

RETAIL ENERGY CODE

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The Code Manager's plan for effective collaborative working under the REC



Welcome

Stakeholder engagement sits at the core of all REC Code Manager services.

The success of the code arrangements is measured against how well the retail market is operating, how Parties comply with their obligations, and how Parties interact with each other and the REC tools and services.

Stakeholder engagement underpins these activities and success criteria by ensuring all stakeholders, Parties and REC Service Providers offer channels to interact and communicate on the same page.

Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has evolved since its introduction to incorporate new areas of work, new processes, and new technologies for improved stakeholder engagement.

This document also incorporates the Communications Plan and Stakeholder Charter, previously standalone documents developed at different stages of mobilisation.

The Communications plan outlines roles and responsibilities, activities, and timescales for stakeholder engagement. The Stakeholder Charter explains what you can expect from us and what we need from you to make the arrangements as effective as possible.

If you have any feedback on this document, please get in touch with us through your Operational Account Manager (OAM) or by raising a ticket on the Service Desk.

Stakeholder Engagement Principles

Our Stakeholder Strategy principles provide a framework to ensure the purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is met.

Our principles	Why this is important
We remain relevant to an evolving market	To ensure we embrace new technologies and the new ways in which businesses work
We encourage inclusivity for all stakeholders	To avoid the loudest and largest voices dominating, allowing stakeholders equal involvement
We support and inform other RECCo and REC Code Manager Digital and Communications strategies	To ensure all strategies are in alignment and stakeholders understand the direction of travel for the REC arrangements
We are consultative and collaborative	To encourage active involvement throughout the REC infrastructure
We use stakeholder data to improve and refine our strategy	To ensure that there is a framework supporting continuous improvement of our services, using data to make evidence-based decisions
We take responsibility for and address criticism of our current processes	To demonstrate that we learn from previous ways of working, and set expectations for an improved service
We use Plain English appropriate to our audience	To ensure ease of understanding for all stakeholders
We actively seek input from stakeholders who represent consumers, and action feedback transparently	To incorporate consumer representative engagement in decision making and change management processes, ensuring the consumer is at the heart of the REC

Stakeholder Engagement Objectives

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy objectives are a key mechanism to enable us to measure how well we are engaging with stakeholders over a given timescale. The objectives below include a retrospective look at what we have achieved to date, and how we plan to deliver going forwards.

Objective	Measured by	When	Current assessment
Prepare stakeholders for the live operation of the REC	Production of a readiness assessment for stakeholders	Mobilisation period (September 2021)	Completed. REC Services went live as planned, with stakeholders able to access and interact with key systems and processes.
Produce a stakeholder charter to outline enduring obligations to stakeholders	Publication of the stakeholder charter	Mobilisation period (September 2021)	Completed. The charter forms part of this document and is revisited on a regular basis.
Prepare stakeholders for CSS go-live operations	Production of a readiness assessment for stakeholders	July 2022	Completed. Stakeholders were engaged through various channels including webinars, via OAMs, bulletin comms, to ensure successful delivery of programme deliverables.
Engage all organisations and representative groups within the stakeholder model	Produce reporting showing levels of engagement across stakeholders	September 2022	Completed. Code Manager reports regularly to RECCo on a number of stakeholder engagement metrics.
Prepare stakeholders for new programmes such as Market Stabilisation Charge (MSC) and Prepayment Levelisation	Communications circulated in line with change plan milestones	March 2022 onwards	Ongoing. Stakeholders are engaged through multiple channels such as OAMs, bulletins, webinars. MSC has now completed and Prepayment Levelisation is being communicated as part of R0147 and ongoing requirements. Other programmes and projects are communicated following agreement with RECCo/Ofgem.
Prepare stakeholders for Marketwide Half-Hourly Settlement	Regular communications with REC impacts and updates for readiness	July 2022	Ongoing. Regular updates are provided through the bulletins, webinars have been held and scheduled for key timings within the programme. Code Manager facilitated the MHHS Stakeholder Advisory Group during key development phase.
Prepare stakeholders for Code Reform	Regular updates for key programme milestones	As required	Ongoing. Updates will increase as the programme moves from consultation to delivery phases.

