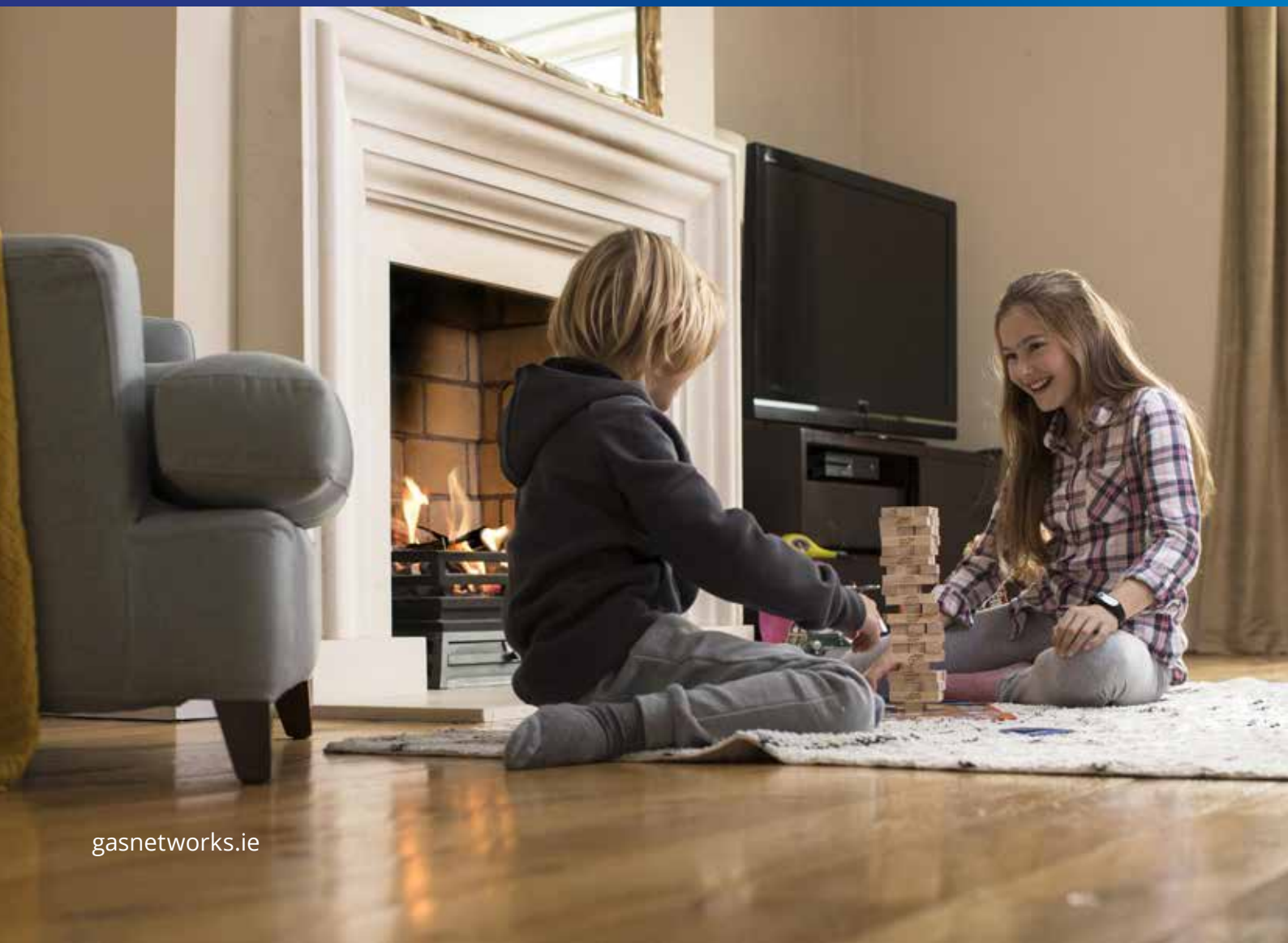


# Customer Performance Report 2019





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# 01 Executive summary

The Gas Networks Ireland Performance Report has been published annually since 2008. There are now two specific performance reports;

- **A Systems Performance Report; and**
- **A Customer Performance Report.**

The Customer Performance Report provides an overview of how both the natural gas transmission and distribution systems have operated during 2019 in relation to customer oriented activities. This report analyses the key areas where Gas Networks Ireland provides services to customers over a five-year period from 2015. The performance of these services is benchmarked against key performance indicators (KPIs) as per the Customer Charter. Gas Network Ireland aims to provide customer services in a prompt, efficient, and safe manner and to a high standard. The levels of service provided to customers is continuously monitored on a daily basis and strives to achieve excellence in all aspects of customer interactions.

**Gas Networks Ireland has a Customer Charter<sup>1</sup> which provides assurance to customers of the company's dedication to 10 performance commitments, whereby in certain circumstances, compensation will be provided for failing to meet these standards. The programme of customer satisfaction monitoring continued to score very favourably across all processes in 2019.**

Ensuring the safety of customers and the general public is of prime importance to Gas Networks Ireland. In 2019, 99.9% of reported escapes were attended to within the hour. The number of gas escapes reported in 2019 decreased by 6% compared to 2018.

The volume of calls received by Gas Networks Ireland was 302,327 in 2019, a decrease of 5.2% on 2018, as our planning of proactive customer communications continues to reduce unwanted and unnecessary inbound calls.

However, when all channels of communication are included, the customer contact volume with Gas Networks Ireland has increased to circa 537,000 contacts in 2019, representing an overall increase of 4%. The total number of complaints created in 2019 was 1,492 down from 1,952 in 2018, showing an overall decrease of 24%. This decrease is largely due to continuous improvement and an improvement in internal communications and feedback processes. The largest number of complaints received fell into the meter related category, which is consistent with previous years. Gas Networks Ireland continues to monitor all customer complaints to seek improvements to the services offered.

Customer processes are measured, and insights gained are shared with stakeholders. Following a consultation in 2016, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), formerly the Commission for Energy Regulation, issued a decision in 2017 on Gas Networks Ireland's Customer Performance Indicators, deciding to incentivise Gas Networks Ireland in key areas of its customer service such as the customer contact centre response, complaints metrics, and the results from customer surveys. During the PC4 price control period, which commenced in October 2017 and will continue for five years until September 2022, the CRU has decided to introduce financial incentives for Gas Networks Ireland with respect to these key customer performance indicators. In 2019, GNI collected data on these metrics, in order to establish baseline performance. The CRU will review the baseline performance and use this information to inform the performance targets. Once the performance targets have been set, GNI will report on its performance for each metric versus these targets. This will be set out in a dedicated section of this report next year.

Operationally Gas Networks Ireland has generally performed within the KPI levels set out in the CRU approved Customer Charter<sup>2</sup>, providing a consistent level of service to its entire customer base throughout 2019. There have however, been exceptions in meeting KPI's as follows, Appointment Granting for metering work came in at 99.97% against a KPI of 100% caused by capacity or Local Authority restrictions. Appointment Keeping for metering came in at 98.9% against a KPI of 100% and Appointment Keeping for Service came in at 97.28% against a KPI of 100% both due to a number of reasons including in day delay making the appointment, human error, called to an emergency response, materials issues or other operational reasons. Gas supply restoration (restore as quickly as possible and less than 24 hours) achieved a KPI of 99.97%, just below the approved target of 100%.

1 <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/corporate/freedom-of-information/foi-publication-scheme/about-us/customercharter/>

2 Customer Charter: <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/corporate/freedom-of-information/foi-publicationscheme/about-us/customer-charter/>

## 01 Executive summary

The 2019 publication of the Climate Action Plan, which included a political commitment to ban the installation of gas boilers in new builds from 2025 and an installation target of 400,000 heat pumps in homes and businesses, has had an impact on Gas Networks Ireland's operations. In particular, changing building regulations and the growing popularity of heat pumps has impacted performance related to appointment granting, quotations, new connections and reinstatement. Our performance under each of these areas is reported in further detail in section 4.0.

The gas network powers our country today. It is a modern and safe EUR2.6 billion asset owned by the people of Ireland, delivering 30% of the country's primary energy needs and generating over half of our electricity. Gas Networks Ireland's vision is for Ireland's gas network to be net zero carbon by 2050. This ambition will be achieved by progressing two core aims, each contributing approximately half of the emissions savings required to completely decarbonise the network. Injecting 50% net zero carbon and net zero gases into the network to displace half of the natural gas required to meet customer demand and abating the 50% natural gas still required to meet overall demand. By 2050, a blend of renewable gas, hydrogen and natural gas in combination with carbon capture and storage will deliver net zero gas for home heating, transport, industry and electricity generation.

Renewable gas is a clean, renewable and carbon neutral fuel and as such can make a significant contribution to Ireland's renewable energy and carbon reduction targets. It is produced from different sustainable organic materials, upgraded to bio-methane and can then be injected into existing gas transmission and / or distribution infrastructure. On a project which was co-funded by the EU Connecting Europe Facility, construction of the first grid injection facility for bio-methane into the existing gas network at Cush Co. Kildare was completed in July 2019 and declared a new Entry Point on the 8th of May 2020. First commercial flows commenced on this date with Naturgy as Shipper, and Tesco as the first customer.



**The gas network  
powers our  
country today**

# 02 Introduction

The Customer Performance Report is produced to comply with the licence conditions pertaining to “overall standards and performance” of the four licences currently held by Gas Networks Ireland, granted by the CRU:

- **Distribution System Owner Licence;**
- **Distribution System Operator (DSO) Licence;**
- **Transmission System Owner Licence; and**
- **Transmission System Operator (TSO) Licence.**



Gas Networks Ireland is responsible for developing, maintaining and operating the gas transmission and distribution systems.

The performance standards have been developed by Gas Networks Ireland and approved by the CRU. These performance criteria may be amended by the CRU from time to time, by notice to Gas Networks Ireland.

The annual performance reports are produced under licence condition 17 of the TSO licence and condition 19 of the DSO licence. Reporting provides an opportunity for Gas Networks Ireland and the CRU to review the company performance over a twelve-month period. The annual performance reports are published on the Gas Networks Ireland website, [www.gasnetworks.ie](http://www.gasnetworks.ie).

Gas Networks Ireland has a Customer Charter where it outlines ten commitments to the customer in terms of the services provided. Section 4 of this report illustrates Gas Networks Ireland's performance in these ten areas over a five-year period.

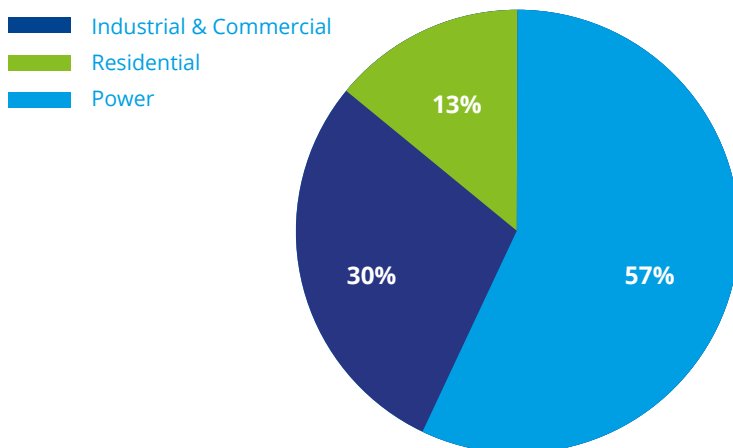
## 2.1 Company and network overview

Natural Gas Customers	705,868
Business Customers	27,021
Population Centres	181
Counties	22
Total Network Length	14,521 Km
Transmission Network	2,477 Km
Distribution Network	12,044 Km

Gas Networks Ireland is responsible for developing, maintaining and operating the gas transmission and distribution systems. Gas Networks Ireland ensures that over 700,000 natural gas customers, including 27,021 business customers, in 181 population centres across 22 counties throughout Ireland receive a safe, efficient and secure supply of natural gas, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## 02 Introduction

Figure 2.1: ROI gas market demand



Natural gas has played a vital role in Ireland’s energy mix and in Ireland’s social and economic progress. In terms of demand, natural gas accounts for 30% of Ireland’s primary energy mix. The gas demand market is categorised into Power, Industrial and Commercial (I & C) and Residential sectors accounting for circa<sup>3</sup> 57%, 30% and 13% of the demand respectively.

The Corrib gas field, which came into operation at the end of 2015, supplements the existing indigenous supply of natural gas from Kinsale Energy Limited, while meeting circa 55% of Ireland’s natural gas demand. Ireland’s interconnection with the United Kingdom (UK) as a gateway to the European gas markets, ensures security of energy supply to the Irish economy.

Natural gas is transported through a total network of 14,521km of pipeline, both transmission and distribution. The pipeline network connects the Republic of Ireland (RoI) to Scotland, Northern Ireland (NI) and the Isle of Man (IoM). The natural gas delivered to end users is not owned by Gas Networks Ireland. Rather, Gas Networks Ireland transports gas on behalf of shippers and suppliers who purchase gas from the wholesale market and use the transportation services of Gas Networks Ireland to deliver gas to businesses and homes throughout Ireland.

The Gas Networks Ireland system includes infrastructure in RoI regulated by the CRU; in NI regulated by the Utility Regulator; and in South West Scotland regulated by Ofgem. The natural gas network is differentiated as transmission and distribution and this is determined by the prevailing pressure in the pipes:

- High pressure transmission network which operates above 16 barg (the total length of transmission pipeline is 2,477km<sup>4</sup>); and
- Distribution network which operates below 16 barg (the total length of distribution pipeline is 12,044km).








A map of the transmission system is provided in Figure 2.2.

