



Connections Strategy RIIO-ED2

CCSG – Connections Feedback- Feb 2021

		Principle 1 - Support connection stakeholders prior to application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information		
		Baseline Expectations	Feedback	Summary
Principle 1 - Support connection stakeholders prior to application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information	1	Provide access to up to date and relevant information to enable a connection stakeholder to decide whether, and where, to connect to the distribution network. This should include, but not be limited to, graphical network records that show the location, size and type of assets.	<p>Stakeholder uses heat maps regularly. They're useful, good balance in information available for people from technical and non-technical backgrounds. WPD have gone a long way on this over the last few year. But going forward what else do people need? It would be beneficial to Include info for the demand sector.</p> <p>Consensus with developers & architects to grab available capacity. Fears of displaying available capacity.</p> <p>Provision of information – more detailed information published which can minimise queries taking up planner's time. Alongside this is a feeling that the heat maps are less useful and shouldn't be worked on any more – they are felt to be misleading in terms of capacity availability. One size fits all approach is flawed. Time should be spent on improving the data.</p> <p>Could WPD share an online data of their earthing information for the primaries? We are always working with worst case scenario fault clearance times and it is taking long time for the WPD Planners to confirm if a primary is hot or cold which sometimes delays our design submissions.</p> <p>Heat maps are a useful tool however the information is inaccurate or out of date. Can WPD look to improve the information and scope of the heat map?</p> <p>Could there be a provision for a "Self Service Budget Estimate". E.g. detailed enough information for connections Customers to carry out their own assessment on a Budget Basis.</p>	<p>1- Heat Maps - It would be beneficial to Include info for the demand sector - time should be spent on improving data - can we improve the information and scope?</p> <p>2 - Earthing - Can we share online data of earthing information, i.e. hot or cold sites</p> <p>3 - Budget Estimate - can we have self-serve for customers to carry out their own assessments?</p>
	2	Communicate a clear connections process for all customers. This should include providing clarity of DNO, customer and third-party responsibilities. This should also include providing clarity on how issues that arise can be raised and resolved.	<p>WPD leading in this area. Jargon doesn't help.</p> <p>We will see a significant increase of EV applications, information/process needs to be clear without too much jargon.</p> <p>Heat pumps/EV installers working to get process in place with ENA, where upgrade required consider installation of both EV & heat pump to future proof. Applications for heat pumps & EV tracked and visible so applicants can share costs.</p> <p>Stakeholder emphasised the value of flexibility with 3ph chargers.</p> <p>Appendix G communications need improvement. Not clear to customers at present.</p>	<p>1- EV & HP - going to see significant volumes so information/process needs to be clear and jargon free</p> <p>2 - EV & HP - Applications made visible so people can share costs</p> <p>3- SoW - Improve communication of Appendix G process</p>
	3	Provide clear explanations of the types of connection products available, the associated costs of each and the information that would need to be provided by the customer to make an application. Where appropriate, this should also include the provision of general information on the potential implications for a customer's connection offer if they change their own requirements, if other customers are	<p>Budget quotation options are mostly useful in demand applications, but for generation applications, WPD are suggesting that they will not be picking up any reinforcement works or additional network requirements unless it is a firm offer application. This situation eliminates the advantage of having the option to apply for a budget quotation on generation applications.</p> <p>Tertiary offers are working well however need improvements in clarity.</p>	<p>1 - Budget Estimate - need to include reinforcement works?</p> <p>2 - Tertiary Offers - require clarity</p>

