

DCUSA Issues Form (DIF)

This form should be used by parties to submit matters for consideration to DCUSA Standing Issues Group (SIG).

The completed form should be issued to DCUSA@electralink.co.uk

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Issue Title:	Provision of Service Termination Equipment Information to Distributors
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Attachments:	

**Assigned by DCUSA Secretariat*

Originator details	
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Nature of Issue

Distribution Businesses have been instructed by Ofgem to use the opportunity presented by the Smart Meter Rollout to gather as much information as possible about their service termination equipment in the most cost effective manner.

In their *Strategy decision for the RIIO-ED1 electricity distribution price control: Reliability and safety* (March 2013) Ofgem state “... ***we believe that DNOs should take the opportunity during RIIO-ED1 to build up a more detailed picture of their cut out populations, which will include knowledge of the age and type of cut outs inspected during the smart meter roll out. This information should be used to identify any potential safety risks attributable to cut outs on DNOs networks***”.

The aim of the industry’s Smart Metering Installation Code of Practice is for the customer experience of having a smart meter fitted to be positive. If some network asset information can be collected by smart meter installers it would avoid, in a lot of cases, a second visit at a later date by network operator staff, thereby mitigating the risk of further inconvenience to the Customer.

In addition to the driver above Distribution Business are also conscious of the judgement in the ‘RIMISSE’ court case at the Technology and Construction High Court (September 2012) in which the judge suggested that Distribution Businesses needed to be more proactive with respect to the replacement of cut-outs. In order to achieve this Distribution Businesses need to obtain more data on the type and condition of their service termination assets to inform any maintenance or replacement regime that may be developed.

Lastly there is some uncertainty around the inspection regimes that Suppliers will put in place following the smart metering rollout. It may be that Suppliers move to a more risk-based approach to the inspection of their assets in customer premises (i.e. the smart meter), in which case Distribution Businesses will need to consider carefully the manner in which they discharge their obligation to inspect their own assets - in particular how this can be achieved at lowest cost and disruption to customers. As noted above, enhanced asset information would allow Distribution Businesses to consider whether a risk based approach to service termination equipment inspection and replacement should or could be implemented.

Following consideration of the above issue under the MRA change process, a draft change proposal which proposes the creation of a new DTC flow, to enable Meter Operators to send details of Service Termination Equipment to Distributors, has been raised and is currently being reviewed by the MRA Issue Resolution Expert Group (IREG).

The DTC change proposal, if approved, will only provide a mechanism for data to be transferred between the Meter Operator and the Distributor. It will not place any obligations on Suppliers requiring them to instruct their Meter Operators to collect and send the flow. Supplier members of IREG have generally indicated that the introduction of any such obligation would be a matter to be considered under the DCUSA.

A consequential change being considered by IREG, if the new DTC flow is implemented, is a change to the D0215 Site Technical Details flow to enable the Distributor to inform the Meter Operator when they do not need to collect and send the Service Termination Equipment Information to the Distributor. The Distributor would potentially need to inform the Meter Operator if they have collected the Service Termination Equipment Information as a result of their own site visit or on a change of agent appointment. The requirement for the Distributor to inform the Meter Operator in these instances may also require a DCUSA change.

During IREG discussions on the above a further proposal emerged which was to add "Category C" Defect information, currently sent by the Meter Operator as part of the Defect Reporting Process (D0135/D0126), to the proposed new Service Termination Equipment Information flow. If such a change were to be approved, Category C Defects would no longer exist and reference to them may need to be removed from DCUSA.

IREG were also informed that Suppliers, ENA, HSE and Ofgem are currently meeting separately to review the obligation on Suppliers to inspect metering points every 2 years. Instead, a risk based approach, which may in part be based on information collected on site, could be adopted. In this event it is possible that Distributors would need to inform Suppliers/Meter Operators of information collected when they visit a site. Requirements that emerge from discussions in this area may also impact the processes for collection and distribution of Service Termination Equipment Information as the information may need to be collected on every site visit and not on a one-off basis.

DCUSA changes that may be needed and would need to be considered are as follows:

1. Introducing an obligation on Suppliers to provide Service Termination Equipment to the Distribution Business when their Meter Operator visits site and removes the fuse.
2. Introduction of an obligation on Distributors to inform the appointed Meter Operator when information does not need to be collected.
3. Introduction of an obligation on Distributors to provide Service Termination Equipment to the Supplier / Meter Operator when Distributor visits site and removes the fuse.
4. Removal of references to Category C defects.
5. Any charging arrangements that may be required as a result of the above.

Solution Overview – if known

Solution description:

The DTC changes that may be required are subject to further development under the MRA. They will be considered further at IREG on 11th February. Any change proposals that emerge as a result of IREG discussion will then be subject to the normal MRA change process.

As DCUSA changes may be needed in conjunction with any MRA changes it would be of benefit to Parties if any required DCUSA change proposals could be issued, assessed and progressed in parallel with the MRA change proposals. This would potentially avoid conflicts between the MRA and DCUSA requirements.

It is therefore requested that a DCUSA working group be established to consider any DCUSA changes needed as a result of the "Provision of Service Termination Equipment Information to Distributors" issue. The working group would liaise with the MRA IREG, consider their output, and identify and raise any associated DCUSA change proposals that may be needed.

Lead time for Implementation: