

Directive (EU) 2026/706 amending Directive 2014/32/EU as regards measuring systems for electric vehicle supply equipment and compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters

Question Dr Steve Aiken MLA Page 4

First, the issue of smart meters is of great interest, particularly for reforming the Northern Ireland electricity market. How much interaction have you had with the Utility Regulator to ask whether any of the changes in the directive will impact on what it is trying to do with the roll-out of smart metering?

Initial response from Hansard transcript

Mr McGregor: I will take the first question, and perhaps Damien can come in on the second one.

We engaged with the Utility Regulator via the energy division in DFE at the proposal stage. It expressed no concerns at that time, and there has been limited change since. We have reached out again to the Utility Regulator via the contact branch in DFE. If there is any substantive comment, we will forward that to members when we receive it. The comment from the Utility Regulator was included in the briefing at the proposal stage, and, as I said, there has not been much change since then.

We will follow up on that and send through anything that we receive in writing

Department for the Economy Utility Regulator Sponsor Branch Follow up response

The design plan for the roll out of electricity smart meters was published in April 2026 and this will obviously lead to a change in this. Under the design plan, first meter installation by 2028 and completion on approximate 932,000 within three years.

Smart meters will empower consumers by providing real-time information on their electricity usage, helping households and businesses better understand how and when they use energy, make informed choices, and manage their bills more effectively. They will also end estimated billing, giving consumers greater confidence and control over their energy costs.

Smart meters are a key enabler of future energy technologies. By providing detailed consumption data, they support the development of smart tariffs, demand flexibility services, and a more intelligent electricity grid, allowing consumers to benefit from lower-cost electricity at times when demand is lower.

The rollout of smart meters will help unlock the benefits of electric vehicles, heat pumps, battery storage, and other low-carbon technologies. Consumers will be able to charge electric vehicles or run energy-intensive appliances at cheaper off-peak times, reducing costs while supporting a cleaner and more efficient electricity system.

Smart meters will also enable innovative technologies and services that automatically optimise energy use within homes and businesses. This will help integrate more renewable electricity onto the grid, improve network efficiency, and support Northern Ireland's transition to a low-carbon economy

Question Dr Steve Aiken MLA Page 4

Has there been any communication between you and the installers of EV charging units in Northern Ireland? If they are to be approached to do that, when is that likely to happen?

Initial response from Hansard transcript

Mr Doherty I will start with your question on the words "do not anticipate". From the conversations and engagement that we have had with the Office for Product Safety and Standards, it seems to be the case that the OPSS will look at everything to do with the directive in the round. There does not appear to be any indication to us that when the OPSS consults on the directive, it will not consult on all its elements. In fact, the opposite is the case. Based on the industry engagement that we have had, the directive will be very welcome. It creates harmonisation and standards and ensures that there is no divergence between Northern Ireland and GB. That is what the Product Regulation and Metrology Act 2025 was brought in by the UK Government to do.

Department for the Economy Utility Regulator Sponsor Branch Follow up response

The department has no engagement with the installers of EV Home Charging Units.

Question Mr Peter Martin MLA Page 5

There is some reference to the requirement not to retrofit in the directive. Are the measuring instruments on the list that I read out subject to retrofitting or not?

Initial response from Hansard transcript

Mr McGregor: Unfortunately, the answer to that requires subject matter expertise, so we will have to take your question away to the Office for Product Safety and Standards and then provide the answer to you in writing. We will contact the office immediately after we leave the meeting and, with a fair wind, should have the answer with you by tomorrow. We are getting into technical detail about the types of meters, retrofitting and the like, so we need the subject matter experts to provide the answer.

Mr Doherty: May I add to that, Chair? The EN does state that there will be no retrofitting obligations for existing EV charging stations or existing gas dispensers. Those are measuring

instruments that are already in the Measuring Instruments Regulations. Thankfully, that creates no additional costs or burdens for any businesses. We can, however, take the question back and get a fuller answer, if required.

