

# IMPACT

FROM INSIGHT TO INFLUENCE

## ENWL QUEST

Customer Engagement Plan

Final version

Prepared by Impact and ENWL

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All projects are carried out in compliance with the ISO 20252 international standard for market, opinion and social research and GDPR.

# Table of contents

1. Executive summary .....	2
Quest project .....	2
Customer Research .....	2
Customer engagement overview .....	2
Customer Interaction .....	4
2. Customer engagement.....	5
QUEST research areas .....	5
Customer groups.....	6
Customer feedback .....	9
Customer consent .....	9
3. Communications strategy .....	10
Customer interaction .....	10
How will customers be engaged with after the in-depth interviews and focus groups? .....	14
Queries, compliments and complaints .....	14
4. Customer Protection Requirements .....	15
Customer consent .....	15
Safety information .....	15
Further customer interactions.....	15
Data Privacy Statement.....	15
5. Conclusions and next steps.....	18
Appendix .....	19

# 1. Executive summary

## Quest project

The purpose of the QUEST project is to create an overarching control system that integrates range of voltage control techniques, optimising their use and facilitating the increased use of low carbon technologies. This system will ensure the network is running at its most efficient, whilst minimising losses, thereby maximising the benefits to customers. Electricity North West will engage with stakeholders to ensure that the methodology developed can be transferred to all DNOs and will be applicable to all customer types.

There are four phases to the project: System Design, Implementation, Trial and Transition to Business as Usual (BaU).

## Customer Research

Electricity North West are seeking to conduct research into how current and possible future changes in voltage control and voltage profiling will/could affect customers, including domestic, non-domestic, generator and sensitive customers such as hospitals or critical infrastructure.

The customer research will provide Electricity North West with support in exploring and understanding answers to the following questions:

- Do customers notice when voltage control is applied, and, if so, how?
- Are the operating characteristics of various generators and sensitive customers affected by voltage control, and, if so, how and in what circumstances?
- Are there any special requirements in respect of the supply voltage for certain customer types?
- What are the impacts of voltage profiling on generator customers?
- What is the appetite amongst customers for voltage-driven, self-managed connections, particularly for generators and/or large demand customers?

Electricity North West may also require support with a potential customer collaboration, with a commercial or generator partner, to discuss the feasibility of installing voltage control devices on their equipment to trial self-balancing within set parameters.

## Customer engagement overview

The development of the QUEST system and its initial implementation will require consultation with a range of customers, focussing on large demand and generation customers who will be most directly connected and affected. This will involve large demand customers who will need to interact with the system to maximise the benefits and minimise disruption. These customers will provide guidance on how best to construct the system and ensure their effective collaboration.

Customer research will apply through each phase of the research, with the aim of ensuring customers have significant input into the system design, that the impact of the system on customers is identified and quantified and that the learnings from this work can be used to support deployment of the system to BaU.

The focus will be on the requirements of High Voltage (HV)/Extra High Voltage (EHV)/large demand customers, generators and sensitive customers who will be in the best position to answer the main questions. However, an overall view of the impacts on domestic and SME customers is also required to provide reassurance that customers do not notice the application of QUEST technology on their supply. There are 3 customer groups of interest (which are overlapping), and specific research objectives to address for each, as detailed below.

Area 1: Domestic and SME customers in the trial area

Area 2: Sensitive HV and EHV connected customers in the ENWL region who have designed their network assuming a narrow band of change to voltage

Area 3: All HV and EHV connected generators customers in the ENWL region

### **How will each customer be engaged with?**

As the objectives and requirements for each customer group are different, there is a need to engage with each group in a different way.

#### *Area 1: Domestic and SMEs*

##### ***Objective: Re-validate the current view that customers do not discern voltage change as the industry moves towards a more dynamic operating model***

Domestic and SME customers across the 10 trial areas will be recruited to take part in a quantitative survey, conducted face-to-face. This will include a representation of customers in vulnerable circumstances, who may be extra reliant on their electricity supply. Prior to the survey beginning, additional customers will be recruited to take part in a cognitive pilot of the interview, for feedback on the survey content. These will not be completed at all trial sites, just enough to test the questionnaire and stimulus material used. Full details of how each customer will be recruited is given in Section 3 below.

A follow up interview will then be conducted with the same customers during the trial. All customers will be re-contacted and asked to complete a further 5-minute interview, which will be conducted over the phone. Impact will use best efforts to recruit as many customers as possible for the mid-trial interview, but expect around 50% to do so.

#### *Area 2: Sensitive HV & EHV connected customers in ENW*

##### ***Objective: These customers have designed their network assuming a narrow band of change to voltage and therefore may experience specific issues with voltage optimisation***

For Area 2, sensitive HV and EHV connected customers from the ENWL region will be recruited to take part in semi-structured qualitative in-depth interviews, conducted using an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Similar to the approach to Area 1, there will be additional customers recruited to take part in a cognitive pilot of the interview prior to the interviews beginning, to feed back on the interview content. Full details of how each customer will be recruited is given in Section 3 below.

These customers will be contacted for a second time, but this time invited to attend a re-convened focus group to test the findings from the in-depth interviews. The first of these groups will be conducted face-to-face at a central location and the second will be done online, using an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Impact will use best efforts to fill these groups, but it is assumed that 15 and 20 customers will be available to attend.

#### *Area 3: All HV & EHV connected generators customers in the ENWL region*

##### ***Objective: Understand the capacity and potential for generators / large customers to respond to changes in voltage, in exchange for some benefit to themselves such as cheaper connections. ENWL may ask them to increase / decrease output in line with voltage changes or give them dynamic profiles to work within***

For Area 3, HV and EHV generators connected customers from the ENWL region will be recruited to take part in semi-structured qualitative in-depth interviews, conducted using an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Full details of how each customer will be recruited is given in Section 2 below. It is possible that some interviews will be conducted with respondents from Area 2, already familiar with the project. However, we will aim to include a sub sample of new, 'uneducated' participants who have not taken part in previous phases of research.

## Customer Interaction

This document outlines the proposed customer engagement plan and summarises how Electricity North West and its project partners will interact with, or impact upon relevant customers where any form of engagement is undertaken as part of the project. All customer research activities will be conducted in strict compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, Electricity North West's Data Protection and Acceptable Usage Policy, NIC governance and in accordance with the professional standards set out in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

## 2. Customer engagement

### QUEST research areas

QUEST will comprise three key areas of customer research the objectives, customer segments engaged into the research and the methodologies are outlined below:

Customer segment	Objective	Research approach
<b>Area 1: Customer experience of technical trial</b>		
A cross section of up to 500 Relevant Customers and SME customers connected to the 10 distribution substations that comprise the QUEST trial area.	Re-validate the current view that customers do not to discern voltage change as the industry moves towards a more dynamic operating model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop introductory materials to support the survey</li> <li>• Develop a qualitative survey instrument</li> <li>• Cognitive pilot survey with 10-20 customers to evaluate instrument</li> <li>• Baseline survey to act as benchmark</li> <li>• Mid-trial survey aligned to technology trials</li> <li>• Analysis and reporting to confirm if customers notice voltage optimisation trial</li> </ul>
<b>Area 2: Sensitive customers</b>		
Atypical HV & EHV connected customers from across the North West that are operating sensitive equipment or have designed their networks assuming narrow voltage bands	Establish the expectations of sensitive I&C customers, from a range of sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop introductory education material and semi-structured qualitative survey instrument/discussion guide</li> <li>• An initial cognitive pilot of 5 interviews for feedback on the interview content.</li> <li>• Semi structured depth interviews with 50 customers to explore expectations and evaluate how this small sub-set of customers set up and operate their own equipment</li> <li>• 30-45 minutes via web assisted interviewing (Skype/Zoom/Teams)</li> </ul>
	Explore potential impact and the guidance they require.	
	Develop guidance materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A focus group, of up to 20 participants convened from the former panel of depth interviewees will evaluate, provide feedback and guide the refinements of materials developed from the previous phase of consultation</li> <li>• The first session will be face to face groups to share and discuss the guidance materials.</li> <li>• The second session will be online to test materials refined following the first session.</li> <li>• Report on the feedback from the customer consultation</li> </ul>
	Endorse guidance materials with customers	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of the suite of guidance materials on the project webpage and other easily accessible channels.</li> </ul>
<b>Area 3: Voltage managed connections</b>		
HV & EHV connected customers (focussed on generators but including a sample of large demand customers) from across the North West	Assess technical ability and customer appetite for Voltage Managed Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop introductory materials and semi-structured qualitative survey instrument/discussion guide</li> <li>• Semi structured depth interviews with 50 customers to assess if they are technically able to respond and have an appetite for voltage managed connections.</li> <li>• 30-45 minutes via web assisted interviewing (Skype/Zoom/Team)</li> <li>• Analysis and full report outlining appetite, reaction to proposed price point (evaluated in the project) and potential constraints, barriers and customer benefits to support transition to BaU and GB</li> </ul> <p>It is possible that some interviews will be conducted with respondents from area 2, already familiar with the project. However, we will aim to include a sub sample of new, 'uneducated' participants who have not taken part in previous phases of research.</p>

## Customer groups

### Customers in the QUEST Trial areas – general publicity

There is no active involvement from the wider community in QUEST and no customer impact is anticipated. Therefore, leveraging learning from previous projects, QUEST will not invest in a large-scale targeted awareness campaign in advance of the trials. Quantitative research in Smart Street highlighted limitations in the effectiveness of general publicity campaigns, such as those involving leafleting, in the delivery of projects of this type. The return of investment was broadly assessed against customer recollection of having received and read literature, the added value in expanding customer awareness of the project and its implications, in addition to interest generation within the context of the UK's low carbon agenda. Benefits were evaluated relative to the potential for materials to be misconstrued and cause confusion or unintended consequences. Electricity North West is confident that the expected absence of customer impact justifies this decision. We are also confident that a sufficient number of customers can be recruited into the QUEST research without a large-scale publicity campaign, by building on existing customer relationships in each of the customer segments.

However, accessible information about QUEST, its aims and objective will be made available for all customers and stakeholders via a range of easily accessible channels, most notably the project website. The trials will also be published via Electricity North West's social media channels. Research specific communication and engagement materials will be generated to support and inform all customers that participate in the three distinct areas of research.

