citizens advice

August 2026

# Standards and Consumer Expectations

## Evaluating whether current GSOP standards (2023/24-2024/25) meet consumer expectations

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# Networks and geographic areas covered

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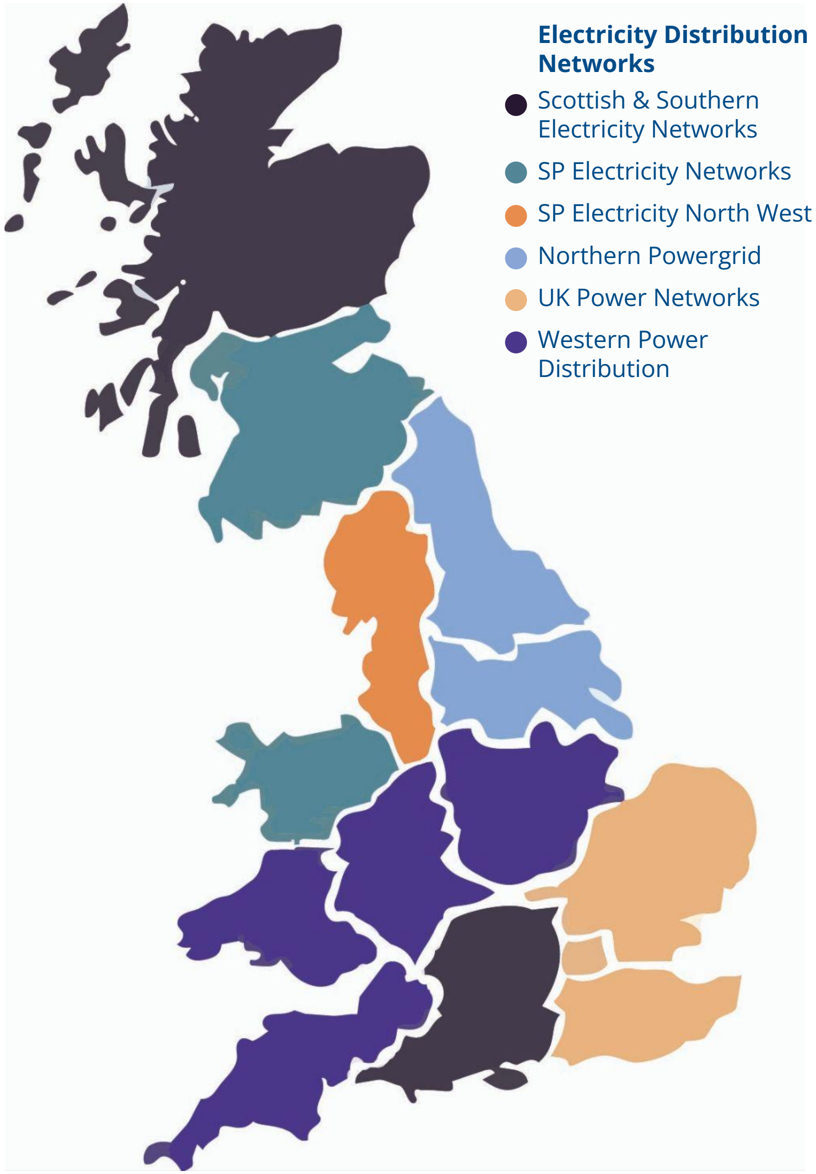
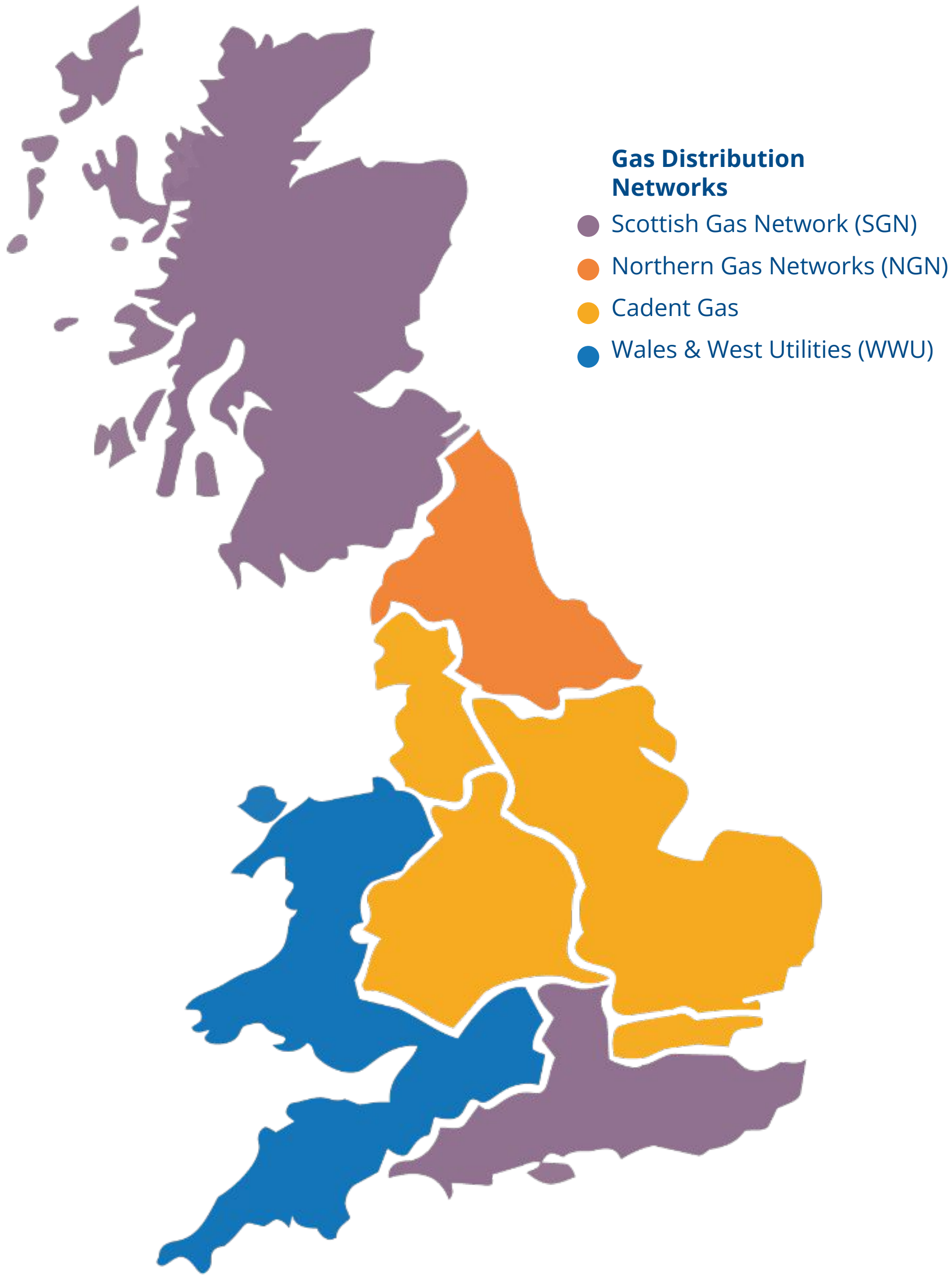



| Electricity networks & abbreviations | Areas covered |
|---|---|
| SP Electricity North West (SP ENW) | North West England (including Derbyshire, North Yorkshire, and parts of Cheshire) |
| SP Energy Networks (SPEN)<br>SPD: SP Distribution<br>SPMW: SP Manweb | North Wales & Chester<br>Southern & Mid Scotland |
| National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)<br>WMID: West Midlands<br>EMID: East Midlands<br>SWALES: South Wales<br>SWEST: South West | South & Mid Wales<br>East & West Midlands<br>South West England |
| Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)<br>SSEH: Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution<br>SSES: Southern Electric Power Distribution | Northern Scotland<br>Central Southern England (including Hampshire,<br>Dorset, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire) |
| Northern Powergrid (NPG)<br>NPGN: Northern Powergrid Northeast<br>NPGY: Northern Powergrid Yorkshire | North East England<br>Northern Lincolnshire<br>Yorkshire |
| UK Power Networks (UKPN)<br>SPN: South Eastern Power Networks<br>EPN: Eastern Power Networks<br>LPN: London Power Networks | London<br>Eastern & South East England |




# Networks and geographic areas covered

| Gas networks & abbreviations | Areas covered |
|---|---|
| Wales & West Utilities (WWU) | Wales<br>South West England |
| Northern Gas Network (NGN) | North East England<br>North, West, & East Yorkshire<br>Northern Cumbria |
| Cadent<br>EOE: East of England<br>Lon:London<br>WM: West Midlands<br>NW: North West | Midlands<br>East of England<br>North West England<br>North London |
| Scottish Gas Network (SGN)<br>SC: Scotland<br>SO: Southern | Scotland<br>Southern England |

# Executive summary

# Executive summary

Network charges account for roughly a quarter of a typical dual-fuel energy bill, covering the operation, maintenance, and upgrade of the infrastructure that transports energy to homes and businesses.[1] It should be noted that this figure includes transmission costs, but transmission operators fall outside the scope of this study. This report focuses exclusively on distribution network operators. As consumers are paying for distribution services through their bills, it is reasonable to expect network companies to meet the service standards set by Ofgem as part of their regulatory obligations.

Guaranteed Standards of Performance (GSOPs) are the primary standard used to ensure the quality of service provided by the distribution network operators. GSOPs set out the required level of service that consumers should expect to receive from their gas and electricity network operators. And the compensation that may be due when standards are not met. These standards are crucial for protecting consumers because these operators are regional monopolies and consumers cannot switch to other networks. The GSOPs apply to both traditional and independent distribution operators.[2] However, this report only focuses on the performance of traditional network operators - Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs).

In our previous reports on GSOPs, including *Living up to the Standard*, *Standard Issue*, and *Standard Issue Update*, we found that network operators generally perform well against these standards, with high pass rates across many areas.[3] A pass rate is the percentage of cases in which a network operator met a particular standard during a given year. It shows how often the standard was met and provides an indication of how well network operators performed against it. High pass rates suggest high levels of compliance with regulatory obligations among network operators.

