Connections Reform:
Customer Guidance Essentials

Updated: 11 August 2025 following announcement of
NESO Connections Reform Evidence Submission Window Closure

15 August 2025: Clarification added on authorised signatures and G1 to G2 validation process

8 September 2025: Clarification added on complaints process

NESO
National Energy System Operator

What this guide covers

As we help you navigate the evidence submission process, we recognise that guidance is being updated frequently in response to customer queries. We understand this can feel overwhelming, especially for those who do not work on connections day to day.

We do not want to add unnecessary complexity. However, we do want to respond to your requests for additional information and bring clarity to support your connections reform journey.

This document was last updated on Monday 11 August 2025, coinciding with our announcement that the evidence window will close on Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 23:59.

This document outlines:

- A statement from NESO announcing the date for the evidence window closure.
- Details of a new process for customers who submitted evidence prior to 23:59 on Monday 11 August 2025 to review and validate their evidence submission.
- An update on the initial checks we will perform on evidence and details of the resubmission process following initial checks.
- A new expedited complaints process.
- Connections Reform timelines.
- The top 10 stumbling blocks we are seeing so far, and how to navigate them.
- A full list of the guidance documents available to help you with your submission.

For background on Connections Reform, please visit the About Connections Reform webpage.

An update from Kayte O’Neill

Thank you for standing with us, your persistence and feedback have been invaluable, and we want to acknowledge the effort you’ve made to stay engaged and keep moving forward. We’re truly sorry for the disruption and the impact it’s had on your confidence in the system.

We’ve listened carefully to your feedback and worked hard to respond. You asked for clearer guidance, better functionality, and stronger support and we’ve acted. Thanks to your feedback and improvements in the portal functionality, last week we reached around 1,000 submissions from across a range of technology types.

Therefore, today we are issuing 10 working days’ notice that the NESO Connections Reform window will close on **Tuesday 26 August at 23:59**. (Please note that Monday 25 August 2025 is a bank holiday in England and Wales and is classed as a non-working day for all customers for the purposes of this announcement).

Our shared objective is to ensure the connections queue is reordered fairly and efficiently. It is essential that projects can submit their application before the evidence submission window closes.

If you have yet to submit, we want to reassure you: **our evidence collection process will not be the reason any project is unsuccessful.**

To make the process as simple as possible, we've taken the following steps:

Commitment to every submission: We have deployed significant additional customer support staff to provide hands-on guidance for customers through the submission process. If you get stuck, we will do whatever it takes to get you through to submission – no application will be left stranded.

New validation process: Customers who have already submitted can review and amend their submission before the window closes through our new validation process. You can read more about the process in this Connections Reform Essentials document.

Dedicated support: Our query function continues to be accessible, and as we handle increasingly complex submissions, you can expect dedicated and proactive support from our team. We are committed to guiding everyone through the process, ensuring no one is left behind.

Advance notice for resubmission: We will give all customers five working days' notice before we start communicating the results of initial checks. Customers will have four clear working days to resubmit any evidence following initial check failure.

New remediation route for outcome of initial checks: We're introducing a new expedited process that allows customers to raise formal complaints following the results of initial checks – ensuring any issues are promptly and efficiently resolved.

Please refer to our guidance to help you through the submissions. This updated **'Connections Reform Essentials' document** is available to assist and support you through the process.

If you've already submitted, thank you. If you have not yet started, please start now, as early submission allows us to provide the best possible assistance and promptly address any issues. Your trust matters and we remain fully committed to supporting every customer throughout the entire submission process.

Evidence gathering by Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) will continue until the same date. If you are submitting evidence to your DNO, the earlier you do this, the more they can support you with this process.

These reforms are vital. They will unlock faster connections for clean energy projects, create a better environment for investment, and help unlock the £40 billion annual opportunity in clean power and infrastructure. Maintaining momentum is therefore essential for investor certainty, and for the UK economy; accordingly, we will be moving at pace to ensure that we can get the first batch of offers out as soon as possible.

We know customers have questions on the longer-term timeline of Reform. Once the evidence window closes, we will communicate a revised overall plan. We know this hasn't been easy.

But we are here, ready to help and we will do whatever it takes to get you through. Your trust matters, and we are committed to earning it every step of the way.

Please continue to use the portal or email **box.connectionsreform@neso.energy** for any queries. For more complex submissions, our team will proactively contact you by phone when necessary. We're also keeping our website updated with the latest materials to help you navigate the process.