## **Customers on Trial networks who may experience planned supply interruptions**

There is a remote possibility that some customers on QUEST Trial networks may experience planned supply interruptions associated with the technology installation. Electricity North West will take all practicable steps to mitigate this risk and will use generation and back-feeds from adjacent networks wherever possible. Where planned supply interruptions are unavoidable, these impacts will be managed through business-as-usual processes and provide all impacted customers with standard written notification, in accordance with Guaranteed Standard procedures. It has been assessed that the maximum impact of any planned interruptions will not exceed eight hours and the number of customers affected will be minimal.

### *Unplanned supply interruptions*

QUEST will have no operational impact on customers directly or indirectly associated with the trial that is likely to result in an unplanned supply interruption.

### *Technology installation at customer premises & customer safety*

QUEST technologies will only be deployed on the network. The project will not necessitate the installation of any type of equipment, or any other intervention works at any customers' premises. The deployment of all QUEST network infrastructure will be in accordance with business-as-usual safe systems of work. It is therefore not envisaged that QUEST will introduce any safety risks to customers.

## **Relevant Customers and SME customers in the QUEST Trial areas that will participate in surveys (customer experience – research Area 1)**

Previous research in voltage related projects has established that most customers do not discern the types of changes in voltage associated with our use of optimisation techniques. This understanding provides confidence in our ability to deliver whole system voltage control without disruption to customers. However, it is appropriate to re-validate this view as we move towards a new operational environment. Therefore, understanding whether the customer is affected by the technical trial of QUEST architecture is crucial to demonstrate the viability of the project. We will recruit customers from within the trial area to participate in customer quantitative surveys towards the end of the project, during the technical trial period. Surveys will be rigorously aligned with the test schedule to reaffirm that customers within the QUEST trial areas do not perceive any changes in power associated with the trial.

A survey of 500 Relevant Customers and SME customers from within the trial area will be conducted to test this assumption. These customers will be recruited from networks served by ten distribution substations, serving approximately 3,000 customers, selected for the deployment of LV voltage optimisation in QUEST. This rationale is on the basis that these customers will experience the full range of optimisation from BSP (Balancing Service Provider) to LV feeder level. The research will act as a litmus test to reaffirm that voltage control remains indiscernible to most customers.

Postal type recruitment methods generate low interest and could lead to self-selection bias. Face-to-face methodology is more expensive to administer but generates higher participation rates. An online approach has the potential to increase bias and is likely to result in lower retention rates. In QUEST, a good compromise between value for money, representativeness and high rates of participation and retention for research Area 1 is initial face-to-face recruitment for the baseline survey. The subsequent mid-trial survey will be conducted primarily by telephone research. However other platforms will be available to customers dependent on individual needs and preferences.

Domestic customers from within the trial area and the control sample recruited from outside the trial region will be matched by ACORN, which is a powerful consumer classification tool. This will eliminate bias as a result of demographic, social and regional factors. SME customers that participate in this area of the research will be matched by SIC to evaluate differences in perception associated with different market sectors.



## **Sensitive HV & EHV connected customer in the North West taking part in research Area 2**

Large atypical I&C customers, typically those directly connected to the HV & EHV network from across that operate sensitive equipment or have designed their networks assuming narrow voltage bands will be engaged into research Area 2. We aim to recruit 50 sensitive customers from across Electricity North West's distribution network and will include customers from both within and outside the trial area.

Interviews will be conducted face to face, by Impact Research executives. These interviews may take place in person but to increase efficiency are most likely to involve web-ex based applications such as Teams, Skype and Zoom etc. Whilst the research partner has the expertise to knowledgably converse on QUEST and its implications and benefits for customers, this in-depth research will be supported, where appropriate, by the Technical Workstream, ensuring participants have access to detailed technical information about the project and fully understand, through bilateral engagement, all potential impacts relative to their specific organisation and unique circumstances. This approach will allow respondents to fully evaluate how their systems may need to evolve, to integrate with new methods of operation.

This learning will be used to develop a suite of guidance materials that will form a blueprint to scaffold sensitive customers' own resilience strategies. This guidance will enable sensitive customers to act, to ensure their systems continue to work harmoniously with the network. These materials will be evaluated by a focus group, of up to 20 participants convened from the former panel of depth interviewees. This group will comprise a representative sample of atypical customers, from various sectors to ensure the evaluation is inclusive and subject to a broad range of views.

The first session will be face to face groups to share, discuss and evaluate the guidance materials to identify and guide necessary refinements. The second session will be online to test materials refined following the first session. This phase of research will ensure materials are appropriately endorsed before publication.

We have learned from experience in previous projects such as C2C and Respond that engaging I&C stakeholders can be challenging. QUEST will draw on these lessons to maximise engagement opportunities. We will seek to engage affiliate organisations including trade associations, aggregators and energy solutions specialists, that have pre-existing relationships with large customer customers to assist us in reaching out to large I&C customers. QUEST will also recruit appropriate customers into the research utilising relationships built with stakeholders representing Electricity North West's various advisory panels and promote involvement via stakeholder newsletters and surgeries.

We recognise from previous research that the views of different senior personnel within an organisation can vary, dependent on unique focus and perspectives. We will address this by incorporating flexibility into our approach and where appropriate, conduct interviews with more than one representative of the same company, ensuring we attain comprehensive and meaningful feedback to fully meet the objectives of this stage of research.

