

Interventions Working Group - Meeting 76

04 September 2024 at 10:30am

ElectraLink, Northumberland House, 303-306 High Holborn, London WC1V 7JZ

Attendees	Company
Boz Laird-Clowes [BLC]	DESNZ
Callum Sheen [CS]	E.ON
Chris Varney [CV]	OVO
Danielle Brown [DB]*	SPEN
Geoff Huckerby [GH]*	Power Data Associates
Jason Scott [JS]*	GTC
John Baker [JB]*	SSE
John Orr [JO]	SPEN
Nick Dodridge [ND]*	EDF
Martin Lenfestey [ML]*	SSE
Mel Swift [MS]*	GTC
Michael Turrington [MT]*	EDF
Mick Gorewoda	E.ON
Paul Abreu [PA]	ENA
Paul Fitzgerald [PF]*	SSE
Paul Morris [PM]	UKPN
Peter Skirvin [PS]	ENW
Richard Brady [RB]	National Grid
Richard Hill [RH]	Centrica
Simon Wilson [SW]	EDF Energy
Victoria Burkett [VB]*	SSE

Secretariat	
Richard Colwill [RC] (Chair)	ElectraLink
Hannah Proffitt [HP] (Secretariat)	ElectraLink

* Teleconference

1. Administration

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the 76th IWG meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair asked members for permission to record the meeting for the purpose of aiding the Technical Secretariat. No members objected.
- 1.3 The Chair reminded members to act in accordance with the terms set out in the DCUSA “Competition Law Guidance” for the duration of the meeting.

2. IWG 75 – Draft Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. The group agreed the minutes to be an accurate reflection of the discussions held at the previous meeting. These are included as **Attachment 1**.

3. Outstanding Actions

- 3.1 The IWG reviewed the outstanding actions, and an updated version of the actions log can be found in **Attachment 2**.
- 3.2 Regarding action 72/05 ‘The Secretariat/Working Group to find the historical guidance around the issue with using clamp type isolators.’ A new action was taken by the Chair to contact Martin Allen (Electrical Safety First) to discuss this.

Action 76/01 – The Chair to contact Martin Allen (Electrical Safety First) to discuss potential guidance relating to the use of clamp type isolators.

4. Phenolic Cut-outs

- 4.1 The Chair noted that the IWG formed a sub group that first met in May 2022 concerning three incidents associated with phenolic electricity cut-outs. The Chair advised that the group developed a safety bulletin that became part of a new A19 code. Since this time there have been more incidents, therefore it is proposed that the matter is discussed again and a way forward is agreed.
- 4.2 AMO members have raised that there have been five incidents involving 50390 cut outs within the last couple of years and that members are losing confidence in that type of asset. PA noted that AMO members are drafting a report proposing that DNOs withdraw these devices when they are

discovered. PA suggested that a discussion needs to be held between DNOs and MEMs to establish a way forward.

- 4.3 PA highlighted that if DNOs are to replace thousands of cut outs, this would be a large undertaking and sufficient evidence would be needed to support this.
- 4.4 GH noted that AMO members are also keen to work with DNOs to find a solution but are cautious as there has now been an injury associated with one of the incidents. GH noted that it is possible that enhanced PPE could have affected the injury, however would not have prevented the flashover incident from occurring in the first place. GH clarified that AMO members are not suggesting to replace all black plastic cut outs, just the 50390 models as they feel these pose the greatest risk.
- 4.5 One member questioned how many incidents there have been, noting that only one incident has been investigated, another is in the process of being investigated, and they are unclear on the others. Members agreed that it is important to recover all equipment possible when these incidents occur to allow forensic investigation and assessment of the root cause. Members acknowledged that this has not occurred in some of the incidents and therefore it is unlikely that the root cause will be established.
- 4.6 PA raised that all cut outs carry some level of risk and this is why safe working practices and training are in place. PA suggested that if the enhanced checks are followed in the updated A19 as instructed, they believe the risks should be mitigated.
- 4.7 Members had mixed views on whether the incidents are restricted to 50390 models. One member noted that some 50390 models are in good condition and it would be difficult to justify removing good quality equipment.
- 4.8 PA noted that the matter has been discussed at the STIG and a proposal is being put forward to the ENFG group at ENA that approves the 2025 budget for a project early next year for all failed black plastic units to be sent to one organisation who will undertake a full forensic analysis to determine the root cause of the failures. Part of the project will also include DNOs collecting healthy units and sending them for analysis under different environmental conditions. This project will enable DNOs to reassess and decide whether a change to their asset management policy is applicable.
- 4.9 PS suggested that the group could review the risk assessments currently carried out for black plastic cut outs and enhance this where possible. RH noted a concern that the previous incidents had occurred after testing had been carried out.
- 4.10 DNOs took an action to share their procedures for working on black plastic cut outs. The group agreed that they can then compare these to MEM procedures.

Action 76/02 – DNOs to provide their current processes and procedures for working on black plastic cut outs. These can then be compared with MOP procedures.

- 4.11 PA took an action to feedback to the IWG following the matter being discussed at the STIG.

Action 76/03 – PA to feedback to the IWG following phenolic cut out discussion at STIG.

- 4.12 Members agreed to revisit the discussion at the next meeting once the above actions have been completed.

5. Operational, Safety and Reporting Issues

- 5.1 MS and JS joined the meeting to give an overview of the item they wished to raise regarding ground subsidence issues at a particular site. MS noted that GTC has experienced damaged equipment due to ongoing ground settlement, with meters being pulled off the board. MS advised that there are standard solutions for these types of situations for gas and water, however not for electricity. To ensure GTC are compliant with safety obligations they are proposing to install a non-standard service termination arrangement on all affected plots.
- 5.2 MS advised that the site build commenced in 2014 split over three phases. In 2017 when phase two commenced, GTC identified issues with ground settlement on phase one. As a result, the then installer decided to retrospectively install a service joint and coil of 35mm² service cable immediately beneath the meter boxes on both phases. MS advised that this contingency has proved unsuccessful due to external factors such as inconsistently compressed ground, heavily compacted driveways, cleated hockey sticks and solid core service cable, which is unable to sufficiently flex thereby resulting in damage at service termination positions.
- 5.3 JS presented their proposed solution which includes an above ground vertical LV service joint with service cable coiled inside the metering housing.
- 5.4 One member asked if the meter could still be pulled off the wall. JS advised that the cable before the cleat will move and that this should reduce the risk. JS noted that there will be challenges associated with meter boxes that contain a lot of equipment and these will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. MS noted that GTC will monitor the work to ensure that it stays fit for purpose.
- 5.5 MS highlighted that they want to raise awareness of the non-standard solution within industry ahead of starting the programme later this month. JS confirmed that this is limited to the one site at the moment but that they are assessing two more for which it might also be necessary.
- 5.6 PM asked if it would be possible to contain a loop in a plastic box underground to save space in the meter box. JS agreed that this would be possible but due to the sensitivity of the site they are avoiding excavating customers driveways where possible. JS noted that this solution would be used in any future sites where early intervention is possible.
- 5.7 RH noted that the customers are aware of the problem and the solution, however that change in property ownership would need to be managed. JS agreed that they had considered putting together a briefing pack for new owners but noted that there is no guarantee this would be passed on.

- 5.8 PS suggested that if there is a meter change in the future, the operative may need to move the cable out of the way. JS agreed that this is something that will need to be dealt with in the future and noted that their details will be left on the meter so they could be contacted for advice if needed.
- 5.9 One member asked if all of the Suppliers on the site are aware of the situation. MS noted that due to time constraints, they have only contacted British Gas directly as they cover 50% of the properties. MS advised that they plan to raise the matter at forums such as this and then will circulate the information to the other Suppliers.
- 5.10 RH asked whether any remaining non smart meters could also be changed over to smart during the process to avoid further disruption for customers. JS noted that there is already a very high smart penetration, however that they would bear this in mind.
- 5.11 One member asked if the third phase of the development will also have the same issues with settlement. JS noted that they have been able to put reinforcements in place to avoid the same problems.
- 5.12 MS and JS noted that they will contact PA and RC later in the year and return to the IWG with an update.

6. 2024 Work Plan

- 6.1 The Chair advised that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Opportunity for Updates on Related IWG Activities

- 7.1 The Chair advised that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

8. Smart Meter Installs

- 8.1 The Chair advised that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 The Chair asked whether there was any other business, to which nothing was raised.

10. Next Meeting

- 10.1 Due to time constraints, the IWG agreed to hold an additional meeting on 02 October 2024 at 10am to address the agenda items that were not covered at this meeting.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - IWG 75 - Final Minutes v1.0
- Attachment 2 - IWG 76 – Actions
- Attachment 3 – Asbestos Gallery