Kayte O'Neil, Chief Operating Officer

Connections reform process

From submission of readiness declaration to initial checks

1. **00:01 Tuesday 12 August - 23:59 Tuesday 26 August** — **Proactive submission support** for customers who have not yet submitted
2. **00:01 Tuesday 12 August - 23:59 Tuesday 26 August** — **Evidence Validation process** for customers who submitted evidence before 23:59 Monday 11 August
3. **Initial checks for all customers**
4. **Evidence resubmission for all customers who fail initial checks**
5. **Review of new evidence for intial check**
6. **Faster formal complaints option**

Submissions must be validated by 23:59 Tuesday 26 August. We encourage customers to complete this process early so we can best support you.

Note: this functionality should not be used by anyone submitting after 23:59 Monday 11 August

Validation process

Thanks to everyone who has submitted their evidence so far. Since Tuesday 8 July 2025, we've received almost 1,000 submissions to the Connections Portal (more than 50% of what we are expecting), covering a wide mix of technologies. We know some customers used different workarounds to submit their evidence via the Portal due to functionality issues and data mismatches. We have committed that anyone who submitted early will have the opportunity to check, confirm and change their submission.

From Tuesday 12 August 2025, a new **validation process** will be open for the customers who submitted prior to 23:59 on Monday 11 August 2025.

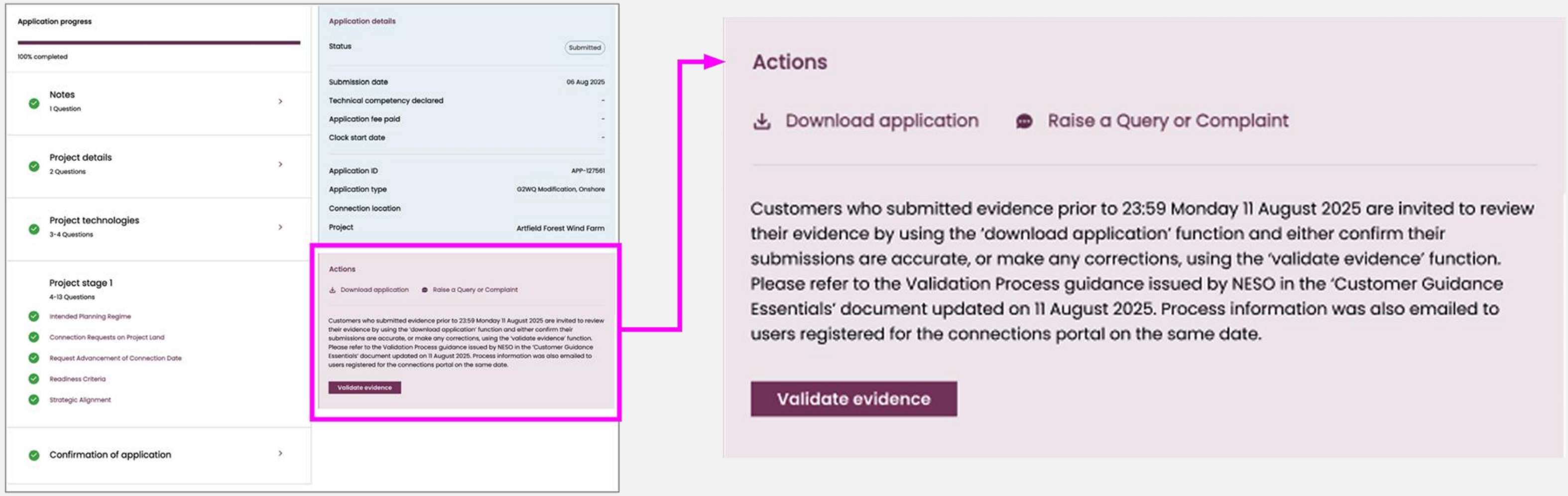
Only customers who submitted prior to 23:59 on Monday 11 August 2025 are eligible to validate their evidence.

This is to ensure the same, fair, process is afforded to those submitting later. Those who have not yet submitted should take care not to submit until they are confident of their answers. Please note that when you submit the application or validation, this will be the final submission opportunity.

In addition, all customers regardless of when they submit, will have the opportunity to download their submission in a PDF form for their records.

If you wish to move a Gate 1 application to a Gate 2 applications, please email box.connectionsreform@neso.energy with "validation" in the subject header. Include your company name and project reference in the message and a short note explaining that you wish you retract your G1 request and submit evidence for G2.

