

UK Power Networks Access Statement 2019-20 Annual Report



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CONTEXT

Where we operate

<p>East</p> <p>Eastern Power Networks (EPN)</p> <p>We deliver power to North London and East Anglia, encompassing a diverse range of urban and rural areas as well as a huge coastline.</p>	<p>London</p> <p>London Power Networks (LPN)</p> <p>We look after the electricity network for Inner London, with responsibility for delivering power to iconic buildings and businesses as well as high-profile international events throughout the year.</p>	<p>South East</p> <p>South Eastern Power Networks (SPN)</p> <p>We serve South London, Kent, East Sussex and parts of Surrey and West Sussex, covering a rich variety of customers and locations.</p>
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Our operations

The area we serve covers more than 29,250 square kilometres from Cromer in the east to Brighton on the south coast.

<p>45,637km</p> <p>Overhead lines</p>	<p>143,466km</p> <p>Underground cables</p>	<p>189,103km</p> <p>Total DNO network length</p>	<p>8,333,910</p> <p>Number of customers</p>
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PURPOSE

Key focus areas

The nature of our business means we are responsible for keeping the lights on, safely and sustainably, and caring for our customers in the most vulnerable circumstances across our communities.



Maintain the safety and reliability of our networks by doing no harm to people and places and making sure power cuts are as rare and short as possible



Meeting our customers' evolving needs by improving existing services and shaping new ones



Caring about the environment by reducing the environmental impacts of our operations and facilitating our country's low-carbon transition



Go above and beyond for our communities by ensuring we remain legitimate and responsible in the eyes of our customers



Support our customers in vulnerable circumstances and ensure they are not left behind during the complex energy transition

This is the fifth Access Statement we have produced in response to the 2015 UK Regulators' Network (UKRN) project on cross-sector infrastructure interactions. Its purpose is to raise the profile of how our organisation supports infrastructure investment across the UK, and how parties can seek information when working near our assets.

This statement is intended for four key audiences:

- **Network operators** – providing the opportunity to review and improve business performance through comparison and structured dialogue with customers
- **Customers** – providing comparative information across different network operators and sectors, and enabling customers to feedback experiences and suggestions for improvement
- **Regulators and government** – providing further evidence to allow judgement on whether we have successfully led on a self-regulatory and proportionate response to UKRN's 2015 review
- **Investors and funders of infrastructure** – providing the opportunity to assist with the assessment of risk for existing or new projects which may come into contact with our assets

We are determined to make access to our expertise as easy and simple as possible, whether it be for a new connection, diversion of supply or safety related queries, and thus we provide a wealth of information on our website. If you require access or information regarding any of our assets, the relevant UK Power Networks representatives can be found [here](#).

GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING INFRASTRUCTURE INTERACTIONS

The UKRN good practice principles provide a good opportunity to demonstrate the work we do to support the significant current and planned infrastructure investment across our licence areas. Examples are detailed below, with links to further information.

Principle 1: Visibility of Long-term Planning

“ Infrastructure network operators recognise the stewardship role they play in developing, owning and operating our national infrastructure, and that effective planning and delivery of new infrastructure, across all sectors, benefits everyone.¹

Clear visibility of our plans and proposals for our infrastructure helps to deliver efficient completion of works whilst minimising disruption to those affected. Stakeholders and interested parties can access our [long term](#) and [regional development](#) plans easily from our website across all three of our licence areas, allowing clear visibility of our projects, future plans and how they might impact on stakeholder activities.

