

SECTION 75 POLICY SCREENING FORM

REVIEW OF THE ELECTRICITY GUARANTEED STANDARDS OF SERVICE AND OVERALL STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

About the Utility Regulator

The Utility Regulator is the independent non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating Northern Ireland's electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries, to promote the short and long-term interests of consumers.

We are not a policy-making department of government, but we make sure that the energy and water utility industries in Northern Ireland are regulated and developed within ministerial policy as set out in our statutory duties.

We are governed by a Board of Directors and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through financial and annual reporting obligations.

We are based at Millenium House in the centre of Belfast. The Chief Executive and two Executive Directors lead teams in each of the main functional areas in the organisation: CEO Office; Price Controls; Networks and Energy Futures; and Markets and Consumer Protection and Enforcement. The staff team includes economists, engineers, accountants, utility specialists, legal advisors and administration professionals.

OUR MISSION

To protect the short and long-term interests of consumers of electricity, gas and water.

OUR VISION

To ensure value and sustainability in energy and water.

OUR VALUES

ACCOUNTABLE:

We take ownership of our actions.

TRANSPARENT:

Ensuring trust through openness and honesty.

COLLABORATIVE:

Connecting and working with others for a shared purpose.

DILIGENT:

Working with care and rigour.

RESPECTFUL:

Treating everyone with dignity and fairness.

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1. Part 1: Policy Scoping

- 1.1 The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy or policy area. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy being screened.
- 1.2 At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step-by-step basis.
- 1.3 The Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy or policy area:

- 1.4 Review of the Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service (GSS) Regulations and the Overall Standards of Performance (OSP) Determination.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy/policy area?

- 1.5 This is an existing policy with possible changes depending on the outcome of the consultation that this screen accompanies. The current electricity GSS Regulations in Northern Ireland have been in place since 1 October 1999 and the current OSP Determination has been in place since 1993. The consultation is proposing a revision to the current electricity GSS Regulations and the OSP Determination.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims and outcomes)

- 1.6 The aim of the review is to update the current electricity GSS Regulations and OSP Determinations for the electricity distributor and electricity supply companies in Northern Ireland to ensure that the GSS and OSP provisions are fit for purpose and to provide an enhanced level of consumer protection to all Northern Ireland electricity consumers.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

Yes	No	N/A
X		

If YES, explain how

- 1.7 Yes. Should any of the options detailed in the consultation proceed we expect all consumers including those that make up the Section 75 categories to benefit from the proposed changes.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

- 1.8 UR developed the proposals detailed in this consultation and will have the role of publishing final decisions on the GSS and OSP following consultation. UR will then offer the new set of GSS Regulations to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for its consent. DfE will have the role of laying the Regulations before the Northern Ireland Assembly. Further detail is provided in the following section.

Who owns and who implements each element of the policy?

- 1.9 UR will review the responses received to this consultation in addition to those received to the August 2023 consultation. UR will then publish its 'Final Decisions on the Review of Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service and Overall Standards of Performance'.
- 1.10 Following this, UR will offer the new set of GSS Regulations to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for its consent. If it consents to the new regulations, DfE will have the role of laying the Regulations before the Northern Ireland Assembly. Regulations made under Article 42 of the Electricity Order are subject to negative resolution, as per Article 93(2) of the Electricity Order¹.
- 1.11 UR will specify the Overall Standards of Performance for both electricity suppliers and the electricity distributor in Determinations made under Article 43 of The Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

Background

- 1.12 GSS and OSP set out the prescribed levels of service which consumers can expect from the electricity distributor and their electricity supplier. This consultation, in addition to the August 2023 electricity GSS/OSP consultation, seeks to update the GSS and OSP regimes to enhance the levels of consumer protection offered to consumers in Northern Ireland.

¹ [The Electricity \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1992](#)

GSS Regulations

- 1.13 GSS are specified in regulations made under Article 42 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992².
- 1.14 The electricity GSS set out prescribed service levels which individual consumers can expect from electricity companies, including payment requirements when the company has failed to adhere to the standards (subject to certain exemptions).
- 1.15 The GSS regime aims to acknowledge the inconvenience caused to the customer when company performance falls below the prescribed level. The GSS payment values do not reflect or attempt to remedy the actual loss, either partial or whole, experienced by each customer in the unique circumstances of every case.

