



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland

Guidance for Electricity Suppliers

December 2022

WITHDRAWN



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WITHDRAWN

The Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland

- 1.1 The Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland (EBSS AFP NI) delivers a combined payment of £400 EBSS support and £200 AFP to domestic electricity customers in Northern Ireland. This combined payment of £600 is being delivered by electricity suppliers from January 2023, with the scheme closure on 30 June 2023. This is equivalent to the support being provided in Great Britain and is in addition to the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) support, delivered directly through energy tariffs (for further information on EPG and AFP follow this [link](#)). The payment is being delivered as a direct payment, either as a bank transfer, non-transferable cheque, or a secure voucher, as determined by electricity suppliers based on how customers pay their bills. Customers do not need to apply for the payment.
- 1.2 The government has confirmed that further funding will be available via the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund to provide equivalent support of £600 for energy bills for the small minority of households who will not be reached through the main EBSS AFP NI, for example, park home residents and those tenants whose landlords pay for their energy via a commercial contract. The government is committed to ensuring such households receive the same support for their energy bills.
- 1.3 This Guidance is provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to support electricity suppliers to deliver the EBSS AFP NI to eligible customers.

2 Legal and regulatory framework

- 2.1 The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will make a Direction pursuant to section 22 of the Energy Prices Act 2022 - the EBSS AFP NI Direction – which will set out the terms of EBSS AFP NI delivery.
- 2.2 The Direction can be found at - www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-support-scheme-and-alternative-fuels-payment-northern-ireland-ministerial-direction
- 2.3 BEIS will conduct monitoring and auditing of the scheme. Where there is evidence of a potential breach of the provisions of this scheme, the Utility Regulator will consider appropriate enforcement action. Under the provisions of their enforcement procedure, UREGNI will consider if any market participant were in breach of the Direction, which would be treated as a breach of a relevant requirement.
- 2.4 The Direction is issued under section 22 of the Energy Prices Act 2022. The purpose of the Direction is to require that a domestic electricity supplier provides and delivers EBSS AFP NI payments to its eligible customers and submit to the reporting, audit, and financial management requirements of the scheme.
- 2.5 The Direction came into force on 23 December 2022 and has effect for the duration of the scheme, until 30 June 2023.
- 2.6 This Guidance is issued by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to domestic electricity suppliers – a person who holds a licence granted under UREGNI and who supplies or intends to supply electricity to domestic customers – to support the implementation of the scheme.

The role of UREGNI in the EBSS AFP NI

- 2.7 The Direction and the deed signed in connection with the Direction, together with any applicable legislation with which suppliers must generally comply, set out the legal framework for suppliers' obligations in the delivery of the scheme.
- 2.8 To facilitate the implementation of EBSS AFP NI, UREGNI has agreed that, when alerted to a potential legislative breach related to any of the schemes, to consider said breach under the provisions of the UREGNI enforcement procedure. The relevant individual(s) with the appropriate authority in UREGNI will consider if any market participant(s) are in breach of the Direction and treat this as a breach of the relevant requirement. If it is determined a breach occurred, proportionate and appropriate action will be taken by UREGNI pursuant to their Enforcement Policy. His Majesty's Government (HMG) is also working in close coordination with the Northern Ireland Office and the Department for the Economy (DfE) which would allow for transfer of

responsibilities should DfE become responsible for the implementation of the scheme in the future.

Contact

2.9 The BEIS EBSS AFP NI team can be contacted at energy.processing@beis.gov.uk

Data sharing and data privacy

- 2.10 BEIS will share with UREGNI non-personal data in the form of aggregate level reporting data, to minimise reporting burden for suppliers. This information sharing is necessary for the purpose of enabling UREGNI and BEIS to cooperate on EBSS AFP NI delivery matters. This data sharing is covered within a Memorandum of Understanding between BEIS and UREGNI.
- 2.11 As part of the scheme BEIS will collect data in the form of Meter Point Reference Number (MPRN) information from suppliers. Suppliers must follow the Guidance set out in paragraphs 7.24 and 7.25 in relation to the sharing and processing of these data.
- 2.12 The EBSS AFP NI data privacy notice will be published on GOV.UK, and it will set out how BEIS will use the personal data collected from electricity suppliers, and the rights of suppliers and consumers. It is made under Articles 13 and 14 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

3 Operations and readiness

- 3.1 Suppliers are required to provide a readiness statement and to confirm readiness prior to delivery of the scheme.
- 3.2 Suppliers must evidence their readiness to deliver the scheme, by providing details on implementing processes and plans, in advance of the EBSS AFP NI grant payment to suppliers being made.

Deed

- 3.3 The BEIS Terms of EBSS AFP NI Scheme Deed sets out the terms under which BEIS will make payments pursuant to the Direction.
- 3.4 The Deed must be signed by a senior person, such as the supplier Finance Director or CEO (or equivalent). The signatory may provide an e-signature or an ink signature scanned into a PDF.
- 3.5 The signed Deed must be returned to BEIS by email to energy.processing@beis.gov.uk by 29th December 2022.

Supplier information

- 3.6 Supplier information, as set out in Annex A, is required to support the administration of the scheme, and is requested to be reported to BEIS in December 2022.
- 3.7 For the purpose of administering the scheme suppliers are required to provide details of the following people:
 - a. Their Finance Director – who may be a person with this job title, or a person in a similar senior financial role or a senior director role.
 - b. The Responsible Person – who has overall supplier responsibility for delivering the scheme. This should be someone in the company with sufficient understanding of and authority over relevant supplier systems and processes to ensure delivery of EBSS AFP NI, as well as sufficient and appropriate authority to sign off reporting submissions to ensure the supplier meets their obligations under EBSS AFP NI.
 - c. The Senior Compliance Officer – who is required to complete internal assurance and must be independent and not under the direction of the Responsible Person. They need to be of the appropriate authority to sign off the requested reporting submissions and will be held accountable for the accuracy and validity of the content.
 - o They can either be part of an internal audit or assurance function and/or an individual who is both independent (of scheme delivery) and capable. To ensure

the internal assurance declaration has validity the Senior Compliance Officer must be a separate individual from the Responsible Person, as the Responsible Person should not audit their own work.

- Independent in this context means an individual who has appropriate authority and independence from the Responsible Person. They must be able to question the accuracy of the return and have the authority to do so.
 - Capable in this context means an individual who is sufficiently competent to undertake verification, to understand the supplier obligations under EBSS AFP NI, and who understands the EBSS AFP NI reporting requirements. There is no requirement for this person to be a qualified auditor or hold Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (CCAB) qualifications.
- d. The person responsible for the day-to-day administration of the scheme – who can be any person chosen to receive and be responsible for all correspondence with BEIS on scheme delivery.
- 3.8 Suppliers should also provide details of those persons who will require access to the Data Management System (DMS) to submit scheme reporting or person responsible for manually sending the reporting.
- 3.9 Suppliers should inform BEIS if their supplier information changes at any time.

Supplier bank account

- 3.10 Suppliers are required to have opened a trust account, solely dedicated to EBSS AFP NI, to receive and administer EBSS AFP NI funding.
- 3.11 A qualifying trust account must be a bank account in the name of the domestic electricity supplier with a bank in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland which will be maintained separately from the supplier's other bank accounts, and which will be subject to a bare trust created for the benefit of the Secretary of State pursuant to the terms to the trust deed into which only EBSS AFP NI monies will be paid.
- 3.12 Ahead of the initial payment only, suppliers should provide a letter signed by their Finance Director (see 3.7a) confirming their bank account details. This should be returned to BEIS with an initial solvency statement (see from paragraph 4.7). A template declaration can be found at Annex B.
- 3.13 Suppliers must not release or transfer monies out of the qualifying bank account for any purpose other than providing an EBSS AFP NI payment to an eligible customer or to a voucher delivery subcontractor (for onwards payment to an eligible customer) or to return funds to BEIS when requested.
- 3.14 Any interest accrued or balance held must be returned to BEIS as part of the scheme reconciliation. Any charges made to the account are not eligible for reimbursement from

EBSS AFP NI funds and equivalent funds must be reimbursed to the account by the supplier.

- 3.15 This account must remain active until the final scheme reconciliation has been completed and this has been confirmed in writing by BEIS.

Supplier readiness notifications

- 3.16 Suppliers must take measures to ensure the swift and direct disbursement of EBSS AFP NI payments from this account to customers or via the 3rd party contracts for providing vouchers. A supplier should not hold any monies relating to the scheme in any supplier bank account which is not the Trust Account, unless either:

- (i) the supplier has become entitled to such money pursuant to the Direction; or
- (ii) the supplier has transferred the money from the Trust Account to one of its own accounts solely for the purpose of swift onward transmission to a third party subcontractor for the purposes of providing secure vouchers and similarly such swift transmission to the Trust Account of any monies returned to the Supplier by any such third party subcontractor.

