CONSULTATION ON THE PUBLICATION OF UTILITY REGULATOR COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Consultation Document
July 2026

www.uregni.gov.uk

Utility Regulator

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 Millennium 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.

ABSTRACT

In the Utility Regulator's (UR) Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2024/2025 we identified that we would be developing and implementing a new and enhanced licence compliance monitoring and reporting framework for all licensees in line with our commitment to robust, consistent and proportionate monitoring. This framework was published and launched on 10 September 2024. In line with our commitment to transparency, we signalled as part of that framework that we will publish an annual compliance report. This consultation paper sets out the background, provides our rationale for the content of the proposed Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report and seeks stakeholder views on key aspects of the report.

AUDIENCE

This document will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders including all licensees, consumers, advice organisations representing consumer interests, other stakeholders, and the wider energy industry. Government departments may also be interested given the potential for greater transparency into the markets we regulate.

CONSUMER IMPACT

This consultation and corresponding Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report aims to deliver further transparency into the markets we regulate to ensure consumers, industry, and other interested stakeholders are suitably informed in relation to the compliance and enforcement (C&E) activity we undertake.

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Executive Summary

The UR has a statutory responsibility for the regulation of gas, electricity, water, and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

A fundamental function of our regulation activity is the ongoing monitoring of regulated companies' compliance with the licence obligations under which they operate. This activity is applicable to all licence types and licence holders. We are committed to protecting the short- and long-term interests of electricity, gas and water consumers in Northern Ireland.

Introduction of the Licence Compliance Framework

As part of our 2024/25 Forward Work Programme (FWP), we committed to developing and implementing a new and enhanced licence compliance monitoring and reporting framework for all licensees. Details of the framework were published in September 2024. The framework aims to deliver a proportionate, consistent, and effective approach to licence compliance monitoring across all licence types and licence holders, supporting the achievement of our Corporate Strategy objectives.

It is common practice for regulators to report publicly on the compliance and enforcement activity they have undertaken throughout the year alongside the annual compliance record of the licensees they regulate. We have developed and are proposing to implement an external reporting framework that provides insights into the compliance monitoring and enforcement activity we have undertaken across the previous calendar year.

Benchmarking

To support the development of the first proposed Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report, we completed a benchmarking exercise considering a wide range of compliance reporting regimes across a number of regulated bodies within the United Kingdom and Ireland. The publications were examined to see how other sectors report upon compliance and enforcement activity to garner insight into how we should structure our own external reporting regime.

Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report

We are seeking views on certain aspects of our first Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report with relevant consultation questions posed within this consultation paper.

We are seeking stakeholder views on specific areas of our external Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report to ensure the content of the report is fit for purpose and enhances market understanding and development. These views will support our effective and transparent regulatory oversight while allowing us to promote the interests of consumers, share market learning and insights as well as provide a summary of the compliance and enforcement activity undertaken across the reporting year.

The proposed content of the report includes the following sections:

- The year at a glance – a brief summary of C&E compliance and enforcement activity over the reporting year, including infographics / summary text.
- Introduction – an overview of our functions and approach to compliance.
- Compliance Framework Development – the development of our compliance framework from 2022 onwards.
- Compliance Monitoring and Reporting – a description of our Compliance Monitoring and Reporting Framework, which includes our routine monitoring of licence compliance and the annual Statement of Licence Compliance (SoLC) process.
- Audits – detail of audits completed within the reporting year and provides an insight into licensee compliance with licence and / or legislative obligations.
- Investigations and Enforcement – this section of the report captures the current investigation and enforcement activity that can be published in accordance with our Enforcement Procedure.[1]
- Next steps – the planned next steps for the C&E Team.
- Annex 1 – Closed public investigations (2016 – current)
- Annex 2 – Financial Penalties and voluntary payments (2016 – current)[2]

Consultation process and next steps

This consultation paper is the initial step towards publishing our first Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report. We would welcome feedback from a wide range of stakeholders to garner a representative view across the licensees we regulate, consumer bodies, energy industry and wider stakeholder groups in relation to six specific elements of the report which includes:

- the relevant compliance data for inclusion within the report to ensure value to the reader;

[1] There may be additional ongoing investigatory activity which we cannot report upon due to the restrictions on publication, this is documented in our Enforcement Policy Approach and Procedure.
[2] Annex 1 and 2 of the report captures the current investigation and enforcement activity that can be published in accordance with our Enforcement Procedure.