OSP Determination

- 1.16 The OSP are specified under Article 43 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992³. Electricity OSP set out general required performance targets that apply to the overall customer base and do not carry a payment if breached.

Update to the electricity GSS Regulations and OSP Determination

- 1.17 We are carrying out a review of the electricity GSS Regulations and the OSP Determination. More specifically, we are consulting on:
 - a) All metering GSS and OSP;
 - b) Introducing a GSS standard for supply restoration in severe weather conditions*; and
 - c) Introducing inflationary uplifts to GSS payments.

*The consultation will present a number of options on standards for supply restoration in severe weather conditions. Against each of these options we will present estimates of the impact on domestic and non-domestic consumer bills, if these costs were recovered from consumers.

- 1.18 This consultation is in addition to our Review of Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service (GSS) and Overall Standards of Performance (OSP) consultation paper that was published in 2023.

² [The Electricity \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1992](#)

³ [The Electricity \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1992](#)

2023 Consultation – Equality Screen

- 1.19 With the exception of the three areas highlighted in paragraph 1.17, the proposed amendments to all other standards remain unchanged from those proposed in the August 2023 consultation.
- 1.20 As part of the 2023 consultation UR stated that it was our view that the equality impacts of the proposed GSS and OSP were positive and did not require a full screen. In order to assist with equality screening of the proposed electricity GSS and OSP, we requested that respondents provide comments on the equality impacts of the proposed electricity GSS and OSP amendments.
- 1.21 There were three responses to this section of the consultation. Of these respondents, all agreed that the equality impacts of the proposed electricity GSS and OSP were positive and therefore that a full screen was not required.
- 1.22 This new screen relates specifically to introducing a GSS standard for supply restoration in severe weather conditions. As part of the 2025 consultation, we will invite views on the equality impacts of these proposals.
- 1.23 While this screen relates to the proposals set out in paragraph 1.17 (b), respondents to the consultation are also welcome to share views and evidence of equality impacts in relation to the other GSS and OSP.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

Yes	No	N/A
X		

If YES, are they

Financial: Y / N (If YES, please detail)

- 1.24 A development stage Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) has been prepared to consider the potential economic impacts of the proposed changes to the electricity GSS and OSP. As part of the consultation, UR invite estimates from electricity companies and from businesses of key monetised costs and benefits expected from the implementation of the proposed requirements. The RIA will be updated and finalised following the consultation and in advance of the decision paper.

Legislative: Y / N (If YES, please detail)

- 1.25 Any amendments to the GSS Regulations following consultation will then be offered to the Department for the Economy (DfE) by UR. If accepted, the amendments to the GSS Regulations will be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly by DfE. The regulations are subject to negative resolution, as per Article 93(2) of the Electricity Order. Overall timelines are dependent on legislative timescales.

Other, please specify:

- 1.26 Stakeholder consultation responses will inform our final decisions on the GSS Regulations and the OSP Determination.

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

- 1.27 We consider the review specifically affects electricity consumers (both domestic and non-domestic), NIE Networks and electricity suppliers.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they and who owns them?

- 1.28 Implementation of updated Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service and Overall Standards of Performance is a dedicated project within UR's Consumer Protection Programme (CPP)⁴. The CPP is a central element of UR's Corporate Strategy and is our principal vehicle to deliver positive outcomes for electricity, gas and water consumers in Northern Ireland.