However, high pass rates do not always tell the full story. Although GSOP metrics capture whether specific regulatory standards are fulfilled, they do not evaluate whether these standards reflect actual consumer expectations. Achieving full regulatory compliance does not automatically guarantee a satisfactory resolution from the customer's perspective.

This report provides an overview of the latest GSOPs performance in 2023/24 and 2024/25. It also looks beyond the pass rates to consider the consumer experience and whether the current standards reflect what consumers expect from their network operators.

Alongside GSOPs performance data, it draws on Citizens Advice casework to understand the main issues consumers raise with us about their gas and electricity networks. We recognise that this data has its limits. It mainly reflects cases where consumers experienced problems and sought support, so it does not capture positive experiences where no help was needed. But it provides important insight into where there may be a gap between regulatory performance and the consumer experience.

Key GSOPs and Citizens Advice data results in 2023/24 and 2024/25 are as follows:

1. **Combined average pass rates across all networks remained above 95% for most GSOPs.**

   Many electricity customer service and connection standards' pass rates, such as planned interruption, remained close to or at 100% across both years. The lowest-performing electricity standard in customer service in both years was the appointment-making process for voltage complaints, with pass rates of 82.0% and 80.0%, respectively.

   Gas networks demonstrated strong overall performance in areas such as customer premise reinstatement and complaint handling, with the combined average across all companies exceeding 96%. However, performance on payment standards was less consistent and remained the weakest-performing area across the sector—dropping to 49.34% in 2023/24 and 32.96% in 2024/25. These lower compliance figures were largely driven by differing interpretations of reporting criteria among network operators rather than operational failures.

2. **Payout under the GSOPs differed significantly between electricity and gas, and between customer service and connection standards.**

   Total payout under electricity customer service GSOPs increased sharply from £5.86 million in 2023/24 to £26.44 million in 2024/25. The 2023/24 total comprised £5.09 million in mandatory payments, £0.69 million in ex-gratia compensation, and £0.07 million in goodwill payouts. By 2024/25, these figures rose to £19.10 million for mandatory payments, £6.02 million for ex-gratia payments, and £1.29 million for goodwill payouts. Most of this increase came from mandatory payments and was largely driven by Severe Weather Category 2 interruptions, alongside higher compensation levels and the introduction of inflation-linked adjustments. The "Severe Weather Category 2" typically refers to major storm events or severe weather conditions (such as high winds and heavy snow) that cause massive disruption to the electricity network. By comparison, payments made under the electricity connection standards were much lower, falling from £2.0 million in 2023/24 to £1.49 million in 2024/25.

In relation to gas customer service standards, network companies paid out £11.41 million in 2023/24 (£9.22 million mandatory; £2.18 million ex-gratia) and £9.84 million in 2024/25 (£9.01 million mandatory; £0.83 million ex-gratia). In both years, over half of these payouts were directly linked to failures in supply restoration. Under the gas connection standards, the payout was significantly lower, totalling £0.72 million (£715,248) in 2023/24 and £0.56 million (£561,667) in 2024/25. The 2023/24 total comprised £0.42 million in mandatory payments, £0.03 million in ex-gratia compensation, and £0.27 million in voluntary scheme payouts. By 2024/25, these payouts shifted to £0.30 million for mandatory payments, £0.01 million for ex-gratia payments, and £0.25 million under the voluntary scheme.  Most of the payments were linked to substantial completion on the agreed date, which accounted for more than 70% in both years.

3. **Consumers received a fairly similar level of service regardless of their location.**

Performance across network operators was broadly consistent, with most companies recording similarly high pass rates for both electricity and gas standards. There were only limited differences between electricity network operators across both customer service and connection standards. The main exceptions were appointments for voltage complaints and compensation payments. For example, Northern Powergrid Northeast (NPGN) recorded 0% for offering voltage complaint appointments in both years, while several operators achieved 100%.

Most gas operators also performed at a similar level across many standards, but the standard on compensation payments showed much bigger differences. Cadent and Northern Gas Network (NGN)  noted that the apparent discrepancy in their performance was driven by reporting methodology rather than operational service levels. Their data capture focused on recording total late payments rather than the proportion of on-time delivery, the calculation method produced a lower compliance percentage that does not reflect standard performance comparisons.

4. **While GSOP data shows how often network operators meet the standards, Citizens Advice casework offers a consumer perspective by showing the issues that most commonly prompt consumers to seek advice about network operators.**

   For electricity consumers, the most common issue was compensation, particularly disputes over whether they were entitled to a payment and whether the amount offered was correct. Appliance damage and wider losses caused by power cuts were also among the top five issues raised. For gas consumers, reinstatement was one of the most common concerns. This refers to repairing and restoring affected areas after network works have been completed. Other common gas issues included disputes over meter locations and the cost of connecting to or disconnecting from the network.

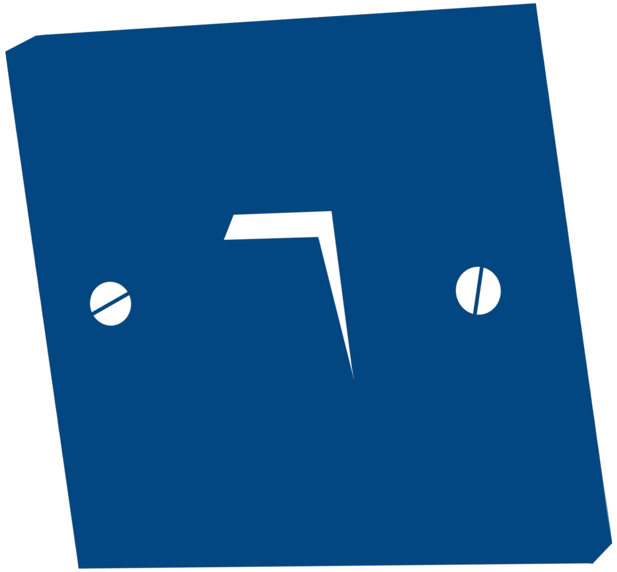
**These data essentially tell us that:**

1. Network operators are largely meeting the GSOPs, with most pass rates remaining above 95% in 2023/24 and 2024/25. But high pass rates do not always mean consumers are satisfied or that their expectations have been met. Citizens Advice casework shows that some of the biggest consumer concerns sit outside what the standards measure. This is particularly clear in reinstatement and appliance damage. Gas networks recorded reinstatement pass rates above 96%, yet it remained one of the most common issues raised by consumers, mainly because the standard measures the time taken to complete the work , not whether original conditions are restored. Appliance damage after power cuts was another frequent issue. While GSOP payments cover inconvenience, they do not cover direct losses such as damaged appliances, spoiled food or lost income, leaving some consumers out of pocket even when the standard has been met.

2. Consumers continue to struggle to understand their rights and network operators' responsibilities. For both gas and electricity, one of the most common reasons people contacted Citizens Advice was to find out who was responsible for resolving an issue, who should pay, and what support they could expect. Consumers reasonably expect clear information, straightforward support, and a clear understanding of their rights when things go wrong. In practice, many are left confused about what they are entitled to and what the network is required to do. This points to a gap in communication between network operators and consumers.

3. Compensation remains one of the clearest gaps between how the GSOPs are designed and how consumers experience them in practice. Total compensation payments increased significantly over the two years, particularly in electricity. But Citizens Advice casework shows that compensation was still the most common reason electricity consumers contacted us for support. This suggests that higher payments do not necessarily lead to a better consumer experience. There is a gap between what consumers expect from the compensation system and how it works in practice. Consumers expect compensation to be clear, fair and easy to understand. In reality,  that was not always the case from consumers' viewpoint.

To better align the GSOPs framework with consumer expectation, this report recommends improving communication, reviewing whether standards reflect consumer expectations, and strengthening protections where consumers face broader losses, to help ensure the GSOPs framework works better for the people it is intended to protect.



# Key recommendations

# Key Recommendations

## Ofgem

Ofgem should implement the recommendation set out in the previous report, *Standard Issue Update*, by reviewing how customers who are not eligible for automatic compensation under standards such as planned supply interruptions and multiple interruptions can be better supported.[4] We recognise that making these payments automatic may not always be practical due to technical challenges or the associated costs. But this should not mean eligible consumers miss out. Network operators should still be expected to take reasonable steps to identify affected customers and make sure compensation is paid.

Ofgem should review whether current GSOP standards properly reflect consumer expectations. Citizens Advice casework shows that reinstatement remains one of the most common issues raised by gas consumers. A common concern is the quality of the reinstatement, particularly where a property or surface is not restored to its original condition. Under the current standards, network operators are only required to complete reinstatement within a set timeframe. There is no requirement for the work to be restored to the same standard as before. This can leave a gap between what the standards measure and customer satisfaction. Ofgem should review whether the reinstatement standard could be strengthened to better reflect the quality of work consumers reasonably expect after network works.

Ofgem should consider whether stronger consumer protections are needed when power cuts cause damage to appliances or other collateral losses. Citizens Advice casework shows that appliance damage remains a common issue raised by electricity consumers. At present, GSOPs are intended to compensate consumers for the inconvenience caused by service failures, not for the financial losses they may experience. This means consumers can still face the cost of repairing or replacing damaged appliances. In most cases, network operators expect consumers to claim these costs through their home insurance. This can leave consumers bearing additional costs such paying an insurance excess or higher future premiums, even though the damage was caused by a network failure. Ofgem should review whether the current framework adequately reflects these risks and whether there should be clearer routes to redress when consumers experience financial harm directly caused by network management or equipment failures, rather than severe weather or other uncontrollable conditions.

Ofgem should consider whether the current approach to compensation in rented properties fairly reflects who is actually affected by a power cut. Although this issue appeared in only a small number of Citizens Advice cases and sits outside the formal scope of GSOPs, it raises an important question about who compensation is really for. In cases where rent includes energy bills, compensation is paid directly to the landlords even though it is the tenant who experiences the loss of supply and the inconvenience that comes with it. This does not sit comfortably with the original intention of GSOP payments, which is to compensate for inconvenience. There is already a similar principle in the energy sector. Under the Maximum Resale Price, landlords who resell energy cannot profit from it and must pass on the agreed retail price to tenants.[5] Ofgem should review whether the same principle should apply to GSOP compensation, so that payments reach the household that actually experiences the disruption.

