

**Minutes of the WIRS Advisory Panel Meeting
13th of March 2024 1000hrs, (via Microsoft Teams)**

Attendees:

LRQA:

Mark Whitehouse – LRQA (MW) -	Permanent Member (LRQA)
Andrew Carter - LRQA (AC)	Permanent Member (LRQA)

UCP's:

Lee Crabtree – HVSS Ltd. (LC)	Permanent Member (WIRS UCP#2)
Bill Jones – Independent Water TA, BJ Utilities Ltd. (BJ) (part)	Permanent Member (WIRS UCP#3)
Jed Garside - Independent Water TA, (JG)	Permanent Member (WIRS UCP#4)

Water Companies:

Ray Jordan – South East Water (RJ)	Permanent Member (WIRSAP#1)
Nick Mahoney – Wessex Water (NM)	Permanent Member (WIRSAP#2)
Phil Blyth – Severn Trent Water (PB)	Permanent Member (WIRSAP#3)
Mike Sloan – South Staffordshire and Cambridge Water (MS)	Permanent Member (WIRSAP#4)
Tim St. John – Bristol Water (SWW) (TSJ) – Chair	Permanent Member (WIRSAP#5)

Guests:

Mark McCullagh – Scottish Water (MMcC)
Denise McGlynn – EU Skills (DMcG)

Apologies:

Ben Brownbill – Infrastructure Gateway Ltd. (BB)	Permanent Member (WIRS UCP#1)
Steve Morris (SM) – J. Murphy Group	Permanent Member (WIRS UCP#5)

Action List:

Action	Date	Owner	Action
1	26/03/2019	MW - LRQA	Standardisation of Auditing <i>MW stated that IAuditor is now in place with LR(QA) and that a meeting will now be setup in the early new year to progress with Water Company's.</i> <i>23/03/22 - Working party to be convened by the end of May 2022 to work on auditing standards. The following people were proposed: NM, PB, BB, TSJ, BJ and DT. MW to progress.</i> <i>20/07/22 – MW to send out an email meeting invite for a meeting to be setup for mid-June 2023.</i>
6	21/07/21	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was the need for each Water Company to describe within their respective DCS document regarding the specification for Barrier pipe, scraping, jointing and wrapping. <i>Action MS to progress via NCC and feedback at the next meeting. STW/Wessex – WIP</i> <i>23/03/22 - TSJ/MS stated that the next NCCM meeting was to be held this afternoon (23/03/22) and that this would be added to the agenda for feedback (MS).</i> <i>27/07/22 - Action for TSJ to progress this issue at the NCC/Adoption Panel and feedback at the next meeting.</i>
8	21/07/21 23/03/22	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was for the clarity from each Water Company regarding the post commissioning of water mains & turn over requirements for dead mains (turnover periods, timescales etc). <i>MS to take to the NCC panel as an agenda item to formalise a response and feedback at the next meeting.</i> <i>Flushing should be included as a standard item within the DCS documents as there was no consistency. MS/TSJ to report back on progress with wither the NCCM or Adoption Code Panel.</i> <i>20/07/22 - TSJ to take this action to the next NCC and Adoption Code panel meeting for discussion, progress and feedback. Also, for TJS to review the Scottish Water Requirements document.</i>
11	30/11/21 23/03/22	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was for the NCC to comment on the Standards for Pressure Testing and Chlorination, do we need an assessment scheme in place for quality, should this be an additional scope under WIRS? WQ departments quite keen for tis to happen. <i>MS to progress at the NCC and report back to the next WIRSAP (agenda item 3ii).</i> <i>Standardisation of pressure testing and chlorination. WQ group to speak to the NCCM, what is happening here and what needs sorting. MS to invite DMcG to the next NCC meeting as an agenda item and report back at the next meeting.</i> <i>20/07/22 - TSJ to take this action to the next NCC and Adoption Code panel meeting for discussion, progress and feedback.</i>
12	30/11/21 04/04/23	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action to raise at the NCC meeting as to what metrics are required from the WIRS scheme. <i>All WIRSAP members – What does the WIRSAP want in terms of reportable metrics?</i> <i>WIRS Metrics</i> <i>MS/TSJ to raise the issue of WIRSAP metrics at the NCC and report back at the next meeting on progress.</i> <i>20/07/22 - Action for MW - Date in the diary required for the WIRSAP Forum in September/October to ascertain auditing standards, i.e. what do the Water Companies want in terms of data?</i> <i>04/04/23 - TSJ to take this action to the next NCC and Adoption Code panel meeting for discussion, progress and feedback.</i>
16	23/03/22	MW – LRQA DMcG – EUSR	Next adoption code meeting held by Ofwat is due in December (BB)(06/12/23) for change requests. <i>L5 DSM qualification. Waste and potable parts of developer services could be separated as part of this qualification/ Water company adoption of this qualification? Action for DMcG to feedback on this issue at the next meeting.</i> <i>20/07/22 – MW to speak with DMcG and include as a separate agenda item at the next meeting regarding a presentation to the WIRSAP forum.</i> <i>04/04/23 - MW/DMcG meeting setup. MW to email the info to the WIRSAP attendees. Review progress at the next meeting.</i>
18	23/11/23 20/07/22	BB TSJ – Bristol Water	DCS documentation changes. Action – Invite Kate Morgan (Adoption Panel) to the next meeting to ascertain the process for changes to the DCS documents. <i>Action Agenda items for WIRSAP and WIRS UCP forums - Collate for the September Adoption code panel meeting for changes to be made for the new year.</i> <i>Action - TSJ to take this action to the next NCC and Adoption Code panel meeting for discussion, progress and feedback.</i>
19	23\11\22	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was to document the requirements for under pressure mains connections by each Water Company within their respective DCS (or policy document). <i>The requirements for pressure testing of DI/CI and Strap Ferrules should be tabled, discussed and agreed at the WIRSAP forum. Whilst this is happening, LRQA will require a pressure test to be completed prior to any UPT connection under the CRUPC scope for any material.</i>

