



**Shipper Survey
Final Report 2009**

April 2010
Survey conducted March/April/May 2009

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Introduction

Following completion of our 5th Shipper Survey which was conducted during March/April/May 2009, we are pleased to provide our Final Report. Our process for the survey mirrored the previous survey in terms of scoring mechanism so it provides a direct comparison to the previous years results.

Our process involved breaking down the responses by key areas and additional improvements. The key areas were reflective of where more than one shipper raised a similar concern/issue. Additional improvements are areas where the business area had identified actions from the feedback received from individual shippers.

Following on from the initial report which was distributed in July 09, an Analysis Report was provided in October 09. The following pages provide an update to evaluate progress on actions agreed, which will have been collated by the Industry Engagement Team from the business.

This year we invited responses from the 14 organisation that had previous taken part in the survey. Responses have been received from 8 of these organisations either through face to face interviews or by email.

The below table illustrates this year's respondents.

| Shipper | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|
| British Gas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| EDF Energy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| E.ON | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| GDF Suez | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Gazprom | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Npower | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Regent Gas | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Corona | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SSE | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ENI | | ✓ | | |
| Statoil | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Shell Gas Direct | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Scottish Power | | | | ✓ |
| Total Gas & Power | | | | ✓ |

FULCRUM CONNECTIONS**ISSUES RAISED**

Positive feedback was received on the service provided by Fulcrum. A concern was expressed regarding the migration of I&C non standard connections service to National Grid and potential loss of knowledge.

ACTIONS

Knowledge sharing has been managed through the Connections Alignment Project (CAP) to ensure processes and Standards of Services were transferred over at a high level. In addition to this, the teams have also created lower level processes to manage the day to day activities.

Fulcrum and Distribution Customer Support* Commercial fully supported these lower level processes and provided the necessary support to the teams to ensure knowledge transfer. This included training packages and Q&A sessions, which were rolled out across all impacted departments.

Pre and post go live Fulcrum staff provided on site support to National Grid staff to ensure consistency of service levels to our customers.

* Distribution Customer Support has recently been renamed to Customer Services recognising the increased focus in our aim to providing excellent customer service.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

The final phase of the Connections Alignment Project went live 1st April 10. The project was completed in tranches with the Quotation element being transferred in house in April 09. The final phase will enable NG to complete the construction work for any work received by NG from 1st April 10. We believe the project has run smoothly with engagement with Fulcrum to ensure a smooth and effortless transition, with little or no impact on our customers. There is still work to be done to ensure any historic work orders provided to Fulcrum are completed with the contract.

DOMESTIC CONNECTIONS**ISSUES RAISED**

Positive comment was received regarding the service delivered by the team. The only issue raised related back to Site Works Terms and Conditions.

ACTIONS

National Grid Gas is keen to promote competition in connections. Organisation in competition with National Grids connection activity tend to be small in size and funding credit terms can be a major issue for them entering the market.

The approach by National Grid Gas to remove the credit facility allows third parties to either offer a credit facility or allows them to compete on the same commercial terms with National Grid Gas. Currently, due to the economic climate, this is even more relevant for these connections organisations who are often much smaller than Suppliers, Shippers and Gas Transporters.

Further, many customer are not eligible for credit from Suppliers for such works and removing the credit facility ensure that the money moves through the gas industry to those providing the services rather than remaining with the larger transporters and / or supplier organisations.

DISCONNECTIONS

ISSUES RAISED

A number of concerns were raised regarding general communication. These comments ranged from a lack of reference numbers on paperwork, to concerns over direct contact numbers for the quotations and planning department.

ACTIONS

Many of the issues raised focus on our communication with our customers. Given the feedback we have received from this survey, a review of our current processes and our wider communication strategy is under review.

Our current Enquiry process enables all calls to be received via our Contact Centre, with the person who takes the call taking ownership of the enquiry and where possible resolving the query on first contact. There will always be occasions where the call will need to be logged via our enquiry process and handled within our SLA (Service Level Agreement), however, as part of the review of our process, quality monitoring of call handlers will be undertaken on a weekly basis.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

A number of visits to meet our Connections/Disconnections Team have been hosted at our base in Northampton. These visits have enabled a greater understanding of our customers' expectations and feedback received during these sessions has offered suggestions of how we can work together to improve the customer experience.

Our enquiry process for handling Disconnections calls has been reviewed and additional quality monitoring has now been implemented, to improve the quality of service we provide.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

ISSUES RAISED

Positive feedback was received for the team, in particular with respect to query resolution; however, Shippers see the value in building on this to receive a more proactive account management service.

ACTIONS

Our aim is to provide excellent customer service to all our customers. We have recently undertaken a review of our communications strategy and aim to deliver the first of those initiatives in the coming weeks. As part of this review we are looking to review our web page [National Grid: Shipper Information](#) to provide additional useful information.

Working closely with the Regulation team will improve our understanding of some of the challenges that our customers face which in turn will assist the team to deliver a more proactive service.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

Our Regulation Team has now joined forces with the Strategy Relationship Team in order to deliver a more focused service that we believe will benefit National Grid and our customers.

This year has seen the introduction of our Shipper News Letter. The aim of the newsletter is to provide periodic updates to you regarding changes to processes and procedures within National Grid and also to share information on hot topics.