Ofgem should review how compensation is calculated for power cuts. GSOP rules calculate payments from the time a network operator is notified rather than the actual onset of an outage. This model provides an auditable dataset, encourages companies to resolve issues rapidly upon notification, accounts for unmonitored or unoccupied properties, and incentivises consumers to report power cuts as soon as possible. However, this approach often results in lower compensation than consumers expect. Given potential reporting hurdles associated with the early 2027 PSTN switch-off, Ofgem should explore whether alternative calculation models can better reflect the total outage duration while maintaining fast response times and timely reporting incentives.

Ofgem should consider introducing a new guaranteed standard requiring electricity network operators to provide alternative power or practical support to a proportion of PSR customers during power cuts. This requirement is strongly supported by Citizens Advice casework, which shows that vulnerable individuals who rely on electricity for life-supporting medical equipment or refrigerated medication are routinely left without backup power or guidance from DNOs. Aligned with the 'Lights Out' report’s recommendations, this standard should target the most at-risk customers rather than the entire register.[6] This targeted approach delivers critical protection to those facing life-threatening risks while balancing operational feasibility and costs for bill payers.

Ofgem should ensure that all gas network companies interpret the regulatory reporting pack consistently, with a specific focus on the GS12 compensation criteria. We observed substantial gaps in reported pass rates among networks, which stem from how different networks interpret the reporting requirements. The issue of inconsistent interpretation regarding GS12 has also been documented in our Standard Issue Update report. Our analysis also revealed that networks interpreted the supply restoration standard (GS1) differently, specifically over whether restoration is defined as delivering gas into the property itself or merely up to the Emergency Control Valve (ECV).

### Network Operators

Network operators should conduct joint consumer research to better communicate GSOPs, consumers' rights, and network responsibilities, as recommended in the Lights Out report.[7] In Citizens Advice casework, questions about consumer rights and responsibilities, and about the responsibilities of network operators, were among the top five issues raised by gas consumers. For electricity consumers, disputes over entitlements and the amount offered were among the most common issues. These concerns could be reduced through better communication, helping consumers understand what support they can expect and what network responsibilities lie, which could improve a customer’s experience.

Building on our recommendation to Ofgem regarding appliance damage, network operators should consider supporting low-income and vulnerable consumers whose essential appliances have been damaged by a power surge as suggested in the Lights Out report.[8] This could include funding for repairs or replacements, particularly when the loss of an appliance directly impacts the household’s day-to-day living (like the fridge). A similar approach already exists in the gas sector, where vulnerability funding can be used to repair or replace condemned appliances for fuel-poor and vulnerable consumers.

Network operators should continue to maintain their strong performance against GSOP standards. This is essential to ensure consumers receive reliable services and timely support when problems arise.

# Guaranteed standards of performance

# Guaranteed Standards of Performance

Gas and electricity networks provide essential services that households and businesses rely on every day. When these services are interrupted, delayed or not delivered properly, the impact on consumers can be significant. Therefore, standards are needed to protect consumers and set clear expectations for the service they should receive. This is especially important because gas and electricity networks in Great Britain operate as regional monopolies, meaning consumers cannot choose or switch their network operator as they can with energy suppliers. Although these standards also apply to independent network operators, this report looks only at the performance of DNOs and GDNs.

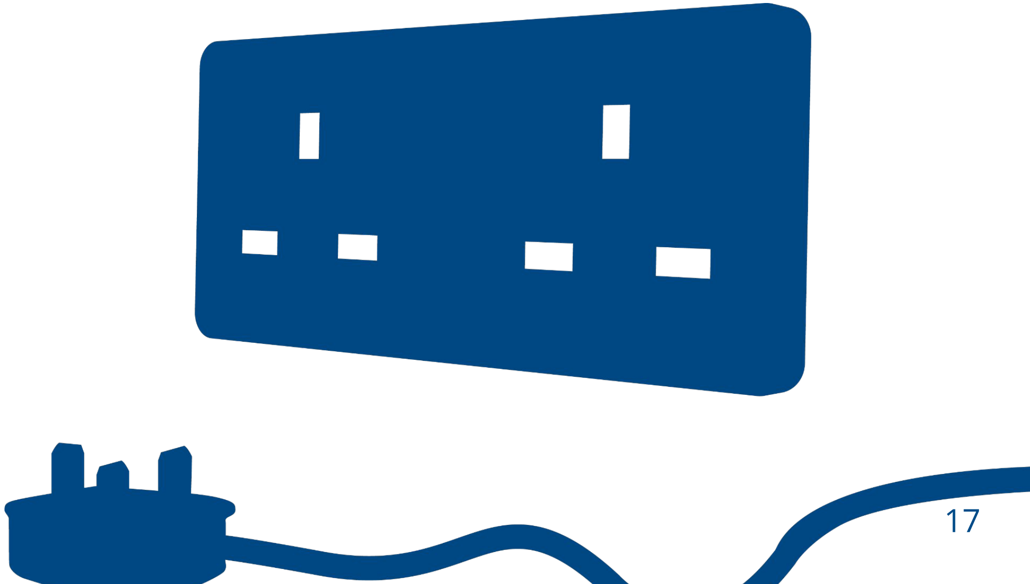
### What are GSOPs?

Guaranteed Standards of Performance (GSOPs) are rules that define the level of service domestic and non-domestic consumers should receive from electricity and gas network operators.[9] These distribution operators operate, maintain and upgrade the pipes and the wires that bring gas and electricity to homes and businesses across Great Britain.[10]

Although alternative providers like IDNOs and IGTs compete for new connection projects, network operators maintain regional monopoly power once a customer is connected and on supply. Because connected customers cannot switch networks or benefit from market competition on price and service quality, GSOPs serve as an essential regulatory safeguard, ensuring that all consumers receive an acceptable standard of service.

GSOPs cover a range of services. For both gas and electricity, the standards mainly cover two areas: dealing with interruptions and customer services, and providing new or altered connections. Gas networks are also required to provide emergency services, such as attending to gas leaks. However, because emergency services are governed by licence conditions rather than GSOPs, customers do not receive compensation payments in the event of a service failure. The table below provides an overview (on page 18).

Energy consumers are entitled to a set compensation when their network companies fail to deliver against these performance standards. This payment is to compensate consumers for the inconvenience rather than any loss suffered as a result of network companies failing to meet these standards. And depending on the standard, there may also be a cap on the total amount a consumer can receive.



| | |
|---|---|
| **Electricity** | |
| Supply interruption and customer services | Covering reconnections after unplanned power cuts in both normal and severe weather, fuse failures, planned interruptions, responses to voltage complaints, appointments, and compensation where standards are not met. |
| Connections | Setting standards for budget estimates, quotations, and the delivery of metered connection works, as well as unmetered connections such as new streets and traffic lights, fault repairs, completing works by agreed dates, and with compensation payable within 10 working days. |
| **Gas** | |
| Supply interruption and customer services | Relating to supply restoration and reinstatement after work at a customer's premises, alternative heating and cooking facilities for priority domestic customers, responses to complaints, and notification of planned work requiring an interruption to gas supply, with compensation payable where standards are not met. |
| Connections | Including providing accurate quotes for connection works, agreeing on start and completion dates, and completing the work on time. |
| Emergency services | Falling outside the scope of GSOPs.<br><br>Requiring gas network operators to attend uncontrolled and controlled gas escapes within one and two hours, respectively, and answer emergency calls within 30 seconds, with minimum pass rates of 97% and 90%. |

Beyond the mandatory compensation for service failures, network operators can also issue other types of financial remedies, such as ex-gratia payments, goodwill payments, and voluntary scheme payments. These are usually offered at the company's discretion as a gesture of goodwill.

- An ex-gratia payment is a discretionary payment that network operators choose to make when a service failure occurs. This can be on top of the mandatory payment or when no statutory payment is due. Overall, ex-gratia payments for both gas and electricity are interpreted similarly. However, in electricity distribution, ex-gratia payments specifically apply to claimable standards such as EGS2A (multiple interruptions) and EGS4 (planned interruption). In these cases, when a DNO detects a service failure occurred, it will issue an ex-gratia payment to the affected customer even if no formal claim was submitted.
- A severe weather ex-gratia payment works similarly, but it only applies to supply interruptions during severe weather. These payments can be made even when the interruptions do not meet the conditions for a formal GSOP payment.
- A goodwill payment is made when the network operator has not failed a guaranteed standard but still chooses to pay to recognise the inconvenience caused.
- A voluntary scheme is an agreement between Ofgem and distribution networks to apply certain connection standards to customer groups that are not directly covered by the regulations, such as gas suppliers, shippers, independent connection providers, and independent gas transporters.[11]

**What has changed in GSOPs recently?**

There have been a few important recent updates to GSOPs across both electricity and gas.

Gas GSOPs were updated in 2021, with changes aimed at improving consumer protections and extending certain standards to cover disconnections. Some of the key changes included:

- shorter timeframes for gas transporters to restore and reinstate supply for priority domestic customers during planned interruptions,
- a requirement to provide hot meals and access to hot water where interruptions last more than 48 hours and affect over 250 premises, limited to PSR customers,
- automatic compensation, so consumers no longer need to make a claim when standards are missed,
- a higher initial compensation amount,
- inflation-linked increases to compensation payments and caps over time, and
- wider quotation and land enquiry standards, so they now cover diversion and disconnection work as well as new connections.[12]

Ofgem updated the electricity supply interruption and customer service GSOPs in late 2023 following reports on Storm Arwen, which found that the standards at the time did not fully reflect the impact of long power cuts on consumers. The changes were:

- reducing the waiting time for additional compensation from 12 hours to 6 hours after the initial payment period,
- allowing compensation to be paid by bank transfer, removing Severe Weather Category 3, so consumers can become eligible for compensation sooner,
- introducing an inflation adjustment mechanism to keep payments in line with rising costs, and
- increasing both the initial payments and the compensation cap for supply interruptions caused by severe weather.[13]

For the electricity connection standards, Ofgem also made an update. These changes included:

- updating the initial payments for missed standards, and
- introducing an inflation adjustment mechanism.[14]


# Methodology

# Methodology

This report examines how well electricity and gas distribution network operators met their GSOPs between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The main analysis uses the statistical data published by Ofgem. Pass rates are the primary performance measure for assessing how well network operators meet the service standards set by Ofgem.

