

Utility Regulator Consults on Social Action Plan

March 2009



The Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation is currently consulting on the Social Action Plan for 2009-2014.

The Utility Regulator has responsibility for the regulation of the water, gas and electricity industries.

The Utility Regulator's previous Social Action Plan was published in August 2003. Since then there have been a number of important developments including the addition of regulatory responsibility for Northern Ireland's water industry.

The Utility Regulator has a statutory duty to protect utility customers and must have due regard for vulnerable customers. The purpose of the Social Action Plan is to set out how the Utility Regulator interprets its duty to have due regard to the interests of vulnerable customers, and to examine what progress has been made to date.

The Social Action Plan has two main strands. The first strand focuses on the provision of special services for utility customers who may need additional assistance. The second strand focuses on financial vulnerability, detailing how the Utility Regulator has and will contribute to reducing financial vulnerability.

The deadline for responses to the consultation is 21 March 2009. It is expected that, following the consultation, the Utility Regulator will finalise and publish a definitive action plan. It is envisaged that the action plan will cover a five year period. The progress of the action plan will be reviewed after three years.

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