he has had with EUSR over the issue. He also gave a detailed update of the process underway and stated he thought there had been a delay agreed. There had been no such notification to the UIP community, so the confusion remained. CB took an action raise the issue with EUSR.

Addendum to meeting Following discussions with CB and EUSR an email has been issued confirming the CSCS Card Changes deadline has been extended to June 2026.

PC confirmed that he and Karl Miller have a further meeting with EUSR this coming Friday 9/5/25. He also clarified that he has requested that EUSR recognise the existing competency systems in place for the industry which LRQA assesses as part of NERS/WIRS/GIRS.

PT asked about emergencies with LT explaining that network owners have rights of entry that would apply in emergency situations.

There were no further matters arising.

3. REVIEW OF GIRSAP MINUTES MAY 2024

3.1 Fire rated Gate Valves – regarding the use of these valves in buildings,

The UIP forum had requested that GIRSAP confirm if the new Firesafe Valves should be used as ECVs in every internal situation. During discussion at GIRSAP 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 MOBs. However, there was no update available as Lee Keegan explained that the policy team in SGN for example were reluctant to specify specific manufacturers.

PL confirmed that the issue relating to bolts impacting on the body of the epoxy coated valves has also been identified on the new Firesafe Valves where clearly the casting was wrong.

With no further comment from the forum, this action is closed

4. LRQA YTD Report 2025

Company Info

169 Companies Listed on the Web site (+1)

3 New Companies

- BER Consultancy Services Ltd
- Water Supply Surveys Ltd
- SAUK Utilities

2 Companies have been removed from the register

- Next Generation Utilities
- North West Multi Utilities Ltd

3 Company's accreditation remain Suspended

Generally, these are companies that have left their Partial Accreditation Status Lapse Radius Utilities Ltd. (Not to be mistaken for Radius Subterra Ltd.)

Gasco Ltd

Skanska

To date in 2025 LRQA have completed

81 on site Surveillance Visits

15 Design Surveillance Visits (225 total in 2024)

5 Recertification visits (16 total in 2024)

7 Partial Assessments (15 total in 2024)

2 Partial to full Assessments (12 total in 2024)

On Site Deficiencies Identified

1 Major Deficiencies (12 total in 2024)

35 Minor Deficiencies (100 in 2024)

41 visits with no deficiencies (112 During 2024)

4 Comments Made

The one Major deficiency identified during this year's surveillance visits was identified as:

- No deep excavation permit available on site or shuttering used

LT presented the latest report with the increased number of instances of Trainees not being registered with EUSR highlighted for awareness.

AB raised the fact that individuals losing qualifications at the renewal stage due to not having the appropriate certificates was starting to impact on sites. LT stated that EUSR say that the original certificates must be available at renewal. It is recognised as an issue and LT stated that a unified approach is required to prevent the older operatives leaving the industry.

5. Bulletins Issued / Info raised Since Last GIRSAP

- Notice that Scotia Gas Networks have now published SGN/SP/SLO-1 That is available on their web site
- SGN Connection Charges Documents - 31st March 2025
- Cadent's Connections Charging Statement: Notification of change effective 01 April 2025
- Cadent third-party connections customer communication FM144 to be distributed out to the IGT/UIP community

6. AOB

a) Body Vent requirements

PT asked the forum if anyone had, or knew of, a procedure or specification for installing valve body vents on 7 Bar strategic valves. No attendees had anything, but this led to a discussion on the matter.

It was stated as body vents are a screwed connection that a deviation is required for every occasion as the requirement is for welded or flanged joints on 7 Bar installations. The screwed joint contravenes existing requirements. During discussion it was agreed that the issue to be taken to GIRSAP to request if the network owners had a standard design the UIPs could use and to request if a blanket deviation could be agreed as this is a known issue.

b) IGEM/TD/101 Edition 4

LB informed the meeting that TD101 edition 4 is out for comment with a deadline of 14/5/25. Also, GL6 to be out for comment within the next couple of months.

Design Approval – GT rejection

SL raised an issue whereby IGTs are rejecting MOB designs that involve mains installations with services to external meter boxes because of the inclusion of a PIV on the design.

It was clarified that IGEM/G/5 section 10.3.1 states:

"Where a network pipeline supplies a multi-occupancy building, a PIV **shall** be installed outside the building to enable isolation of the building complex.

Note 1: Unless identified as a mitigation requirement during the design risk assessment, a service supplying only one or more external individual domestic meter boxes does not require a PIV."

Due to the question of interpretation, SL raised a technical query with IGEM, and the Chair of the IGEM/G/5 Panel confirmed that if a new supply is being laid to supply a MOB, with services supplying external meter boxes, then a PIV is required. He also clarified that the note, (which is in italics and therefore is only advisory) is there to provide additional information that if services are installed to supply a MOB via external meter boxes off an existing main, there is no requirement to install a PIV on to the existing main.

SL expressed concern that following Grenfell, where it was known the falling objects prevented the isolation of the PIV at the base of the building, failure to comply with 10.3.1 could place the designer in a vulnerable position in a court of law, and at the very least would result in a non-

conformance during a GIRS Audit, as there is a reasonably foreseeable risk that was not addressed.

A useful discussion was held and LT clarified that if the IGT requested any changes to the compliant design then, provided there was evidence that the GT had a demonstrable involvement in the decision, then the non-inclusion of a PIV would still be a GIRS compliant design as GTs are GIRS compliant designers, being the network owner.

SL then stated that she had been asked to complete the designers risk assessment which she was reluctant to do as her risk assessment resulted in the need for the PIV. LT reminded the forum of the HSE guidance on CDM that states (see HSE Guidance on CDM Regulations 9 & 10). 'A designer is an organisation or individual, who (a) prepares or modifies a design for a construction project (including the design of temporary works); or (b) arranges for or instructs someone else to do so.' Consequently, should a GT reject the design based on the inclusion of a PIV, then the current HSE guidance means that they take on 'designer' responsibilities. As a result, they would need to carry out their own designers' risk assessment

The hierarchy of risk and subsequent designs for MOBS was discussed with CP stating an example where the IGT had requested external meter boxes when they had proposed an external riser even though this is option 1 in the IGEM/G/5 Hierarchy of risk and external meter boxes are option three.

Finally, PM reminded the forum that IGT's often chose options that are easier to manage based on their safety case.

The issue to be raised at GIRSAP such that a consistent approach be clarified.

c) IGEM/TD/3 and TD/4 changes to pressure testing requirements being implemented

LT informed the forum that digital pressure testing allowances are being reviewed in TD3 and TD4. For a 15-minute digital test in TD3, a 0.5mbar pressure drop allowance is proposed, while TD4 proposes a 0.2mbar drop for digital service tests. Group members were alerted to these potential changes.

7. Next Meeting Details

The agreed dates for 2025 meetings are:

GIRS Forum – 9th September 2025

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