**Ofgem meeting 13.06.17 at 15.00 to 16.00**

Ofgem offices, 9 Millbank, London, SW1P 3GE (meeting rooms G3M1/CR2)

**Attendees were to be**

Kersti Berge, Partner, RIIO Networks and Head of Ofgem in Scotland via conference

Anthony Pygram, Partner for Consumers and this includes responsibility for domestic suppliers,

Pete Wightman, who works with Kirsti on the gas networks side via conference

Jonathan Kane of Kane International, director/trustee CO-Gas Safety

Stephanie Trotter, OBE, president & director/trustee CO-Gas Safety

Sue Westwood, director/trustee CO-Gas Safety

Frank Brehany, CEO of Holiday Travel Watch interested organisation which has worked with CO-Gas Safety on CO holiday issues for about 20 years.

**Introductions**

Stephanie explained that sadly neither Sue nor Frank could attend as they were both experiencing huge difficulties.

We all introduced ourselves.

Stephanie Trotter, CO-Gas Safety (ST) – had campaigned for children’s activity holidays to be licensed – took three years – seems like nothing when I’ve been doing this since 1995. CO-Gas Safety is an independent registered charity with the trustees being victims or MPs apart from Jonathan Kane and Jim Lambeth (retired – solid fuel).

Jonathan Kane (JK) – Kane International and trustee CO-Gas Safety – declared his interest of making flue gas analysers measuring appliance and indoor air emissions for CO. JK has worked with CO-Gas Safety for over 20 years & other CO organisations, concluding CO-Gas Safety is measured and logical in its work to find and present sensible solutions to relevant stakeholders.

Kersti Berge (KB) Partner, RIIO Networks and Head of Ofgem in Scotland, SP's Office – Networks – heads the GDNs.

Pete Wightman (PW) Gas Networks and Transmission – reports to Kirstie

Anthony Pygram (AP) – Consumer Partner – overall view of retail supply and vulnerable consumers.

Phil Sumner (PS) – Policy and compliance – Anthony’s team.

On being asked where to start, JK referred KB to p.3, item 5 of material sent beforehand, asking if OfGEM agreed with CO-Gas’s estimate of size of CO problem.

KB confirmed OfGEM was well aware of risks but not experts. KB acknowledged 2015 saw 7 deaths re gas appliances & just under 50 injuries so there was common ground with CO-Gas Safety.

JK then referred to P.4’s Item 5 (a) to (d).

He asked if OfGEM understood why CO-Gas was campaigning on these issues – For example, how it took many years campaigning to persuade GDNs to give gas emergency engineers with PAMs following 1 trial revealing over 100 CO incidents within 18 months despite original protestations PAMs weren’t needed, given previous risk assessments assumed no gas or CO would still be present on arrival at affected premises.

However, why wouldn’t GDNs use equipment to confirm which appliance (perhaps next door’s) was the CO source?

There is a problem in that it is almost impossible for a consumer who suspects he has been poisoned by CO to get a test done to identify which appliance is emitting CO. The individual gas installer has to have a qualification called CMDDA1 and the Gas Safe Register hasn’t made this easy to find at all.

ST We have complained to the GSR and also to HSE with no result. Even a solicitor Debra Morris of Barratts could not obtain a test at all easily and she was a solicitor and hadn’t been affected by CO. People ring me and I often think they are not very intelligent and then 6 weeks later we talk and the person has recovered from CO and I realise that they are of university level of intelligence.

ST added smart meter changers don’t have PAMs yet are more at risk since heating will be on – despite our submissions to BEIS, DCLG & Smart Meter groups like SMOG & SMICOP.

The problem is that the GDNs are not really very expert for example at one of our House of Lords events, one of the GDN employees said that until she talked to us she didn’t know much at all about CO and hadn’t had her boiler serviced for something like 10 years.

Interestingly a New Scientist article in 2004 found that 3,500 people die of unexplained causes in the UK every year between the ages of 16 and 64 but are not tested for CO. Dr Mary Shepherd who is sent the hearts confirmed this.

The Gas Safety Trust is carrying out tests on all dead bodies in three Coronial areas and so presumably when that is finally finished and available, some more reliable information will be possible.

So far our data (from 1995) seems to show that gas is safer than solid and other fuels so we cannot understand why we are not welcomed by the gas industry.

