firmus energy

Distribution Connection Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 In accordance with condition 2.3 of the licence for the conveyance of gas granted on 24 March 2005 under which Firmus Energy (Distribution) Limited ("**firmus energy**") conveys gas ("**Licence**")[1] there is a requirement to set out a policy regarding connections, connection charges, maintaining, repairing, renewing, altering and removing connections.

1.2 This distribution connection policy ("**Connection Policy**") has been developed in accordance with the conveyance statement of firmus energy submitted to the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation ("**UR**").

1.3 All indicative costs provided in this Connection Policy are exclusive of VAT. Where applicable, VAT will be added at the prevailing rate to any quote for work to be carried out under this Connection Policy.

1.4 Save in respect of adjustments made in accordance with the Retail Prices Index ("**RPI**"), amendments or variations of this Connection Policy will be provided to the UR prior to coming into effect.

1.5 The GD14 allowances set out in Schedule 4 of this Connection Policy are compliant with the provisions of the UR's final determination of the GD14 price control for Northern Ireland's Gas Distribution Networks for 2014-2016 (the "**GD14 Determination**") which was published in December 2013.

1.6 A copy of this Connection Policy and the firmus energy Distribution Network Code can be downloaded from the firmus energy website at www.firmusenergy.co.uk ("**Website**") and is also available by writing to our customer services manager at A4-A5 Fergusons Way, Kilbegs Road, Antrim, BT41 4LZ.

2 Requests for connection

2.1 Who can request a connection

Subject to the limitations in our Licence, firmus energy has an obligation (in accordance with Licence Condition 2.3.10(b)) not to refuse a request for connection where the person seeking the connection is willing to pay the Licensee's charges for connection and comply with firmus energy's other terms for connection, including any terms as to technical and safety matters.

A formal request seeking a connection to the Network[2] may be made by:

[1] A copy of the firmus energy Conveyance Licence is available on our Website at http://firmusenergy.co.uk/media/2013-04-30-BGE-firmus-Conveyance-Licence.pdf

[2] "**Network**" means all gas plant owned, operated and utilised by firmus energy through which gas is delivered to a meter point.

2.1.1 a property owner, which shall include industrial and commercial businesses ("**I&Cs**"), a developer (who constructs a Domestic Development [3] or Non-domestic Development[4]) and private landlords (each a "**Property Owner**");

2.1.2 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive ("**NIHE**");

2.1.3 Housing Associations;

2.1.4 Licensed Gas Suppliers[5]; and

2.1.5 Licenced Gas Conveyors[6].

2.2 How to request a connection

2.2.1 To request a connection to the Network the applicant must provide the following information to firmus energy:

2.2.1.1 all such information as may reasonably be requested by firmus energy, including a wayleave (where applicable), details of any planned future developments and details of expected gas volumes (where applicable);

2.2.1.2 a fully completed Gas Application Form (Distribution) ("**GAF**") or signed contract (as applicable);

2.2.1.3 confirmation of a suitable position for the gas meter and associated equipment;

2.2.1.4 confirmation in respect of the estimated date on which gas usage will begin;

2.2.1.5 the name of the Gas Safe Registered[7] installer hired to complete the natural gas conversion; and

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[3] "**Domestic Development**" means a development of at least 5 new build domestic premises where there is no existing connection to the Network.

[4] "**Non-domestic Development**" means a development of at least 5 new build non-domestic premises where there is no existing connection to the Network.

[5] "**Licensed Gas Supplier**" means any person or body corporate authorised by licence under Article 8 of the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (the "**Order**") or by exemption under Article 7 of the Order to supply gas to a consumer's property.

[6] "**Licenced Gas Conveyer**" means any person or body corporate authorised by licence under Article 8 of the Order or by exemption under Article 7 of the Order to convey gas to a designated area as set out in the relevant licence. A connection to the Network for a Licenced Gas Conveyor will be facilitated under the terms of an appropriate connected systems agreement between firmus energy and the Licensed Gas Conveyor and will not be facilitated under the terms of this Connection Policy.

[7] "**Gas Safe Registered**" means any engineer qualified to work safely and legally on gas appliances by the Gas Safe Register, being the official gas registration body for Northern Ireland appointed by the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland. It is a legal requirement that all gas engineers must be Gas Safe Registered A copy of the Gas Safe Registered installers is available at http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk

2.2.1.6 payment to firmus energy of all applicable charges.

2.2.2 Firmus energy shall facilitate the connection of a Licenced Gas Supplier or Property Owner to the Network in accordance with the provisions of this Connection Policy. A Property Owner must have a Licenced Gas Supplier who has agreed to supply gas to the Property Owner at the relevant property.

2.3 Charges for Connection

2.3.1 Within 28 days of receipt of a request for a quotation for a new connection, firmus energy shall provide a quotation outlining the applicable connection charges and other applicable terms of connection covered by this Connection Policy in line with the timescales set out below:

2.3.1.1 in respect of a Standard Quotation, firmus energy will endeavour to provide a quotation of connection charges to a potential customer within 10 Business Days[8] of receipt of such a request. A "**Standard Quotation**" is a quotation that can be determined by firmus energy without the need for a site visit. Please be aware that Standard Quotations exclude Domestic Developments, Non-domestic Developments and Complex Connections[9];

2.3.1.2 in respect of a Non-Standard Quotation, firmus energy will endeavour to provide a quotation of connection charges to a potential customer within 28 days of such a request. A "**Non-Standard Quotation**" is a quotation which requires firmus energy to visit the site prior to provision of a quotation. Please be aware that Non-Standard Quotations exclude Domestic developments, Non-domestic Developments and Complex Connections; and

2.3.1.3 firmus energy will endeavour to provide a quotation of connection charges as soon as reasonably practicable if the connection is part of a Domestic Development, Non-domestic Development, a Complex Connection or where the connection involves costs as a result of a third party or wayleave issue.

2.3.2 Firmus energy is unable to provide a connection to a property which is outside its Licensed Area. A quotation of connection charges cannot therefore be provided for an Excluded Connection.[10]

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[8] "**Business Day**" means a day other than as Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday in Northern Ireland when banks in Belfast are open for business.

[9] "**Complex Connection**" means connection to a property which is not readily connectable and as per the terms of clause 2.5.

[10] "**Excluded Connection**" means connection to a property which is outside the Licensed Area of firmus energy.

2.4 Properties Readily Connectable

A readily connectable property means:

2.4.1 a property where the front curtilage/boundary is within 50 metres of a suitable distribution pipeline located at the front of the property at the same postal address; and

2.4.2 a property where the gas service pipe can be installed perpendicular to the distribution gas main located in the highway and the proposed service route does not encounter engineering difficulties (such as waterways, culvert crossings, train lines, significant ground level changes etc.) and a suitable alternative position for the gas meter can be established. Please see 'Meter Position' example at Appendix 3 of this Connection Policy.

If you are unsure whether your property is connectable please contact firmus energy.

2.5 Properties Not Readily Connectable

2.5.1 A property may not be readily connectable if it fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

2.5.1.1 the front curtilage or boundary is not within 50 metres of a suitable distribution main located at the front of the property at the same postal address;

2.5.1.2 it is a complex connection (i.e. engineering difficulties are present between the location of the distribution main and the property such as waterways, train lines, culverts, significant ground level differences, sites of special scientific interest etc. which must be taken into account. A further list of such engineering difficulties is provided at Appendix 2 of this Connection Policy);

2.5.1.3 the front curtilage or boundary is within 50 metres of a suitable distribution main but the distribution main is located at the rear of the property (which is more than 50 metres of a suitable distribution pipeline);

2.5.1.4 it is part of a Domestic Development or Non-domestic Development;

2.5.1.5 it is part of a multi storey building or the gas meter is to be sited at high level (in excess of 3m); or

2.5.1.6 an easement and/or a wayleave agreement is required[11] to install gas apparatus to supply gas to the property. In such an instance, obtaining

[11] An easement and/or wayleave agreement is required where it is necessary for firmus energy to install a gas pipeline within a third party's property in order to connect the applicant's property to the Network.

the necessary easement and/or wayleave agreement is the responsibility of the property owner requesting the connection and any associated costs will be borne by the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier.