		seeking to connect in the same area or if they do not accept an offer within its validity period.		
4		Provide support and help to customers through appropriate channels which should include, but not be limited to, connections surgeries.	<p>Connection Surgeries – Really like them.</p> <p>Make an assessment/steer to advice the customer 'what they need to do?' The Customer may not require a full blown surgery just relevant information.</p>	1 - Connection Surgeries - customer may not want surgery but just some advice
5		Have robust processes in place to proactively engage with stakeholders. This should include how the DNO plans to both identify and address connections issues.	<p>WPD do not notify us when they make changes to their application processes or policies. For example, we were only informed of the new application form after making the application and receiving rejection from the WPD Planner. This caused delay on receiving our quotation which should have been completed within 25 working days from the date of the application. Another case was experienced on quotation policy changes of the interactive offers. This was only picked up after an application got very complicated and the WPD Planner sent over the updated policy afterwards. It would be good if WPD had a policy & application process update emails similar to the one they do with the G81 documents regardless of how big or small the changes are.</p> <p>"Flexibility First" principle needs to be pulled into BAU. Currently this isn't the reality and only limited flexible technology options an available for specific connections (EHV DG).</p>	<p>1 - Change of policy/process - improve prior notification</p> <p>2 - Flexibility - needs to be BaU and more wider</p>
6		<p>Provide clearly signposted information on capacity available to enable points of connection to be identified.</p> <p>(Applies only to Metered demand HV, EHV and 132kV; Metered DG HV)</p>	<p>Stakeholder uses heat maps regularly. They're useful, good balance in information available for people from technical and non-technical backgrounds.</p> <p>WPD have gone a long way on this over the last few year. But going forward what else do people need? It would be beneficial to Include info for the demand sector.</p> <p>Consensus with developers & architects to grab available capacity. Fears of displaying available capacity.</p> <p>Simplification of the increase process, e.g. a fast track check on whether capacity can be ramped up without going through the full connections process – e.g. enable a capacity check to be undertaken which determines if a simple increase can be applied or if it does need to go through the connections process. There is a feeling that users are reluctant to relinquish capacity (which it's noted is a very simple and quick process) as once they have done they have to jump through hurdles to ramp back up again. That's not to say that some circumstances won't need to go through the full process – disturbing loads for assessment, constrained areas etc.</p> <p>Tipping Point information would be very useful. Noted SSE do this. Additionally this should ideally be available for generation and demand not just generation.</p>	<p>1 - Capacity ramp-up - improve process where possible, i.e. fast-track</p> <p>2 - Tipping Point - introduce for generation and demand</p>
7		Provide guidance that explains to customers the criteria to allow an unmetered connection to be made, ensuring compliance with the Unmetered Supply Regulations		No Feedback
8		Provide support in the form of tailored pre-application communication to suit different stakeholder needs.		No Feedback

