

Minutes of 8th GIRS Providers Forum
Lloyd's Register EMEA, Coventry on 19th February 2009

Attendees:

Shirley Course - AF Gas
Roger Collier - Bethell
Colin Fish - PN Daly
Ray Perriman - E.ON Energy Services
Kevin Wood - JFD and CES
Peter Baldwin - PDI
John Hopkins - Morgan Est
Nigel Hodson - Exoteric
Karl Miller - Carillion
Allan Davies - Inexus
Louise Boccaccini - Veolia MU Services
Robert Beavis - - Veolia MU Services
Eric Dodd - Wilcock
Dean O'Dee - Denholm Pipecare
Chris Joyce - CM Utilities
John Snelling - Pipework GB

Martyn Speight - LR EMEA
Keith Bird - LR EMEA

Apologies

Steve Murray - Fulcrum
Zenon Przbysewski - Murphy Pipelines

Minutes of Meeting

1. Review of;

- a) **the minutes of the GIRS Providers Forum held on 24 September 08**
- b) **the minutes of the GIRSAP meeting on 30 September 08 and 14 January 2009**

1.1 GIRS Provider Representation on GIRSAP

Shirley Course and Colin Fish reported that their input had been well received at the last GIRSAP (a late change to the timing of the earlier meeting preventing either of them attending). They felt that the other GIRSAP members welcomed having the opportunity to communicate with people who are directly involved in infrastructure provision

As required by GIRSAP attendees at the Forum were asked to nominate 2 deputies representatives to provide cover and to line up representatives to take over at the end of the time limited involvement. Karl Miller was nominated to take one of these places and the other was left unfilled.

Whilst understanding the reasons GIRSAP has stipulated that Forum representatives should only serve for 12 months it was felt that clear change over dates should be established and that, for continuity, the 2 representatives should not change at the same time. Hence it is proposed that

- representative 1 serve until 31 December 2009
- representative 2 serve until 30th June 2010
- subsequent change-overs occur annually (at the end of June and December)

- Action -**
- 1. GIRS Providers to consider GIRSAP representative vacancy so that decisions on filling vacancy can be taken at the next Forum.**
 - 2. GIRSAP be asked to endorse the proposed representative change-over timings. (Shirley and Colin deciding between themselves which of them will stand-down first)**

1.2 Proactive Management of Surveillance Visits

Whilst recognising that the economic situation is proving challenging to some Providers, in so far as they are finding it difficult to maintain work programmes and therefore give advance commitment to surveillance visits, the minimum requirement remains of an annual visit to verify that scheme compliant systems and procedures remain in place. Where little work suitable for surveillance is being done GIRS Providers do need to regularly update their nominated assessor about the situation and agree surveillance arrangements.

Where Providers give regular updates the LR assessors are in a better position show flexibility over the timing of surveillance visits.

- Action -** **GIRS Providers to regularly update their nominated assessor about their work commitments so that surveillance visit arrangements can be kept under review.**

1.3 Transmittal of Completion Files

LR stated that they are being asked to check that job completion details are being sent by Providers in a timely way and to the required standards.

GIRS Providers felt that the issue was not just with themselves and that they could detail instances where they have sent the records by recorded post yet were being told that the records had not arrived. It was therefore felt that this matter needed raising by the Provider Representatives at the next GIRSAP.

- Action -** **Representatives to raised at GIRSAP issue of completion file processing delays being caused within DNs and IGTs.**

1.4 GIRS Requirements Document (GIG2) and Website

It was noted that the new format GIRS Requirements Document has been issued and is being worked to on all assessments. The document using the term 'Provider' which is directly interchangeable with the term 'UIP' which is continuing to be used in other gas industry documentation.

The LR GIRS website listing has also be changed with the level of accreditation now been colour coded - green for 'full', amber for 'partial' and red denoting 'suspended' accreditation.

1.5 HSE Construction Standards

HSE appear to still be unwilling to meet directly with GIRS Providers and this is being followed up by NG.

1.6 Project Management Scope

LR stated that they are currently reviewing the Project Management scope for those GIRS Providers who only had a minimal on-site presence. A suggestion being that such companies would be required to risk assess their control of on-site arrangements and through this demonstrate that the way they managed each project was appropriate.