## **HV & EHV connected customers in the North West taking part in research Area 3**

QUEST will provide the infrastructure required to offer its customers a new type of managed connection. Electricity North West has previously explored demand-side flexible connections, developed in C2C and fault-level managed agreements in Respond.

QUEST will examine how a voltage managed connection is presented to the customer at the network interface and we will engage large I&C customers in Area 3 of the research to explore the appetite of customers to connect to the network in such a manner. This area of research will deliver an understanding of the ability of large customers to technically respond to voltage signals and identify if and to what extent there are technical (or any other) constraints that introduce barriers to managed connections of this type.

This area of research will engage with 50 HV & EHV and connected customers in the North West, focussed primarily on generators, that are typically responsible for voltage constraints, but large demand customers will also be

consulted in the research. The output of this research will be a new design and operating standard for voltage dependent connections. This customer research does not seek to sign up customers to actively participate in the trial of a voltage managed connection trial, nor will it define a route to market or new commercial templates.

The method of recruitment, engagement, communications and research strategy in research Area 3 will be similar to the approach utilised in Area 2, involving semi-structured in-depth interviews facilitated by research partner executives. It is also possible that there will be some overlap and some interviews will be conducted with respondents from Area 2, already familiar with the project. However, we will aim to include a sub-sample of new, 'uneducated' participants who have not taken part in previous phases of research to provide a broad and representative view.

## Customer feedback

In line with best practice, we make it easy and accessible for customers to provide feedback or raise queries with the project team through various channels. These include calling the Impact office, emailing Impact or contacting Impact by post. Contact details for the Market Research Society and the ENWL project manager are also given. Details of these contact methods are provided in Appendix A. We will provide these to those who are part of the project.

## Customer consent

Customers participating in the in-depth interviews will be fully informed before signing up about how their data will be used and shared. They will be asked to sign a consent form and by doing so, will agree to their information being used for the specified purpose. A draft consent form is included in Appendix B.

The process for obtaining customer consent is outlined in Section 4 and explained in detail in the project's Data Privacy Statement (DPS; Section 7).

There will be no installation of equipment or any other intervention works at customer premises and therefore, no requirement to obtain consent for any such purpose.

## 3. Communications strategy

### Customer interaction

The governance arrangements for Network Innovation Competition Funded projects mandates the licensee to set out any planned interaction with Relevant Customers or Relevant Customers' premises as part of the Project, and any other impacts (i.e. a customer with a profile class of 1,2,3 or 4 as defined in Part 2 of Schedule 16 of the Distribution Connection and Use of System Agreement). The Quest Project will engage a sample of Relevant Customers in addition to Industrial & Commercial customers who are excluded from the definition of a Relevant Customer.

Electricity North West appreciates the value of an overarching Customer Engagement Plan and this document therefore outlines the process that will be adopted in our approach to engaging all customers impacted by and/or engaged into QUEST research and will set out the associated data protection requirements.

Impact and ENWL understands that without the support and buy-in of its customers, this project will not succeed. The team is therefore committed to ensuring that all customer interaction with the QUEST Project is a positive experience. Support will be provided through high-quality communications at every stage of the research lifecycle to ensure that customers' needs are met and exceeded wherever possible.

In accordance with the requirements of the Electricity Network Innovation Competition Governance Document, this research will comply with Electricity North West's publicly available data privacy and sharing policy. Electricity North West, Impact Research or any other project partners or project supporter will not visit a premise of any customer for sales or marketing activities in connection with, in the context of or otherwise under the guise of the QUEST project. The full document is available to view here:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/version-30-network-innovation-competition-governance-documents>

Impact Research will be responsible for provision of customer consent forms and for obtaining explicit consent before undertaking any form of customer research, as part of this project. These activities will be subject to a project specific Data Protection Impact Assessment, which will be published on the project website prior to any form of engagement. All customer engagement will have regard to the implementation of the smart meter roll-out to ensure that the research does not impede the implementation of the roll-out in any way.

### **Area 1: How will the project engage and recruit customers for the interviews?**

Impact will be responsible for the customer recruitment for the interviews. Impact will work with specialist recruiters to find domestic and SME customers across the 10 trial areas. ENWL will supply Impact with a list of locations that the trial will affect, to ensure the customers are located in the right places. In total, 300 customers will be recruited to take part in the survey for Area 1, which will include a minimum of 50 SMEs and a representation of customers in vulnerable circumstances in the remaining domestic sample.

All customers surveyed would have successfully completed a short screener, to confirm eligibility to take part and to ensure we speak to range of different domestic and SME customers.