- the extent to which it would be necessary or desirable to have the data anonymised / pseudonymised and inclusion by licence type; and
- whether cases closed at the Initial Enquiry Stage through an agreed alternative resolution should also be published in our Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report.

Following closure of the consultation period, we will analyse all consultation responses received and use this as the basis for our decision paper. We hope to publish our decision paper and our first Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report in October 2026 and annually thereafter.

Equality Considerations

As a public authority, UR has a number of obligations arising from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. UR must also have regard to the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial groups. In the development of its policies UR also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the needs of vulnerable consumers which may include individuals who are disabled or chronically sick, individuals of pensionable age, individuals with low incomes and individuals residing in rural areas. Some of the above equality categories will therefore overlap with these vulnerable groupings.

The information contained within the Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report will apply equally to all consumers. Our consideration of equality considerations is outlined in section 3 of this report.

1. Introduction

Background

1.1 The UR has a statutory responsibility for the regulation of gas, electricity, water, and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

1.2 We perform our statutory duties in accordance with the following key legislation:

- The Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003;
- The Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996;
- The Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992; and
- The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

1.3 We hold the companies we regulate to account for their compliance with both legislative requirements and their licence obligations.

1.4 We issue new licences, subject to the satisfaction of certain criteria, to a wide range of companies who wish to operate in the electricity, gas, and water markets. We also modify the conditions of licences from time to time, which changes the obligations to which those licensees are subject.

1.5 A fundamental function of our regulation activity is the ongoing monitoring of regulated companies' compliance with the licence obligations under which they operate. This activity is applicable to all licence types and licence holders. We are committed to protecting the short- and long-term interests of electricity, gas and water consumers in Northern Ireland.

1.6 Our Corporate Strategy 2024-2029, "Protecting Consumers on the way to Net Zero", was published in April 2024. The Strategy sets out four strategic objectives, of which two are relevant to this consultation: Objective 3: 'Enabling best in class energy and water companies' ensuring that Northern Ireland energy and water companies compare to the best by strengthening the culture of compliance across licenced companies through greater accountability and transparency; and Objective 4: 'Providing the highest level of consumer service and protection' through increased reporting on consumer metrics which highlight the performance of energy and water companies.

Introduction of the Licence Compliance Framework

1.7 On 10 September 2024 we published details of our new compliance monitoring and reporting framework for all licensees. The aim of this framework was to deliver an enhanced, proportionate, consistent, and effective licence compliance framework across all licence types and licence holders.

1.8 The introduction of this framework was in support of the delivery of our Corporate Strategy. Through our FWP 2024/2025 we signalled that we would be undertaking a project to develop and implement a new and enhanced licence compliance monitoring and reporting framework for all licensees.

1.9 This new compliance framework comprises of two core pillars – ongoing / routine monitoring of licence compliance, and an annual assurance process which is known as the annual SoLC. The annual SoLC process requires all licensees to provide assurance on an annual basis that they are compliant with their licence. Compliance must therefore be central to the work of licensees and that focus must run through all levels of the organisation. Our annual assurance process simply seeks this confirmation of compliance at the highest level within the licensed companies by ensuring that this is signed off by the Chief Executive Officer, Managing Director or equivalent.

1.10 The framework is supported by the introduction of a new external reporting regime (which underpins the two core pillars) and is the basis of this consultation paper. We published an instructions and guidance document providing all licensees with the necessary background information on the compliance framework, including our intention to publish an annual compliance report.

1.11 It is common practice for regulators to report publicly on the compliance and enforcement activity they undertake in relation to, for example, ongoing investigations and audits; alongside their reporting on the compliance record of the licensees they regulate. Learning from best practice and market experience, we have developed and proposed to implement an external reporting framework that provides an insight into the compliance monitoring and enforcement activity we have undertaken across the previous calendar year. We do not intend to publish any commercially sensitive information and where we do publish information relating to potential compliance issues, we are considering whether and to what extent it may be necessary to include these in an anonymised / pseudonymised format (except if these have already been published in accordance with our Enforcement Policy Approach and Procedure). It is on this basis that we are consulting, and we would invite stakeholders to share their views on this further in response to our consultation questions posed throughout this paper (and collated in Annex A).

1.12 Our publication will include details of both the routine and annual compliance monitoring processes as well as any relevant audit activity that we have undertaken across the year. We will provide a summary of relevant enforcement activity that can be published in accordance with our Enforcement Policy Approach and Procedure. This will help to deliver further transparency into the markets we regulate and ensure consumers and stakeholders alike are suitably informed in relation to the Compliance & Enforcement (C&E) activity we undertake.