Communications Plan

Our Communications Plan outlines the activities which we will undertake to deliver our enduring services and for the implementation of new services and processes.

These activities enable effective two-way interaction, with training, education, events, and direct contact with Operational Account Managers and our Service Desk.

Our stakeholder engagement plan has the following objectives:

- Reaches the required audience.
- Fit for purpose in terms of frequency.
- Up to date communication channels which are appropriate to the intended audience.
- Clear and consistent in messaging, accurate in content and language.
- Accessible and available channels for all stakeholders.
- Feedback and continuous improvement defining future engagement.

Across all elements of the Code Manager service, stakeholder engagement is on multiple levels and often involving multiple parties. We use the following engagement channels to ensure that our messages reach the required audience at the right time.

REC Portal and Digital Navigator

The REC Portal is the first port of call for most REC stakeholders; a critical point of contact into the REC. On the REC Portal Dashboard, the News Carousel is updated regularly with the highest impact stories that stakeholders should be aware of. Alerts may also be added in the form of banners that appear at the top of the page, particularly useful where time critical information needs to be pushed to Portal Users.

The REC Portal is home to the REC Wiki, a repository of information pages for many topics associated with the REC arrangements. Wiki pages are designed to be accessible, written in Plain English for ease of understanding. Users can recommend changes to Wiki articles, or the creation of new articles where gaps are identified.

The REC Portal is the window into the Digital Navigator, which offers stakeholders an accessible means of viewing, downloading and filtering REC code documents so that they can easily understand the obligations relevant to them. The Digital Navigator is also home to ERIN – the REC’s AI tool which allows stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions about the REC and get quick responses.

Service Desk

Also accessible through the REC Portal is the Service Desk – this is the tool that allows stakeholders to raise queries into the Code Manager for formal resolution. Before stakeholders raise a query, they can self-serve the required information through REC Wiki, and the Service Desk also presents a number of other related (external) Service Desks and resources for when the query may not directly relate to the Code Manager services. This includes when a stakeholder has a technical question about the Gas or Electricity Enquiry Services, or the Central Switching Service.

Once a stakeholder has raised a ticket through the Service Desk, they can expect a prompt and friendly response from the Code Manager, in accordance with defined service levels.

REC Change Process and Committees

The REC Change Process facilitates the evolution of the REC code documentation and associated services, allowing stakeholders the ability to raise issues and opportunities that may result in Change Proposals to the REC. There are numerous formal and informal engagement opportunities defined within the Change Process – these will often vary slightly depending on the path a Change Proposal takes.

Although our decision-making Committees are attended by those elected as representatives, there are a number of forums established to allow all stakeholders the opportunity to attend, raise issues, engage in discussion, and inform the development of solutions. These include the REC Issues Group, REC Operations Group, and Gas and Electricity Operational Metering Forums. In some circumstances, workgroups are established for specific Change Proposals, where expertise is sought from the community – how stakeholders engage with these depends on their terms of reference.

Operational Account Managers

Our team of OAMs are our front-line information providers to all REC Parties and Service Users. All organisations are assigned a named OAM to support them through their code journey. Contact your OAM for the up-to-date information on any question you might have. We meet with our REC Party contacts monthly – or at a frequency that suits the REC Party needs.

Our OAMs are part of the stakeholder engagement team which guides the entry and exit of REC Parties through our party management processes. We produce guidance to ensure everyone is aware of timescales and responsibilities. We work with the DCC and have interactions with other relevant service providers including the CSS, EES and GES service providers.