- 3.17 Where it is necessary for a supplier to transfer funds through another business account as part of a process of making an EBSS AFP NI payment, and where the transfer is for the sole purpose of making the payment to an eligible customer, suppliers should:

- a. Minimise the time any funds are held outside of the qualifying account. Suppliers should be prepared to evidence that funds have been withdrawn from the qualifying bank account no earlier than necessary and, at a minimum, in line with a schedule of disbursement to customers. Where required, BEIS may request further evidence that payments have not been withdrawn unnecessarily early.
- b. Ensure any undispersed funds moved out of the qualifying account are returned as soon as reasonably practical.
- c. Be prepared to evidence the flow of the money in full through all accounts that the EBSS AFP NI monies have transferred through as part of the reconciliation, post payment assurance and audit programme.
- d. Account for and return any interest accrued through all accounts that the EBSS AFP NI monies have transferred, reflected proportionately against the EBSS AFP NI fund figures.

- 3.18 As part of conditions suppliers are required to meet in order to access funds from the qualifying bank account, suppliers will need to submit information covering clauses:

8.2(a)(iii) a description of how suppliers have validated that their systems confirm eligible customers identified.

- 8.2(a)(v) a description of how ineligible customers have been identified.
- 8.2(a)(vi) a description of how eligible customers will be provided with the EBSS AFP NI payment, broken down by payment type –prepayment customers, Direct Debit customers and credit customers.
- 8.2(a)(vii) – a description of how eligible customers who have not been provided with an EBSS AFP NI payment before or on the last day of each scheme month or before the final date, will be identified and recorded.
- 8.2(a)(viii) – a description of how eligible customers will be notified of the EBSS AFP NI payment, broken down by payment type – prepayment customers, Direct Debit customers and credit customers.
- 8.2(a)(ix) – a description of any systems or other testing intended to be used or carried out before the qualifying date.
- 8.2(a)(x) – a description of any management processes put in place to oversee compliance.
- 8.2(a)(xi) – a description of the measures taken to prevent fraud, misuse or abuse.
- 8.2(a)(xii) – a description of how the internal audit will be carried out for the purpose of compiling the internal audit report.
- 3.19 Supplier bank account information (8.1(a)(i) and 8.1(a)(iii) and details of the responsible person 8.1(a)(iv)) must be provided as set out in this Guidance from paragraph 3.10.
- 3.20 Eligibility information (8.1(a)(v) must be provided as set out in this Guidance from paragraph 4.12.
- 3.21 If at any time during scheme delivery period any of the readiness notification information changes this must be submitted to energy.processing@beis.gov.uk. Suppliers will be required to confirm that any changes have been reported when providing the monthly reconciliation and compliance report.

Managing the risks of fraud

- 3.22 The government will not accept any manipulation or fraud. Any allegation or suspicion of fraud, misuse or abuse will be treated seriously.
- 3.23 Suppliers should provide BEIS with a description of their Fraud Strategy and Fraud Response Plan as part of their EBSS AFP NI readiness reporting.
- 3.24 Suppliers must maintain business as usual fraud detection, prevention, reporting and recovery processes and procedures that are proportionate to and appropriate for EBSS AFP NI scheme delivery.
- 3.25 If suppliers detect any attempted or actual fraud or misuse of public monies by an internal actor, customer group or third party, they should immediately report it to

energy.processing@beis.gov.uk to ensure this intelligence can be signposted appropriately for the development of control measures.

- 3.26 Supplier bank accounts will be checked using control measures including the government's digital due-diligence tool Spotlight to ensure funds are held safely and in line with the requirements of the Direction. Suppliers should also formally write to BEIS confirming details of the bank account that the EBSS AFP NI grant funding will be paid into (see paragraph 3.12).

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4 Providing the EBSS AFP NI grant to suppliers

- 4.1 BEIS will provide each supplier with the funding required to provide EBSS AFP NI payments to all eligible customers in advance of payments to customers commencing. Funding will be provided once the supplier satisfies the conditions for receiving payment.
- 4.2 Payment will be made to suppliers by Wednesday 4 January 2023.
- 4.3 The supplier is responsible for ensuring that all payments are used for the sole purpose of providing EBSS AFP NI to eligible customers. Suppliers must not retain any grant funding to reimburse costs incurred or for any other purpose.
- 4.4 Funding will not be provided to suppliers for scheme administration. Scheme implementation may cause suppliers to incur costs, whilst providing benefits in other areas of their organisation.
- 4.5 The EBSS AFP NI will close for delivery on 30 June 2023. Any funds provided to suppliers and not dispersed by the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023 must be returned to BEIS.

Solvency statement

- 4.6 To receive payment, suppliers are required to provide a declaration, signed by their Finance Director or someone in a similar role such as a senior financial role or a senior director role.
- 4.7 The declaration must confirm that an insolvency event has not occurred and that, having made reasonable enquiries, the Finance Director is not aware of any circumstances that could reasonably be expected to give rise to such an insolvency event during the calendar month in which the declaration is given or in the immediately following calendar month.
- 4.8 The declaration must be dated the last day of the calendar month immediately prior to the scheme month (or if such day is not a working day, the working day immediately prior to such day).
- 4.9 The declaration must be provided by no later than 23:59 hours on the last day of the calendar month immediately prior to the relevant scheme month, or there is a risk of not receiving the payment. The declaration must be submitted to energy.processing@beis.gov.uk. A template declaration can be found at Annex B.

Calculating payments to suppliers

- 4.10 The grant payment to suppliers will be based on the estimated number of eligible customers the supplier will be required to make EBSS AFP NI payments to on the qualifying date.
- 4.11 Suppliers are expected to provide the estimated number of qualifying customers based on best available data and to certify that as of the date provided and to the best of their knowledge, the information is a true and accurate reflection of the number of EBSS AFP NI payments that will be provided.
- 4.12 Suppliers must provide an estimate of eligible customers broken down by payment type.
- 4.13 Suppliers will receive 101.5% of the estimated funds for making the EBSS AFP NI payment, to provide contingency for any adjustments, such as customer switching or exceptions that take place between the estimated figures and the number of eligible customers on the qualifying date. Where a supplier can demonstrate that customer growth is expected to be greater than 1.5%, up to a further 0.5% contingency may be made available in the grant payment. Suppliers requesting the additional contingency should contact BEIS to discuss evidence and the quantum requested.
- 4.14 Grant payments will be made based on the number of EBSS AFP NI payments estimated to be required for eligible customers in the qualifying month. Payments will be based on the number of qualifying customers per supplier multiplied by the agreed payment.
- 4.15 BEIS will consider if any adjustment is required to the payment calculation having regard to the bank balance position, forward estimate and exceptions position reported. Adjustments are only expected on an exceptional basis. The presumption is that adjustments for remittance or recovery will be actioned as part of the final reconciliation stage.
- 4.16 The grant figure will be communicated by BEIS to individual suppliers in advance of the payment date.

Payment reconciliation

- 4.17 Following the closure of the scheme on 30 June 2023 a final audited reconciliation will take place, allowing for confirmation of final expenditure under the scheme and reimbursement to suppliers of any balance due or repayment of undispersed balance to BEIS.
- 4.18 To complete the scheme reconciliation, an end of scheme report must be submitted to BEIS by Monday 31 July 2023 (see from paragraph 7.30).

- 4.19 The information provided in the report will be used by BEIS to fully reconcile actual EBSS AFP NI payments made under the scheme against estimated allocations provided to suppliers.
- 4.20 Following the completed reconciliation BEIS will write to suppliers confirming:
- a. The total allocation of grant made to the supplier,
 - b. The value of eligible EBSS AFP NI payments delivered, and
 - c. The balancing figure for remittance or recovery.
- 4.21 Any undispersed funding resulting from monies which exceed the total sum of all the EBSS AFP NI payments delivered will need to be returned to BEIS as soon as practically reasonable of receipt of the reconciliation notification. The notification will provide full details of how to make any payment.
- 4.22 Suppliers are not expected to make any payment to BEIS ahead of receiving a reconciliation notification request and should not routinely expect to make any repayment before the scheme closure, except if this is required on an exceptional basis.

