

NESO - Investigation following alleged whistleblowing**Background**

Following alleged whistleblower contact received by the Shadow Secretary of State for Energy, The Right Honourable Claire Coutinho MP (**CC**), a letter dated 7th July 2026 was submitted to Information Commissioner, Paul Arnold MBE, requesting an investigation into allegations that:

1. NESO has been deliberately altering operational records to avoid public scrutiny under Freedom of Information (**FOI**) law.
2. During periods of system stress, Senior NESO managers have instructed operators in the Control Room to keep 'live documents' with no version history to ensure there is no audit trail or records of how key operational decisions are made and to ensure records are not preserved for the purposes of FOI.
3. The aforementioned approach was in effect during an incident on Tuesday 23rd June 2026 where system frequency became unstable, and fell below normal operating frequency limits set out in the Security and Quality Supply Standard (**SQSS**).
4. To avoid reputational damage, Corporate Affairs personnel interfered in operational decisions to urge that certain operational stabilising actions were not taken and that due to the use of 'live documents', these interventions were not recorded for public record.

A further letter repeating these allegations was received by NESO on 10 July 2026. In this letter, it is alleged that further whistleblowers have contacted the Shadow Secretary of State for Energy, The Right Honourable Claire Coutinho MP.

On 9 July 2026, Zoe Morrissey, NESO Director of Legal and Regulation, asked Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP (**ESI**) to conduct an independent investigation into the above allegations.

NESO is conducting a separate technical review into the events of w/c 22 June 2026. This will be conducted under a commission from Ofgem under NESO'S Electricity System Operator Licence Condition C7.5 (*Part B: Post-event and post-emergency analysis*). The terms of reference for this will be published separately.

Scope & Approach

ESI's work will involve:

- Interviews with Power System Managers (**PSMs**) and other Control Room personnel who worked on shift during the week commencing Monday 22 June 2026 until Friday 26 June 2026. The full list of relevant staff will be confirmed by the independent panel and may include roles not put forward by NESO. The interviews will seek to determine:
 - Details of policies and procedures pertaining to the operational decisions and record keeping within the Control Room generally;
 - How operational decisions were made, documented, version controlled and retained generally;
 - When those processes/recording of data policies and procedures were last changed and how, and if any of those changes were in response to FOI concerns;
 - Whether NESO reputational impact was as a matter of fact taken into account as a factor when the Control Room made its decisions during the week commencing 22 June 2026;
 - Whether they consider there was any pressure by management and/or Corporate Affairs during the week commencing 22 June 2026 not to document instances of system stress/security due to adverse reputational impacts that NESO could face.
 - Whether they consider that, in circumstances where they have concerns, they are clear and confident in how to raise and escalate those concerns.
- Interviews with the Corporate Affairs team who may engage with the Control Room to ascertain:
 - What their typical interactions are with the Control Room;
 - What engagement did they have with the Control Room during the week commencing 22 June 2026;
 - Whether they have any involvement in the decisions made in respect of FOI concerns relating to Control Room decision making.
- Review Control Room and Silver Command logs during the week commencing 22 June 2026.

- Review of standard operating procedures or equivalent for the Control Room relating to retention and documenting of actions that would have applied/been in force during the week commencing 22 June 2026. At the conclusion of its investigation, ESI will draft a report addressed to the Audit and Risk Committee. ESI will make recommendations based on its findings, in line with these Terms of Reference. Should wider issues be identified during the course of the investigation, which extend beyond the events of the week commencing 22 June 2026 (such as any wider whistleblowing concerns within the Control Room), then ESI will consider and recommend whether further investigation is required in respect of those issues, as part of this investigation or separately. Where relevant, ESI will include information in respect of those concerns within the report, maintaining the anonymity of the individual raising the concerns.
- There are a number of individuals who are critical to the investigation as having been directly involved operationally in the period concerned. They will be directly invited for interview. An additional invite will be made to any employee within NESO who has not already been invited for interview, to proactively come forward and contact ESI directly via an ESI dedicated fully confidential email box account and telephone line if they have any information pertinent to the two direct allegations made (interference in operation of the system and record keeping) relating to period concerned. Whether any additional staff come forward, and the details of those individuals not invited for an interview that come forward, will not be shared with NESO.

Oversight of the Investigation

ESI will work independently of NESO and report directly to an independent panel comprised of 3 members being Jayne Scott as Chair of NESO's Audit and Risk Committee & a Non-Executive Director of the NESO Board, Akshay Kaul, Ofgem Director General for Infrastructure and Siobhan Duffy from UKGI in her role as representative of the shareholder on the NESO Board (the **Panel**). Ms Scott will Chair the Panel. Paul Golby, Chair will receive regular updates of progress alongside the Panel unless the Panel, for good reason, advise otherwise.

ESI will carry out all interviews with no NESO attendees present to ensure relevant employees feel able to speak freely. These interviews will be carried out on a fully confidential basis and preserve the anonymity of all interviewees. Where necessary this may require interviews to be conducted online or at a third-party location. An interviewee may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or another NESO colleague if they so desire.

Any information provided to ESI that is not relevant to the allegations being assessed by ESI but is relevant to the wider security, operation or resilience of the energy system will be passed along directly to Ofgem.

For avoidance of doubt, we expect that no records relating to the matters outlined in this document are altered, deleted, overwritten or otherwise disposed of while the investigation is ongoing. For clarity, this extends to:

- Emails and attachments.
- Microsoft Teams chats, meeting records and files.
- SharePoint sites and live working documents, including version histories.
- Mobile phone records and messages where used for operational discussions.
- Call logs and recordings.
- Operational logs, incident records and control room documentation.
- Risk registers, internal reports and investigation material.
- Any other electronic or physical records relevant to the matters under investigation.

Privacy

All personal data will be handled in accordance with NESO's general privacy notice which can be found [here](#) and any other relevant NESO policies and procedures.