

The Regulatory Role Energy Action Conference

5 October 2015

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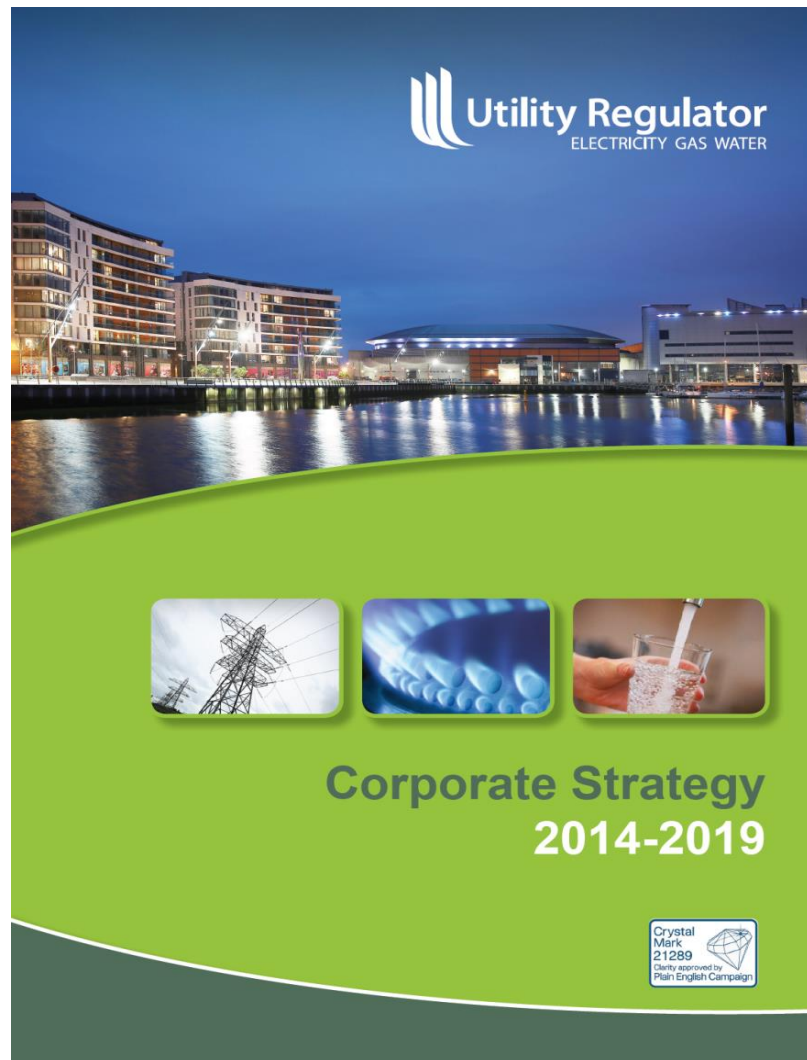


Contents

This presentation will include:

- UR Direction
- Business as Usual
- Consumer Protection Strategy

Our strategic direction is clear....