3 Percentages of gas market share calculated based on Gas Networks Ireland gas year 2018/19 data.

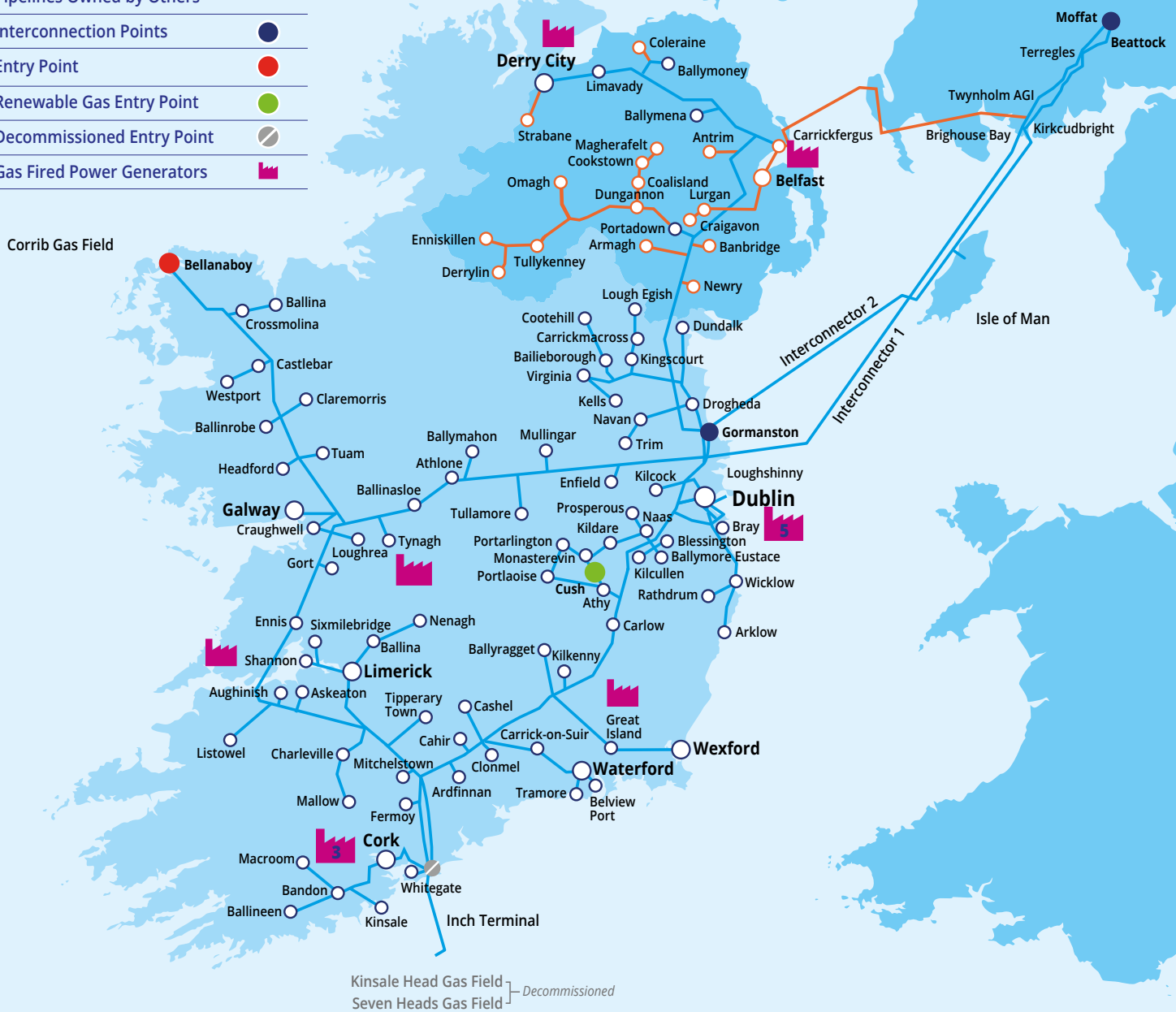
4 Total length of transmission pipeline is the entire network including pipeline in RoI, NI and on-shore Scotland.

Figure 2.2: Overview of Gas Networks Ireland Transmission System

## Pipeline map

Existing Pipelines	
Pipelines Owned by Others	
Interconnection Points	
Entry Point	
Renewable Gas Entry Point	
Decommissioned Entry Point	
Gas Fired Power Generators	

Corrib Gas Field

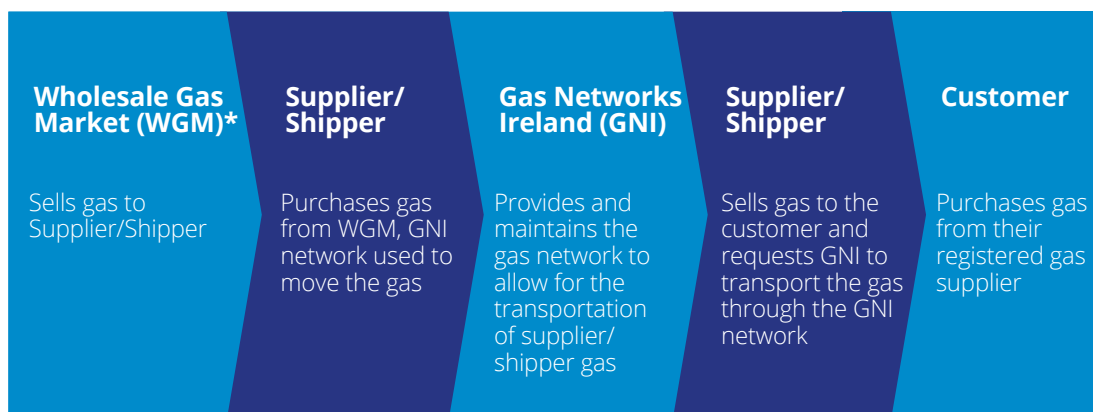


## 02 Introduction

The transmission pipes link Ireland’s major urban areas and also connects Ireland to the UK at Moffat in Scotland. Electricity generating power stations and some large industrial customers are also directly connected to the transmission network. Mostly residential and small to medium commercial customers are connected to natural gas in the distribution network.

Suppliers are retail market players that sell gas and provide services to end users i.e. customers. Shippers include suppliers and some large end users such as power stations. These power stations consume large amounts of gas allowing them to purchase gas directly from the wholesale market and use the Gas Networks Ireland natural gas transmission system to transport gas directly to their sites to facilitate the generation of electricity.

**Figure 2.3: Structure of Irish gas market**



\*The Wholesale Gas Market (WGM) is where the gas is purchased by energy traders and shippers

Gas Networks Ireland is responsible for connecting all customers to the network, regardless of their supplier. The company manages a 24-hour gas emergency service which handled 15,822 callouts in 2019.

Through the Gas Networks Ireland Connections Policy<sup>5</sup>, Gas Networks Ireland continually brings the benefits of natural gas to new customers and new towns. The Connections Policy is a Gas Networks Ireland document which is approved by the CRU. The Connections Policy is based on high level objectives to encourage the connection of new customers; provide transparency around charges; treat connections consistently and minimise the impact on tariffs. The more customers that are connected to the gas network, the more throughput there is on the system which in turn reduces tariffs for the benefit of all gas customers.

<sup>5</sup> Connections Policy: <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/business/renewable-gas/renewable-gasinformation/Gas-Networks-Ireland-Connections-Policy-Document-Revision-5.0.pdf>

Gas Networks Ireland actively promotes natural gas as a fuel of choice for homes, businesses and industry, encourages greater utilisation of the natural gas network, and looks for opportunities to expand the network where economically viable. Growing the gas network sustainably by adding new towns where appropriate and focusing on connecting customers to the existing network remains a key objective for Gas Networks Ireland.

As a low carbon fuel with low energy costs, natural gas is appealing to multi-national organisations. Cities and towns that have natural gas infrastructure are attractive for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and can benefit through direct employment and investment in the local economy. The natural gas network developed by Gas Networks Ireland has sufficient capacity to meet the gas demands of a modern Ireland competing in the global economy, contributing to Ireland's social and economic progress.

The clear benefits of gas for the customer are that it is cheaper, cleaner and more reliable than other fossil fuels. It is also a versatile energy source that can play a significant role in decarbonising the nation's energy consumption. Natural gas already contributes to competitiveness being at a lower cost than oil for domestic consumers<sup>6</sup>; it produces approximately 22% less CO<sub>2</sub> than oil and 40% less than coal<sup>7</sup>. Natural gas provides energy security for Ireland through existing infrastructure.

The indigenous sources at Corrib met c.42% of RoI total gas requirements in 2019. With the Kinsale field approaching the end of its production life (closure planned in 2020) supplying only 4%, imports from the UK have re-emerged as the main supply source for RoI. Interconnectors to the UK market provide access to diverse gas sources ensuring a robust supply of gas and pricing liquidity.

## 2.2 Customer service overview

Engaging with and listening to customers, meeting their needs, and delivering value for money are key priorities for Gas Networks Ireland. The customer experience provided by Gas Networks Ireland is delivered by the entire organisation, including outsourced business providers, who together provide a range of services, from answering queries over the phone to connecting customers to the gas network and responding to gas emergency incidents.

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6 SEAI Domestic Fuels Comparison of Energy Costs

7 The Irish Academy of Engineering Policy Advisory The Future of Oil and Gas, published February 2013

## 02 Introduction

### 2.2 Customer service overview *(continued)*

Through the Insights into Action Programme<sup>8</sup>, Gas Networks Ireland actively surveys customers to evaluate the experience of their interactions with the organisation. Customer feedback includes feedback from both domestic and commercial customers. Customer issues and complaints are analysed, statistics on calls and queries are interpreted to see if there are opportunities to introduce customer improvement initiatives. In addition, feedback is also gathered from employees and business partners that engage with customers on a daily basis, as well as from key stakeholders whom customers interact with to evaluate how the overall customer experience can be improved. The users of the Dial Before You Dig<sup>9</sup> service are also surveyed.

**Engaging with and listening to customers, meeting their needs, and delivering value for money are key priorities for Gas Networks Ireland.**

A sample of customers are surveyed weekly following their transaction with Gas Networks Ireland. The sample surveyed covers customers who have recently had a job completed by Gas Networks Ireland including emergencies, domestic connections, meter replacement programme, query or a complaint. The majority of surveys moved from calls/email to SMS text in 2018, simplifying surveys and making it easier for customers to respond. Customers were incentivised to respond by offering a €2 donation to Gas Networks Ireland's charity partners Age Action. Each survey is tailored to the journey customers take and to the customer segment to which they belong. Core metrics include; Net Promoter Score (NPS); Customer Satisfaction Scores (CSAT); and Net EASY Score (NES). In addition, performance measures across key touch points and against brand values are collected.

Customers provide detail of their customer experience; and this feedback is then linked back to the internal references of the specific job to allow for root cause analysis and enable continuous process improvement. All surveys incorporate a service recovery loop where the Gas Networks Ireland Customer Care team contact the customer within 24 hours if requested, regarding any issues arising. Reporting is undertaken through an online survey portal to provide transparency for all staff and business partners. A structured face-to-face bi-monthly session is attended by all process owners to gain employee engagement and commitment to change.

The Customer Service "Insights into Action Strategy" illustrated in Figure 2.4 shows how Gas Networks Ireland listens, communicates and works on solutions to action improvements that benefit customers.

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8 <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/home/customer-care/our-customers/>

9 <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/home/safety/dial-before-you-dig>

Figure 2.4: Insights into action illustration



## 02 Introduction

### 2.2 Customer service overview *(continued)*

Initiatives are captured on a formal register and are tracked to completion. There were 51 initiatives implemented in 2019, some examples of which are:

- Customer Care in collaboration with HSQE developed a brochure explaining key safety advice, how to read meters, and other important information relevant for the customer. This leaflet is provided to all new small/medium commercial customers.
- Post payment phonecall for all domestic connections. This is to agree an appointment with the customer, advise on next steps in connection process and gather further essential information to ensure connection goes smoothly.
- An increased number of lay service job types for SME Commercial Projects are now system appointable, meaning that we can provide customers an appointment earlier in our connection process. This allows for more efficient planning internally and most importantly allows the customer to plan their works and requirements on-site more easily.
- Work to understand and develop relationships with all suppliers/shippers – each year GNI surveys all shippers, and work is underway to address issues raised in these surveys and enhance these key relationships. This initiative brings focus to customer issues, thus benefitting domestic customers by highlighting trends in our performance. In addition, GNI holds regular face to face meetings with suppliers and shippers to enhance relationships and gain closer insights into specific issues facing shippers. GNI also held three workshops with suppliers focusing on a number of operational matters.
- We continued the rollout of our Customer Experience Guiding Principles, developed to encourage all staff to put the customer first. Two further events took place in 2019 with over 134 attending from our HSQE and Commercial departments. These principles were rolled out to staff to identify ways of collaborating and communicating more effectively, using these principles to guide putting the customer and at the heart of all that Gas Networks Ireland does.



## Customer centricity

As part of our Customer Strategy, we developed a plan to drive a customer centric focus across GNI. We carried out surveys across GNI and our business partners to determine the current state and create a road map of where we want to be. We also devised the Customer Centric metric to measure how customer centric we are as an organisation and track the experience across the various customer interactions. This metric is not a score in itself, but rather a composite score comprising three other measures from our Net Promoter Score, Net Easy and Satisfied metrics.<sup>10</sup> We feel that improvements in this metric will only be achieved if all staff, including business partners, work together to put our customers first. The customer centricity objective is to understand the current state of play with respect to customer centricity in GNI.

### Some of the customer service highlights from 2019 are as follows:

- In 2019 Gas Networks Ireland handled 537,214 customer contacts, agreed and completed 83,710 appointments.
- In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland completed two further roadshows as part of embedding the guiding principles encouraging all staff to continue to consistently put customers (both internal and external) first.
- 151 number of staff were recognised in our Above and Beyond recognition programme
- Peer recognition continued in 2019, with GNI winning the CX Impact in Utilities category in the Irish CX Impact awards.
- GNI were recognised by CCA Global as a Centre of Excellence for Customer Experience.
- A 24% reduction in complaints was received in 2019
- 12,854 Euro was given to Age Action as part of our survey donation programme
- 52 customer improvement initiatives were implemented
- Gas Networks Ireland achieved excellent levels of performance in respect of our published Customer Charter service standards and commitments. Our programme of customer experience monitoring continues to score favourably across all processes.

The customer commitments and KPIs are shown in Table 2.1. These will be explored in greater detail in section 4 (Retail Market).

