

## Meeting notes & actions

The aims of this meeting:

- *Continued discussion on the topic of the typical consumer journey, alongside consumer perceptions and expectations.*
- *Further to discussions at the first Working Group meeting, continue to discuss and agree where the consistency of consumer communication/messages may be beneficial.*
- *Agree approach to Customer Requested Switch dates, further to Forum member action from the first Working Group.*
- *Consideration of the journey from a consumer perspective, including what a customer may reasonably expect to experience.*

## **Update on the definition of ‘Relevant Date’**

- Ofgem have published the updated, proposed Supply Licence Changes for faster switching.
- The Forum will utilise this definition as the basis for all future discussion.
- At high-level, the Relevant Date will be determined by the Supplier at the point when they determine that all information has been provided to conduct the switch.
- Link to published information below.

[Explanatory note](#)

[Gas supply licence](#)

[Electricity supply licence](#)

## **Consumer Communication (minimum messaging requirements)**

### Speed of switch messaging

Consensus view is that firm commitments on the Switch Date should come from Suppliers:

- Suppliers are best placed to determine whether all information is captured (to determine the Relevant Date).
- Speed of switch is expected to vary across the market initially and may be further varied due to the happy/unhappy path of the specific consumer journey.
- PCWs are able to reassure customers with a generic statement around the speed of switch and that their new Supplier will contact them shortly with the actual switch date.

- In the longer term, the ambition remains for PCWs to potentially provide firmer, more confident messaging of switch dates to consumers.

#### Consent to be billed in cool-off period

- Legal advice provided to some Suppliers, advises that without consumer consent being received, the Supply Start Date can only be set to a date after the cooling-off period has expired.
- Some PCWs noted that this does not appear to be the case in other markets and consumers would have no grounds for refusing to pay for energy used.
- The general Supplier view is that the requirements for express consent from the consumer is very clear within both the Supply Licence and the Statutory Instrument text.
- A suggestion was made, that the PCW process could include a ‘tick box’ consent option to capture consumer consent (or not). How this is worded and explained to consumers would need to be considered. Should this be consistent, or down to bilateral agreement?

#### Standstill Period

- Consensus view that this could be an interim requirement (with longer term Ofgem expectation that the Standstill Period be reduced to zero) and will affect very few consumers.
- View noted that it is possibly easiest for a Supplier to validate and ensure that the Supply Start Date chosen does not misalign with any Standstill period.

#### Prepayment

- General consensus that no specific messaging from PCWs is necessarily required for prepayment, though this is dependent upon bilateral arrangements with Suppliers.
- A Supplier advised that specific messaging about their prepayment process is provided by PCWs (e.g. the customer balance is not wiped at CoS).
- It was agreed that with Suppliers being responsible for setting the Supply Start Date, lead times to programme and dispatch prepayment devices (after the objection window has closed) can be taken into account.
- Device delivery arrangements may need to be reviewed by Suppliers, to ensure that delivery is achieved within the Supply Licence Condition (SLC) switch speed requirement.
- Suppliers will be sensitive to commercials around provision, programming and dispatch of devices that may not be used and will ultimately need to navigate the requirement to appropriately serve the consumer and be compliant with SLCs.

### Priority Services Register

- Currently, the Supplier requirements of PCWs on capturing this information are variable.
- Some Suppliers may be incapable of receiving the information (for technical reasons).
- General consensus that the customer experience can be improved and that the questions asked should reflect the standard industry codes.
- One suggestion put forward was for the PCW to ask the consumer if there are any special needs that their new Supplier should be aware of, but for the actual detail to be captured by the Supplier.
- It was noted that some customers may be cautious about providing personal data to PCWs.
- The switch can proceed without this information being captured, but with faster switching timeframes a delay in obtaining this information could put vulnerable customers at risk e.g. if a gas or electricity supply emergency happens on or immediately after the switch date.

### **Customer Requested Switch Dates**

- The following proposal was considered and supported by the Working Group.
- *'The Forum agrees that as there are not any material changes to the current obligations, no changes to the existing arrangements are required unless agreed bilaterally between parties.'*
- Discussions on this topic are now concluded.

### **AOB**

- **Unhappy path** - A view was expressed that more focus is required on messaging around the 'unhappy path' and impacts to consumers.
- **Action:** *Chair to include unhappy path messaging at a future working group meeting.*
- **Cooling-off definition and messaging** - There are some differing views on this and inconsistency within existing consumer comms, as discussed at meeting 1. To be addressed at the next Working Group meeting.
- **Micro-Business** - Noted that the conclusions of the Ofgem consultation have recently been published. The messaging for this group of customers may now be more complex.
- It should be noted that as per the Terms of Reference, the focus of the Forum is 'on the domestic market sector only' and non-domestic activity is out of scope.

**Next Working Group meeting dates**

- The next meeting of this Working Group will take place on Wednesday 4 August.