

	<p>REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS</p> <p>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [REDACTED] Executive Relations Manager, npower 2. [REDACTED] Chief Executive, Energy UK 3. [REDACTED] Head of Consumer Affairs, Ofgem
1	<p>I am Mrs Lydia Brown, Assistant Coroner for the Coroner area of Leicester City and South Leicestershire</p>
2	<p>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</p> <p>I make this report under paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.</p>
3	<p>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST</p> <p>On the 31 January 2013 I commenced an investigation into the death of Michael Joseph Hirrell that was concluded at the end of the inquest on 23 September 2013. The conclusion of the inquest was</p> <p>'Mr Hirrell died from carbon monoxide poisoning at some time between 18-25 January 2013 at his home address [REDACTED] Cross Street Leicester. The lethal fumes arose from a generator he had borrowed as his electricity supply had been cut off due to an unpaid commercial bill to which he was not a party'.</p> <p>The Cause of death was:</p> <p>1a Carbon monoxide poisoning.</p>
4	<p>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</p> <p>Mr Hirrell died between 18 – 25 January 2013 from carbon monoxide poisoning, the fumes arising from the use of a generator he had borrowed to use in his domestic residence. On 17th January the electricity supply to his home, [REDACTED] Cross Street Leicester, had been disconnected by npower as he shared this supply with a commercial property next door, 5 Cross Street, and there was an unpaid commercial debt.</p>
5	<p><u>CORONER'S CONCERNS</u></p> <p>During the course of the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances it is my statutory duty to report to you.</p> <p>The MATTERS OF CONCERN are as follows. –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Hirrell's presence was recognised by npower representatives before the power supply was disconnected, and he was noted to look unwell, be in receipt of welfare benefits, have no credit on his mobile telephone and to have no gas supply (and therefore no source of heat or light to his home). Notwithstanding this, he was not recognised to be a "vulnerable person". 2. Although all 3 personnel present on the morning (Warrant Officer, locksmith and meter engineer) had concerns regarding Mr Hirrell, no one felt empowered to halt the disconnection, and despite efforts by the Warrant Officer, customer services at npower were unable to assist with his predicament.

	<p>3. Mr Hirrell was not afforded customer protection under the license agreement, or under the Energy UK Safety Net as a vulnerable person, which he clearly and unequivocally was.</p> <p>4. Ofgem were unaware of this death until advised of the circumstances by this office; no contact has been made directly with Energy UK but npower were unable to offer any reassurances at inquest hearing that the circumstances of this tragic death were reported back either in routine audit feedback, or as a special case, given the failings of the system for consumer protection.</p> <p>5. Steps taken by npower since Mr Hirrell's death was brought to their attention are (while welcome) not permanent, nor industry wide, and therefore future deaths may occur if matters are not resolved to introduce a more robust form of consumer protection.</p>
6	<p>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</p> <p>In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe your organisation has the power to take such action.</p>
7	<p>YOUR RESPONSE</p> <p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by the 28th November 2013. I, the coroner, may extend the period.</p> <p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.</p>
8	<p>COPIES and PUBLICATION</p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to the following Interested Persons:</p> <p>Evershed Solicitors LLP (representing Npower)</p> <p>The Family of Mr Hirrell</p> <p>I am also sending a copy to Carbon Monoxide Awareness as I consider they may find it useful.</p> <p>I am also under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.</p> <p>The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who he believes may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.</p>
9	<p>Date: 1 October 2013 Mrs Lydia Brown Assistant Coroner Leicester City and South Leicestershire</p>