

First of all a big thank you for all of the input that you sent me regarding the Storm Arwen power outages. It was a tremendous help in presenting our issues, as a rural community, to Ofgem for their consideration in how to proceed in enforcing improvements with ENWL and other affected energy suppliers in the future.

The meeting took place via video as planned on Tuesday February 15 at 2:00 PM. I was both surprised, and delighted, to find out that the two Ofgem attendees were Martin Cave, the chair of Ofgem, and Akshay Kaul, Director of Networks at Ofgem - the principal author of the report into the industry's failings around their handling of, and response to, the storm. This report is being issued in two stages - the interim report which investigates the network providers situations and response, which is largely a facts and figures exercise with no significant assessment of the customer impact (this is available now and can be downloaded from:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Interim%20report%20on%20the%20review%20into%20the%20networks%27%20response%20to%20Storm%20Arwen_0.pdf

), and the final report which will add in the customer impact information (and hopefully some reality in terms of compensation payments). Many such meetings and visits by Ofgem staff are being held around the affected areas in the coming weeks looking at all groups of people that have been impacted. The final report is due to be issued probably in early April, but the date is yet to be confirmed.

Other attendees at the meeting were Aidan Miller, administrative officer to Simon Fell MP, and two other local constituents, one from the Ulverston area and one from further up the Duddon valley, possibly near Broughton. Many significant points were brought up in the conversation including, but not limited to the following, which do not all apply to the situation in and around Kirkby:

- ENWL approach to communication with customers was totally unacceptable and somewhat naive;
- ENWL's mentality is that everyone would be able to access the internet for information one way or another. This would be very difficult in the situation where there is no power to your residence (to charge phones, provide WiFi etc.) and also no power to the mobile mast(s) that serve that residence. Therefore sending texts or emails in such circumstances is ineffective;
- Inaccurate information regarding the likely outage length - being told that power would be restored by 4:00PM and then having that pushed back, repeatedly, by 24 hours, does not permit customers to make alternative arrangements based on the reality of the situation;
- Inaccurate information on the ENWL web site;
- Inability to reach ENWL by phone within a reasonable timeframe;
- Very long recorded messages when trying to get through to an operator - no 'bypass the messages' option;
- No way of reporting the outages online;
- No outage recorded on their records even though multiple people had reported it beforehand;
- ENWL web site went down one afternoon under the load;

- Recognition that power outages could have less obvious impacts e.g. pumping of water to a property;
- ENWL seem unaware of their own infrastructure (e.g. where the power lines actually go);
- Compensation payments often inaccurate and many yet to be paid (10+ weeks after the event);
- ENWL 'unaware' that compensation requests had been submitted even though many were submitted the day after the power was restored;
- (Customer) recommendation that compensation should be significantly higher to help focus ENWL's mind on resolving issues more quickly in future;
- A small number of people had significant health impacts e.g. unable to perform dialysis for a week;
- Unacceptably long wait for power to be restored via an interim generator (3.5 days after the power went off, why not in the first 24 hours?);
- Staff shortages to answer, and handle, queries about the situation;
- The cost of underground cables to alleviate the problem is prohibitive;
- Are ENWL prepared for future disaster situations? Do they run disaster exercises? If not, why not?

Rest assured that if you raised any points in your input to me then they did get raised either by myself or other attendees; **all** issues raised by yourselves were heard.

As a follow-up step, I contacted ENWL the following day asking about when compensation was going to be paid. Their statement was that most or all people have received a basic £70 cheque as their initial obligation (...or allowing them to state for the purposes of the interim report that 100% of properties had received compensation - omitting to say that it was only a fraction of the full amount owed), and all outstanding payments are due by the end of the month - I'll believe that when I see it though! As confirmation of the impact in this area, I provided details of all properties in the LA17 7YA and LA17 7YB postcodes; unfortunately I had insufficient information regarding the time line for Chapels to be able to provide them any details of the affected properties there.

This was never intended to solve any of the problems that we have all had, purely to ensure that Ofgem are fully aware of the reality of the situation 'on the ground' which may not always agree with ENWL's view of the same.

Happy to discuss further with you if you want and I have also offered to have further discussions with Ofgem if they so desire.

Storm Arwen impact assessment

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