Webinars, Training and Podcasts

The Code Manager hosts a number of events to support informing and engaging stakeholders about specific relevant topic areas under the REC, such as major industry milestones or upcoming code releases. All of our events take place remotely, so that they are accessible to the greatest extent possible without undue impacts on stakeholder time.

The Code Manager also publishes podcasts which focus on hot topics within the REC. Podcasts cover impactful Change Proposals about to go out to Consultation, REC Releases being deployed soon, or an upcoming industrywide Performance Assurance milestone.

Consumer Advocates

Our Consumer Advocacy team is responsible for ensuring that the voice of the consumer is central to the decisions that we make as a Code Manager. They build strong relationships with consumer representative bodies to ensure that they are fully engaged when it comes to REC Change that has potential impacts on the consumer. You'll often see our Consumer Advocacy team at industry workshops, conferences and events, building consumer relationships and making sure the voice of the consumer is understood.

Bulletins and Social Media

To combat the tide of emails that can be generated by the Code Manager work, and avoid overwhelming our stakeholders with traffic, we aggregate our messages into weekly consolidated bulletins – one focused on Change and one more general. Both are sent every Friday to stakeholders who have signed up to receive them. We will still send emails when there is urgent/time-critical information to share, and our emails will be marked as 'For Action' or 'For Information'. And we also socialise key updates and events through our LinkedIn page, while event recordings are all uploaded to our YouTube channel.

Acting on Your Feedback

Wherever you reach out to us with ideas for service improvements – be it via your OAM, our Continuous Improvement page on the REC Portal, Service Desk, or any other means – we log your feedback. And our Continuous Improvement team assign owners within the Code Manager team to take action. Where we make changes off the back of your feedback, we'll keep you informed and work with you to check that our improvement plan has had the intended impact.

Stakeholder Charter

Our Stakeholder Charter outlines how we will engage with you - the REC stakeholders, what you can expect from us, and what we would like from you.

This two-way interaction will set expectations allowing us to get the most from the REC arrangements and the underlying engagement strategy.

We are committed to delivering our services in a way that promotes the following eight principles.

Transparency	Impartiality	Respect	Responsiveness
Honesty	Innovation	Inclusivity	Quality

These are the values you can hold us to. How do we meet them? Read on.

Transparency

We're transparent in our activities and communications. You can see how decisions are made. We are open.



- Committee Member workspaces contain action logs, reporting, collaboration spaces showing progress and decisions.
- Documentation includes problem statements, considerations, rationale for decisions.
- Roadmaps set out the direction of travel for processes, systems, and the code.
- Guidance and training material include background and reasoning.
- We clearly communicate updates through a wider variety of accessible channels.
- We share information with you where we are able.

Honesty

We openly communicate the challenges we face and what we do to address them. We demonstrate fairness and trustworthiness.

- We operate in an open and fair way.
- We proactively raise challenges before they manifest, communicate how we will address them, and ask the same of our stakeholder partners.
- We hold our team members accountable when their words do not match their actions.
- We present all perspectives and options to engender objectivity of decision making.

Impartiality

We're impartial in our actions and not unduly influenced by individual organisations or groups. We consult equally with stakeholders regardless of the size of their business.

- Our solutions, systems and processes are developed without prejudice towards one or more types of stakeholder or role.
- We consult with stakeholders equally regardless of size and role.
- Competition Law is adhered to within our Committees, with our team undertaking relevant training to identify potential breaches.
- Consultation responses are considered thoroughly regardless of respondent.
- Escalation processes have been developed to highlight actual or perceived pressure from organisations, individuals or groups.



Innovation

Our systems, processes and interactions are designed to be delivered digitally, scalable, and embrace technology to assist you in interacting with the REC arrangements.



- Systems and processes are designed from a user journey perspective.
- Technology and systems are designed to be accessible and interactive for stakeholders.
- Systems designed with scalability to cater for peaks in workload.

Respect

We respect people's views and allow a safe environment for debate. We are respectful to the environment with our working practices.