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5 Providing the EBSS AFP NI payment to customers

- 5.1 Domestic electricity bill payers in Northern Ireland are eligible for EBSS AFP NI payments, which are applied to primary (main) domestic supply contracts (or deemed contracts).
- 5.2 Households who do not have a domestic supply contract (or deemed contract) with an electricity supplier are not eligible for EBSS AFP NI payment.
- a. Any domestic customer who is only supplied gas is not eligible for the EBSS AFP NI payment.
 - b. Where a landlord rather than a tenant holds the contract, the landlord is eligible for the EBSS AFP NI payment. Where the landlord resells the electricity to their tenant, they must comply with the maximum resale price (MRP) rules and should therefore pass on any EBSS AFP NI payments appropriately.
 - c. Where an inclusive charge is made for accommodation with no specified charge for gas or electricity and no separate agreement for the resale of energy, parties (i.e. landlord and tenant) are encouraged to come to an agreement on the EBSS AFP NI payment, in line with the arrangements in their respective contracts or tenancy agreements. HMG expects intermediaries to pass on the benefit of EBSS AFP NI to end users of energy, and regulations will be brought forward shortly to require this.
- 5.3 For the purpose of the scheme, eligibility refers to only one contract (or deemed contract) per domestic premises.
- a. Where there are multiple related meter points, eligibility relates to the primary meter point (primary MPRN) only.
 - b. Where a premises has multiple unrelated meter points, a supplier must exclude all known ineligible MPRNs from their estimate of eligible customers and must not provide EBSS AFP NI payments to these meters. Examples of meter points that are not primarily dwellings include, but are not limited to, a stable, barn or swimming pool.
 - c. For accounts where two-meter points serve two separate occupied domestic premises, both meter points should receive an EBSS AFP NI payment. For the purposes of the scheme, an occupied property is a non-vacant property, as defined in the vacant property exception in Annex C.
- 5.4 Customers with a domestic electricity supply contract or a deemed contract at 08:00 hours on the qualifying date will be eligible for payment under this scheme.
- 5.5 Suppliers should aim to provide the EBSS AFP NI payment to eligible customers as soon as reasonably practicable for all customer payment types.

- 5.6 The supplier is obliged to provide an EBSS AFP NI payment for each eligible customer, subject to exceptions provided for in the Direction.

Qualifying date

- 5.7 The qualifying date is the date used for determining a supplier's customers who are eligible on that date to receive the EBSS AFP NI payment.
- 5.8 Suppliers are responsible for providing the payment to all eligible customers using the information provided by NIEN, who are those customers registered at 08:00 2 January 2023.
- 5.9 Based on the information provided by NIEN, suppliers are responsible for accurately validating all eligible customers on the qualifying date. Suppliers may choose the best method for validating the list of eligible customers and should prepare in advance so they are confident that their management information systems can accurately do so. Evidence of how eligible customers have been identified should be retained for audit purposes.
- 5.10 Suppliers are required to report the actual number of eligible customers identified on the qualifying date as part of their compliance reports (see section 7).
- 5.11 If a supplier has no domestic electricity customers on the qualifying date, they must provide a nil return.

Providing the payment to eligible customers

- 5.12 The payment should be provided by making the payment directly to the customer's bank, providing the customer with a secure cashable voucher of an amount equal to the EBSS AFP NI payment or where necessary issuing a non-transferable cheque as a last resort.
- 5.13 Suppliers should provide the EBSS AFP NI payment to all eligible customers as soon as practicable and must have provided the EBSS AFP NI payment by the end of the scheme. Where this has not occurred, suppliers should follow the process for outstanding customers.
- 5.14 For all customer and payment types, suppliers must retain sufficient records to evidence each EBSS AFP NI payment being provided, as per the compliance, audit and assurance requirements of this Guidance and must report on these payments by customer and payment type to BEIS.
- 5.15 Where a customer uses a combination of payment types the supplier should provide the EBSS AFP NI payment once only, applying it to the primary method of payment.

EBSS AFP NI payment by payment type

Standard credit accounts and Prepayment (keypad) meters

- 5.16 A credit customer is a customer who pays on receipt, including customers that pay by debit or credit card, BACs transfer or cheque, and is neither a prepayment customer nor a Direct Debit customer.
- 5.17 A prepayment customer is a Pay As You Go customer supplied by a prepayment meter (also known as a keypad meter).
- 5.18 For standard credit customers, the supplier should provide the EBSS AFP NI by issuing a secure voucher addressed to the account holder. Provision of these vouchers should include identification checks at the point of redemption to ensure funds are reaching the intended recipient.
- 5.19 For prepayment customers, the supplier should provide the EBSS AFP NI by issuing a secure voucher addressed to the occupier and include the corresponding Keypad Registration Number (KPRN). Provision of these vouchers should include identification checks at the point of redemption to ensure funds are reaching the intended recipient.
- 5.20 Vouchers can be issued via SMS text, email or post and can be provided, for example, as a barcoded letter or vouchers. Suppliers may determine the most appropriate method and must clearly communicate this method to customers ahead of delivery.
- 5.21 Where a customer's correspondence address differs from the supply address the voucher should be issued to the supply address as standard. Where a customer has made a specific request to issue the voucher to the correspondence address a supplier may choose to do so.
- 5.22 Suppliers should issue funds and required data to voucher providers within three working days of the start of the scheme. Suppliers may, as required, withdraw sufficient monies from the trust fund account to fund all voucher provision across the scheme in a single transaction to pay a voucher provider.
- 5.23 Suppliers should seek to ensure that the chosen voucher provider begins delivery of vouchers to customers within 11 working days of the funds being transferred. Suppliers should prioritise vulnerable customers on their Care Registers, forwarding that data to voucher providers first and identifying those customers as a priority.
- 5.24 Vouchers should be issued with a beginning on the date the voucher is issued, with an expiry date of 31 March 2023 at the latest. Any voucher issued after 31 March 2023 must have an expiry of 23:59 on 30 June 2023.
- 5.25 In all cases, payments provided must be redeemed by the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023 as no payments can be made after this date. Payments for unredeemed or expired vouchers must be returned by the voucher provider to suppliers as soon as

possible after the scheme closing date, and subsequently returned to BEIS in full through the reconciliation process.

- 5.26 Where the payment has been provided by a voucher, but where customers have not redeemed the payment the EBSS AFP NI is considered provided but not delivered.
- 5.27 Suppliers should take action to encourage all standard credit and pre-payment customers to redeem their EBSS AFP NI payment during the scheme period, recognising that not all payments will be redeemed and that suppliers will be unable to guarantee that the customer redeems the payment within the scheme.

Fixed and variable Direct Debit

- 5.28 For all Direct Debit customers, the supplier should begin providing the EBSS AFP NI at the point that the first voucher payments are expected to arrive with customers. The payment should be made by providing a direct bank transfer to the customer, equal to the EBSS payment. All payments to Direct Debit customers should be completed as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 5.29 Where it is not possible to provide the refund within the scheme period the supplier must follow the process for outstanding customer (see paragraph 5.49) and provide any outstanding EBSS AFP NI payment to the customer as soon as possible.

Voucher security

- 5.30 Vouchers for credit customers must be addressed to the named account holder(s) as ID checks will be required when vouchers are redeemed. As part of their readiness preparations, suppliers should ensure they have accurate and up to date information for account holders to ensure the account holder can be named.
- 5.31 For pre-payment customers, the voucher must be addressed to the occupier and an address check will be used for verification (see Annex G).
- 5.32 Individuals can redeem an EBSS AFP NI voucher on behalf of someone else, including vulnerable customer groups who cannot collect themselves. Further ID checks will be done (as outlined in Annex G) to confirm the ID of the customer and the individual redeeming the voucher to mitigate fraud risk.
- 5.33 ID checks will be carried out by voucher providers at redemption points. A list of ID requirements for these checks can be found at Annex G for all relevant customer types. Suppliers should communicate that ID checks will be conducted to customers (see paragraph 5.76).
- 5.34 Where an unredeemed EBSS AFP NI payment has expired or been lost a replacement credit can be issued.
- 5.35 Replacement vouchers can be issued up until the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023. When providing replacement vouchers close to the scheme closing date, suppliers and

voucher providers should account for the time taken for a customer to receive and redeem a payment and therefore should consider the use of cheques or bank transfers as necessary.

- 5.36 Where a supplier identifies that a voucher has been incorrectly issued, for example in the case of a change of tenancy, they should cancel the voucher issued incorrectly and reissue to the correct recipient.
- 5.37 Where an EBSS AFP NI payment has been redeemed but the account holder seeks to claim a replacement credit the supplier must be able to:
- a. Provide evidence of the original voucher's redemption,
 - b. Be able to evidence that their agreement with the voucher provider required ID checks at redemption, and
 - c. For standard credit customers, evidence that the voucher was addressed to the named account holder(s) or present the evidence of the actions taken to identify the named account holder(s) before issuing a voucher addressed to the occupier.
- 5.38 Where these criteria are satisfied the supplier has met their obligation to provide the EBSS AFP NI payment to the eligible customer.
- 5.39 Where these criteria have not been met the supplier will be required to reissue the EBSS AFP NI payment to the customer at their own cost.
- 5.40 Suppliers will not be held responsible for customer or third-party misuse of vouchers where they have met the requirements of paragraphs 5.50-5.53.

