

Care Register Review: special provisions for vulnerable customers NIE Networks comments

29 September 2017

NIE Networks welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above UR consultation. Our comments are as follows.

Section Seven (page 42)

- Point 3. We support that NIE Networks and NIW should work together (within data protection guidelines) to ensure the most vulnerable customers can avail of a comprehensive service. The development of a data sharing initiative and the practicalities of this between NIE Networks and NIW will be very relevant to this review. NIE Networks notes that the UR considers that there is merit in exploring the concept of data sharing.
- Point 5. We support the proposal to improve promotion and awareness of the care registers. There are currently around 7,000 customers registered on the NIE Networks critical care register, this is manageable and we can provide a good service to those currently registered. Promoting the service and incrementally growing the numbers registered needs to be done gradually to ensure we maintain the current level of service. Significant increases in the number of customers registering would require additional resourcing to provide the required service.
- Point 6. We support the initiative to improve relationships within community and voluntary organisations. The support provided to people on the register is monitored and regularly reviewed. During periods of unplanned (faults) supply interruption we make contact with the affected customers who are on the register, and provide information and advice. When planned interruptions are scheduled customers on the register are contacted three days before the outage and advised of the situation. During major escalations we build up relationships with the critical care customers and keep them informed and provide advice and in some cases generators can be provided. In all of these situations feedback from customers is welcomed and where appropriate used as learning opportunities. NIE Networks will continue to use dependency on life saving medical equipment as the criteria for joining. Our Customer Service Agents are trained to advise customers about the critical care register and also to register some one-off calls as 'special needs' if a customer is not on the register but clearly has a vulnerability.