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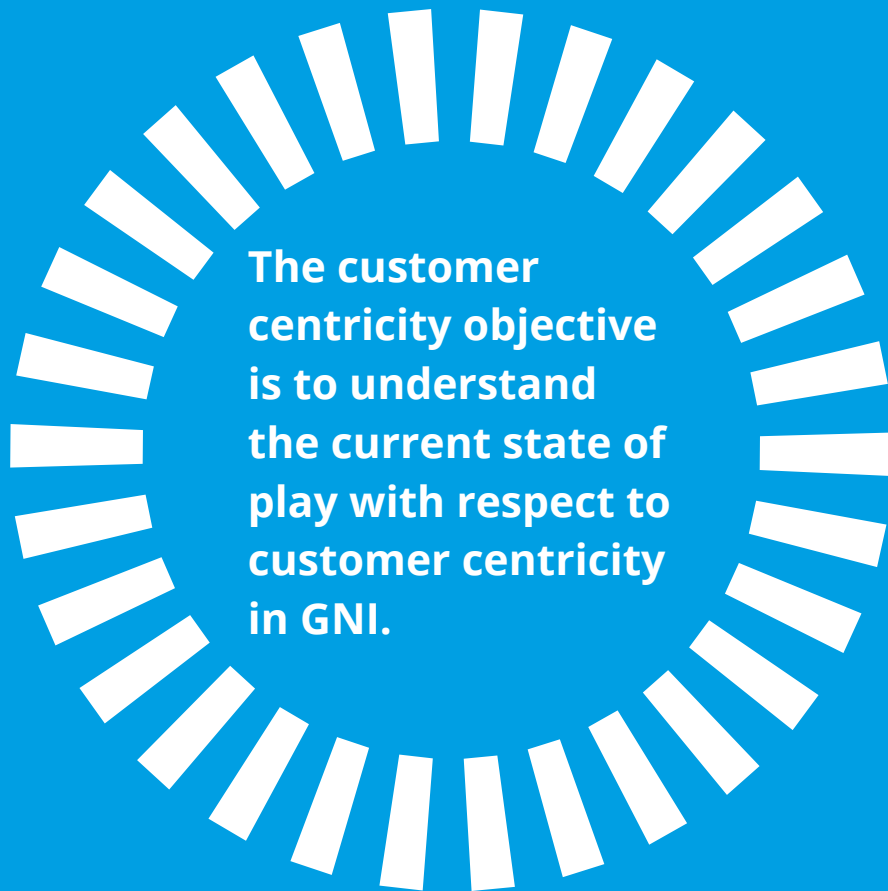
<sup>10</sup> See appendix 7.2 for further information

## 02 Introduction

### 2.2 Customer service overview *(continued)*

**Table 2.1:** Customer commitments

Measure		Target	2018 Performance	2019 Performance
Call response	Call answered within 20 seconds	80%	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>93.4%</b>
Quotation turnaround	Respond within 7 working days	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Appointment Granting Schedule	Appointment within 5 days	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>99.97%</b>
Appointment keeping	Contact 1 working day prior	100%	<b>99.96%</b>	<b>98.1%</b>
Reinstatement commitments	within 24hrs of completion	100%	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>98.9%</b>
Gas supply restoration	Restore as quickly as possible (less than 24hrs)	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>99.97%</b>
Emergency response	Arrive within 1 hour of report	97%	<b>99.3%</b>	<b>99.9%</b>
Complaints handling	Resolve within 10 working days	85%	<b>96.3%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Payment Guarantee	Aim to process payment following claim within 10 working days	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



**The customer centricity objective is to understand the current state of play with respect to customer centricity in GNI.**

# 03 Gas industry

## 3.1 Market overview

The CRU has responsibility for regulating the natural gas market in Ireland. Gas Networks Ireland connects all customers to the network regardless of which natural gas supply company the customer chooses. Additionally, Gas Networks Ireland transports gas on behalf of the suppliers who sell the gas to the end users. The role of Gas Networks Ireland is also to facilitate meter readings for end-users. In July 2007 the Irish retail gas market was opened to competition allowing all gas customers to switch their gas supplier. The domestic gas market was subsequently fully deregulated in July 2015 allowing suppliers to set their own tariffs. The intrinsic benefits to consumers are increased choice, greater efficiency, lower prices and higher standards of service.

There are a number of large end-users of gas such as power stations who engage Gas Networks Ireland to transport the gas on their behalf. Collectively the suppliers and these large end users who use the transportation service are known as “Shippers”.

## 3.2 Shipper queries

Gas Networks Ireland provides transportation services to shippers operating in the wholesale and retail markets. The shippers/suppliers and large end users (circa 294 industrial customers), are supported by the Shipper Services Department. In addition to this, Shipper Services also supports the development of new entrants to both the retail and wholesale markets. It does so by facilitating and mentoring their entry into the gas market through information provision, system setup, training and implementation of the necessary legal and contractual arrangements. Gas Networks Ireland supports initiatives from various industry bodies and ensures compliance with EU legislation as well as playing a driving role in the development of market arrangements to meet with industry best practice. Gas Networks Ireland coordinates industry meetings at both retail and wholesale levels in Ireland; at the Gas Market Arrangements Retail Group (GMARG) and Code Modification Forum respectively. These groups process changes agreed to reduce issues that shippers may have. Gas Networks Ireland continues to work proactively with shippers on initiatives to identify possible issues in advance of problems occurring.

Gas Networks Ireland continued its engagement with shippers to maintain the levels of service achieved in previous years. All issues received by the Shipper Services Key Account Management function are logged on the Shipper Services Issues system and issue resolution is managed to successful conclusion. This includes stakeholder management of internal and external departments. Every issue is assigned a unique issue number and an email confirmation is sent where requested, regarding the status of an issue within three business days. Gas Networks Ireland provides each shipper with an issue update every 20 business days thereafter, as long as the issue remains open on the Gas Networks Ireland system.

## 3.3 Breakdown of issues by type

There were 2,564 issues directed to the Shipper Services Key Account Management department in 2019. During the year a new CRM system was introduced in order to improve our case management capability and the opportunity was taken to review and consolidate our shipper issue categories. A definition of the main categories of issue experienced by shippers is provided in Table 3.1. The breakdown in the main categories of issues as a percentage of the total recorded in 2019 is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

## 03 Gas industry

**Table 3.1:** Explanation of the main categories of Shipper issues

Issue Category	Explanation
Siteworks query	Queries relating to the status of various siteworks jobs such as it meters, meter unlocks, etc.
Information request	General Shipper queries on a broad range of issues such as customer historical consumption, market messages, capacity register, etc.
SPC/AQ Queries	Questions relating to customers SPC/AQ values or the annual SPC/AQ process
IT Issues	GTMS access requests, problems with GTMS access, issues relating to the marketing messaging system (Gasmap), issues related to the PRISMA Capacity Booking system
Connection Issues	Any issue relating to a new gas connections or disconnections e.g. disconnection quotations
Financial Security	Questions relating to the financial security policy, the shippers transactions with GNI in relation to financial security deposits, letter of credit etc.
Metering/Billing	Any query that relating to billing for individual customers – in general these are driven by meter-related issues such as a notified possible high consumption issue, PAYG end user queries, etc.
Other	Any issue not captured by the above categories

**Table 3.2:** Main category of shipper issues recorded by %

Shipper Issue Category	Issue No.	%
Metering/Billing	817	32%
Information request	708	28%
Siteworks Queries	565	22%
IT Issues	245	10%
Other	133	5%
SPC/AQ Queries	48	2%
Financial Security	31	1%
Connection Issues	17	1%

The average length of time that a shipper issue was open in 2019 was five business days similar to 2018. The average number of business days taken to resolve Shipper Services issues per category is shown in Figure 3.2 below. Shipper issues are defined in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.3:** Average number of business days to resolve shipper issues by category

<b>Shipper Issue Category</b>	<b>Days to resolve</b>
Metering/Billing	6
Information request	4
Siteworks Queries	5
IT Issues	4
Other	3
SPC/AQ Queries	5
Financial Security	1
Connection Issues	7



## 04 Retail market

Gas Networks Ireland provides access to the gas pipeline system for shippers. At the end of 2019 there were 31 shippers active in the Irish gas market, supplying and selling gas to customers in all segments of the market from power generation to residential. Of the total 31 shippers, nine engaged in the retail supply market. Gas Networks Ireland connects all natural gas customers to the network no matter which supplier they choose.

Gas Networks Ireland is also responsible for works on service pipes and meters to customers' premises and operates a full 24-hour emergency response service 365 days a year. A range of supporting customer services is managed by Gas Networks Ireland to deliver these activities to customers, and the general public.



## 4.1 Customer service

Gas Networks Ireland is committed to putting customers first. This commitment is reflected in day-to-day operations and in both the Gas Networks Ireland Codes of Practice<sup>11</sup> and the Gas Networks Ireland Customer Charter<sup>12</sup>.

The Codes of Practice include the Vulnerable Customer Guide<sup>13</sup>. This outlines Gas Networks Ireland's commitment to providing the best customer service possible for all customers; specifically the provisions made for those who require special services. Customers are encouraged to register, if necessary, on the Special Services Register with their gas supplier to automatically avail of these provisions.

In addition to this, we also work with our charity partners Age Action to promote the services that we provide for our vulnerable customers. We also commenced meetings with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland to discuss how we can drive awareness and support for this group across GNI.

The Customer Complaint Handling Guide<sup>14</sup> provides guidance to customers on how their complaint will be handled. The Disconnection Code of Practice<sup>15</sup> outlines Gas Networks Ireland's obligations towards customers when disconnecting their occupied property following a request from their gas supplier. The Customer Charter provides assurance to customers of Gas Networks Ireland's commitment to these standards and in certain circumstances, compensation will be provided for failure to meet these standards. Details of these standards are outlined in Table 2.1 Customer Commitments.

**Figure 4.1:** Ten customer performance commitments



11 Code of Practice <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/corporate/freedom-of-information/foi-publicationscheme/about-us/code-of-conduct/>

12 Customer Charter; <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/corporate/freedom-of-information/foi-publicationscheme/about-us/customer-charter/>

13 Vulnerable Customer Guide <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/home/customer-care/vulnerable-customers/>

14 Customer Complaint Handling Guide <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/home/customer-care/how-to-make-a-complaint/>

15 Disconnection Code of Practice <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/business/business-gasmeter/disconnection-code-of-practice/27-GNI-Disconnection-Code-of-Practice-English-2018.pdf>

## 04 Retail market

The customer guides have been translated into six different languages with input from disability groups to ensure that they are accessible to all customers. The guides are available to download on the Gas Networks Ireland website, or by contacting the Gas Networks Ireland Contact Centre. They may be requested in braille if required.

In addition to the above, Gas Networks Ireland carried out three surveys of gas shippers and suppliers in 2019. The first two surveys (one mid-year and one at year end) were aimed at operational staff in supplier organisations with a specific focus on how Gas Networks Ireland handles day-to-day queries from suppliers in the retail market. The third survey, aimed at management level staff in both shipper and supplier organisations, had a much broader remit across wholesale and retail activities.

The purpose of the surveys was to gauge shipper and supplier sentiment towards Gas Networks Ireland and to look at ways in which these relationships could be improved, ultimately feeding down to end customers. Based on the outcomes of these shipper/supplier surveys a plan is being developed across 17 internal GNI teams with initiatives for improvement identified.

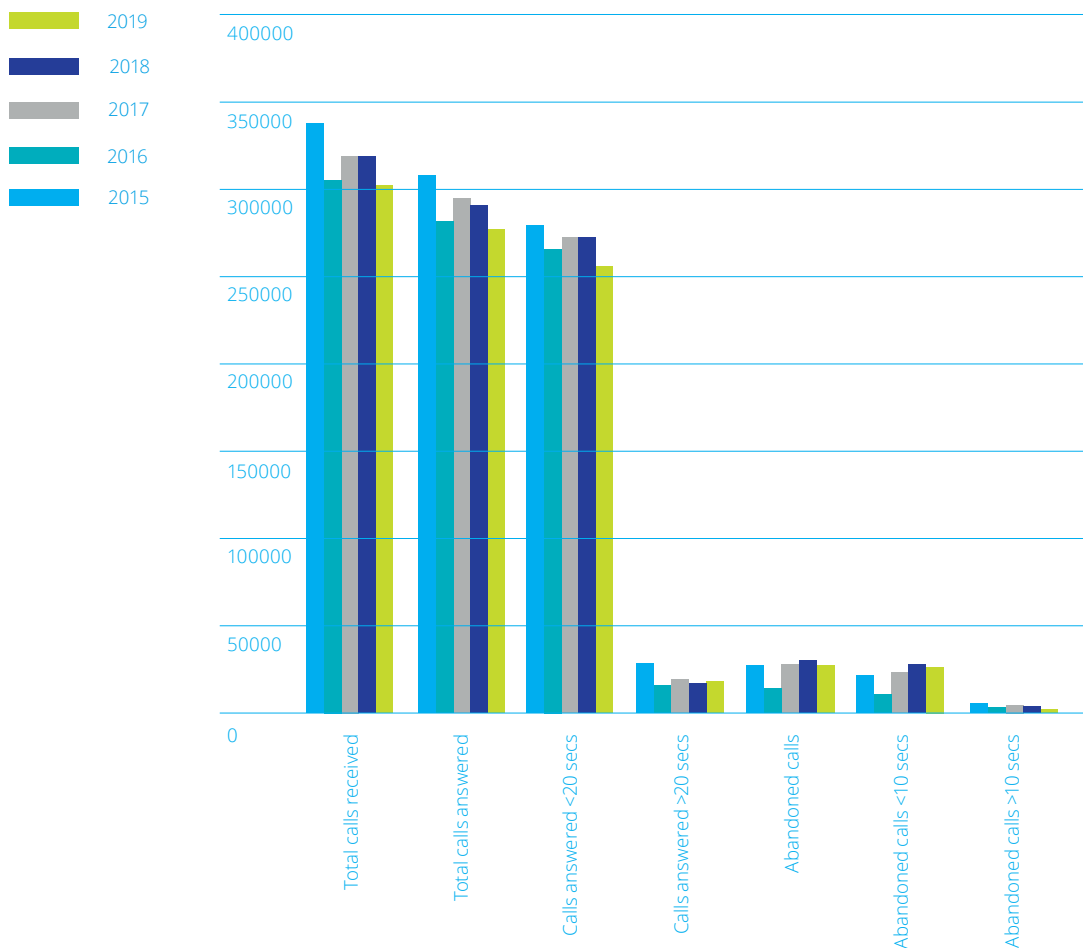
It is expected that implementation of the recommendations of this survey will enable shippers/suppliers to better serve their end customers. The proposed initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gas Networks Ireland aims to host a series of training and networking sessions aimed at sharing knowledge between Gas Networks Ireland and supplier operational staff and work towards better outcomes for our shared customers.
- Gas Networks Ireland will establish and lead a collaborative working group with subject matter experts from each supplier to review and monitor workflow progression of shipper requested cut offs.
- Gas Networks Ireland will establish a communication plan with suppliers on the prepaid meter (PPM) enhancement project to ensure suppliers' collaborative development. It is intended that this plan will include supplier workshops in the design phase and regular update calls in the implementation phase.

