



### **NJUG Statement: ITV documentary**

*Attributable to Les Guest, Chief Executive Officer, National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG):*

Utilities carry out in excess of two million essential works each year, which are undertaken for four primary reasons – safety, security of supply, to connect or upgrade customers' supplies, or to divert apparatus to facilitate major transport or urban regeneration projects. Utility reinstatements adhere to the national specification agreed by the Department for Transport, NJUG, and local authority representatives. Failures that do occur are low in number when taken in proportion to the number of essential works utilities undertake; even so utilities continue to invest to find ways of reducing the number of failures by improved training and techniques.

Potholes occur for a variety of reasons including extremes of weather, road maintenance standards, high volumes of traffic, and the increase in heavy goods vehicles. NJUG believes that utilities, local authorities, and Government should focus on researching better materials and methods to prevent potholes occurring in the first place. In addition, the National Joint Utilities Group and its members have entered into a successful voluntary Code of Conduct with the Mayor of London, who has acknowledged the success achieved to date. This Code is now being rolled out across the UK and looks to share best practice by increasing the number of first-time reinstatements and inspections, as well as improving communications and advanced planning.

The number of works is unlikely to decrease due to: major gas and water mains replacement programmes designed to replace and update old and leaking infrastructures; the Government's drive for *Broadband Britain*; works to facilitate large scale infrastructure projects such as Crossrail and the Olympics; and massive road repair and maintenance programmes being undertaken by local authorities. Therefore all involved (Government, utilities, and local authorities) must work together to reduce the regrettable disruption that can sometimes arise as a result of these essential works.

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#### **Notes to Editors**

For further information about the National Joint Utilities Group please go to [www.njug.org.uk](http://www.njug.org.uk).

To arrange an interview please contact the NJUG press office at [pressoffice@njug.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@njug.org.uk) or telephone 020 7340 8737.

'Reinstatement' is the process of returning the road to the agreed national standard and specification.

#### **About The National Joint Utility Group (NJUG)**

NJUG is the only UK industry association representing utilities and their contractors on street works issues.

Our full members include the Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas companies), Water UK (representing water and waste water companies), National Grid, Openreach, and Virgin Media. Our Associate Members, all of whom are utility contractors, are Clancy Docwra, Skanska Utilities, Balfour Beatty, Morrison Utility Services, Morgan Est, NACAP, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise, Laing O'Rourke, AMEC and Stanmore Quality Surfacing. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents thirty-nine utility companies and thirteen utility contractors.

NJUG is the utility arm of the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee representing street works in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales known as HAUC (UK). Please see <http://www.hauc-uk.org.uk/> for further information.

NJUG's focus is on promoting best practice, safety, quality and co-ordination of works as well as representing utilities in discussions with Government and other stakeholders on street work issues.



Utilities undertake street works for four primary reasons – safety, security of supply, to connect or upgrade customers' supplies, or to divert apparatus to facilitate major transport or urban regeneration projects. Examples include Crossrail, the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, tram projects, or new urban and housing developments.

### **The NJUG National Code of Conduct for Street Works**

NJUG launched the National Code of Conduct with Boris Johnson, Conservative Mayor of London, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010. This seeks to promote active participation at co-ordination meetings discussing advance planning, joint working and collaborative practices and in particular the following:

#### **Permitting**

NJUG offers to assist prospective permit authorities develop their proposed permit schemes to ensure that they will not only benefit the whole community but are also legally robust, workable and that the software systems are compatible and the necessary process changes are put in place and tested prior to going live.

#### **Advance Planning**

NJUG members will continue to share long term plans for asset upgrades and major replacement programmes with authorities and utilities, to promote greater opportunities for trench sharing, site sharing or sequential working and where possible to accommodate authority work plans, as part of their commitment to encouraging enhanced co-ordination between all parties.

#### **Use of Minimum-Dig Technology**

NJUG will continue to promote the use of minimum-dig technology where practical and safe to use, in order to reduce the size, environmental impact and duration of works.

#### **Plating**

To ensure a rapid return of carriageways and footways to road users and pedestrians during traffic sensitive times NJUG will encourage its members to consider the option of plating over, or applying bridging techniques to, utility excavations at sites where it is safe and practical to do so and does not unduly extend the duration of the works or adversely affect the highway structure.

#### **Working Outside Peak Hours**

NJUG members will strive to work at the times of the day that minimise disruption to traffic and reduce excessive traffic delays. As part of the planning process including budgetary considerations and following discussions with environmental and highway departments along with affected stakeholders, we will consider the options of evening, weekend and 24 hour working at key locations where highlighted environmental concerns can be overcome and where disturbance to residents can be kept to a minimum and it is safe to do so for the workforce.

#### **Standard Information Signage**

NJUG members will continue to provide work site information boards at all sites containing contact details and provide additional unique information boards specific to long term (major works) projects displaying updates on progress and the estimated completion dates.

#### **Inspections**

Worksites will be inspected at all stages including within the reinstatement guarantee period and will be promptly rectified if any aspects of the site do not meet appropriate standards.

#### **First time Re-Instatements**

To ensure work sites are returned to public use at the earliest opportunity and help reduce any possible delays and disruption, NJUG promotes the use of first time permanent re-instatements where ever possible.

#### **Good Practice Guide**

NJUG, along with HAUC (UK), is committed to sharing good practice to help raise awareness and drive performance improvement. We will continue to share examples of good practice on our web site and at events around the country, and adopt the highest standards that emerge from this awareness.



NJUG will regularly review its Code of Conduct to ensure that it continues to reflect good practice.