Validation process	
Contact	Starting on Monday 11 August 2025, we will contact all customers with information about the validation process. Those customers who submitted evidence between 00:01 on Tuesday 8 July 2025 and 23:59 on Monday 11 August 2025 will be welcome to participate in the validation process.
Download	Customers will be invited to download their evidence submission.



Verify	Customers are encouraged to carefully review their submission for accuracy. If, when you reflect on changes to the portal, you want to change your submission due to a workaround you used when submitting, you are now invited to do so. You may find it useful to check the Portal changes list, as this can help you in determining whether any submission amendments are needed. **Submissions must be validated by 23:59 Tuesday 26 August.** We encourage customers to complete this process early so we can best support you.
Confirm	If customers are satisfied with their application, they should use the validation button on the Portal (see screenshot below) to confirm they have no changes by using the text box. 

Correct	Customers must notify us of any amendments they wish to make to their submission. If customers want to make changes to their original application and know what new or additional evidence is required, they should inform us what they are changing in the 'validate evidence' text box and complete the designated form and download the final content in PDF format. This should then be uploaded to the 'evidence validation' section of the Portal (see screenshot above), along with any supporting documents (accepted formats: GeoJSON, PNG, or PDF). A authorised signature is also required. Please use the template text below, saved as a PDF of a Word document, to accompany the signature. 1 [authorised signature...] confirm we have reviewed and, with the updated evidence, certify we have validated our information submitted as part of the connections reform process. *[Signature]* *[Name] [Position] [Company] [Date]* We recognise that some customers may want to make a change to their original application but may be uncertain about how to do so or what additional evidence is required. This may be due to recent updates to the Portal that have affected the type of evidence originally provided.

	If this applies to you, please use the 'evidence validation' function (see screenshot above) to outline the nature of the changes you intend to make. A member of our team will then contact you to provide tailored support. Our triage team is available to ensure you are directed to the appropriate assistance. Please note we can only support you with the process and cannot advise you on your readiness or strategic alignment approach.
No action	If a customer chooses not to validate their evidence before 23:59 on Tuesday 26 August 2025, we will proceed to check previously submitted evidence.
Important note	Validation is intended as a single-use function. Please submit all your validation edit requests at the same time. When you provide your authorised signature for your validated evidence, we will accept your changes as your final submission. For assurance, we will confirm that the changes have been made in line with your instructions before we move to initial checks

Checks process update

We are currently checking that we've received valid evidence from customers. These are basic checks to make sure we have what we need for the next stage, when we will carry out more detailed checks to confirm which projects are 'ready' and 'strategically aligned'.

The plans for checks on customers evidence have not changed. However, we have noticed that some customers are making avoidable mistakes when submitting evidence that will cause them to fail certain checks. For instance, the over-redaction of documents. We urge all customers to read the Evidence Submission Handbook which outlines what evidence to submit.

Due to the timeline changes in the Connections Reform process, customers are understandably concerned about when they will be contacted about the results of initial checks and when they will have to respond by.

We will give **five working days' notice** before we begin the first communication to customers about the results of initial checks. Some customers may hear as soon as the five days' notice passes, and some may hear a little later. Customers who have passed initial checks will be notified and automatically moved to the next phase of the process with no further action needed.

If the result of the initial checking process is that a customer has failed any initial checks, the following process will begin:

1. **Stage 1:** Customers will have four clear working days from notification to resubmit evidence relating to the checks using the Portal. If they have any questions *during* those four days, we encourage them to contact us straight away. To support clarity, we've included a query function in the resubmission section of the portal. Customers will see this when invited to resubmit. The function includes a character limit to help keep queries focused and efficient, ensuring we can respond promptly and accurately.
2. **Stage 2:** Once we receive resubmission, we will respond to customers within four working days with a final decision.
3. **Stage 3:** If customers disagree, they will have the opportunity to participate in our new expedited complaints process, outlined on the next page.