2.5.2 If a property is not readily connectable the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier can request a bespoke quotation for the cost of the connection. The quotation will include:

2.5.2.1 the cost of providing a suitable distribution main at the front of the property (where required); and

2.5.2.2 the cost of the complete service connection and the provision of a gas meter installation.

2.5.3 Please note that, even where a property is not readily connectable, the property owner remains entitled to the GD14 regulatory allowances as set out in Schedule 4 of this Connection Policy. The relevant regulatory allowance will be deducted from the cost of connection in respect of the relevant property. Please see Appendix 3 of this Connection Policy for a worked example of this calculation.

2.5.4 Any quotation provided is valid for a period of 28 days. Please be aware that, where an original quotation has expired, additional charges may be applicable to any subsequent quotation, both in respect of the work to be carried out and for the provision of the subsequent quotation. Firmus energy may extend the period for which a quotation remains valid at its absolute discretion and in no circumstances shall firmus energy be obliged to do so.

2.5.5 If the quotation request relates to a Domestic Development or a Non-domestic Development and the property owner requires a subsequent redesign, the property owner will be required to pay a non-refundable quotation determination charge. The quotation will be provided within 28 days of receipt of the payment. The quotation determination charge includes:

2.5.5.1 the cost of producing the bespoke network design; and

2.5.5.2 the production of the quotation.

2.5.6 The quotation determination charge is set out in Schedule 1. Each redesign thereafter may require the property owner to pay a further non-refundable quotation determination charge.

2.6 Cost of connection

2.6.1 Charges for connection are based on the actual costs of carrying out the work based on firmus energy's agreed schedule of rates for construction works.

These rates have been established to achieve best value for money through an OJEU[12] tendering process.

2.6.2 These actual costs will be adjusted for regulatory allowances in accordance with the GD14 determination and the rates established therein by the UR. Details of such allowances, where applicable, are shown in Schedule 4 under the heading "**Mains**" where provision of a suitable distribution pipeline at the property is required (i.e. provision of a live gas main at the property) and under the heading "**Connections**" for provision of the complete service connection and the provision of a meter installation. From time to time firmus energy may provide additional allowances where there are operational benefits or where development of the system is accelerated as a result.

2.6.3 The property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier may be required to make a contribution to the difference between the connection costs and the value of the allowance. However, where the value of the allowance exceeds the connection cost there will be no charge payable in this respect.

2.7 Domestic customers

2.7.1 The cost of connection includes the cost of providing the complete service connection (indicative costs are shown in Schedule 1) and the provision of a meter installation (meter installation charges are set out in Schedule 1).

2.7.2 The first 30m of a domestic service connection (where the peak flow is less than 6 scmh) and the provision of a low or medium pressure meter are free of charge. Where a domestic service connection is in excess of 30m in length a rate per linear metre will be charged for each metre in excess of the first 30m (additional costs per metre are set out in schedule 1).

2.8 Industrial and Commercial customers (I&Cs)

2.8.1 Each connection will be treated independently based on expected usage and whether the property is readily connectable.

2.8.2 Each connection will be subject to financial appraisal and any shortfall in payback from the financial appraisal may be requested from the customer.

2.9 Developers – new build housing developments

2.9.1 Connections to new housing developments will be undertaken where developers commit to a gas agreement for their site.

2.9.2 Each development will be subject to financial appraisal. Any shortfall in payback from the financial appraisal may be requested from the developer.

[12] "**OJEU**" means Official Journal of the European Union.

2.9.3 The developer will be required to provide pre-excavated trenches for mains and services within their site and proposed meter locations in line with firmus energy recommendations and in conjunction with the firmus energy engineer.

2.9.4 The developer must inform firmus energy of any relevant changes to the development plans which may affect the works to be carried out by firmus energy. Please be aware that the costs charged by firmus energy may need to be re-evaluated as a result.

2.10 **NIHE and Housing Association developments and refurbishments**

2.10.1 Firmus energy will continue to construct the Network giving consideration to any applicable heating replacement programmes in place from time to time.

2.10.2 NIHE and Housing Association tenants will be advised to contact their nearest office to request further details on connection to the firmus energy Network.

2.10.3 NIHE and Housing Association developments will be subject to financial appraisal. Any shortfall in payback from the financial appraisal may be requested from NIHE or the Housing Association (as applicable).

2.11 **Additional costs**

2.11.1 Costs may be chargeable to the property owner, developer or Licensed Gas Supplier where:

2.11.1.1 there are extensive reinstatement materials not covered in firmus energy contractor's normal charges, including but not limited to decorative quarry stone. Please see clause 4 for further details;

2.11.1.2 engineering difficulties are present between the location of the distribution main and the property including but not limited to waterways, train lines, culverts, significant ground level differences, sites of special scientific interest;

2.11.1.3 there is an exceptional length of service on the property i.e. more than 50 metres from the nearest suitable distribution pipeline subject to no more than two metres along the gable wall of the property where the gas supply is being fitted;

2.11.1.4 the gas supply is being fitted greater than two metres along the gable wall of the property. This provision is also subject to all applicable health & safety regulations which are in place from time to time and any the outcome of any risk assessment and/or site visit carried out by or on behalf of firmus energy;

2.11.1.5 there is an inaccessible meter position, e.g. a meter position that requires specialist equipment for installation (such as a meter positioned on the roof of a commercial building);

2.11.1.6 there is a potential engineering difficulty en route to the meter position due to hazardous surrounding apparatus; or

2.11.1.7 further costs have been incurred by firmus energy over and above those stated in the quotation provided.

2.12 Other Charges

2.12.1 The Charges for non burn or reduced burn

If the customer does not use any gas during the first 12 months after the property is connected to the Network, the customer or Licensed Gas Supplier may be required to pay the full costs of the connection as stipulated in Schedule 1, including any allowance given.

Where applicable, additional costs may be applied if it is found that there is a difference between the actual load determined via the metered rate and the initial forecasted load as supplied initially by the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier.

2.12.2 Service alteration and post connection works

Service alteration costs are included in Schedule 2. Post connection work rates are set out in Schedule 2.

2.13 Review of charges

A Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner can request a review of a quotation by writing to:

Director of Engineering
firmus energy
A4-A5 Fergusons Way
Kilbegs Business Park
Antrim
BT41 4LZ

If after contacting firmus energy the matter is still not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the requestor has the right to contact the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland for an independent investigation at:

The Consumer Council
Floor 3
Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast
BT2 8EN
Tel: 028 9025 1600

3 Facilities for connection to the distribution system

A connection is an interface with the Network through the construction of pipe and facilities. A connection includes valves, pipe, pressure reduction equipment and meter installation. The arrangements for connections may vary depending on the annual load and the upstream pressure of the gas system. A supply meter will only be fitted when firmus energy receives acceptance of its terms for connection and a Licensed Gas Supplier has confirmed its willingness to supply in accordance with firmus energy's Distribution Network Code.

3.1 The connecting pipe and facilities

To ensure safety of operations and to meet the various statutory and commercial needs, certain facilities are required at a connection.

3.1.1 Connecting pipe

Any main or service pipe will be constructed of either polyethylene (PE80 or PE100) or steel depending upon the operating pressure requirement.

3.1.2 Isolation valve

In addition to the customer control valve, a service isolation valve will be required for all connections to domestic premises with a service pipe, having a diameter greater than or equal to 32mm. A service isolation valve will be required for all connections to buildings containing several separately metered domestic premises, special risk premises and all industrial and commercial premises. Medium pressure domestic connections having a diameter less than 32mm have a flow limiting device and therefore an isolation valve is not required.

3.1.3 Pressure reduction equipment

An area of land together with planning permission may be required for very large installations to allow for the installation of pressure reduction equipment.

3.1.4 Operational additional facilities for connections

The following equipment is available at extra cost:

3.1.4.1 twin streams for additional security of supply;

3.1.4.2 additional line valves;

3.1.4.3 additional housing for pressure reduction equipment; and

3.1.4.4 service riser covers (including house entry tees).

