



# Southern Electric Power Distribution plc

# Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc

## Compliance Annual Report 2024/25

### 1. Introduction

This report is for the year to 31 March 2025, as required by Standard Licence Condition 43.6 of the electricity distribution licences of:

Southern Electric Power Distribution plc (SEPD), and

Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc (SHEPD)

The report summarises the licensees' compliance with the Relevant Requirements and provides an update on the implementation of the practices, procedures, and systems adopted in accordance with the Statement of Compliance which is published on the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) website. In addition, the report details the activities of the Business Separation Compliance Officers throughout the year including reference to any investigative work undertaken.

As such this report should be read in conjunction with the current SEPD and SHEPD Statement of Compliance and the external Business Separation Compliance Officer (EBSCO)'s Report 2024/25 (provided by Henderson Loggie LLP), both of which are published on the SSEN website. SEPD and SHEPD have appointed Henderson Loggie LLP as their EBSCO, the EBSCO is supported by an internal Business Separation Compliance Officer (IBSCO) who reports to the General Council Directorate.

### 2. Compliance with the Relevant Requirements

#### 2.1 Review Work

SEPD and SHEPD have demonstrated compliance with licence condition 43.12, Relevant Requirements, through the business separation review work undertaken by the EBSCO, Group Compliance and Distribution Business Assurance during 2024/25. The Group Compliance function is independent of the operations of SEPD and SHEPD and of the Board of each of SEPD and SHEPD and it reports directly into the General Counsel directorate (as part of Corporate Services) of SSE plc. Distribution Business Assurance is a specialist team carrying out regular assurance checks on behalf of the Distribution business management team.

From the review work undertaken, no significant issues were identified, and overall indications are that staff are aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of SEPD and SHEPD information as required. In addition, there have been no reports of material instances of cross subsidy breaches between SEPD or SHEPD and other Affiliates or Related Undertakings, as evidenced through the annual EU Cross Subsidy report prepared by SEPD



and SHEPD which is reviewed by external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP, using agreed audit procedures and sent to the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (Ofgem).

The Compliance Officer role (EBSCO), as stipulated in Standard Licence Condition 43.1, was performed during reporting year 2024/25 by the external audit firm Henderson Loggie LLP. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the EBSCO has had full and open access to SEPD and SHEPD staff and documentation to complete this work.

Throughout the financial year, regular meetings have been held with key stakeholders from the business, Distribution Business Assurance, Distribution Regulation and Group Ethics to assist the EBSCO in monitoring ongoing business separation compliance. As part of the role, the EBSCO has assessed the robustness of SEPD and SHEPD's managerial and operational independence, systems, branding, staff transfers, training arrangements, protection of Confidential Information and complaints in relation to the Relevant Requirements (as defined in licence condition 43.12). A summary assessment has been captured in the EBSCO's report and presented to the Board of each of SEPD and SHEPD. No material issues were identified within this report, with the EBSCO satisfied that SEPD and SHEPD continue to comply with their stated business separation policy by implementing and enforcing procedures and controls commensurate with that policy. The report also acknowledges the independent review work of Group Compliance which highlighted one finding with actions that have already been partially completed, with the remaining elements due for completion by the end of June 2025. This related to a single site failure with respect to visitor passes which could give access to a general Distribution workspace. Review work also highlighted five observations relating to records of staff transfers and exemptions, updates needed to business separation procedures, documentation of systems on the Master Register of Information Owners and the internal Business Separation Officer email box.

It should be noted that the re-appointment of the EBSCO is considered by the Board of each of SEPD and SHEPD every year normally during Quarter One of the financial year. The role was tendered for during 2024 and Henderson Loggie were successful in that process and appointed again to the role.

## **2.2 Managerial and Operational Independence of SEPD and SHEPD**

To maintain the full managerial and operational independence of the Licensees, the two businesses are managerially and operationally run under the governance of the Boards of SEPD and SHEPD and independently from other SSE plc interests.

The Boards of SEPD and SHEPD have a common set of directors for both companies. The purpose of the Boards is to set the strategic aims, supervise the management and monitor performance of the Licensees.

Currently, both Boards comprise three executive directors and five non-executive directors. Executive directors are wholly engaged in the day-to-day management and operation of the Licensees and not involved in the activities of any other affiliates or related undertakings. Two of the non-executive directors are Sufficiently Independent Directors as required by the terms of the Distribution Licence. The non-executive Chair is also an executive director of SSE plc Board.