## 4.2 Call response

Gas Networks Ireland operates telephone lines<sup>16</sup> for customers to contact the company in relation to a number of key activities including: the 24-hours emergency service; domestic connections; commercial connections; Dial Before You Dig; carbon monoxide information; and the meter replacement programme.

**Figure 4.2: Call response**



## 04 Retail market

In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland handled 302,237 inbound calls. This total includes calls related to emergencies, domestic and business queries and meter readings. Out of the calls received, 93.4% (1% decrease) were answered within 20 seconds and only 0.84% (0.5% increase) of calls were abandoned by the caller after more than 10 seconds; meaning all call handling targets were achieved.

However, when all channels of communication are included, the customer contact volume with Gas Networks Ireland has increased over this time with 537,214 contacts in 2019.

**Table 4.1** 2019 Contact Breakdown

Call Type	Volume	% Split
Outbound Call	36652	6.80%
E-Mail	49186	9.20%
SMS	63273	11.80%
Call Handled with IVR	85398	15.90%
Correspondence	85776	16.00%
Inbound Agent Handled Calls	216929	40.39%
<b>Total Customer Interactions</b>	<b>537,214</b>	

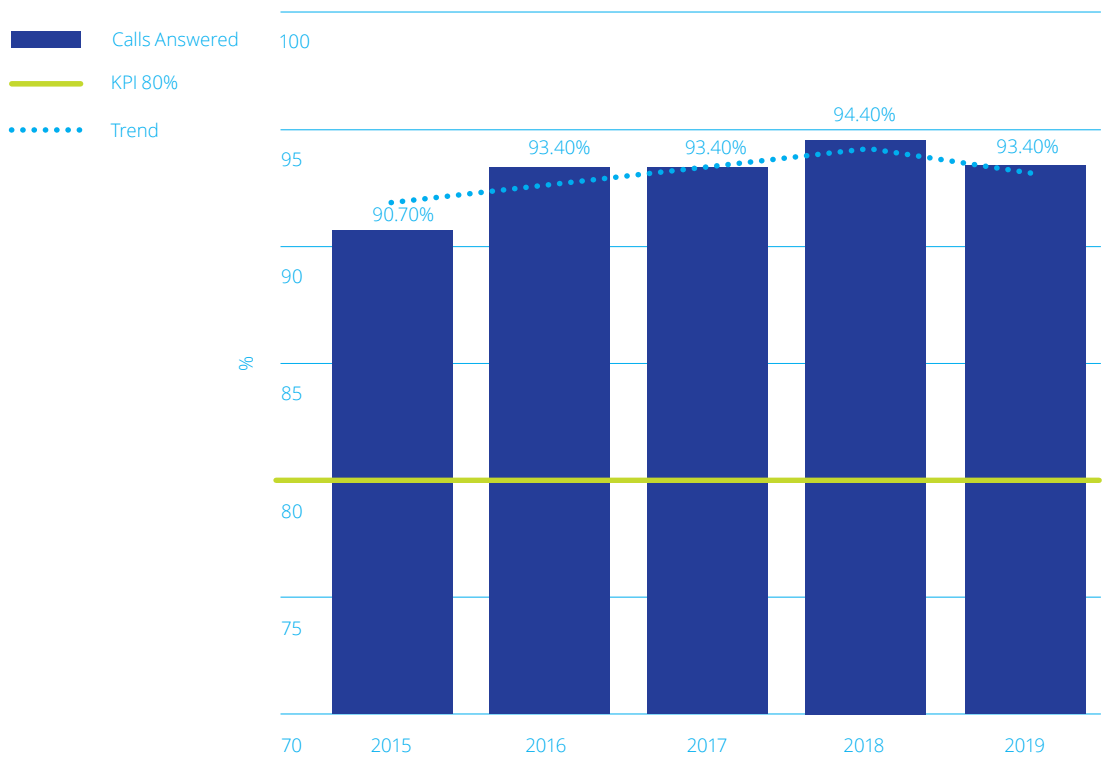
A number of initiatives and improvements have been introduced to reduce unnecessary inbound customer contacts and to serve customers through more efficient and cost-effective channels. The key customer channels are enhanced Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) information messages for customers, proactive outbound calling and engagement with gas suppliers on shared customer processes. The main driver of these improvements has been a focus on delivering the information in the format that our customers want, and more crucially when they need it. A lot of time and effort in 2019 went into identifying opportunities through various customer journey mapping and continuous improvement working groups.

These improvements have been a response to understanding both the importance, and cost effectiveness, of alternative channels with regard to displacing unnecessary contacts and delivering improvements in customer effort and engagement. The main areas of increased contact are Dial A Read, SMS, Email and Outbound calls. Considerable effort continues to be made in enhancing the customer experience by displacing inbound calls with planned outbound calls and the use of text messages to customers at key stages of their interactions with Gas Networks Ireland. In 2019, GNI handled customer interaction volumes on these channels of communication: circa 37K Planned Outbound calls, 49K Email and 63K SMS. Postal correspondence continues to be a key part of the customer engagement strategy with 85K customer letters issued from the Contact Centre in 2019.

The consistent focus on driving efficiencies in customer communications has mitigated the anticipated increase in customer inbound calls over the past five years and ensured that calls are answered promptly for customers. Fexco are contracted to provide the Contact Centre service on behalf of Gas Networks Ireland, and in 2019 we made the decision to execute the two-year extension allowed under the contract framework. This extension will run through to July 2022.

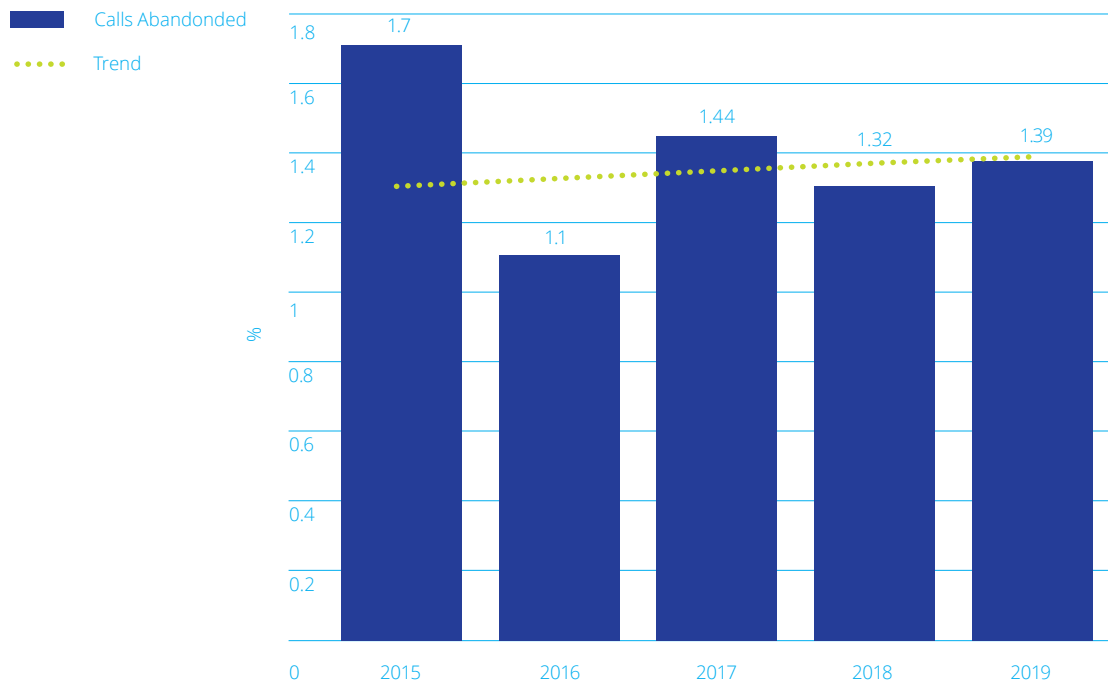
Gas Networks Ireland is continuing to increase its social media presence through creating unique content that engages our customers. The popularity and level of engagement on these channels highlights the trend towards using social media and the necessity to continue to provide and enhance digital channels as a contact option. Facebook, in particular, is the strongest social customer service tool.

**Figure 4.3: Calls answered < 20 seconds**



## 04 Retail market

**Figure 4.4:** Abandoned calls after 10 seconds

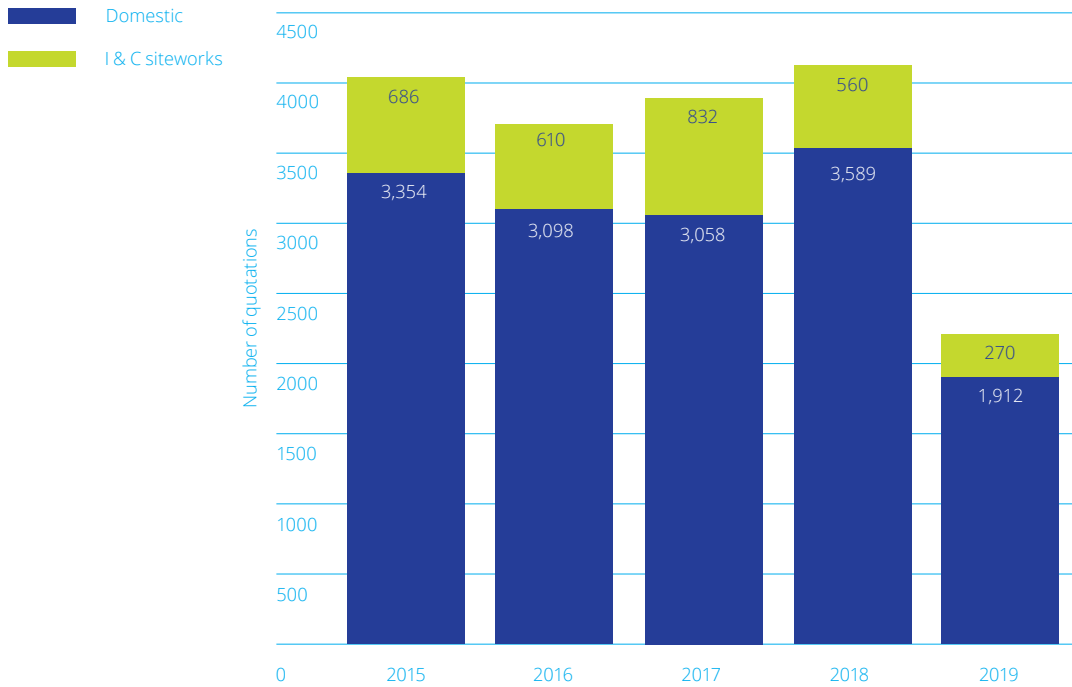


### 4.3 Quotations turnaround

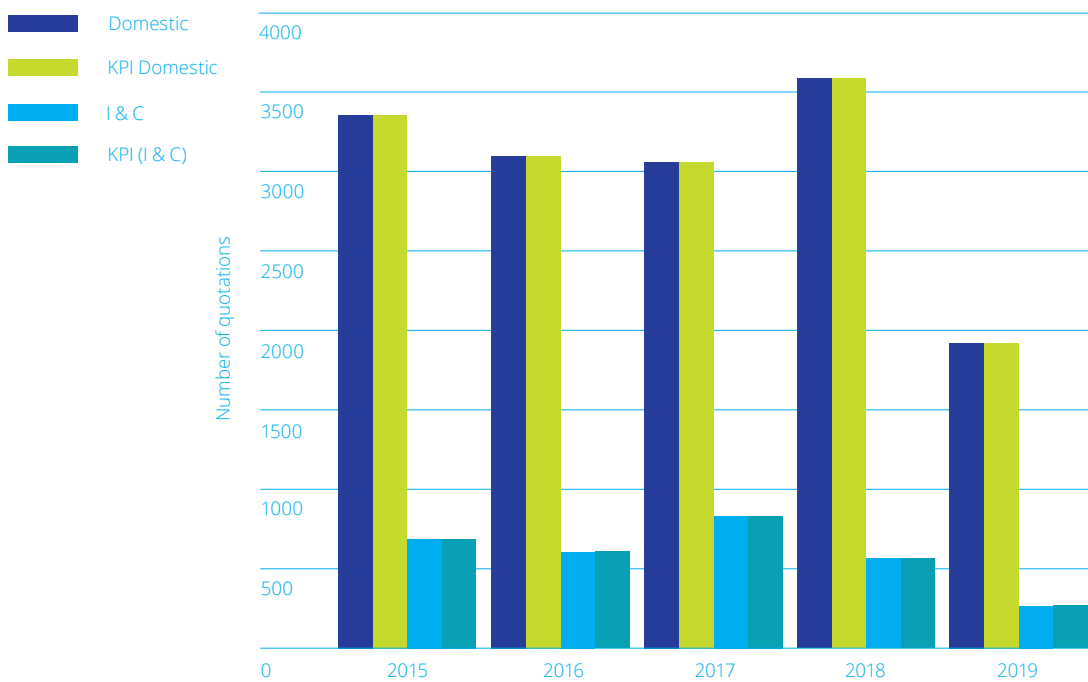
Many of the services provided by Gas Networks Ireland are standard and quotations can be provided quickly over the telephone with minimal information. If the job requirements are more complex, a company representative may need to make a visit to the site in advance of a quotation being issued.

For domestic and small commercial service pipe connections (where no design work is required) or connection alteration/reconfiguration involving no main laying activity, the KPI is that quotations will be available within seven working days from receipt of all necessary data. In 2019, a total of 2,192 quotations were issued within the seven-day period, achieving the KPI of 100% performance rate. The KPI of 100% has been achieved consistently over the past five years, see Figure 4.6. In 2019, there was a decrease in domestic quotations of 46.72% and a decrease in I&C quotations of 51.78%. This decrease is largely due to changing market demand and new preferences following the publication of the 2019 Climate Action Plan.

