

DCUSA Request For Information (RFI)

DCP 383

Provision for Distributors to Move Meters for Service Alterations

Date raised: 10 February 2021

Proposer Name: Paul Morris




Company Name: UK Power Networks






Company Category: DNO

Purpose of this Request For Information:

This proposal seeks to include provision in the DCUSA to provide a facility for licensed Distributors to move whole current meters as part of customer requested works to alter the service position.

This document is a Request for Information issued to Distributors and Suppliers in accordance with Clause 11.14 of the DCUSA.

	<p>The Workgroup recommends that this Change Proposal should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Request for Information <p>Parties are invited to consider the questions set in section 4 and submit comments using the form attached as Attachment 1 to dcusa@electralink.co.uk by 12 April 2021.</p> <p>The Working Group will consider the RFI responses and determine the appropriate next steps for the progression of the Change Proposal (CP).</p>
	<p>Impacted Parties: DNOs, IDNOs and Suppliers</p>
	<p>Impacted Clauses: Introduction of new Clause</p>

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1. Summary

What?

- 1.1. This proposal is seeking to include provision in the DCUSA to provide a facility for licensed Distributors to move whole current meters as part of customer requested works to alter the service position.
- 1.2. DCUSA (under clauses 25.23 and 25.24) allows Distributors to remove and replace meters as close as reasonably practicable to the original position and this request would extend this facility to allow trained service alteration operators to reposition the meter and associated equipment to a new service position as requested by a customer.
- 1.3. The proposal would require communication to Suppliers advising when the appointment is made (via the D0368 flow or similar) and should be followed up through the MRA to provide a flow facility to update suppliers of the activity undertaken and confirmation of the new meter location.
- 1.4. The provision will allow:
 - a) The Supplier / meter operator to facilitate the meter move if the customer prefers. This option must be communicated to the customer.
 - b) Where the Distributor chooses not to provide the meter move service, the Supplier will, at the customer's request, arrange to move the meter in coordination with the Distributor's service alteration work.
 - c) Where the Supplier believes it necessary to carry out the meter move work itself it shall notify the Distributors in writing in advance not to provide this service to their customers, on a 'universal' basis.
- 1.5. The scope of this amendment will apply to whole current meter changes only. Where complex / non-standard metering arrangements are encountered and not recognised by the Distributor, these will be flagged for action by suppliers as part of the pre-site survey. This proposal excludes CT metering.

Why?

- 1.6. When customers request a service alteration, the coordination / planning of the physical service alteration and the attendance of the Supplier on the same date to move the meter to maintain supply is often problematic for the customer. This causes lead times for attendance to impact on work dates, leading to customer frustration and negative results from the broad measure of customer satisfaction feedback.
- 1.7. It is estimate that during 2020, there were about 15,000 service alterations carried out in the UK, including cut backs, service diversions, and disconnection and new services. These are situations where moving the existing whole current meters (and associated metering equipment) as part of Distributor works can improve the level of service provided to the customer.
- 1.8. Since privatisation, some Distributors have carried out this activity where customers have not been successful in coordinating both Supplier and Distributor, and arrangements are not in place to maintain the metered supply facility. More recently, Distributors have agreed to assist with meter-moves while Supplier / meter operator staff were unable to co-ordinate with Distributors through

COVID-related furlough, helping to reduce negative impact on customers and improve their experience.

- 1.9. Enabling this change will provide an opportunity for Distributors to offer a 'one-stop-shop' to customers for service diversions, significantly improving the customer journey through the service diversions process and potentially reducing overall costs.

2. Governance

Requested Next Steps

- 2.1 Following a review of the RFI responses, the Working Group will work to agree the detail of the solution for DCP 349.

3. Working Group Request

- 3.1 A Working Group met on 15 March 2021 to start the review of DCP 383. Members agree that the inclusion of a provision in the DCUSA to provide a facility for licensed Distributors to move whole current meters as part of customer requested works to alter the service position would be beneficial to improve the customer journey.
- 3.2 To fully define the proposed solution, the Working Group would like to seek views from Distributors and Suppliers. The Working Group would like to fully understand the customer journey and the potential scenarios that could exist if this change is approved. For example, how is this choice communicated to the customer, what are the potential issues with smart connectivity if the smart meter is moved and how should this be considered.
- 3.3 The Working Group are concerned with the current lack of Supplier representation on this Working Group and therefore are particularly keen on Supplier views as to the potential customer scenarios that could occur if this CP is approved. What are the current processes you have in place and how do you envisage this changing if this CP is approved? Are there any scenarios that could make the customer journey worse?
- 3.4 The Working Group is keen to review all of the potential customer scenarios so that they can ensure that the proposed solution captures these scenarios and that the ultimate aim of improving the customer experience is achieved if this CP is implemented.
- 3.5 The Working Group also discussed MOCOPA audits and whether the Distributor should be audited similar to Meter Operators. At present, Meter Operators have independent audits to assess their use of the processes and procedures, and technical competencies. The Working Group is keen to understand Parties initial thoughts on this.

1. Suppliers: What service do you offer customers in terms of lead times to move meters – are there any exceptions? Is this currently a chargeable service or free?

2. If this CP was approved and Distributors were able to move meters during service alterations, how should the customer journey look? Are there any concerns that require mitigation?
3. Do you believe the customer experience can improve with Distributors moving meters?
4. Are there any scenarios where the customer experience could be worse? Are there any scenarios where the Distributor should not move the meter?
5. Communication between the customer, Distributor and Supplier will be key for the success of this CP. What and how should the communications between each associated Party be like?
(Distributor<->Supplier)
(Supplier<->Customer)
(Customer<->Distributor).
6. Supplier: What level of information is deemed necessary to be received from the Distributor? (is the new meter location required / is it currently maintained?)
7. What are your thoughts on appropriate auditing of meter moves if this CP is approved?
8. Distributor: What is the annual volume of service alterations for each Distributor normalised for COVID.

4. RFI Responses

4.1 Responses, or any part thereof, can be provided in confidence. Parties are asked to clearly indicate any parts of a response that are to be treated confidentially.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: RFI Response form
- Attachment 2: DCP 383 Change Proposal