

Annex 16: Major Connections Strategy

Providing services to our major connections customers

December 2021

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1. Introduction

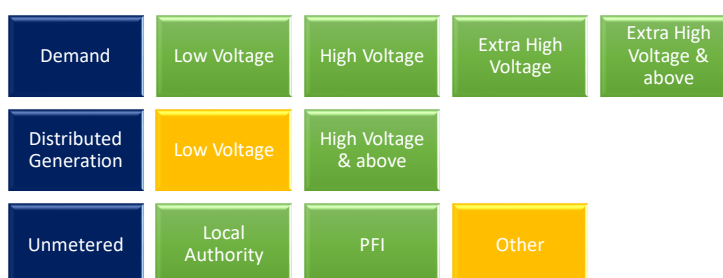
Electricity North West makes thousands of major connections to our network each year from new housing developments to new business premises. We recognise our critical role in regional economic development and our role to make connections happen. These strategies will set out, in line with guidance from our regulator, Ofgem, our improvement plan. The strategies do not cover every aspect of connections as, in line with Ofgem’s key principle of promoting competition and only regulating where it has not materialised, the strategies only focus in areas where there is not active competition. The following sections explain Ofgem’s rationale in more detail and the scope that the strategies do cover.

Ofgem set out its requirements for DNOs to develop and submit ‘major connections strategies’ in its ‘Sector Specific Methodology Decision’ in December 2020.

5.63 We have decided to require major connections strategies as part of DNOs’ business plans. The DNO’s strategy will need to set out the activities the DNO plans to undertake to improve the services provided to major connections customers in RIIO-ED2. Major connection customers include those connections customers in market segments where there is an absence of effective competition (ie they have not passed the Competition Test) and which are not captured by the CSS or TTC incentives¹.

The scope of the ‘major connections strategy’ will vary for each DNO since they are dependent on the level of effective competition that has been demonstrated through passing the Competition Tests. Ofgem has instigated a review² of the level of competition across GB but requires all DNOs to base the scope of their strategy using the position from the most recent (2013) Ofgem Competition Tests. Ofgem has not yet decided how the incentive framework will operate, nevertheless, we have identified a number of metrics and reported information that we think will be useful to track our progress.

For the purposes of the Competition Tests, new connections work was categorised into 11 market segments. Two of these were ‘excluded’ market segments which covered small connections (up to four premises) and where competition was expected to be less likely to develop; for these customers other mechanisms (eg customer satisfaction survey and time to connect incentive) are in place to ensure they receive good service. Of the other nine market segments, Electricity North West successfully passed seven of the nine as shown in green in the diagram below.



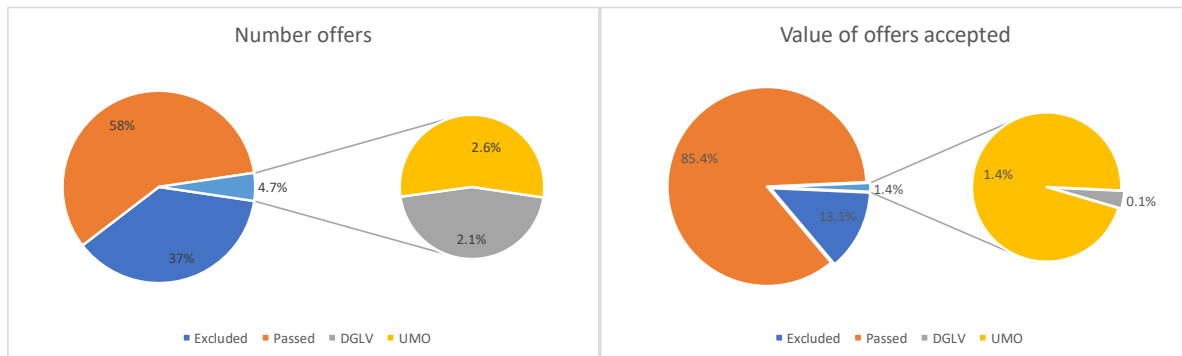
We were the most successful DNO in demonstrating that there was active competition and as a result of passing most of the market segments, our strategies are much smaller in scope than other DNOs. By comparison, our strategy may appear to cover less than other DNOs, but this is by virtue of there being more active competition that negates the need for regulatory intervention from Ofgem.

¹ CSS is the Customer Satisfaction Survey and TTC is the Time To Connect incentives and apply to small scale connections.

² [Decision on the proposal to review competition in the electricity connections market for RIIO-ED2 | Ofgem](#)

The two market segments we didn't pass are 'Distributed Generation Low Voltage' and 'Unmetered Other'. These are described in more detail later in the document.

In terms of context, it is important to appreciate the size and scale of these market segments. Both are relatively small segments and together represent less than 5% of our connections activity. In terms of the volume of connection offers we make, they cover 4.7% as shown in the chart below. In terms of accepted work, they are an even smaller proportion of our activity with the combined value constituting just over 1% of the value of work accepted.



Our 'major connections strategy' therefore needs to cover these two market segments. In addition, we need to consider non-contestable activities for all the market segments as specified in Ofgem's 'Sector Specific Methodology Decision', see extract below. These are the activities that we still need to carry out to support competition in connections and these are further described later in the document.

5.64 We note that the DNOs are still responsible for completing non-contestable connection activities in market segments that have passed the Competition Test. To ensure that DNOs deliver best practice in the provision of non-contestable activities, DNOs' strategies should capture these activities, even where these have passed the Competition Test. As set out in more detail in paragraph 5.73, the application of the financial ODI will differ with regard to the provision of non-contestable activities.

2. Baseline expectations

As part of its Sector Specific Methodology Decision, Ofgem set out three high level principles that largely cover the three stages of connections activity:

- Pre-application information and engagement
- The application process
- Delivery of the connection



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.



Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.

The three Principles are underpinned by Ofgem's baseline expectations (as shown in Appendix 1) and these set the expectations that we need to deliver during RIIO-ED2.

5.70 In their strategies, DNOs will need to set out the activities and deliverables that will contribute to meeting customers' needs in RIIO-ED2, as well as how these activities and deliverables meet the baseline expectations. We expect the majority of activities in DNOs' strategies to be delivered through BAU baseline funding and do not expect DNOs to request additional funding to deliver their strategies.

5.76 We are inviting companies to propose metrics and performance benchmarks to be used in assessments within their strategies and we will engage with DNOs and wider stakeholders through the RIIO-ED2 working group to develop the assessment approach.