Corporate governance procedures, which have been advised on by the EBSCO for the purpose of maintaining managerial and operational independence, are in place between the Boards of SEPD and SHEPD and the SSE plc Board. The terms of reference for the Boards of SEPD and SHEPD and capital authorisation corporate policy are regularly reviewed to maintain the independence of the Boards and reinforce the corporate governance procedures. The performance of the Licensees is reported to the SSE plc Board.

During 2024/25, the day-to-day management of the distribution businesses was co-ordinated through the Distribution Executive Committee (DEC) which reports to the Boards of SEPD and SHEPD. The DEC is responsible for ensuring every part of the distribution businesses operate in a safe, responsible and efficient manner, including compliance with relevant legislation and regulations. Staff are directly employed by either SEPD or SHEPD, or under contractual agreements that include confidentiality provisions.

### **2.3 Systems and Confidential Information**

No significant system changes were implemented during the financial year. The Distribution Business Assurance team have continued to conduct business separation routine checks to ensure access controls to confidential information are being adequately applied in new systems and system changes. Nine IT systems access control reviews were undertaken in Distribution last year by the Distribution Business Assurance team. No material issues were identified during these reviews, and this programme of regular assurance checks provides confidence in the business's ability to identify any potential access control weaknesses.

Procedures for managing access controls to Distribution premises and office areas continue to be maintained to ensure clarity of processes and consistency in approach.

Regular assurance checking of controls applied across the businesses have been performed by the Distribution Business Assurance team, including confirmation that regular audits of staff access lists are undertaken for all sites within the SSE estate that have a Distribution presence,

In advance of the 2024/25 audit year, the Distribution Business Assurance Team undertook a review of the method used to determine the annual site audit programme. The outcome of this review was to focus available resources on the highest risk sites which include our north and south Control Rooms, and those that have a high footfall and are shared with other vertically integrated companies within the SSE Group. Following this method, eight site access control reviews were planned and completed during 2024/25.

The combination of these measures has ensured continued focus on business separation arrangements throughout the year, especially on access to confidential information across Distribution.

### **2.4 Branding**

SEPD and SHEPD currently use the common brand of "Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks" (SSEN), which is also used by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc, in its day-to-day operations to maintain a separate identity from other parts of SSE plc. Equipment, facilities/property, fleet, staff uniforms, identity cards and stationery



are clearly marked with this branding. No issues have been identified during 2024/25 with respect to branding.

## **2.5 Staff Transfers**

A formal process for identifying and reporting key staff transfers from SEPD or SHEPD to the other SSE plc group businesses exists. Any transfers of concern (i.e. those that may impact business separation) are risk assessed and where appropriate notified to the IBSCO who may then discuss with the EBSCO and the Board of each of SEPD and SHEPD as necessary. During 2024/25, there was one transfer of concern in relation to Distribution reported to the IBSCO. This was risk assessed and processes were followed to ensure no issue arose with the transfers.

## **3. Breach Reporting and Complaints**

In accordance with internal practices and procedures, any business separation breaches and complaints of this nature are required to be directed to the IBSCO, who works in conjunction with the EBSCO in the provision of advice to Networks businesses on business separation. There were no items considered to be reported breaches or complaints during 2024/25.

## **4. Staff Training**

Networks Business Separation training continues to be provided via an e-learning module which sits on the SSE Group training platform and is rolled out to all SEPD and SHEPD staff, including new starts and any relevant contractors. In addition, due to the importance of business separation across the SSE Group, most Corporate staff and senior management from other SSE businesses are required to undertake the training. This approach ensures a high level of staff awareness and understanding of business separation requirements. The completion of this training is mandatory for key personnel and its uptake is monitored and reported to management. To ensure ongoing compliance, relevant staff are required to undertake regular training, normally each financial year. The Distribution Business Assurance team monitor and report on the status of staff training on Business Separation to senior management, including the DEC and senior leadership team. The above training is supported by formal procedural documents which provide detailed guidance to Distribution staff on the required processes for managing access to IT systems and premises related to SEPD and/or SHEPD, handling staff transfers, raising business separation queries and reporting potential breaches to the internal BSCO. These procedures have been reviewed, updated and extended in places to facilitate staff understanding and ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of any business separation issue. A dedicated, internal Business Separation mailbox continues to operate to facilitate the management of queries and reporting of potential issues by staff. Overall, the above measures ensure there is a continued focus on maintaining business separation awareness and required arrangements throughout the year.

The businesses continue to utilise an internal application (known as i-Comply) which captures key regulatory



and legislative obligations applicable to Distribution business operations in a single system and ensures that legislative and regulatory change is managed. This system is designed to assist managers and staff in their understanding of key rules, including business separation requirements, via rule content summaries, the identification of affected business areas and allocation of business owners to each rule.

## 5. Contact

Queries relating to this report should be addressed to:

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