Promoting effective and efficient monopolies

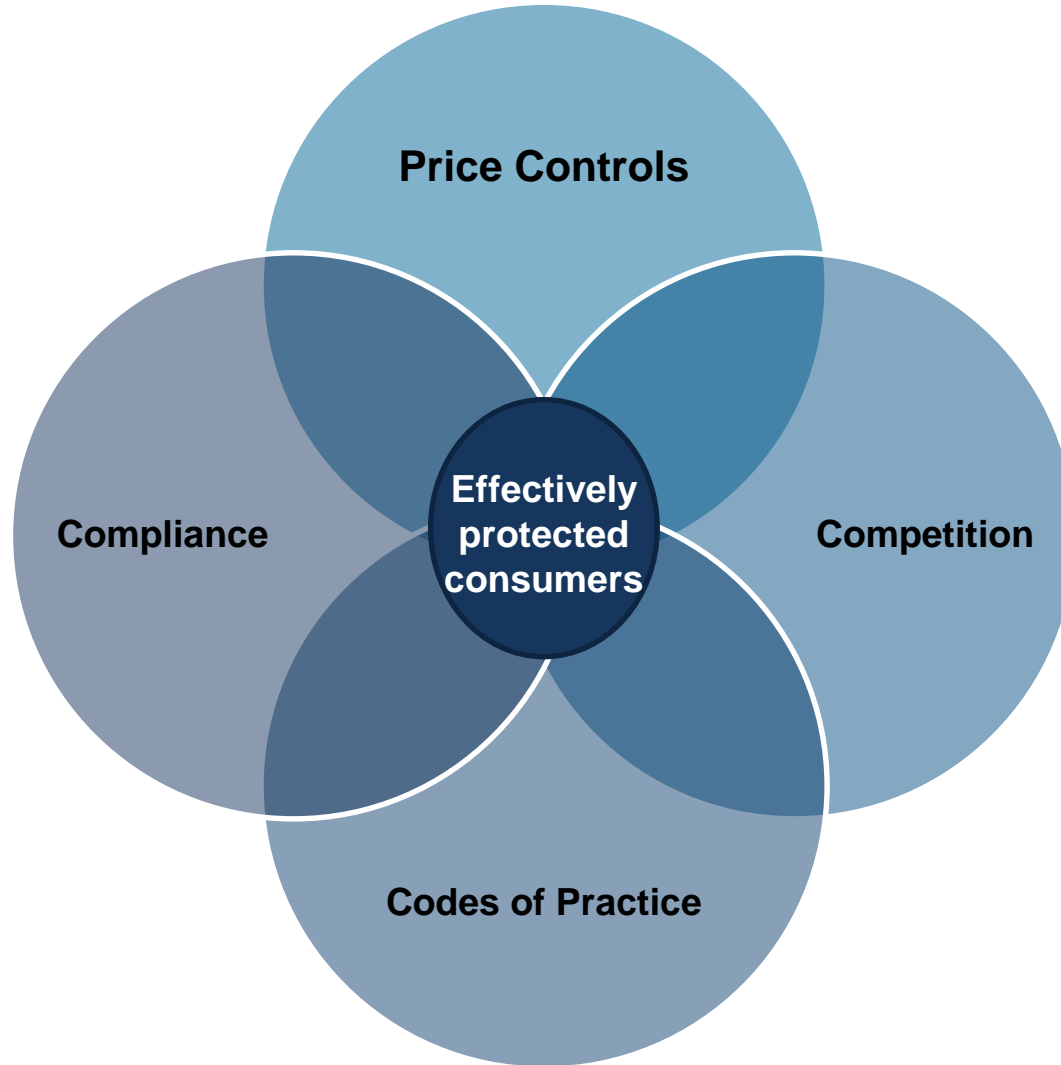
Promoting competitive and efficient markets