Principle 2: Efficiency, Economy and Safety

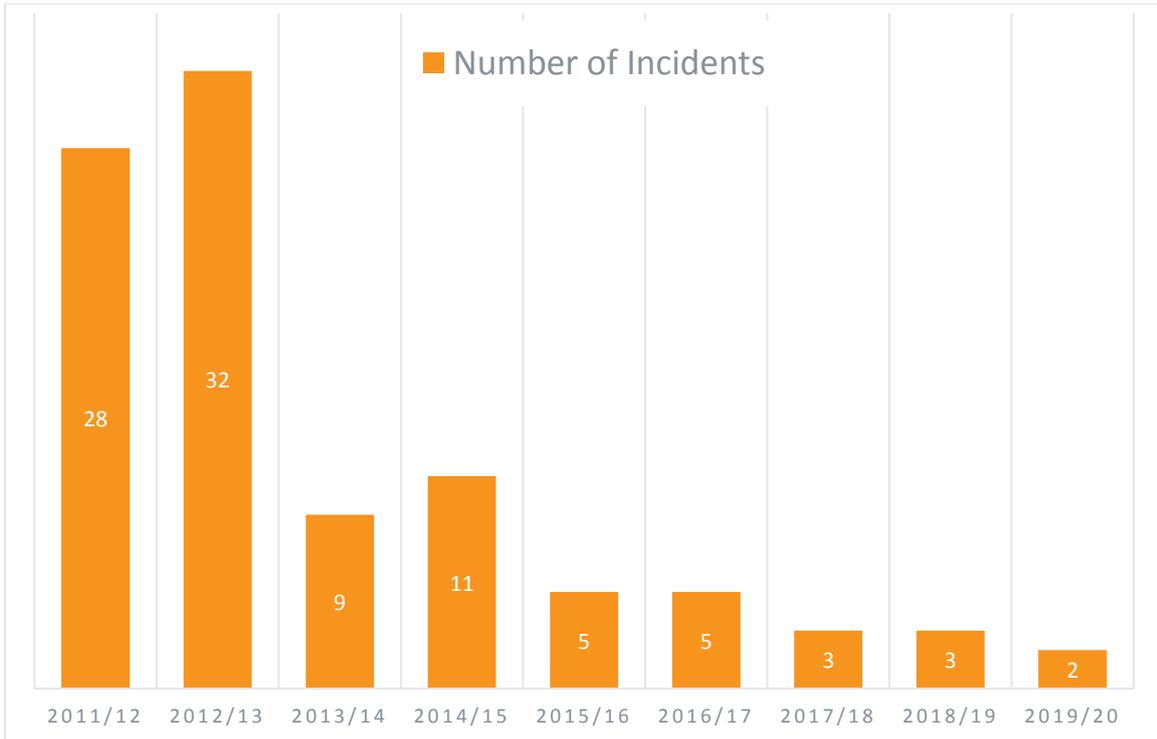
“ Without prejudicing the needs of customers or funders, or its statutory duties including safety, network operators of in situ assets should act with efficiency and economy when interacting with clients.²

We do everything we can to ensure that no one comes to harm as a result of our actions, inaction, equipment or ways of working. The twin goals of providing a safe work environment for our employees and delivering a service to our customers that presents no danger to the public combine to form what is simply the most important objective of all: to achieve an exemplary safety record and be the safest Distribution Network Operator.

The chart below shows the number of Lost Time Injuries each year (incidents after which employees or contractors needed to take at least a day off work).

¹ <https://www.ukrn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2015DecCSI-AnnualReportingGuidance.pdf>

² <https://www.ukrn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2015DecCSI-AnnualReportingGuidance.pdf>



We continue to provide an efficient and reliable service to customers at low cost.

In 2019/20, LPN continued to be the best performing UK network for both the number of unplanned power cuts (customer interruptions or CIs) and for the total length of time customers were without power (customer minutes lost or CMLs). There were only 12.9 unplanned CIs per 100 customers and 14.2 unplanned CMLs. This is an improvement of 47% and 56% respectively since 2012/13.

There were 41.9 unplanned Customer Interruptions per 100 customers in EPN in 2019/20. This represents a 23% improvement since 2012/13. SPN reduced unplanned CIs to 44.0, which is a 17% improvement since 2012/13. The graphics below show the figures for UKPN as a whole and compare them against the targets set for the company.

Reliability

Customer Interruptions
(weighted & excluding exceptional events)

35.4 (35% better than target)

●

Ofgem target of **54.3**

Customer Minutes lost
(weighted & excluding exceptional events)

28.0 (36% better than target)

●

Ofgem target of **43.7**

Over the last five years our charges have on average been 10% lower than the industry average and 29% lower than the most expensive DNO. Keeping our charges as low as possible is important to us because we know how much difference this makes to everyone, particularly the people in fuel poverty.



Principle 3: Transparent Process and Practice

“ Network operators should establish and follow a process to manage interactions that is transparent, easy to follow, appropriately resourced and commits to explicit service standards appropriate to the clients and projects concerned, supported by the provision of accurate information about the operators’ network, safety or process as necessary. ³

All of our processes are clearly defined and laid out on our website, taking the customer through simple steps to guide their interaction with us.



