

Medically dependent consumer guidelines and vulnerable consumer guidelines

Phase 2 – Initial session

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James Tipping, EA
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Welcome
Mihi and Karakia

Fit for purpose guidelines

- Now is the time to update the MDC guidelines and VC guidelines
 - Electricity Authority inherited guidelines in 2010
 - Driven positive consumer outcomes since their establishment
 - COVID-19 brought them sharply into focus
 - Much has changed since 2010
 - Consumer centricity lies at the heart of the Authority's new strategy
 - Energy hardship a key focus of the 2018-19 Electricity Price Review

Today we will cover

- Set the scene for the overall process: reflections
- Reiterate the case for change
- Communicate key themes from feedback on the phase 1 addendum consultation
- Test a set of proposed design principles for the phase 2 update process
- Provide an overview of phase 2's process and timeline
- Preview potential customer personas



Reflections

- Reflections on the introduction of the original MDC and VC guidelines.

Why change is needed

WHAT – the potential risks

- Potential for consumer distress and/or medical harm if communications are not effective or a disconnection is premature or could have been avoided

WHY – the challenges

The existing guidelines have limitations:

- inconsistent interpretation - lack of clarity
- inadequate coverage - don't cover modern tech or operating practices
- don't support any monitoring - don't contain information loops
- don't support retailer competition, innovation or operating efficiencies:
 - not a level playing field for all retailers
 - interface between customers/suppliers/agencies is not consistent
 - are overly prescriptive in some areas

Phase 1 Addendum: context

- These Guidelines are different to other Guidelines
 - Affects wide range of stakeholders: participants, consumers and government agencies and wider organisations
 - Last updated 2010-2012
 - Includes type 1 and 2 retailers
- Authority and industry identified shortcomings caused by changing technology and processes
 - 3 of which appear urgent and can be dealt with relatively easily
 - the rest are more complex and involve multiple stakeholders

Phase 1 Addendum: key themes

17 submissions received:

Proposal	Feedback			Taking on board feedback, Authority will:
	Agree	Propose changes	Disagree	
Prepay metering	7	3	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend para 7(g) to allow for some manual disconnection within the process provided that the proves is otherwise automatic
Remote disconnection and reconnection	4	10	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend para 8(d)(i) to clarify who should be contacting the consumer and to remove ambiguity that a retailer can disconnect occupied and vacant premises Amend para 8(e) to include 'reasonable' endeavors and remove reference to paras 43 to 47 of the VC Guideline. Para 42 stays in
Retailer-customer-consumer-premises	8	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete para 10(e) as it is also contained in the existing Guidelines

Phase 1 Addendum: some wider themes *(will be addressed in Phase 2)*

- Involvement of the consumer voice
- Improving processes by which customers in hardship are connected into community-based social services (such as FinCap) or referred into programmes like EnergyMate
- Long-term benefits to consumers is more than just “operational efficiencies”
- Guideline recommendations that apply to an MDC/VC, alternate contact or account holder, raise a number of practical issues
- The Guidelines should be clear about what happens if
 - the consumer prevents verification
 - customers will not respond to retailers
- Clear definitions

Phase 1 Addendum: next steps

- Authority will now finalise the addendum making amendments based on feedback,

noting that

- This Addendum is a temporary solution
- The issues covered in it will be examined again, in more detail, during Phase 2, so further changes could be made.



Questions?

James Tipping, EA
Tamara Linnhoff, EA

Phase 2: Proposed design principles for the update

The right consumers are identified

- Consumers can initiate the identification process, but are not relied as the only method to identify
- Other parties can initiate the identification process.

