

Our plans and commitments for connections customers



Introduction

Providing excellent service to our customers is at the heart of what we do. I'm therefore delighted to share with you what we plan to do this year to offer you an even better connections service. While we delivered on all the commitments we made to you for 2015/16, our aim is now to go even further and faster towards satisfying your expectations.

If you would like more detail, please look out for our full report which will be published on 31 May 2016 - including a summary of how we performed over the past 12 months as well as key performance indicators and timescales for the commitments we will deliver over the coming year.

I hope you find this document interesting and useful. We welcome any comments you may have, which you can email to us at connectionsfeedback@sse.com



Colin Nicol, Managing Director Networks

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It is essential that we don't stand still, but that we continue to learn and build upon our previous achievements. This involves looking at the broad range of connections customers we serve while also taking into account your specific needs as an individual customer. Whilst working to implement our commitments we have therefore also been actively engaging with our connections customers through a wide variety of channels to seek feedback to help inform this work plan as well as our wider business improvement activities.

In the coming year we will focus on six key areas where you have told us you would like to see continuing improvements:

- Customer service
- Information provision
- The application Process
- Getting connected
- Choice in connections
- Innovation

If you would like more specific information on each of our commitments in these six areas, please look out for our full work plan of activities that we will publish by the end of May 2016. It will include:

- the different types of engagement activities we have undertaken to identify the commitments we have made to our connections customers
- a more detailed explanation around how we intend to deliver the commitment
- a targeted time of completion
- how we will measure what we implement, including clear and measurable key performance indicators

We appreciate your feedback on what we are doing. We therefore hope you find this document both useful and interesting in showing how we are responding to your needs as a connections customer. If you would like to share your thoughts, or if you would like to be kept up to date with our plans and progress throughout the year, please contact our connections engagement team at connectionsfeedback@sse.com

Our work plan of commitments

	Your idea	Our commitment	Demand	Generation	Unmetered
Customer Service	Contact all demand & generation customers regarding planned outages as part of the switching schedule	When we plan an outage that will interrupt your power supply we commit to delivering the same service for all demand and generation customers. We will provide as much notice as possible to enable you to make alternative arrangements in addition to the Guaranteed Standard timescales.	✓	✓	
	Provide guidance for updating site contacts for operational sites	We will provide a service to enable you to update your site contact details for operational sites via our website. We will publish details on how to complete this task to ensure that all your contact and correspondence details for your site are accurate.	✓	✓	✓
	Quote reminder for all connection quotations	We will extend the service we currently provide by committing to provide email quote reminders for all connections two weeks prior to the quote expiring. This reminder will notify you of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the date your existing quote will expire; which date the acceptance period could be extended until (by up to 10 working days); the option to revalidate your current offer - which will provide a full 90 day extension period; the details of the Designer / Customer Connection Manager for your quote - should you have any further questions or wish to arrange a meeting prior to acceptance. 	✓	✓	✓
	Improvement to online project tracking facility	We will extend the services currently available on our project tracking facility. These will include the option to request that your quotation be revalidated and to make visible online the quotation start date, corresponding expiry date and quotation acceptance date. Our customers have specifically asked for these dates to be made clear throughout the project tracking process.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide the main point of contact for a connection on the project tracking facility	We will provide contact details for our Customer Connections Managers and/or Commercial Contract Managers within our online project tracking facility. These managers are your main points of contact from pre-application through to post-energisation of the connection. They are also available to have regular meetings with you to discuss current and potential projects.	✓	✓	✓
	Project evaluation card	We will provide you with an evaluation card where you can comment on your connection experience with us. Our connections engagement team is continuously seeking ways to improve the service you receive when making a connection to our network. You will be sent the card by your appointed Connection Delivery Manager, making it easy for you to voice any concerns you had during the process or to comment on anything you thought went particularly well.	✓	✓	✓
Information Provision	Produce guidance document for laying cable	We understand that the laying of cables in permeable road construction is becoming more common and that guidance is required. With a view to improving clarity around this we commit to produce a guidance document which explains the full process in appropriate detail. This will be available on our website to view or download.	✓	✓	✓