		Principle 2 - Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process		
		Baseline Expectations	Feedback	Summary
Principle 2 - Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process	9	Have clear and simple customer application process, which accounts for the particular needs of different groups of customers and which can be shaped by the parties involved. This should include, but not be limited to, providing options for how customers can apply for new connections and ensure these are clearly communicated.	<p>WPD structure works well. Planners & teams should be aware of all processes. Aware it is a big job for WPD to communicate that internally.</p> <p>Communication on the application process Not just a validation email.</p> <p>More information up front would be helpful in order to avoid putting in multiple applications.</p> <p>This process needs to be tailored to the Customer to allow choice to the Customer. Email, Online, etc. Not forced to one route e.g. forced via online web portal only. Larger applications prefer the existing email process (note this was compared to other web portal processes that may be not user friendly)</p> <p>EV process – ability to select pre-approved equipment from a drop down (from ENA table of compliant installations).</p> <p>This process needs to be tailored to the Customer to allow choice to the Customer. Email, Online, etc. Not forced to one route e.g. forced via online web portal only. Larger applications prefer the existing email process (note this was compared to other web portal processes that may be not user friendly)</p>	<p>1 - Application Process - should communicate better; not just validation email? - provide choice so not just online portal - more information required up front</p> <p>2 - EV application - ability to select pre-approved equipment from a drop down (from ENA table of compliant installations)</p>
	10	Provide tailored communication plans to suit different customer needs, including the provision of specified points of contact during the application process. This should include the provision of various channels through which customers can access support or help.	<p>Re engagement – targeted mail outs to previous correspondents (where GDPR can be adhered to – i.e. user signs up in agreement to updates and we'd need a mechanism for periodic review of mailing lists held)</p>	<p>1 - Engagement – targeted mail outs to previous correspondents (i.e. user signs up in agreement to updates)</p>
	11	Provide customers with clear connection quotation cost breakdowns, listing out the cost components and any assumptions used in the formulation of a connections offer.	<p>Provide better breakdowns or more transparency on comms installation costs included within the connection offer.</p> <p>WPD's cost breakdown is lacking clarity on 'Communications' costs under the EHV offers. Their costs are budgeted approx. £63k with an assumption of necessity of a microwave tower. Upon acceptance of the offer, it takes very long time for WPD's Telecommunication Team to survey the area to find out what is required, and upon completion of the survey, we never get a breakdown on what the budget cost of £60k is covering and we don't get a revised cost for wooden poles or any other scope changes.</p> <p>We are seeing more request for automation on WPD's network, however, every WPD area is approaching to this differently and there is no clear process or standard cost to cover their requirements. We have been requested/informed of the following in different WPD schemes and it will be good if WPD had a clear guideline on this when they are producing their connection offers:</p>	<p>1 - Comms installation - Provide better breakdowns or more transparency on costs included within the EHV connection offer.</p> <p>2 - Automation of switchgear - Consistency of process and costs required across WPD facilitated via clear guideline in the connection offers.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - required to provide and pay for full automation of the switchgear & RTU. - required to provide automation on the switchgear while WPD provided the RTU themselves. - were asked to deliver the switchgear to WPDs depot to get the automation fitted. We were advised that WPD always pays for the automation and ICPs can claim this back from WPD. However, there is no process in place for us to follow. <p>Having a cost breakdown is good however these can sometimes be inaccurate and payments are not lined up to spend.</p> <p>Stakeholder noted that his own experience (e.g. large scale sites) the payment plan has been very reflective and consistent with good communication.</p>	
12	<p>Have processes in place to help customers identify how they could make changes to their connection requirements that would meet their needs and allow them to get connected more quickly or cheaply.</p>	<p>Changes to the customers connection request, instead of being asked to re-submit application could the planner/designer be pro-active in contacting the customer giving feedback on the connection. (Tipping point). Could be time saving for the DNO.</p> <p>Most of the demand & connection requirement change requests are directed to reapplication process which is time consuming. It would save our and WPDs time if WPD could share their demand tipping point and have more flexibility on the minor connection requirement changes to save time.</p>	<p>1 - Tipping Point - Instead of being asked to re-submit application could the designer be pro-active in contacting the customer giving feedback on the connection.</p> <p>2 - Demand change requests - most requests are directed to reapplication process which is time consuming. It would save time if WPD could share their demand tipping point and have more flexibility on the minor connection requirement changes to save time.</p>
13	<p>Specifically, in relation to flexible connection customers, provide clarity around conditions and circumstances of current and future curtailment associated with a connections offer.</p> <p>(Applies only to Metered demand EHV and 132kV; Metered DG HV and 132kV)</p>	<p>Flexible connection offer - which team is responsible? It can become convoluted. Make the user aware there are innovative options available.</p> <p>See comments already noted RE Flexibility First and Tipping Point.</p>	<p>1 - Flexible connection offer - Process for assessing flexibility can become convoluted. The customer should be made aware there are innovative options available.</p>
14	<p>Provide guidance that explains to customers the criteria to allow a DG connection to be made to ensure compliance with relevant Engineering Recommendations (G98/G99).</p>	<p>G99-Knowing how to get through effectively. Not much knowledge on time taken.</p> <p>Engage internally and externally on G99.</p>	<p>1 - G99 - Improve understanding of process availability of information. Engage internally and externally to raise awareness.</p>
15	<p>Have in place options for 'fast track' reconnections of critical infrastructure such as internet cabinets that have been damaged in road traffic accidents or similar.</p>	<p>Consider EV street chargers for 'fast-track' reconnections.</p> <p>Is EV Chargers critical infrastructure?</p>	<p>1 - EV Charge points - Should EV street chargers be considered as critical infrastructure and eligible for 'fast-track' reconnections.</p>