Most connections activity sits outside of the Price Control and is funded directly by the customers who have requested the connection. We expect this approach to continue into RIIO-ED2 and therefore any improvements we make would be funded through connection charges rather than through allowances.

The following sections describe each of the three areas highlighted in section one, the feedback we have received on our current performance and how we propose to track and measure our performance.

3. Assessing our performance

Ofgem published its decision on Baseline Expectations in December 2020 and during the period January to March 2021 we sought feedback from our stakeholders for our draft plan and then supplemented it with further feedback during September 2021 on how they thought we were currently performing against those Baseline Expectations.

We did this through several different channels:

- ‘Expert Panels’ – where we have regular engagement with a small number of representatives of that market segment
- Stakeholder workshops – open access stakeholder events targeted at that market segment
- Stakeholder surveys – short electronic surveys sent to our stakeholders on our distribution lists
- Stakeholder interviews – short interviews carried out by an independent market research company
- Wider stakeholder consultation – included as part of our wider RIIO-ED2 consultation to seek feedback from stakeholders who might have not been included in our targets engagement
- Engagement with our Customer Engagement Group (CEG) to explain the requirements and proposed approach to develop our strategy document.

We asked stakeholders to give us their view as to how well we are currently performing against the Baseline Expectations that will be introduced in ED2. We also asked them what else we could do to improve our performance; either to improve an aspect where we were not meeting the Baseline Expectations or to exceed it if we currently were meeting expectations. We have used this feedback to develop improvement actions and these are detailed in each of the following three sections.

The volume of responses received was quite low. We believe that this is due to a combination of factors:

- The two market segments have a small number of customers to start with
- Of those, very few are repeat customers who are more likely to engage as they have a vested interest in improving our services
- Ongoing challenges of COVID-19 where many companies had greater priorities
- Engagement fatigue as other DNOs were seeking similar feedback at a similar time.

We have shown the results of the feedback in each of the three sections based on a simple percentage of the responses received. The small number of respondents means that the results are very sensitive to one or two responses.

4. Distributed Generation Low Voltage

4.1. Types of connections included

The distributed generation low voltage market segment (DG LV) covers activities which are defined as “*new or modified connection of generation and storage equipment involving only low voltage (<1,000V) work*”. Note that the segment is defined by the work necessary on our network and not necessarily the voltage of connection. If any high voltage work is needed, then the project will be classified as being in the distributed generation high voltage market segment.

In the North West, we have seen a gradual increase in the number of generation applications and connections in the DG LV market segment over the last three years. Although these numbers continued to increase in the last year, the overall number of customers remains low. Most of the connection offers (91%) and acceptances (93%) are zero cost to the customer, requiring no site works from Electricity North West, thus limiting the opportunity to engage with our customers. Of those where there is some work, the majority are relatively small in value. The tables below demonstrate the level of applications and accepted jobs in the DG LV market in the North West of England.

Quotes Issued	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Quotes Accepted	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Zero cost	225	265	364	Zero cost	135	157	193
Up to £5k	26	11	30	Up to £5k	12	5	14
Over £5k	6	7	5	Over £5k	2	1	1
Total	257	283	399	Total	149	163	208

The DG LV market segment is closely aligned to Community and Local Energy stakeholders, a growing sector across the UK. For us, community energy relates to community-led projects or initiatives to reduce, manage, generate or purchase energy. Community energy projects focus on engagement and benefits to the local area and communities.

Local energy encompasses community energy projects and also includes activities by a wider set of local partners such as local authorities, housing associations, intermediary or advisory organisations and local businesses. Local energy projects may have a commercial aspect to their delivery but are also likely to benefit their local area and community.

In many cases, the projects that both these groups will be considering result in connections that fall into the DG LV market segment and we coordinate our engagement efforts accordingly. There is a separate strategy for Community and Local Energy stakeholders in Annex 5.

4.2. What we already do for our customers

Helping customers before they apply

We cater for a diverse range of customers interested in connecting distributed generation to our network. These range from people who are doing it for the first and only time, whether on their own property or as part of a community group to companies that have extensive knowledge and experience of the connection process.

To support these different needs, we have a range of information available and different ways we can help. These are summarised in the tables below with relevant links to information on our website.



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.

Baseline expectation (BE) ³	Summary of current activities
BE1) Provide access to information to enable a connection stakeholder to decide whether, and where, to connect to the distribution network.	Network Asset Viewer (NAV) available on our website which is an intuitive system designed to reflect the current structure of our network and provide data access which is straightforward to navigate through.
BE2) Communicate a clear connections process for all customers.	Simple process guidance on our website here and here . Step by step guidance provided in our Distributed Generation Low Voltage webinar (Nov 2020), slides are available here and recordings here Project specific pre-application support available on request
BE3) Provide clear explanations of the types of connection products available.	Details of options and requirements on our website , as well as average costs within the Connection Charging Methodology here .
BE4) Provide support and help to customers through appropriate channels.	Key contacts available for queries on the website . Project specific ‘surgery sessions’ available on request
BE5) Have robust processes in place to proactively engage with stakeholders.	Proactive communications for stakeholders who have expressed an interest in receiving information. Engagement through Workshops, expert panels, webinars and bilateral engagement detailed in our ICE reports

³ Not all Baseline Expectations apply to each market segment. The numbers may therefore not be consecutive. Please refer to the Appendix for a full list.

Helping customers when they apply

Once a customer makes a formal application for a new connection then we try to get them a connection offer that meets their needs as quickly as possible.



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.

Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE9) Have clear and simple customer application process.	Simple process guidance on our website here and here . Step by step guidance provided in our Distributed Generation Low Voltage webinar (Nov 2020), in slides here and recordings here . Key contacts available for queries on the website . Project specific 'surgery sessions' available on request
BE10) Provide tailored communication plans to suit different customer needs.	Planner available once application has been received to provide tailored support to customer's needs. Project specific 'surgery sessions' available on request here .
BE11) Provide customers with clear connection quotation cost breakdowns.	Cost breakdown provided in quotes, further information available on our website here .
BE12) Help customers get connected more quickly or cheaply.	Planner made available at all stages pre-application, application and delivery to assist with getting stakeholder connected as quickly and cheaply as possible.
BE14) Provide guidance with relevant Engineering Recommendations (G98/G99).	General & detailed guidance provided on our website, including dedicated EREC G98/G99 guidance pages. Multiple webinar recordings also available on the EREC G98/G99 pages and here .