			<i>Action – TSJ to raise at NCC Meeting, and to be included in all Water Companies DCS to be progressed and added to list for future Adoption Code Panel meetings (See 18 above)</i>
20	23\11\22	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was to review the engagement process with each Utility regarding Regulation 31 Approved Material Requirements. <i>Action TSJ to raise with NCC and consultation periods relating to implementation of changes.</i>
21	23\11\22	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was to understand the engagement process with the Adoption code group for major changes to the DCS templates. NM states that the SLA needs updating. <i>Consultation and notification to SLP's with respect to individual water companies process changes, notice periods of implementation and any DCS updates. Action TSJ to raise with NCC and consultation periods relating to implementation of changes (See 20 above).</i>
22	04/04/23	TSJ – Bristol Water	See action 19. Duplication. Closed. <i>Pressure testing of CI/DI Under Pressure Tee's & W.C specifying polices.</i> <i>SLP's request that each water company developer services department update their DCS documents via the NCC.</i> <i>TSJ to table at the next NCC meeting.</i>
23	04/04/23	TSJ – Bristol Water	Action was for the NCC panel to provide guidance on the use of specialist contractors for under pressure connections. Do they need an NCO qualification or will an STC assessment with hygiene/SHEA Water suffice? <i>CRUPC/UPT use of Specialist Contractors.</i> <i>Action for TSJ to table the issue of specialist contractors for CRUPC/UPT activities and qualifications/competencies at the next CC and feedback.</i>
24	04/04/23	MW – LRQA / DMcG – EUSR	City and Guilds qualifications and requirements to converting to NCO(W) EUSR registrations. MW/DMcG Action to report back at the next WIRSAP meeting on progress.
25	04/04/23	TSJ – Bristol Water	Ofwat letter stating that by April 2025, all personnel shall be NCO (W)/NVQ qualified – possible effects on Framework's. Any progress? <i>Action for TSJ to table the issue at the next NCC and feedback at the next meeting.</i>
26	04/04/23	TSJ – Bristol Water AC - LRQA	Action was for the NCC panel to discuss whether their needs to be a WIRS accreditation scheme for Framework contractor's (for Non-contestable work). <i>TSJ to table the Framework qualification issues at the next NCC and provide feedback to the next WIRSAP.</i> <i>AC to provide a formal response from LRQA regarding WIRS non-contestable work statements on certificates and also provide feedback regarding geographical coverage. Response from LRQA is that management need to be informed if the industry wants this to go-ahead.</i>
27	23/11/23	MW - LRQA	Ensure that two vacancies within WIRSAP are filled by candidates from the WIRS UCP forum – Action for MW at the next WIRS UCP meeting.
28	23/11/23	MS MW - LRQA	MS to table the actions above at the next NCC meeting and also add to the NCC agenda, the need for the Chair of the WIRSAP to be nominated from this group. MW stated that it was for Water UK to decide the membership of the group and that he would speak to them.
29	23/11/23	MS	Feedback to MW , the dates of the next NCC panels so that MW to coincide the WIRSAP meetings and publicise.
30	23/11/23	AC – LRQA	Raise at the next WIRS UCP, the issue of Water Regs. By laws for pressure testing and chlorination requirements for long, large diameter service connections.

Minutes of Meeting

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies (including identification of matters to be raised by WIRSAP members) and apologies

- 1.1. JG asked the chair if future communication could be set to his personal email address garside.civil.engineer@btinternet.com
- 1.2. Two new WIRSAP permanent members were welcomed to the meeting, filling the current vacancies. They were Jed Garside and Stephen Morris. Jed Garside gave a brief introductory overview of his career. Unfortunately, Stephen Morris was unavailable to attend this meeting. The forum introduced themselves in turn to the new members.

2. Review minutes and actions from last WIRSAP Meeting (on 23rd of November 2023)

- 2.1. TSJ gave feedback that he had emailed Water UK and also the NCC forum chair regarding the outstanding issues and actions for feedback. No feedback has been received therefore TSJ will redistribute the WIRSAP forum notes and actions now for inclusion on the next NCC meeting – TSJ proposed to provide a proposal for each action if nil return is received. As no feedback received from the NCC meeting regarding the outstanding actions and queries therefore the action list remains outstanding.
- 2.2. It was agreed that the minutes from the 23rd of November 2023 were true and accurate.