1.13 We collect licence compliance information under the 'Provision of Information to the Authority' licence condition within all licences and are publishing this information under Article 7 of The Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and Article 259 of The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

Benchmarking

1.14 To support the development of this annual report, we completed a benchmarking exercise considering a wide range of compliance and enforcement reporting regimes across a number of regulated bodies within the United Kingdom and Ireland. This included analysis of external compliance reports from Ofgem, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Financial Reporting Council (FRC) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). These documents were examined to see how other sectors report upon compliance and enforcement issues and garner insight that could help strengthen our own external reporting regime.

1.15 We assessed the content of each report individually and used this to identify common themes / areas covered across the reports to ensure that we were identifying best practice across a range of compliance functions and to ensure that our report would cover all relevant information. The common themes / areas included:

- focus on enforcement activity;
- varying report length from five to 54 pages with the average containing 29 pages;
- various methods of presenting information with a combination of narrative and graphical formats;

- high level overview of open and closed cases, including outcomes; and
- regulatory changes / future workstreams.

1.16 There were other aspects of these reports which we believe represent best practice. We have incorporated these where possible into our template.

1.17 In addition to this desktop research, we also engaged with other regulators directly through the UK Regulators Network (UKRN) compliance and enforcement forum. Through this forum we further explored other regulators approach to compliance and enforcement publications and plans for further development.

Consultation

1.18 This consultation paper is the initial step in the process of publishing our first Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report. The purpose of this paper is to consult on certain aspects of the external report (see section 2).

1.19 We aim to gather responses from a wide range of stakeholders including all licensees, consumers, advice organisations representing consumer interests, other stakeholders and the wider energy industry. Government departments may also be interested given the potential for greater transparency into the markets we regulate.

1.20 The publication of this consultation will assist us in achieving objectives three and four of our Corporate Strategy. The responses to this consultation will support us in our decision making around the content of the external report and help with our decision on anonymising / pseudonymising information relating to licensees.

Structure of this paper

1.21 This section outlines the background and the introduction of the Licence Compliance Framework, benchmarking across other regulators in the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as the purpose of this consultation.

1.22 Section two provides an overview of the sections contained within the proposed Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report including those sections on which we are consulting.

1.23 Section three covers equality considerations.

1.24 Section four provides guidance on how to respond to this consultation, including information on next steps.

2. Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report

2.1 This section details the proposed content for the Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report. Within this section we focus on each area of the report, specifically highlighting those sections on which we require stakeholders' views. We provide our rationale for the inclusion of each section along with any relevant consultation questions.

2.2 The aim of the annual report is to:

- promote the interests of consumers;
- provide transparency and accountability in the market in relation to our C&E work;
- fulfil the objectives of our Corporate Strategy 2024-2029 in relation to 'Enabling best in class energy and water companies' and 'Providing the highest level of consumer service and protection';
- provide greater insight for consumers and stakeholders into how we hold the companies we regulate to account; and
- enable us to be a best practice regulator.

2.3 We are keen to hear the views of interested stakeholders and invite representations on the consultation questions included within this section, including any rationale for the responses given.

2.4 We are specifically seeking consultee views on whether and to what extent it may be necessary for information contained within the proposed report to be anonymised / pseudonymised in relation to licensees and their compliance activity.

2.5 We will publish information naming licensees where publication is permitted within the confines of our enforcement policy approach and procedure.

2.6 The report includes the following sections:

- The year at a glance
- Introduction
- Compliance Framework Development
- Compliance Monitoring and Reporting

- Audits completed during the year
- Current and ongoing Investigations and Enforcement
- Next Steps
- Annex 1 – Closed public investigations (2016 – current)
- Annex 2 – Financial penalties and voluntary payments (2016 – current).

The year at a glance

2.7 For this section we will include a brief summary of C&E activity over the reporting year (January – December). This aligns with the annual SoLC reporting process timelines.

2.8 This summary is designed to give readers a quick, digestible overview without needing to read the full report. This will be represented in graphical and / or text format. All information contained within the summary will be borne from the information contained within the body of the report.

2.9 A number of other regulators include a summary / infographic which provides a high-level overview of 'the year at a glance' / highlights of the year. This will contribute to greater clarity and transparency, providing an accessible, digestible summary on one page for the reader.