Payment by cheque or bank transfer

- 5.41 Where, having exercised reasonable endeavours, suppliers are unable to provide an EBSS AFP NI payment using the methods set out for each of the customer types, they should provide the payment by bank transfer, secure voucher that may be exchanged for cash or where possible by non-transferable cheque. Payment using these methods should be by exception.
- 5.42 Where a non-transferable cheque has not been cashed or redeemed five working days before the end of the scheme period, the supplier should take steps to ensure the cheque is cancelled prior to the end of scheme period. Ensuring payments are delivered.
- 5.43 Suppliers are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure the EBSS AFP NI payment is both provided and delivered. It is provided when a supplier provides payment to an eligible customer. Delivery of the EBSS AFP NI is confirmed when the customer has received the financial benefit of the payment (e.g. when a refund is provided, voucher redeemed, or cheque cashed).

- 5.44 Where a secure voucher or cheque is issued, not all payments will be redeemed by customers. In these scenarios, an EBSS AFP NI will be considered provided but not delivered.
- 5.45 To demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to deliver the payment to voucher customers, suppliers should make a minimum of three attempts to contact customers who have not redeemed their payment to encourage the customer to take action.
- 5.46 The supplier may determine the best method of contacting the customer for each attempt. Where possible the supplier should consider trying different approaches for each attempt to provide the best chance of reaching the customer – for example where they hold both a telephone number and email address if the first unsuccessful attempt is via email the supplier should consider using telephone for the second attempt.
- 5.47 One of the three attempts should include contacting the customer at least one-month before the expiry of the unredeemed EBSS AFP NI payment, highlighting the expiry date and encouraging redemption.
- 5.48 Additional attempts may include but are not limited to:
- a. Contacting the customer at the end of the scheme to encourage redemption.
 - b. Providing a cheque or alternative methods to provide cash to customers (see from paragraph 5.40).
 - c. Providing a reminder to customers on how to redeem or request the replacement of previously unredeemed EBSS AFP NI vouchers, or cheques.
- 5.49 Where a supplier can demonstrate the minimum three steps have been taken and the EBSS AFP NI remains unredeemed by the customer, the supplier can consider that it has taken all reasonable steps to allow it to classify the payment as an exception case.
- 5.50 Suppliers should report on the number of delivered payments as part of their scheme data reporting.

Outstanding customers

- 5.51 Suppliers must take all reasonable steps as outlined in the Guidance to provide the EBSS AFP NI payment to all eligible customers by the end of the scheme. It may not always be reasonably practical to provide the EBSS AFP NI payment to an eligible customer by the end of scheme. Outstanding customers will occur where a supplier has not attempted to provide the payment or the supplier has attempted to provide the payment during the payment period but has been unable to do so, and where the payment has not been classified as an exception. This will include, for example, where a supplier is continuing to follow steps to make a reasonable attempt to pay in relation to a possible exception case.

- 5.52 The supplier must endeavour to provide any outstanding EBSS AFP NI payment to the customer as soon as possible, and in all cases before the scheme closure date of 30 June 2023.
- 5.53 As part of the monthly reconciliation and compliance report, suppliers are required to state the three most common reasons as to why customers have been reported as outstanding for each payment type. A short description of each reason must also be included.
- 5.54 In the case of all outstanding customers the supplier should be prepared to evidence:
- a. Why it was not reasonably practical to provide the EBSS AFP NI during the scheme, and
 - b. The steps taken to attempt to provide the EBSS AFP NI and the additional steps planned to provide the payment.

Exceptions

- 5.55 An exception case occurs where the supplier, having taken all reasonable attempts to pay, cannot provide the EBSS AFP NI to a person which it has determined to be an eligible customer where that person falls within a listed exception category.
- 5.56 In these cases, having demonstrated a reasonable attempt to pay, a supplier should classify the outstanding customer as an exception case. Once classified as an exception case the supplier is not required to continue to take steps to provide the EBSS AFP NI payment.
- 5.57 Subject to paragraph 5.60, an exhaustive list of exception cases, and details of actions constituting a reasonable attempt to pay, can be found at Annex C. These are:
- a. Deceased customer
 - b. No forwarding address
 - c. Vacant properties
 - d. No domestic premises
 - e. Misidentified customer
 - f. Erroneous transfers
 - g. Unredeemed voucher.
- 5.58 Where a supplier has determined an exception case applies, they should be prepared to evidence:
- a. The reason why an exception was made, and
 - b. The reasonable steps taken to attempt to provide the EBSS AFP NI.

- 5.59 Where a supplier has followed this Guidance and can evidence an exception case, BEIS will not deem such cases as a failure to meet supplier obligations.
- 5.60 Where a customer meets more than one exception case category the supplier may choose which exception to apply and report on.
- 5.61 Where a supplier identifies an exception case not covered by the exhaustive list, they should contact BEIS explaining their case for proposing an exception. BEIS will consider the case and, if necessary, update the Guidance and Direction. BEIS will also consider the case made from a compliance perspective.
- 5.62 Suppliers are required to report on the number and category of exception cases as part of their monthly reconciliation and compliance report.
- 5.63 As part of the end of scheme reporting suppliers will be required to document the total number and category of exception cases.

Final payment date

- 5.64 Any funding that does not reach a customer by 23:59 on 30 June 2023 for any reason must be returned to BEIS through the final reconciliation process. This includes returning funding where an exception was applied, where a customer remains outstanding on 30 June 2023, and where an EBSS AFP NI was not delivered because a voucher was not cashed by 30 June 2023.
- 5.65 All monies must be fully defrayed from the supplier bank account by 23:59 on 30 June 2023. Any monies paid to customers after this date will not be reimbursed under this scheme and the supplier will be liable for this amount.
- 5.66 Where a non-transferable cheque has not been cashed or redeemed five working days before the end of the scheme period, the supplier should take steps to ensure the cheque is cancelled prior to the end of the scheme period, of 30 June 2023.

Communicating that the EBSS AFP NI payment has been provided

- 5.67 Customers must be informed in writing (paper or electronic) when the single EBSS AFP NI payment has been provided.
- 5.68 The communication must specify that the customer has been provided with an EBSS AFP NI payment by HM Government to reduce the customer's energy costs. This should be reflected by using the following wording:

- a. That a combined Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland discount has been provided.
 - b. That the Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland is a combined discount funded by HM Government.
- 5.69 Suppliers are required to confirm that this communication has or will take place as part of the monthly reconciliation and compliance report.
- 5.70 This communication should be provided using the most relevant and timely business as usual communication approach (including through App or In-Home Display).
- 5.71 In customer communications the scheme should be referred to as the ‘Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland’. The scheme name should not be abbreviated on statements. In wider communications once stated in full on the first occasion, it is then reasonable to abbreviate it subsequently to EBSS AFP NI.
- 5.72 In all references in customer communications the EBSS AFP NI payment should be described as a discount funded by HM Government.
- 5.73 Where customers are provided with vouchers or cheques, customers should be informed that the purpose of these is for provision of the Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment discount, as funded by HM Government, and of the expiry date.
- 5.74 In the case of vouchers customers should also be informed of:
- a. How the voucher will be sent,
 - b. How to redeem the EBSS AFP NI voucher,
 - c. The ID requirements for redemption, and
 - d. Information, including links, on where to find a suitable location to redeem their voucher.
- 5.75 ID checks will be required when vouchers are redeemed. Suppliers should communicate to customers that ID will be required to cash the voucher and specify what ID will be acceptable. Where a third-party cashes the voucher, the person will need to produce evidence of both the customer’s identity and their own.

Wider communications

- 5.76 Suppliers will be asked to report on the channels and regularity of communications they send to customers and to make an assessment of how far the scheme has been understood. This communications reporting does not form part of the regular reporting as set out in this Guidance. Further information on communications reporting, which will be collected on a monthly basis, will be provided to suppliers.

6 Compliance, assurance, and audit

- 6.1 To ensure compliance with the requirements of the scheme, suppliers are required to engage with the following compliance, assurance and audit processes:
- a. Start of the scheme compliance assessment
 - b. Audit and assurance programme
 - c. End of scheme compliance assessment
- 6.2 Suppliers should take care to ensure that the information contained is accurate, justifiable, and supported by evidence. It is a supplier's responsibility to ensure it has appropriate systems, management controls and senior management oversight in place to ensure that eligible customers are accurately identified and recorded.
- 6.3 Suppliers should retain all documentary evidence for a minimum of 7 years from the date of the EBSS AFP NI payment. This may include (but is not limited to): customer number reports and calculations, customer billing system records, individual customer bills, internal governance reports, reporting from third party service providers and copies of correspondence with customers. This is for the purposes of delivery, reconciliation, audit, assurance, compliance and enforcement, and monitoring and evaluation of the EBSS AFP NI programme. These records may be subject to external audit.

Compliance assessment

- 6.4 Northern Ireland Energy Network (NIEN) will provide a list of all customers on a T01 domestic meter to suppliers. Suppliers are required to filter data to ensure only a domestic customer list is sent to BEIS.
- 6.5 In order to report a payment as delivered the Supplier must fulfil the control points set out in Annex D. Suppliers are expected to retain evidence, at an individual customer account level, to be able to demonstrate these control points.