3.2 Supply meter installation

3.2.1 Filtration equipment

On large supply meter installations (over 40 standard cubic meters per hour (scmh)) separate filtration is required to protect metering and pressure reduction equipment.

3.2.2 Pressure regulation equipment

This is supplied at all sites.

3.2.3 Meter outlet valve

An outlet valve will be fitted to meters with a capacity of more than 40 scmh.

3.2.4 Data loggers

If the load is over 2,196,000 kWh (75,000 tpa) and where deemed as a requirement by firmus energy data loggers will be supplied.

3.2.5 Volume correction equipment

This equipment is required to convert the measured volumetric consumption to a volume corrected for temperature and pressure at supply meter points using more than 2,196,000 kWh (75,000 tpa).

3.2.6 Optional extras as part of the Supply Meter Installation

At an additional cost the following can be provided:

3.2.6.1 meter by-pass[13];

3.2.6.2 data loggers (where not required for firmus energy Network Code purposes);

3.2.6.3 additional over/under pressure protection devices;

3.2.6.4 non-return valves (recommended for installations that utilise compression or forced draught equipment in their downstream);

3.2.6.5 interface for energy management equipment (chatter cabinet); and

3.2.6.6 non-standard operating pressure (not available on low pressure system).

[13] Where the continuous flow of gas to a property is essential, a meter by-pass is installed to allow the flow of gas to be diverted so as not to pass through the meter therefore securing the continuous offtake of gas at a supply meter point in the event of any failure of part of the meter. It minimises interruption of a gas supply to a property where a continuous flow of gas is essential and also where appropriate, helps satisfy particular technical requirements. The meter by-pass comes in standard format/configuration for all twin stream units over 160 scmh.

4 Service installation process and reinstatement

4.1 In order to bring gas to a customer's premises, an underground gas service pipe has to be laid from the gas main to the gas meter. This gas service pipe will be installed using a trenchless technique called "moling" where possible. This technique limits the amount of excavation (i.e. holes) that needs to be excavated on a customer premise.

4.2 There will be a minimum of one excavation at the customer's boundary and one excavation at the gas meter location.

4.3 This technique is limited to a maximum distance of 10m between excavations and depends on the ground conditions and the presence of existing underground apparatus. As a result, further excavations may be required to complete the installation of the gas service pipe at the relevant property.

4.4 The assessment of whether the trenchless technique can be used for part or all of the gas service will only take place on the day of the installation once the work has started and the ground has been excavated. Firmus energy will endeavour to notify the customer once a decision has been made.

4.5 In some cases there will be a requirement to excavate a trench (dig the whole way) from the customer's boundary to the gas meter location to install the gas service pipe. At all times the trenchless technique will be considered for all/part of the route to minimise the disruption to the customer's premise where possible.

4.6 Firmus energy will endeavour to reinstate the customer's property within 5 Business Days of the completion of the service installation using standard materials to match the existing reinstatement (surface) where possible.

4.7 Standard materials include

4.7.1 bitumen;

4.7.2 concrete; and

4.7.3 block paviars (where readily available).

4.8 Where the excavation takes place on grass or unmade ground (stone), the excavated material will be used to reinstate the excavation.

4.9 An additional cost will be charged for any non-standard reinstatement materials such as decorative surface or materials no longer readily available or materials that are considered over and above the standard materials listed above.

4.10 There is no guarantee that an exact match of the existing reinstatement can be accomplished as these surfaces may have weathered or the material previous used may no longer be readily available. Please be aware that it is inevitable that the excavated area will remain visible and will not be returned to its original state.

4.11 Firmus energy shall, when completing such works as are required to connect the relevant property to the network, adhere to the provisions of all applicable Northern Ireland Road Authority and Utilities Committee codes of practice.

4.12 All works carried out shall also be in line with our Guaranteed Standards of Service (Gas Distribution).

5 Maintaining, repairing, altering, renewing, upgrading and removing connections

As the Distribution Network Operator, firmus energy will carry out any maintenance, repair and renewal that is required under normal operation of the gas network. Any such costs will be recovered through published conveyance charges.

Where costs are not recovered through conveyance charges firmus energy will charge the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner for such works under the terms of this Connection Policy.

Firmus energy reserves the right to charge the Licensed Gas Supplier for works undertaken at a property for which they are the registered Licensed Gas Supplier under the terms of the firmus energy Distribution Network Code

5.1 Alterations

5.1.1 Requests for alteration of any connections will be charged to the customer or Licensed Gas Supplier in full, based on costs set out in Schedules 1, 2 & 3.

5.1.2 Where there is an alteration to a non-domestic connection, a site specific quotation will be provided due to the bespoke nature of these works. This quotation will be provided within 28 days of request and payment will be required in full prior to commencement of the works. Any quotation provided by firmus energy will be valid for a period of 3 months.

5.1.3 If alterations are required to meet the needs of customers who are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick, please contact your Licensed Gas Supplier.

5.2 Upgrades/downgrades

5.2.1 If upgrades of service connections and meters are required due to an increase gas load the costs will be chargeable to the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier.

5.2.2 If a meter and /or service are to be downsized due to a customer request or due to a technical requirement caused by a decrease in gas usage, firmus energy will request the full cost from the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier prior to commencement of the works.

5.3 Damaged meters (including meter cabinet and fittings)

The property owner must not, and must ensure that no other person does, interfere or tamper with, misuse or damage the Equipment[14] or the meter cabinet. The property owner is responsible for any theft or damage to the Equipment or the meter cabinet and the property owner or the Licensed Gas Supplier will be liable to firmus energy or its agents for all costs incurred in the repair, replacement or removal of same, including the costs set out in Schedules 1, 2 & 3 for replacing damaged meters or equipment.

[14] "Equipment" means the meter and associated equipment and installations installed or to be installed at the relevant property, including associated pipework, regulator, filters, valves, seals, housings and mountings in order to connect the relevant property to the Network.

5.4 **Stolen meters**

5.4.1 The cost of replacing a stolen meter at a domestic property will be charged to the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner as detailed in Schedule 2.

5.4.2 The cost of replacing a stolen meter at an industrial or commercial property will be charged to the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner as detailed in Schedule 2.

5.5 **Meter Interference**

5.5.1 Where firmus energy has determined that theft of gas, criminal damage to firmus energy assets, meter and/or supply tampering or recovery of stolen assets may have occurred an investigation will commence. All evidence gathered as part of any investigation may be passed on to the PSNI. An exchange of the meter will also be arranged. All applicable costs will be charged to the Licensed Gas Supplier or, in the absence of a Licensed Gas Supplier, will be charged to the property owner.

5.5.2 Where firmus energy has determined that meter interference has occurred, the property may be permanently disconnected and the meter removed, service capped and the costs will be chargeable to the Licensed Gas Supplier or, in the absence of a Licensed Gas Supplier, to the property owner. Where such meter interference has caused an immediate safety risk, the property shall in all instances be permanently disconnected and the meter removed.

5.5.3 Where meter interference is, in the opinion of firmus energy, an immediate risk to life or property, the meter may be disconnected permanently without notice, whether or not it is the first instance of theft of gas. All applicable costs will be chargeable to the Licensed Gas Supplier, or in the absence of a Licensed Gas Supplier, to the property owner.

5.6 **Entry warrants**

Firmus energy or the Licensed Gas Supplier may obtain an entry warrant under the relevant legislation. All warrants obtained by firmus energy or the Licensed Gas Supplier will be executed by firmus energy. The associated costs with the execution of any entry warrant will be calculated by firmus energy based on actual costs and will be recovered from the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner.

5.7 **Abortive visits**

5.7.1 Firmus energy reserves the right to charge the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner for any abortive visits undertaken by them for the purpose of post connection activities as set out in “Abortive visit costs” in Schedule 2.

5.7.2 An abortive visit means when firmus energy visits a property on behalf of a Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner and where the requested work cannot be completed for one of the following reasons:

5.7.2.1 firmus energy employees or the agents of firmus energy are unable to gain access to the property to carry out the work;

5.7.2.2 the property owner has not prepared the property as agreed;

5.7.2.3 it would be unsafe to undertake the work due to the condition of the property; or

5.7.2.4 the work was cancelled on the instruction of the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner after firmus energy has despatched resources at the property.

