

Miss K J Gomersal LLB | Senior Coroner | Cumbria
Fairfield,
Station Road,
Cockermouth,
Cumbria,
CA13 9PT

Wednesday, 11 February 2026

Dear Miss Gomersal,

[REDACTED]

This letter is the response from Energy Networks Association ('ENA') to your Regulation 28: *Report to prevent future deaths*, dated 19th December 2025 into the death of Henry John Oates.

We are deeply saddened by the tragic death of Mr Oates and want to express our deepest sympathies and extend our condolences to his family and friends.

ENA represents the companies which operate the electricity networks in the UK and Ireland. We support our members to meet the challenge of delivering electricity to communities across the UK and Ireland safely, sustainably, and reliably and share best practice. Our members' duties are enshrined in many legislative provisions and in regulatory licence conditions issued by Ofgem, the industry regulator.

As you have stated, ENA was not an Interested Person (and did not participate in any way) in the inquest which you held in this case, nonetheless we recognise the concerns you have identified and aim to facilitate a pathway for our member companies to further consider and implement proactive measures.

I would like to take the opportunity to confirm that the essential elements related to the death of Mr Oates have already been shared with member companies through our member forums.

ENA has carefully considered the concerns set out in your *Report to prevent future deaths* and wishes to outline the actions being taken by ENA to reduce the likelihood of similar events occurring in the future. Following the immediate actions undertaken by Scottish Power Electricity North West (SP ENW) and items as referenced in your report, ENA has convened member company representatives to consider the learnings from this case and determine how existing arrangements can or should be improved.

The actions we have taken and intend to take include the following:

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Objective 1: Review and improve where necessary, Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) industry standards and public safety risk assessment

ENA and its members will:

- Review and update if deemed necessary, the relevant ENA SHE Standards (including Standard 06 - Post Trip Manual Reclosing of High Voltage Electrical Distribution Circuits & Standard 09 - Distribution Network Operator Response to Reports of Low or Grounded Overhead Lines) in consideration of the information shared from this incident.
- Develop supplementary guidance to address the risk relating to overhead lines that have automatically reclosed where a low hanging conductor may exist but has not been reported or been detected. The guidance will establish a risk assessment criteria for member companies to consider, informed by industry best known and available practices. This should inform and strengthen existing ways of working and support appropriate interventions such as risk-targeted inspections or patrols, asset location data, enhanced monitoring, and other appropriate or technical solutions to proportionately mitigate foreseeable risk.

ENA will oversee delivery of these objectives and ensure they are completed no later than September 2026.

This additional guidance will support ENA member companies in reviewing and updating their own individual associated public safety risk assessments, which each company has committed to undertake and continue to review periodically.

Objective 2: Review and improve engineering evidence, asset risk awareness and promote risk-based investment

ENA and its members will also:

- Develop an Engineering Technical Report (ETR) to collate and document engineering evidence on asset failure modes relevant to this incident, consolidating findings from SP ENW and concerns identified in your report, and incorporate learning from wider industry experiences. It will also capture and review other relevant or emerging failure mechanisms, providing a reference resource for ENA member companies.

The ETR will provide a clear evidence base to support ENA member companies in undertaking their own risk-based assessments and determining proportionate interventions or investment actions required, aligned to their specific asset populations and public safety risk profiles.

The ENA will oversee delivery of these objectives and ensure they are completed no later than September 2026.

Broader objectives

ENA will continue to promote improvements in engineering standards and raise awareness of available and emerging innovative monitoring and detection technologies, including those referenced in your report. ENA member companies will assess the effectiveness of these solutions and share current and emerging good

practice to support assessment of asset risk exposure, development of maintenance strategies, investment planning, price control submissions, and engagement with Ofgem. Where appropriate, such technologies will be promoted through ENA's Smarter Networks Portal or similar mechanisms to support planned, risk-based investment in potential innovative monitoring and detection solutions.

ENA will also continue to review and, where necessary, update existing ENA Engineering, SHE documentation and general advice to reflect newly identified or emerging failure mechanisms.

Summary

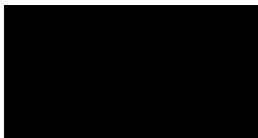
Together, the two objectives will deliver clear, practical industry guidance to support the continuous improvement of health and safety risk assessment and interventions associated with low hanging overhead line conductors, while also providing an evidence-based framework to support informed, risk-based asset management and investment decisions by individual member companies.

I can confirm that once the above objectives as outlined are completed, ENA will produce a summary briefing for our members. The briefing will be shared with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to support the dialogue ENA and member companies have already started with them.

I trust that the information and response provided above will help to discharge our responsibilities in this matter.

The industry regrets any loss of life related to our activities or infrastructure and takes our duties to minimise these risks very seriously.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive