



WESTERN POWER
DISTRIBUTION

Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales
a nationalgrid company

Incentive on Connections Engagement

ICE 2022/23 Plan

[westernpower.co.uk](https://www.westernpower.co.uk)



Introduction

The electricity industry faces an exciting period of change across all aspects of the sector. We will play a pivotal role in helping the UK and our stakeholders reach net zero. Moving forward as part of the National Grid group will enable us to build on our shared commitment to excellence and leverage our combined expertise to ensure customers are placed at the heart of the smart energy transition.

We are currently preparing for the next distribution price control period which runs from 2023-2028 (RIIO-ED2). A significant amount of our recent stakeholder engagement has been focused on our plans for the next distribution price control period and, in December 2021, we submitted our RIIO-ED2 Business Plan to Ofgem. As part of the plan, we created a Major Connections Strategy that sets out our Major Connections vision for RIIO-ED2.

The Incentives of Connections Engagement (ICE) remains a key element of our stakeholder engagement programme and ensures we continue to deliver improvements in all aspects of connections based upon your feedback.

I'm pleased to introduce our new ICE Plan for 2022/23; our eighth and final annual ICE Plan in this price control period. The Plan sets out our ambition for improving services, processes and the customer journey for our connections customers.

Our 2022/23 ICE Plan contains 14 initiatives. Some are new initiatives and others build on previous initiatives but all are created as a direct consequence of stakeholder feedback. The ICE plan focuses on five key areas; policy guidance, customer support, communication, stakeholder engagement and process improvement.

This year's plan focusses on a number of key areas:

- **To deliver a more efficient, flexible and responsive customer service.**
- **Automating the process for the connection of low carbon technologies such as electric heating and electric vehicles.**
- **Community energy.**

Our ICE Plan fully reflects the ambitious and changing priorities of the people we serve as we progress towards a low carbon future.

I trust that you find our new ICE Plan suitably reflective of your needs. Your views are invaluable to us so please do not hesitate to contact us at wpdconnpolicysupport@westernpower.co.uk



Graham Halladay
Operations Director



Engaging with our stakeholders



We have followed an enhanced and expanded approach to stakeholder engagement in order to co-create our ICE plan.

To ensure that we accommodate all our connections customers' needs, we engage with stakeholders by various means, including connection workshops, connection surgeries and regular expert panel meetings.

Our Customer Connections Steering Group (CCSG) meets regularly which has proven to be an excellent source to challenge us throughout the ICE process, and has been instrumental in the design of our plan. CCSG members have encouraged us to be ambitious and industry leading in our approach.

Our second Connections Workshop held in November 2021, as our first ever hybrid meeting was considered a success, as it helped us understand our stakeholders needs and priorities. We have now committed to hold this event annually.

“To build a truly stakeholder led plan you must consult extensively at every stage, including establishing the priorities of the stakeholders from the outset.”

Stakeholder feedback



Identify stakeholders

- Recognise emerging stakeholders.
- Maintain stakeholder contacts.



Understand their needs

- Identify the range of interest areas from unmetered to DER.



Always engage with a purpose

- Avoid talking shops, demonstrate we have listened via the actions we undertake.



Range of methods

- Use a variety of mechanisms e.g. expert panels, workshops, surveys etc.
- Tailor to suit the audience.



Listen, act and measure benefits

- Engage on priorities ICE Plan identified.
- Publish ICE 2022/23 Plan, KPIs and updates.



Use feedback to improve service

- Short-term: policies, procedures, processes.
- Long-term: shape our strategic priorities.



Make feedback available

- Publish findings and WPD's response.
- Clear line of sight to ICE 2022/23 Plan.

RIIO-ED1

Connections strategy

Our strategy in respect of connections customer engagement is built upon well-established principles.

Our simple ethos is to listen to what our customers tell us in terms of their requirements and translate that into a set of high-level connection objectives designed to fulfil those needs.

We then take these high level objectives and define more specific initiatives for inclusion in the ICE plan that focus on key deliverables and how we measure our success.

Our aim is to deliver an exceptional connections service for our customers. To help us in our quest, high quality, frequent and challenging engagement with our stakeholders is therefore crucial to achieving this. As part of our approach we have to take into account the differing needs of our stakeholders and tailor our service accordingly.

Our primary connections objectives are shown below;

To provide a faster and more efficient connections service

The key output is to improve the overall time to connect by 20%, whilst still maintaining excellent customer service such that WPD continues to be the top ranked DNO group by customer satisfaction surveys.

To improve communication with customers

This objective centres on delivering outputs that improve how our stakeholders can communicate with us and the information that we can provide them. There is a focus on developing and enhancing online information and interaction for connection customers.

To enhance engagement with major customers

Outputs for this objective centre on ensuring we communicate effectively to gain feedback to better understand the requirements of major customers. Enhancing our engagement leads to improved focus on these customer requirements and drives the development of our priorities for ICE Plan initiatives.

To achieve guaranteed standards of performance

The target to achieve zero failures of connections GSOPs ensures that we maintain our focus on the core connection activities required at each stage of the connection process.

To enable facilitation of the competitive market

WPD has a key role in the facilitation of competition in connections and it is important that we continue to work with customers and connection providers to ensure that we further develop competition in connections to ensure a level playing field in the connections market.

Policy guidance

	Action number and subject	Stakeholder feedback	Our commitment	Measure	Target date (Q2;Q3;Q4;Q1)	Connections area			
						DMD	DER	ICP/ IDNO	UMS
Policy guidance	1 ICP virtual audits	Better transparency of post acceptance inspections programme – clarity on when an engineer will be appointed, provision of a programme/works schedule for the ICP installations, in relation to the inspections.	Investigation of adoption of virtual audits/inspections as part of CiC inspection policy. Run a series of trials for virtual audits across WPDs regions, in a phased approach.	To trial a new virtual audit process. Positive stakeholder feedback.	Q4 Dec 2022.			●	
	2 Statement of Works (SoW)	Provide guidance relating to how the Statement of Works process will develop following codification.	To update external guidance document, information on WPD's website and template letters following the outcome of CMP298, which is designed to formally codify the Appendix G process into CUSC. Following the improvements made we will identify and implement any further enhancements to the 'Connections Information' pages on the WPD website. Extended from ICE 2021/22 Plan - Action 4.	Updated document issued to stakeholders. Positive feedback from stakeholders through a questionnaire in relation to the updated document.	Q4 Dec 2022.		●	●	
	3 G99 application advice	Update through information on how the G99 process is working on the ground, office studies and on-site testing.	Provide improved guidance advice for customers on completing applications when applying for G98 or small G99 installations. Include example application forms and schematic drawings.	Complete guidance for customers. Example scenarios produced on our website.	Q3 Sep 2022.		●		

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Customer support

	Action number and subject	Stakeholder feedback	Our commitment	Measure	Target date (Q2;Q3;Q4;Q1)	Connections area			
						DMD	DER	ICP/ IDNO	UMS
Customer support	4 Distribution Use of System (DUoS) advice/information	In connection offers there's no information on when payment needs to be made or standing charges. It's only when the application is accepted that we are told when it should be paid by. It would be good to have clarity during the application stage.	Pro-actively sign post in the Connection Agreement (CA) to the charging methodology. Simplifying and improve the 'use of system charges' web page to enable our relevant staff to sign post customers to the system charging information.	Update the Connection Agreement by Q3 2022. Completion of implementation of the 'use of system charges' web page.	Q4 Dec 2022.	●	●	●	
	5 EV charging mobility	EV charging for non-domestic customers i.e. large public charging/airports/distribution/large retail/bus and transportation. Also for disabled car charging facilities.	We will undertake some pilot schemes, in partnership with mobility charities, consumer groups and local authorities. Exploring data and evidence to identify the needs for accessibility for disabled drivers, the analysis will help recommend the most effective intervention. - Outline an implementation plan with practical ideas that can be put forward for trial. - Define an engagement plan to socialise findings with relevant parties. - Support engagement and develop well-rounded views of differing needs.	Updated document issued to stakeholders. Implement stakeholder engagement plan.	Q1 Mar 2023.	●			
	6 Electric heating online portal	It would be great to have improved visibility of upcoming changes to policies and standards, as it takes time to get equipment manufactured. Access to policy and specification documents needs to be made easier.	Identify and implement any improvements to existing guidance to improve consistency, transparency and fair application of electric heating. We will develop an online knowledge base for our staff, installers and electrical contractors with practical guidance and technical information on a electric heating portal.	Review existing guidance - end Q2 June 2022. Implement online knowledge base - end Q4 Dec 2022.	Q4 Dec 2022.	●			