For most standards, pass rates are already available in Ofgem's datasets. Where they were not provided, we calculated them using the underlying data.

For electricity connection standards:

**Pass rate = (number of passes + number of exemptions) ÷ total cases × 100**

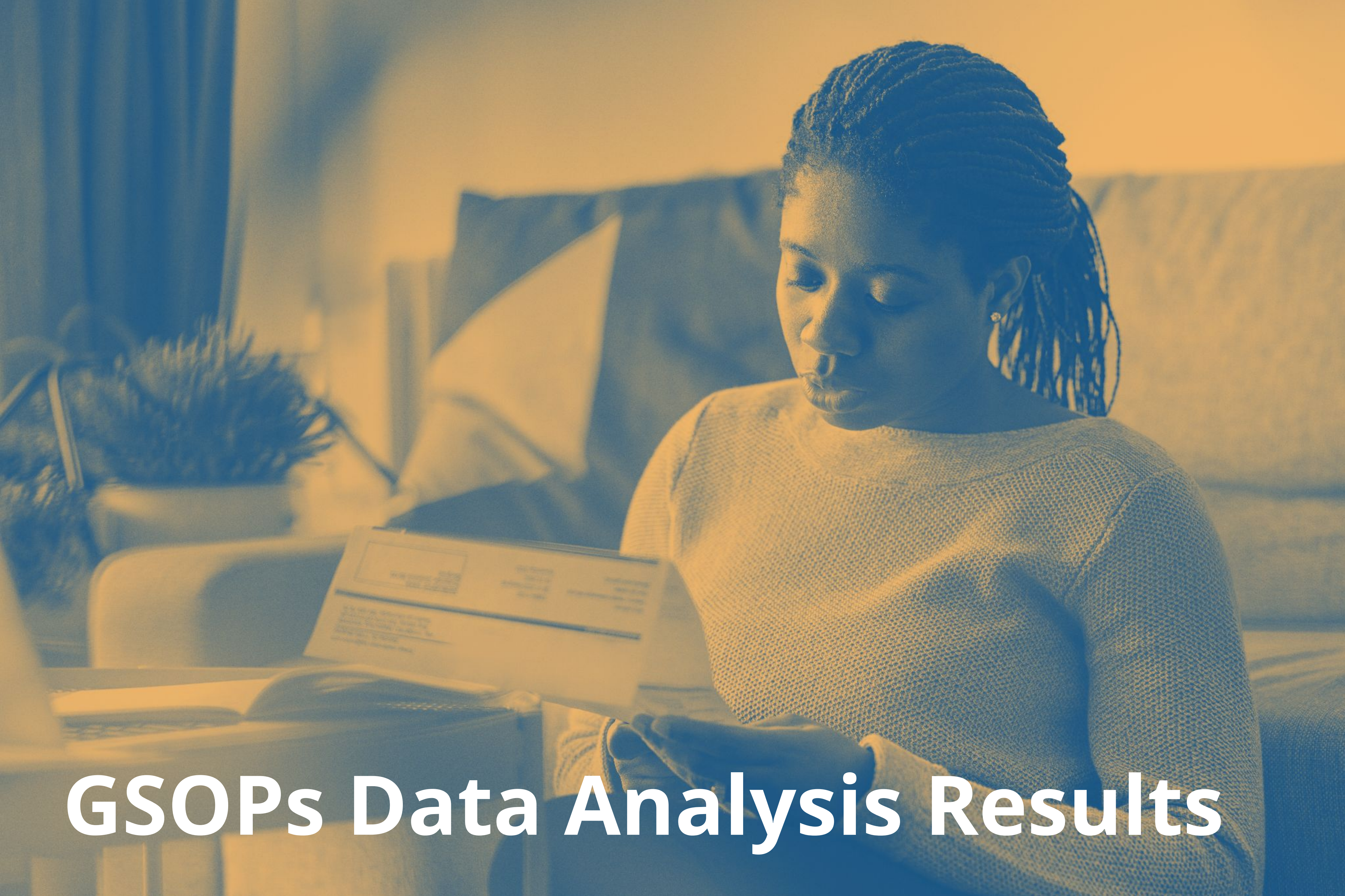
For gas connection standards:

**Pass rate = total standards met ÷ total requests × 100**

These calculations were used to allow comparisons across standards and across years.

Alongside Ofgem's data, this report also draws on Citizens Advice's internal casework data to understand the types of issues consumers raise about network services and GSOPs. In total, we reviewed 381 cases between 1 April 2023 and 30 March 2025, matching the same period as Ofgem's data.

Using both Ofgem's performance data and Citizens Advice's casework data helps us understand not just how often standards are met, but where consumers continue to face problems and whether these standards meet consumer expectations in practice.



# GSOPs Data Analysis Results

**Electricity supply interruptions and customer service standards:**

The electricity supply interruption and customer service standards mainly assess whether network companies restore power or respond to customer issues within the timeframes set by Ofgem. For example, during a Category 1 severe weather event, electricity supply must be restored within 24 hours. If a network operator fails to meet this timeframe, it is required to compensate affected consumers. Some standards work slightly differently. For example, the multiple interruptions standard looks at how many times a customer experiences repeated power cuts within the same financial year (starting from 1 April), while the making and keeping appointments standard looks at whether network companies offer appointments when needed and then turn up as agreed.

Against that background, overall customer service performance remained strong across the electricity GSOP standards in both 2023/24 and 2024/25, with most pass rates above 95% (Table 1). However, there were some weaker areas. The pass rate for offering appointments for voltage complaints remained around 80.0%, making it the lowest-performing standard across both years, while performance for keeping those appointments remained much higher. This lower overall pass rate was largely driven by NPGN, which recorded 651 and 801 voltage complaint cases in 2023/24 and 2024/25, respectively, but reported no instances in which the standard was met. This significantly reduced the standard's overall performance.

Severe weather Category 2 recorded the biggest drop, falling from 99.8% to 96.2%. This standard applies when major weather events, such as storms, heavy snow, or strong winds, cause widespread power cuts. Under this standard, network operators are required to restore the supply within 48 hours.[15] This fall in performance may reflect the greater impact of storms in 2024/25. The number of premises affected rose sharply from 395,208 to 1,757,162, while the number of licence areas affected increased from 5 to 10.

Performance on making payments improved from 95.3% to 98.1%. This standard looks at whether network operators made the payout on time after missing service standard.[16] The improvement is encouraging, with SP Electricity North West Limited (SP ENW), National Grid Electricity Distribution South Wales (SWALES) and National Grid Electricity Distribution South West (SWEST) showing particularly great improvements, rising from 68.8% to 81.7%, 84.0% to 98.9%, and 89.7% to 99.8%, respectively. Despite overall improvement, National Grid Electricity Distribution East Midlands (EMID) and National Grid Electricity Distribution West Midlands (WMID) both saw their performance fall significantly, from 97.3% to 88.9% and 98.5% to 78.4%, respectively.

There are no major differences in pass rates among network operators, which suggests that consumers received a fairly consistent level of service across licence areas for most day-to-day operational standards. The areas where performance varies most are appointments for voltage complaints and how quickly compensation is paid. For instance, NPGN recorded 0% for offering appointments in both years, while several other operators achieved 100%. Compensation payments also varied more than other standards. In 2023/24, SP ENW had the lowest pass rate at 68.8%, compared with 100% at SP Energy Network Distribution (SPD) and SP Energy Network Manweb (SPMW) . A similar pattern can be seen in 2024/25, with WMID recording the lowest rate at 78.5%, while SPD and SPMW again achieved full pass rates.

Table 1: Overall pass rates for electricity customer service standards (2023/24 and 2024/25)*

| GSOPs Standard | EGS1 - fuse failures | EGS2 - normal weather | EGS11A - severe weather cat 1 | EGS11B - severe weather cat 2 | EGS2B - Supply Restoration (5k+) | EGS4 - planned interruptions | EGS5 - voltage: Making Appointment | EGS5 - voltage: Keeping Appointment | EGS5 - voltage: Dispatch response | EGS8 - making & keeping appointments | EGS9 - Payments owed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23/24 | 98.7% | 99.6% | 99.8% | 99.8% | 100.0% | 99.8% | 82.0% | 99.95% | 100.0% | 99.24% | 95.33% |
| 24/25 | 98.8% | 99.6% | 99.7% | 96.2% | 100.0% | 99.8% | 80.0% | 99.77% | 100.0% | 99.15% | 98.11% |

* EGS2A has been excluded. This is because Ofgem only records claims-based data for this standard, rather than the total number of times the standard is applied. As a result, the data only shows the outcome of claims and does not provide enough information to calculate a full pass rate. EGS2C (rota disconnections) and EGS11C (Category 3 severe weather) have also been removed from the chart, as there were no rota disconnections and no Category 3 severe weather events recorded in 2023/24 or 2024/25. Category 3 severe weather was also removed as part of Ofgem's 2023 update to the electricity GSOPs.

As for payments made to consumers, the total amount (including mandatory, ex-gratia and goodwill payments) increased sharply between 23/24 and 24/25, rising from £5.86 million to £26.44 million. These totals include three types of payments: mandatory GSOP payments, ex-gratia payments, and goodwill payments, and cover three customer groups: domestic customers (excluding PSR), non-domestic customers, and Priority Services Register (PSR) customers.  Most of the increase came from higher mandatory GSOP payments (Table 2). This is likely linked to the recent GSOP changes, which increased the initial compensation amounts, shortened the waiting time before additional payments become due, and introduced inflation-linked adjustments.