3. Review of WIRS Forum Meeting (on 21st of February 2024)

- 3.1. Actions 12 – MS has sent the info to MW regarding the Ofwat metrics for the next AMP. Ofwat are making changes to rebalance the Developer volume vs. one man band builder as the current DMEX is skewed.
- 3.2. Action 14 & 15 now with NCC as actions.
- 3.3. Action 17 – DMcG stated that the Reg31 committee had approach her regarding Products for Drinking Water. DMcG to email MW information to be distributed.
- 3.4. Action 22 – With WIRSAP/NCC as a required action – No progress.
- 3.5. Action 23 – DMcG stated that a mapping exercise has been completed and that she will be updating the EUSR website accordingly.
- 3.6. Action 24/25 - Agenda item.
- 3.7. Action 26 – EUSR to feedback on progress at the next WIRS UCP meeting.
- 3.8. Action 27 – Meeting arranged in April between LRQA/EUSR and BJ to discuss and document the processes for CRMC/CRUPC authorised signatory.

4. NCO(W) Operative Update

- 4.1. DMcG gave an overview of the work that EUSR has been completing to reduce the number of units for the NVQ / NCO (W) qualification, more core technical skills and aligned to the gas industry. ‘Self-lay’ and ‘Distribution’ qualification have been removed to just one qualification. Looking at ‘experienced’ people being assessment based, looking at resolving ‘pipe sizes’ categories on the NCO qualification for main laying.
- 4.2. NVQ NCO(W) uptake by water company framework – did peak but not the numbers expected. DMcG has asked Graham Morley of UU for an update on the progress. Her understanding is that the level playing field would apply to all tier 1 framework providers and their contractors for transparency, i.e. all of the supply chain.

- 4.3. NM asked what the cut-off date was – 01/04/25.
- 4.4. TSJ asked if the NVQ/NCO(W) applied to NAV's as well. MW stated that in his experience, NAV's employ WIRS accredited SLP's to complete the work. AC stated that it was his belief that NAV's are regarded as separate water companies in their own right from an Ofwat perspective. DMcG stated she would raise the NAV query with Graham Morley of UU. MW stated that South West Water already stipulate that their tier 1 frameworks are WIRS accredited.
- 4.5. MW asked what water companies were doing regarding training. PB stated that STW are completing their NVQ/NCO(W) training and would be ready by the deadline. TSJ stated that Network Plus were their framework provider and that they was a query regarding their WIRS status (AC update – NPMU (self-lay at Full WIRS, NP frameworks at partial WIRS (for the UU and YW operating areas only). DMcG stated that she would ask GM for visibility from all water companies regarding progress of the NVQ/NCO (W) qualification and it could take up to six months to complete induction training.
- 4.6. BJ raised this issue that he was seeing limited availability/no availability of training provider provision for self-lay companies.
- 4.7. LC raised the question about 'what happens after the April 2025 deadline?' and gang members don't have the qualifications to complete the work? MW stated that this is an Ofwat issue. DMcG stated there could potentially be another issue regarding access to developers sites regarding CSCS cards.
- 4.8. JG asked if there was a WIRS accreditation deadline. MW stated that LRQA were not stipulating a date as yet

5. Water Regulations for pressure testing and chlorination requirements for long, large diameter branch / service connections.

- 5.1. MW asked that where service connections are long or 63mm diameter (off a branch connection) what are the water companies rules for pressure testing and chlorination? AC asked where this information is (per water company) and should it be stipulated within the respective water companies DCS document? BJ added that water company practices were inconsistent with zero application for branch connections and road crossings etc.
- 5.2. NM stated that this was in the Wessex Water DCS for services up to 63mm diameter and he would double check this as an action. MS stated that most water companies have similar practices. TSJ stated that Bristol Water expect pressure tests and bacti test on their network. Action for each Water company to ensure that the information regarding pressure testing and chlorination/bacti testing is visible (website or DCS).
- 5.3. PB stated that he is told if there are any issues with SLP's or frameworks. JG asked whether there should be a rule that every branch connection is sampled irrespective of water company or SLP.

6. WIAPS / Self-Certification and Company's Procedure

- 6.1. BJ raised the issue regarding the consistency, process and procedure from each water company regarding the need to provide a WIAPs/Self certification for each service connection and there was confusion particularly when SLP's work across different water company operating areas.
- 6.2. NM stated for Wessex Water that is was self-certification and his understanding was that the WIAPS should be provided by the developers ground worker (internal stop tap to the boundary box).
- 6.3. AC/MW stated that is a WIAPS certificate is not in place then an email is required form the respective water company stating that the plot has been signed off by the water company (water regs.) as evidence of managing the quality. PB stated that STW stipulate within the STW Developer pack. General question raised, do all DCS document give enough guidance for service plot connections. Action for all water companies to review their processes and ensure visible process is documented.

7. AOB

7.1. None raised.

8. Date of next meetings 17th July and 20th November 2024.

Meeting closed at 1127hrs.