Those attending the meeting had no issues with the proposal but wider feedback on this issue would be helpful.

Action - All to consider Project Management scope requirements and inform LR about minimum acceptable requirements.

1.7. NG Technical Audits (Being Done By LR)

LR do not require whereabouts information from Providers as they are being notified direct from National Grid.

1.8. Squeeze-Offs

Discussion is now ongoing between NG, Fusion Provider and IDNs to establish a framework for reducing the distance between fittings.

It was noted that IGEM are reviewing TD3 and it may be appropriate to seek to set minimum distances in this document. If any IGEM members supported this they may care to raise the issue directly with IGEM (Ian Smith or Keith Bird).

1.9 SCO Issues

LR have received an email from NG detailing information requirements concerning the need for network analysis to be done when sizing bypasses. This is attached to these minutes for information.

2. Energy and Utility Skills Matters.

Phil Burnet of EU Skills attended for this item, giving general background to each of the topics and answering specific questions/matters brought forward from previous meetings.

2.1 Gas SHEA

Gas SHEA (Safety, Health and Environmental Awareness) now established as basic foundation training. Course has 7 core modules (that apply across other utility sectors) and 3 / 4 sector specific modules. Hence it is possible to upgrade SHEA in one sector (e.g. gas) to say SHEA in water just by taking the sector specific modules.

EUS SHEA registrations has been recognised by CSCS from Jan 2008 and all cards issued (from Dec 08) by EUS for SHEA qualifications contain the CSCS logo. To secure the agreement of CSCS EUS have had to change the SHEA test so that it is now a randomised selection of questions drawn from a publicly available comprehensive suite of questions. These are issued to the trainer in advance of each SHEA course.

Concerns were raised about:

1. The Olympics site not recognising SHEA as a replacement for CSCS and although EUS were checking this out with the Olympics Delivery Authority progress on this matter was unknown
2. (Linked to 1) that it is not possible to get EUS to re-issue cards with the CSCS logo even when the card had been recently issued and the card holder test had been done using the new testing arrangements.
3. Whether a SHEA is required when a Provider is just doing 'civils' works outside the confines of a site.

2.2 Gas Network Operations (GNO)

Whilst the replacement of the GD scheme with GNO was understood, along with the need to re-register GNO cards that were coming up to renewal the following issues were raised.

1. GNO renewals just require a declaration by the employer. There are cases where the person signing the declaration may not know the operatives actual level of competence and the EUS verification checks appear to be very rudimentary. This is of concern to GIRS Providers, who use holding GNO as part of their recruitment criteria, and asset owners. In response EUS stated that employers should do their own competence checks (as is required for GIRS) and not simply rely on GNO registrations.
2. The standard GNO registration is for work up to 2 bar pressure but some operatives have more wide ranging (up to and beyond 7 bar) or activity specific qualifications. Where this arises it is for the employer to provide an evidenced case to EUS and request the specific registration categories appropriate to that individual.
3. IGE/TD4 covers Services of all sizes with pressure up to 16 bar so the GNO registration structure does not directly align with this standard and the situation is further complicated by there being lack of clarity between what constitutes a 'service' (in terms of materials, size etc.). EUS were asked to clarify what boundaries (if any) relate to the GNO registration of Team Leader - Services
4. There is some confusion as to the minimum requirements for registering a GNO (Level 1) Trainee such that they can work as a second man in a gang. The EUS position is that they need to hold Gas SHEA, have attended a '5 day fundamental safety course' and be registered with City and Guilds for GNO. However there appears no set criteria for the safety course so it appears that minimum requirements will differ across employers.

2.3 Gas Designer Qualification

It is recognised that although it is possible to secure a route to Incorporated Engineer status by supporting obtaining the required Level 4 NVQ Gas Network Engineering Management modules with a project that demonstrates intellectual capacity to make engineering judgements (related to maths and physics) this is not an easy route. The suggestion being that it would be easier to use the 'mature applicant' route.

Hence there are difficulties with advancing to IEng status and this is likely to lead to less people who are suitably qualified being available to audit and authorise GIRS designs.

2.4 SCO (Safe Control of Operations) Registrations

Although EUS took over the nation SCO database it was never fully populated and the data was not kept up to date and all data has now been removed.

EUS are currently working with the Network Controllers to specify the structure and underpinning requirements for a replacement database.