Audit and Assurance Programme

Internal Assurance

- 6.6 Suppliers must provide internal independent assurance on the accuracy of the information submitted in the monthly compliance report and the end of scheme report. Suppliers must submit a written internal assurance declaration as part of the submission of both documents, which will confirm that the assurance activity has been completed (see paragraph 6.10).

- 6.7 The internal assurance will be undertaken by an appointed Senior Compliance Officer, who can either be part of an internal audit or assurance function and/or an individual who is both independent (of scheme delivery) and capable (see paragraph 3.7).
- 6.8 The purpose of the internal assurance is to provide assurance to BEIS of the accuracy of the information submitted in the monthly compliance reports and end of scheme report. This is used as evidence within the compliance assessment to determine if the supplier has delivered in line with their reporting obligations.
- 6.9 If an internal assurance declaration is not submitted with the monthly compliance reports or the end of scheme report the supplier will be contacted to arrange for the submission of the document. If the supplier continues to not provide this declaration and assurance the supplier may be found non-compliant and face possible enforcement action.
- 6.10 Each supplier declaration should contain assurances for each of the data points detailed in the monthly compliance reports definition including, but not limited to, the following assurances:
- a. Confirmation that the number of eligible customers on the qualifying date has been accurately reported and is supported by source records.
 - b. Confirmation that the number of reported EBSS AFP NI payments provided (e.g. voucher issued to customers) has been accurately reported for each of the scheme months and is supported by source records.
 - c. Confirmation that the number of reported EBSS AFP NI payments delivered to (e.g., EBSS AFP NI payment applied to the customer account or refunded to bank account) or redeemed (e.g., prepayment voucher cashed) by customers has been accurately reported for each of the scheme months and is supported by source records.
 - d. Confirmation that the number of exceptions reported has been accurately reported for each of the scheme months and is supported by source records.
 - e. Any recommendations arising from the internal assurance process, including action owners, and intended timescales for completion.
- 6.11 The name, designation and contact details of the individual authorising the internal assurance declaration should be clearly outlined.
- 6.12 On receipt of the internal assurance declaration as part of the compliance report, BEIS will complete a review of the information provided. This will inform the compliance assessment. As part of the assessment BEIS may raise questions or concerns with the supplier and may seek clarity on the content and assurances provided by the author of the internal assurance declaration.

Post payment assurance

- 6.13 Post payment assurance will be carried out by BEIS to ensure the effective management of public money. BEIS will undertake detailed assurance checks on a subset of payments delivered to customers to assess whether appropriate and robust

processes were in place to complete the minimum assurance for operating the EBSS AFP NI.

- 6.14 Suppliers are required to participate in a post payment sample-based assurance process, the purpose of which is to provide assurance that all EBSS AFP NI payments have been delivered in line with the eligibility conditions for the scheme.
- 6.15 Appropriate evidence must be retained to evidence that all EBSS AFP NI payments met all relevant criteria at the point of award.
- 6.16 For EBSS AFP NI payments delivered, at a minimum, suppliers must be able to evidence:
 - a. The meter was an eligible meter,
 - b. The customer eligibility on the qualifying date,
 - c. The value of EBSS AFP NI payments delivered,
 - d. The date of EBSS AFP NI payments delivered,
 - e. The EBSS AFP NI payment was communicated to the customer as funded by HM Government, and
 - f. The date the EBSS AFP NI payment redeemed (where a voucher was issued).
- 6.17 Where a payment was not delivered to an eligible customer the supplier must be able to evidence:
 - a. The case falls within one of the categories of exception case set out in the Direction.
 - b. Reasonable steps were taken to provide the EBSS AFP NI payment before classing the case as an exception (see Annex C).
- 6.18 The subset of payments selected to be assured will cover all payments and payment types and will be chosen proportionally to the number of payments delivered by a supplier and the potential risk BEIS identifies in the payments. Suppliers should anticipate the number of checks to be a few thousand, although this will be lower for smaller suppliers.
- 6.19 For each sampled meter, suppliers will be asked to provide evidence that:
 - a. An EBSS AFP NI payment was successfully delivered.
 - b. Or to provide evidence and explanation for why a payment was not delivered.
- 6.20 Suppliers are required to provide an account statement or other relevant evidence, such as a data file, demonstrating the payment delivered against the meter number. The statement or other evidence should show the record relating to the EBSS AFP NI payment.

- 6.21 Personal information such as customer name and address should be redacted, but the MPRN must be clearly visible.
- 6.22 The first samples will be issued to suppliers once data collections have commenced from suppliers in 2023.
- 6.23 Suppliers will have 30 days to submit the evidence requested to BEIS.
- 6.24 BEIS will review the evidence presented and confirm satisfactory receipt to suppliers. Where suppliers are unable to provide evidence required to support that EBSS AFP NI payments have been delivered then appropriate enforcement action may be instigated by BEIS and/or UREGNI.

Audit Programme

- 6.25 BEIS will appoint independent auditors to deliver an external audit programme and obtain audit assurances.
- 6.26 The purpose of the audit is to:
 - a. Ensure that the information provided, including the end of scheme report, is correct.
 - b. Provide BEIS with assurance over the number and value of payments provided and delivered.
 - c. Ascertain whether the total value of advances that suppliers have claimed are reconciled against those payments delivered and ensure as far as reasonably practicable that payment figures are reported correctly.
 - d. Support the compliance assessment process to determine if a supplier has met their obligations.
 - e. The auditor will be expected to complete a report for each supplier. The audit will include:
 - f. Verifying the accuracy of data submissions to BEIS in line with the Direction and Guidance – test a sample of the data to ensure that information submitted to BEIS for compliance and for progress reporting is accurate.
 - g. Securing assurance of compliance with this Guidance and with any processes and procedure that BEIS may have reviewed with the supplier.
 - h. Identifying any suspected fraud, either on the part of the supplier or those parties with whom they have a contract for the delivery of EBSS AFP NI in respect of the payments and reimbursement process; and
 - i. Identifying any irregular payments due to error or non-compliance, and detect departures from good practice that have resulted, or that may result, in suppliers requesting reimbursement for the incorrect amount.

- j. Review the end of scheme report.
- 6.27 The above list is indicative, and suppliers may be subject to audit to obtain assurances other than those listed above.
- 6.28 The evidence of the external audit will be used, alongside the assurance and compliance assessment processes, to determine if a supplier has met its obligations.
- 6.29 It is the responsibility of the supplier to retain sufficient management information on administering the EBSS AFP NI to be effectively audited.
- 6.30 Suppliers must make sufficient information, records and personnel available, at the time required, to enable the external auditor to effectively undertake the audit, co-operating with the auditor as required.
- 6.31 Suppliers refusing to participate or co-operate with the external audit programme may be found non-compliant.
- 6.32 It is intended the audit programme will take place in August 2023. Suppliers will be provided with notification at least two weeks in advance of any site visit. The external auditor will seek a mutually agreeable date.
- 6.33 We will aim to provide suppliers with a copy of the draft report no later than eight weeks after the date of visit by auditors. Suppliers will be given four weeks to provide a management response.

End of scheme Compliance Assessment

- 6.34 Following receipt of the end of scheme report and associated audit and assurance declarations BEIS will assess submitted information for each Supplier. From this BEIS will determine whether the supplier is compliant with their EBSS AFP NI obligations. In making this decision they will consider:
 - a. The content of the end of scheme report.
 - b. The assurances provided by the supplier internal assurance declaration.
 - c. The assurances provided by any external audit report.
 - d. Any relevant supplementary information.
- 6.35 BEIS will give suppliers the opportunity to respond to their enquiries on notifications and end of scheme reports as well as providing management responses to audit recommendations. This will be undertaken before the decision is made regarding supplier compliance.
- 6.36 The compliance assessment is expected to take place from August to September 2023. These timelines may be extended, for example if an audit report fails to provide

adequate assurance and further examination is required prior to making a compliance assessment decision.

- 6.37 BEIS will inform suppliers as soon as is reasonably practical after the compliance assessment notifying them of their decision. This may be that the:
- a. Supplier is compliant: The supplier is considered to be compliant based on the end of scheme report and satisfactory audit assurances obtained.
 - b. Supplier is compliant with minor contraventions: The supplier is considered mainly compliant. Some minor contraventions were reported however these were not considered significant and the supplier appears to have implemented a suitable response.
 - c. Supplier is non-compliant: The supplier is considered non-compliant based on the end of scheme report and/or lack of audit assurance (either internal and/or external). The information obtained highlights significant breaches and/or significant operational weaknesses.
- 6.38 If a supplier is found non-compliant BEIS may open an investigation into the need to commence enforcement action.