Helping customers deliver the connection

As can be seen from the data tables in section 4.1, the clear majority (93%) of accepted projects are zero cost. This means that we have no work to carry out in order to allow the connection to be made. This is because the majority of DG LV applications are to fit distributed generation to existing premises eg fitting solar panels on a commercial property. This stage of the connections journey under Principle 3 is therefore less relevant for the majority of customers in this market segment.




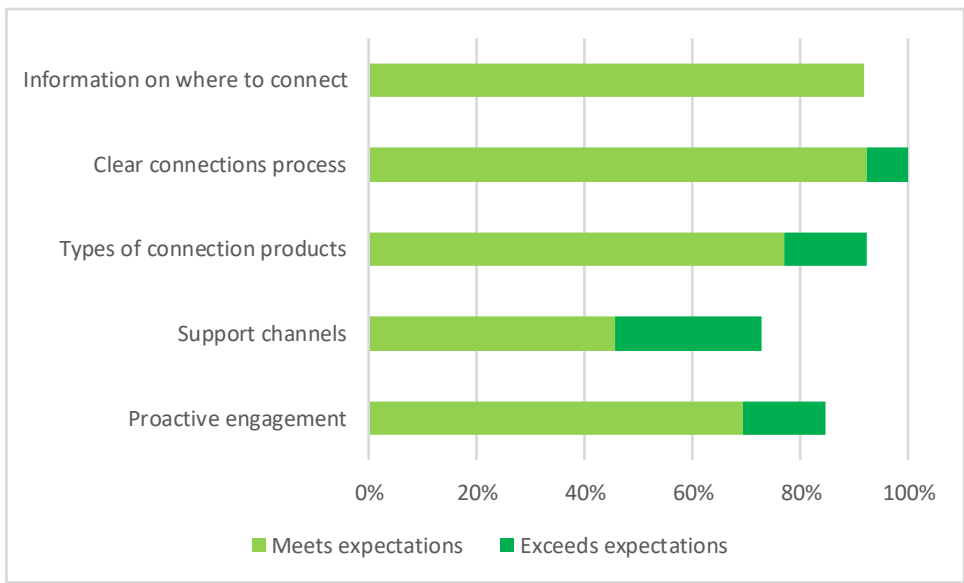
Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.


Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE16) Provide tailored communication plans	Communication throughout project delivery tailored to the stakeholders' needs. Specific points of contact provided (eg Design Engineer / Construction Coordinator) throughout connections process.
BE17) Complete any cost reconciliation in a timely manner.	Written confirmation of changes is discussed with the customer and issued with any cost reconciliation being dealt with in a timely manner.

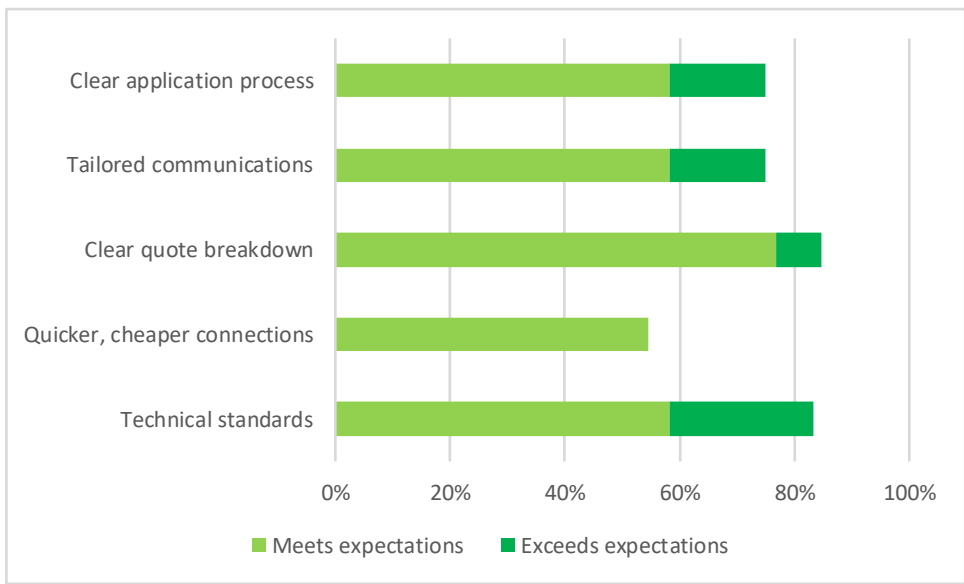
4.3. Feedback on how well we do it

We asked our stakeholders to give us feedback on how well we measured up against the Baseline Expectations to help us identify any areas we need to focus on. The feedback we received was broadly positive and the percentages are shown below based on the 13 responses we received.

 **Principle 1:** Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user- friendly information.

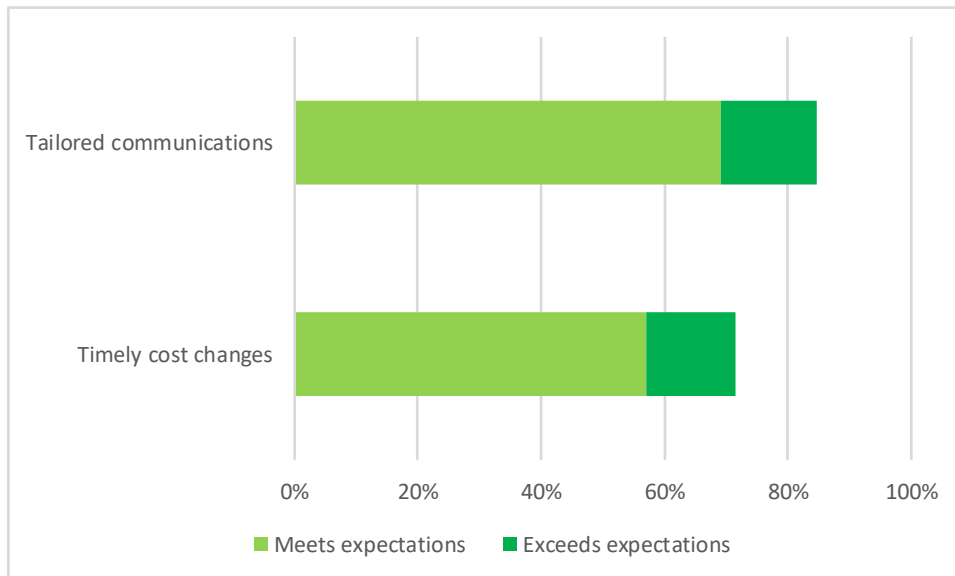


 **Principle 2:** Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.





Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.



