

# Supplier of Last Resort for the Northern Ireland Gas Industry

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The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has issued a consultation paper on the proposed implementation of Directive 2003/55/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas.

All Northern Ireland Gas licences contain a provision whereby the Department or the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation can revoke the licence if the licence holder becomes insolvent. However Northern Ireland legislation does not currently provide for the appointment of an alternative supplier to ensure continuity of supply to customers let down by failed suppliers.

Although the Directive does not require Member States to specifically appoint a supplier of last resort, it is considered that there is a need to appoint a Supplier of Last Resort to ensure continuity of supply to customers in the event of the failure of their gas supply company.

The Department proposes to introduce new regulations which will appoint an alternative supplier to ensure continuity of supply to customers affected by failed suppliers, and to provide the Utility Regulator with the power to control supplier of last resort issues.

The closing date for comments on the proposals is 1 April 2009. For further information please contact Karen Blair ([k.blair@cflaw.co.uk](mailto:k.blair@cflaw.co.uk)) or Maria O'Loan ([m.o'loan@cflaw.co.uk](mailto:m.o'loan@cflaw.co.uk)) on (028) 9024 3141.

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