**Figure 4.5: Quotations**



**Figure 4.6: Quotation turnaround in 7 working days against KPI**



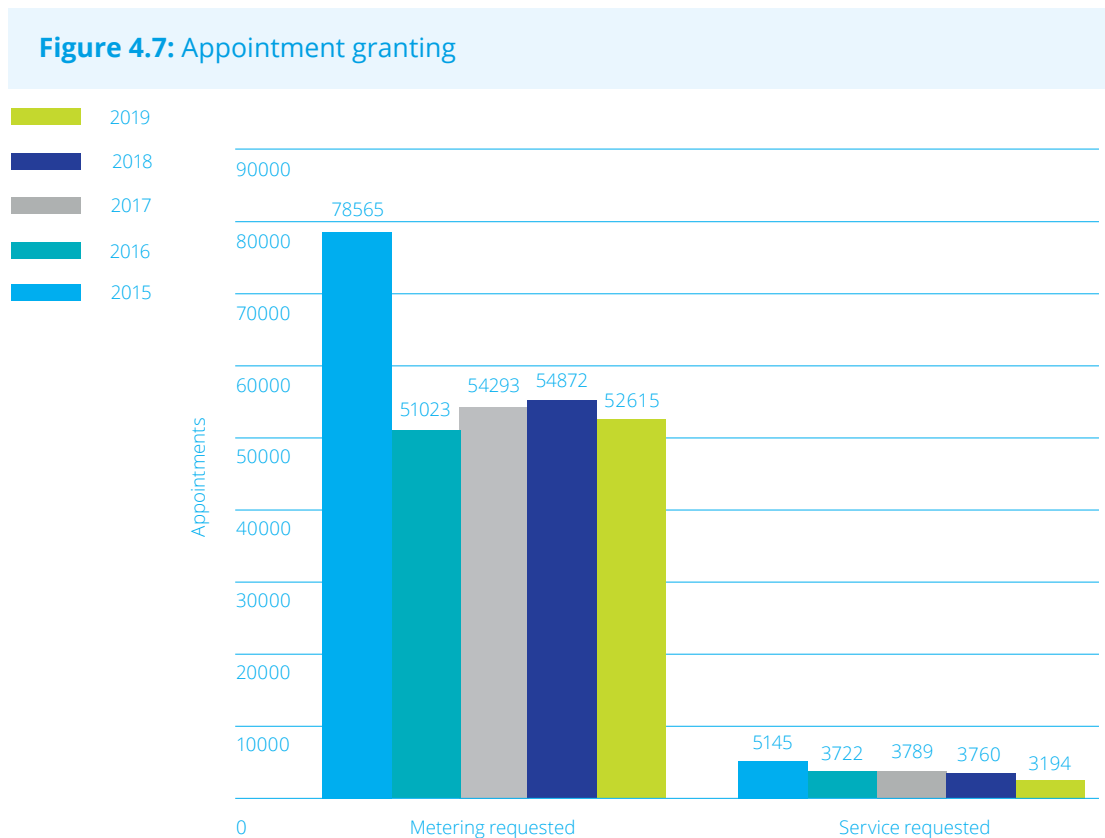
## 04 Retail market

### 4.4 Appointment granting

For quotation site visits and domestic metering service appointments, a choice of morning or evening day appointments will be scheduled within five days of receipt of request. For domestic pipe laying appointments, an appointment will be given, on receipt of payment which takes into account the realistic timeframe to acquire a Road Opening Licence (ROL) if required. If no ROL or additional restrictions are required, Gas Networks Ireland endeavours to offer an appointment within four weeks.

Closer to the time a firm date will be agreed with the customer ensuring that sufficient notice is given. If Gas Networks Ireland fails to grant an appointment commitment within five days (quotation) or four weeks (domestic works), applicable compensation can be claimed, subject to conditions. These conditions include, but are not limited to, restrictions put in place by local authorities including road closures, moratoriums, operation free flow<sup>17</sup> and severe weather restrictions on certain roads. These conditions would preclude the operation of charter payments.

Appointment requests in 2019 were lower than 2018 by 4.81%. Meter appointment requests totalled 52,615 and service appointment requests totalled 3,194, versus 54,872 and 3,760 in 2018, respectively.



<sup>17</sup> Operation free flow covers situations when GNI is instructed by a local authority not to undertake physical works except for emergencies, for example at busy retail times such as Christmas.



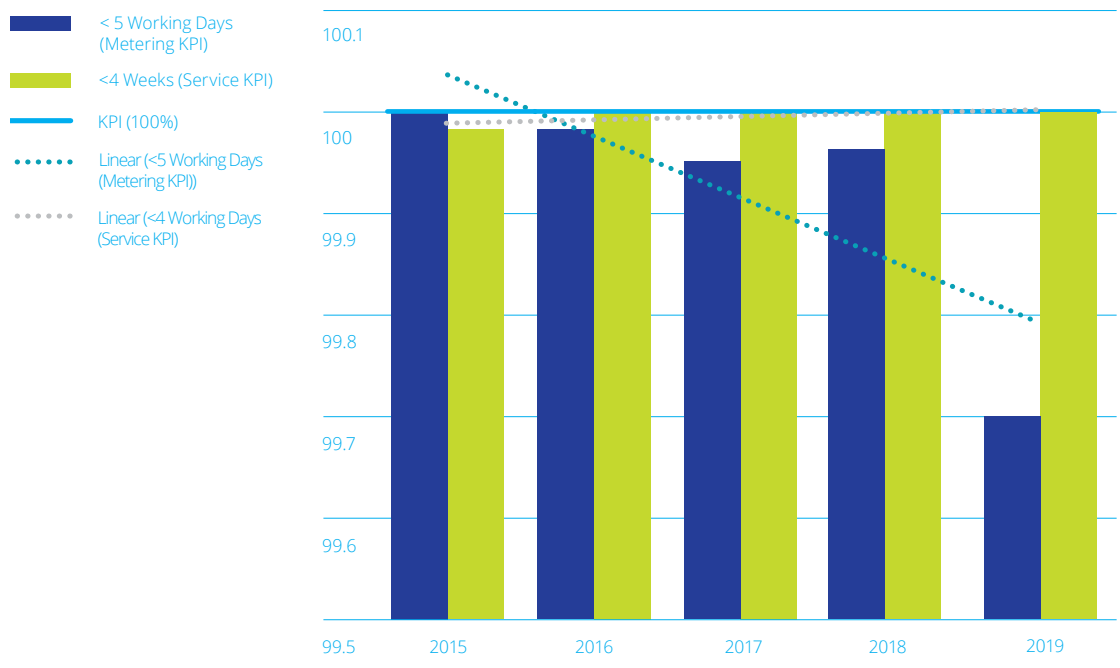
In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland’s compliance around pipe laying was adhered to and customers advised as necessary, while metering compliance was at 99.97%, just below the KPI of 100%, where 16 requests were not granted. Gas Networks Ireland endeavours to achieve maximum compliance with Customer Charter performance commitments with regard to the granting of appointments.

In 2019 Gas Networks Ireland granted 3,194 service appointments. This represents a decrease of 15.05% on the 2018 figures. The number of appointments granted in 2019 was 3,194 versus 3,760 the previous year. The performance for service requests was 100% which is in line with 2018 results.

The performance rate of meter appointment requests was 52,615 in 2019, this was down 4.11% with 2018 figures of 54,872. The performance for meter compliance was 99.97% which is in line with 2018 results (see Figure 4.8).

There has been continued downward pressure on domestic connections due to new building regulations and the increasing competitiveness of heat pump pricing.

**Figure 4.8: Appointment granting performance against KPI**



## 04 Retail market

### 4.5 Appointment keeping

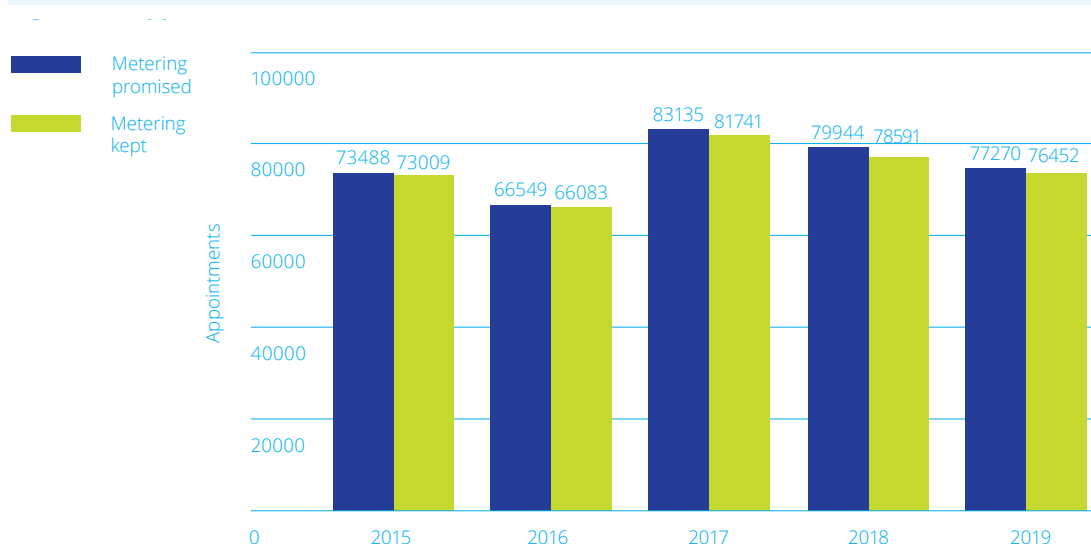
Gas Networks Ireland endeavours to keep all appointments with customers on the assigned day and within the nominated timeframe (morning, afternoon, or all day). If unable to keep this appointment, contact will be made with the customer a minimum of one working day prior to the scheduled appointment.

Failure to make the appointment or notify the customer of the cancellation on or before the working day prior to the scheduled appointment results in the customer being able to make a request for a compensation claim. This request will adhere to the Customer Charter process. In 2019, there were 77,270 metering appointments which was a decrease of 3.34% on the 2018 figure. This decrease was driven mainly by the fact that Gas Networks Ireland has changed the process of making some appointments to enable site crews to interact directly with customers to make appointments suitable to both parties and to take advantage of the fact that the site crew may be in the area carrying out other site works activities.

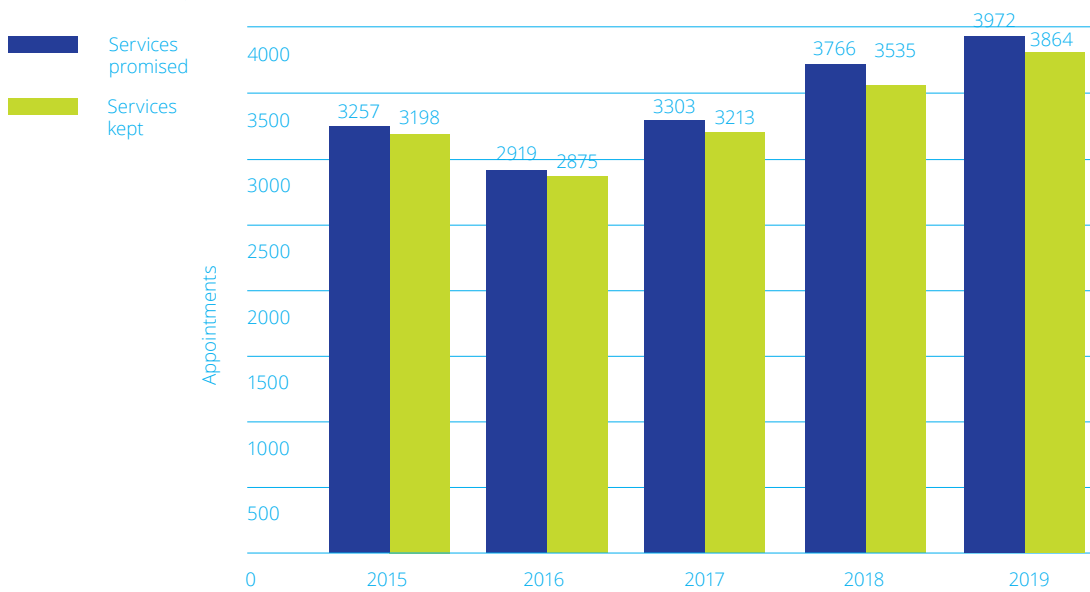
Compliance for these was at 98.9%, compared to 98.3% in 2018. In 2019, there were 3,972 service appointments which represents an increase of 5.50% on 2018. The compliance rate for service appointments was 97.3%; which is an increase of 3.42% on 2018 figures.

The KPI of 100% is the ultimate service level that Gas Networks Ireland strives to achieve in collaboration with business partners and key stakeholders. Gas Networks Ireland is actively engaged with all relevant Local Authorities. Regular meetings take place on a needs basis in relation to enhancing relationships and improving the Road Opening Licence (ROL) application process. Gas Networks Ireland is also engaged with key stakeholders and agencies such as the Department of Transport, City & County Managers Association (CCMA) and the Road Management Office (RMO); other utilities; and representative organisations. Ongoing engagement will continue throughout 2020 to provide service excellence to customers and to improve the customer experience.