To break the payments down by customer type, domestic consumers (excluding PSR customers) received £3.07 million in 2023/24, rising to £11.68 million in 2024/25. Payments to Priority Services Register (PSR) consumers increased sharply between 2023/24 and 2024/25, rising from £1.48 million to £6.52 million. A breakdown of PSR payments shows a clear shift in the type of disruption affecting vulnerable consumers. In both groups, most payments in 2023/24 were linked to normal supply interruptions, but by 2024/25, the main driver had shifted to Severe Weather Category 2.[17]

As for which standards contributed the most to compensation payments,  the largest share came from Supply Restoration: Normal Conditions, with total payments of £4.53 million in 2023/24. By 2024/25,  Supply Restoration: Severe Weather Category 2 became the biggest source of mandatory payments, reaching £13.74 million.

The network paying the highest compensation also changed over the two years. In 2023/24,  Southern Electric Power Distribution (SSES) made the highest total payments to consumers, at £1.61 million, almost all of which came from mandatory GSOP payments. In 2024/25, SWALES recorded the highest total payments, reaching £7.82 million. Of this, £5.75 million came from mandatory payments and £2.07 million from ex-gratia payments.

Over the two years, potentially £2.78 million in compensation payments (£1.56 million in 23/24 and £1.22 million in 24/25) did not reach consumers who may have been entitled to them, either because they could not be identified or because they did not make a claim. Despite this, these payments, with an additional 20% penalty, will still be returned to consumers through the revenue adjustment mechanism. The amount would be deducted from the network operators’ revenue allowance. It is worth noting that this only applies to standards related to normal weather interruptions and severe weather Category 1 and 2.  Most of these unpaid amounts were linked to supply interruption under normal weather conditions.

Table 2: Breakdown of Electricity Customer Service Paid Out by Payment Type

| Payment Type | 2023/24 Amount | 2024/25 Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Mandatory Guaranteed Standards Payment | £5,098,730.00 | £19,117,530.00 |
| Ex-gratia Payment | £691,661.33 | £6,021,603.63 |
| Goodwill Payment (only severe weather categories) | £71,645.80 | £1,296,516.63 |
| Total | £5,862,037.13 | £26,435,650.26 |

Table 3: Summary of Highest Payouts by Payer and Amount

| Category | 2023/24 Payer | 2023/24 Amount | 2024/25 Payer | 2024/25 Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mandatory Guaranteed Standards Payment | SSES | £1,576,165.00 | SWALES | £5,747,885.00 |
| Ex-Gratia Payments | Northern Powergrid Yorkshire (NPGY) | £158,550.00 | SWALES | £2,065,615.00 |
| Goodwill Payments | SPD | £40,796.94 | SPMW | £651,032.43 |

### Electricity connection standards

The electricity connection standards look at whether network companies provide quotes, arrange connections or disconnections, complete the work, or repair faults within the timescales set by Ofgem. One exception is the quotation accuracy standard, which is not about how quickly a quote is provided, but whether the quote itself is correct. These standards cover both metered connections, such as homes and businesses, and unmetered connections, such as streetlights, traffic lights, and CCTV.

Connection performance remained strong overall, with average pass rates of around 98.8% across connection standards. These cover metered standards for budget estimates and quotations, other metered standards such as work completion and energisation, and unmetered standards. Overall, there was not a big difference in performance across these standards. The main exception was unmetered connections, where pass rates (i.e., 95.3% and 96.1%, respectively) were slightly lower than for metered connections in both years.

All network operators recorded very high overall pass rates across the electricity connection standards in both years, indicating generally strong performance across the sector. Even the lowest overall pass rate was 96.0%, recorded by SSES in both years. The main reason for SSES's lower overall performance appears to be its weaker results for unmetered connections, with pass rates of 78.1% in 2023/24 and 85.1% in 2024/25.

Although SSES improved in this area in 2024/25, it remained the weakest part of its connection performance, pulling down its overall pass rate.

The total value of penalties paid fell from £2.0 million in 2023/24 to £1.49 million in 2024/25 (Table 5). SSES also paid the highest compensation across the connection standards, totalling £ 1.0m in 2023/24 and £0.82m in 2024/25, which supports the wider finding that SSES had the weakest performance in both years. By contrast, UK Power Networks - London Power Networks (LPN) paid the least compensation of all network operators. It incurred no penalties at all in 2023/24, and only £460 in 2024/25. This reflects its consistently strong performance across the connection standards.

Table 5: Breakdown of Total Penalties Paid by Category

| Category | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---|---|
| Metered Budget Estimates & Quotations | £329,310 | £300,365 |
| Unmetered Standards | £1,168,040 | £955,860 |
| Rest of Metered Standards | £423,575 | £187,430 |
| Quotation Accuracy Scheme (ECGS 11) | £335 | £0 |
| Failure to Make Payment (ECGS 12) | £80,110 | £48,950 |
| Total Penalties Paid | £2,001,370 | £1,492,605 |

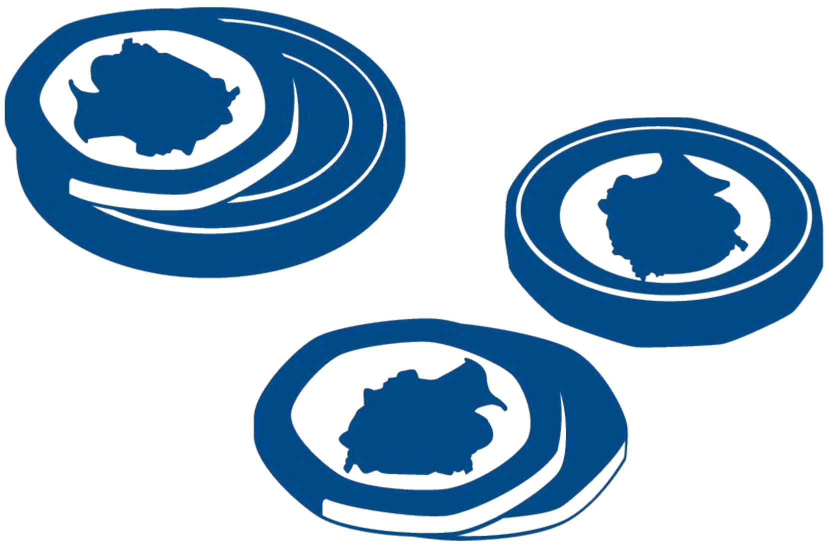
### Gas supply interruptions and customer service standards

Similar to the electricity standards, the gas supply interruption and customer service standards focus on whether network companies meet the timeframes set by Ofgem. These standards cover a range of services, including restoring gas supply, reinstating customers' premises after work, providing support for vulnerable customers, and giving notice of planned interruptions. For example, if a Priority Services Register (PSR) customer loses gas supply, the network must provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within four hours. If these timeframes are missed, compensation may be due to the customer.

The gas customer service standards showed a mixed picture across the two years (Table 6). Some standards remained fairly steady, while others showed a clear decline in performance. In particular, reinstatement of customers' premises and response to complaints standards remained strong. Their pass rates stayed at around 96.4% and 99.2% in both years. However, performance on supply restoration fell quite sharply, dropping from 90.2% in 2023/24 to 79.2% in 2024/25. It suggests that networks found it harder to restore supply within the required time. Apart from Cadent East of England (EOE), Cadent West Midland (WM)  and Northern Gas Network (NGN),  all networks saw their performance in restoring supply to domestic customers fall. The biggest drop was seen in SGN Southern, where the pass rate fell sharply from 93.1% in 2023/24 to 68.3% in 2024/25. Cadent explained that performance drops across its impacted areas were primarily driven by major incidents.

Data on making payments on time recorded the lowest average pass rate across all standards, dropping from 49.3% in 2023/24 to 33.0% in 2024/25. However, this low pass rate does not reflect actual operational failure. Through our engagement with network operators, we found that companies were interpreting the reporting criteria differently. For instance, NGN and Cadent tracked instances of delayed payments rather than on-time completions. This calculation method artificially drove down their compliance percentages, which pull the overall sector pass rate to a low level, without truly reflecting their operational performance.

Compensation paid under the gas customer service standards remained heavily concentrated in Supply restoration across both years. In 2023/24, total payments (i.e. mandatory and ex-gratia payments) under Supply restoration reached £6.2 million, rising slightly to £6.3 million in 2024/25, making it by far the largest source of compensation. Most of this went to domestic customers, with non-domestic payments making up only a small share. Payments under reinstatement and late payments were much lower than supply restoration, and both fell in 2024/25, with reinstatement dropping from £1.00 million to £667,160 and late payments falling from £1.27 million to £774,165.



Across the gas customer service standards, the network paying the highest total compensation changed between the two years. In 2023/24, Cadent London (LON) recorded the highest total at £3.02 million, driven in part by nearly £978,000 in ex-gratia payments. In 2024/25, Cadent EoE paid the highest total at £2.73 million, although this was mainly made up of mandatory payments rather than ex-gratia payments. At the other end, NGN paid the least in both years, with total compensation just over £300,000. SGN SO and SGN SC are the only two networks for which all of their payments come through the mandatory payments (Table 7). SGN explained that this variation in ex-gratia payments stemmed from how it interpreted supply restoration during the RIIO-2 period. SGN interpreted the mandatory requirement as restoring the gas supply within the customer's property, while other networks interpreted it as restoring the supply to only the ECV. As a result, some payments that SGN classified as mandatory may have been recorded as ex-gratia payments by other networks.

Table 6: Gas Customer Services Pass Rates*

| | GS1 - Supply Restoration | GS2 - Reinstatement of the customer's premises | GS3 - Priority domestic customers | GS13 - Notification of planned supply interruptions | GS14 - Response to complaints | GS12 - Payments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2023-24 Domestic | 90.30% | 96.46% | - | 86.34% | - | 49.28% |
| 2023-24 Non-Domestic | 84.28% | 97.85% | - | 72.17% | - | 51.94% |
| 2023-24 Overall | 90.21% | 96.49% | 90.33% | 86.23% | 99.27% | 49.34% |
| 2024-25 Domestic | 79.10% | 96.44% | - | 91.53% | - | 32.93% |
| 2024-25 Non-Domestic | 81.53% | 96.59% | - | 81.97% | - | 34.17% |
| 2024-25 Overall | 79.16% | 96.44% | 94.02% | 91.42% | 99.17% | 32.96% |

* GS3 (priority domestic customers) and GS14 (response to complaints) are not broken down into domestic and non-domestic categories. Regarding GS12 (payment standards), overall compliance appeared lower than for other standards. However, based on our engagement with network operators, this stems from differing interpretations of Ofgem’s data submission requirements rather than operational failures. These inconsistent reporting approaches distort the overall average pass rate and make it difficult to accurately interpret and compare company performance under this specific standard.