Definition of "clear working day"

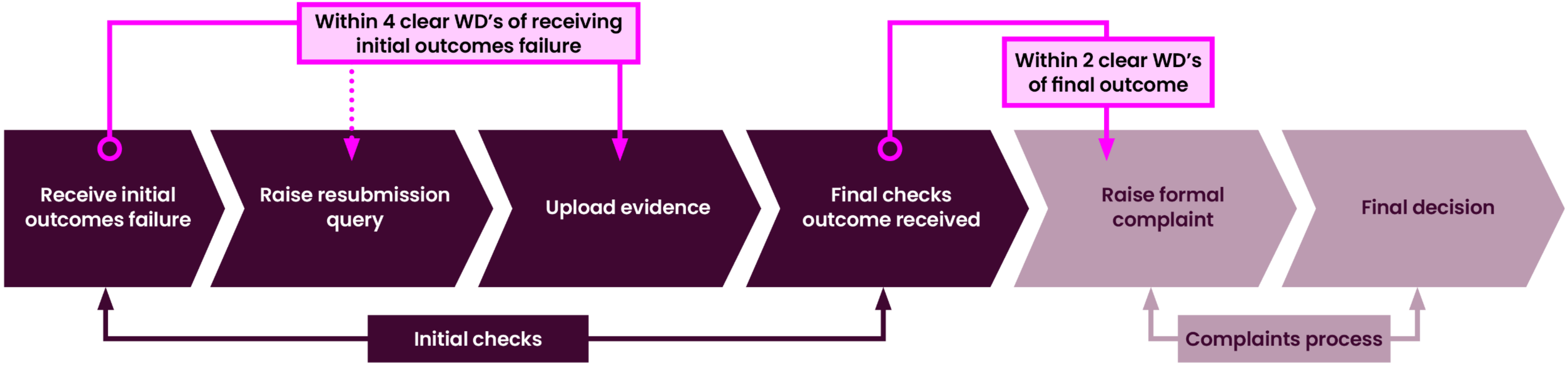
A clear working day means that no matter the time we email you, the 'clock' starts at 00:01 the next working day.

So, if we email you on Friday at 11am about the results of your checks, your four working days start on Monday at 00:01 and finish on Thursday at 23:59.

Please note: Monday 25 August 2025 is classed as a non-working day for all customers for the purposes of this announcement.

Faster complaints process

To support customers, we have introduced a new faster complaints procedure enabling customers to raise a complaint, or disagreement about the final outcome of initial checks. This faster process allows us to review complaints efficiently, ensuring projects with valid appeals can re-enter the Connections Reform process (also known as the Gate 2 to Whole Queue or GT2WQ process).



A route back into the GT2WQ process: a new complaints approach for faster response.

This new process gives customers a formal route to raise concerns, specifically the decisions made after initial checks. Note, it does not cover broader reform policy or code complaints.

Customers can raise a formal complaint only after receiving their final outcome from the initial checks. If you believe we have made an error in how the process was administered, you can submit a complaint using a standard form, which will be provided once the final decision is shared. We have chosen to introduce this process as an additional measure to support customers who still feel something isn't right, even after the checks. This will ensure that we can get you back into the process quickly if a complaint is upheld.

Customers will have **two clear working days'** (see page 13 for definition) to raise a complaint. We know the timeline might feel condensed, but if customers wait longer than two days, we may not be able to get them back into the reform process, even if the complaint is upheld. Acting quickly gives us the best chance to resolve things if something has gone wrong.

If a customer raises a complaint within the two working days of receiving the final initial checks outcome, we will be able to review it quickly. If the complaint is upheld, we will place customers back into the G2TWQ process. If it is not upheld, they will exit the process and can explore other industry routes, such as raising a dispute through the **Connection and Use of System Code** (CUSC), or other formal channels. Please note, these processes can be lengthy and make timely re-entry into the GT2WQ process very unlikely. It is therefore essential that complaints are raised within the two-day window.

How to make a complaint

When customers are informed of the final decision of their initial checks, projects that have failed will be given a complaints pro forma to return to us. We will also publish this information on our website.

How Complaints Are Reviewed

1. Formal complaint raised
2. Complaint reviewed
3. Final decision issued

Each complaint is reviewed by an impartial case handler with no prior involvement in the checks process for the related project. Along with GT2WQ experts, they will assess the complaint using the customer's existing audit trail and any new information provided. If NESO is found to have made an error, the customer will continue to participate in the G2TWQ process (i.e. progress to queue formation and detailed checks).

Once the team reaches a final decision, they will promptly communicate the outcome to customers, along with a clear explanation of the reasoning behind it.

Further escalation

We understand that some customers may disagree with NESO's final decision on initial check complaints.

While other industry complaints routes, like Connection and Use of System Code (CUSC) exist, these processes can be lengthy and make timely re-entry into the GT2WQ process very unlikely. To address this, we have introduced the new, faster complaints process.