### **Area 1: Eligibility criteria to take part in the research**

Domestic customers will need to pass the following eligibility criteria to be accepted on to the project:

1. Location of property must match those in trial area
2. Individual responsible, or jointly responsible, for electricity usage in their property
3. Individual must consent to taking part in a face-to-face interview
4. Individual must consent to taking part in a follow up telephone interview mid-way through the trial
5. Individual, or anyone in their household, must not work in any of the following industries:
  - a. Electricity supply/distribution
  - b. Marketing
  - c. Market research
  - d. Public relations

SME customers will need to pass the following eligibility criteria to be accepted on to the project:

1. Location of workplace must match those in trial area
2. Individual responsible, or jointly responsible, for electricity bills paid for the company
3. Individual must consent to taking part in a face-to-face interview
4. Individual must consent to taking part in a follow up telephone interview mid-way through the trial

### **Area 1: How will customers be engaged with, once the research starts?**

Once the initial screening questions have confirmed eligibility, the face-to-face interview will begin. At this point, customer consent will be gained for participation in the research and use of the data collected for research purposes and dissemination as outlined in Section 4. Participants will also be given background information about the project and contact details for the Impact and ENWL team, if they are required. The information pack will include the following:

- Background to the project, why it is needed and FAQs
- Project partners involved, i.e. ENWL and Impact
- Information pack from Impact explaining:
  - Who we are
  - What the interview will involve and what will be asked of the customers participating
  - How the information from the interview will be used and stored securely
  - Whom they can contact in case of any further queries or complaints
  - Where to find published project outcomes and reports on the project website

Impact will be the main point of contact for customers on the project during the interviews, with the exception of escalated complaints as outlined in Appendix A. Following the interview there will be no other communication from the project team, its partners, sub-contractors or associates with the in-depth interview participants, aside from for the follow-up mid-trial survey. The exception of this would be in response to participants' enquiries or where explicit permission has been given (e.g., to proactively share project outcomes). The duration of each interview will be approximately 20 minutes. The survey content will be agreed between the project partners prior to fieldwork beginning and will be cognitively piloted among 10-20 customers to allow for feedback on the interview content. Respondents for the cognitive pilot interviews will be recruited in the same way as the trial participants.

Customers will then be re-contacted mid-way through the trial period to complete a follow up interview. This will be done over the phone, using a contact number collected as part of the initial face-to-face interview. The duration of each follow-up interview will be approximately 5 minutes and the survey will be agreed between the project partners prior to fieldwork beginning.

## **Area 2: How will the project engage and recruit customers for the interviews?**

Impact and ENWL will be responsible for the customer recruitment for the in-depth interviews. Prior to recruitment beginning, ENWL will share a list of eligible business with Impact, to target for the research. This will contain the full business name, address, individual name and number to be used to contact to take part in the research. Impact will then contact the businesses given in the sample file. A total of 50 sensitive HV and EHV connected customers from The ENWL region will be recruited for Area 2.

All customers surveyed would have successfully completed a short screener, to confirm eligibility to take part in the in-depth interviews, and to ensure we speak to range of different businesses.

## **Area 2: Eligibility criteria to take part in the research**

Customers in Area 2 will need to pass the following eligibility criteria to be accepted on to the project:

1. Location of property must match those in trial area
2. Individual responsible, or jointly responsible, for electricity usage in their property
3. Individual must consent to taking part in an in-depth interview
4. Individual must consent to taking part in a follow up re-convened focus group after the interviews have been completed, if they are available to do so

## **Area 2: How will customers be engaged with, once the research starts?**

The initial screening survey will confirm eligibility, following this an in-depth interview will be scheduled, to be completed using an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The participant will be emailed login details and thorough instructions for the in-depth interview at least one day prior to the interview. The in-depth interviews will be scheduled to suit customers' availability at all times.

At this point, customer consent will be gained for participation in the research and use of the data collected for research purposes and dissemination as outlined in Section 4. Participants will also be given background information about the project and contact details for the Impact and ENWL team, if they are required. The information pack will include the following:

- Background to the project, why it is needed and FAQs
- Project partners involved, i.e., ENWL and Impact
- Information pack from Impact explaining:
  - Who we are
  - What the interview will involve and what will be asked of the customers participating
  - How the information from the interview will be used and stored securely
  - Whom they can contact in case of any further queries or complaints

- Where to find published project outcomes and reports on the project website

Impact will be the main point of contact for customers on the project during the interviews with the exception of escalated complaints as outlined in Appendix A. Following the interview there will be no other communication from the project team, its partners, sub-contractors or associates with the in-depth interview participants, aside from for the follow-up re-convened focus groups. The exception of this would be in response to participants' enquiries or where explicit permission has been given (e.g., to proactively share project outcomes). The duration of each in-depth interview will be approximately 30-45 minutes. The survey content will be agreed between the project partners prior to fieldwork beginning and will be cognitively piloted among 5 customers to allow for feedback on the interview content. Respondents for the cognitive pilot interviews will be recruited for in the same way as the trial participants.

Customers will then be recontacted after the in-depth interviews have been completed to ask if they are available to participate in a two follow-up focus groups. If they are available, the participant will be emailed details for each group. The first group will be conducted at a central location and the second using an online platform, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

### **Area 3: How will the project engage and recruit customers for the interviews?**

Impact and ENWL will be responsible for the customer recruitment for the semi-structured interviews. Prior to recruitment beginning, ENWL will share a list of eligible business with Impact, to target for the research. This will contain the full business name, address, individual name and number to be used to contact to take part in the research. Impact will then contact the businesses given in the sample file. A total of 50 HV and EHV generator connected customers from the ENWL region will be recruited for Area 3.

Once contacted, customers will be asked to complete a short screener, to confirm eligibility to take part in the in-depth interviews, and to ensure we speak to range of different businesses.