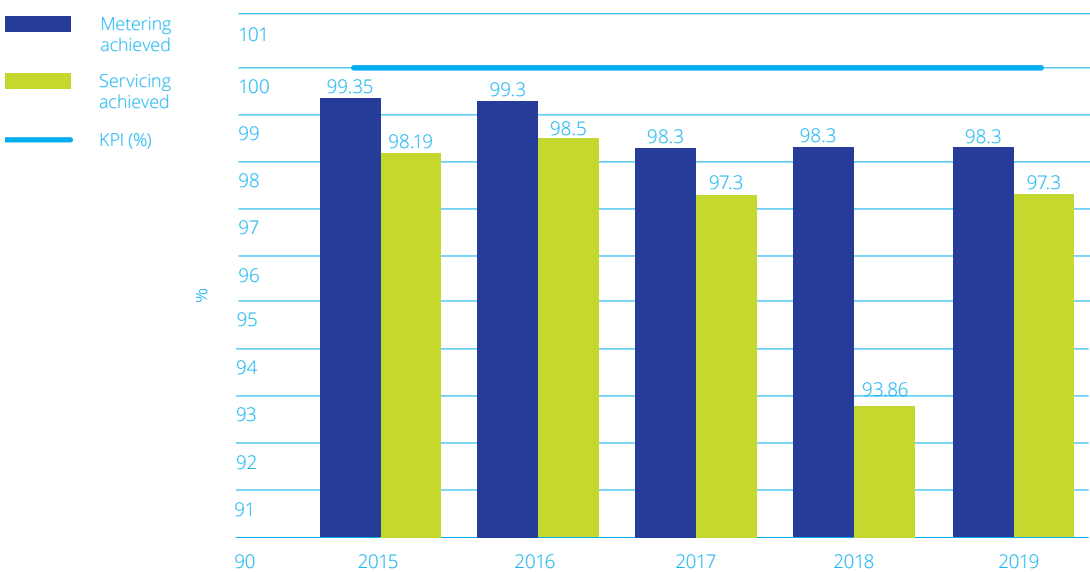
Figure 4.9: Appointment keeping (metering)



**Figure 4.10: Appointment keeping (service)**



**Figure 4.11: Metering and service delivery performance against KPI**



Gas Networks Ireland fell just short of the KPIs for Appointment Granting because of capacity issues on the system and Appointment Keeping because of delays in previous appointments and availability of materials.

## 04 Retail market

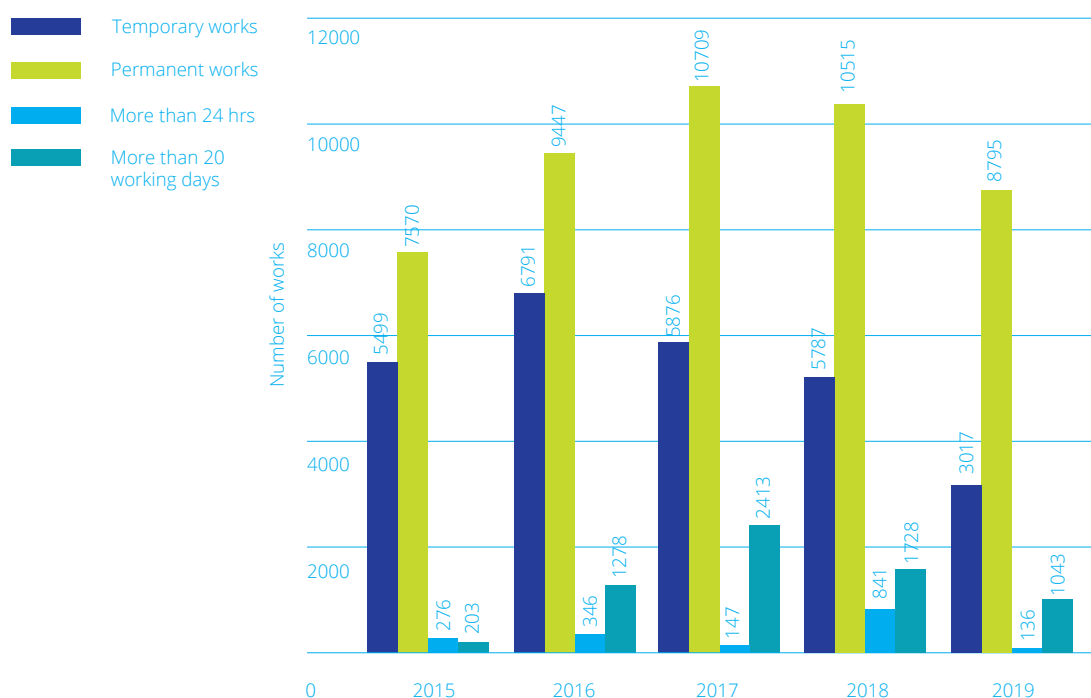
### 4.6 Reinstatement commitments

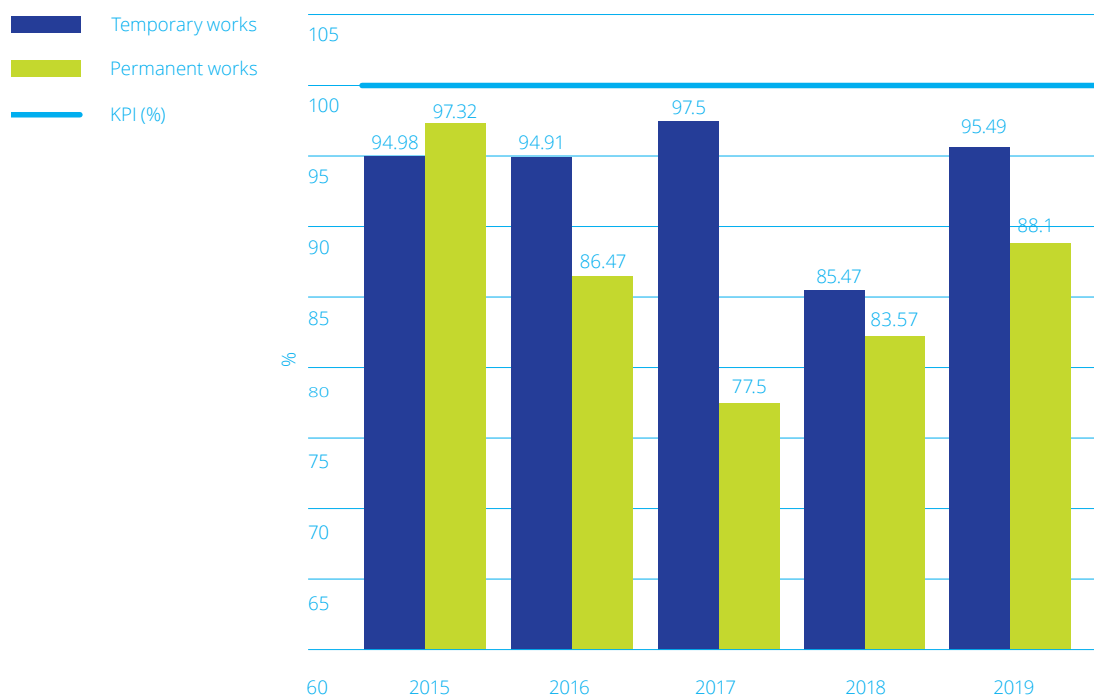
In order to facilitate the laying of the gas connection pipework, Gas Networks Ireland may need to excavate ground on the premises. It is the aim of Gas Networks Ireland to backfill and securely cover all excavations within 24 hours of work completion.

If there is a failure to complete a temporary reinstatement within 24 hours (as per the KPI) of the work completion, compensation will be paid to the customer, if applied for. Commitments apply only to circumstances where clear access to the site and premises has been provided. Reinstatement commitments do not extend to excavations arising from emergency, renewal or unplanned work.

Reinstatement is associated with the level of new connection activity. In 2019, there were 3,017 temporary works completed, all of which were completed within the 24 hours commitment, which shows that performance against the KPI was at 100.00%. Works are all either permanently reinstated first time; temporarily reinstated; or selected openings are backfilled, secured with barriers/steel plates or footpath boards and reinstated within 2 days. The total permanent works carried out in 2019 were 8,795. 1,043 of these were completed outside the 20 working days commitment, the majority of which were addressing legacy reinstatements, an issue in getting Road Opening Licence extended to complete the reinstatement, or difficulty in accessing the area due to parked vehicles etc. Progress was made in 2019 with 55% of permanent reinstatements completed within two working days of carrying out the original work (D+2 reinstatement). By carrying out permanent reinstatement sooner, GNI provides better customer service and by minimising customer impact. Progress will continue into 2020 with a target of achieving D+2 permanent reinstatement on 60% of works. Figure 4.12 shows the reinstatement performance against the KPI.

Figure 4.12: Reinstatement commitments



**Figure 4.13:** Reinstatement performance vs. KPI

The KPI of 100% is the ultimate service level that Gas Networks Ireland strives to achieve in collaboration with business partners and key stakeholders.

## 4.7 Gas supply interruption

In some instances when carrying out essential planned maintenance work or connecting new customers, Gas Networks Ireland may need to interrupt the gas supply. If this is necessary, customers will be given at least two days' notice. Failure to do so allows the affected customer(s) to claim for compensation. However, very short supply interruptions<sup>18</sup> and interruptions arising from network faults or third-party actions are exempt from this guarantee.

Every effort is made to minimise the inconvenience caused to customers in these instances. For customers listed as vulnerable on the Special Services Register (as registered by their natural gas supplier); Gas Networks Ireland will offer alternative heating and cooking facilities during planned gas supply interruption or network outage.

In 2019, there were 10,365 vulnerable customers registered. See Figure 4.15 – Gas supply restoration and Table 4.2. The Register of Vulnerable Customers is managed by the gas suppliers (shippers). In 2019 there was no system wide need to draw down the vulnerable customer list, but it may have been required for local incidents, though these are not recorded.

<sup>18</sup> Very short supply interruptions refer to the "No Gas calls" received from end users. GNI receives approximately 1,100 of these no gas calls per month and the vast majority are completed within 24 hours.

## 04 Retail market

**Table 4.2:** Register of vulnerable customers

Description	Count of GPRN
Dexterity Impaired	11
Elderly	6,586
Hearing Impaired	1,053
Language Difficulty	232
Learning Difficulty	148
Mental Health	192
Mobility Impaired	1,503
Speech Impaired	98
Visually Impaired	542
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10,365</b>

### 4.8 Response to emergencies

One of Gas Networks Ireland's primary objectives is to respond to all emergencies as soon as possible. On notification of an actual or suspected gas escape report, one of the emergency response personnel will be dispatched immediately. The objective is for the response personnel to arrive on site within one hour of the gas escape report being notified. The KPI for arriving and dealing with such incidents is 97%.

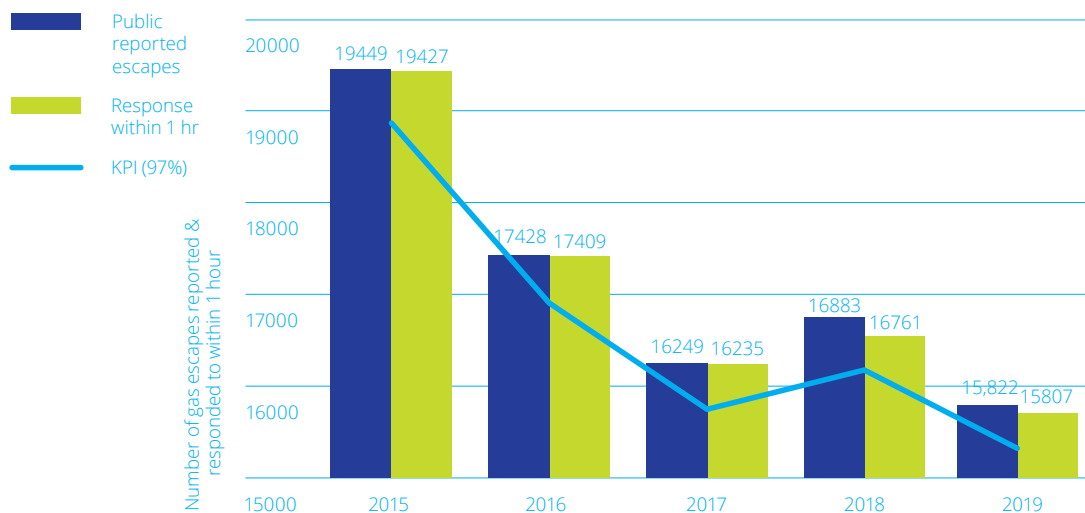
At Gas Networks Ireland safety is a key priority. There are a number of ongoing safety campaigns to advertise the steps to take in case of a gas emergency and to promote the emergency number (1800 20 50 50) for instances where a response is required. The aim is to make the general public aware of what to do if they smell gas on a premises or on the street.

The number of reported emergency gas escapes was 15,822 in 2019, 99.9% of which were attended to within one hour. Annually this has been a consistent achievement (see Table 4.14). The average response time for 2019 was 27 minutes, a decrease from 32 minutes in 2018.

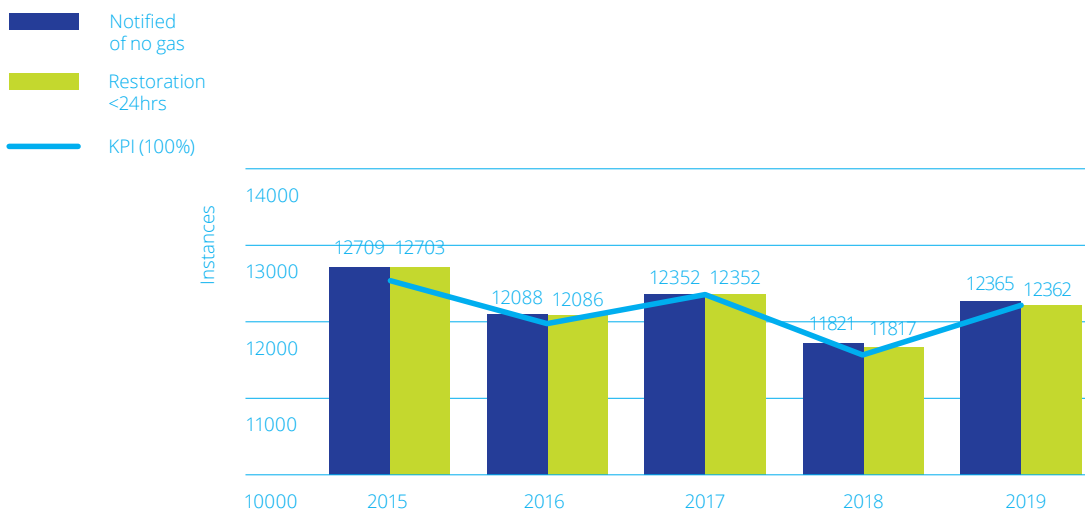
The breakdown of incidents is as follows;

- No Trace - 8,358;
- Internal - 3,771; and
- External - 3,456.

**Figure 4.14: Response to emergencies**



**Figure 4.15: Gas supply interruption and restoration**



The number of reported gas escapes in 2019 was down circa 6% when compared to 2018. Since 2015, reported gas escapes have been reduced by 18%. This is due to maintenance and meter replacement programmes which finished in 2015.