Generally, the feedback we received was very positive with most respondents saying we met expectations and many rating us as having exceeded expectations. For the areas where respondents did not think we had met expectations, we received limited feedback on what we needed to do to target improvements. The lowest scoring area related to Baseline Expectation 12 which covers processes to enable customers to make changes to their connection requirements to allow them to get connected more quickly or cheaply; this aspect will be significantly affected by Ofgem's proposals in relation to the Access Significant Code Review and we will need change our processes once a final decision is reached in 2022. Overall, we intend to continue to engage with stakeholders during the rest of RIIO-ED1 to identify any further areas where we can improve.

4.4. Further improvements we are making

As community and local energy groups are key stakeholders in this market segment, many of the commitments in our community and local energy strategy cover improvements that will be of benefit to all DG LV customers.

These actions will directly improve the support channels that are available to stakeholders and ensure we are meeting the baseline expectations.

Community and local energy commitments
Clearly signposted dedicated point of contact for community and local energy
Provision of relevant information to enable community and local energy groups to understand and fully utilise ENWL services
We will continue to encourage early engagement, improve routes into our business and allocate engineering resources to support projects at the initial stages to identify the best point of connection.
Pre-application support to understand network data, available capacity, the connections process, likely cost of a connection and available options; we will undertake a campaign with community partners to promote our resources and bookable surgery slots
Information provided in appropriate language and format to enable community and local groups to access data, guidance and applications
A commitment to continue to consult on and develop this service to community and local energy groups in response to stakeholder requirements.
We will continue to promote all flexible services opportunities to community energy groups and provide dedicated surgeries to improve understanding and facilitate participation
We will develop a delayed payment scheme for connections costs for community energy projects

We continue to engage with our stakeholders to define any further improvements required to ensure we are meeting the baseline expectations for our stakeholders. Since 2015 we have been engaging with these stakeholders as part of the Incentive on Connections Engagement. We have sought their feedback and made improvement commitments each year. We will continue this approach for the remaining years of ED1 to identify any shortcomings against the ED2 Baseline Expectations and develop improvement actions to address them.

We are also developing a new metric on project closures that we believe will address the stakeholder feedback on timeliness of cost changes.

4.5. How we propose to measure our performance

We have identified several performance measures to track progress. In some cases, where they are outside our control, we will report on them (as they give useful context) but have not set a target.



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.

Metric	Baseline Expectation ⁴	What we will measure	What we will target
Volume of products issued	BE3	No. of budget estimates & quotes issued	Reported information for context, no target
Number of surgery sessions held	BE4	Number of surgery sessions held	Reported information for context, no target
Speed of offering surgery sessions	BE4	Time to offer a surgery session	We will offer 90% within 10 working days
Satisfaction with surgery Session	BE4	Customer satisfaction with surgery sessions	At least 85% satisfaction
Satisfaction with engagement activities	BE5	Stakeholder satisfaction with engagement events	At least 85% satisfaction



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Number of quotes issued	P2	Number of quotes issued	Reported metric, no target
Speed of time to quote	P2	Average number of working days	22 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 45 working days)
Customer satisfaction with application process	P2	Customer satisfaction with quotation process	At least 85% satisfaction



Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Number of quotes accepted	P3	Number of quotes accepted	Reported metric, no target
Customer satisfaction with their connections	P3	Customer satisfaction with connections process	At least 85% satisfaction
Time to financially close projects and process any refunds	BE1	Average number of working days to financially close projects	55 working days

⁴ Where the reference is BE, this refers to the Baseline Expectation, please see Appendix for a full list. Where the reference is a P, this refers to the Principle as a whole.

5. Unmetered Other

5.1. Types of connections included

Most new connections have a meter that provides an accurate measurement of the electricity used so that customers are charged accordingly. In some circumstances, it is not practical or cost effective to meter all new connections, particularly when the load used is relatively small and predictable. What are known as 'unmetered' connections can be made in these circumstances and there are a set of regulations that set out the specific criteria for them.

Ofgem categorise unmetered connections into three market segments:

1. The **Local Authority** market segment, as its name suggests, includes unmetered connections for Local Authorities. This is mainly new street lighting but also includes other road traffic street furniture such as traffic light and bollards.
2. The **Private Finance Initiative (PFI)** market segment includes any unmetered connections covered by a PFI. PFIs were put in place by several local authorities across the country and resulted in large replacement programmes of street lighting columns though these have now largely completed. We have a number in our area including Manchester, Blackpool, Oldham and Rochdale.
3. The **Unmetered Other** market segment comprises all unmetered work that is carried out for customers other than local authorities or under a Private Finance Initiative. This work can be for developers on new housing sites, for advertising hoardings and for telecommunication and internet providers.

Unmetered connections have been an area where competition has particularly flourished and we only complete about 10% of all unmetered activity in our region with the clear majority carried out by Independent Connections Providers working directly for the Local Authorities.

As described previously, the Unmetered Other market segment is one of the two that we are required to include in our Major Connections Strategy. Although it is relatively small, it represents a vital part of our local community. It helps ensure safety on our streets where bus shelters are illuminated, streetlighting is provided, and internet connections enable flexible working and maintaining social activity.

In the North West, we have seen a consistent number of customers over the last three years in the Unmetered Other market segment. The table below shows that a high proportion of customers have connections that are valued under £2,000. Most of our customers in this area are one-off connections with only a small number of returning customers, therefore this limits our opportunities for enduring engagement.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Number of customers under £2k	29	22	14
Number of customers Over £10k	9	7	7
Total Number of customers	60	53	29

5.2. What we already do for our customers

Helping customers before they apply

We cater for a diverse range of customers interested in connecting unmetered connections to our network. These range from people who are doing it for the first and only time, to companies that have extensive knowledge and experience of the connection process.

To support these different needs, we have a range of information available and different ways we can help. These are summarised in the tables below with relevant links to information on our website.



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.

Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE1) Provide access to information to enable a connection stakeholder to decide whether, and where, to connect to the distribution network.	Network Asset Viewer (NAV) available on our website which is an intuitive system designed to reflect the current structure of our network and provide data access which is easier to navigate through. Project specific 'Surgery' sessions on request
BE2) Communicate a clear connections process for all customers.	Simple unmetered process guide on website here . Create tailored approach at local level within our teams, building relationships with business specialists.
BE5) Have robust processes in place to proactively engage with stakeholders.	Proactive communications for stakeholders who have expressed an interest in receiving information. Engagement through Unmetered forums, webinars and bilateral engagement detailed in ICE report Project specific 'Surgery' sessions on request .
BE7) Provide guidance that explains to customers the criteria to allow an unmetered connection to be made, ensuring compliance with the Unmetered Supply Regulations.	One to one guidance provided on request. Actively engaging in national groups. Commitment to publish guidance during 2021/22 as ICE commitment.
BE8) Provide support in the form of tailored pre-application communication to suit different stakeholder needs.	For customers with large portfolio of projects, a single point of contact will be established if required.

Helping customers when they apply

Once a customer makes a formal application for a new connection then we try to get them a connection offer that meets their needs as quickly as possible.



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.

Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE9) Have clear and simple customer application process.	Simple unmetered process guide on website here . Options to apply on-line or by downloading an application form Unmetered connections (enwl.co.uk)
BE15) 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.	Details of 'fast track' process for fibre optic street cabinets is available on website Unmetered connections (enwl.co.uk)

Helping customers deliver the connection

When projects have been accepted we will work with the customer to facilitate a timely connection for their project.




Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.

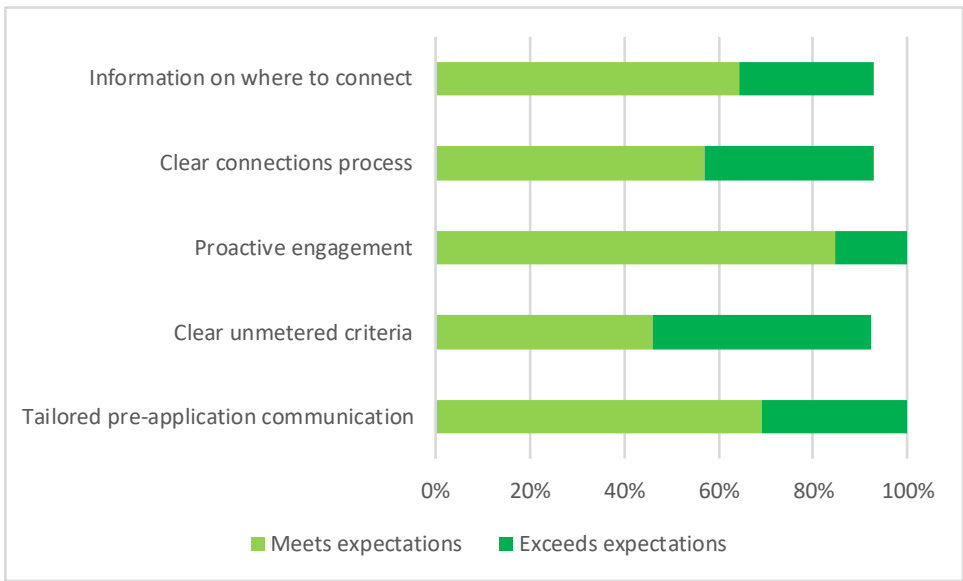
Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE17) Complete any cost reconciliation in a timely manner.	Written confirmation of changes is discussed with the customer and issued with any cost reconciliation being dealt with in a timely manner.
BE20) Provide access to services that facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections such as 'rent a jointer' services.	Customers can request via website Rent a jointer (enwl.co.uk)


5.3. Feedback on how well we do it

We asked our stakeholders to give us feedback on how well we measured up against the Baseline Expectations to help us identify any areas we need to focus on. The feedback we received was very positive from the 14 responses we received.

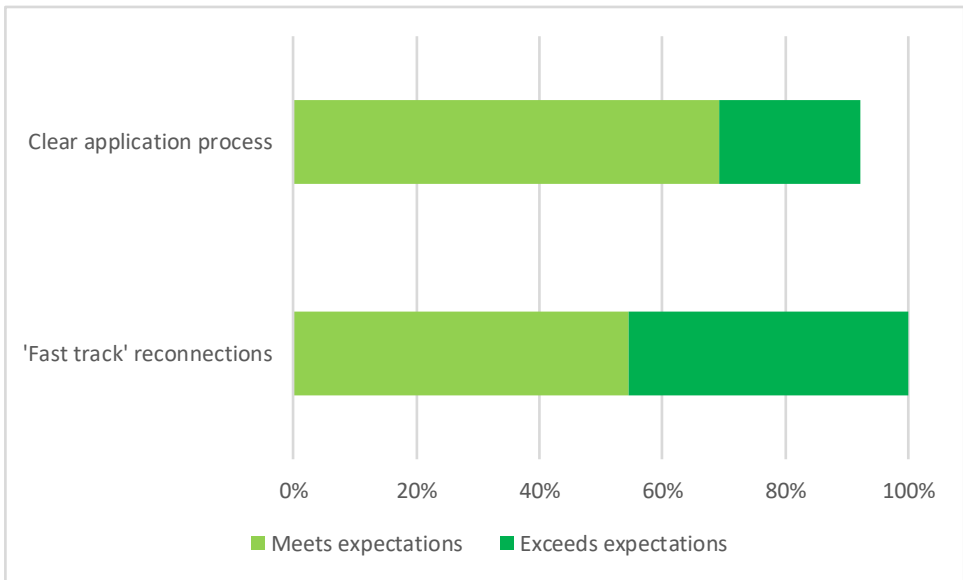


Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user- friendly information.



