

Unlocking the power of flexibility

Question and Answer session

Electricity Futures Conference, October 2025

Question	Answer
Can you share any lessons learned from predicting take-up of flexibility services? It must be difficult to plan quantities given that it's so new	Distribution flexibility markets in the UK are still in development and to date we've not yet seen full liquidity across all of our requirements. However we can predict the level of response we expect reasonably well. We base this on historic response and model a level of market growth by factoring in growth predictions for things like EV and heat pump take up. We also have the visibility of assets already registered in our Market Gateway. We encourage flexibility providers to register all assets with us when possible, not just those that are sited within an existing flex location, this is very helpful for our planning.
How are flexible users demand managed to match the supply? Are there scenarios that more flex users aren't able to be supplied by renewables and so fossil fuel energy generators are brought in to provide the demand?	The current use case for Distribution flexibility markets is not to balance demand with supply, this is done at a national level by NESO. We are using distribution flexibility to support locations on the network where our equipment does not have the capacity to meet the volume of demand from consumers.
What's the best dataset to find out if a postcode is in one of your constraint managed zones?	This information is available on our Market Gateway platform - https://marketgateway.nationalgrid.co.uk/flexibility-map-landing

Is there a dataset that shows this in the connected data portal instead (if i want to see multiple postcodes rather than manually putting it in one by one)?

Our postcode data set can be accessed on our data portal here;
<https://connecteddata.nationalgrid.co.uk/dataset/flexibility-forecasts>

Is there a piece of equipment that participants in flexibility need to fit to their equipment for 'turn down' - could you provide a rough cost figure for this please?

Generally, there isn't a specific piece of equipment needed.

For domestic customers, turn down participation is usually through their supplier or installer. It would be inefficient/not cost effective for domestic customers to come directly to us.

This is the same for industrial and commercial customers. If we have evidence of metering then we can use that in conjunction with a calculated baseline to determine the level of response that's been delivered.

What is the role of the energy supplier in the flexibility contract that the DSO has with the flexible asset owner? Do they have any legal or financial interest?

We procure flexibility on an equal basis across all suppliers and providers – we don't pay different fees for flexibility. This includes to aggregators who represent domestic customers.

It's not a one-size-fits-all approach for how suppliers pass the benefits of the flexibility market onto their customers. This is contained in their contractual terms.

What is the smallest generational supply to be added to the pool of flexibility providers?

We don't impose a limit for participation.

In our system, we see assets as small as 1kw participating, usually as part of a group of assets that can deliver an instructed service together.

How long will the provision of flexibility services continue? Can we expect it to last for, say, 10 or 20 years? In other words, is there a possibility that it could suddenly become unnecessary if the distribution network is reinforced?

Our current use case for flexibility is as a bridge to network reinforcement.

We know that the network will get reinforced, and we forecast for flexibility up until that point and can be very clear about those timelines.

Most of our forecasts are at least 4 – 6 years ahead, although there are some examples where the need for reinforcement has been deferred and we're seeing flexibility doing its job well.

Even if this initial use case is no longer needed, other use cases may arise where flexibility has a role to play

Do your baselines assume EVs (or other domestic assets) are on a TOUT?

Yes. We do factor in a level of Time Of Use Tariff within the consumer behaviour profiles that we use to inform our baseline profiles

How do the GWh of flex break down between industrial and domestic customers?

For the 2024/25 period we reported 3GWh of flexibility instructed to deliver flexibility. Of this 2.3GWh came from domestic demand response and the remaining 0.7GWh came from Industrial and Commercial assets.

Would consumers need half hourly meters?

Consumers could just use smart metering. As long as suppliers are able to share the data with us (half hourly or minute by minute), that's sufficient for the consumers to benefit from being part of the flexibility market.

If needed, we can accept different granularities to ensure that the maximum number of people benefit from flexibility services.