Gas Networks Ireland has been appointed the National Gas Emergency Manager (NGEM) by the CRU in accordance with Statutory Instrument (SI) 697 of 2007, should a major gas incident occur. The NGEM has responsibility for declaring a natural gas emergency, as well as coordinating planning arrangements and any emergency response in accordance with the Natural Gas Emergency Plan (NGEP). The scope of the NGEP covers emergency arrangements, emergency planning and operational response.

## 04 Retail market

### 4.9 Gas supply restoration

Occasionally faults may occur on the gas network and as a result there may be an interruption to supply. On receiving a report, Gas Networks Ireland will do everything possible to restore the supply as quickly as possible. However, if there is a failure to restore the supply by the end of the following day after notification and it is a network fault, customers may make a claim for compensation per day, for each 24-hour period without gas subject to a maximum amount. Where there are exceptional circumstances such as extreme weather conditions or extensive disruption to gas supplies, the guarantee and the compensation will not be offered. The number of gas supply interruptions has decreased over the past five years, with the number of instances reported declining.

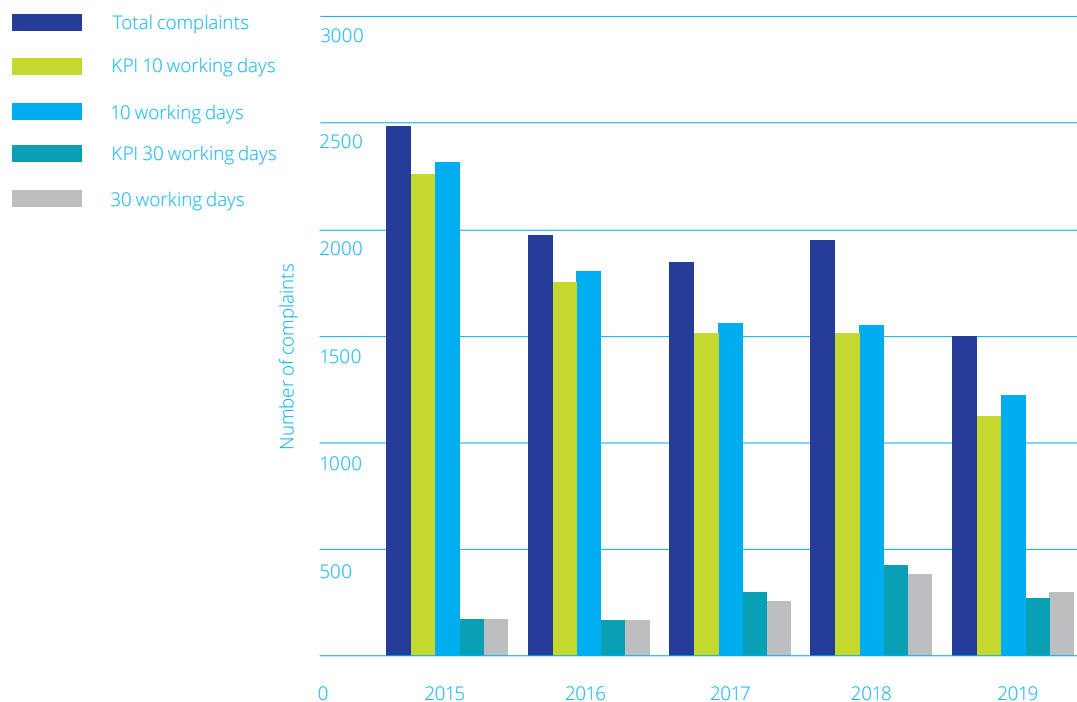
The number of customers who had service restored outside 24-hours has been steadily declining (see figure 4.15 above). The performance was at 100% in 2019 with restorations taking place within a 24-hour period. It should be noted that there was an increase of 5% in the number of gas interruptions in 2019 which was largely due to weather events. Still, Gas Networks Ireland has achieved a decrease of 2% for the overall period from 2015 to 2019.

### 4.10 Complaints handling

Complaints may be registered with Gas Networks Ireland. The company endeavours to resolve all complaints within 10 working days of registration of the complaint. However, property damage or meter mix-ups may take up to 30 days from notification to resolution. Complaints are acknowledged within one day from receipt and the complainant will be contacted by Gas Networks Ireland within four working days of registering their complaint to check on the progress of the issue. Gas Networks Ireland has exceeded the complaint handling performance measure since 2011. The number of complaints has fallen by approximately 40% since 2015, from 2,494 to 1,497, driven primarily by continuous improvement and improved internal feedback processes. The complaints handling process is illustrated in Figure 4.16.

In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland received a total of 1,497 complaints. Of this number 1,213 were closed out in less than 10 working days and the remaining 284 within 30 working days. In 2017, Gas Networks Ireland modified its turnaround time for licencing complaints from 10 to 30 days. These are customer complaints where Gas Networks Ireland is unable to progress a job because of issues encountered in obtaining a licence from a Local Authority related to road works. This resulted in a 40% increase in the number of complaints requiring resolution within 30 days. In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland achieved 100% and 100% performance, versus 96.2% and 97.2% performance in 2018 for 10 and 30 working days respectively. Gas Networks Ireland's performance for resolution of all complaints was 100% in 2019 against a CRU approved KPI of 85%.



**Figure 4.16: Complaints handling**

Under the terms of the Natural Gas Distribution Licence, Gas Networks Ireland published a Complaint Handling Procedure<sup>19</sup> as agreed with the CRU. This document outlines how Gas Networks Ireland handles complaints.

## 4.11 Categories of complaints

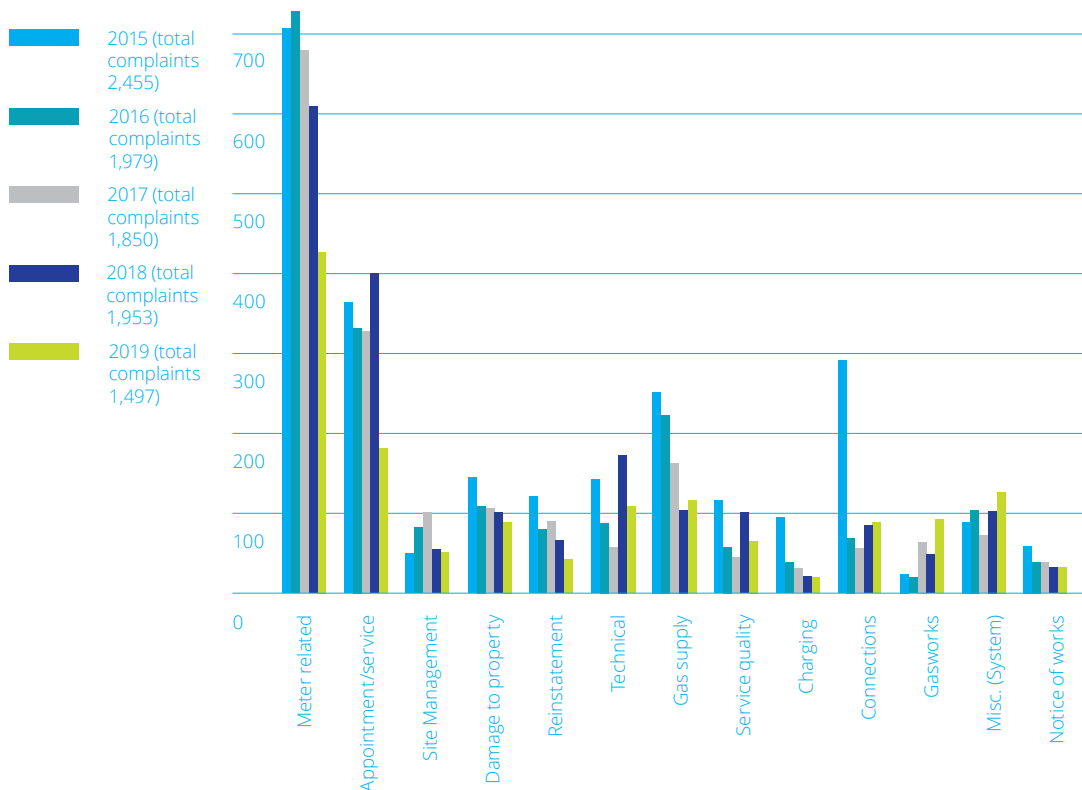
Due to the diversity of the work that Gas Networks Ireland engages in, there are many categories of complaint types. These categories are outlined in figure 4.17 below. The total number of complaints received was 1,497 in 2019. Complaints can vary across all the types of services delivered by Gas Networks Ireland. Complaints are received from both customers who are having services installed and may also come from others affected by the works undertaken by Gas Networks Ireland in their locality. The figure for complaints decreased from 1,952 in 2018 to 1,497 in 2019, representing a fall of 23%.

The largest number of complaints received fell into the meter related category, which is consistent with previous years. Gas Networks Ireland continues to monitor all customer complaints to seek improvements to the services offered and address any issues that are within our control. As a result of these reviews, Gas Networks Ireland has appointed a Customer Advocate in the Contact Centre to be a single point of contact for complaints. In addition, individual reports are issued to departments highlighting the volume and type of complaint received. This helps to highlight areas in need of improvement.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gasnetworks.ie/home/customer-care/how-to-make-a-complaint/GNI-Customer-Complaint-Handling-2017.pdf>

## 04 Retail market

Figure 4.17: Customer complaints by category



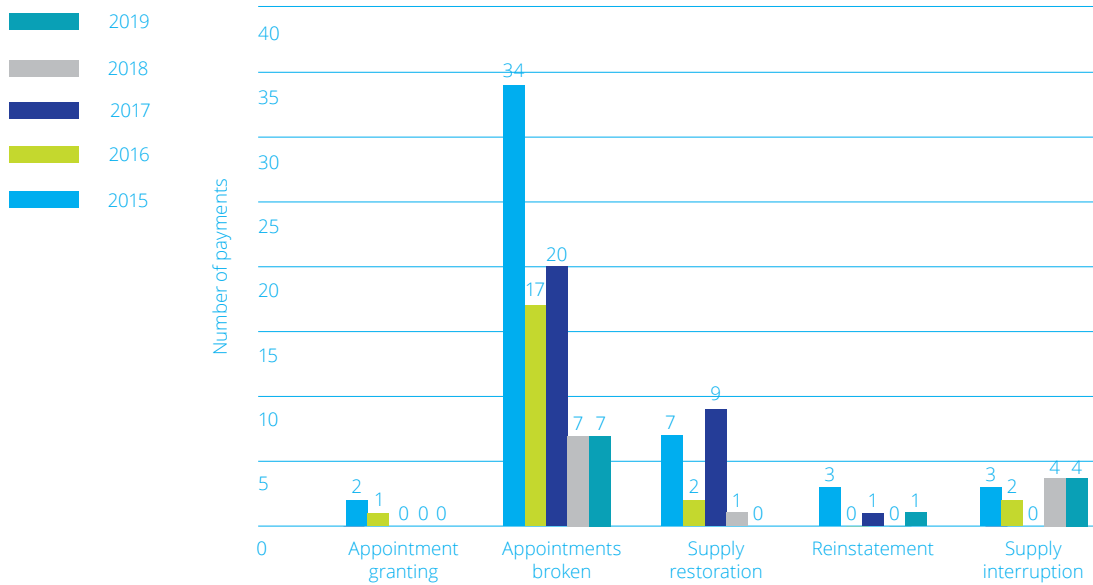
### 4.12 Payment guarantee

Gas Networks Ireland will issue a cheque for the appropriate sum in respect of a requested or notified refund or any validated Charter compensation claim within 10 working days. If the KPI of 10 working days is not met, then compensation will be made in respect of failure to meet this standard. The performance rate payment guarantee has been 100% since 2012. All claims and refunds in 2019 were paid within the required time frame.

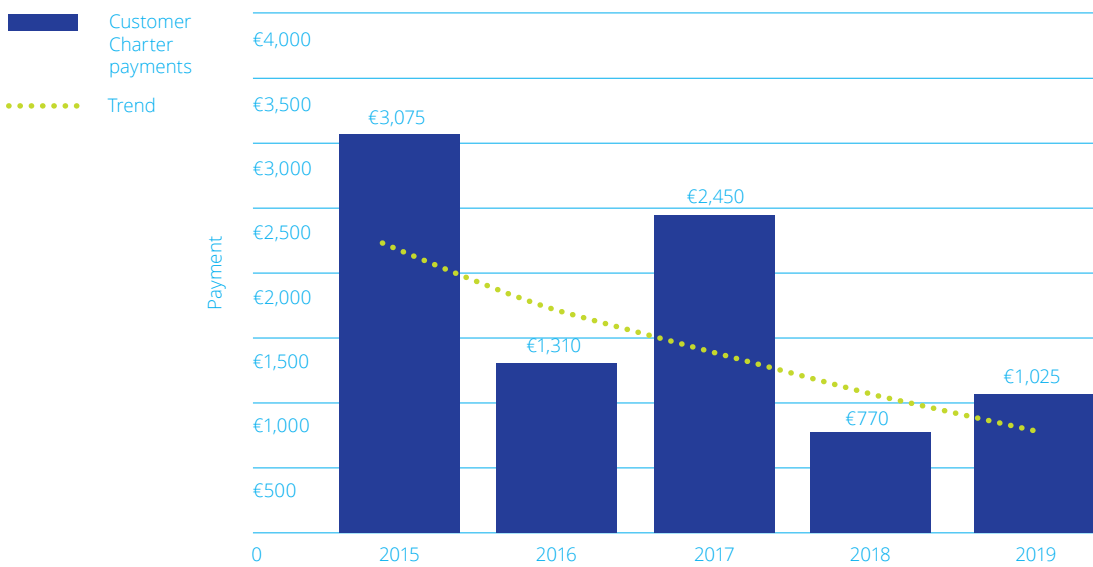
### 4.13 Customer charter payments

Gas Networks Ireland connects all natural gas customers to the network and is responsible for carrying out related work at the customer's premises. Every effort is made to provide services in a prompt, efficient, and safe manner and to a high standard. The Customer Charter provides assurances to customers regarding the standards to which these services are provided. In certain circumstances, compensation will be provided for failing to meet these standards where the customer makes a claim. In such instances, the customer is directed to the Customer Charter page on Gas Networks Ireland's website where instructions on making a claim are available. Reflecting an overall 40% downward trend in complaints between 2015-2019, in 2019 12 compensation payments were made to customers. The total value of these payments was €1,025. A further five payments to the value of €700 were made to customers as directed by the CRU.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 4.18: Customer charter payments and compensation claims**



**Figure 4.19: Customer charter payments**



# 05 Future development

Gas Networks Ireland continually brings the benefits of natural gas to new customers and new towns whereby it is now available in 181 population centres throughout Ireland. Growing the natural gas network is a key priority for Gas Networks Ireland, in order to ensure the existing natural gas network infrastructure can be more efficiently utilised. Gas infill aims to extend the distribution mains in urban areas to a greater number of 'within reach' properties and opportunities to expand the network are explored where viable. The more customers that are connected to the gas network, the more throughput on the system, which in turn reduces the tariffs for the benefit of all gas customers.