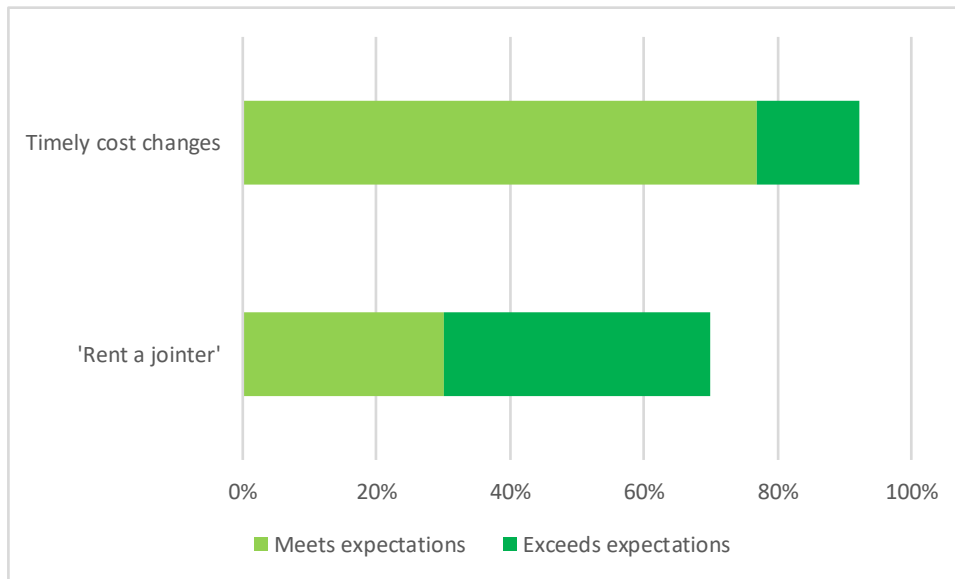


Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.





Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.



5.4. Further improvements we are making

Generally, the feedback we received was very positive with most respondents saying we met expectations and many rating us as having exceeded expectations. We continue to engage with our stakeholders to define any further improvements required to ensure we are meeting the baseline expectations for our stakeholders. Since 2015 we have been engaging with these stakeholders as part of the Incentive on Connections Engagement. We have sought their feedback and made improvement commitments each year. We will continue this approach for the remaining years of ED1 to identify any shortcomings against the ED2 Baseline Expectations and develop improvement actions to address them.

5.5. How we propose to measure our performance

We have identified several performance measures to track progress. In some cases where they are outside our control, we will report on them (as they give useful context) but we have not set a target.



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Satisfaction with engagement activities	BE5	Stakeholder satisfaction with engagement events	At least 85% satisfaction



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Number of quotes issued	P2	Number of quotes issued	Reported metric, no target
Speed of time to quote	P2	Average number of working days	19 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 25 working days)
Customer satisfaction with application process	P2	Customer satisfaction with quotation process	At least 85% satisfaction



Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Number of quotes accepted	P3	Number of quotes accepted	Reported metric, no target
Speed of time to connect	P3	Average number of working days	22 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 35 working days)
Customer satisfaction with the connections process	P3	Customer satisfaction with connections process	At least 85% satisfaction
Time to financially close projects and process any refunds	BE17	Average number of working days to financially close projects	55 working days

6. Non-contestable activities

6.1. Types of connections included

Most new connections work is open to competition. This means that our customers have choices when it comes to deciding who they choose to make a new connection. We can provide a quote for the work but there are alternative providers who may also be suitable for our customers' needs.

Independent Connection Provider (ICP) - an ICP is an accredited company that can build electricity networks to agreed standards and quality required for them to be owned by either a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) such as Electricity North West or an Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO). For an ICP to carry out some of the connection works they must be registered with National Electricity Registration Scheme (NERS) that is administered by Lloyds' Register.

Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO) - an IDNO is a company licensed by Ofgem, to own and operate electricity networks. An IDNO network will be connected to the local power network, which is owned by a DNO. However, the IDNO will be responsible for managing and operating their local network, including all future maintenance and fault repairs.

Customers can choose to employ an accredited contractor (ICP or IDNO) to carry out 'contestable' elements of the work or ask us to complete all the connection work for them. If they choose to use an ICP or IDNO, there are some aspects that we still need to be involved with and these are known as 'non-contestable' activities. A high-level summary of these are shown in the table below⁵.

Contestable	Non-contestable
Design of the network extension to the existing network	Reinforcement of the existing network
Provide all materials and equipment for the work	Agreeing any suitable legal consent that we require for assets we will adopt
Construct the network extension and any other contestable work including all excavation and reinstatement	Inspection, monitoring and testing of any contestable work
Recording any work done and the location of cable routes and other equipment and providing the information to us	Maintaining and providing records of the existing networks

To ensure that DNOs actively facilitate competition, there are a set of obligations defined in the Competition in Connections Code of Practice⁶. This document was jointly developed with representatives from ICPs and IDNOs and approved by Ofgem. We are confident that we meet the requirements of this document and demonstrate our compliance annually in a published report. Nevertheless, we are keen to understand if and how we could make improvements to our processes.

The following sections relate to the services that we provide to ICPs and IDNOs when they are involved in delivering the connection to an end user and are covered by Standard Licence Condition 15 of our distribution licence.

⁵ Further details are included in our Connections Charging Methodology which can be found [here](#).

⁶ Further details on the Code of Practice can be found [here](#).

6.2. What we already do for our customers

Helping customers before they apply

We cater for a diverse range of third parties interested in connecting customers to our network. These range from ICPs and IDNOs who are working in our area for the first time, to companies that have extensive knowledge and experience of our connection processes.

To support these different needs, we have a range of information available and different ways we can help. These are summarised in the tables below with relevant links to information on our website.



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.

Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE1) Provide access to information to enable a connection stakeholder to decide whether, and where, to connect to the distribution network.	Network Asset Viewer (NAV) available on website which is an intuitive system designed to reflect the current structure of our network Our Long Term Development Statement provides network details and planned development to help assess potential connections. Our Heatmap Tool provides a useful tool to assess potential capacity on our HV/EHV network, including Appendix G information.
BE2) Communicate a clear connections process for all customers.	Simple guidance on website Step by step guidance provided in webinars, slides are available here and recordings here . Onboarding email for new ICPs
BE3) Provide clear explanations of the types of connection products available.	Details of options and requirements on website here , as well as average costs within the Connection Charging Methodology here .
BE4) Provide support and help to customers through appropriate channels.	Key contacts available for queries on the website . Project specific ‘surgery sessions’ available on request here .
BE5) Have robust processes in place to proactively engage with stakeholders.	Proactive communications for stakeholders who have expressed an interest in receiving information. Engagement through Expert Panels & ICP IDNO events Provide a detailed annual report showcasing our delivered commitments and engagement with ICPs / IDNOs Project specific ‘Surgery’ sessions on request .

Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE6) Provide clearly signposted information on capacity available to enable points of connection to be identified.	<p>Our Long term Development Statement provides network details and planned development to help assess potential connections.</p> <p>Our Heatmap Tool provides a useful tool to assess potential capacity on our HV/EHV network.</p>

Helping customers when they apply

Once an ICP or IDNO makes a formal application for a new connection then we try to get them a connection offer that meets their needs as quickly as possible.



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.

Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE9) Have clear and simple customer application process.	<p>Simple guidance on website</p> <p>Step by step guidance provided in webinars, slides are available here and recordings HERE</p> <p>Key contacts available for queries on the website.</p> <p>Project specific 'surgery sessions' available on request here.</p>
BE10) Provide tailored communication plans to suit different customer needs.	<p>Planner available once application has been received to provide tailored support to your needs.</p> <p>Project specific 'surgery sessions' available on request here.</p>
BE11) Provide customers with clear connection quotation cost breakdowns.	<p>Information available on our website here along with a designated webpage for Competition in Connections</p> <p>Cost breakdown provided in quotes.</p>
BE12) Help customers get connected more quickly or cheaply.	<p>Planner made available at all stages pre-application, application and delivery to assist with getting stakeholder connected as quickly and cheaply as possible.</p> <p>Information & guidance available via CIC mailbox and our website or via specific surgery sessions here.</p>
BE14) Specifically, in relation to flexible connection customers, provide clarity around conditions and circumstances of current and future curtailment associated with a connections offer.	<p>Available options for flexible connections and curtailment information described on website.</p> <p>Project specific options discussed during application process where applicable.</p>

Helping customers deliver the connection

When projects have been accepted we will work with the ICP or IDNO to facilitate a timely connection for their project.




Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.

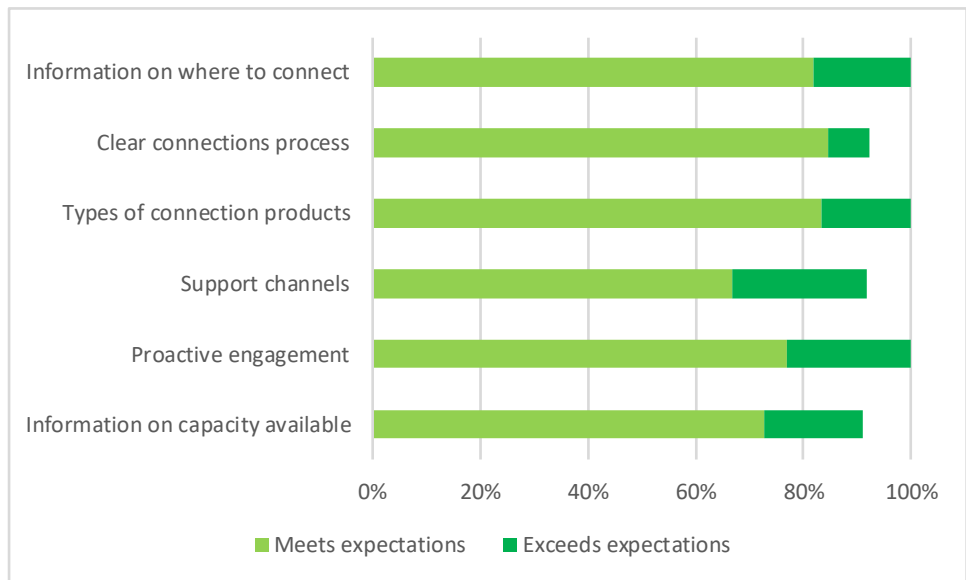
Baseline expectation (BE)	Summary of current activities
BE16) Provide tailored communication plans	Communication throughout project delivery tailored to the stakeholders' needs. Specific points of contact provided (eg Construction Coordinator) throughout connections process or via CIC mailbox
BE17) Complete any cost reconciliation in a timely manner.	Written confirmation of changes is discussed with the customer and issued with any cost reconciliation being dealt with in a timely manner.
BE18) 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.	Process for slow moving projects detailed in contracts . Revised Queue Management process introduced in July 2021, details available here .

6.3. Feedback on how well we do it


We asked our stakeholders to give us feedback on how well we measured up against the Baseline Expectations to help us identify any areas we need to focus on. The feedback we received was very positive and the percentages are shown below based on the 13 responses we received.



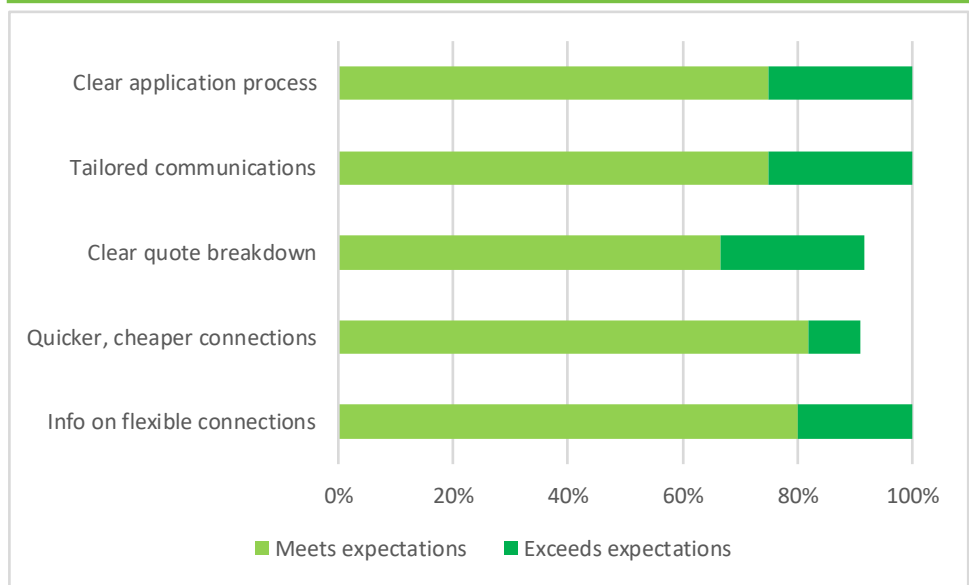
Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.