### **Area 3: Eligibility criteria to take part in the research**

Customers in Area 3 will need to pass the following eligibility criteria to be accepted on to the project:

1. Location of property must match those in trial area
2. Individual responsible, or jointly responsible, for electricity usage in their property
3. Individual must consent to taking part in an in-depth interview
4. Individual must consent to taking part in a follow up re-convened focus group after the interviews have been completed, if they are available to do so

### **Area 3: How will customers be engaged with, once the research starts?**

The initial screening survey will confirm eligibility, following this an in-depth interview will be scheduled, to be completed using an online platform, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The participant will be emailed login details and thorough instructions for the in-depth interview at least one day prior to the interview. The semi-structured interviews will be scheduled to suit customers' availability at all times.

At this point, customer consent will be gained for participation in the research and use of the data collected for research purposes and dissemination as outlined in Section 4. Participants will also be given background information about the project and contact details for the Impact and ENWL team, if they are required. The information pack will include the following:

- Background to the project, why it is needed and FAQs
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- Information pack from Impact explaining:
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- How the information from the interview will be used and stored securely
- Whom they can contact in case of any further queries or complaints
- Where to find published project outcomes and reports on the project website

Impact will be the main point of contact for customers on the project during the interviews with the exception of escalated complaints as outlined in Appendix A. Following the interview there will be no other communication from the project team, its partners or sub-contractors with the interview participants. The exception of this would be in response to participants' enquiries or where explicit permission has been given (e.g. to proactively share project outcomes). The duration of each in-depth interview will be approximately 30-45 minutes.

It is possible that some interviews in Area 3 will be conducted with respondents from Area 2, already familiar with the project. However, Impact will aim to include a sub sample of new, 'uneducated' participants who have not taken part in previous phases of research in Area 3.

## How will customers be engaged with after the in-depth interviews and focus groups?

Customers participating in the in-depth interviews and focus groups will be provided with an appropriate monetary incentive for their participation. This will be provided as either a BACS payment or a charity donation and, in line with ISO 20252 standards, will be paid within 28 days of the end of the fieldwork period.

## Queries, compliments and complaints

A process will be implemented by Impact to capture and record all queries or concerns raised by customers relating to this research. This will ensure that any enquiries or complaints are handled promptly and appropriately, and resolved to the satisfaction of the customer. During recruitment, all participants will be provided with a general enquiries telephone number and email for the relevant duration of the project. It is anticipated that any customer enquiries will be resolved during the initial contact. However, those which are not resolved at the first point of contact will be managed centrally by the project team. The complaints procedure and log held by the customer researcher are described in Appendix A.

## 4. Customer Protection Requirements

In line with the Electricity Network Innovation Competition Governance Document, referenced earlier, the following protections are in place.

### Customer consent

Consent for the use of personal data will be via the agreement to participate in the in-depth interviews. Participants will be asked to sign a consent form or provide verbal consent (see Appendix B in Section 10 for an example) during recruitment to the in-depth interviews. Participants will be fully informed by the customer researcher about how their personal data will be used and shared before they sign the consent document. By doing this they will agree to the learning and analysis from the in-depth interviews being used by the project. The customer researcher will inform the participant customers that their personal data will not be used nor shown in any analysis in a disaggregated manner.

### Safety information

QUEST technologies and equipment will only be installed on the network; there will be no installation works at customer premises. The installation of all QUEST technologies will be in accordance with business as usual safe systems of work. It is therefore not envisaged that QUEST will introduce any safety risks to customers.

### Further customer interactions

In line with section 8.10 of the NIC Governance Document, the project will not include visits or approaches of any kind to customers for an

any sales or marketing activity. Impact is bound by the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and participants will be provided with the MRS contact information should they wish to understand more about the company or make a complaint.

### Data Privacy Statement

To enable robust analysis to be undertaken to understand how current and possible future changes in voltage control and voltage profiling will/could affect customers, a range of data, including some personal data, will be collected during the life of the project.

This data privacy statement describes how this personal data will be managed and summarises the steps that will be taken to comply with Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) and has been developed in line with ENWL's privacy policy, specially section 11.3 Innovations, available here: <https://www.enwl.co.uk/misc/privacy-policy/>.

### Personal data being collected for the project

One of our responsibilities as a joint data controller is to be transparent in our processing of personal data and explain the different ways in which we will collect and use each respondent's personal data as part of this project.

The project will collect name, address, telephone number, profiling data (e.g., age and social grade) and email address during recruitment. This data is necessary to meet the objectives of the project to ensure that a representative sample have been included in the engagement and the customers are resident in the ENWL operating region.

### How will personal data be used in the project

The project will use names, addresses and profile classifications (e.g., age and social grade) to recruit the right type of participant to the study. This information will be anonymised in all reporting documents ensuring no individual can



be identified. For reporting purposes respondents will be categorised by their type (e.g., domestic, SME), not anything personal to each respondent.

Impact will not pass names, addresses or any other personal customer data to third parties other than to those partners who have a specific need for this information as part of the project. A DPIA has been developed with all project partners specifically with this project in mind, and partners are committed to adhere to it as part of their contractual obligations.

### **Obtaining consent for the use of personal data**

All participants will provide explicit consent to take part in the research either via email or completing an online form in Appendix B.

Suppliers related to Impact will handle the recruitment and have signed SLA and agreement to adhere to ISO 20252 and the DPIA. Details of participants will not be shared with anyone else other than supplier and Impact and will not be used for any other purpose other than those agreed with the customer for this project.