Available evidence

- 1.29 Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

⁴ [CPP 2024-2029 Decision Paper.pdf](#)

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories

- 1.30 Quantitative research carried out in 2020/21 with electricity consumers (domestic and non-domestic)⁵. This research was conducted prior to the equality screen completed in 2023. 1,211 domestic and 500 non-domestic surveys were completed. The research explored consumer views in relation to electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service and Overall Standards of Performance across multiple areas and found high levels of support for having standards in place across these areas and across all groups. Areas covered included meter disputes, charges, payments, complaints, supply interruptions, proving a supply and other services. Views on supply interruptions included views on having standards of service for restoring their electricity supply following an unplanned disconnection in 'bad' weather conditions. The sample was representative of the Northern Ireland population with regards to age, sex, socio-economic group and geographical area. Disability status was also gathered for sub-group analysis.
- 1.31 Quantitative research carried out in 2025 with electricity consumers (domestic and non-domestic). 1,000 domestic and 200 non-domestic surveys were completed. The research explored consumer opinion regarding the provision of a GSS for restoring supply during severe weather events. The research also explored consumer views on how such a payment (if introduced) should be funded and on consumer willingness to fund such a payment. The sample was representative of the Northern Ireland population with regards to age, sex, socio-economic group and geographical area. Disability status, caring responsibilities and numbers of respondents who were reliant on electricity for healthcare reasons were also monitored. As the survey questions were included as part of an omnibus survey, religion and marital status were also monitored.
- 1.32 Qualitative stakeholder engagement with the consumer representative bodies, including those who represent views of some of the Section 75 categories, took place in July and August 2025. The purpose of these sessions was to understand the experiences across different consumer groups who lost electricity during Storm Éowyn (or during previous storms). The sessions also explored stakeholder opinions regarding the introduction of payments for those who experience loss of electricity during periods of severe weather, in recognition of the inconvenience caused.

⁵ [Consumer Research Electricity GSS OSP.pdf](#)

- 1.33 As part of the 2025 consultation, consumer views on equality impacts will be sought.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Considering the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

Quantitative research

- 1.34 For this area we focus on our most recent quantitative research that took place in July 2025 and the qualitative engagement with consumer representative bodies that are members of CPAG. We highlight some key from parts of the qualitative research and qualitative engagement below.

Religious belief

- 1.35 The analysis of the research carried out in July 2025 suggests similar needs or priorities across this group (Table 1). For instance:
1. Nearly all (93%) respondents say getting their electricity back on was in their top three most important priorities. While the percentage figure is different the same views are held by those from a Catholic (91%) background, Protestant (93%) background and other (96%).
 2. A majority (77%) of all respondents feel those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused. While the percentage figure is different the same views are held by those from a Catholic (85%) background, Protestant (73%) background and other (66%).
 3. A majority (62%) of all respondents say they would not be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather. Again, while the percentage figure is different the same views are held by those from a Catholic (56%) background, Protestant (67%) background and other (63%).

Table 1: Percentage of respondents by religious belief that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three, that agree compensation payments should be available and those not willing to pay.

Religious belief	All	Protestant	Catholic	Other
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 259	Base size: 231	Base size: 76
Getting my electricity back on⁶	93%	93%	91%	96%
All respondents	Base size: 1000	Base size: 420	Base size: 410	Base size: 179
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment⁷	77%	73%	85%	66%
Would <u>not</u> be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills⁸	62%	67%	56%	63%

Political opinion

- 1.36 While there was no subgroup analysis within the research in July 2025 by political opinion, it was carried out with a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population.
- 1.37 This means the sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population that reflects the characteristics

⁶ Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

⁷ Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

⁸ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

and demographics of the entire population. We consider that this includes the Section 75 political opinion category.

Racial group

- 1.38 While there was no subgroup analysis by racial group, the research in July 2025 was carried out with a representative sample of the Northern Ireland.
- 1.39 This means the sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population that reflects the characteristics and demographics of the entire population. We consider that this includes the Section 75 racial group category.

Age

- 1.40 The analysis of the findings from the research carried out in July 2025 suggests similar needs or priorities across age groups. The sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population which means it reflects the age profile of Northern Ireland population.
- 1.41 We can analyse the findings of our research by age profile as illustrated below (Table 2). The table shows that:
1. A majority with a similar proportion (between 89% to 97%) of respondents across the various age profiles say getting their electricity back on was among the top three priorities that were most important to them.
 2. A majority with a broadly similar proportion (between 68% to 84%) of respondents across the various age profiles agree those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused.
 3. A majority with a similar proportion (between 60% to 69%) of respondents across nearly all the age profiles (except those aged between 18-24) say they would not be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather.