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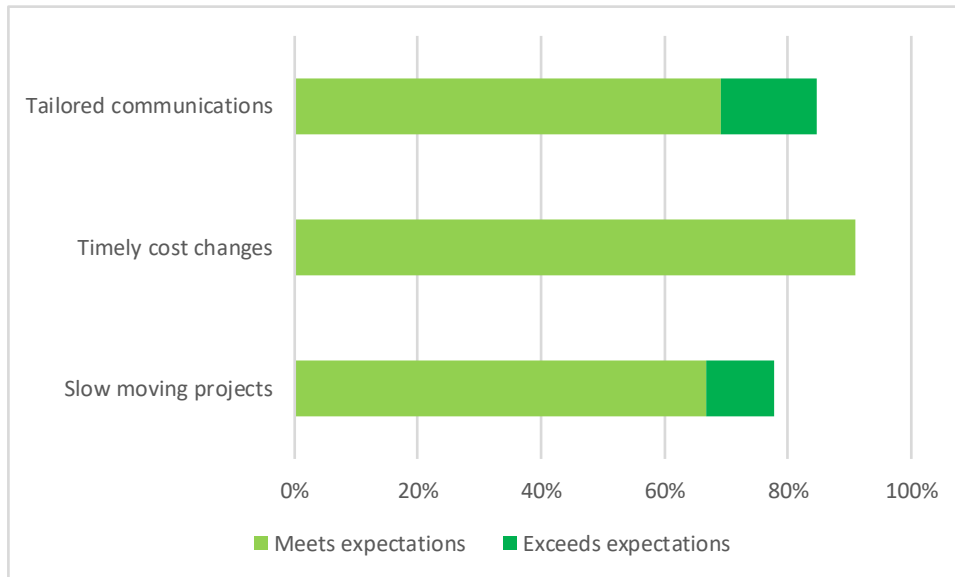


Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.





Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.



6.4. Further improvements we are making

We continue to engage with our stakeholders to define any further improvements required to ensure we are meeting the baseline expectations for our stakeholders. Since 2015 we have been engaging with these stakeholders as part of the Incentive on Connections Engagement. We have sought their feedback and made improvement commitments each year. We will continue this approach for the remaining years of ED1 to identify any shortcomings against the ED2 Baseline Expectations and develop improvement actions to address them.

6.5. How we propose to measure our performance

We have identified several performance measures to track progress. In some cases where they are outside our control, we will report on them (as they give useful context) but we have not set a target.



Principle 1: Support connection stakeholders prior to making a connections application by providing accurate, comprehensive and user-friendly information.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Volume of products issued	BE3	Number of budget estimates & quotes issued	Reported metric, no target
Number of surgery sessions held	BE4	Number of surgery sessions held	Reported metric, no target
Speed of offering surgery sessions	BE4	Time to offer a surgery session	We will offer 90% within 10 working days
Satisfaction with surgery Session	BE4	Customer satisfaction with surgery sessions	At least 85% satisfaction
Satisfaction with engagement activities	BE5	Stakeholder satisfaction with engagement events	At least 85% satisfaction



Principle 2: Deliver value for customers by ensuring simplicity and transparency through the applications process.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Number of quotes issued	P2	Number of quotes issued	Reported metric, no target
Speed of time to quote LV demand	P2	Average number of working days	11 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 15 working days)
Speed of time to quote HV demand	P2	Average number of working days	15 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 20 working days)
Customer satisfaction with application process	P2	Customer satisfaction with quotation process	At least 85% satisfaction



Principle 3: Facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections that meet customers' needs.

Metric	Baseline Expectation	What we will measure	What we will target
Number of quotes accepted	P3	Number of quotes accepted	Reported metric, no target
Speed of design approval response	P3	Average number of working days	8 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 10 working days)
Speed of issuing Bilateral Connection Agreements	P3	Average number of working days	10 working days
Speed of time to Connect LV demand	P3	Average number of working days	7 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 10 working days)
Speed of time to Connect HV demand	P3	Average number of working days	15 working days (versus the guaranteed standard of 20 working days)
Customer satisfaction with connections process	P3	Customer satisfaction with connections process	At least 85% satisfaction
Time to financially close projects and process any refunds	BE17	Average number of working days to financially close projects	55 working days

7. Appendix -Baseline Expectations

Baseline expectation - Principle 1	Relevant Market Segment (RMS)
BE1) 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.	Applies to all RMS
BE2) 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.	Applies to all RMS
BE3) 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 seeking to connect in the same area or if they do not accept an offer within its validity period.	Applies to all RMS, except Unmetered
BE4) Provide support and help to customers through appropriate channels which should include, but not be limited to, connections surgeries.	Applies to all RMS, except Unmetered
BE5) Have robust processes in place to proactively engage with stakeholders. This should include how the DNO plans to both identify and address connections issues.	Applies to all RMS
BE6) Provide clearly signposted information on capacity available to enable points of connection to be identified.	Applies to Metered demand HV, EHV and 132kV; Metered DGHV
BE7) Provide guidance that explains to customers the criteria to allow an unmetered connection to be made, ensuring compliance with the Unmetered Supply Regulations.	Applies to Unmetered LA, PFI and Other
BE8) Provide support in the form of tailored pre-application communication to suit different stakeholder needs.	Applies to Unmetered LA, PFI and Other

Baseline expectation – Principle 2	Relevant Market Segment (RMS)
BE9) 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.	Applies to all RMS
BE10) 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.	Applies to all RMS, except Unmetered
BE11) Provide customers with clear connection quotation cost breakdowns, listing out the cost components and any assumptions used in the formulation of a connections offer.	Applies to all RMS, except Unmetered
BE12) 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.	Applies to all RMS, except Unmetered
BE13) Specifically, in relation to flexible connection customers, provide clarity around conditions and circumstances of current and future curtailment associated with a connections offer.	Applies to Metered demand EHV and 132kV; Metered DGHV and EHV
BE14) Provide guidance that explains to customers the criteria to allow an DG connection to be made to ensure compliance with relevant Engineering Recommendations (G98/G99).	Applies to metered DGLV, HV and EHV
BE15) 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.	Applies to Unmetered Other

Baseline expectation – Principle 3	Relevant Market Segment (RMS)
BE16) 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.	Applies to all RMS, except Unmetered LA, PFI and Other
BE17) Complete any cost reconciliation in a timely manner.	Applies to all RMS
BE18) 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.	Applied to Metered demand HV, EHV and 132kV; Metered DG HV and EHV
BE19) 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 to Metered DG HV and EHV
BE20) Provide access to services that facilitate the delivery of timely and economical connections such as 'rent a jointer' services.	Applies to Unmetered LA, PFI and Other