5.8 **Site visits**

5.8.1 Firmus energy reserves the right to charge the Licensed Gas Supplier or property owner for all planned site visits which result in a second visit to carry out a purge and relight as set out in purge and relight costs in Schedule 2.

5.8.2 Firmus energy reserves the right to charge the Licensed Gas Supplier for any site visit where firmus energy determines that the issue could have been resolved by the Licensed Gas Supplier as set out in Operator Site Visit Costs in Schedule 2.

5.9 **Disconnection**

5.9.1 Disconnection means the interruption of the gas supply, other than due to a system outage. The method of disconnection employed will vary dependant on meter type and may involve one or more of the following methods:

5.9.1.1 physical removal of the meter;

5.9.1.2 insertion of a disc at the meter outlet; and/or

5.9.1.3 cutting and capping the service pipe.

5.9.2 Disconnection of a gas supply to a property may be required under various circumstances, for example unoccupied properties, network safety purposes, site redevelopment or requests from Licensed Gas Supplier.

5.9.3 Firmus energy will seek to recover costs of equipment owned by it and described in Schedule 2 from the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier.

5.9.4 Network disconnection costs for domestic properties (<6 scmh) are outlined in Schedule 2.

5.9.5 Where the disconnection relates to a non-domestic property, a site specific quotation will be provided due to the bespoke nature of the works.

5.9.6 A request for reconnection can be invoked when the customer pays any reconnection fee in full and all outstanding issues with firmus energy are resolved to the satisfaction of firmus energy. Reconnection costs are included in Schedule 2.

5.9.7 **Works not included within this connection policy**

Where a property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier requests work to be carried out to their connection, the costs detailed in Schedules 1 & 3 will apply. Any work not detailed in the Schedules will be charged by firmus energy on a time and materials basis and prevailing uplifts will be applied.

5.9.8 **Non-standard meters and meters not owned by firmus energy**

5.9.8.1 Connection charges referred to in Schedule 1 are for complete service connection, including the provision of a standard meter.

5.9.8.2 Where a non-standard meter installation is requested firmus energy's Conveyance Licence Condition 2.5.3 will be applied.

5.10 **Forced Meter Exchanges**

5.10.1 A forced meter exchange is carried out by removing a credit meter from a property and replacing it with a prepay meter. A forced meter exchange will be carried out at the request of a Licensed Gas Supplier.

5.10.2 A forced meter exchange is generally required when the Licensed Gas Supplier is unable to contact the occupant of a property regarding meter reads, bills and unpaid charges.

5.10.3 Firmus energy will place a disc in the outlet of the gas meter following the forced meter exchange. Firmus energy will not be required to complete a 2nd visit to the premises to reinstate the gas supply as all liability falls within the remit of the property owner or the occupier. Any reinstatement must be carried out by a Gas Safe Registered engineer.

Schedule 1 – Indicative costs: services and meters

All indicative costs exclude VAT. VAT where applicable will be added at the prevailing rate to any quote.

Engineering survey required ("**ESR**") is stipulated where firmus energy deem that the cost must be compiled on an individual basis due to the bespoke nature of the works.

Indicative costs for service connection to low pressure (75mbar) main

Peak flow (scmh) less than	0 - 15 metres	Additional £ per metre (excl. VAT)
6	£731.21	£49.51
16	£1,452.88	£49.51
25	£1,865.93	£63.81
40	£1,865.93	£63.81
65	£1,865.93	£63.81
100	£1,865.93	£63.81
160	ESR	£85.52
250	ESR	£87.58

Please review these schedule costs in conjunction with section 3 – costs of connection

Indicative costs for service connection to medium pressure (4bar) main

Peak flow (scmh) less than	0-15 metres	Additional £ per metre (excl. VAT)
6	£844.17	£49.51
16	£1,465.38	£49.51
25	£1,465.38	£49.51
40	£1,465.38	£49.51
65	£1,465.38	£49.51
100	£1,465.38	£49.51
160	£1,732.32	£63.81
250	£1,732.32	£63.81

Please review these schedule costs in conjunction with section 3 – costs of connection

Meter fit costs
These costs are applicable to first installations.

Peak flow (scmh) less than	Meter fit (excl. VAT)
6	£70.94

Indicative costs for 6 scmh meter – low pressure and medium pressure

Peak flow (scmh) less than	Credit meter (excl. VAT)	Debt recovery (excl. VAT)	Prepayment meter (excl. VAT)
6	£33.30	£122.09	£122.09

Indicative costs for installation of a 6 way meter cabinet to supply 6 no. of 6 scmh meters (*includes meter cabinet, fittings and regulator but excludes meter cost)*

Pressure	Low pressure (excl. VAT)	Medium pressure (excl. VAT)
6 way meter cabinet	£1,504.03	£1,526.47

Indicative costs for low pressure (75mbar) meter (*includes meter cabinet (external only), fittings, meter and regulator)*

Peak flow (scmh) less than	External Meter		Internal Meter	
	Single Stream (excl. VAT)	Twin Stream (excl. VAT)	Single Stream (excl. VAT)	Twin Stream (excl. VAT)
16	£1,179.06	n/a	£527.06	n/a
25	£1,596.06	n/a	£699.12	n/a
40	£1,832.23	n/a	£921.87	n/a
65	£4,872.54	£9,041.11	£4,180.57	ESR
100	£4,729.31	£8,754.64	£5,861.89	ESR
160	£5,520.43	£10,279.79	£6,595.01	ESR
250	£9,177.47	£17,484.27	£7,453.22	ESR

Indicative costs for medium pressure (4bar) meter (*Includes meter cabinet, fittings & regulator)*

Peak flow (scmh) less than	S/S External (excl. VAT)	T/S External (excl. VAT)
16	£978.74	n/a
25	£2,118.90	n/a
40	£2,608.24	n/a
65	£4,248.27	£9,143.16
100	£5,925.87	£8,741.20
160	£7,848.54	£9,275.35
250	£9,404.93	£17,190.90

Abortive visit costs - new connections

Option	Work required	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Meter fitter	£37.37
2	Distribution team	£103.19

Quotation Charge

The quotation charge is £50 per property included within the domestic or non domestic development, up to a maximum charge of £500 per quotation.

Schedule 2 – Post connection activities

All domestic post connection charges quoted apply to 6 scmh meter installations only. Any domestic meter installation larger than 6 scmh will be charged at the prevailing I&C post connection costs.

Domestic post connection activities

Option	Work description	Charge (excl.
1	Disconnect 6scmh	£57.18
2	Reconnect 6scmh	£74.76
3	Disconnect and/or reconnect non- standard gas meter	ESR
4	Meter exchange 6scmh	£112.47
5	Stolen meter charge (6 scmh)	£194.04 Prepay £104.24 Credit
6	Revenue protection charge	£331.51

Meter exchanges for Credit meter to Prepay meter will be free of charge if no similar exchange has been carried out in the previous 12 months. If the initial connection of the meter installation has been completed within the last 12 months the exchange will be fully chargeable.