Given the topicality of this work it was decided that Shirley Course and Colin Fish should raise this matter at the next GIRSAP

Action - Shirley and Colin to discuss SCO Database at next GIRSAP.

- Action - LR to request from EUS**
- progress on resolving issue of CSCS acceptance by ODA
 - details of the training course required for GNO(1) Trainee
 - The boundaries (maximum pressure and size) of a service that a GNO Team Leader can construct

3. Supervisory Regimes

LR stated that they are starting to look at minimum supervisory standards and the level of input that it is reasonable to expect a supervisor to provide to the gangs under his control. Developing this framework is at an early stage and the views of GIRS Providers on this matter would be welcomed.

It was noted that someone from the HSE had, in another forum, suggested that supervisors should spend 80% of their time with gangs or travelling and only 20% of time on other activities, meetings etc. They should also see each gang at least every other day.

- Action - All to consider supervisory requirements and inform LR about minimum acceptable standards.**

4. Minimum Operative Competencies

Allan Davies raised a query concerning whether it was possible for an experienced worker who has extensive GT experience but no qualifications to get their competence established such that on their transfer to a GIRS Provider they could avoid a period of non-productive time until they were able to go through the necessary training to secure GNO registration. Especially as if they returned to the GT they could start working immediately.

- Action - Issued to be raised at GIRSAP.**

5. Cut-Off Arrangements

An issue was reported where a developer was delayed by the need to cut-off small diameter pipes crossing their site. Although all the pipes were the same diameter 2 were classed as services, so could be worked on by GIRS Providers, but the other 2 were mains. A query was therefore raised as to whether the rules controlling such work should be reviewed.

- Action - Issued to be raised at GIRSAP.**

6. Design Packs

LR reported that they have encountered situations where the design information provided to the construction company is not fit for purpose as it does not contain full specifications and associated information to construct the works to the required standard.

- Action - All CCCR accredited Providers to ensure that they check design packs for completeness prior to issue.**

7. GIRS Forum Terms of Reference

Allan Davies queried whether any 'terms of reference' have been set for the GIRS Provider Forum as this would clarify the purpose of the meeting and better identify the routes to issue resolution.

LR will check whether anything has formally been set-up but the purpose of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for Providers to identify concerns, either with the scheme or the way that the scheme is being applied, such that the issues can be channelled to GIRSAP. The difficulty has been that without Provider representatives being on GIRSAP the communication channels have not necessarily lead to speedy issue resolution. With the representatives now attending GIRSAP hopefully this will now improve.

Another factor that delays focused discussion on issues is that rather than issues being identified in advance of meetings they are often just raised at the meeting. So it would be helpful if attendees could respond with details of the items they wish to see discussed when each Forum agenda is circulated.

Action - LR to check whether any 'terms of reference' for the GIRS Forum have been set.

8. Next GIRS Provider Forum meeting

The next GIRS Providers Forum has been set for Wednesday 15th July

(Note this is one day earlier than the date provisionally suggested at the meeting).

Appendix – Message and attachment issued by Tony Nixon on 2 December 2008

Message

Please find attached a communication on behalf of all Distribution Networks regarding the registration of Applicants as an Authorising Engineer and / or a Competent Person.

Over the next couple of months the DNs will be working with EUS to ensure that the registrations of all third party Applicants will be visible on the EUS skills register.

Please feel free to contact me in the first instance should you have any questions with regard to the attached communication or speak with one of the Network Controllers.

Attachment

Communication on behalf of Distribution Network owners

Safe Control of Operations Registration of Authorising Engineers and Competent Persons

This communication has been prepared to inform Utility Infrastructure Providers, Independent Gas Transporters and stakeholders of a modification to the application process for obtaining registration for the role of:

- Authorising Engineer (“AE”); and/or
- Competent Person (“CP”)

following validation by a Distribution Network’s Network Controller.

At the time of Network Sales, all Distribution Network (DN) owners agreed to collaborate on ‘key’ technical areas across the gas distribution networks including the DNs’ Safe Control of Operations (“SCO”) procedures. Ensuring technical consistency in this area facilitates contractors moving between DNs (enabling them to carry out works when contracts are awarded to different organisations) as well as facilitating the DNs’ arrangements for allowing third parties to perform connection works.