Follow up Response

06 August 2026 Christine Knox | Head of Measuring Instruments & Cosmetics Policy | Office for Product Safety & Standards Department for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade

- We can confirm that Directive (EU) 2026/706 explicitly includes no retrofitting obligations for existing EV charging stations and for existing compressed gas dispensers - see recitals (7) and (9). Existing EV charging stations and existing compressed gas dispensers are therefore not subject to retrofitting.
- Newly in-scope measuring instruments – DC electricity meters and thermal energy meters for cooling – which have already been placed on the market or have already been put into use, are not subject to retrofitting obligations. However, these instruments are not captured by the no retrofitting obligation for future application. From 10 October 2028, these products will need to be conformity assessed as meeting the MID's requirements before they can be placed on the market (see article 2(1)). This will not affect existing DC electricity meters and thermal energy meters for cooling that were placed on the market or put into use before this date.

Question Mr Peter Martin MLA Page 5

Do we know the proportion of utility meters in Northern Ireland that are remote only?

Initial response from Hansard transcript

Mr McGregor No, we do not. That question will have to be directed to the Utility Regulator, so, if we are to contact the Utility Regulator, we can include that question.

Department for the Economy Utility Regulator Sponsor Branch Follow up response

NIE Networks collect and process meter reading data for all its approximate 932,000 customer premises throughout Northern Ireland. While data can be obtained remotely via telecommunication links from meters at approximately 13,000 large commercial and industrial premises as a pilot scheme, the vast proportion of meters are read manually by its meter reading staff. No domestic meters are remotely read via telecommunication link presently.

Question Mr Peter Martin MLA Page 6

My final question is on the measuring system for hydrogen compressed gas dispensers being brought in

Initial response from Hansard transcript

Mr Doherty: It appears to. It is a new measuring instrument. Essentially, it is akin to a petrol pump for compressed gas. Again, these are emerging technologies and sustainable energy sources. I cannot answer on the specific technical side, because, again, it is outside the scope of Trading Standards' measuring instruments, but we can take your question back to the Office for Product Safety and Standards, which will be able to give us more information.

Follow up Response

06 August 2026 Christine Knox | Head of Measuring Instruments & Cosmetics Policy | Office for Product Safety & Standards Department for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade

- We can confirm that the amendments will bring compressed gas dispensers (including hydrogen) within the scope of Directive 2014/32/EU. Directive 2026/706 makes this clear in recitals (5) and (9) and brings these dispensers into effect by inserting a new '*ANNEX VIIa MEASURING SYSTEMS FOR COMPRESSED GAS DISPENSERS*'

Question Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA Page 6

Peter largely covered what I was going to ask. The UK Government previously said that they would consult on making similar changes, as you have outlined, but they did not cover all proposals included in the directive. Do you therefore have an update on the current state of play?

Initial response from Hansard transcript

Mr McGregor: No, we have not seen an outline text of a consultation. All that we know is that they intend to launch the consultation shortly and that it is to run for 12 weeks. In such instances, what would normally happen is that a copy would be shared with us in advance, and we would be asked whether we wanted to add anything or expand on any of the questions in it. However, we have not yet seen any of the detail. The OPSS will prepare that.

Follow up Response

06 August 2026 Christine Knox | Head of Measuring Instruments & Cosmetics Policy | Office for Product Safety & Standards Department for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade

- The UK Government shares similar ambitions to the EU in supporting new technological development and progress towards net zero. To that end, the Government indicated in February this year (in their response to the consultation on Measuring instruments display requirements for ESAs - GOV.UK) that it intends to implement a similar measure permitting remote displays for Energy Smart Appliances (ESAs) in Great Britain. This will allow electrical energy meters in Energy Smart Appliances (such as those in EV charge points and heat pumps, but excluding domestic utility meters) to have the option of a remote-only display. The UK Government plans to lay a Statutory Instrument in December 2026 to make this change in Great Britain, to come into force in June 2027, meaning there will not be any regulatory divergence with NI when the remote display options for ESAs in Directive 2026/706 are implemented.
- The government response to the consultation also noted that the Government is considering all measures in the Directive 2026/706 and whether similar provisions may be appropriate for the GB market. This will take into account Government priorities to support the domestic rollout of smart energy devices, ensuring that UK businesses remain competitive in both the UK and EU markets, and maintaining protections for the UK internal market. The decision on whether to implement similar measures in GB will be informed by a Call for Evidence which will explore whether implementing similar measures would benefit the whole of the UK internal market. We plan to issue this later this year alongside a full programme of stakeholder engagement which will include consideration of whether GB should match the EU's measures to also apply a remote display option to domestic gas and electricity utility meters.