Table 7: Mandatory and Ex-gratia Compensation Payments under Gas Customer Service Standards (GS1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 12) by Network

| Network | 2023-24 Value (£) | 2023-24 Ex Gratia (£) | 2023-24 Combined Total (£) | 2024-25 Value (£) | 2024-25 Ex Gratia (£) | 2024-25 Combined Total (£) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cadent EoE | £2,327,200.00 | £555,140.00 | £2,882,340.00 | £2,624,645.00 | £108,715.00 | £2,733,360.00 |
| Cadent London | £2,041,235.00 | £977,684.00 | £3,018,919.00 | £1,531,620.00 | £365,980.00 | £1,897,600.00 |
| Cadent NW | £672,145.00 | £306,530.00 | £978,675.00 | £806,620.00 | £101,040.00 | £907,660.00 |
| Cadent WM | £661,775.00 | £237,705.00 | £899,480.00 | £569,250.00 | £103,935.00 | £673,185.00 |
| NGN | £242,020.00 | £74,040.00 | £316,060.00 | £224,940.00 | £77,430.00 | £302,370.00 |
| SGN Scotland | £264,830.00 | £0.00 | £264,830.00 | £429,430.00 | £0.00 | £429,430.00 |
| SGN Southern | £2,734,600.00 | £0.00 | £2,734,600.00 | £2,527,830.00 | £0.00 | £2,527,830.00 |
| WWU | £284,620.00 | £35,127.30 | £319,747.30 | £299,570.00 | £69,788.25 | £369,358.25 |

## Gas connection standards

The gas connection standards cover the different stages of connecting, disconnecting, changing or moving a gas supply for both households and businesses. This includes things like providing quotations, responding to enquiries, agreeing on dates for the work, and completing the work. For each stage, network companies are expected to meet the timeframes set by Ofgem. If they fail to do so, compensation may be due to the customer.

Performance on the gas connections (including both mandatory and voluntary schemes) remained consistently high, with all pass rates above 96%. This is partly because of the special licence condition D10, which requires gas network operators to meet the connection standards in at least 90% of cases (excluding the accuracy of quotations standard).[18] Among these standards, the weaker area was the ability to provide a date for larger and more complex connection works, although performance improved slightly in 2024/25 (Table 8).


Network operators' performance on the connection standards was very similar across the board. For example, for standard and smaller-scale connections, SGN was the highest performer, achieving a 100% pass rate, while Cadent London was the lowest, although it still recorded a high pass rate of 99.1%. The gap between the highest and lowest performers was very small across all of the connection standards. This suggests that the level of service was fairly consistent across network operators, meaning consumers were likely to receive a similar standard of service regardless of which network they were connected to.

Total payout under the gas connection standards (including mandatory, ex gratia, and voluntary scheme payments) was much lower than that paid under the customer service and supply restoration standards. In both years, gas connection payments were around half a million pounds (Table 9), compared with £11.41 million and £9.84 million paid under supply restoration standards. Cadent EoE paid the highest amounts in both years: £163,006.51 and £131,614.07, respectively. Across the individual standards, Substantial completion on the agreed date) made up by far the largest share of compensation, with £525,100.88 paid in 2023/24 and £421,036.63 in 2024/25, which made up more than 70% of all gas connection compensation payments in both years.

Table 8: Overall Pass Rates for Gas Connection Standards (including voluntary scheme)

| | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---|---|
| GS4 - Provision of standard and altered connection, disconnection quotations =<275kWh per hour, <2 barg (i.e.routine connection or disconnection work, for example linking a normal household or small business to the gas network) | 99.51% | 99.19% |
| GS5 - Provision of non-standard and altered connection, disconnection quotations =<275kWh per hour, <2barg (i.e. more complicated than a standard connection, often because of factors such as site conditions ) | 99.31% | 99.42% |
| GS6 - Provision of non-standard and altered connection, disconnection, diversion quotations > 275kWh per hour, =>2 barg (bigger and more complex connections, such as those for large businesses or factories ) | 98.16% | 98.87% |
| GS7 - Accuracy of quotations | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| GS8 - Response to land enquiries | 99.10% | 99.00% |
| GS9 - Offering a date for commencement and substantial completion of connection works (=<275kWh per hour) (i.e.offering a work date for standard and normal connections, such as homes and small businesses ) | 99.00% | 99.35% |
| GS10 - Offering a date for commencement and substantial completion of connection works (> 275kWh per hour) (i.e.offering a work date for larger and more complex connections, such as factories or other large commercial sites ) | 96.91% | 98.64% |
| GS11 - Substantial completion on agreed date | 96.15% | 96.55% |

Table 9: Breakdown of Gas Connections Compensation Payments by Payment Type

| | Mandatory | Ex Gratia | Voluntary Scheme | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2023/24 | £416,011.93 | £34,205.62 | £265,030.71 | £715,248.26 |
| 2024/25 | £303,535.93 | £7,536.99 | £250,593.91 | £561,666.83 |

### Gas Emergencies

In addition to customer service and connection standards, gas network operators are also required to meet standards on emergency response times and call handling. Over the regulatory year, GDNs must attend 97% of reported gas escapes within one hour for uncontrolled escapes and within two hours for controlled escapes. Although gas emergency services fall under standard licence conditions rather than the scope of GSOPs, their performance remains critically important to consumers. Therefore, this report includes an analysis of emergency response performance.

Under RIIO-3, Ofgem has strengthened its oversight of this area by requiring network operators to report their emergency response performance on both a monthly and annual basis, reflecting a recommendation we made in our previous report, Standard Issue Update.[19] Where monthly performance falls below the 97% target, operators must explain the reasons.[20] Although all networks exceeded the annual 97% target for both types of emergency response (Table 10), the monthly data shows that Cadent London, Cadent North West and SGN Southern fell below the threshold in November and January. These companies said the drop in performance was driven by exceptional weather and other incidents happening at the same time, which placed unexpected pressure on their resources.[21] Similar performance dips were also highlighted in Ofgem's RIIO-2 Gas Distribution Annual Report (2023/24), suggesting this is an ongoing issue during periods of higher pressure.[22]

For responses to telephone calls, gas network operators achieved 94% in 2023/24 and 92% in 2024/25.[23] This performance is consistent across all networks because emergency calls are handled by the national gas emergency service, which takes them and passes them on to the relevant network operator. While performance remains relatively high, there was a slight drop over the two years.

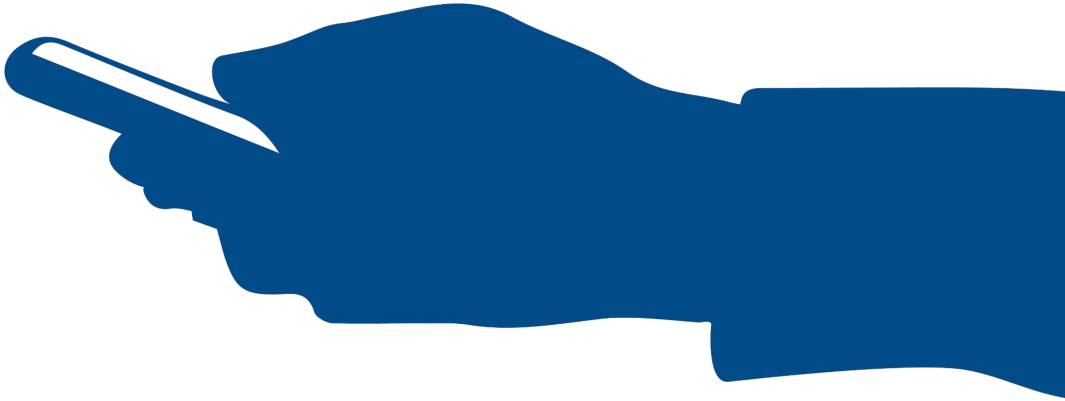


Table 10: Percentage of gas emergencies attended within standard/timescale

| GDN | Uncontrolled (23-24) | Uncontrolled (24-25) | Controlled (23-24) | Controlled (24-25) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cadent EoE | 98.90% | 98.90% | 99.30% | 99.20% |
| Cadent LON | 98.30% | 98.70% | 98.20% | 98.50% |
| Cadent NW | 98.80% | 98.90% | 99.00% | 98.80% |
| Cadent WM | 98.40% | 98.70% | 98.80% | 99.00% |
| NGN | 99.80% | 99.90% | 99.90% | 100.00% |
| SGN SC | 99.50% | 99.50% | 99.80% | 99.90% |
| SGN SO | 98.40% | 98.00% | 98.90% | 98.60% |
| WWU | 99.30% | 99.30% | 99.80% | 99.90% |

# Customer Expectations and Realities

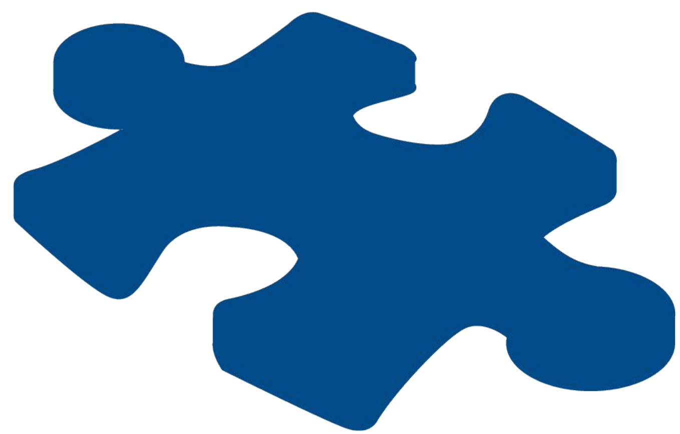
# Customer Expectations and Realities

Network operators broadly comply with their regulatory obligations, suggesting that companies generally deliver the level of service required by Ofgem. High compliance rates do not mean standards are met on every occasion, and individual instances of non-compliance continue to occur. Crucially, these standards only tell us whether consumers received that specified level of service. On their own, GSOPs data does not tell us whether consumers received the service they expected. A network operator may meet the standard, but consumers can still have a poor experience, particularly during a power cut or when waiting to be connected to the network. To explore this gap, this report also examines Citizens Advice's internal data to understand the main issues consumers face when dealing with network operators. This helps us move beyond compliance data and assess whether networks are meeting consumer expectations in practice. The following examines specific areas where our casework highlights a notable gap between regulatory compliance and consumer expectations.