Connections Reform timelines

Thank you for standing with us, we know this process has tested patience, stretched resources, and caused real frustration. Throughout, your hard work and feedback have been invaluable. We have listened to you and as a result, extended the evidence submission window. This extension will have a knock-on impact on the overall timeline of connections reform.

Completing this initial phase of reform is crucial to the success of Great Britain's (GB') energy infrastructure. Along with our network partners we are working hard to keep the delay to a minimum.

Through our daily webinars and regular trade association meetings we have heard how important it is for customers to have certainty around the timelines, including when offers will be sent out, when new demand and generation can apply following the pause of applications earlier this year, and when the next window will open.

Given the importance of this information, we cannot rush the timeline assessment process. Therefore, we aim to publish new timelines as soon as possible. This will be after the evidence submission window has closed.

Top 10 stumbling blocks:

	Stumbling Block	Guidance
1	Do all projects need to request advancement?	No. The decision to request advancement is project-specific. Advancement is only mandatory if your project has a contracted connection date of 2036 or later and is applying under Strategic Alignment Criteria b) – in scope of Clean Power 2030.
2	I have a demand project, and the portal shows Installed Capacity as '0 MW'. Does this need to be fixed?	No. For demand projects, Installed Capacity is automatically set to 0 MW. NESO will use the Installed Capacity (MW) figure provided in your Original Red Line Boundary (ORLB) submission instead.
3	My company registration number in the Portal is incorrect.	If the incorrect number shown is for a parent or subsidiary company that is still part of your business, your application remains valid. If the number is for an unrelated company, please contact us.
4	My pre-populated data is incorrect, so I can't move my submission forward.	Contact us as soon as possible. Please include screenshots and describe the issue clearly. The more detail you give, the quicker we can help.

5	I can't see my non-firm stages in the Portal. What should I do?	This is expected. Only firm or enduring non-firm stages need to be submitted. Use the Ctrl + F function in our FAQs to search for 'non-firm stages' for more information.
6	What are split offers, and do they apply to me?	Split offers don't currently apply to any projects. A small number of customers may be contacted about this in future. A split offer allows part of a project to be offered Gate 2 (Phase 2) and part Gate 1 if the MW total exceeds the permitted capacity. Use the Ctrl + F function in our FAQs to search for 'split offers' for more information.
7	I need to submit a Mod App. How do I do this?	A Mod App (Modification Application) is used to change a connection. You may need to do this as part of Connections Reform. See our Mod App guidance. The form may feel repetitive, but it uses much of the same information as your main application.
8	I'm submitting confidential files. Can I redact them?	Yes, but avoid over-redaction. Do not block out critical details we need to verify your submission.
9	I couldn't upload my M7 (Milestone 7) evidence.	This has now been fixed. As of 29 July M7 evidence can be uploaded in the correct section of the Portal.

10	I bought my project from another company. What should I do?	You must novate the project to your company (a legal ownership transfer via a sealed deed). Evidence can only be submitted by the contracted legal entity. Contact us with 'novation' in the subject line by. Previously, we asked all customers to notify us by Friday 8 August, as novations typically take around one week to process if completed promptly. However, should you inform us after this date, we will do everything we can to help.

Guidance documents

Document	What it includes	Who should read it
Evidence Submission Handbook and Addendum	A network-wide guide to connections reform evidence submission. **It steps through each part of the readiness declaration and outlines what you need to submit.** Based on customer feedback, the addendum provides further clarification and examples on topics including Land Routes, Installed Capacity and Hybrid Projects. Note: This document covers both NESO and DNO evidence submission, so does **not include guidance on the NESO Portal.**	All customers submitting evidence
Queue Management Guidance	Explains the Transmission **Queue Management** process, including the eight prescribed User **Progression Milestones** and the acceptable evidence required.	All customers requesting advancement

Letter of Authority and Acknowledgement Guidance	Provides the **Energy Density Table and supporting** information to help customers calculate the **minimum acreage** or seabed area (in KM^2) required for Gate 2 Readiness, and to complete the Letter of Authority or Letter of Acknowledgement for evidence submission.	All customers submitting evidence
FAQs	Regularly updated log of customer questions and our responses, covering both Portal and evidence submission queries. Portal information in these FAQs is tracked and updated on our Connections Reform Portal Updates webpage. Use Ctrl + F to search topics quickly.	Customers with additional questions

NESO

Faraday House

Warwick Technology Park

Gallows Hill

Warwick

CV34 6DA

United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales No. 11014226

neso.energy