### **Information provided to the customer prior to consent being sought**

All customers sought to participate in this study will be provided with details and purposes of the project.

In line with GDPR we will ensure that all respondents are given the right to be informed this includes the following:

- Objectives of the Project
- The identities of the Project Partners
- Funding for the Project
- A brief summary of how they can be involved in the Project, including information on the customer research sub-contractor, their obligations as a participant, and the timescales of the Project.

The full engagement strategy is given in the Customer Engagement Plan above in Section 3.

Impact supports and enforces ISO 20252 quality standards and the guidelines in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct in all of its customer engagement. Following these protocols will ensure that there is documented evidence that the anonymity of participants has been protected, unless informed consent has been acquired.

### **Ownership of personal data**

Personal data collected by Impact, on behalf of ENWL, will be owned by the individual to whom it relates and held by Impact.

Personal data provided by third parties will be owned by the individual to whom it relates and held by third parties and Impact.

ENWL will be joint data controller with Impact, as they are the initial holder of customer data for Areas 2 and 3.

Suppliers in the form of specialist recruiters will be used to free-find respondents and they will be data processor with Impact being data controller.

### **Retaining personal data**

ENWL will not have access to any personal data collected during the QUEST Project beyond the life of the project. ENWL will only have access to anonymised summaries.

Anonymised technical data will be retained by Impact so documentation shared to project partners is without personal data.

Impact will collect data from recruitment for Areas 1, 2 and 3. This data will be used ensure we are engaging with the right customers for this project. Customers who participate in any customer engagement with Impact will be fully informed about how their data will be used when they sign up. All recruitment data will be stored in a secure, confidential and appropriate manner and accessible only to the Impact team for the duration of the project. All data relating to the project will be retained until completion of the project, when it will be destroyed.

As part of the Project's close down procedure, all personal data will be anonymised and the original personal data will be permanently deleted. Following the Project's close-down, project partners may only retain anonymised results of their analysis.

### **Data collection and storage summary**

As per the MRS (Market Research Society) Code of Conduct, Impact staff are obligated to ensure that:

- Market researchers never allow personal data they collect in a market research project to be used for any purpose other than market research;
- Research conforms to the national and international legislation relevant to a given project including in particular the Data Protection Act 2018;
- Employees take reasonable steps to ensure that all hard copy and electronic lists containing personal data are held securely in accordance with the relevant data retention policies and/or contractual obligation;
- Employees take reasonable steps to ensure that all parties involved in the research are aware of their obligations regarding security of data;
- Employees take reasonable steps to ensure that the destruction of data is adequate for the confidentiality of the data being destroyed. For example, any personal data must be destroyed in a manner which safeguards confidentiality.
- All spreadsheets will be password protected with the password transferred separately to the spreadsheet; only anonymised data will be handled in this way; they will only be passed between project partners and sub-contractors as a measure of last resort and via secure password protected online storage
- All transfer of data will be via secure password protected online storage e.g., on Microsoft OneDrive
- Data is stored on individual machines, Microsoft servers and Attachmore. All external suppliers (Microsoft and Attachmore) are major players in their field with industry-standard security systems.

Audio recordings created at the in-depth interviews will not be used for any purpose other than research, such as promotion or direct sales activities. Recordings will be deleted at the latest two years after the research. In exceptional cases the audio recording will be listened to/the transcription read by employees at ENWL working on this project. In these circumstances, the Impact project team will go through the recordings first to delete any references to people's names or anything else that could identify them.

The Data Protection Officer at Impact is: Steve Whennell

## 5. Conclusions and next steps

This Customer Engagement Plan sets out the QUEST project's approach for communication and engagement with customers throughout the Project. All ENWL project partners will adhere to the plan and the basic principles outlined. There will, however, be learnings and lessons learnt as the project progresses. The plan will therefore be reviewed on an on-going basis in light of any feedback and useful lessons learned. Ofgem will be consulted before any material changes are made to the plan.

All outputs and learning gained from customer engagement activities will be made available to other DNOs. Specifically, all communication materials developed in the project will be publicised. All relevant learning will be shared at learning events, through trade magazines and in other appropriate forums.

All of the deliverables for this project will be reported on an aggregate level, and all participants' personal data will be collected and used in a manner that respects and protects their confidentiality. Personal information held by Impact will be deleted within 12 weeks of the end of the project, and all research materials will be dated and deleted at the latest two years after the research is completed.

## Appendix

### Appendix A: Management of customer complaints specific to the research (example)

#### Complaints Handling Process

If, unfortunately things have gone wrong then you can use the following process to let us know.

#### How to contact us

The easiest and quickest way to resolve a complaint is to telephone us and ask for a member of the Impact QUEST project team, Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 5.00 pm:

Impact: 01932 226 793

Alternatively, if you are unable to telephone or would prefer to write, you can contact us by post using the addresses detailed below, or by email.

[Address: Impact, 3 The Quintet, Churchfield Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 2TZ]

[Email: Utilities@impactmr.com]

The Market Research Society is the regulatory body for Market Research. If you would like to check the validity of this research or seek reassurance that Impact is a responsible organisation that will keep the information you give it safe, you can do so by calling the Market Research Society UK Freephone verification service free\* on:

0500 39 69 99 or visiting <http://www.theresearchbuyersguide.com/freephone/alpha/all>

\*Calls to Freephone made from outside the UK may incur charges.