Protecting the long-term interests of business and domestic consumers

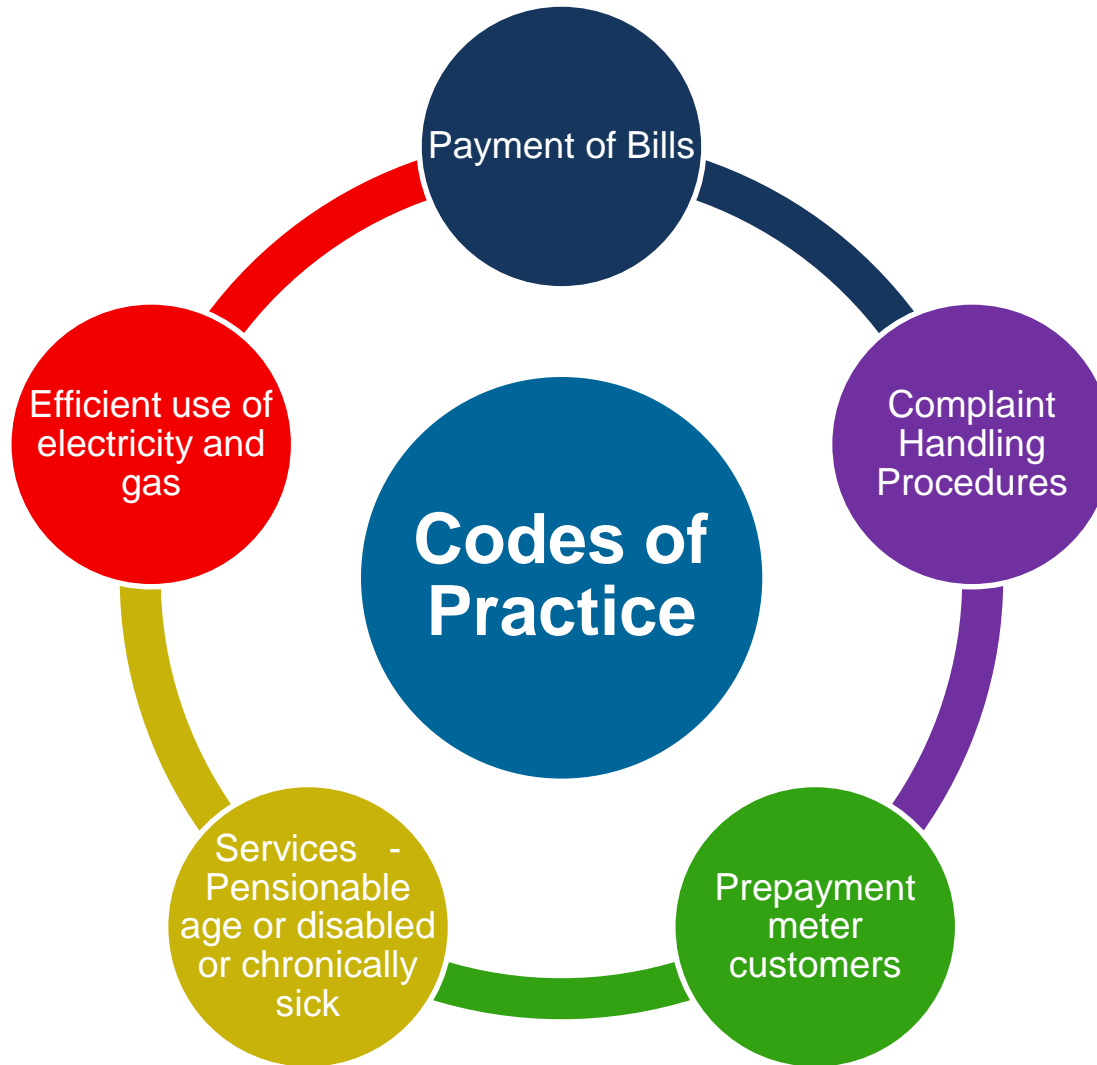
What we do

- Protecting consumers is at the heart of UR's role
- The UR's aim is to balance security supply, sustainability and affordability issues
- Our ideal vision is for well-informed consumers who
 - Have access to clear and easily understood information and are empowered to use it;
 - Are aware of different electricity and gas suppliers and products and can easily switch supplier if they wish; and
 - Benefit from competition as much as possible, but are also protected by ongoing regulatory action.

What we do



Protection – Codes of Practice



Protection – Marketing Code of Practice



Why do consumers need a Consumer Protection Strategy?

- Electricity, gas and water are essential services – their provision cannot be left entirely to the market.
- Some customers, especially vulnerable customers, may need extra protection in some circumstances.
- There is a need to analyse and prioritise consumer protection requirements
- Need a regulatory framework to deliver them.

- Formal review of UR of 2009 Social Action Plan and development of 5 year Consumer Protection Strategy.
- The Customer Protection Strategy project will continue the work of the Social Action Plan.
- Will cover domestic customers for water, electricity and gas – focus on the most vulnerable

- Substantial engagement with stakeholders on the way:
 - representatives from regulated energy companies and NI Water,
 - consumer organisations, community and voluntary organisations,
 - natural gas, electricity and water and sewerage consumers, government and other statutory bodies
- Identify the areas where the Consumer Protection Strategy should be focused.
- Develop a five year strategy from 2015 to 2020 leading to specific projects for regulatory action or facilitation.

Consumer Protection Strategy

Stage 1: Scoping and research phase

- One-to one interviews with key stakeholders
- Qualitative research with domestic energy and water consumers
- Desk research and review of Social Action Plan and UR consumer protection work