### Reinstatement

Under the guaranteed gas standards, there are specific requirements covering the reinstatement of customers' premises after network works. If a gas transporter carries out work on a customer's property, it must permanently reinstate the premises within five working days after the engineering work is completed, or within three working days where the customer has been a Priority Services Register customer for more than 30 days before the work began. On paper, performance against this standard remained strong, with pass rates above 96% in both years.

However, Citizens Advice casework showed that reinstatement remains one of the most common issues raised by gas consumers (Table 12). This highlights a gap between what the standard measures and what consumers actually expect. The current standard mainly measures whether the work is completed within the required timeframe, but it does not evaluate whether the finished outcome meets customer expectations or accounts for aesthetic finish of a reinstated site. Because consumer satisfaction depends heavily on the quality and completeness of property restoration, meeting time-based targets alone is often insufficient to prevent customer dissatisfaction.



**Case studies: Reinstatement concerns after gas works**

James* contacted Citizens Advice on behalf of several neighbours after being told that gas network works would require the road and driveways on their street to be dug up to replace old pipes. The residents were particularly concerned because the road had only recently been resurfaced at their own expense. They were told that once the works were completed, the network would only patch the affected areas rather than restore the road to its previous condition. The planned works were also expected to cause significant disruption. The street was narrow, making access and parking difficult, and some residents were worried about the impact on home-based businesses.

Sarah* contacted Citizens Advice after her garden path was damaged during work carried out by the gas network to repair underground pipes. After the work was completed, the network arranged repairs to the damaged path. However, she was unhappy with the quality of the repairs and felt the path had not been properly restored. When she asked for the work to be redone, the network refused and instead offered her £100 to arrange repairs herself. Sarah did not feel this was a fair solution. She wanted the network to take responsibility for putting the damage right rather than leaving her to deal with it.

James and Sarah's cases highlight a common issue with reinstatement standards. Networks are required to complete reinstatement within a set timeframe but the standards do not require the property to be restored to its condition prior to the work. This means that a network can meet the regulatory standard, but still leave consumers unhappy with the quality of the outcome. From the consumer's perspective, the issue has not been properly resolved.

### Collateral damages

Another area where there is a clear gap between service standards and consumer expectations is collateral damage. When a power cut happens, it can sometimes damage electrical appliances, and similar issues can arise with gas appliances too. These kinds of losses are not directly covered by gas or electricity GSOPs, as GSOPs are designed to compensate consumers for inconvenience rather than direct financial losses. Network operators expect consumers to recover these costs through their home insurance. But not all consumers have the right level of cover, or some may not have insurance at all, particularly people renting their home. Even where consumers are insured, making a claim can leave them out of pocket through insurance excesses or higher premiums in the future. This leaves some consumers worse off. Citizens Advice's casework reflected this gap, where appliance damage was among the top five issues raised by electricity consumers (Table 11).

*Name Changed

**Case study: Appliance damage following a power cut**

David* contacted Citizens Advice after a power cut left his home without electricity for several hours. When the power came back on, he found that several appliances had been affected, including the family's stove, which they relied on for heating, hot water and cooking. An engineer later confirmed that part of the stove had been damaged and would cost more than £500 to replace. When he contacted the network operator, he was told to file a claim with his home insurance. But his policy did not cover this type of damage. For him and his wife, both pensioners, one of whom is disabled, the loss of the stove meant more than just a repair bill. It left them without heating, hot water and cooking facilities, showing how the impact of a power cut can continue even after the electricity is restored.

The impact of a power cut on consumers often goes beyond the damaged appliance itself. Citizens Advice casework shows that power cuts can also lead to wider financial losses, such as having to buy gas bottles or portable heaters, losing food stored in freezers, or missing work and losing income.  This highlights that while GSOPs focus on restoring service, they do not always capture the broader financial impacts that service interruptions could have on consumers.

**Case study: Wider losses after a power cut**

Emma* contacted Citizens Advice after her power went out early in the morning. Although the network said the supply would be restored by early afternoon, the outage lasted much longer and was not fully resolved until the evening. The delay caused several losses for the household. Food in the freezer had defrosted, and medicine stored for her disabled daughter was also affected. The household's boiler stopped working, leaving them without heating. When she later made a claim for the losses, it was turned down.

These cases show that the negative impacts of a power cut do not always stop when the power is restored. A power cut can leave people facing financial losses and, in some cases, health risks, especially for vulnerable households. GSOPs focus only on restoring supply within a set timeframe and do not fully reflect the wider impacts or the difficulties consumers face in recovering their losses. This means consumers can still be left dealing with the consequences after the power has been restored.

*Name Changed

## Compensation Issues

Although automatic compensation now applies to most electricity standards (with exceptions for multiple and planned interruptions), disputes over entitlement to compensation and the amount offered remained the most common issue raised by electricity consumers contacting Citizens Advice (Table 11). Making compensation automatic may reduce the need for consumers to claim. However, it fails to address the lack of consumer understanding regarding who is entitled to compensation and how payout amounts are calculated.

For electricity power cut compensation in normal and severe weather conditions, compensation is calculated from the time that network operators become aware of the outage, rather than from the time the power first went off.[24] This is not obvious to consumers and can lead to disagreement about the amount of compensation they receive.

**Case Study: Dispute over compensation entitlement**

Paul* contacted Citizens Advice after being without electricity for 82 hours. Based on the duration without power, he thought he would receive £285. But the actual compensation was less than that. The network argued that compensation should be calculated only from the date they were notified, not when the power first went off. Paul could not understand why the whole outage was not counted.

Beyond disputes over the amount of compensation, Citizens Advice casework also shows that consumers often contact us to ask how to make a claim and whether they are entitled to compensation. This again points to gaps in communication and in how compensation works in practice.

One case that stood out involved a tenant who had been without electricity for around 30 hours following an unplanned outage caused by faulty wiring. The tenant contacted Citizens Advice after being told that the compensation would be paid to the landlord rather than to them, even though the tenant had experienced the disruption. This raises an important question about the purpose of compensation. If GSOPs payments are intended to recognise inconvenience, it is not always clear why the payment would go to the property owner rather than the person directly affected. Cases like this show that the reality of compensation can sometimes conflict with what consumers reasonably expect.

## Confusion over rights and responsibilities

A key challenge for consumers is understanding where responsibilities lie and who is responsible for resolving network issues. In fact, this was the fourth most common reason gas consumers reached out to us, and the sixth for electricity. Many other issues raised by consumers also came back to the same

*Name Changed

point: understanding their rights. This included cases such as disputes over whether network operators could require a gas meter to be moved (also one of the top five issues in gas).

Communication is therefore a key part of the consumer experience, but it is not directly reflected in the current GSOP framework. As our previous report, *Standard Issue Update*, highlighted, communication around GSOPs and consumer rights needs to improve.[25] The fact that clarifying rights and responsibilities remains one of the most common issues suggests there is still more work to do to make sure consumers have clear and accessible information when things go wrong.

All network operators currently publish information about GSOPs on their websites, including how consumers can claim compensation. But the standards do not always make it clear where the network's responsibilities end and the consumer's begin. Additionally network operators fulfill their obligation by notifying customers of service standards annually, but this periodic communication may not be sufficient and does not ensure meaningful awareness. As a result, even where networks meet the service standards, consumers may still feel frustrated or treated unfairly if responsibility is unclear or not explained in advance.

**Case study: Unclear rights during a gas outage**

Rachel* contacted Citizens Advice after losing gas supply to her home. The gas network provided an electric heater and a camping stove, but the household had no hot water. The network offered to cover gym access so the family could shower, but she felt the arrangement was not a suitable option for her husband, who was a cancer survivor and felt uncomfortable using public shower facilities.  She wanted to know whether she had the right to request more appropriate support, such as hotel accommodation, while the gas supply was off.

*Name Changed

Racel's case show the discrepancy between what consumers expect networks to do and what they actually do. Consumers were left unsure about their rights and what the network was responsible for. GSOPs set the level of service that networks must meet, but that does not always help consumers understand what support they can actually rely on. This example show that clearer communication about rights and responsibilities is just as important as meeting the standard itself.

**Connection and Disconnection Cost**

Connection and disconnection costs were one of the main issues raised by both electricity and gas consumers contacting Citizens Advice (Tables 11 and 12). A common concern was that the quoted costs for the work seemed too high. In some cases, consumers contacted us to ask whether any financial support was available or whether the costs could be spread over time to make them more manageable.

Although financial support or advice for new connections are outside the GSOP framework,  cases like Michael's underscore the importance of effective communication with vulnerable consumers. Without signposting, vulnerable households may struggle to access essential services, even where support is available. This case demonstrates that the customer experience depends not only on the standard itself but also on how the network supports consumers throughout the process.

**Case study:**
**Connection costs as a barrier to essential supply**

Michael* contacted Citizens Advice to ask whether any grants or long-term financial support were available to help connect his home to a mains electricity supply. He was relying on a generator that was increasingly costly to repair and run. Living with several serious health conditions, including heart failure and diabetes, Michael required a continuous power supply for a bedside monitor which transmitted pacemaker data to the hospital. Because the generator had to be switched off overnight, the monitoring system could not operate continuously, leaving gaps in his care.  Michael's case was not just the cost of connecting to the network, but the wider impact that being off-grid was having on his health and well-being.