WITHDRAWN

7 Reporting

- 7.1 To minimise administrative burden, two regular monthly reports and end of scheme reporting will be submitted by suppliers once and then shared by BEIS.
- 7.2 A reporting calendar can be found at Annex F.

Regular reporting

- 7.3 Suppliers are required to submit monthly reports.
- 7.4 Suppliers are also required to provide an end of scheme report, which includes a consolidation and up to date view of the previously submitted monthly reconciliation and compliance reports. This must be submitted by Sunday 30th April and Monday 31 July 2023.

Monthly compliance report

- 7.5 Suppliers are required to complete a monthly compliance report in each month of the scheme delivery for the purposes of financial management, verifying delivery and monitoring compliance.
- 7.6 The regular monthly compliance report includes the pre-disbursement information, a delivery progress update and the outstanding customers snapshot and is required to be submitted for each scheme month.
- 7.7 The monthly compliance report must be submitted on the fifth working day of the month, and additionally on the scheme end date of 30th April 2023 as part of the end of scheme report:
 - a. Tuesday 7 February 2023
 - b. Tuesday 7 March 2023
 - c. Tuesday 11 April 2023
 - d. Monday 01 May
 - e. Monday 8 May 2023
 - f. Wednesday 7 June 2023
 - g. Monday 31 July 2023
- 7.8 The report is used by BEIS to monitor the financial position, confirm eligible customer payments, and to evidence the appropriate use of public funds.
- 7.9 The report is used by BEIS to inform their in-scheme compliance reporting which determines supplier progress in delivering the scheme.

7.10 On a monthly basis each supplier is required to provide the following data fields:

Q1. Headline financial figures on the qualifying date

- a. Total EBSS AFP NI payments received (£)
- b. Balance remaining in EBSS AFP NI account (£)

Q2. Actual number of eligible EBSS AFP NI customers on the qualifying date, split by payment type.

- a. Direct Debit customers
- b. Credit customers
- c. prepayment customers

Q3. Number of delivered EBSS AFP NI payments split by payment type.

- a. Direct Debit customers
- b. Credit customers provided and delivered
- c. prepayment customers provided and delivered

Q4. For prepayment and credit customers.

- a. vouchers provided and delivered
- b. vouchers expired
- c. vouchers re-issued

Q5. Top three reasons for outstanding payments for

- a. Direct Debit customers
- b. Credit customers
- c. prepayment customers

Q6. Total cumulative number of exceptions split by payment type

- a. Direct Debit customers
- b. Credit customers
- c. prepayment customers

7.11 Suppliers should continue to follow all guidance in relation ensuring payments are delivered and must retain all specified records for compliance, audit and assurance purposes.

7.12 Similarly, the reported figures from previous months should be checked and updated to include any catch-up activity where all reasonable steps have been taken and outstanding payments can now be classed as exceptions. As part of the report, each supplier is also required to provide the following evidence:

- a. Bank account statement – a screenshot or PDF evidence clearly showing the total funds held in the dedicated EBSS AFP NI bank account on the report date.
 - o The bank account number
 - o The statement date
 - o The total account balance
 - o Details of all transactions made in the previous month
- b. Responsible person declaration – A signed declaration by the responsible person certifying that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief the information provided in this report is a true and accurate reflection of the number of EBSS AFP NI payments that will be or have been provided in each scheme month.
- c. Internal assurance declaration - A signed declaration by the senior compliance officer certifying that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief the information provided in this report is a true and accurate reflection of EBSS AFP NI payment activity and is supported by source records.
- d. Confirmation of changes - confirmation that, if necessary, any changes to the readiness notification information has been communicated to BEIS.
- e. Confirmation of supplier information change – confirmation that the supplier information (supplier name, contact details and bank account) has not changed.
- a. A plan for outstanding customers, describing how the supplier plans to provide an EBSS AFP NI to outstanding customers.

7.13 The Responsible person declaration (7.12b) should take the following format:

- a. Once applicable, the figures presented for the previous month are a true and accurate account of payments dispersed as verified via internal assurance processes.

7.14 The format of the internal assurance declaration (7.15) is not prescribed but must contain assurances for each of the data points detailed in the monthly compliance report including, but not limited to, the following assurances:

- a. Confirmation that the number of eligible customers on the qualifying date has been accurately reported and is supported by source records.
- b. Confirmation that the number of reported EBSS AFP NI payments provided has been accurately reported for each of the scheme months and is supported by source records.

- c. Confirmation that the number of reported EBSS AFP NI payments delivered to or redeemed by customers has been accurately reported for each of the scheme months and is supported by source records.
 - d. Confirmation that the number of exceptions reported has been accurately reported and is supported by source records.
 - e. Any recommendations arising from the internal assurance process, including action owners and intended timescales for completion.
- 7.15 The name, designation and contact details of the individual authorising the internal assurance declaration must be clearly outlined as part of the declaration.

Monthly MPRN-level delivery data

- 7.16 Throughout the scheme delivery suppliers are required to provide regular delivery data for monitoring, financial assurance and evaluation purposes.
- 7.17 Suppliers are required to submit monthly meter level data reports, capturing data related to the previous month for each meter.
- 7.18 The list below sets out the information required from suppliers for each eligible customer:
- On a monthly basis:*
- a. Meter Point Reference Number (MPRN)
 - b. Customer type – prepayment/ / Direct Debit / Credit
 - c. Latest EBSS AFP NI payment status –
Provided/delivered/outstanding/exception/unknown
 - d. Billing cycle – monthly/quarterly/biannually/annually/irregular/other
- 7.19 The MPRN delivery data report should be submitted on the tenth working day of the month. The first report should contain EBSS AFP NI eligible customers as of, ahead of the first payments being made.
- 7.20 The MPRN-level report is not personal data but in the event suppliers need to share personal data with BEIS suppliers must:
- a. Make customers aware that BEIS will be given access to these personal data and will store and securely process these data for the purposes laid out in the scheme privacy notice.
 - b. Provide a link to customers to the BEIS privacy notice on GOV.UK.
 - c. Provide evidence to BEIS, if requested, of execution of the above points.

7.21 We recommend the following text to be communicated to customers, this may be provided within your data privacy notice, or with other scheme communications:

“Your personal data will be shared with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to support administration of the Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland (EBSS AFP NI). These data consist of your meter point number, whether you have received and redeemed each EBSS AFP NI payment and data about your meter point including your billing cycle and how you pay your bill.

BEIS is collecting and processing this information under the ‘Public Task’ (UK GDPR, Article 6(1)(e)) legal basis. Processing is necessary for monitoring, assurance, fraud prevention and evaluation purposes of HM Government’s Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland. This task is carried out in the public interest and in the exercise of official authority vested in the Secretary of State for BEIS.

You can find more information on how BEIS will use your personal data in the BEIS Privacy Notice available www.gov.uk/government/publications/electricity-meter-data-collected-through-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-privacy-notice/use-of-electricity-meter-data-collected-through-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-privacy-notice.”

7.22 The legal basis for collecting this data is in line with UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Article 6 (1) (e), that processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.

7.23 Data provided will be used:

- a. To enable BEIS to monitor the progress of the scheme. This includes monitoring the reach of the scheme across regions and vulnerable groups.
- b. To conduct financial checks on EBSS AFP NI payments including for assurance and the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences including fraud.
- c. To allow BEIS to evaluate the scheme to understand its impact and to inform future government policy.
- d. To support the delivery of equivalent support to those households not eligible for this scheme.

7.24 These data are being used by BEIS and will be shared with BEIS contractors (and if applicable their sub-contractors) where required for the delivery of EBSS AFP NI work that BEIS has contracted out. These personal data will be shared with BEIS’ data processors Microsoft and Amazon Web Services. BEIS does not allow third parties to use this data. BEIS will not:

- a. Sell or rent these data to third parties.
- b. Share these data with third parties for marketing purposes.

- 7.25 BEIS may share these data if required to do so by law, for example by court order or with other enforcement agencies for the prevention and detection of fraud or other crime.

End of scheme report

- 7.26 The end of scheme report will compile the information and data submitted through regular monthly reconciliation and compliance reporting for the duration of the scheme. It will give an up-to-date view of the position of the supplier at the end of the scheme.
- 7.27 BEIS will use this report to reconcile all payments made under the scheme. Final reconciliation will allow reimbursement to suppliers of any balance due or repayment of undispersed balance to BEIS.
- 7.28 BEIS will use this report to assess overall compliance in a supplier meeting its obligations under the Direction and Deed and may look to validate past monthly compliance report information submitted against the end of scheme report submission.
- 7.29 The end of scheme report must be submitted by Sunday 30th April and Monday 31 July 2023 as the scheme ends on 30th June 2023. This report may be shared with UREGNI in connection with enforcement of supplier compliance.
- 7.30 The monthly reconciliation and compliance report must be submitted on the scheme end date of Monday 31 July 2023 but as part of the end of scheme report. As with previous months the reported figures should be checked and updated to bring the reporting up to date for the end of scheme.
- 7.31 BEIS will use the data provided to aggregate the figures in respect of all scheme months.
- 7.32 To complete the end of scheme report suppliers must also provide the number of outstanding customers and the number and category of exception cases as of 1 July 2023. A specific reporting template will be circulated to complete this additional part of the report.
- 7.33 The end of scheme report must be signed by the Responsible Person and internally assured by the Senior Compliance Officer, following the process set out for the monthly reconciliation and compliance report.
- 7.34 The end of scheme report will be subject to independent external audit.