Our work plan of commitments continued

Information Provision	Your idea	Our commitment	Demand	Generation	Unmetered
	Provide details of planned distribution reinforcements on our website	We will continue to improve our online heatmap tools and will publish details of planned reinforcements and operational improvements on our distribution networks.	✓	✓	
	Guidance on recharging of additional legal costs	We will continue to develop our suite of guidance documents and will review our current guide on wayleaves to include additional information on the possible additional legal costs which may impact your connection. This guide will also help explain all aspects of the legal costs you should expect when applying for a connection.	✓	✓	✓
	Make GIS mapping 'shape' files available to all customers	We will provide free GIS 'shape' files for developers at their request via CD. These CD's will include the 'back-end data' from our GIS system, which will allow developers to overlay it on to their own GIS system or to use it in other ways.	✓	✓	✓
	Highlight community groups case studies online	We will work closely with community bodies to highlight examples of successful community projects, illustrate potential stumbling blocks, highlight financial considerations to be made and to present other useful experiences from other, already connected, community projects.	✓	✓	
	Commissioning documents and guidebook attached to website.	We will create a guide on commissioning and ensure that all relevant documentation is located together and can be downloaded from our website		✓	
	Distribution Use of System(DUoS) charges workshops	Our Charging Team will hold workshops that focus on the difference between Connection and Distribution Use of System(DUoS) charges. Going forward, we will also provide guidance on how you can calculate these charges, assisting you in making an informed decision regarding your connections proposal.	✓	✓	✓
	Help unmetered customers prepare standard inventories	We will assist local authorities and developers when they are preparing their standard inventories. This additional support will help in identifying, recording and declaring inventory returns, and reviewing any historical records.			✓
	Provide a technical guide for installing unmetered services	We will provide a guidance document for installing unmetered services up to and including 100A connections. This guidance will help facilitate the unmetered process and explain the limitations where applicable. This guidance will be added to our current suite of documents and be available to view and download from our website.			✓
	Provide mapping symbols for your GIS mapping tool	We will add mapping symbols for GIS mapping as a guide on our website. We appreciate that not all customers may be equally familiar with our systems; we will review the information currently made available to ensure that a mapping tool is issued with all connection offers. We will also ensure this information is available on our website to view and download.	✓	✓	✓
	Include Frequently Asked Question sheet in all quote packs	We will include within the standard quote pack a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section which will explain many of the questions we are often asked by our connections customers. We will also include links to the various guides and process documents available on our website.	✓	✓	✓

Our work plan of commitments continued

	Your idea	Our commitment	Demand	Generation	Unmetered
Information Provision	Create a Distribution Use of System(DUoS) charges webpage	We will create a Distribution Use of System (DUoS) charges webpage to explain the difference between Connection and Distribution Use of System(DUoS) charges. We will present an overview of the methodologies that underpin the DUoS charges for demand and generation customers; looking at what determines the charges, the Distribution Network Operator's (DNO) licence obligations and the contractual framework. We will also explain how these charges are billed and we will look at some worked examples.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide visibility of quoted jobs on the heatmap	We will increase the level of information currently provided within the connected/contracted registers on our heatmaps. This will include quotes that have been issued but have not yet been accepted or lapsed.		✓	
The Application Process	Provide an explanation for reinforcements costs in quotations	We will include in your quotation details and an explanation of any reinforcement requirements for your connection. To make sure you are clear on the costs being provided we will make this information more transparent and visible on all quotations where applicable.	✓	✓	
	Expand guidance on revalidation process	We will review our existing process and expand on this to include in your quotation details to explain our revalidation process. We will help to facilitate this process by creating a guide on the process and make this guidance available on our website to view and download.	✓	✓	
	Enable intermediate payment to progress wayleaves/legals/harmonic studies in advance	We will provide you with acceptance options should you wish to make an advance payment to progress aspects of your connection early. Depending upon your chosen option this could start the wayleaves survey process or the harmonic studies, for example, in the early stages of progressing the connection.	✓	✓	✓
	Improve the online application process	We will extend our online application process to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to allow you to look at previous applications you have made as well as print the applications you have submitted; a tick box for you to choose if you wish SSEPD to include design approval costs within the PoC connection quotation. These design approval costs are for contestable works design; the facility for you to choose 'copy my details' on to the new application. This will allow the same company details to be copied over for any subsequent new applications. 	✓	✓	✓
	Provide breakdown of costs for disconnections	We will provide a breakdown of costs in all disconnection quotations. Last year, customers told us they wanted to see more information and further detail on the costs provided in their offer. We provided revised offer letters with the aim of making the information that is important to you more visible. We commit to delivering this same level of service for disconnections.	✓		✓