Indicative costs for domestic service alterations up to and including 6 scmh (Costs are based on works being completed during one visit)

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Disconnect meter, box and fittings and re-fix in location 0 - 5 metres from original site incl. excavation (excl. downstream pipework)	£1,200.27
2	Disconnect meter, box and fittings and re-fix in location 0 - 5 metres from original site not incl. excavation (excl. downstream pipework)	£420.28
3	Additional £ per metre based on excavation work required	£86.64
4	Additional £ per metre based on open trench provided by customer	£39.20
5	Cost to amend downstream pipework	ESR

Indicative costs for service disconnection (medium pressure and low pressure) up to and including 6 scmh (1st visit)

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Cap and seal service pipework at mains connection (incl. excavation)	£432.30

Note: *the above disconnection does not include the costs associated with the meter. See **Domestic post connection activities** for meter costs.*

Indicative costs for service reconnection (low pressure and medium pressure) up to and including 6 scmh (2nd Visit)

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Reconnect service pipework at mains location, and install meter (incl. excavation)	£341.72

***Note**: the above reconnection does not include the costs associated with the meter. See **Domestic Post Connection Activities** for meter costs.*

Lateral disconnection

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Ground floor	£103.19
2	2nd floor and above	ESR

I&C post connection activities

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	6 scmh meter exchange	£112.47
2	> 6 ≤ 40 scmh meter exchange	£439.48
3	Disconnect and remove meter, cap and seal service pipework within meter box (6 scmh)	£57.18
4	Reconnect 6 scmh (meter only)	£74.76
5	Disconnect and remove meter, cap and seal service pipework within meter box (16-40 scmh)	£107.51
6	Reconnect 16 - 40 scmh (meter only)	£99.66
7	Disconnect and remove meter and meter box, cap and seal service pipework under ground at meter box location (6 - 40 scmh)	£441.83
8	Disconnect / Reconnect for connections with a capacity greater than 40 scmh	ESR
9	Stolen meter charge	ESR
10	Revenue protection charge	ESR
11	Alter position of meter and/or service	ESR
12	Cut and cap service at mains location	ESR
13	Reconnection of service pipe at mains location	ESR

Note: *The above costs are labour only rates*

Post Customer energy management interface to gas meter

Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
Customer energy management interface to gas meter (Chatterbox)	£600.00

Purge and relight costs

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Test and commission gas system, 6 scmh meter	£51.29
2	>6 scmh meter	ESR

Note: *Test and commission gas system 6 scmh means the reinstatement of the gas supply at a SMP following a temporary interruption of supply. Purge and relight includes the performance of a "Tightness Test" and the visual inspection of the downstream gas installation and connected appliances. Should any issues with the system be highlighted during this visit, the system will not be commissioned and instead will be made safe.*

Abortive visit costs

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	Meter fitter	£37.37
2	Distribution team	£103.19

Ducting

Option	Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
1	63mm per meter	£1.21
2	110mm per meter	£2.12

Operator site visit costs

Work description	Charge (excl. VAT)
firmus energy representative	£37.37

Meter cabinet repair costs (6 scmh)

Whilst firmus energy supplies a meter cabinet at the point of connection, the property owner shall own the meter cabinet. Thereafter, as it will form part of the fabric of the property, repairs and maintenance of the meter cabinet are the responsibility of the property owner.

Meter box works	Surface mounted box (excl. VAT)	Multi-box (excl. VAT)	Recessed (excl. VAT)	6-way meter cabinet (excl. VAT)
Replace door/front cover/lid	£104.35	£106.08	£103.66	£310.67
Replacement meter box key	No Charge	No Charge	No Charge	No Charge
Install anti-vandal cover	£285.33	£285.33	£246.47	ESR
Replace meter box and fittings (excavation required low pressure)	£502.80	£498.56	£520.98	£2,099.31
Replace meter box and fittings (excavation required medium pressure)	£575.72	£561.71	£600.12	£2,124.00

Note: *The above costs for replacing damaged meter cabinets do not include any works associated with the downstream pipework. Due to recessed cabinets being installed in the fabric of the buildings the property owner must arrange for a third party to remove the damaged cabinet and the refitting of the replacement recessed cabinet.*

Meter cabinet door repair costs (>6 scmh)
All repairs to meter cabinets >6 scmh are subject to an engineering survey due to the bespoke nature of the works.

Meter tests (off site)
All meter tests will be carried out using the Office of Gas and Electricity Market (OFGEM) approved registration test. The total cost chargeable will include cost of the meter test and the carriage costs which will depend on the size and weight of the meter.

Meter Type	Charge	Adder (Broken seal)	Meter fitter/Gov technician cost
Diaphragm Meter (U6 - U40 or G4 - G25)	£180.00	TBC	£37.37
Electronic Libra	£180.00	TBC	£37.37
RPD (<650 scmh)	£850.00	£400.00	£300.00
Turbine (>=650 scmh)	£1,070.00	£800.00	£300.00

Note: *The above costs for meter tests does not include broken seal costs or carriage costs for Diaphragm and Libra meters. Carriage costs have been included for RPD and Turbine meters. There is no cost for replacement meters included.*

Meter operation test (on-site test)

Meter type	Meter operation test (on-site test) fees (excl. VAT)
Domestic	£74.76
Commercial (test to confirm meter index registration only)	£74.76

Note*: All meter tests must be paid for in advance. A full refund will be given if the meter is determined to be faulty*

Schedule 3 - GD14 Allowances

Allowances

Mains

Property Passed	Allowance per Property Passed
New Build Domestic Housing	£428
Existing housing - Domestic and I&C	£576

Connections

Domestic

Domestic Housing	Service and Meter Allowance
Existing housing	£982
New Build housing	£653

I&C

I&C Meter Size	Service and Meter Allowance
U6	£979
U16	£1,680
U25	£1,774
U40	£2,034
U65	£3,114
U100	£3,608
U160	£4,444
U250	£8,055
U400	£10,139
U650	£13,839
U1000	£18,756
U1600	£27,579
U2500	£40,276

Appendix 1 – Information required when requesting a new domestic connection

The initial assessment of the costs of connection and reinforcement, if required, will be more accurate if the full information is available when the request is made.
The following information is required:

- Site information – including the Postcode
- User name and address
- Preferred Supply Meter Point Registration Date (date the meter agreed with supplier to take responsibility for the transportation costs of the SMP)
- Date of submission

Should the required information not be provided, firmus energy will indicate the assumptions made.

Information required when requesting a new industrial or commercial connection

The initial assessment of the costs of connection and reinforcement, if required, will be more accurate if the full information is available when the request is made.
Should the required information not be provided, firmus energy will indicate the assumptions made if possible.

The following information is required to make a full evaluation:

- Site name
- Site address – including the postcode
- Company name(s) and address(es)
- Gas supplier

Details of the supply meter installation are also required:

- Load type – heating or process
- Supply type (firm or interruptible)
- If interruptible supply alternative fuel
- First date that gas is required including commissioning
- SMP capacity (peak flow day – kWh/day)
- Peak hourly flow – kWh
- Annual Quantity – kWh per annum
- Supply pressure – bar
- Required operating pressure – mbar
- Max operating pressure – mbar
- Lowest operating pressure – mbar
- Design incidental pressure – mbar

- Strength test pressure – mbar
- Max flow rate – scmh
- Min flow rate – scmh
- Any special equipment requirements at the connection e.g. elevated pressure requirements etc.[15]
- Priority customer – (yes/no)[16]

[15] Certain assumptions will be made if this information is not provided. It should be noted that elevated pressure of more than the standard 21mbar may have significant impact on connection and reinforcement costs.

[16] The conveyance licence requires the distribution company to establish a list of non-domestic consumers who must be given priority with maintaining a gas supply in the event of a gas emergency.

Appendix 2 - List of obstacles

The list below details a number of obstacles that may cause engineering difficulties in providing a gas supply to a Property and as such would deem the connection to be not readily connectable. Please note this list is not exhaustive and a site visit by an engineer will be required to assess the extent of the complexity of the connection and to provide a bespoke quotation in line with clause 2.5.2 of this Policy.

List of obstacles:

- Works that necessitate the crossing of a bridge structure either within the road make up on top of the bridge or attached to the bridge structure itself.
- Works which require the crossing of waterways (e.g. rivers, streams, drainage channels, etc.).
- Works that involve the crossing of motorways, dual carriageways or highways which have been designated by the Highway Authority to have special engineering difficulties.
- Works which involve the crossing of, or which are affected by the presence of, a railway line.
- A connection to a Property which has been designated as a listed building.
- Where works are in, or are likely to impact upon a Area of Special Scientific Interest.
- Works are situated within, or are likely to impact upon, a woodland, marsh, peat bog or coastal wetland.
- A connection to a building that has a basement or cellar in the locality of the service route and/or meter position.
- Connections to existing blocks of apartments/flats where any service pipe will terminate more than two stories above the adjacent ground level.
- Connections where access for the installation of apparatus is restricted requiring specialist access platforms.
- Connections to new blocks of flats / apartments where any service pipe will terminate more than five stories above the adjacent ground level.
- A connection to a building that requires significant excavation and reinstatement of public realm paving.
- Works which involve any requirement for a public enquiry or planning permission, including planning permission associated with any buildings including meter houses
- Where the route of any apparatus involves significant breaking out and excavation of a continuous stream of rock.
- Where the route of any apparatus involves a significant (greater than 2m) change in elevation within a short horizontal distance e.g. a cliff or retaining wall.
- Where any apparatus will be laid through contaminated ground.
- Where any apparatus will be laid in land likely to suffer from subsidence.
- Where works are likely to be affected by special security provisions, e.g. airports, military bases, prisons etc.
- Where works will take place within top tier COMAH sites i.e. sites subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH).