Across GNI, there is considerable emphasis on investing in innovation and new business areas such as renewable gas and natural gas vehicles. In this chapter we set out some of the initiatives under development to improve the customer experience and to ensure that Gas Network Ireland will continue to underpin the social, environmental, and economic progress of Ireland.

## CNG

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is an established global source of transport fuel, with more than 27 million Natural Gas Vehicle (NGVs) worldwide and almost 1.5 million in Europe. CNG is natural gas stored under high pressure used in transport. Natural gas is distributed to refuelling stations via the current gas network from where it can be easily compressed and transferred to NGVs and used as fuel. CNG as a transport fuel offers a number of environmental, economic and financial benefits, ranging from cheaper fuel for transportation, lower air pollution and reduction in noise pollution. Furthermore, with more gas flowing through the network, the use of CNG may ultimately lead to lower tariffs for all natural gas users.

Gas Networks Ireland is currently establishing a minimum initial network of fast-fill CNG stations. These fast-fill stations are being deployed along the main transport corridors in Ireland, which cover the elements of the TEN-T core and comprehensive network. GNI provides CNG refuelling via three station formats: large public forecourts, large private stations and medium private stations - using fast fill technology that is similar in operation to diesel refuelling with similar uptimes. Gas Networks Ireland has received co-funding from the European Commission, under the CEF Transport Fund and the CRU Innovation Fund, to install a total of 14 public CNG refuelling stations and a renewable gas injection point on the gas network by 2021. This project is known as the Causeway Study. The rollout of these 14 CNG refuelling facilities has already commenced, with the first public CNG refuelling station opening in Ireland in December 2018 at Circle K Dublin Port. A second public CNG station was commissioned at Circle K's Cashel station in 2020. An additional seven public stations are currently progressing through the design and planning project phases.

GNI also delivers infrastructure to private fleet operators and hauliers. There are currently three medium-sized private CNG stations operational in Ireland. A large private station is also planned for completion in the second half of 2020. In addition, Gas Networks Ireland has received grant approval from the European Commission for a project called Green Connect, running from 2019 to 2023, which will include the installation of an additional 21 public CNG stations, four direct renewable gas injection facilities, four mobile CNG refuelling units as well as a vehicle grant scheme for 400 vehicles.

In the development of CNG infrastructure, Gas Networks Ireland continues to work with all stakeholders in the transport market, including Government departments, regulatory agencies, vehicle manufacturers and distributors, forecourt operators and, most importantly, end-users. The Gas Innovation Fund also continues to promote and encourage an environment of innovation in the gas industry, including CNG.

## 05 Future development

### Renewable natural gas

Renewable gas is a clean and carbon neutral fuel and as such can make a significant contribution to Ireland's renewable energy and carbon reduction targets. It is produced from different sustainable organic materials, upgraded to biomethane and then injected into existing gas distribution infrastructure. Renewable gas is widely used in other European countries and Gas Networks Ireland believes it has a major role to play in assisting the country's transition to a low carbon economy.

Renewable gas represents the lowest cost pathway to decarbonising residential heat, at less than one third the cost of electrifying heat<sup>21</sup>. Renewable gas also has a role to play in attracting future FDI to Ireland as it provides an appealing solution to many multinationals that have mandatory targets set for renewable energy<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, renewable gas provides a solution for national waste management and represents a renewable indigenous fuel source.

Gas Networks Ireland has plans to grow renewable natural gas injection points. On a project, which was co-funded by the EU Connecting Europe Facility and received €1.7m in support from the Innovation Fund as part of the PC3 price control, construction of the first grid injection facility for biomethane into the existing gas network at Cush Co. Kildare was completed in July 2019 and declared a new entry point on the 8th of May 2020. First commercial flows commenced on this date with Naturgy as Shipper, and Tesco as the first customer.

A new Connections Policy was approved by the CRU in October 2018 to facilitate applications and projects for direct injection of biomethane. Over 100 enquiries were received by the end of Q2 2019 with three projects advancing to pre-planning and initial contract stage in Q2. GNI has been shortlisted for €8.5 million of co-funding under the National Climate Action Fund for the construction and development of a large-scale central grid injection facility near Mitchelstown Co. Cork. This project was submitted for planning permission approval in Q3 2019 and has a total value of €29 million. The project will also support two public access filling stations and a grant scheme for HGV fleet operators to support initial vehicle acquisitions.

Gas Networks Ireland is currently progressing the implementation of a Green Gas Certification Scheme for Ireland. This scheme will be designed to fulfil the requirements of the recast Renewable Energy Directive (RED), Article 19 and issue Guarantees of Origin for biomethane injected into the gas grid. Funding from the Gas Networks Ireland Gas Innovation Fund to establish a pilot scheme has been approved, as a voluntary initiative. The obligations in the recast RED must be implemented by Member States before June 2021. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) is the government department with responsibility in Ireland. Government's Climate Action Plan was published in 2019 and Gas Networks Ireland continues to monitor its implementation with respect to Action 71, which sets a national target for the level of energy to be supplied by biomethane injection in 2030.

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21 Poyry report: "Fully decarbonising Europe's energy system by 2050" and KPMG report: "Decarbonising Domestic Heating in Ireland"

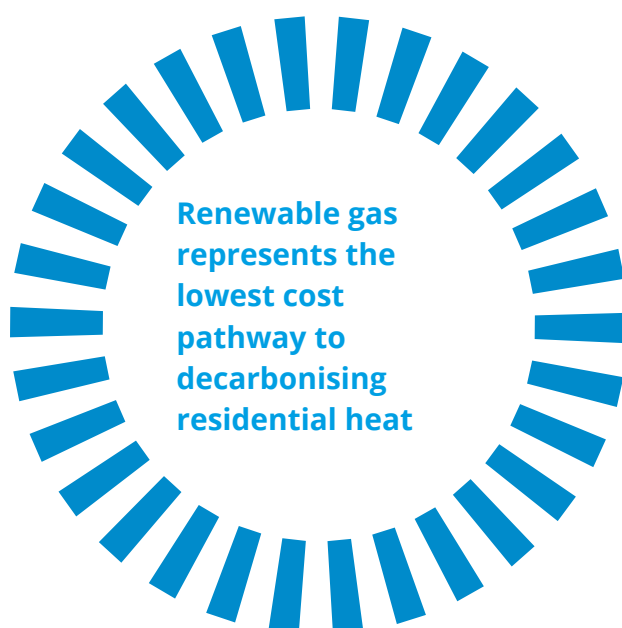
22 World Business Council for Sustainable Development

## Smart metering

The National Smart Metering Programme (NSMP) is under the direction of the CRU. Smart gas meters are the next generation of energy meters. The smart meters will replace the traditional gas meter thus removing the need for a meter reader to visit a home. This will eliminate the need to use estimates whenever a meter cannot be read. Smart meters work by communicating with the customer and their energy provider, giving a view of near real-time actual energy usage. The benefits to the customer will be timely information on their gas consumption so customers are empowered to be more economical by conserving cost and energy, which in turn helps the environment through reducing overall energy production.

In 2018 Gas Networks Ireland worked with the CRU and ESB Networks (ESBN) to define the detailed requirements of the end-to-end smart metering solution. Subsequently, ESBN submitted a proposal to the CRU to deliver the NSMP in a phased approach. This proposal included fundamental changes to the existing programme and timelines with smart gas services becoming available in late 2024. Smart electricity service will be delivered in three phases from 2019-2024. This proposal was accepted by the CRU and led to a restructure of the NSMP governance arrangements. A steering committee was put in place in late 2017 and includes the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, CRU, ESBN, Gas Networks Ireland and a supplier representative.

In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland continued to work with the CRU and all other key stakeholders to monitor the delivery of phase one of ESB Network's roll-out of electricity smart meters as part of the NSMP. GNI also engaged with ESBN to assess the electricity metering and communications technologies procured by ESBN with a view to compatibility with gas smart meters in due course.



# 06 Conclusion

The Customer Charter, which outlines Gas Network Ireland's 10 guaranteed performance commitments, is also a means to measure performance of Gas Networks Ireland's customer interactions. Gas Networks Ireland works in partnership with its stakeholders, including the CRU and shippers to ensure the safe, secure and reliable delivery of gas to all users. Our customer service performance is benchmarked against key performance indicators (KPIs) as per the Customer Charter.

Our operating environment is constantly changing, presenting new opportunities and challenges. The business is continually adapting to meet customers' needs and identifying areas for improvement. Customers are empowered to make contact through various means of communication, which include telephone and digital channels. Their feedback is also encouraged through surveys. Regular active participation with shippers takes place through the GMARG and Code Modification Forums. Gas Networks Ireland continuously seeks and monitors customer feedback, analyses results and KPI metrics.



In 2019, Gas Networks Ireland achieved excellent levels of performance in respect of its published Customer Charter service standards and commitments. Our programme of customer experience monitoring continues to score favourably across all processes. Gas Networks Ireland fell just short of the KPIs for Appointment Granting because of capacity issues on the system and Appointment Keeping because of delays in previous appointments and availability of materials. As part of our Customer Strategy, we developed a plan to drive a customer centric focus across GNI. Some of the Customer Service highlights from 2019 include a 24% reduction in complaints received and the implementation of 52 customer improvement initiatives.

2019 also saw the publication of the Climate Action Plan, which established new national targets for heat pump installation and introduced a ban on gas boilers in new builds from 2025. Taken together, the actions within this Plan will significantly shape the nature of Gas Networks Ireland's operations in the short to medium term, not least in relation to new connections, appointment granting and reinstatements.

Looking ahead, Gas Networks Ireland's customer strategy will continue to drive a customer centric focus across the business, by proactively monitoring feedback and undertaking monthly trends analyses to identify areas for improvement and maintain a high consistency of service. Working in collaboration with teams across the business and our customer contact centre, we will host monthly meetings, workshops and Customer Experience Days for relevant stakeholders to meet and agree areas for improvement.

As we work towards our vision for Ireland's gas network to be net zero carbon by 2050, customers will remain at the fore of our business. Developments in innovation provide customers with choice and presents new opportunities for customers to make a positive impact on emissions. By transitioning the gas network to combine renewable gas, hydrogen and natural gas in combination with carbon capture and storage, Gas Networks Ireland will deliver net zero gas for home heating, transport, industry and electricity generation. In doing so, we will empower our customers to actively partake in a low carbon economy and contribute to meeting Ireland's renewable and carbon reduction targets.

# 07 Appendices

## 7.1 Glossary of terms

CCA	Customer Contact Association
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CRU	Commission Regulation of Utilities
CSAT	Customer Satisfaction Scores
DSO	Distribution System Operator
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EU	European Union
ESBN	ESB Networks
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GMARG	Gas Market Arrangements Retail Group
GTMS	Gas Transportation Management System
IoM	Isle of Man
IVR	Interactive Voice Recording
I & C	Industrial & Commercial
I/C	Interconnector
Km	Kilometre
KPI	Key Performance indicator
MPD	Market Process Documents
NGEM	National Gas Emergency
NGEP	Natural Gas Emergency Plan
NI	Northern Ireland
No.	Number
NPS	Net Promoter Score
NSMP	National Smart Metering Programme
PAYG	Pay as you Go
PRISMA	Operates the internet platform where capacity rights for natural gas transport can be traded or marketed
RMO	Road Management Office
RoI	Republic of Ireland
ROL	Road Opening Licence
SI	Statutory Instrument
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
TSO	Transmission System Operator
UK	United Kingdom

## 07 Appendices

### 7.2 Customer centricity scores

<b>DMetric</b>	<b>Assessment of metric (Survey Question &amp; Scale)</b>	<b>How score is calculated</b>
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Following your recent experience how likely are you to recommend Gas Networks Ireland as an organisation to deal with? <i>(On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all likely' and 10 is 'Very likely')</i>	Subtract the % of detractors (scoring 0 to 6) from promoters (scoring 9 to 10)
NetEasy	Overall, how easy was your experience of dealing with Gas Networks Ireland? <i>Out of 10 (On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is 'Extremely difficult' and 7 is 'Extremely easy')</i>	Subtract the % stating it was difficult to some extent 1 to 3, from those stating it was easy 6 to 7
Satisfied	Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience? <i>(On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'Very dissatisfied' and 10 is 'Very satisfied')</i>	Overall satisfied defined as those scoring 7 to 10, with Very Satisfied defined as those scoring 9 to 10
Customer Centricity	This metric is not a score in itself, but rather a composite score comprising three other measures.	An average of total promoters (9-10), total easy (6-7) and total very satisfied (9-10), i.e. take the three scores and divide by 3.

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### 7.5 Customer charter payments 2019

#### Charter payment breakdown 2019

Charter Commitment	Total Payment €	YTD	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Call Response	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quotation Turnaround	€105.00	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appointment Granting	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appointment Keeping	€325.00	7	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
Reinstatement Commitment	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gas Supply Interruption	€595.00	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
Emergency Response	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gas Supply Restoration	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaint Resolution	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payment Guarantee	€0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRU Decision	€700.00	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2
<b>Total Number</b>		17	2	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	1	3	2	2
<b>Total Payment €</b>	€1,725.00	€1725	€105	€0	€205	€0	€0	€0	€425	€210	€65	€190	€210	€315



The main contact details for  
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**General Enquiries**

**1800 200 694**

Lines open Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm  
and Saturday 9am - 5.30pm

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