Table 2: Percentage of respondents by age profile that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three, that agree payments should be available and those not willing to pay to help fund payments.

Age Profile	All	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 101	Base size: 85	Base size: 132	Base size: 128	Base size: 566
Getting my electricity back on⁹	93%	92%	89%	91%	97%	94%
All respondents	Base size: 1000	Base size: 142	Base size: 168	Base size: 233	Base size: 253	Base size: 205
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment¹⁰	77%	84%	72%	81%	78%	68%
Would <u>not</u> be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills¹¹	62%	42%	60%	62%	69%	68%

Marital status

- 1.42 The analysis of the findings from the research carried out in July 2025 suggests similar needs or priorities regardless of marital status. The sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population which means it reflects the profile of the Northern Ireland population.
- 1.43 While there was no subgroup analysis available specifically by marital status, we can analyse the findings of our research by those married or

⁹ Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

¹⁰ Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

¹¹ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

living with a partner and those that are single \ separated \ widowed \ or divorced. We consider that this offers valuable insight. Table 3 shows that:

1. A majority with a similar proportion (between 92% to 94%) of respondents by marital status say getting their electricity back on was among the top three priorities most important to them.
2. A majority with a similar proportion (76% and 77%) of respondents by marital status agree those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused.
3. A majority with a similar proportion (59% and 64%) of respondents by marital status say they would not be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather.

Table 3: Percentage of respondents by marital status that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three, that agree payments should be available and those not willing to pay to help fund payments.

Marital status	All	Married or living with partner	Single\ Separated\ Widowed\ Divorced
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 329	Base size: 236
Getting my electricity back on¹²	93%	92%	94%
All respondents	Base size: 1000	Base size: 557	Base size: 437
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment¹³	77%	77%	76%
Would <u>not</u> be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills¹⁴	62%	64%	59%

Sexual orientation

- 1.44 While there was no subgroup analysis by sexual orientation, the research in July 2025 was carried out with a representative sample of the Northern Ireland.
- 1.45 This means the sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population that reflects the characteristics and demographics of the entire population. We consider that this includes the Section 75 sexual orientation category.

¹² Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

¹³ Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

¹⁴ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

Men and women generally

- 1.46 The analysis of the findings from the research carried out in July 2025 suggests there is similar priorities and needs for men and women generally. The sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population which means it reflects the profile of Northern Ireland's population.
- 1.47 We can analyse the findings of our research by men and women as illustrated below (Table 4). The table shows that:
1. A significant majority with a similar proportion of men (91%) and women (94 %) say getting their electricity back on was among the top three priorities most important to them.
 2. A majority with a similar proportion of men (72%) and women (81%) say those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused.
 3. A majority with a similar proportion of men (64%) and women (60%) say they would not they be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather.

Table 4: Percentage of men and women that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three priorities, that agree compensation payments should be available and those not willing to pay.

Men and women generally	All	Male	Female
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 271	Base size: 296
Getting my electricity back on¹⁵	93%	91%	94%
All respondents	Base size: 1000	Base size: 487	Base size: 513
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment¹⁶	77%	72%	81%
Would <u>not</u> be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills¹⁷	62%	64%	60%

Disability

- 1.48 The analysis of the findings from the research carried out in July 2025 suggests similar needs and priorities for those with and without a disability. The sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population which means it the disability profile of the Northern Ireland population.
- 1.49 We can analyse the findings of our research comparing the views of those with and without a disability as illustrated below (Table 5). The table shows that:

¹⁵ Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

¹⁶ Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

¹⁷ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

1. A significant majority with a similar proportion of those with a disability in the household (95%) and those without a disability in the household (93%) say getting their electricity back on was among the top three priorities most important to them.
2. A majority with a similar proportion of those with a disability in the household (79%) and those without a disability in the household (75%) say those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused.
3. A majority with a similar proportion of those with a disability in the household (65%) and those without a disability (61%) say they would not be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather.

