



Response from the Society of St. Vincent De Paul to Commission for Energy Regulation Strategic Plan 2014-2018 June 2014

SVP acknowledges the significant role of the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) to the provision of safe, secure and fair and reasonably priced energy in Ireland. CER's remit has now extended to the regulation of water provided through the monopoly of Irish Water. SVP makes three recommendations and two observations below in relation to the CER Strategic Plan 2014-2018 which are informed by our regular contact with CER. These are:

Recommendation 1: Change of Name

SVP believes that in order to ensure that the public can clearly recognise the role of the regulator that its title should be changed to reflect its dual mandate for both energy and water.

Recommendation 2: Recognising the role of CER in protecting vulnerable customers

CER plays an important role as an interface between consumer organisations and suppliers in relation to customers who are vulnerable either due to medical/advanced age or financial hardship. This area of work of the CER is very important and is evident through the role of the regulator in the provision of supplier handbooks and also facilitating discussions between suppliers and customer representatives. SVP strongly believes that the strategic plan of the CER should reflect this area of regulation in both its corporate vision and specifically through the goals and objectives of strategic goal five. Such a move would be an important acknowledgement of the reality that many consumers are in need of such regulated protection. SVP further believes this point has equal weight with CER's strategic plans to facilitate customer switching in the energy market.

Recommendation 3: CER receiving complaints in relation to Irish Water

SVP would welcome legislation that allows CER to handle complaints in relation to Irish Water. SVP in its submission on the Irish Water Supplier Handbook has noted the need and the expertise of CER to handle such complaints.

Observation 1: The Staff Resource

SVP would like to acknowledge the role of CER staff in assisting and responding to the various communications, proposals and submission of the SVP. SVP has in a previous submission acknowledged the need for the CER to be fully resourced in the event of the Commission taking on additional responsibilities.

Observation 2: CER Consultations

SVP as an NGO advocate organisation recognises the recent work by CER to facilitate the NGO sector by providing workshops on consultation themes. It welcomes the on-going commitment of CER to provide such a facility and any efforts by CER to make the consultation process more accessible to non-industry agencies, or indeed the public.

In conclusion, SVP sees the need and the role for a strong economic regulator for both energy and water. To facilitate the public the Commission's title should be changed to reflect its dual mandate. SVP strongly believes the CER's work in protecting vulnerable customers should be reflected in the CER's Strategic Plans and encourages the regulator to amend the strategic plan 2014-2018 to reflect this point.

Working with those in need

Assistance to Families

Home Visitation
Debt Advisory Service
Personal Development Courses
Community Development Projects
Drugs Awareness
Resource Centres

Help for Children

Holiday Breaks
Youth Clubs
Education Grants
Teen Holiday Programmes
After School Projects
Pre-Schools / Creches
Breakfast Clubs

Housing the Homeless

Hostels
Social Housing Projects
Homeless Referral Centre

Special Visiting

Hospital Visitation
Prison Visitation
Travellers
Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Special Services

Holidays for the Elderly
Family Holidays
Job Creation
Job Finders' Club
Shops
Seafarers' Club
Social Policy / Justice Office