Our work plan of commitments continued

Getting Connected	Your idea	Our commitment	Demand	Generation	Unmetered
	Review all projects over £1 million within 6 months of completion.	<p>We will review all customer projects over £1 million within 6 months of the job completion. This will take the form of a face-to-face meeting and will allow us to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtain feedback on the connection experience; • build better working relationships with your dedicated project manager; • ensure you know what to expect from start to finish throughout the connections process. 	✓	✓	
	Provide an updated guide to advise who you should contact to arrange a witness test	Our connections customers have told us they are not always sure who their point of contact should be for organising a witness test. We will expand on our current guidebook to advise how to arrange witness testing and explain the end-to-end process.		✓	
	Create process flow chart for tasks to be undertaken to deliver your connection after project acceptance	We will create flow charts for all types of connections. This will begin from the point your project is accepted - including reference to other guides - through to project completion. This information will be made available on our website to view and download.	✓	✓	✓
	Contact upon acceptance to discuss and clarify the approach to be taken for achieving a successful connection	<p>Upon acceptance of your quote, our Commercial Contract Manager or Customer Connections Manager will contact you to discuss and clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans for a face-to-face meeting schedule; • your preferred frequency and method of contact with them; • the role that their colleagues will play in delivering the connection 	✓	✓	
	Review all accepted quotations over £1million on site	<p>We will review all accepted quotations over £1million on site with you and the following staff where applicable;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection Designer; • Project Manager and either; • Commercial Contract manager or Customer Connections Manager. <p>This will allow discussion of the design proposed / wayleaves and next steps of the project.</p>	✓	✓	
	Display contract novation process online	We will publish on our website information on what the process and templates are for novating a contract.	✓	✓	
Send post-acceptance email to confirm Project Manager, Customer Connections Manager and Commercial Contract Manager for the connection	We understand that it is not always clear with whom you should be dealing in the various stages of your connection. We will send you an email within 10 days of acceptance confirming who your Project Manager and Customer Connections Manager/Commercial Contract Manager will be for the connection. These contacts will assist you through the connection process and will be available for meetings to discuss any queries you may have about your connection delivery.	✓	✓	✓	

Our work plan of commitments continued

	Your idea	Our commitment	Demand	Generation	Unmetered
Getting Connected	Send email reminder of tasks to be delivered prior to connection	We will send you an email to advise you of the site requirements for our staff to successfully connect you on the agreed connection date. Some customers have told us they are not ready when we go to site to make the connection. We want to make this process as smooth as possible. To do this we commit to sending you an email 10 working days before your scheduled connection date with a detailed list of required tasks.	✓	✓	✓
	State available options for transmission-constrained projects	We will include within the standard connection offer what options are available to you where your proposed connection is constrained by transmission access availability .		✓	✓
	Provide indicative Distribution Use of System (DUoS) charges in advance upon request	We will provide you with indicative Distribution Use of System (DUoS) charges in advance upon your request.	✓	✓	✓
Choice in Connections	Expand the secure area on web portal for ICPs and IDNOs	We will create a web portal on the secure area of our website for ICPs and IDNOs to submit design approval. This new tool will also allow file sharing and the safe upload of documents which will avoid the need to send multiple emails to achieve design approval.	✓	✓	✓
	Improve the Alternative Provider Register	We will enhance our Alternative Connection Provider Register on our website to allow companies who are only NERS accredited for electrical design work to be able to register as 'active' in our area. This will include contact details to enable you to contact them directly.	✓	✓	✓
	Clarify what contestable and non-contestable works are	We currently make all our customers aware that they have a choice when applying for a connection. We will update our 'You have a choice' leaflet to provide you with greater clarity on the differences between contestable works and non-contestable works. This document will detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the difference between contestable and non-contestable works; who is responsible for what and what works can typically be carried out by an Alternative Connection Provider; how to contact Alternative Connection Provider; what happens when you have appointed an Alternative Connection Provider. 	✓	✓	
Innovation	Proactively engage with connected generators to ensure customers are utilising existing capacity in full	We commit to contact each of the currently connected generators to confirm if they are utilising their existing capacity in full, and if they would like to "hand back" any capacity that is unused. This would potentially free up MWs and may allow us to pull forward some of the generator connections that are currently constrained.		✓	
	Provide guidance on process for flexible connections	We will provide guidance to explain the process of making a flexible connection request. This process guide will provide a better explanation on what a flexible connection is and how one can be applied for.	✓	✓	

Our work plan of commitments continued

Innovation	Your idea	Our commitment	Demand	Generation	Unmetered
	Display flexible connections and active solutions management teams online	We commit to providing our customers with the contact information they require for our active solutions and flexible connections teams. Staff contact maps will be created to enable our customers to discuss innovative ideas with our specialist teams. This information will be available on our website to view and download.	✓	✓	
	Host flexible connections and Active solutions management workshops	Last year we introduced a range of engagement days aimed at our different customer types, focused on key business areas. This year we plan to delve deeper into what our customers want to learn more about. We have been told that this should focus on flexible connections - we will therefore host workshops with our active solutions and flexible connections experts from our asset management and innovation teams.	✓	✓	
	Collaborate with other DNOs to provide a street furniture toolkit	We will work in partnership with other DNO's and the Scottish Future Trust in their role-out of a dedicated street furniture toolkit to assist local authorities in upgrading their existing lighting stock to LED.			✓

We are currently finalising our detailed Looking Forward work plan and would be keen to hear your feedback on this overview.

Please email us at connectionsfeedback@sse.com

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Email: connectionsfeedback@sse.com

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