Other reporting

- 7.35 Suppliers are required to participate in a post payment sample-based assurance process to be issued once data collections have commenced from suppliers in 2023 (see from paragraph 6.13).

- 7.36 Suppliers are asked to participate in monthly communications reporting (see paragraph 5.76).
- 7.37 Suppliers may be asked to provide information; participate in surveys or other opinion gathering; and engage in discussions in order to evaluate the outcomes of the scheme and/or assist BEIS in evaluating the scheme more generally.
- 7.38 Suppliers may be asked to provide information to BEIS in order to answer questions (including Parliamentary Questions and ministerial correspondence) on topics including, but not solely limited to, the operation of the scheme, and information that BEIS may require to support the development and monitoring of government policy.

WITHDRAWN

Annexes

Annex A: Supplier Information

Responsible Person:	
Supplier contact with overall responsibility for the administration of the scheme	
Name	
Position	
Email	
Telephone	
Address	
Primary Contact:	
Primary contact for day-to-day administration of the scheme – will receive all EBSS AFP NI delivery correspondence	
Name	
Position	
Email	
Telephone	
Address	
Secondary Contact:	
Secondary contact for day-to-day administration of the scheme – will receive all EBSS AFP NI delivery correspondence	
Name	
Position	
Email	
Telephone	
Address	

Financial director (or equivalent):		
Responsible for signing and submitting monthly solvency statement		
Name		
Position		
Email		
Telephone		
Address		
Senior compliance officer:		
Responsible for compiling and certifying the internal assurance declaration. Must not be under the direction of the responsible person		
Name		
Position		
Email		
Telephone		
Address		
Supplier contacts requiring access to Data Management System (DMS)		
For submission of reporting (up to 5 contacts)		
Name	Position	Email address

Supplier EBSS AFP NI bank account details:

Confirmation that Oracle SUPPLIER INFORMATION FORM AP1a has been submitted

Annex B: Solvency statement and bank account statement templates

Solvency statement –

From: [the relevant domestic electricity supplier]

To: The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Dated [] 202[2/3]

Dear Sir

[name of the relevant domestic electricity supplier] (the “Company”)

I acknowledge that the provision of this certificate is a requirement of the EBSS AFP NI Direction made by The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on [DATE] 2022 (the “Direction”) and that the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and his officials will rely on this certificate in providing EBSS AFP NI payments to the Company.

I am the [finance director/deputy finance director] of the Company and hereby declare that no insolvency event (as defined in the Direction) has occurred with respect to the Company and that having made reasonable enquiries I am not aware of any circumstances that could reasonably be expected to give rise to an insolvency event during the calendar month in which this declaration is given or in the immediately following calendar month.

This certificate and any non-contractual obligations arising out of or in connection with it are governed by English law.

Yours faithfully

[name of [finance director/deputy finance director]]

Finance Director/Deputy Finance Director

For and on behalf of

[name of the domestic electricity supplier]

Bank account statement

From: [the relevant domestic electricity supplier]

To: The Finance Director, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Dated [December] 2022

Dear Sir

[name of the relevant domestic electricity supplier] (the “Company”)

I acknowledge that the provision of this information is a requirement of the EBSS AFP NI scheme and that officials will rely on this declaration to provide EBSS AFP NI payments to the Company.

I am the [finance director/deputy finance director] of the Company and hereby declare that following bank account information is accurate.

The bank account is with a bank in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and will be maintained separately from other bank accounts. Only EBSS AFP NI monies will be paid into the account and no monies will be released or transferred out of the qualifying bank account for any purpose other than providing an EBSS AFP NI payment to an eligible customer or returning funds to BEIS when requested.

Name of company: [name]

Account holder name: [name]

Bank name: [name]

Account No: [number]

Sort code: [number]

Yours faithfully

[name of [finance director/deputy finance director]]

Finance Director/Deputy Finance Director

For and on behalf of

[name of the domestic electricity supplier]

Annex C: Exception cases

Category	Definition
<p>Deceased customers</p>	<p>A customer is deceased and their account is closed after the qualifying date and before an EBSS AFP NI has been provided. The supplier has not been able to contact a relative / executor in order to provide the EBSS AFP NI to the deceased's estate.</p> <p>Suppliers will have processes in place for deceased customers, and it is only if suppliers have not been able to contact a relative / executor in order to provide the EBSS AFP NI to the deceased's estate that this be classed as an exception.</p> <p>Where an account is closed before the qualifying date the EBSS AFP NI is not payable and the account should not be included as an eligible customer in estimates.</p>
<p>Reasonable steps to make payment:</p>	
<p>The supplier writes to the deceased's last known address advising of the entitlement to the EBSS AFP NI and provides contact details of who to contact at the supplier to arrange provision. If contact is received then the supplier arranges to provide the EBSS AFP NI. If no contact is received or contact is received but relatives do not wish the payment to be provided then no further action is required and the case may be classed as an exception.</p> <p>Suppliers should give relatives three months from when the deceased's account was closed to respond. If no contact is received after three months, the case may be classed as an exception.</p> <p>Alternatively, if the executor's address is known, the supplier should provide the payment directly to them (e.g., cheque payment to solicitor) outlining in correspondence what the payment is for and who it relates to.</p>	
Category	Definition
<p>No forwarding address</p>	<p>A customer is no longer living at that property and has closed their account after the qualifying date and before the EBSS AFP NI was provided. The customer has left no forwarding address.</p>
<p>Reasonable steps to make payment:</p>	

<p>The supplier contacts the individual with any known contact details they may hold (e.g., email or telephone) to explain the customer has eligibility for the EBSS AFP NI and to arrange for the most suitable method of EBSS AFP NI provision. If the supplier retains bank details for the individual then they should provide a credit to that bank account via BACS etc.</p> <p>If the supplier has no bank details and has no details by which to contact the individual, or the individual does not respond to an information request then the supplier may class the case as an exception.</p>	
Category	Definition
Vacant Properties	Where a household was captured as having a domestic electricity supply on the qualifying date but further investigation revealed that the property was empty and no eligible customer could be established.
Reasonable steps to make payment:	
<p>Investigation of the household reveals to a supplier that whilst they supplied a household on the qualifying date there appears to be no customer resident in the property at present and furthermore no eligible property account holder could be established.</p> <p>The supplier writes to the address to clarify if anyone was present in the property on the qualifying date. If no response is received or confirmation is received that the property was vacant on the qualifying date, then the case may be classed as an exception.</p> <p>Suppliers may also run a consumption report during the scheme period up to scheme closure to identify any newly registered customers for properties which had previously been registered as vacant on the qualifying date. If there was still no one registered at a vacant property, then no EBSS AFP NI will be applied.</p> <p>It is likely that if the premise is vacant it would be de-energised and therefore ineligible and not included in estimates of eligible customers. The main reasons for a property being vacant without a named account holder include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Newly constructed properties where the MPRN has been registered with a supplier and the account holder has not yet moved in b. Rental properties that are vacant following the departure of the old tenant and prior to a new tenant moving in 	

- c. Properties that are newly occupied and there has been a delay in the occupier registering their details with their supplier

Properties that are unoccupied for all or part of the EBSS AFP NI scheme period.

Where a property account holder is known, the supplier must continue to pay the EBSS AFP NI for the duration of the scheme.

Where a supplier is aware that a property is vacant due to ill health, caring responsibilities or some other vulnerability, the supplier must continue to pay the EBSS AFP NI.

Category	Definition
<p>No domestic premises</p>	<p>Where an energised meter was captured on the qualifying date but further investigation revealed that there was no household or eligible customer (e.g. house demolished, destroyed by fire, empty for renovation, etc).</p> <p>Disconnected and de-energised properties are ineligible for EBSS AFP NI and should not be included in estimates of eligible customers.</p>
<p>Reasonable steps to make payment:</p>	
<p>Investigation by the supplier of the household reveals that whilst they supplied a house on the qualifying date, there was no actual “house” on the qualifying date, albeit an MPRN remained connected etc.</p> <p>Should any doubt exist, suppliers should write to addresses to ascertain if an eligible customer was in the premises on the qualifying date. Should no response be received or confirmation be provided that the household is no longer operational then the case may be classed as an exception.</p>	
Category	Definition
<p>Misidentified eligible customer (e.g. due to a Change of Tenancy)</p>	<p>A customer account was captured on the qualifying date on a supplier’s customer database, but it transpires a different customer was actually in the property on the qualifying date.</p>
<p>Reasonable steps to make payment:</p>	
<p>On becoming aware of EBSS AFP NI being provided to a person other than the actual eligible customer on the qualifying date the supplier should attempt to reverse the EBSS AFP NI provided to the presumed eligible customer and re-apply this to the customer actually present in the property on the qualifying date.</p>	

For Direct Debit, Suppliers should write to the presumed eligible customer and reverse the EBSS AFP NI refund provided to the presumed eligible customer by charging the bank account or adding as a debit in an amount equal to the EBSS AFP NI. Suppliers should then apply the EBSS AFP NI refund as a direct bank transfer to the customer actually present in the property on the qualifying date.