*Name Changed

### PSR Support

About 5% of callers calling Citizens Advice about the electricity network are on PSR. This includes disabled people, people with medical conditions and households with young children who can be particularly vulnerable to the impact of the power cut, as many essential devices are powered by electricity. For these consumers, it is reasonable to expect a higher level of protection and support when supply is interrupted. However, the current electricity GSOPs do not include any specific guaranteed standards for PSR customers. This stands in contrast to gas GSOPs, where network operators must provide additional support such as alternative heating and cooking facilities, within set timeframes. The current electricity standards fail to protect vulnerable consumers, leaving them exposed to higher risks. It is understood that the protection of the vulnerable relies on the need code which DNOs developed. As the Lights Out report made extremely clear, people need a guaranteed standard rather than a code which can be overlooked or neglected.[26]

**Table 11: Top 5 electricity network issues raised by consumers**

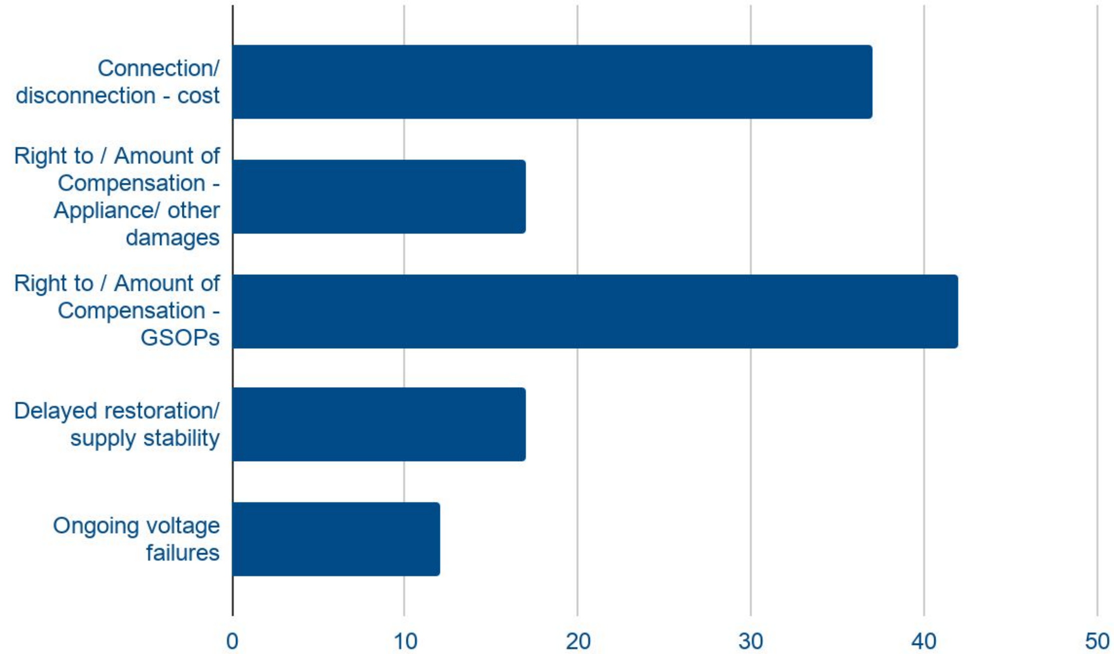
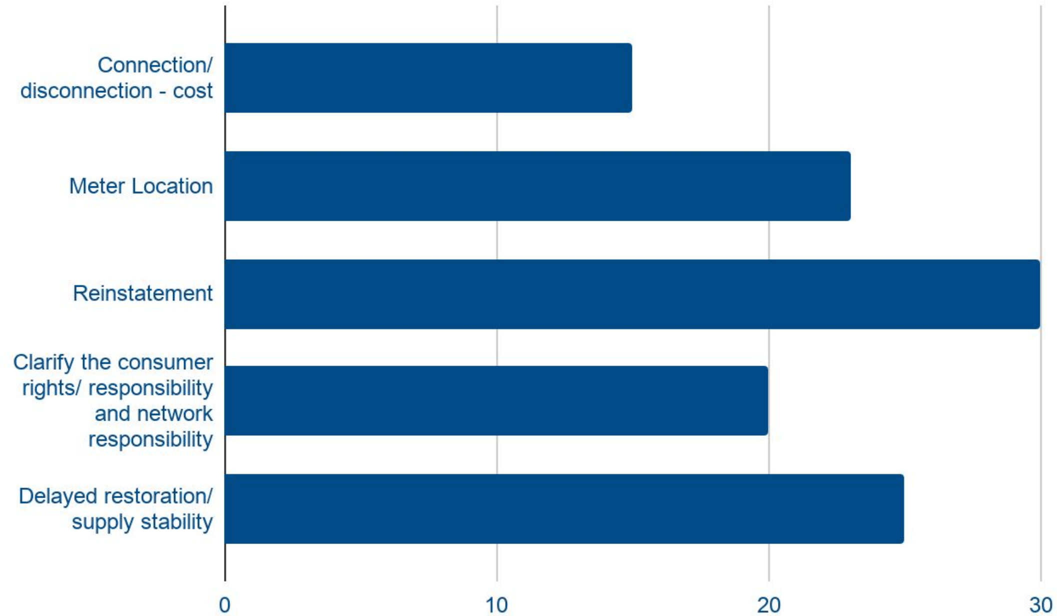


**Table 12: Top 5 gas network issues raised by consumers**




# Conclusion

# Conclusion

This report set out to examine not only how well network operators performed against the GSOPs, but also whether those standards meet consumer expectation in practice. Looking at the GSOPs data alone, the picture appears very positive. Most pass rates across electricity and gas remain high in 2023/24 and 2024/25, with many above 95%. It illustrates that network operators are largely meeting the required standards set by Ofgem. In this sense, the system is working as intended.

However, the Citizens Advice casework shows that meeting the standards does not always mean consumer expectations are being met. Consumers continue to raise issues such as poor quality reinstatement, appliance damage after a power cut, confusion over rights and responsibilities and disputes over compensation. Many of these issues are not fully reflected in the current GSOPs framework. This suggests that, while the standards measure whether required service levels have been met, they do not always capture the issues that matter most to consumers when things go wrong.

GSOPs remain an important mechanism to protect consumers. They set a clear baseline for the services that network operators must provide. But these standards currently do not fully capture the full reality of consumer experience. Meeting the standards does not always mean consumer expectations are met. If GSOPs are to remain fit for purpose, they should not only measure whether a service is delivered but also whether the outcome matches what consumers reasonably expect from network operators.

# References and bibliography


1. Ofgem (2026) Summary of changes to energy price cap
2. Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) and Independent Gas Transporters (IGTs) own, operate and maintain some of the local electricity and gas networks in Great Britain. They typically take on responsibility for the networks serving new housing developments and commercial sites, with those networks connecting to the wider gas or electricity system. Unlike regional Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs), they are not responsible for a fixed geographical area and can operate anywhere in Great Britain. They are regulated by Ofgem and are required to meet the same Guaranteed Standards of Performance (GSOPs) as the regional network operators.
3. Citizens Advice (2017) Living up to the standards?; Citizens Advice (2019) Standard Issue; Citizens Advice (2024) Standard Issue Update
4. Citizens Advice (2024) Standard Issue Update, p.8
5. Section 44 of the Electricity Act 1989; Section 37 of the Gas Act 1986
6. Citizens Advice (2026) Lights Out: improving people's experience of power cuts, p.41
7. Citizens Advice (2026) Lights Out: improving people's experience of power cuts, p.44
8. Citizens Advice (2026) Lights Out: improving people's experience of power cuts, p.36
9. Non-domestic customers range from small businesses to large commercial and industrial users. While many network GSOPs apply to non-domestic customers, larger customers may also have contractual arrangements with network operators that set out service levels and compensation.
10. Citizens Advice (Oct 2017) Living up to the Standards? P.4
11. Ofgem (2024) RIIO-ED2 Regulatory Instructions and Guidance – Interruptions, pp.36-37; Ofgem (2009) Guidance on Guaranteed Standards of Performance and Standard Special Licence Condition D10, p.21; and Ofgem (2026) RIIO-2 Gas Distribution Price Control – Regulatory Instructions and Guidance, p.144
12. The Gas (Standards of Performance) (Amendment) Regulations 2021
13. Ofgem (2023) Ofgem announces rise in storm compensation cap from £700 to £2,000
14. The Electricity (Standards of Performance) (Amendment) Regulations 2023

15. ENA (2024) Notice of Rights 2024, p.3
16. Ofgem (2006) Guaranteed Standards: OFGEM Guidance and Proposals on Best Practice - Electricity Distribution, p.15-16
17. Not all GSOPs data are broken down by customer type. The customer-level payment data only cover the following standards: EGS2 (normal weather), EGS11A (severe weather Category 1), EGS11B (severe weather Category 2), EGS11C (severe weather Category 3, now removed from GSOPs), EGS2B (supply restoration: normal conditions affecting 5,000 or more customers), EGS2C (rota disconnections), and EGS4 (planned interruptions for domestic customers). The payment figures used are limited to these standards.
18. Ofgem (2009) Guidance on Guaranteed Standards of Performance and Standard Special Licence Condition D10 , p.22
19. Citizens Advice (2024) Standard Issue Update p.9
20. Ofgem (2026) RIIO-GD2 Annual Report 2024/25 - Appendix p.14
21. Ofgem (2026) RIIO-GD2 Annual Report 2024/25 - Appendix  p.11
22. Ofgem noted in its RIIO-2 Gas Distribution Annual Report (2023/24) that some licensees did not maintain this level of performance consistently throughout the year. In particular, some failed to meet the one-hour response target during the winter months in 2022/23 Following Ofgem's investigation, Cadent, SGN Scotland and SGN Southern made payments of £1.5 million, £700,000 and £5.8 million respectively into Ofgem's Voluntary Redress Fund. RIIO-2 Gas Distribution Annual Report: 2023/24 p.11
23. SGN (2025) Gas Transportation Customer Standards of Performance 2025/26p.3; SGN (2024)  Gas Transportation Customer Standards of Performance 2024/25 p.3
24. The Electricity (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2015 Section 4
25. Citizens Advice (2024) Standard Issue Update p.9
26. Citizens Advice (2026) Lights Out: improving people's experience of power cuts,p.27

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