#### Complaint escalation

If you are unhappy with the outcome having been in contact with the researcher, you can contact the QUEST project team at ENWL.

[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS FOR QUEST PROJECT MANAGER]

#### Complaint Handling Statement

Sometimes things can go wrong, so we have produced this Complaint Handling Statement to show what will happen if you have cause to complain to us.

#### Our Process

In the first instance, Impact will endeavour to resolve your enquiry as quickly and easily as possible. As part of resolving your complaint, we will offer you an explanation and an apology.

#### Step 1 – Aim to resolve your problem within 10 working days

If you contact us with a problem, we aim to resolve matters with you directly, as soon as possible within 10 working days. However, if we cannot resolve your complaint fully or have not agreed a form of resolution within 10 working days of your first contact, then we will escalate your complaint to ENWL, the project lead.

#### Step 2 – Aim to resolve your problem within the next 10 working days after escalation

If unresolved, your complaint will be passed to the project manager at ENWL who will do everything possible to address your concern and reach a positive conclusion.

## Appendix B: In-depth Interview - Customer Consent Form (example)

Dear xxx,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in ENWL QUEST project's in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview you take part in will be:

- Audio recorded
- Video recorded
- Observed by people from another location

**The Data Protection Act requires we (Impact) collect and use the information you provide to us in a manner that respects and protects your confidentiality.** Your personal details (name, email address, telephone number) will not be disclosed to anyone else without your permission other than to Impact.

In most cases the recordings will be heard/watched and the transcription read **only by the transcriber and researchers from the research company**. The transcript will only be read/audio recording listened to/video recording watched for research purposes and only to pursue the aims of the study. Excerpts from the transcripts or recordings may be used to illustrate the research findings. This will always be done in a way to protect your identity (e.g., comments will not be attributed to you personally).

The recordings will not be used for non-research purposes, such as promotion or direct sales activities. The recordings will be dated and deleted, at the latest, two years after the research is completed. **In exceptional cases** the audio recording will be listened to/the transcription read/the video recording watched by employees at ENWL working on this Project. In these circumstances, the project team will go through the recordings first to delete any references to people's full names or anything else that could identify them.

Anyone from ENWL who reads the transcript or listens to/watches the audio/video recording will sign a form undertaking that they will respect the anonymity of those taking part. Thus, if anyone recognises you, (s)he will immediately stop reading, listening or watching. Any other material or information generated by you, such as ideas written down on paper, will be subject to the same strict controls.

You may find the following questions and answers helpful in understanding what data will be collected from you and how it will be used. **Please read this information and indicate your consent at the bottom of the form.**

### What is the purpose of market research?

Market research attempts to generate understanding and knowledge about customer behaviour within it, by gaining information (*data*) from specific samples of customers and extrapolating results to the population as a whole.

Market research is scientifically-conducted research where the identity of respondents, and all personal data they give to the researchers, are kept fully confidential, and cannot be disclosed or used, for any non-research purpose.

Market research is not a commercial communication or a selling opportunity. Market research has no interest in the individual identity of respondents.

### Who is Impact?

Impact is an independent market research agency whose registered address is 3 The Quintet, Churchfield Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 2TZ.

### What is personal data?

The following definitions are taken from the Data Protection Act 2018.

‘Personal data’ is defined as any information which is capable of being used to identify a living individual.

In addition to name, address and contact details, this could include individual preferences, transactional history, and record of activities or travel, profiles or credit scores.

‘Sensitive personal data’ is defined as any personal data that relates to any of the following: racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or other similar beliefs, trade union membership, physical or mental health, sexual life, criminal convictions or proceedings.

### **What personal or sensitive personal data will be collected from you?**

You will be asked to provide Impact with your contact details so that they are able to re-contact you to take part in the in-depth interviews. Any answers you give in the in-depth interview or surveys will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

This means that all of the information collected will be used for research purposes only and it will not be possible to identify any particular individual or address in the results.

You will also be asked if you or anyone in your household, or anyone you are a carer for, have a disability, medical equipment in your household, mobility problems, are seriously ill or have hearing impairment, and will be asked to specify this.

### **Who will this personal or sensitive personal data be shared with?**

At the end of the Project and as part of sharing the learning and outcomes, aggregated data and the results of the Project will be shared with interested parties such as other electricity companies. Any data shared with interested parties or published for general readership will not contain any personal data.

No personal data will be provided to any third parties for any marketing activity.

ENWL will not use this Project or any information collected in connection with the Project to market any products or services to customers.

### **So that this is absolutely clear, we would like you to now sign the following statement:**

I am happy to have the feedback I give through participating in this market research attributed to me so that ENWL are aware that I have taken part in this market research.

Please circle: YES/NO

I am happy for Impact to get in touch with me again in the future to discuss the service I receive from ENWL for market research purposes?

Please circle: YES/NO

I am happy for my data to be passed to ENWL in order that they can discuss with me any aspect of my electricity supply in the future?

Please circle: YES/NO

I agree that after the above explanation, I was given the option not to take part in the in-depth interview, if I had any reservations.

Name ..... Signed .....

Date.....