Table 5: Percentage of respondents by disability within the household that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three priorities, that agree compensation payments should be available and those not willing to pay.

Disability	All	With disability	No disability
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 185	Base size: 364
Getting my electricity back on¹⁸	93%	95%	93%
All respondents	Base size: 1000	Base size: 326	Base size: 651
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment¹⁹	77%	79%	75%
Would <u>not</u> be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills²⁰	62%	65%	61%

Dependants

- 1.50 The analysis of findings from the research carried out in July 2025 suggests similar needs and priorities for those with responsibility for a dependant and without a dependant. The sample taking part in the research were a statistically accurate subset of the total population which means it the disability profile of the Northern Ireland population.
- 1.51 We can analyse the findings of our research comparing the views of those with and without dependants as illustrated below (Table 6). The table shows that:

¹⁸ Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

¹⁹ Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

²⁰ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

1. A significant majority with a similar proportion of those with a dependent child under the age of 15 (91%) and those without a dependent child under the age of 15 (94%) say getting their electricity back on was among the top three priorities most important to them.
2. A majority with a similar proportion of those with a dependent child under the age of 15 (80%) and those without a dependent child under the age of 15 (75%) say those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused.
3. A majority with a similar proportion of those with a with a dependent child under the age of 15 (57%) and those without a dependent child under the age of 15 (64%) say they would not be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather.

Table 6: Percentage of respondents by dependent child under the age of 15 within the household that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three, that agree compensation payments should be available and those not willing to pay.

Dependants	All	Yes - Parent or guardian of children under 15	No - Parent or guardian of children under 15
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 161	Base size: 405
Getting my electricity back on²¹	93%	91%	94%
All respondents	Base size: 566	Base size: 274	Base size: 726
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment²²	77%	80%	75%
<u>Would not be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills²³</u>	62%	57%	64%

1.52 We can also analyse the findings of our research comparing the views of those with and without caring responsibilities for another adult as illustrated below (Table 7). The table shows that:

1. A significant majority with a similar proportion of those that care for another adult (98%) and that do not care for another adult (92%) say getting their electricity back on was among the top three priorities most important to them.

²¹ Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

²² Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

²³ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

2. A majority with a similar proportion of those that care for another adult (73%) and that do not care for another adult (77%) say those electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused.
3. A majority with a similar proportion of that care for another adult (65%) and that do not care for another adult (61%) say they would not be willing to pay extra on their future electricity bills to fund a compensation scheme for consumers without power during severe weather.

Table 7: Percentage of respondents that care for other adults that say getting their electricity supply back on was among their top three, that agree compensation payments should be available and those not willing to pay.

Dependants	All	Yes – care for other adults	No - care for other adults
All those that have you ever lost electricity to your home during severe weather or a storm	Base size: 566	Base size: 99	Base size: 468
Getting my electricity back on²⁴	93%	98%	92%
All respondents	Base size: 1000	Base size: 150	Base size: 850
Agree affected consumers should be entitled to claim a payment²⁵	77%	73%	77%
Would <u>not</u> be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills²⁶	62%	65%	61%

²⁴ Survey question: Thinking about the last time you lost electricity because of severe weather, what was most important to you during the period you were without power? TOP 3 ANSWERS

²⁵ Survey question: Do you agree or disagree that electricity consumers who go without power due to storm damage for over 24 hours should be entitled to claim a payment in acknowledgement of the inconvenience caused?

²⁶ Survey question: If a payment was introduced, would you be willing to pay extra on your future electricity bills to fund consumers who are without power during severe weather for over a certain period of time to claim a payment?

