



An Coimisiún
um Rialáil Fóntais
**Commission for
Regulation of Utilities**

An Coimisiún um Rialáil Fóntais
Commission for Regulation of Utilities

Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook 2019

Consultation Paper

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Public Impact Statement

The CRU is consulting on the requirements of the Electricity and Gas Supplier's Handbook. The Supplier's Handbook sets out minimum levels of service that licensed energy suppliers are required to adhere to in their dealings with energy customers. In this paper we consult on:

- Editorial changes to the current requirements to make the Handbook more accessible to the CRUs stakeholders including customers, market participants and consumer interest groups. The changes also provide further clarity on the existing regulatory requirements for suppliers of electricity and gas.
- The introduction of additional requirements, reflecting policy developments since the previous Handbook review in 2017; these relate to the Smart Meter Upgrade. This paper proposes the introduction of new Codes of Practice for Smart Services which apply to both household and non-household customers.
- An additional requirement to implement the CRU Supplier of Last Resort in Prepayment Electricity Decision Paper published in 2018.

Smart meters are the next generation of electricity meter replacing older analogue meters and, when fully operational, will deliver benefits for consumers, the environment and the economy. The Smart Meter Upgrade will change how energy is measured, managed and paid for. The new systems and processes will provide customers with more accurate bills, better and more accessible information about energy use, and access to new tariffs and services. The Smart Meter Upgrade will involve the nation-wide replacement of over two million electricity meters, over the next 6 years, affecting all customers. Smart meters will enable customers to get better information on their actual energy usage, end estimated bills and introduce new smart services and products such as Time of Use tariffs and Smart Pay-As-You-Go. That is why we are including these new requirements for suppliers relating to the Smart Meter Upgrade. This will ensure that customers availing of new smart services receive the same level of protection when interacting with energy suppliers.

In relation to a Supplier of Last Resort event, the Supplier of Last Resort will provide customers with continuity of service where a customer's chosen supplier exits the market. A Supplier of Last Resort market exit would be an extraordinary event where the CRU would step in to protect the customer. The requirement included in the Handbook provides certainty to customers around the treatment of credit in a Supplier of Last Resort event and ensures they were informed of the potential impact such an event may have on them.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) is the independent body responsible for overseeing the regulation of electricity and gas sectors in Ireland. The CRU has a legislative obligation to protect the interest of energy customers and promote competition in retail energy markets.

Under its legal mandate, the CRU is responsible for implementing energy specific customer protection measures. This has been done to date through the development of requirements and guidelines for energy suppliers and network companies, reflected in several documents including Standard Terms and Conditions of Supply, Codes of Practice and Customer Charters, as detailed in the Supplier's Handbook, gas and electricity supply licences and market design rules.

The Supplier's Handbook sets out minimum service requirements that suppliers must adhere to in their dealings with energy customers. It sets out the requirements for Codes of Practice which cover all key areas of customer – supplier interaction, such as marketing and sign up process, billing, disconnection, PAYG meters and vulnerable customers. These rules are in place to ensure that customers enjoy a high standard of protection when interacting with energy suppliers.

1.2 Purpose of this Paper

The CRU is conducting a review of the Supplier's Handbook in order to ensure that the minimum service requirements imposed on energy suppliers provide adequate safeguards to energy customers in relation to the Smart Meter Upgrade. Since 2014, the CRU has published a number of consumer policy decisions (See Section 2.2 for details) in relation to the Smart Meter Upgrade. The primary focus of this review is to ensure that the relevant smart metering related policy decisions are incorporated into the Electricity and Gas Supplier Handbook in time for Smart Services 'go-live' at the end of Phase One of the Smart Meter Upgrade¹, and will provide clarity for energy customers, suppliers and potential new entrants to the market in terms of the provision of smart services.

¹ Smart Services 'go-live' at the end of Phase One of the Smart Metering Project i.e. January 2021

1.3 Related Documents

By way of background to this consultation paper, the following document is of relevance:

[CER17060 Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook April 2017](#)

[CRU19093a Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook 2019 \(clean version\)](#)

[CRU19093b Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook 2019 \(track change version\)](#)

Information on the CRU's role and relevant legislation can be found on the CRU's website at www.cru.ie

2. Key proposals

2.1. Editorial Review

This review of the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook has provided the opportunity for an extensive editorial review of the document, which has resulted in a number of non-material edits to the handbook. The handbook has been updated to reflect a more consistent style of formatting and numbering. Many of the sections in the handbook have been re-numbered as a result and these edits can be viewed in the accompanying track change version of the Handbook (CRU/19/093b). In some cases, instances of duplications of text been removed from the document, while in other cases, additional text has been added to the document for clarity. In both cases, these edits regarding duplications/clarifications are highlighted in the accompanying track change version of the Handbook (CRU/19/093b).

