

Minutes of the 70th NERSAP Meeting

Microsoft Teams on 26th March 2024

Attendees:

Paul Wragg (PW)	PowerOn	paul.wragg@poweron-uk.co.uk (Chair)
Paul Costelloe (PC)	LRQA	paul.costelloe@lrqa.com (Secretary)
Nigel Evans (NE)	LRQA	nigel.evans@lrqa.com
Maryline Guinard (MG)	SSE	maryline.guinard@sse.com
Jevan Laxen (JL)	SSE	jevan.laxen@sse.com
Bob Fearnley (BF)	Leep	bfearnley@leeputilities.co.uk
Simon Burnett (SB)	MES	simon.burnett2@morrisones.com
Gareth Pritchard (GP)	HEA	gareth.pritchard@thehea.org.uk
Paul Thomas (PT)	SPEN	paul.thomas@spenergynetworks.co.uk
Tracey Taylor (TT)	ENWL	tracey.taylor@enwl.co.uk
Keith Montague (KM)	UKPD	keithmontague@matrixgroup.co.uk
Kevin Freiter (KF)	MES	kevin.freiter@morrisones.com
Simon Watton (SW)	Fulcrum	simon.watton@fulcrum.co.uk
Luay Elia (LE)	MUA	luayelia@muagroup.co.uk
Cuan Rowlands (Cro)	NGED	cuan.rowlands@nationalgrid.co.uk
Matthew Crittenden (MC)	UKPN	matthew.crittended@ukpowernetworks.co.uk
Stuart Ogg (SO)	Indigo	stuart.ogg@indigonetworks.co.uk
Chris Roe (CR)	UCCG-EoN	chris.roe@eonenergy.com

Apologies:

Apologies had been received from:

Kelly McLaughlin	NGED	kmclaughlin@nationalgrid.co.uk
Clare Roberts	NPG	clare.roberts@northernppowergrid.com
Mel Swift	GTC	mel.swift@gtc-uk.co.uk
Colin Jamieson	IDCSL	colin.jamieson@idcsl.co.uk
Andy Green	Eclipse	andy.green@eclipsepower.co.uk
Rich Hibbert	Harlaxton	rich@harlaxton.com
Tom Farmery	ESP	tom.farmery@espug.com
Karl Miller	LRQA	karl.miller@lrqa.com

1. Introductions

Introductions were made and new attendees welcomed. Several attendees who had accepted an invitation to this meeting did not attend.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from those identified above.

3. Installation of Chairperson and Election of Deputy Chairperson

PW as current Deputy Chairperson was installed as Chairperson since the departure of Martyn Crocker, the previous Chairperson.

PC stated that Clare Roberts of NPG was willing to take up the position of Deputy Chairperson and invited interest from the meeting for the position. Since no other interest was forthcoming and that whilst recognising that not all NERSAP members were present, voting by NERSAP is in future going to be based on majority decisions, it was deemed safe to elect Clare Roberts as Deputy Chairperson with effect from the date of the next NERSAP meeting on July 26th 2024.

4. Acceptance of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous NERSAP meeting held on 21st November 2023 were accepted as a true record of that meeting.

5. Review of Minutes & Actions from NERS Forum of 12th March 2024

PC stated that there had been 77 attendees. Matters arising and discussion points are detailed below:

5.1. Issue of v10 of NERS Requirements

PC advised that v10 had been sent out to the LRQA NERS team for consultation and following this it would be sent to NERSAP for approval prior to issue. This would likely be end of May. The main change is the clarification of the requirement for ICPs to hold Project Management scopes where work is to be sub-contracted to other, appropriately accredited Providers.

5.2. Certificates of Competency

ICPs should make it clear on an individual's certificate which competencies are NERS-related and those which are not in order to save having to issue separate certificates.

5.3. Pre-Inspection Prior to Handover of Assets to Network Operators

PC advised that he had advised ICPs that this was an important aspect of their work and that the network Operators could likely take steps to get for example 'as-laid' information themselves and at the ICP's cost.

5.4. Remote Surveillance Visits

PC stated that there had been an increased number of remote surveillance visits since the Covid pandemic in order to mitigate the driving risk and to minimise environmental impact. CR questioned if this would potentially be ALL surveillance visits in an ICPs surveillance visit programme and PC responded that it would only be a small number if at all.

5.5. 'In-Person' ICP Forums

Karl Miller had previously been asked if the ICP Forums could be held as a 'hybrid' format i.e. a mixture of in-person attendance and remote attendance. PC stated that this had not been very successful in the past when trialled for a NERSAP meeting despite the relatively small number of attendees at NERSAP as compared to the now increased participation by ICPs in recent years using the Microsoft Teams format. This was to be trialled at the forthcoming GIRS Forum since the technology at the Kegworth venue has improved somewhat. PC will report on how that went at the next NERSAP meeting in July.

6. Review of Minutes & Actions from NERSAP Meeting of 21st November 2023

The minutes of the NERSAP meeting of 21st November 2023 had been issued prior to this meeting. Matters arising are detailed below:

6.1. NERSAP Attendance by Network Operators

PC advised that since contact had been made with the IDNOs via the INA, attendance had increased, and therefore thought might need to be given to increasing the ICP members in

order to keep the ratio of ICP/Network Operators the same. The requirements will be reviewed by PC who will report at the next NERSAP meeting in July 2024.