Qualitative engagement with the Consumer Representative Bodies

- 1.53 We hosted a roundtable discussion with domestic consumer representative bodies on 30 July 2025. The purpose of this session was to understand the experiences across different consumer groups who lost electricity during Storm Éowyn (or during previous storms). Discussions also explored stakeholder opinions regarding the introduction of payments for those who experience loss of electricity during periods of severe weather, in recognition of the inconvenience caused. The Consumer Council, National Energy Action, Advice NI and Disability Action attended.
- 1.54 Some key issues raised from this engagement were the fundamental importance to consumers of:
1. Effective NIE Networks resilience activity to reduce the risk of a loss of power during severe weather and its negative impact on consumers;
 2. Accessible and accurate communication before, during and after severe weather events with consumers and key stakeholders;
 3. Adequate and responsive support to consumers especially the most vulnerable in response to severe weather events from multi agencies including NIE Networks;
 4. A coordinated multi agency approach to deal with future severe weather events to reduce the negative impact on consumers.
- 1.55 The proposed introduction of payments for those who experience the loss of electricity during periods of severe weather, in recognition of the inconvenience caused was broadly felt to be a secondary issue. It was expressed that the most important area to deal with was around communications and support.

Summary of findings from quantitative research and qualitative engagement

- 1.56 The research highlighted above and UR's engagement with consumer representative bodies on the review of GSS has not identified any negative impacts on consumers including those that make up the Section 75 categories.
- 1.57 However, stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide their views along with supporting evidence on the impact on the Section 75 categories in response to the consultation.

2. Part 2: Screening Questions

Introduction

- 2.1 If the conclusion is none in respect of all the Section 75 categories, then you may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out', you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.
- 2.2 If the conclusion is major in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to an EQIA.
- 2.3 If the conclusion is minor in respect of one or more of the Section 75 categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an EQIA, or to measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or an alternative policy.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- 1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- 2. Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and hence it would be appropriate to conduct an EQIA;
- 3. Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- 4. Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns among affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- 5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- 6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- 7. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- 8. The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

9. Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
10. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

11. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
12. The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

- 2.4 Taking into account the earlier evidence, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity / good relations for those affected by this policy, by applying the following screening questions and the impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds? Minor/Major/None

- 2.5 Please see table below that outlines the likely impact on equality of opportunity for the Section 75 categories.

Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None

Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Political opinion	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None
Racial / ethnic group	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None
Age	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None

Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Marital status	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None
Sexual orientation	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None
Men and women generally	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None

Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Disability	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None
Dependants	UR considers that the consultation options provide equality of opportunity for this category. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations are a universal set of standards of performance.	None

Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories?

If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
	X Reason provided below

- 2.6 No. The consultation proposals apply equally to all the Section 75 categories. The GSS Regulations represent a universal set of standards of performance and do not exclude any Section 75 category.
- 2.7 Once the consultation is complete and responses considered, if a final decision is made to proceed with the new and updated GSS Regulations

for consumers (domestic and non-domestic) all groups across Northern Ireland will be served by the same standards.

To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? Minor/Major/None

Good Relations Category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	UR considers that the consultation proposals are unlikely to have any impact on good relations on this category.	None
Political opinion	UR considers that the consultation proposals are unlikely to have any impact on good relations on this category.	None
Racial group	UR considers that the consultation proposals are unlikely to have any impact on good relations on this category.	None

Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
	X Reason provided below

- 2.8 No. UR considers that the consultation proposals will not affect the promotion of good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial groups.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

- 2.9 Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).
- 2.10 We consider that the proposals are unlikely to negatively affect people with multiple identities. The GSS framework is a universal set of standards and should the potential changes proceed, they will apply to everyone.

3. Part 3: Screening Decision

3.1 In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please underline one):

1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)

2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)

3. Not be subject to an EQIA at this time

4. Be subject to an EQIA

3.2 We consider that the consultation proposals on the GSS and OSP should not be subject to an EQIA at this time. There are two key reasons for this. The first, we have no evidence to suggest that any Section 75 Category will be negatively affected. The second, is the GSS framework is a universal set of standards that will apply equally to all categories.

3.3 However, we will ask for stakeholders' views in this area and will consider all responses before making a final decision on whether a EQIA is required.

4. Part 4: Monitoring

- 4.1 Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development. You should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007). The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

- 4.2 If we proceed with the consultation proposals, we will require electricity companies to report annually to UR.

5. Part 5: Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Mabel Stevenson	Consumer Protection Manager	6/10/25
Approved by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Sinéad Dynan	Head of Consumer and Business Protection	8/10/25