		Principle 3 - Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.		
		Baseline Expectations	Feedback	Summary
Principle 3 - Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.	16	Provide tailored communication plans to suit different customer needs, including the provision of specified points of contact during the delivery process. Ensure various channels are available for customers to access support or help.	<p>Find we have to chase WPD after acceptance. Not much communication from technician. It would be beneficial to make Customer aware of who is involved in scheme post acceptance. Improve handover process from planner to technicians/project controllers post acceptance.</p> <p>Its felt there was a jump from application process to deliver – significant gap in post connection offer to pre acceptance and/or delivery.</p> <p>Improvements required on having access to a system planner or PSD engineer post offer but pre acceptance to enable discussions to determine if the solution issued is the correct one to proceed with. An example was mentioned where engagement was attempted but the planner advised they couldn't engage with the customer unless they accepted the scheme.</p> <p>Better transparency of post acceptance programme – clarity on when an engineer will be appointed, provision of a programme/works schedule for the WPD works in relation to ICP installations, it's currently felt that it can take a long time before WPD admit there's a couple of years' before completion of reinforcement for example. Online tracker system would help with this.</p> <p>There is no clear process or transparency on WPD's NC reinforcement works programme. WPD's delivery engineers are always getting involved at a later date which results in us having no information of specific WPD delivery timescales. It would be useful for WPD to share their programme from design to completion including the payment milestones upon offer acceptance so that we can report this back to our end client and programme our connection works accordingly. The information could be shared via an online project tracker system or simply via an email provided by the WPD delivery engineer. Communications in person are the best solution. This combined with "Tipping Point" website information would be better overall.</p> <p>Website pre info is a good idea however points of contact and talking (surgeries) are better.</p> <p>Post acceptance communications could be improved. For example a list of contacts that are responsible for the delivery of the project e.g. PSD, Projects, Specialists etc.</p> <p>Overall post acceptance needs more input from the DNO.</p>	<p>1 - Communication following acceptance - Improve communication after acceptance. Make the customer aware of who is involved in scheme post acceptance, i.e. handover process.</p> <p>2 - Pre-acceptance communication - Improve access to a designer post offer but pre acceptance to enable discussions to determine if the solution issued is the correct one to proceed with.</p> <p>3 - Post acceptance programme – improve transparency by provision of a programme/works schedule. Online tracker would help share programme and payment milestones.</p>
	17	Complete any cost reconciliation in a timely manner.	<p>Refunds arrive out of the blue, No detail on refund. Could do with some background on the refund. Provide more information when receiving refunds, such as, why has this been refunded? Which scheme is applicable?</p> <p>A milestone or KPI for project cost review would be useful. Example given of WPD going back with additional costs 3 years after project completion which is unjustifiable – the ICP's contract with their own client has ended and they cannot go back to them for further payment.</p>	<p>1 - Refund information - Improve refund information.</p> <p>2 - Milestone or KPI for project cost review - improve timescales for reconciliation (3</p>

			We have received an abortive works invoice from WPD for approx. £8k after three years of completion of a project. There is no record of these works or clarification on why they are being sent after three years. It is difficult to justify any costs after a project is energised and handed over to the network operator, and it will be useful if WPD could introduce a deadline period for their invoices and take the responsibility of the costs if they are not progressed prior to the deadline date.	years after project completion is unjustifiable).
18	Where there are slow moving projects and where these may impact on other customers, have processes in place for releasing capacity that is not being used. (Applies only to Metered demand HV, EHV and 132kV; Metered DG HV and EHV)	WPDs connection offer milestones dates are only focused on the customers. There is nothing covering WPDs works and how the customer milestones are affected by the delays caused by WPD. Application of Milestones is inconsistent. Clarity is needed on the process and what triggers missed Milestones to be chased. The process of evidencing isn't clear and is lengthy e.g. the evidence is sent to the designer however the designer isn't able to "okay" it and there is then time taken for it to be assessed by other teams internally but no clear timescale. There is inconsistency in the application of Milestones.	<p>1 - Delays to WPDs work - Improve clarity on how the customer milestones are affected by delays caused by WPD.</p> <p>2 - Application of Milestones - Improve consistency of application. Improve clarity on the process and shorten timescales for dealing with evidence of progress.</p>	
19	Have processes in place for the promotion of certain types of customers (such as storage) in connection queue in circumstances where they will help others connect more quickly/cheaply. (Applies only to Metered DG HV and EHV)	More information needed to understand how a project can move up in the connections queue.	1 - Promoting certain types of customers - Improve information regarding how a project can qualify to move up in the connections queue.	
20	Provide access to services that facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections such as 'rent a jointer' services.		No Feedback	