



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee for the Economy

cc committee.economy@niassembly.gov.uk

Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FD
02890 529333

Our ref:

Date: 05 08 2026

Dear Peter

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU) BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND
AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION (UR) AND CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND (CCNI)**

I am writing to inform the Committee that the Department has laid the above MoU before the Assembly on 27 July 2026. A copy of the MoU, which covers both energy and water issues, is attached.

It was developed by the UR and CCNI pursuant to requirements under Article 11 of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and Article 47(7) of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Neither the Department for the Economy (DfE) nor the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) have a role in developing or approving the MoU.

To avoid duplication and confusion, DfE have laid the MoU on 27 July 2026 on behalf of both DfE and DfI. This is in keeping with previous laid papers covering both departments on energy and water issues, and the approach has been agreed with the DfI Minister.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer.A black rectangular box redacting the name of the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer.

Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Memorandum of Understanding between the Utility Regulator and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

The following Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared jointly by the Utility Regulator and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.

It is a requirement of both:

- Article 11 of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003; and
- Article 47(7) of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

that this Memorandum of Understanding be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Copyright Statements

Due to the differing classifications of the organisations jointly publishing this document under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, both Crown and non-Crown copyrights apply.



© Crown copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/

Where we have identified any third party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at **www.uregni.gov.uk**.
Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to the Utility Regulator at:

Utility Regulator
Millennium House
Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ
Tel: +44 (0) 28 9031 1575
Email: info@uregni.gov.uk



© Consumer Council for Northern Ireland copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence visit: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at **www.consumercouncil.org.uk**.
Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to the Consumer Council at:

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
Floor 3 | Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast | BT2 8EN
Tel: 08001216022
Email@info@consumercouncil.org.uk

Memorandum of Understanding between the Utility Regulator and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

FOREWORD

The Utility Regulator (UR) and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (Consumer Council) recognise the crucial role that electricity, gas and water play in the lives of consumers, both domestic and non-domestic in Northern Ireland.

As we journey towards net zero, we are in an unprecedented period of energy transition, and along with many other stakeholders the UR and the Consumer Council are working to do their part to help Northern Ireland meet its net zero targets. Whilst we are two independent organisations, each with a distinct purpose and mission, we acknowledge that effective collaboration can help us successfully deliver better outcomes.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out how our two organisations will work together for the years to come, and we look forward to working together, constructively and in partnership, to achieve the very best outcomes for electricity, gas and water consumers.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1. This MoU has been developed in accordance with:

- The Energy (NI) Order 2003 (Article 11)
- The Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006 (Article 47); and
- The General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1984.

It sets out how the UR and the Consumer Council will maintain and foster co-operation, mutual understanding and effective working relationships between the two bodies, ensuring each can fulfil its respective statutory functions.

It is the intention of the UR and the Consumer Council to articulate, through this MoU, the arrangements that are in place to meet our principles of co-operation and information exchange.

While respecting the distinct and complementary roles of each organisation, we are united in our shared objective of protecting and promoting the interests of consumers, with both organisations recognising the:

- critical role energy and water play in the lives of consumers in Northern Ireland
- need to ensure that we add value to each other's work and collaborate on our future plans so that we take forward joint endeavours where this will minimise duplication of effort or the spending of public funds; and
- importance of maximising the benefits to the consumer and utility industries while minimising costs.

2. This MoU is not intended to cover every aspect of the working relationship between the UR and the Consumer Council. It is a document to facilitate collaborative working between the organisations and achieve optimum outcomes for consumers.

3. In relation to the principle of shared working in paragraph 1, for any specific joint projects between the UR and the Consumer Council, where both organisations consider that a more focused bilateral arrangement than this MoU will be appropriate, a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) may be entered into to govern the relationship for that specific project, lasting for the duration of that specific project.

4. This MoU will be reviewed at biennial intervals. Additionally, it may be updated or amended at any time by agreement of both organisations to reflect changing operational requirements, given the pace of progress to meet Northern Ireland's net zero ambitions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Utility Regulator

The Utility Regulator is the economic regulator for electricity, gas and water in Northern Ireland. We are the only multi-sectoral economic regulator in the UK covering electricity, gas and water.