6.2. Access to Infrastructure Scheme

PC advised that there had been no movement on this from the DNO requesting it. MG agreed to check and report back.

6.3. Refresher Training

PW advised that the feedback he had received from Mel Swift is that whilst they were currently discussing SAPs and Aps etc, the ENA Working Group would likely recommend a five- year frequency of refresher training for crafts-persons. Potentially long waiting lists for training may be a problem. Initially this would apply to Network Operator employees, but the intention would be to make it apply to anyone working on assets that are going to be adopted by the Network Operators.

6.4. Design Requirements for Highway Electrical Equipment

PC stated that he thought it had been decided that no amendment to the NERS requirements were necessary. CR confirmed that this was his understanding also, since if any form of mains extension was necessary in order to accommodate for example additional street lighting then this would be subject to existing design requirements, but for a transfer of an existing lighting column or even a new connection to an existing main then no additional design work would be required.

7. Update on NERSAP Working Groups

It was previously agreed that the existing Strategy and Competency Working Groups would be combined into one group called the NERS Strategy Working Group.

A Working Group Meeting took place on 8th March 2024 and the minutes of this meeting are circulated with the minutes of this meeting. Comments arising were:

BF asked if where ENWL had been to site to gather 'as-laid' information because an ICP had failed to provide such information, they would take scarring in tarmac for example as an indicative cable route or joint position. TT responded that where there was doubt, re-excavation would take place because while scarring might give an indicative position of a cable or a joint it would not give information for example on the type of joint installed. Also,

on a new site there may not be any scarring if the work was carried out before final surfacing took place and in which case the only option would be to re-excavate.

Discussion had taken place at the Working Group about some ICPs that were having difficulty doing business with LRQA. PC stated that these were around the time of the changeover from LR to LRQA and that he thought that these difficulties had largely been resolved,

The Power Skills Scheme (PSS) was discussed again, and the consensus of the Working Group was that if we as an industry don't come up with something then it will be mandated. We must all use every opportunity possible to try and re-ignite this initiative.

The consensus of the meeting was that a Code of Conduct for ICPs would be welcomed, but not one that made things more onerous for the 'good' ICPs.

BF stated that using an existing organisation such as Trustpilot would provide some context to the performance of ICPs. PC agreed to discuss this within LRQA. PW stated that a system of guaranteed standards by the ICPs could be considered similar to the guaranteed standards which network operators have to comply with (i.e. a 'harmonised' process). Working Group to consider.

Since the departure of Martyn Crocker, the membership now includes:

Paul Wragg – PowerOn
Gareth Pritchard – HEA
Simon Burnett – Morrisons
Graham Commons – Balfour Beatty
Mel Swift – GTC
Karl Miller – LRQA
Dave Ellis – LRQA
Clare Roberts – NPG
Paul Costelloe – LRQA
Tracey Taylor - ENWL

The next meeting of the NERS Strategy Working Group is 20th June 2024 at 10:00hrs.

8. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

PC stated that this has been circulated on 10th June 2022, 5th July 2022, 16th November 2022 and 6th Feb 2023 with further reminders since the last NERSAP meeting with only ENWL now

not having signed it. TT had previously requested that the word ‘unanimous’ when making decisions by NERSAP be re-considered and PC produced some proposed changes to the MoU which required a minimum two-thirds majority. Two-thirds was generally accepted as being reasonable.

PT asked if there were more ICPs on the group then they would potentially have a greater influence. PC advised that if the ratio was agreed and maintained that this shouldn’t be a problem. CR commented that the issue of ICP/Network Operator representation ratio should be managed in conjunction with this proposed change to the MoU.

PC stated that changes were being proposed about the sector (ICP/DNO/ICP) being represented by the Deputy Chairperson and Chairperson, to make the requirements for these post-holders less prescriptive.

PC asked if the meeting was happy with the proposed changes to the MoU presented and no objections were received.

Action: PC to change MoU to align with above.	Open:
Action: PC to produce an Addendum which changes to ‘unanimous’ principle to ‘majority’	Open:
Action: ENWL to sign MoU once Addendum in action above is produced.	Open:

9. LRQA Report

PC presented the data showing the activity on the NERS scheme noting that the highest number of visits by LRQA took place in the UKPN, NGED, SSE areas.

The presented slides will be circulated with these minutes to NERSAP members. PC asked that the slides are not circulated further. This now shows detail of deficiencies noted.

PC advised that some form of frequency rate was being considered since it followed that it was likely that most deficiencies would be found in Network operator areas where the most visits were carried out.

NE gave an overview of the Major Deficiencies identified by himself.

PC advised that LRQA were looking to recruit an additional NERS Assessor.

10. AOB

PW went round the table asking if attendees had any other business to raise.

TT asked that if during audits, any scopes had not been assessed during the surveillance visit programme. PW responded that if scopes were not seen during any period of 3 years these scopes would be reverted to 'partial' status. PW stated that he thought the main challenge was ICPs not advising LRQA of when work is taking place. PC re-iterated that the onus was on the ICPs to facilitate surveillance visits, not on LRQA to chase them.

MG stated that JL would be the representative at NERSAP going forward but that she would be happy to deputise.

PC asked NERSAP to approve an uplift of 3.8% for LRQA surveillance visits and their hourly rate. PW stated that in the light of no objections this is hereby approved.

PC presented the proposed dates for the meetings in 2024 as:

NERS Provider Forum 16th July, 12th November

NERSAP 30th July, 26th November