KB explained how OfGEM worked with GDNs, citing its price control regime & 8 year RIIO programme – a discretionary scheme rewarding GDN CO2 (sic) initiatives & repeated OfGEM are not the experts. KB also noted this was a wider industry issue also affecting manufacturers and installers and asked which groups CO-Gas Safety had related with.

ST replied frequent contact with HSE, VIGIL, COCAA, APPCOG, GDNs & Ofgem etc.

JK added other stakeholders were dealing with their issues – for example, HSE & BEIS’s predecessor, BIS, correctly identified problems with incorrect installation of new condensing boilers & the appliance manufacturers’ association HHIC responded by developing Technical Bulletin 143 which installers must now follow.

JK added he sat on GISG, Gas Industry Safety Group, chaired by industry veteran Chris Bielby with membership including GDNs & some energy suppliers. However, it struggles to secure coordinated action from GDNs to report collectively on emergency call out reasons & changes year on year.

JK asked if KB’s preferred group was the GDN CO sub group chaired by Adrian McConnell which Energy UK recently agreed to join?

ST noted she had attended OfGEM meetings with Steve Brown & James Veaney both very nice but unable to really resolve issues noted by CO-Gas.

KB noted Ofgem had awarded GDNs £850,000 and was happy to talk with Tom Bell, chairman of the GDN CO group she wanted us to work with and present to. KB noted CO-Gas Safety had done a good job and should share its information with them.

ST noted CO-Gas Safety has no guaranteed funding and there is still no victim support other than what CO-Gas Safety does, whilst 1 GDN proudly declared its saving of £13 million in one year from efficiency measures!

JK asked if anyone from Ofgem attend Tom Bell’s meetings & KB said no – we should share our info with them. JK replied we would if OfGEM attended, as otherwise these individual organisations will not make a coordinated response.

KB noted work being done on vulnerable consumers but ST replied we’re all vulnerable to CO – Zoe Anderson died of CO although her father’s a multimillionaire. ST wished OfGEM had watched our 1 minute film now in front of us. We saw how Npower’s head of PR was shocked to say, ‘so it could happen to anyone.’

ST asked if Ofgem has power to ring fence funds as done by the regulator in N. Ireland?

AP replied by saying it has no powers over suppliers & KB added it has power over networks but are committed to the 8 year RIIO programme to encourage best practice.

ST replied GDNs haven’t addressed the main concerns. There is still no victim support and no gathering of data from all fuels. GDNs took over our schools poster competition but never bothered to claim from the discretionary scheme for the small sums given to us, despite pleas to do so, because, so they told CO-Gas Safety it just wasn’t worth their while.

JK asked KB to find out from the NI regulator what was the measured benefit from its campaign. Why couldn’t OfGEM use its authority to persuade the GDNs to start a national programme by attending that committee meeting?

KB replied she can’t commit to having someone attend meetings with Tom Bell but would influence GDNs to act together.

As time was ending, JK asked OfGEM to further review smart meter roll out, following our own submissions to DCLG, SMICOP, BEIS & SMOG since 2011. JK suggested there will soon be headlines such as ‘Smart meters blew up my home/family’ given there is no independent data transfer of smart meter tightness tests and installers are not equipped with CO PAMs.

JK asked OfGEM to contact GISG’s Chris Bielby to find out number & reasons for GDN call outs to problem smart meter installation which KB noted.

JK confirmed we would see Tom Bell but who from Ofgem would attend? KB would only commit to getting in touch with Tom Bell.

ST thanked OfGEM attendees for seeing them and noted it took over a year to achieve. CO-Gas Safety provided press packs for KB & PW to receive and copies for AP & PS.

Action points by CO-Gas Safety

1. CO-Gas Safety would seek to attend the GDN committee chaired by Tom Bell and continue to share information gained through its data and victim support.

Action points by Ofgem

1. Ofgem would talk to Tom Bell about our need for cooperation and might attend the meeting.

CO-Gas Safety would greatly appreciate the Regulator attending the meeting at least to show interest and commitment to its duty to protect consumers.

1. Ofgem to confirm when 8 year RIIO expires and what they plan to do to replace it.
2. Ofgem to review the GDN discretionary rewards and see how to make them national.
3. Ofgem to contact Chris Bielby for information about what’s really happening (particularly with regard to meter changers wearing PAMs and also the possible danger of explosion).