- Where ground conditions require significant trench supports systems to be employed.
- Where an easement or other legal permit has to be obtained from any person other than the person requesting the works.

Appendix 3 – Worked Examples

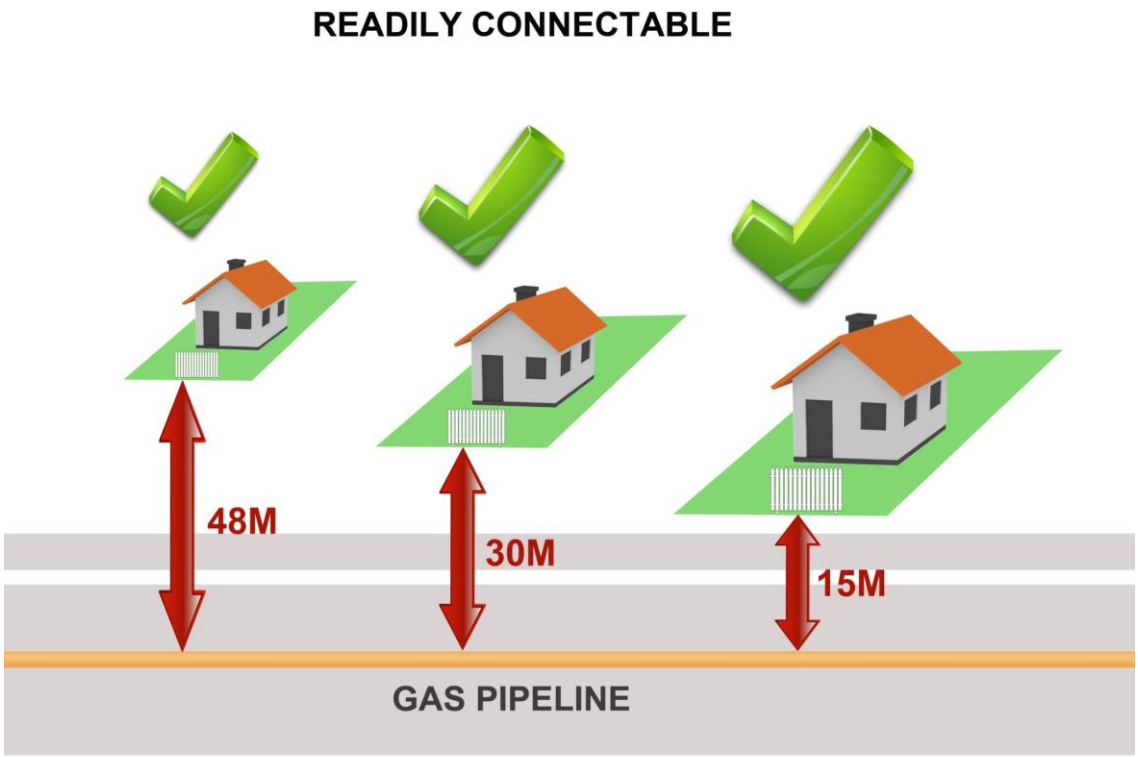
Readily Connectable Properties

As provided in clause 2.4 of this Policy, a readily connectable property is a property where:

- the front curtilage/boundary is within 50 metres of a suitable distribution pipeline' located at the front of the property at the same postal address; and

- the gas service pipe can be installed perpendicular to the distribution gas main located in the highway and the proposed service route does not encounter engineering difficulties (such as waterways, culvert crossings, train lines, significant ground level changes etc.) and the gas meter can be positioned.

This principle is illustrated below:



All three examples shown above are readily connectable and result in no charge being incurred by the customer.

Not Readily Connectable Properties

As provided in clause 2.5 of this Policy, a property may not be readily connectable if it fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

- the front curtilage or boundary is not within 50 metres of a suitable distribution main located at the front of the property at the same postal address;

- it is a complex connection (i.e. engineering difficulties are present between the location of the distribution main and the property such as waterways, train lines, culverts, significant ground level differences, sites of special scientific interest etc. which must be taken into account. A further list of such engineering difficulties is provided at Appendix 2 of this Policy);

- the front curtilage or boundary is within 50 metres but the distribution main is located at the rear of the property (which is more than 50 metres of a suitable distribution pipeline);

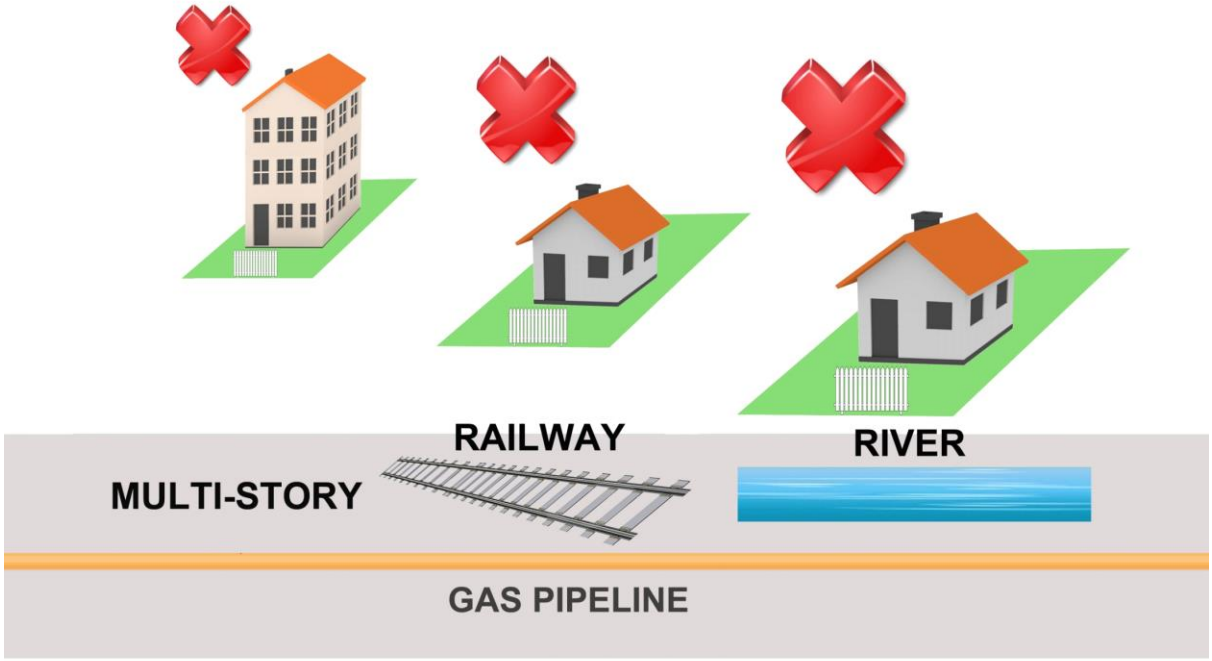
- it is part of a Domestic Development or Non-domestic Development;

- it is part of a multi storey building or the gas meter is to be sited at high level (in excess of 3m); or

- an easement and/or a wayleave agreement is required to install gas apparatus to supply gas to the property. In such an instance, obtaining the necessary easement and/or wayleave agreement is the responsibility of the property owner requesting the connection and any associated costs will be borne by the property owner or Licensed Gas Supplier.