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Communication

	Action number and subject	Stakeholder feedback	Our commitment	Measure	Target date (Q2;Q3;Q4;Q1)	Connections area			
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Communication	7 Customer connections portal	Being able to check your application progress is a positive thing, using a portal is a good idea for certain kinds of customer that are more often than not a one off interaction. An ongoing portal of advice and conversation would be great.	To develop a web based customer portal for an end to end scheme progression during the application process, through to delivery and connection. Initially for our smaller customers (1-4/69kVA), to establish a quality service for our customers before releasing to the larger customers. Following the survey, feedback and trial from last years ICE action 7- Enquiry Tracker for non-ICPs. We will enable all major customers to have access to the tracker, and to further monitor feedback.	85% positive feedback from our customers.	Q1 Mar 2023.	●		●	●
	8 Interactive map	Data is critical to everybody in terms of making decisions. It's really essential that they have a centralised mapping functionality that is interactive for customers. This will save us time and help with our customer experience.	To engage with our stakeholders to understand the digital customer journey cases for which they would require an online mapping tool, and develop a new solution that can empower them to realise those journeys.	Completion of Stakeholder engagement.	Q1 Mar 2023.	●	●		

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Process improvement

	Action number and subject	Stakeholder feedback	Our commitment	Measure	Target date (Q2;Q3;Q4;Q1)	Connections area			
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Process improvement	9 Domestic LCT acceptance web based	Make it as easy as possible for customers to connect LCTs and reduce times to provide approval to install LCT equipment.	Provide a web-based service for assessing requests for additional load at domestic premises as a result of low carbon technology (LCT) installations, facilitating a same day response to approve connections where pre-determined load acceptance criteria are met. Develop a mobile app functionality to automate the provision of low carbon technology (LCT) application process. Continuation from ICE 2021/22 Plan - Action 23.	Positive feedback from stakeholders on the improvements completed.	Q4 Dec 2022.	●			
	10 Connection Agreement reduction of Authorised Supply Capacity (ASC)	It makes our lives a lot easier to not have to pick up the phone.	Develop a process for reduction of Authorised Supply Capacity (ASC) in the Connection agreement process to be available as an online application.	Completion of online application.	Q4 Dec 2022.	●	●		
	11 Interactive video solutions	We are seeing an increase in all applications, and the systems you have in place aren't up to the task for what is coming in the future.	Investigate the development of an interactive video call option to replace some site visits to ensure that the customer experience is faster, safer, easier and more efficient. To enable our staff to give a new customer experience that enables our connections staff to focus on the customer needs and requirements.	Completion of interactive video solution.	Q4 Dec 2022.	●	●		

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Stakeholder engagement

	Action number and subject	Stakeholder feedback	Our commitment	Measure	Target date (Q2;Q3;Q4;Q1)	Connections area			
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Stakeholder engagement	12 Developer engagement event	Please keep us informed of progress. We are most grateful to be kept in touch with.	Hold an event in spring 2023 to brief a wide spectrum of developer/builder stakeholders on WPD's connection strategies, ED2 and the Net Zero future. Encourage round table discussion to generate feedback and potentially develop further initiatives.	85% positive feedback from housing developer/builder customer event.	Q1 Mar 2023.	●	●		
	13 Customer engagement report	I like the idea of each region having a specific contact point. That would provide a consistent approach. The connections process is very good, but the correct point of contact can be tricky.	Enhance the provision of named/nominated lead customer relationship contact points for returning customers across all four WPD licence areas. To provide nominated WPD customer relationship leads to customers.	The provision of nominated WPD customer relationship leads/point of contact to customers.	Q1 Mar 2023.	●	●	●	●
	14 Community energy schemes	Support a growth in community energy schemes by facilitating their access to available funding streams.	Publicise new case studies as they arise on our website and newsletter. - Develop a process for innovation referrals and promote at events and community surgeries. - Publish a guide to Network Innovation Allowance (NIA) projects for communities, to encourage community groups to come forward with projects, offering a digital call with network innovation engineers.	Deliver a small community generation/demand demonstrator including funding.	Q1 Mar 2023.	●		●	

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If you would like to share your thoughts and feedback throughout the year, please contact our Connections Strategy Team at wpdconnpolicysupport@westernpower.co.uk

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