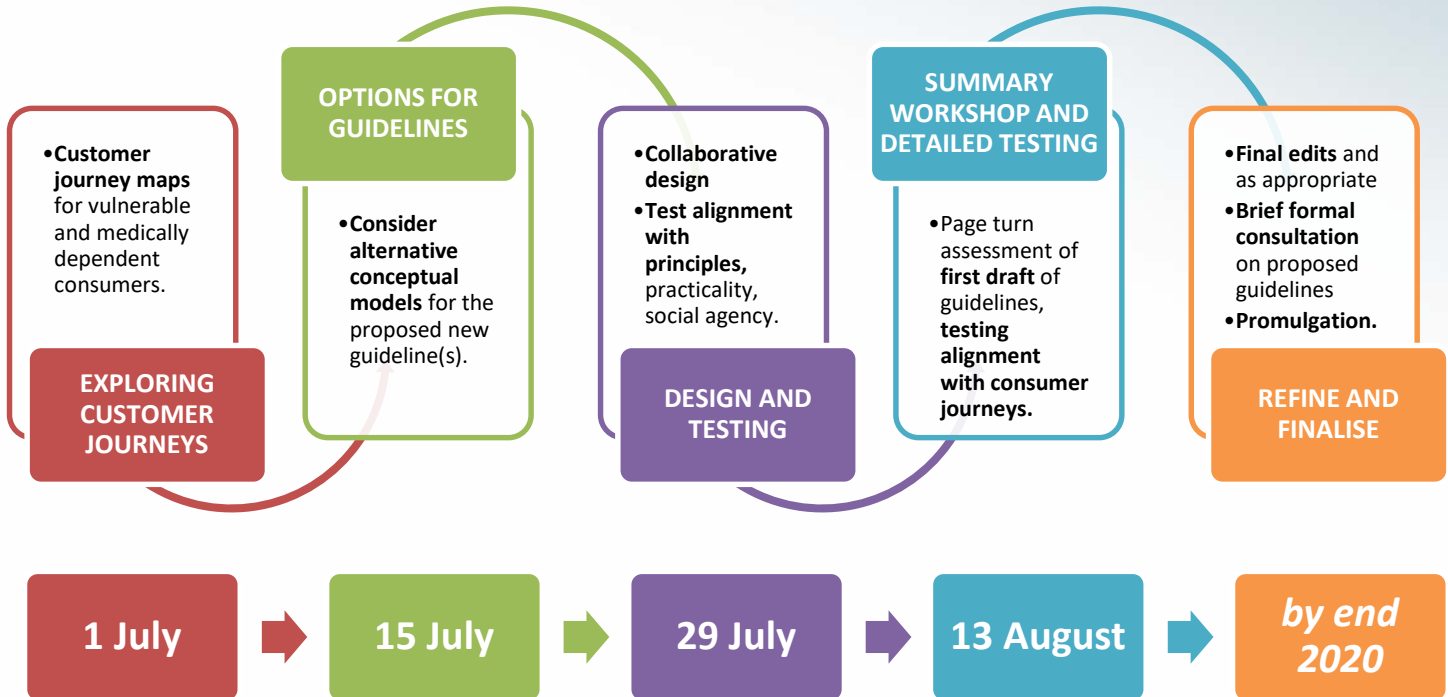
Manaakitanga guides the consumer experience, every time

- Processes are accessible
 - Privacy is maintained
 - Communication is timely, and clear
 - Appropriate advice given (in advance)
- If payment issues arise:*
- Early contact and intervention
 - Options given
 - Support offered, including referrals to wider agencies

A level playing field and support for innovation for retailers

- Retailers engage
- Retailers face an even playing field (processes are predictable and consistent) and retailers can recoup costs
- Processes make sense: intervention is early, and communication channels are easy to use (also for retailers)
- Interfaces are efficient
- Guidelines support retailer innovation

Phase 2: the process and timeline



Questions?

Tamara Linnhoff, EA
Debbie Francis

Phase 2: consumer centric

Preview our consumer personas
(We'll explore and refine next week)



Medically dependent

Wiremu

Gladys

Vulnerable

Frank

Lea

Jason

Amena

Questions?

An open collaborative process

- A living FAQ and suggestions page has been created:

<https://www.ea.govt.nz/development/work-programme/operational-efficiencies/medically-dependent-consumer-and-vulnerable-consumer-guidelines/mdvc-q-and-a/>

- Please send questions or suggestions to:

MDVC.guidelines@ea.govt.nz