2.10 We currently utilise infographics in our public facing reports to depict the market. For example, the Quarterly Retail Energy Market Monitoring Report uses infographics to ensure that information is quickly and clearly communicated.

2.11 We will utilise Plain Numbers principles when producing any infographics contained within this report to ensure that our communications are easily accessible to all consumers.

Introduction

2.12 This section of the report will give an overview of the UR's functions and approach to compliance in order to provide relevant context for the reader. It also gives an outline of our licence compliance framework including the development of this report.

2.13 The inclusion of an 'introduction' is standard practice in all UR reports. We will include a detailed introduction to cover our statutory duties and provide a background to the report, setting the scene for C&E activity, development of the licence compliance framework and the reporting period covered by the report.

2.14 As this information is already included in our general publications and consultations, we have not included a specific consultation question for this section.

Compliance Framework Development

2.15 This section covers the development of the compliance framework from 2022 onwards, along with the associated ongoing updates to UR policies and procedures.

2.16 We have previously published information in relation to our compliance monitoring and reporting framework, including instructions and guidance for licensees which was published on 10 September 2024 and updated supporting guidance documents on 24 November 2025. These documents are intended to support licensees when they are completing their annual SoLC return and ensure that all licensees complete the required paperwork consistently and in line with the requirements of the process.

2.17 This section will contain any changes / amendments to the Compliance Framework from the previous reporting year and any significant updates to the process.

2.18 As this information is already published on our website, we have not included specific consultation questions for this section.

Compliance Monitoring and Reporting

2.19 This section of the report covers our Compliance Monitoring and Reporting Framework, which includes the routine monitoring of licence compliance and the annual SoLC process both of which are underpinned by this proposed external reporting regime.

2.20 Routine monitoring of licence compliance is the central focus of our compliance framework. This includes the day-to-day monitoring of licence compliance by both licensees and the UR. It is the responsibility of all licensees to ensure compliance with their licence(s). This extends to notifying us promptly at the earliest opportunity of any issues that affect their compliance with their licence obligations throughout the year – whether through circumstance, accident or design.

2.21 Within this section we first propose to include an overview of our routine compliance monitoring findings for the reporting period. We are considering using anonymised / pseudonymised information but will include detail by licence type in order to ensure the information within the report remains valuable to the reader. We would welcome stakeholders' views on this approach.

2.22 This overview section will include:

- number of potential compliance issues during the reporting period;
- breakdown of the number of potential compliance issues by licence type; and
- summary of common compliance issues identified per licence type.

2.23 Secondly, we propose to include an overview of our Annual SoLC findings. For this information we are considering using anonymised / pseudonymised information but will include detail by licence type in order to ensure the information within the report remains valuable to the reader. We would welcome stakeholders' views on this approach.

2.24 This section will include:

- number of SoLC submissions received by the reporting deadline;
- number of SoLC submissions closed by the end of process deadline; and
- number of potential compliance issues[3] recorded through the SoLC process and relevant summary as necessary.

We will also highlight where the number of potential compliance issues recorded during the SoLC process varies from the information provided to us during the routine compliance monitoring process.

Consultation Questions

Question 1. Do you agree with our proposed compliance data providing detail of both our routine and annual compliance monitoring?

Please provide clear reasoning and examples where possible evidencing the impact of your views.

Question 2. To what extent would it be necessary or desirable to have the published data anonymised / pseudonymised?

[3] We refer to 'potential compliance issues' rather than breaches of licence as the determination of a breach of licence can only be made by an enforcement committee.

Stakeholders should outline and explain (where applicable) their rationale for the views expressed and include examples where appropriate.

Question 3. To what extent do you agree with our proposal to include relevant detail by licence type to ensure the data remains of value to the reader.

Stakeholders should outline and explain (where applicable) their rationale for the views expressed and include examples where appropriate.

Audits

2.25 Audits form an integral part of our compliance monitoring framework. They provide insight into licensee processes and assist in informing regulatory policy and decisions.

2.26 The C&E team conduct an annual compliance audit programme, which takes into consideration the potential for customer harm, market / industry developments, areas of concern and potential issues or risks. All regulated companies may be subject to audit. The audit scope varies each year, providing an opportunity to monitor compliance across a range of regulated activities and licensees and can be responsive to market conditions and outcomes.

2.27 This section of the report will provide an overview of the C&E approach to audits as well as highlighting audits undertaken by the C&E team during the reporting period. It will include the audit findings and recommendations.