- Our team members address individuals who do not respect the views of others in meetings, at events, or online.
- This Charter is published and monitored to ensure our principles are adhered to by all.
- We treat everyone with courtesy and politeness, and ensure that opinions and ideas are not marginalised.
- In line with our digitalisation strategy, we hold remote committee meetings wherever possible, reducing travel for our members and in turn environmental impacts.

Inclusivity

We encourage participation, making sure that you have an opportunity to have your say in the arrangements. We give you the information you need to engage, and we listen to your feedback.

- Our Consumer Advocacy team liaises with stakeholder groups to gather consumer views for input into our services.
- We annually request feedback on our services via a survey which we monitor through continuous improvement.
- Every REC Party has been allocated an OAM who helps ensure information is cascaded and viewpoints are received.
- We reach out for views from stakeholders, regardless of size. You don't have to be a Committee Member to make sure we hear your views.

Responsiveness

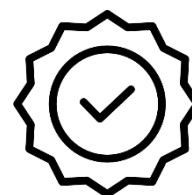
We engage at the appropriate time in line with our Service Levels, allowing you time to be involved and allowing us to learn from your feedback.

- Consultations and Requests for Information will allow adequate time for review and response to encourage participation from a wide range of stakeholders.
- Our Service Enhancement Report will include how we have listened to feedback with respect to how future plans or roadmaps incorporate change.
- We report on Service Level progress for Service Desk, surveys, and system availability.

Quality

Our processes and documentation are underpinned by quality standards, and written in Plain English to decipher industry jargon.

- All our documentation is produced according to the principles of Plain English, avoiding legalese and jargon where possible.
- Our team has been chosen for its technical and industry expertise to drive the arrangements in line with the REC Objectives.
- We manage our services and report in line with our agreed Service Levels.



Your Commitment

We want you to engage with us and be involved on matters of mutual interest. Therefore, we ask the following of you.

Please engage with us

We'd like you to share with us your ideas and knowledge, helping to share arrangements into the future. You can find training and information to enhance your understanding of REC arrangements in the REC Wiki.

If you think we've gone above and beyond, please let us know. Conversely, we want to hear from you if you think we should do better so that we can improve.

Please be honest

We want you to share how you feel in an open environment, providing you with freedom to get your points across. Let us know your opinions through responding to our consultations and surveys, in interactions with our team, in dialogue with your OAM.

Let us know if you think discussion or progression is being stifled by the arrangements or by our approach. Tell us how we're doing and help us improve.

Embrace technology and change

The REC arrangements incorporate digitalisation and automation, with new systems and processes designed at empowering us all. Please be open to change, and let us know what we can do better to ease your migration to new digital ways of working.

We appreciate that technical issues can arise due to corporate policy restrictions. Speak with your OAM who will help you to overcome your challenges.

Please respect others

We encourage an environment where everyone feels comfortable to share their opinions. We ask all our stakeholders to do the same. Please treat others how you would wish to be treated, be that online, in meetings, or in person.

Please tell us if you feel there is any offensive or abusive behaviour being exhibited by anyone in any part of our service. Please let us know if you have any suggestions on how to make our working environment even safer for everyone who participates in the arrangements.

Help us to focus

The REC covers a vast number of services across a wide range of areas. We all need to remain focused on the right tasks, and we encourage your support. The arrangements encompass many activities; please help us keep the focus on appropriate topics.

During meetings, help us to keep to schedule by sticking to the subject in hand. There will be ample opportunity to raise new topics and capture wider issues on future meeting agendas. Please respond to consultations in a timely manner to support the efficient progress of issues.

Be responsive

We want to be confident that you understand what is expected of you, and for you to meet requirements in a timely manner. If you're unsure, or unable to meet requirements, let us know so we can help.

Complete your obligations in a timely manner, and let us know if that's not possible. Respond to consultations on time - help us make the arrangements work for everyone.