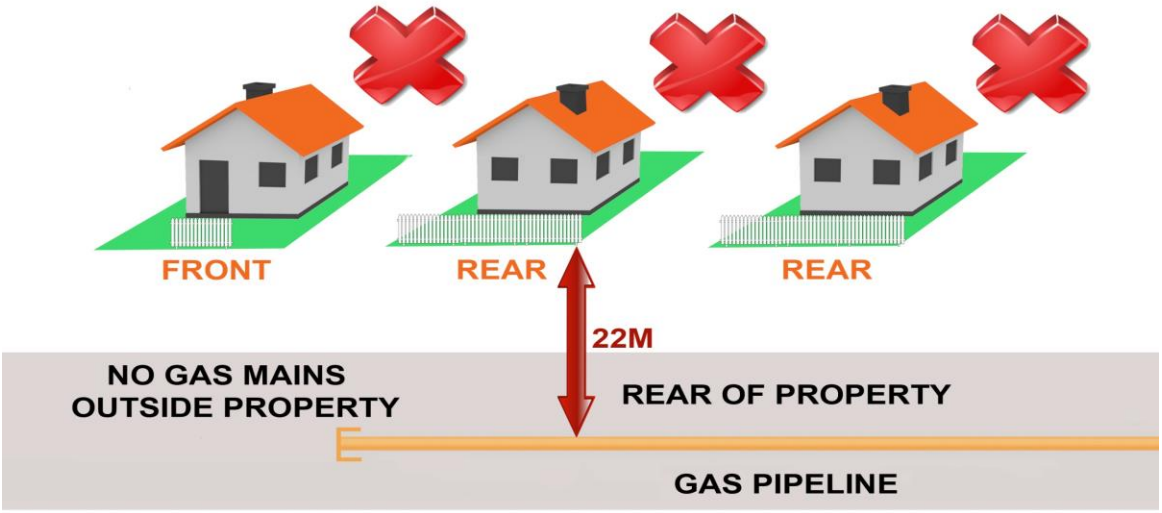
Please see below for some examples:

NOT READILY CONNECTABLE

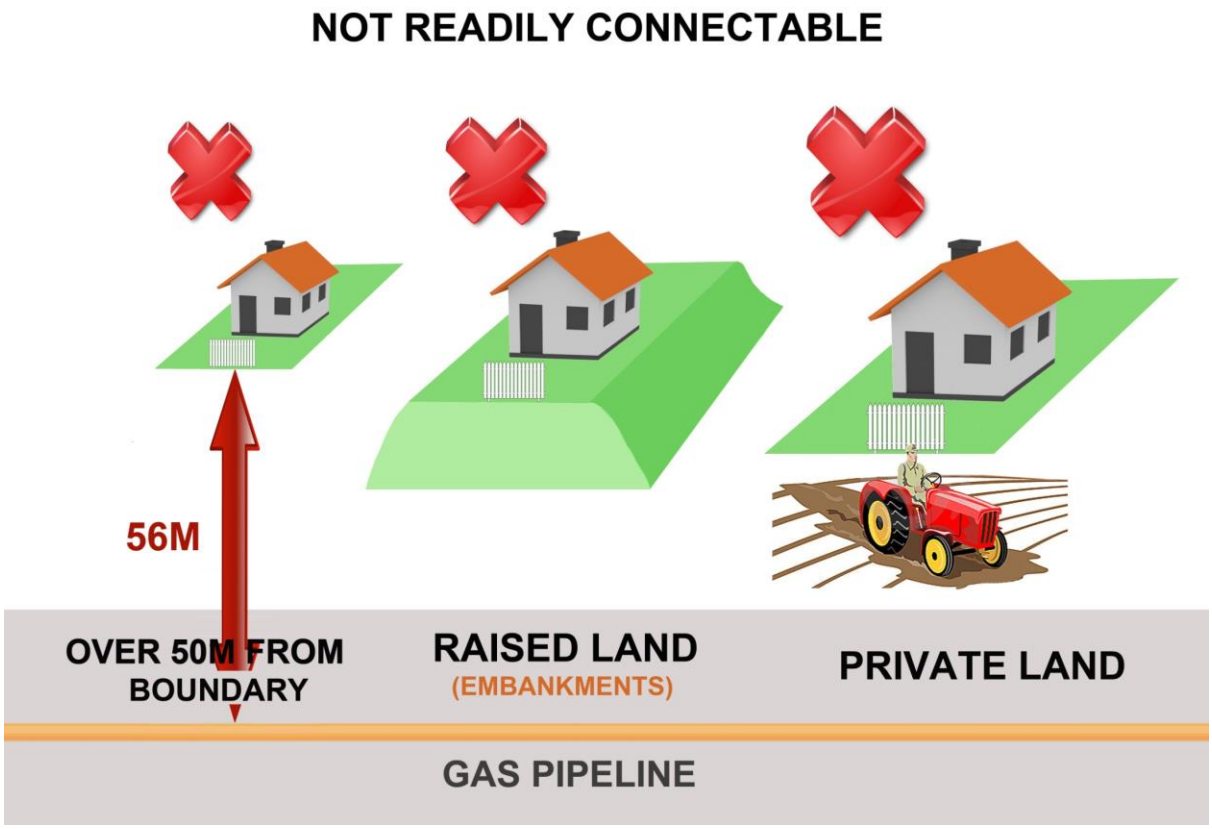


The three examples illustrated above require an engineering site visit to determine if the property is connectable and the costs associated with the service and meter installation.

NOT READILY CONNECTABLE



The three examples above are not connectable under the firmus energy connection policy. Firmus energy does not connect properties to the rear. Please note that firmus energy is unable to connect a Property to the Network from the rear of the Property. This is because, in accordance with the IGEM/TD4 Gas Services Standard, under no circumstances should a meter box be positioned behind a locked gate, hidden from view or not accessible by an engineer when required. This is an important safety consideration which is in turn adopted firmus energy in its Operations Policy. Firmus energy will work together with potential customers to find an alternative connection point.



The 3 examples above are not readily connectable:

- The first illustration details a 56 metre service and the front curtilage or boundary is not within 50 metres of a suitable distribution main located at the front of the property at the same postal address.

- The second illustration details raised land. This scenario requires an engineering site visit to determine whether the property is connectable. If connectable an individual engineering quotation for the costs to complete a service and fit the meter would be required.

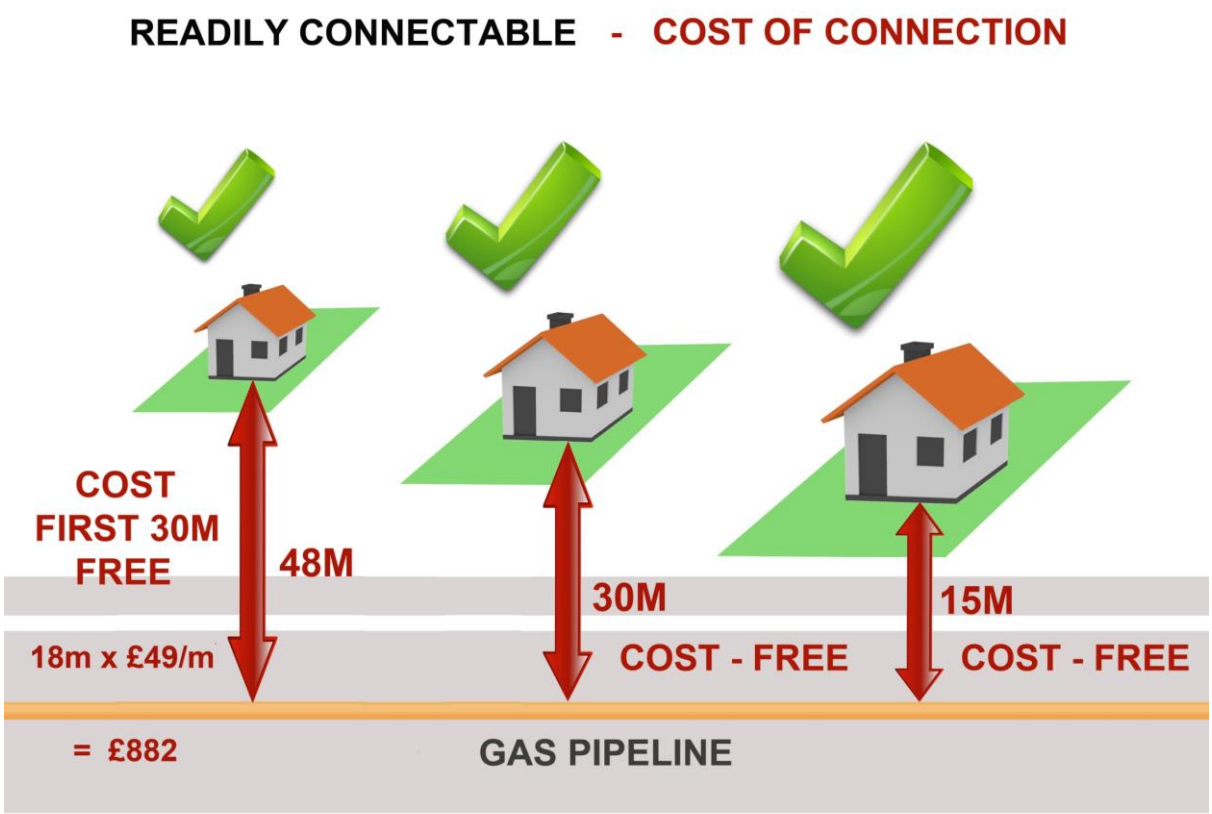
- The third illustration details a private land crossing. This scenario requires an easement and/or a wayleave agreement to install gas apparatus to supply gas to the property as well as an engineering site visit to confirm whether the property is connectable.