2.28 We currently publish our audit findings as a standalone news item on our website shortly after completion of the auditing programme and are not proposing to change this process. However, we will provide an overview of the audit programme for the reporting year and will provide a link to the published findings. Further detail on other audits carried out by the organisation will also be linked where publicly available.

2.29 As such, audit results will form an integral part of our annual report. They assist in assessing licensee compliance with licence and / or legislative requirements, provide insight into licensee processes and assist in informing regulatory policy and decisions. An independent audit assurance process also helps to provide stakeholder and consumer confidence in relation to the operations of our licensees. This approach is in line with that taken by other regulators who also provide detailed information on routine auditing findings.

2.30 Information in this section will include:

- the scope of the audit (categorised by licensee type, e.g. relating to suppliers or electricity generators); and
- a brief outline of the independent auditor's conclusions / recommendations and any relevant actions.

Investigations and Enforcement

2.31 We expect regulated companies to abide by their respective licence conditions and / or the applicable legislation. However, if we are satisfied that a company is contravening, has contravened, or is likely to contravene a relevant condition or requirement, we have a number of powers under the relevant energy and water legislation to take enforcement action against the regulated company.

2.32 Where appropriate and necessary, we take enforcement action in accordance with our published Enforcement Policy Approach and Procedure ("Enforcement Procedure") and our prioritisation principles contained therein.

2.33 Our Enforcement Procedure enables licensees to know what to expect if they find themselves under investigation or have enforcement action commenced against them. It outlines how the process will operate, the stages of the process, and possible outcomes.

2.34 Our benchmarking exercise highlighted that most reports we reviewed contained investigation and enforcement reporting. For example, Ofgem split their reporting into two separate documents to include an Enforcement Overview and a Retail Supplier Compliance / Enforcement Report. The Enforcement Overview contained reporting on both open and closed investigations along with outcomes along with remedial activity.

2.35 The information contained within this section of the report only captures the relevant enforcement activity that can be published in accordance with our Enforcement Policy Approach and Procedure.[4]

2.36 We are not consulting on our publication requirements as laid out in our policy, but we are consulting on the inclusion of cases that have already been published, in our Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report. For

[4] Section 2.5 – 2.9, 4.14, 4.19 – 4.20, 4.46 and 4.55 – 4.57 of our Enforcement Policy Approach and Procedure covers what we can publish in relation to each stage of our investigations.

example, where cases are closed following the Initial Enquiry Stage either because there is no case to answer or the breach identified is minor and has been resolved, we do not publish details about the case. Where the case is closed following the Initial Enquiry Stage because alternative resolution has been agreed, we do not publish information about the case on our website as a news item, but we include a description[5] in the UR Annual Report. As the Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report is an overview of all C&E activity throughout the year, for completeness, we are proposing to also include this information in this report.

2.37 During 2025 we recruited for and established an Enforcement panel. The panel plays a critical role in supporting complex regulatory and compliance decisions, ensuring robust and impartial decision-making in our enforcement cases. Enforcement Panel members may be called upon to sit on any given Enforcement or Settlement committee. The Panel members will help ensure that the UR's enforcement actions are consistent, impartial and fair. Further information on the panel and its members can be found on our website.

2.38 The investigations and enforcement section of the report will contain:

- an overview of UR's approach to investigations and enforcement (as outlined in our Enforcement Procedure)[6];
- an overview of the UR Enforcement Panel and its members;
- open investigations (during the reporting year, Stage 1 and beyond);
- closed investigations (during the reporting year, excluding those which may not be published in line with our Enforcement Procedure);
- financial penalties and voluntary payments paid during the reporting year; and
- provisional and final orders issued during the reporting year.

[5] The information to be published will illustrate why alternative resolution was appropriate at the Initial Enquiry Stage and will include the name of the licensee, the potential contravention involved and the alternative resolution agreed - including the amount of any charitable donation (if any) and who it was paid to.
[6] The information contained within this report only captures the relevant enforcement activity that can be published in accordance with our Enforcement Procedure and has already been published on our website.

Consultation Question

Question 4. Should information about cases closed at the Initial Enquiry Stage through an agreed alternative resolution also be published in our Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report?

Please provide the rationale for your position including how it represents the consumer interest.

Next Steps

2.39 This section covers the planned next steps for the C&E Team, including a forward look on our workstreams. This will include the ongoing review of the compliance monitoring framework, any consultations that we have undertaken or are planning to undertake and any planned updates to policies or procedures.