For credit customers, the voucher issued should be cancelled and a new voucher for the correct name issued.

If insufficient details exist about the customer actually present in the property a supplier should write to the property requesting customer details to allow provision of the EBSS AFP NI. If a supplier cannot obtain sufficient information in order to provide the EBSS AFP NI by any means, then the case may be classed as an exception.

Suppliers should follow BAU complaints and fraud processes where customers dispute the date of an end of tenancy.

Category	Definition
Erroneous Transfers	Where an eligible customer was erroneously transferred into the electricity supplier on the qualifying date but was returned to another supplier shortly thereafter. The electricity supplier could not establish contact details for this customer or the customer did not respond to contact detail information requests.
Reasonable steps to make payment:	
Using contact details that were provided when the individual was erroneously transferred, the recipient supplier should write to the transferred customer to attempt to provide the EBSS AFP NI. If the individual does not respond and there is insufficient information available to provide the EBSS AFP NI then the case may be classed as an exception.	
Category	Definition
Unredeemed vouchers	Where an eligible customer has not redeemed their EBSS AFP NI voucher during the voucher validity period.
Reasonable steps to make payment	
Suppliers must follow the Guidance to support customers to redeem their EBSS AFP NI vouchers within the validity period.	
Where a supplier has followed the guidelines and the EBSS AFP NI vouchers remain unredeemed until they expire, the supplier may class that EBSS AFP NI voucher as an exception.	

Annex D: Control Points

Control points for Direct Debit customers

Process Step	Control Points Description
Suppliers to issue the EBSS AFP NI payment to eligible customers' registered bank account.	Supplier will report how many Direct Debit customers they have provided the EBSS AFP NI to their registered bank account, for every scheme month. Bank and transfer statements will serve as evidence.
Suppliers to specify on a customer's next Bill or statement of account, or via an alternative communication that an EBSS AFP NI payment has been provided and is funded by HM Government.	Suppliers will report that they have communicated payment of the EBSS AFP NI to a Direct Debit customer.

Control Points for credit customers

Process Step	Control Points Description
Suppliers to send EBSS AFP NI payment as a voucher to eligible customers, as soon as possible following the Qualifying Date.	Supplier will report how many of their eligible credit customers have been sent an EBSS AFP NI payment as a voucher.
Suppliers to specify that the purpose of the voucher is for provision of the EBSS AFP NI grant, as funded by HM Government and of the expiry date.	Suppliers will report that they have communicated distribution of the EBSS AFP NI, as a voucher to the customer.
Eligible customers to redeem their voucher provided by their supplier.	Suppliers to report how many EBSS AFP NI vouchers have been redeemed. Records from the post office or other payment voucher issuer are to be retained as evidence.

Control points for Prepayment customers

Process Step	Control Points Description
Suppliers to send EBSS AFP NI payment as a voucher to eligible customers, as soon as possible following the Qualifying Date.	Supplier will report how many of their eligible pre-payment customers have been sent an EBSS AFP NI payment as a voucher.
Suppliers to specify that the purpose of the voucher is for provision of the EBSS AFP NI grant, as funded by HM Government and of the expiry date.	Suppliers will report that they have communicated distribution of the EBSS AFP NI, as a voucher to the customer.
Eligible customers to redeem their voucher provided by their supplier.	Suppliers to report how many EBSS AFP NI vouchers have been redeemed. Records from the post office or other payment voucher issuer are to be retained as evidence.

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Annex E: Control Points: Deep-dive

Customer Payment Type	Types of information which may be requested as part of deep-dives
Direct Debit customers	Proof of payment of the EBSS AFP NI such as a receipt, or proof of BACs/Faster Payments transfer.
Credit customers (pay on receipt)	<p>Voucher numbers and/or values of vouchers issued for the EBSS AFP NI.</p> <p>Postal or other communication records of payment card sent to customers with a value equal to the EBSS AFP NI.</p>
Pre-payment meter customers	<p>Voucher numbers and/or values of vouchers issued for the EBSS AFP NI.</p> <p>Postal or communication records of vouchers sent to customers with a value equal to the EBSS AFP NI.</p> <p>Issues reported by the voucher provider to the supplier, in reference to EBSS AFP NI vouchers to be issued.</p>

Annex F: Reporting calendar

Date to be confirmed 2023	Post Payment Assurance sample(s)
7th February 2023	Monthly Reconciliation and Compliance report
7th March 2023	Monthly Reconciliation and Compliance report
8th April 2023	Monthly Reconciliation and Compliance report
30th April 2023	End of Scheme report 1 (including outstanding customers and exceptions)
7th May 2023	Monthly Reconciliation and Compliance report
7th June 2023	Monthly Reconciliation and Compliance report
31st July 2023	Monthly Reconciliation and Compliance report
31st July 2023	End of Scheme report 2 (including outstanding customers and exceptions)
August – October 2023	End of Scheme External Audit including site visits to supplier

Annex G: Identification Requirements for Voucher Redemption

Pre-payment/ Keypad meter customers

Voucher Redemption Method	ID Required
Bank payment for vouchers addressed to “the occupier”	<p>Voucher showing KPRN and address</p> <p>App or top card showing KPRN</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and KPRN linked address</p> <p>Bank Card with name matching the proof of address</p>
Cash payment or loaded debit card for vouchers addressed to “the occupier”	<p>Voucher showing KPRN and address</p> <p>App or top up card showing KPRN</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and KPRN linked address</p> <p>Photo ID in the name matching the proof of address</p>
On behalf of another individual – Bank payment for vouchers addressed to “the occupier”	<p>Voucher showing KPRN and address</p> <p>App or top card showing KPRN</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and address</p> <p>Bank card or bank statement of the recipient with details matching the proof of address</p> <p>Signed letter of authorisation from the recipient, naming the person collecting on their behalf</p> <p>Photo ID of person presenting the voucher</p>
On behalf of another individual – Cash payment or loaded debit card for vouchers addressed to “the occupier”	<p>Voucher showing KPRN and address</p> <p>App or top up card showing KPRN</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and address</p> <p>Photo ID and signature of recipient with details matching the proof of address (could be 2 separate documents)</p>

	<p>Signed letter of authorisation from the recipient, naming the person collecting on their behalf.</p> <p>Photo ID of person presenting the voucher</p>
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Standard Credit Customers

Voucher Redemption Method	ID Required
Bank payment for named vouchers	<p>Voucher showing customer name and address</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and voucher linked address</p> <p>Bank Card with name matching the proof of address</p>
Cash payment or loaded debit card for named vouchers	<p>Voucher showing customer name and address</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and voucher linked address</p> <p>Photo ID in the name matching the proof of address</p>
On behalf of another individual – Bank payment for named vouchers	<p>Voucher showing customer name and address</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and address</p> <p>Bank card or bank statement of the recipient with details matching the proof of address</p> <p>Signed letter of authorisation from the recipient, naming the person collecting on their behalf</p> <p>Photo ID of person presenting the voucher</p>
On behalf of another individual – Bank payment for named vouchers	<p>Voucher showing customer name and address</p> <p>Proof of address dated before the Qualifying Date (2 January 2023) with name and address</p> <p>Photo ID and signature of recipient with details matching the proof of address (could be 2 separate documents)</p>

	Signed letter of authorisation from the recipient, naming the person collecting on their behalf. Photo ID of person presenting the voucher
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To redeem an EBSS AFP NI voucher for cash, customers must present a form of photo ID, alongside the requirements listed above. Acceptable forms of Photo ID are listed below:

Valid passport

Valid UK or EU/EEA photo driving licence

Armed forces ID or Police Warrant Card

NI Electoral Identity Card

Translink SmartPass (Senior/60+/War Disabled/Blind Person's)

Asylum ID card

If a customer or individual collecting on behalf of the customer does not have photo ID, they will not be able to redeem the voucher for cash. Instead, the customer or individual will need to use a bank card and deposit.

Acceptable forms of proof of address include utility bills, letters from government departments (UK Government or NI Departments) or Bank, Building Society or Credit Union statement or passbook dated within the last three months.

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