2.2 Incorporation of Existing Policy Decisions

The revised Handbook incorporates elements of the following policy decisions;

Smart Metering

- High Level Design Decisions (2014)
 - Smart Metering High Level Design (CER/14/046)
 - Appendix A: Core Design (CER/14/046A)
 - Appendix B: Time-of-Use Tariffs (CER/14/046B)
 - Appendix C: Presentation of Energy Usage Information (CER/14/046C)
 - Appendix D: Pay-As-You-Go (CER/14/046D)
- Detailed Design Decisions (2015 & 2016)
 - Smart Pay-As-You-Go (CER/15/054)
 - Time-of-Use Tariffs (CER/15/270)
 - Regulating the Transition Activities of Market Participants (CER/16/124)

- Empowering & Protecting Consumers (CER/16/125)
- Policy Decisions since 'Phased Approach' (2017-)
 - Standard Smart Tariff (CRU/18/164)
 - The Customer-Led Transition to Time-of-Use (CRU/19/019)
 - Smart Meter Allocation (CRU/19/083)

Supplier of Last Resort

- Supplier of Last Resort in Prepayment Electricity Decision Paper (CRU/18112)

The key proposals included in this review are summarised below and are highlighted in the accompanying track change version of the Handbook (CRU/19/093b).

- The introduction of a statement that the obligations and requirements set out in the Supplier Handbook are enduring and applicable for all smart metering activities (Section A: Introduction);
- The introduction of additional requirements in relation to Smart Billing (Section B: 4. Code of Practice on Billing and Section C: 4. Code of Practice on Billing);
- The inclusion of a new Code of Practice on Smart Services, which includes requirements on Time-of-Use Tariffs, the Standard Smart Tariff and Provision of Information to Customers (Section B: 9. Code of Practice on Smart Services and Section C: 7. Code of Practice on Smart Services).

The only other policy decision that is proposed to be incorporated into the handbook under this review is the requirement for Electricity Suppliers to ensure that PAYG customers are aware that their credit may be lost in event of a supplier exiting the market in a Supplier of Last Resort event. This requirement has been added to Section B: 8. Code of Practice on Pay As You Go Metering as well as Section B: 10. Terms and Conditions, in line with the CRU Supplier of Last Resort in Prepayment Electricity Decision Paper (CRU/18/112).

3. Conclusion and Next Steps

The CRU is seeking views from suppliers, consumer interest groups, industry groups, members of the public and all other interested parties regarding the proposed new requirements in the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook. The primary focus of this consultation is the implementation of policy decisions that have already been taken by the CRU, and not on the rationale behind these decisions. Furthermore, comments on existing requirements in the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook will be considered out of scope for this review. However, the CRU is committed to reviewing the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook on a bi-annual basis and will seek views from all relevant stakeholders and customers on the Handbook more generally in advance of the next review.

In parallel the CRU will continue to progress the development of new policy necessary to support the delivery of smart services including decisions related to the application of an estimated annual bill for Time of Use tariffs and smart Pay-As-You-Go. The 2019 review of the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook will provide clarity and certainty for energy customers, suppliers and potential new entrants to the market in terms of the provision of smart services.

CRU welcomes all relevant stakeholders and customers comments on the new proposals put forward in the consultation paper by close of business on 13 September 2019. Comments should be sent to the Retail Market and Smart Metering team, Commission for Regulation of Utilities, The Exchange, Belgard Square North, Tallaght, Dublin 24 or via email to retailandsmartmetering@cru.ie

Following the consultation period, the CRU will review all responses received and consider the issues raised. The responses to this consultation paper will be used to inform and develop the implementation of the new requirements set out in the Electricity and Gas Suppliers' Handbook, which will be finalised and published in a subsequent decision paper.

Unless marked confidential, all responses from companies or organisations may be fully published on the CRU's website. Respondents may request that their response is kept confidential. The CRU shall respect this request, subject to any obligations to disclose information. Respondents who wish to have their responses remain confidential should clearly mark the document to that effect and include the reasons for confidentiality. Responses from identifiable members of the public will be anonymised prior to publication on the CRU website unless the respondent explicitly requests their personal details to be published. The CRU privacy notice sets out how we protect the privacy rights of individuals and can be found [here](#).