

Minutes

Meeting Name	DCP 008 Working Group	Meeting Number	001
Meeting Date	05 October 2007	Meeting Time	10.30
Meeting Venue	ElectraLink, 289 – 293 Regent St, London, W1B 2HJ		

In Attendance

Attendee

Nigel Menzies (Chair)
Glenn Sheern
Jen Daines
John Dallimore (Teleconference)
John Lawton
Kevin Woollard (Teleconference)
Lynne Hargrave
Mike Smith
Peter Waymont
Elizabeth Lawlor (Secretary)

Representing

EDF Energy
E.ON UK
RWE Npower
ScottishPower Energy Retail
United Utilities Electricity Ltd
British Gas
CE Electric
Western Power Distribution
EDF Energy
DCUSA Limited

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

- 1.1 The Working Group appointed Nigel Menzies as Chair.

2 ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mike Harding (The Electricity Network Company).

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 The Working Group approved the ToR subject to one typographical amendment. EL took an action to update the document with the member details.

ACTION: EL

4 DCP 008 – PROVISION OF SERVICE

- 4.1 JL informed members that following the discussion around UMETS at the Panel and other industry groups, United Utilities believed that the best way to progress the issue was to raise a DCUSA Change Proposal. The Working Group noted that the CP was based on drafting agreed at the REMA Emergency Services Expert Group in 2002 rather than being specific to United Utilities.
- 4.2 JL informed members that the CP includes consequential changes to the DCUSA and makes reference to industry developments such as competition in metering and the licence. The Working Group noted that a key element of the REMA recommendations, as supported by Ofgem was the provision of a 'one stop shop' solution.
- 4.3 The Working Group noted that the REMA recommendations considered two scenarios: When metering faults are discovered by DNOs when on site with a customer; and out of hours telephone calls from special needs customers. PW clarified that the original intent was for the provision of an 'urgent' metering service rather than the provision of an out of hours or emergency service where a Meter Operator (MOP) is not available or does not provide a service. He clarified that the situation should only apply when DNOs had done all possible to ascertain that there is a distribution issue rather than metering fault, but out on site the issue proves to be due to the meter failing. PW suggested that based on this principle the group should consider the service Suppliers want and the service DNOs are prepared to offer.
- 4.4 LH and MS noted that given the regulatory changes since 2002, DNOs may not be able to offer the service as drafted in DCP 008 as a number of parties no longer operate a MOP service and have no obligation to do so. MS pointed out that new members of staff are not trained to fit meters and that over time the number of legacy trained MOP employees will reduce. MS confirmed that the majority of site workers can only fit credit meters but the CP drafting indicates that meters should be replaced like for like.
- 4.5 LH added that the DNOs that don't provide MOP services have difficulty obtaining metering equipment and are unable or unwilling to carry a

number of different meter types to carry out replacements. LH added that the further the industry develops the greater the number of DNOs likely to be impacted. LH suggested that the group needed a clear view from Ofgem as to whether a 'one stop shop' remains suitable in the current climate and if so, who should provide it.

- 4.6 The group noted that there may also be a cultural issue to overcome and that currently DNOs endeavour to get customers back on supply by any means in all circumstances, which may not suit suppliers. PW asked Supplier representatives what they wanted DNOs to do in such scenarios, noting that in an emergency situation DNOs may fit whatever meter they can which may require a subsequent re-visit from the suppliers' agent.
- 4.7 GS confirmed that E.ON supports the principle of a single service provided by DNOs but would take a pragmatic approach to the type of meters being installed as the number requiring changing out at a later date would be minimal. However it was noted that not all suppliers shared this view. JD and NM confirmed that they would prefer a like for like meter exchange and KW raised issues regarding asset ownership, the quality of service, warranty etc and confirmed that BGAS would prefer to use its own agent although it would accept a basic service in extreme circumstances
- 4.8 LH suggested that the one stop shop service could be provided by suppliers contracting with MOPs to do emergency work on site rather than putting the obligation on DNOs. Supplier representatives suggested that the cost to maintain 24 hour supplier and MOP services would be greater than the cost incurred by DNOs. LH and MS re-iterated that DNOs do not want to train meter fitters, procure meters or be obligated to provide a detailed UMETS service when they are not obliged to provide a metering service.
- 4.9 JD noted the points made by the DNO members but reminded the group that the recommendations from REMA and Ofgem, as well as Supplier members, favoured the 'one stop shop' and suggested the group should consider how the barriers to providing this service (availability of meter type and skilled meter fitters, and the developing skills gap over time) could be overcome. PW noted that the issue of the procurement and delivery of meter stock and the training of resource would be insurmountable unless DNOs were able to recover the costs of providing the service.
- 4.10 JD suggested that the UMETS solution within the DCUSA should not be too onerous but rather a minimum standard for the provision of an urgent service on reasonable endeavours basis to get special needs customers back on supply. LH supported this view and suggested that any additional requirements could be arranged on a bilateral contractual basis between the supplier and DNO or supplier and Agent.