We are an independent non-ministerial government department, and our main duty is to promote and protect the short- and long-term interests of consumers. Our role is to ensure that the energy and water utility industries in Northern Ireland are regulated and developed within ministerial policy, as set out in our statutory duties.

Consumer Council

The Consumer Council is the statutory consumer body of Northern Ireland, operating as an arm's-length body of the Department for the Economy (DfE).

Our foundational statute in consumer affairs, through the General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1984, is to champion and safeguard consumer interests in any UK market. We use the consumer protection principles of access, choice, safety, information, fairness, representation, redress and information to guide all our work, respond to enquiries, provide expert advice, investigate complaints, conduct independent research, advocate across consumer issues, deliver information campaigns and influence public policy.

Our legislative underpinning in consumer protection extends to energy, water and sewerage, transport, post and food affordability, with a brief for financial inclusion and EU Exit. We also have super-complaints designation and advise UK policy makers, regulators, trading standards authorities and ombudsman services on reserved and devolved matters of consumer rights and protections.

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Principles of cooperation

While the UR and the Consumer Council are independent and have their own legitimate interests and responsibilities, we recognise the importance of working together across a range of areas and on matters of mutual interest, including collaborating on research and sharing research insights and outputs.

- Both organisations highlight connection and collaboration with others as a key tool in achieving their goals and are committed to working together in a spirit of trust and mutual respect in a transparent manner in the interests of consumers.
- Both organisations will consider the views of the other and we commit our organisations to consult each other on relevant proposals and to share best practice between our organisations including during business planning processes.
- We commit to treat matters that affect both organisations in a consistent manner or where different approaches are taken by the organisations to express clearly the reasons for this.
- We will ensure that consumer complaints and disputes are dealt with effectively and in accordance with our respective roles.
- Both organisations will maintain an open and constructive working relationship, briefing each other as soon as is practicable on relevant developments within their respective areas of responsibility. We will hold bilateral working level meetings at regular intervals or as the need arises and, where appropriate, invite each other to relevant events.
- We shall be open to ideas for improvements in the way we operate and actively seek to better leverage the synergies between our organisations including the sharing of intelligence and insights, within the limits of our legal authority.

Exchanging and Sharing of Information

Both organisations are committed to maintaining good communication with each other on a 'no surprises' basis.

- Each organisation commits to work cooperatively to ensure any public communications on areas of mutual interest are, where practical, shared in advance and reflect shared goals and aspirations. Any work delivered through joint endeavour or collaboration should be easily recognisable as delivering on the goals of both organisations.
- Both organisations commit to the principle of sharing information including best practice and emerging issues within the limits of our legal authority and any relevant official guidance. Both will apply a presumption of the desirability of

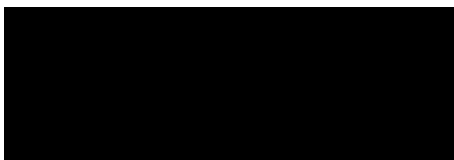
disclosure as a starting point when considering information requests from the other.

- Where the outcome of each other's work is likely to impact or impose an action on the other, the organisation carrying out the work shall, in so far as is possible, inform the other organisation in ample time to allow it to make representations and for those representations to be considered.
- Both organisations commit to meeting regularly at multiple levels, including executive/senior leadership and Board level, to share information on matters relevant to consumer interests in the water and energy sectors, and to keep each other updated on relevant work which they are considering or currently undertaking.
- If either organisation receives a request to disclose information (under relevant legislation) that is not public and originally came from/was shared by the other organisation, it shall consult that organisation before disclosing.

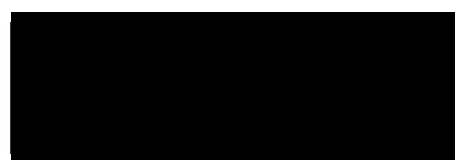
Managing Disputes

- Both organisations agree to resolve their differences in the spirit of collaboration and in the best interests of Northern Ireland citizens. If there is a dispute between the organisations about the interpretation and/or operation of this MoU the matter shall be resolved between the relevant teams in both organisations in the first instance.
- Where a convergent view cannot be achieved, each team shall provide an explanation to support its stance following which the matter shall be referred to the relevant senior leaders of both organisations for resolution.

Signatories:



John French
Chief Executive
Utility Regulator



Noyona Chundur
Chief Executive
Consumer Council