A consistent approach ensures that contractors have a consistent understanding of the skills and competency required and that no different requirements are developed by individual DNs that could lead to confusion over the roles and responsibilities of AEs and CPs which could have safety implications.

As part of this, the DNs facilitated a form of common registration through Energy Utility Skills (EUS) that enable all DNs to pass on records of Competency Registration to a central register for reference by external parties including other DNs, with a view potentially to moving to a national registration for AEs and CPs by an independent body which would judge the competency of an applicant and issue a Competency Registration Form in place of the roles of the DNs’ Network Controllers.

The DNs’ collaboration has been in place for 3 years and the DNs follow a consistent set of SCO procedures. The process for judging the competency of AEs and CPs who wish to undertake connections to the relevant DNs network falls within the DNs’ Network Controller role and is

discharged by the DNs Responsible Engineer. These requirements form part of the DNs' respective Safety Cases and is documented within the suite of SCO procedures.

At present an application for the role of AE and/or CP is firstly authenticated by the Engineering Manager or equivalent of the organisation undertaking the works. Once authenticated by that organisation, the application is sent to the DN in which the head office of the organisation is located. Where an AE and/or CP wishes to work on a network operated by another DN then an application must be made to the relevant Network Controller.

In March 2006 the SCO Registration Management Group agreed that the move to the use of independent third party assessment should be separated from the creation of a National Register and would be subject to a further consultation with Heads of Network, together with the possibility of establishing a common standard of assessment first, before any consideration to move to an external arrangement. In January 2008, the DNs Network Directors agreed that a move to a third party assessment would require a change to the requirements of the Safety Case requirements and would lead to greater costs being incurred from the assessment, approval and maintenance of competency for third parties and contractors.

In this light, the following amendment and clarification is being made, recognising that there have been requests for AEs and/or CPs to work across neighbouring distribution networks.

Process for Registration

The process requires no changes to the DNs SCO procedures and therefore can be implemented from the date of this communication.

This modification recognises that under the SCO procedures the role of authentication of competencies and training resides with the applicant's organisation (typically an individual UIP or GT) and that this requirement will remain regardless of the development of a National Register.

The process of registration is as follows:

- An applicant will be authenticated by their organisations Engineering Manager or equivalent as detailed in the current SCO procedures. Each registration is specific to an organisation or company that the applicant is undertaking works for, therefore, an applicant may have separate registrations authenticated with more than one company or organisation.
 - The applicant will sign the attached form to confirm that they are happy for the application and supplementary evidence to be copied and forwarded on to all DN Network Controllers.
 - The applicant will send the complete information to the DN on whose network the AE or CP wishes to carry out their initial works (the "Host DN").
 - On the validation of the evidence submitted a response will be sent by the Host DN normally within 10 working days of receipt of the relevant forms.
 - On successful completion of all stages of the assessment and validation process, the Host DN will enter the registration of either the AE and/or CP status onto their own Perimtry Database and confirm this by issuing the relevant notification letter and signed Competency Registration Form to the applicant.
 - The documents received by the Host DN will be issued to all other DN Network Controllers for assessment and validation as required by the DNs Safety Case requirements and entered onto each DNs Perimtry Database.
 - A data transfer will be made by the Host DN to EUS for Registration onto their SCO database.
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**Safe Control of Operations
Registration of Authorising Engineers and Competent Persons**

On behalf of;

- Wales & West Utilities Limited
- Northern Gas Networks Limited
- Scotland Gas Networks plc
- Southern Gas Networks plc
- National Grid Gas plc

Distribution Network Operators are committed to respecting your privacy and to complying with applicable data protection and privacy laws. Distribution Network Operators will process personal information contained in your application for the purpose of registration as an Authorising Engineer and / or Competent Person related to the Safe Control of Operations processes and procedures. The data provided may be disclosed to employees and agents of Distribution Network Operators.

Signing this form will confirm that you as the applicant wish for copies of your application to be forwarded onto the other Distribution Network Operators listed above and Energy Utility Skills as appropriate.

Please inform us as soon as possible should any of the information that you have provided to us change.

I confirm that the enclosed documentation can be copied and forwarded onto other Distribution Network Operators indicated above and Energy Utility Skills as appropriate.

Applicants signature

Applicants Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date