Stage 2: Consultation Phase

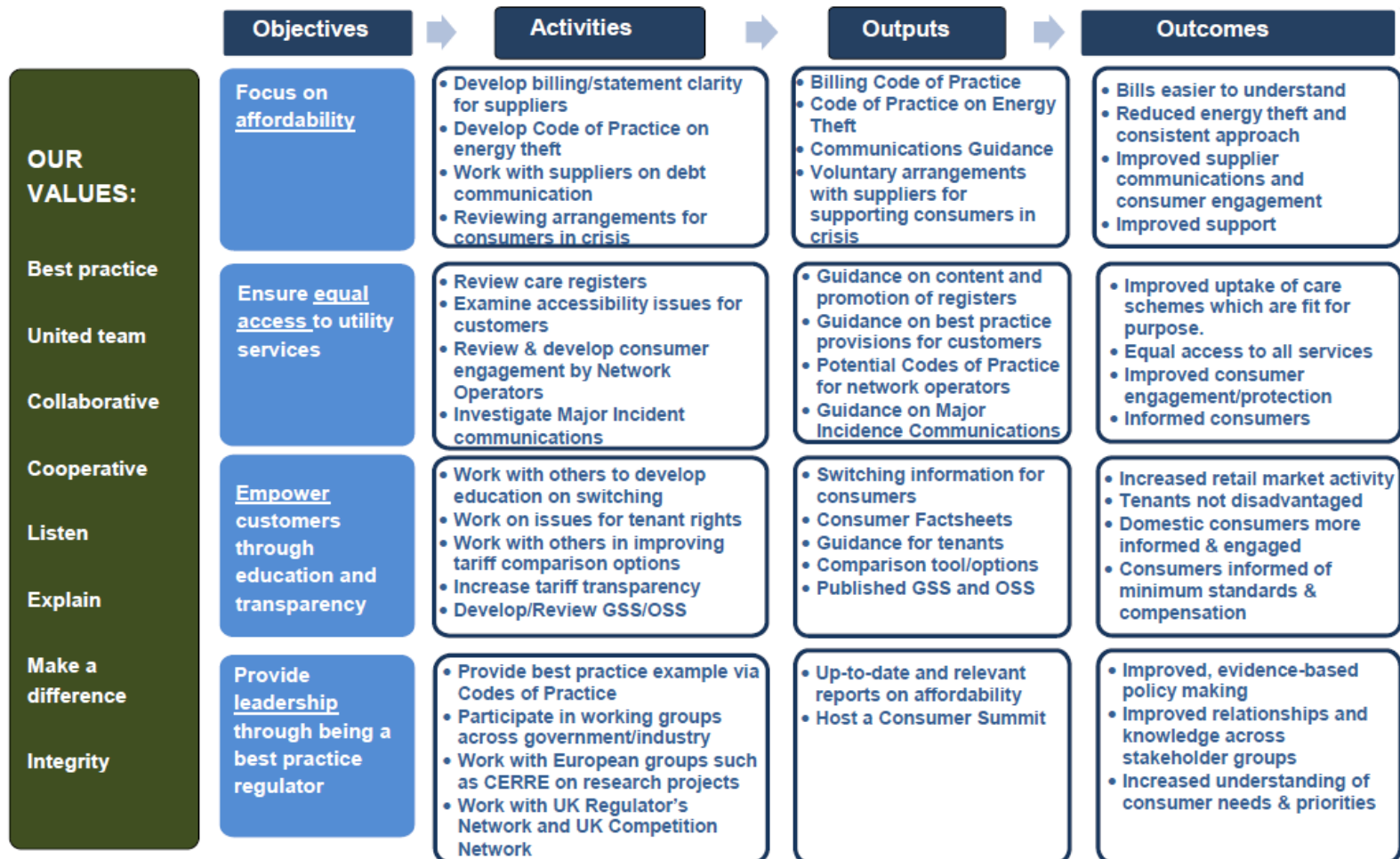
- Publish consultation with full 12 Week consultation period
- Workshops and one-to-one sessions with stakeholders
- Development and publication of decision paper & Consumer Protection Strategy

Stage 3: Implementation Phase

- Publication of five year Consumer Protection Strategy
- Development of projects designed to deliver the strategy

Consumer Protection Strategy – Summary

Corporate Objective: Protecting the long term interests of all consumers



Focus on affordability

- Develop billing/statement clarity for suppliers
- Develop Code of Practice on energy theft
- Work with suppliers on debt communication
- Reviewing arrangements for consumers in crisis

Equal access to utility services

- Review care registers
- Examine accessibility issues for customers
- Review & develop consumer engagement by Network Operators
- Investigate Major Incident communications

Empower consumers through education, transparency and responsibility

- Work with others to develop education on switching
- Work on issues for tenant rights
- Work with others in improving tariff comparison options
- Increase tariff transparency
- Develop/Review GSS/OSS

Provide leadership through being a best practice regulator

- Provide best practice example via Codes of Practice
- Participate in working groups across government/industry
- Work with European groups such as CERRE on research projects
- Work with UK Regulator's Network and UK Competition Network

Consumer Protection Strategy Consultation

“A number of valuable proposals within the consultation”

“Agree with ethos that high degree of protection should be in place for all domestic customers” with particular emphasis on circumstances which may mean customers are vulnerable

“Greater focus on impartial energy advice and provision of in-depth support for vulnerable customers”

“No need for excessively prescriptive measures”

“Any measures need to be direct and practical”

Thank you