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Standards

SWiFT 9:2012

# Universal Design for Energy Suppliers

## SWiFT 9:2012

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I.S. xxx: Irish Standard – national specification based on the consensus of an expert panel and subject to public consultation.

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SWiFT xxx: A rapidly developed recommendatory document based on the consensus of the participants of an NSAI workshop.

<i>This document replaces:</i>	<i>This document is based on:</i> SWiFT 9:2012	<i>Published:</i> 18 January, 2012			
This document was published Under the authority of the NSAI and comes into effect on:  18 January, 2012		ICS number: 35.240.20 01.110 01.140			
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## SWiFT 9:2012

### Foreword

This SWiFT has been prepared by Working Group 6 of the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) Accessibility for all Standards Consultative Committee (AASCC). Irish Energy Suppliers, experts and representatives of customer advocacy groups contributed to its development. The National Disability Authority's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design and the Commission for Energy Regulation co-chaired the working group. It reflects the consensus<sup>1</sup> of the individuals listed below together with other contributors to whom the NSAI is indebted for their contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> *Consensus need not imply unanimity.*

## **Introduction**

### **General**

This SWiFT provides guidance and requirements to Energy Suppliers on how to apply Universal Design in the development of accessible and usable products and services for household customers.

By applying the requirements and guidelines set out in this SWiFT, Energy Suppliers will consider the needs of customers who have different ranges of physical, sensory or mental ability when developing their products, services and communications.

This ensures that more customers will be able to access, understand and use products for energy customer communications.

Energy customer communications based on Universal Design principles will enable a wider range of customers to participate in the competitive energy markets.

### **What this SWiFT covers**

The content includes:

- the principles of Universal Design that are relevant to the types of services that Energy Suppliers provide to their household customers;
- requirements and guidelines for Energy Suppliers on how to communicate with their customers.

### **Legal requirements**

The legal requirement for Energy Suppliers in relation to Universal Design is set out in Section 3 (3) of *The European Communities (Internal Market in Electricity and Gas) (Consumer Protection) Regulations of 2011*. This section states that suppliers must apply the principles of Universal Design to:

- a) all products and services offered or provided to final customers, and
- b) communications with final customers.

## SWiFT 9:2012

# Universal Design for Energy Suppliers

## 1 Scope

This SWiFT:

- gives requirements and guidance on Universal Design for Energy Suppliers to household customers in the provision of energy products, supporting services and associated communications;
- is intended to assist suppliers to make products and services accessible and usable by as many people as possible without the need for additional adaptation or specialized design;
- does not address the design, or the operation, of any meters, appliances, or pipework to which the energy is connected.

## 2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

### **accessibility**

extent to which products, systems, services, environments or facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of capabilities to achieve a specified goal in a specified context of use

NOTE Context of use includes direct use or use supported by assistive technology.

[SOURCE: ISO TR 22411:2008]

### **assistive product**

any product (including devices, equipment, instruments and software), especially produced or generally available, used by or for persons with disability

- for participation;
- to protect, support, train, measure or substitute for body functions/structures and activities; or
- to prevent impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions

[SOURCE: ISO 9999:2011]

### **energy supplier**

regulated supplier of natural gas or electricity

### **household customer**

customer(s) who purchase natural gas or electricity for their own use at a domestic dwelling

NOTE In the context of this document the term dwelling refers to a house, flat, or other place of residence.

### **literacy**

ability to listen, speak, read, write, use numbers and use technology to function effectively in today's society

### **organization**

group of people and facilities with an arrangement of responsibilities, authorities and relationships

[SOURCE: ISO 10001:2007, 3.6]

NOTE In the context of this document the term "organization" refers to "Energy Suppliers" .

### **plain English**

style of presenting information that helps a person understand it the first time they read or hear it

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