Costs of Connection

As provided in clause 5.10 of this Policy:

- charges for connection are based on the actual costs of carrying out the work based on firmus energy's agreed schedule of rates for construction works. These rates have been established to achieve best value for money through an OJEU[17] tendering process; and

- these actual costs will be adjusted for regulatory allowance in accordance with the GD14 determination and the rates established therein by the UR. Details of such allowances, where applicable, are shown in Schedule 4 under the heading "Mains" where provision of a suitable distribution pipeline at the property is required (i.e. provision of a live gas main at the property) and under the heading "Connections" for provision of the complete service connection and the provision of a meter installation. From time to time firmus energy may provide additional allowances where there are operational benefits or where development of the system is accelerated as a result.

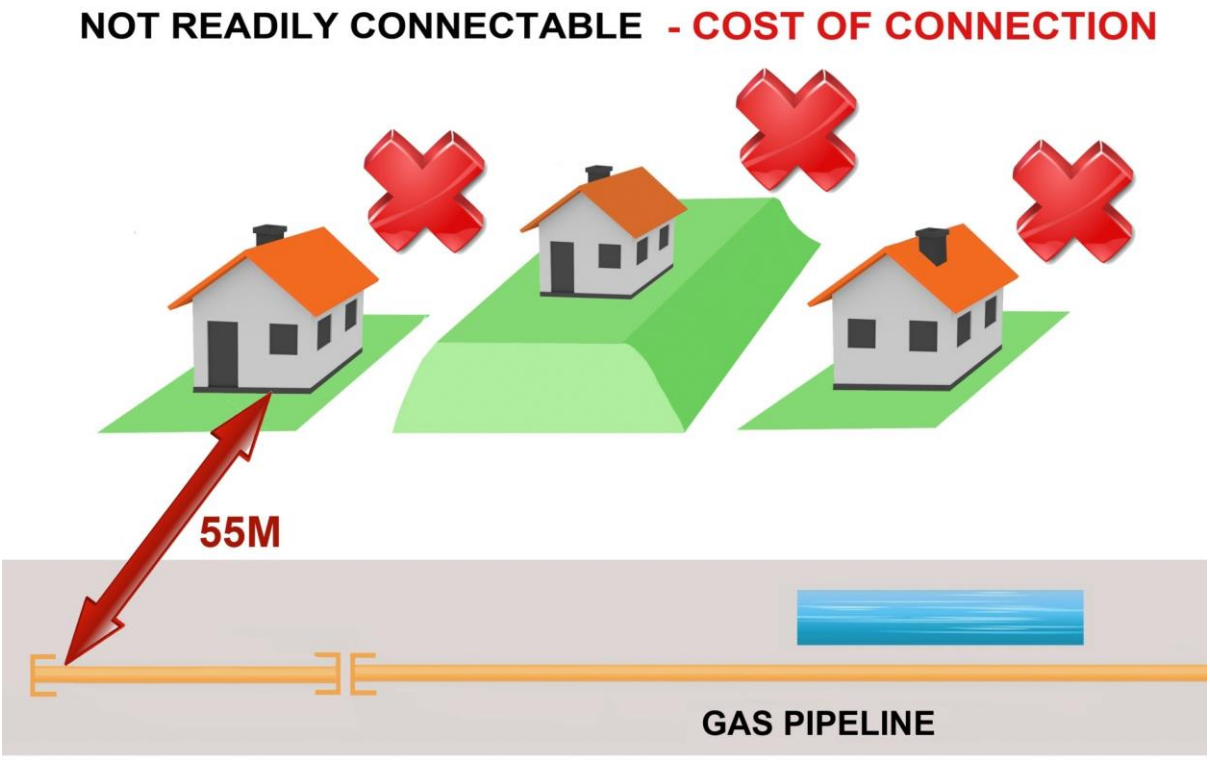


The three examples above are readily connectable:

- The first illustration details a 48 metre service. The front curtilage or boundary is within 50 metres of a suitable distribution main located at the front of the property at the same postal address. The first 30 metres of a domestic service connection (peak flow less than 6 scmh) and the provision of a low or medium pressure meter are free of charge. Where a domestic service connection is in excess of 30 metres in length, a rate per linear metre will be charged for each metre in excess of the first 30 metres (i.e. 18 x £49 = £882 chargeable to the customer (Please note actual rate is £49.51 per metre and the cost of £49 was used for illustrative purposes only).

- The second illustration details a 30 metre domestic service connection (peak flow less than 6 scmh). The provision of a low or medium pressure meter is free of charge.

- The third illustration details a 15 metre domestic service connection (peak flow less than 6 scmh). The provision of a low or medium pressure meter is free of charge.



The 3 examples shown above are not readily connectable:

- The first illustration details a 55 metre service. The front curtilage or boundary is not within 50 metres of a suitable distribution main located at the front of the property at the same postal address and requires a network extension. The customer will be quoted for the network extension and any additional meterage to complete a service.

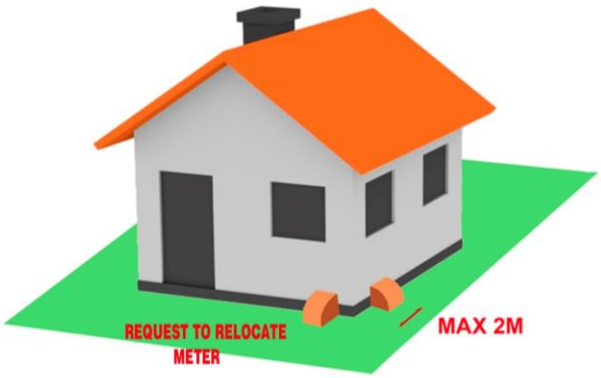
- The second illustration details raised land. This scenario requires an engineering site visit to determine if constructable. If connectable, this would then require an engineering quotation for the costs to complete a service and fit a meter.

- The third illustration details a river / water crossing. This scenario requires an engineering site visit to determine if constructable. If connectable, this would then require an engineering quotation for the costs to complete a service and fit meter.

Meter Positions

Firmus energy permits a meter box to be installed a maximum of 2 metres down a gable wall (subject to gas regulations). If the meter position is not achievable, then a engineering site visits is required to establish a suitable alternative position.

Alteration Requests



If firmus energy receives an alteration request to any service or meter, the costs for such alternation will be charged to the customer, e.g. to relocate the existing meter to the front elevation 0 to 5 metres from the original location, the costs chargeable to the customer would £1,200.27 (excluding downstream pipework).