For example, when planning to carry out work, customers will need to know the location of our equipment, such as electricity lines or cables. These may need to be avoided or moved, and hence we have made it easy for customers to obtain this information, either through the third party ‘[LineSearchBeforeUDIG](#)’ or by getting in touch with us [directly](#). This is a free service for all domestic customers and those working on behalf of domestic customers, with a £50-£80 charge for commercial users.

Principle 4: Clear, Transparent and Appropriate Pricing

“ Any fees or charges to clients should be clearly explained, reflect reasonable and appropriate cost and risk, without exploiting unfair commercial advantage and where reasonable facilitate efficient planning and delivery of infrastructure projects. ¹

³ <https://www.ukrn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2015DecCSI-AnnualReportingGuidance.pdf>

Access to our electronic records, such as underground/overhead cables, is generally free of charge. Where charges are applicable, this is clearly explained.

If works are required, and once a project has been designed, UK Power Networks will prepare a quotation that clearly breaks down the cost and scope of the works involved, whilst pointing out where responsibilities lie. A quotation expiry date is also provided to further clarify the time for which the offer is valid.

If the customer finds that they do not understand any part of the quotation, contact details are provided so they can discuss the process in more detail with a project designer. Additionally, we provide a cost breakdown of our quote to allow customers the option to use third parties to complete part of the works if preferred.

Principle 5: Continuous Learning and Best Practice

“The lessons and experiences of best practice in managing interactions within the organisation, based on measurable performance where possible, and outside are proactively gathered and applied, with a commitment to training and support of staff managing interactions.”⁴

We are committed to continuous improvement, in our own work and in our interactions with customers. We receive a vast number of enquiries a year, all expecting a high level of service, and with so many customer interactions, it is important that we recognise what went well and how we can improve.

Customer satisfaction is important to us; we are well aware of the responsibility and privilege that we have as a provider of an essential service, so we are determined to deliver the best-possible service to our customers. With people generally only becoming aware of us when something goes wrong or they want to make a change to their arrangements with us, we do our best to plan for every eventuality. This ensures that we are ready to take care of their needs and we go to particular pains to look after our vulnerable customers as they are likely to feel the effects of power cuts more acutely than others.

We are pleased to rank 1st in Europe and the UK, and 2nd globally in the Singapore Power Group's Smart Grid Index.

CASE STUDY – CUSTOMER SERVICE ALGORITHM

We are always on the lookout for innovative thinking that we can bring in from outside the sector to improve customer service.

Our newly formed analytics team took experience from technology disruptors, like Netflix and Amazon, to develop an advanced machine-learning tool to be used in customer connections.

Taking three years of customer feedback combined with internal performance data, we created a predictive algorithm to flag potential customer dissatisfaction.

The algorithm already displays 91% accuracy and it continues to improve as more data is added.

The algorithm displays daily prioritised recommendations to support early customer interventions and anticipate problems.

This helps our customer-facing teams to understand individual customers' particular needs and to provide them with a more tailored service.

⁴ <https://www.ukrn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2015DecCSI-AnnualReportingGuidance.pdf>

Customer Satisfaction Rating

The industry regulator, Ofgem, measures customer satisfaction across all the DNOs in the country and it is one of our most important measures of performance. Since 2012, UK Power Networks' score has been rising steadily and in 2019/20 we achieved our highest-ever score of 91%.



Broader and deeper engagement

Stakeholder engagement has always been at the heart of our business. It helps us build a sustainable business as it anchors us to the needs and expectations of our customers and shapes our long-term vision and objectives. These are times of profound change in energy systems, so stakeholder engagement is more important than ever.

Our stakeholder engagement is built on a programme of events, forums and focus groups along with other communication channels such as newsletters and media campaigns – ensuring our customers have a voice in shaping how our business operates now and in the future.

For example, in 2019/20 we published our Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) which can be found [here](#). These scenarios provide a range of forecasts for housing and commercial floor space growth and also cover a range of low-carbon technologies. We held three roundtable sessions with industry stakeholders looking specifically at our assumptions on the take up of EVs, the rollout of decarbonised heat and the deployment of renewable generation. The scenarios were also presented to a range of Local Enterprise Partnerships and other regional planning bodies including the Greater London Authority to secure their input and feedback.

We also held two Distributed Generation fora in 2019/20, to improve understanding and facilitate the connection of more small-scale, low-carbon generation assets to the UK energy system.

Furthermore, we published an analysis (available [here](#)) in the form of a “stakeholder submission” which gives details of all the improvements we have made to our business processes as a direct result of stakeholder feedback.