Annex 1 – Closed public investigations (2016 – current)

2.40 This section will include details of all formal enforcement activity which has been undertaken by the UR from 2016 onwards and has already been published on our website.

2.41 These details are currently publicly available on our website and will only contain information which we can publish in accordance with our Enforcement Procedure.

Annex 2 – Financial penalties and voluntary payments (2016 – current)

2.42 This section will provide details of all fines and voluntary payments which have been made as a result of our investigation / compliance work from 2016 onwards.

2.43 These details are currently available on our website and will only contain values; they will not be attributed to any specific licensee.

Over-arching Question

Question 5. Do you have any additional comments on the proposed annual report in relation to how the publication of the proposed information is in the interests of consumers?

If you have any additional comments, please provide clear rationale for these.

3. Equality Considerations

3.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a number of obligations on public authorities concerning the promotion of equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between different categories. We aim to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

3.2 UR must also have regard to the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial groups. In the development of its policies, UR also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the needs of vulnerable consumers which may include individuals who are disabled or chronically sick, individuals of pensionable age, individuals with low incomes and individuals residing in rural areas. Some of the above equality categories will therefore overlap with these vulnerable groupings.

3.3 We consider that the proposals set out in this paper will help all consumers and we do not anticipate any negative impacts on any particular consumer group.

3.4 The information contained within the Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report will apply equally to all consumers. We have no evidence to suggest that any Section 75 category will be negatively affected. We welcome any evidence from consultees in relation to the equality impacts of the proposals.

Consultation Question

Question 6. Do you agree that where this document has an impact on the groups listed, those impacts are likely to be positive in relation to equality of opportunity for consumers?

If you do not agree, please provide your rationale and examples where possible.

4. Responding to this consultation

4.1 The proposals detailed in this consultation provide an overview of the proposed structure and content for our annual report.

4.2 We welcome comments from all stakeholders on the consultation questions by **5pm on Tuesday, 8 September 2026**. Responses to this consultation should be forwarded to:

Email: compliance.enforcement@uregni.gov.uk

Or via post to:

Compliance and Enforcement – Consultation Response
Utility Regulator
Millennium House
Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ

4.3 As a public body and non-ministerial government department, UR is required to comply with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The effect of FOIA may be that certain recorded information contained in consultation responses is required to be put into the public domain. Hence it is possible that all responses made to consultations will be discoverable under FOIA, even if respondents ask us to treat responses as confidential. It is therefore important that respondents take account of this. In particular, if asking UR to treat responses as confidential, respondents should specify why they consider the information in question should be treated as such.

4.4 This paper is available in alternative formats such as audio, Braille, etc. If an alternative format is required, please contact our office and we will be happy to assist.

Next Steps

4.5 Following closure of the consultation period, all consultation responses that have been received will be analysed and will contribute to our final decisions. We anticipate that our decision paper will be published alongside the first Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report in October 2026.

4.6 The proposed first report will provide a baseline of data which will enable us to provide comparative data year-on-year.

5. Glossary of Terms

C&E	Compliance and Enforcement
CRU	The Commission for Regulation of Utilities
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FCA	Financial Conduct Authority
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FRC	Financial Reporting Council
FWP	Forward Work Programme
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SoLC	Statement of Licence Compliance
UKRN	United Kingdom Regulators Network
UR	Utility Regulator

Annex A – Consultation Questions

Question 1. Do you agree with our proposed compliance data providing detail of both our routine and annual compliance monitoring? Please provide clear reasoning and examples where possible evidencing the impact of your views.
Question 2. To what extent would it be necessary or desirable to have the published data anonymised / pseudonymised? Stakeholders should outline and explain (where applicable) their rationale for the views expressed and include examples where appropriate.
Question 3. To what extent do you agree with our proposal to include relevant detail by licence type to ensure the data remains of value to the reader. Stakeholders should outline and explain (where applicable) their rationale for the views expressed and include examples where appropriate.
Question 4. Should information about cases closed at the Initial Enquiry Stage through and alternative resolution also be published in our Compliance and Enforcement Annual Report? Please provide the rationale for your position including how it represents the consumer interest.
Question 5. Do you have any additional comments on the proposed annual report in relation to how the publication of the proposed information is in the interests of consumers? If you have any additional comments, please provide clear rationale.
Question 6. Do you agree that where this document has an impact on the groups listed, those impacts are likely to be positive in relation to equality of opportunity for consumers? If you do not agree, please provide your rationale and examples where possible.