5 DCP 008 – UMETS SCENARIOS

- 5.1 The Working Group agreed to focus on developing a minimum standard to be drafted into the DCUSA. It agreed to work with the 'one stop shop' principle but to assess the scenarios to determine when it should apply.
- 5.2 The Working Group noted the recommendations of REMA and considered the following four scenarios and broadly agreed the following responses:

Telephone Call – Metering Fault identified – Not Special Needs	In hours: Pass to Supplier / Agent
	Out of hours: Pass to Supplier / Agent
Telephone Call – Metering Fault identified – Special Needs	In hours: Pass to Supplier / Agent
	Out of hours: DNO Activity
Site Visit – Metering Fault identified – Not Special Needs	In hours: Pass to Supplier / Agent
	Out of hours: Pass to Supplier / Agent or DNO Activity
Site Visit – Metering Fault identified – Special Needs	In hours: DNO Activity
	Out of hours: DNO Activity

- 5.3 GS proposed that the definition of a 'special needs' customer should be based on the MRA definition and the categories within the D0225 flow. GS suggested that categories 1 -7 best represented electrically vulnerable customers and members took an action to confirm whether any additional categories should be included.

ACTION: ALL

6 DCP 008 VARIATIONS

- 6.1 Following discussions the group agreed that DCP 008 could not be taken forward in its current format however members agreed however that the principle of a 'one stop shop' was preferable although opinion on the detail of the service and who was to provide it varied. It was agreed that the group would seek to produce an updated CP with revised drafting for a minimum standard to be included in the DCUSA and that any further provisions would be agreed by bilateral contracts between parties. It was noted that at least one Supplier may prefer their contracted MOPs to be called out in all cases.
- 6.2 Members agreed that it was probable that two variations of the CP would be drafted to reflect the opinions of the group but that they wanted seek feedback from Supplier and DNO Contract Managers before working up the CPs at the next meeting. EL took an action to contact CMs to ascertain the type of service currently provided and the volume of calls / issues dealt with.

ACTION: EL

- 6.3 The Working Group confirmed that it was confident that the industry will be able to work together to find the solution but that it was essential that direction from Ofgem was provided in the early stages of the discussion to understand what the regulator wished to achieve. NM took an action to write to Ofgem and energywatch to invite them to participate in future meetings of the Working Group.

ACTION: NM

7 DCP 008 – ADDITIONAL AREAS OF CONSIDERATION

- 7.1 The Working Group reviewed the ToR and noted that its scope included the requirement to consider the relevance / suitability of procedure documents

being developed for the Post Emergency Metering Services (PEMS) process in the Gas industry. Supplier members indicated that they did not believe the PEMS contract to be applicable to UMETS.

- 7.2 The Working Group also considered the potential impact of Smart Metering. Members noted that although the introduction of Smart meters may reduce the number of calls received by DNOs it is likely to add complexity to the types of meters available and meter exchanges causing increased problems for DNOs in UMETS cases. Members agreed to base the CP on the current position and known technology as the full Smart metering solution has not yet been determined and the use of the technology will not be widespread in the immediate future. The Working Group agreed that it will work to defining basic principles of a minimum UMETS standard that works now, accepting that the DCUSA, like a number of industry agreements, may need to make subsequent changes when Smart Metering is introduced.
- 7.3 The working group noted that it will also have to consider the process that IDNOs follow in UMETS cases, noting that none have ever provided MOP services. EL confirmed that The Electricity Networks Company intends to participate in the Working Group going forward. LH also suggested that a further variation could be considered by the creation the role of 'MOP of Last Resort' noting that this solution supports competition in metering and removes the obligation from DNOs. It was agreed to take these issues forward at the next meeting following feedback from parties and Ofgem.

8 DCP 008 PROJECT TIMETABLE

- 8.1 The Working Group noted the project timetable as proposed by the DCUSA Panel but considered that submitting the final report to the December Panel would be challenging and that the timetable may need to be extended. NM took an action to attend the October Panel meeting to present the opinion of the group and seek an extension from the Panel.

Action: NM

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 There were no additional items of business.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The next meeting of the DCP 008 Working Group will convene at 10.30am on Friday 26 October 2007.

Appendix A: Summary of Actions

This section provides details of actions placed at the meeting. The section is split into two sub-sections:

- New actions and progress against actions currently open; and
- Actions that were closed as a result of the meeting or a previous meeting.

Open Actions

Action No.	Description	Owner
01/01	Update ToR to reflect membership	EL
01/02	Confirm whether categories 1 -7 of the D0255 flow suitably define 'Special Needs' customers	All
01/03	Write to contact CMs to ascertain the type of service currently provided and the volume of calls dealt with.	EI
01/04	Invite Ofgem to participate in future Working Group meetings	NM
01/05	Attend October Panel meeting to present update and seek timetable extension	NM

Closed Actions

Action No.	Description	Owner
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