If you have missed any copies of these newsletters they can be found at the following links:

[Shipper News October 2009](#)

[Shipper News December 2009](#)

[Shipper News March 2010](#)

Provision of additional contact information for direct communications with the business has now been provided. A copy of our Core Contact Directory can be found at the following link: [Core Contact Directory V9 March10v1](#). The account management function, provided by the Industry Engagement team has also been maintained, for escalated enquiries.

PRICING

ISSUES RAISED

Positive comments were received for this team. A comment was passed on the complexity of communication that is issued by the team on occasion. Concern was also expressed over difficulties in navigating the external website in order to find pricing information.

ACTIONS

The Pricing team endeavour to hold at least one meeting focused on pricing with each active shipper in the coming year. DCMF and more frequent shipper meetings will continue where requested. National Grid will seek to highlight future issues and uncertainties at the DCMF meetings when discussing Mod 186 information and also at 1-1 shipper meetings.

The Pricing Team will review the explanations of the changes to charges to improve their readability. Further discussions will be held with the shipping community to discuss how correct notices, and similar communications, can be better communicated.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

A number of 1-1 meetings have been held with shippers. At the DCMF we have created a register of topics relating to the charging methodology, for input by both DNs and shippers, to highlight future issues and get feedback on priorities, etc.

Over the past year we have tried to make the explanations of why charges are changing clearer. We have also provided more detail in the Mod186 reports of the reasons for the forecast changes to charge levels.

Details and information from our Pricing team can be found at the following link: [National Grid: Charges for gas transportation](#)

ORDER TO CASH**ISSUES RAISED**

In general, positive feedback was offered for this area of the business. A few comments regarding the length of time taken to resolve issues were noted. Comment was expressed in relation to providing updates of changes in the team and structure.

ACTIONS

Order to Cash has a planned performance level to resolve 95% of all queries within D+10. This is continuously measured internally to ensure performance remains on track.

Order to Cash performance has exceeded this measure month on month, often hitting 100%. Additional system and process enhancements have also been introduced this year that should further enhance the customer experience.

Our aim is to provide a top quality service to all our customers and to assist this process we will circulate our structure giving key contacts and escalation routes.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

Order to Cash have continued to meet agreed Service Level Agreements in a cost effective way.

We are in the process of transferring the back office activities as part of Transformation and on completion will be sending a new contact and escalation table out for circulating within your organisation..

REGULATION TEAM

ISSUES RAISED

Positive comments were received regarding the knowledge, professionalism and helpfulness of the team. However, concern was raised regarding the focus of the team.

ACTIONS

Our Regulation Team has now joined forces with the Strategy Relationship Team in order to deliver a more focused service that we believe will benefit National Grid and our customers.

The combination of industry knowledge and experience within the wider team, will offer a new dimension to the service that is provided both in terms of our strategy and vision on industry issues whilst seeking to meet the needs of our customers. We welcome feedback on an adhoc or ongoing basis which will help us monitor improvements in this area.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

The amalgamation of our Strategic Relationship and Uniform Network Code teams to form an Industry Engagement team. By working together we are able to work more proactively with our customers, and take a more holistic view in managing the customer interface and the contractual framework under the Uniform Network Code.

NETWORK STRATEGY

ISSUES RAISED

The service received was positive. More clarity of structure (i.e. names and escalation routes) has been requested so that Shippers know who to contact.

ACTIONS

The Core Contact Directory that is published on the National Grid shipper web page provides contact details for process owners within Network Strategy. The Core Contact Directory can be found by clicking on the following link: [National Grid: Shipper Information](#) and is updated at regular intervals.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

Following feedback received on the Core Contact Directory, we have reviewed our Directory to ensure it meets the needs of our customers.

The Directory now forwards a short description of the activities of our various teams followed by listings of our key contacts for the team/activity.

The Core Contact Directory can be found by clicking on the following link: [Core Contact Directory V9 March10v1](#).

CONTACT CENTRE**ISSUES RAISED**

Overall feedback was positive; however concern was raised regarding inconsistencies in staff knowledge and call handling on occasion.

ACTIONS

We have a one team approach to training across our 2 Contact Centres, a dedicated team of administrators and trainers are lead by a single Team Leader and manager. Staff cross flex between Contact Centres to ensure a consistent approach. Behavioural and technical training are combined within our new starter training package, both of which are evaluated and monitored through our newly launched quality monitoring process. We have also recently reviewed the process for issuing policy and procedural briefs to staff, a new team of coaches will be available to deliver the briefs ensuring competence prior to sign off of the material.

IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED

The Emergency Contact Centre provides an unbiased, unprivileged service on behalf of all Distribution Networks (DNs). Calls into the Contact Centre which relate to 'enquiries' are then passed to the appropriate DN team.

We continue to work with our Policy and Commercial Teams in ensuring we deliver appropriate and safe advice and we will be launching a new Technical Training Programme during summer 2010. When combined with our Customer Improvement Plan this will help us to achieve our key aims of "Ownership" and "First-call Resolution".

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the 2009 Shipper Survey. Your continued feedback is important to us for improving the services that we provide to you.

We will be contacting you shortly to request your participation in the Shipper Customer Satisfaction Survey 2010.

Once again, thank you for your support. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of our service.

Tracy Hine

***Customer Contracts Manager
National Grid Gas Distribution
tracy.hine@uk.ngrid.com
07885 775624***