

DIF 70 – –METER BYPASS

COLLATED RFIRESPONSES WITH WORKING GROUP COMMENTS

Company	Confidential/ Anonymous	1. Do you carry out meter bypasses for non-faulty meters eg a meter that has no credit left? If so, under what circumstances would you carry out a meter bypass?	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
BUUK	Non-Confidential	No	Noted
Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	No	Noted
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)	Non-Confidential	This action is only undertaken on very rare occasions. Energy Supplier unavailability and customer vulnerability are the primary considerations for this action. On the Islands in Scotland there is greater unavailability of Energy Suppliers metering staff or appointed contractors. This impacts the number of circumstances where this action is undertaken, as you will note in response 2. Metering is the responsibility of electricity Suppliers, however, as a Distribution Network Operator, we have a duty of care and would not want to leave a vulnerable customer off supply due to a metering fault. On occasions where the Energy Supplier does not have metering staff available, we may look to apply a bypass as a short term solution until the Energy Supplier is able to attend and carry out the required work to get their customer back on to a metered supply.	<p>Rarely taken and only when suppliers aren't available to be contacted and usually when there's vulnerability.</p> <p>Highlights an issue with the islands in Scotland which can be hard to reach so action has to be taken on the visit rather than waiting hours for a MEM to attended.</p>

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National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	It is not always easy to identify the reason the meter is not working, and as suppliers set up meters differently, it is difficult for teams to identify the fault. Therefore in certain circumstances a meter may be bypassed due to no credit, but the customer would be on our PSR list.	Will carry out bypasses on faulty meters if there is a vulnerability.
UKPN	Non-Confidential	We do not bypass a meter where the meter is not faulty.	Noted
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	Yes, we will carry out meter bypasses for non-faulty meters if the customer is deemed vulnerable. Such bypasses are generally carried out out-of-hours and when it is not considered safe to leave the customer without a supply.	Will carry out bypasses on faulty meters if there is a vulnerability.
Working Group Conclusions: One DNO stated they do not carry out bypasses on non-faulty meters. The other DNOs who do carry out bypasses stated that it's rare this happens and usually only if there has been a vulnerability identified on site.			

Company	Confidential/Anonymous	2. To Distributors Non-faulty meters 2. If you responded yes to Q1 please provide volumes for the number of meter bypasses for non-faulty meters you have performed in the last 12 months period (1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023).	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
Electricity North West Limited	Non-Confidential	Zero	Noted

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Northern Powergrid)	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)	Non-Confidential	<p>We are not able to provide a breakdown of bypasses undertaken based on faulty meters vs non-faulty meters. The below figure represents meter bypasses undertaken between 1 November 2022 – 31 October 2023, and will have been undertaken for the reasons outlined in response 1.</p> <p>We have approximately 3.9 million customers and carried out 162 bypasses across all Suppliers during this period.</p> <p>We receive a vast number of calls from Supplier customers experiencing supply related issues for whom we do not undertake a meter bypass.</p>	<p>162 bypasses carried out 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023.</p> <p>Highlights they receive a number of calls from customers experiencing supply issues where a bypass isn't taken.</p>
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	Not easy to collate though it would be less than 100.	Noted
UKPN	Non-Confidential	Zero	Noted
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	<p>SPEN volumes for the period January to date are:</p> <p>SPD is 431 – 84 are Bypass & 347 have dry meters installed. SPM is 93 – 11 are Bypass & 82 have dry meters installed</p> <p>Meter installs includes the DNO fitting single rate meters to get the customer back on supply as a short term solution until the supplier rectifies the metering issue.</p>	<p>SPD 84 bypasses and 347 dry meters. SPM 93 bypasses and 82 dry meters installed.</p> <p>Dry meters are single rate traditional meters</p>

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		Note, the volumes are for faulty and non-faulty meters as the split is not available.	
<p>Working Group Conclusions: Low numbers of bypasses are carried out based on the responses. It was highlighted by one DNO that where a meter fault is identified, they usually carry out a meter exchange where a single rate traditional meter is installed and the customer is informed to contact the supplier to request a smart meter is fitted.</p> <p>One responder did note that a large number of calls are received out of hours where the supplier cant be contacted. It was noted that there is an Ofgem change in flight that is looking to obligated suppliers to have an out of hours service.</p>			

Company	Confidential/ Anonymous	3. To Distributors Faulty meters 3. Do you carry out meter bypasses for faulty meters? If so, under what circumstances do you carry out the meter bypasses	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
BUUK	Non-Confidential	Only in circumstances where the Supplier is unable to provide an out of hours response to the Customer and then, only if the Customer is registered as a vulnerable person, typically for medical reasons on our PSR database.	Only when the supplier cant be contacted and only for vulnerable customers.
Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	We would only consider by-passing a meter as a last resort in circumstances where (a) the customer concerned is vulnerable; (b) it is not possible to restore the supply by tightening/re-terminating the meter tail connections,	Only as a last resort where there is vulnerability identified on site.

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		replacing faulty meter tails or replacing the meter; and (c) it has not been possible to temporarily re-locate the customer.	
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)	Non-Confidential	<p>As noted in response to question 1, this action is only undertaken on very rare occasions. Energy Supplier unavailability and customer vulnerability are the primary considerations for this action.</p> <p>On the Islands in Scotland there is greater unavailability of Energy Suppliers metering staff or appointed contractors. This impacts the number of circumstances where this action is undertaken, as you will note in response 4.</p> <p>Metering is the responsibility of electricity Suppliers, however, as a Distribution Network Operator, we have a duty of care and would not want to leave a vulnerable customer off supply due to a metering fault. On occasions where the Energy Supplier does not have metering staff available we may look to apply a bypass as a short term solution until the Energy Supplier is able to attend and carry out the required work to get their customer back on to a metered supply</p>	Noted this is tied in with the response to Q1.
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	NGED will try all efforts not to bypass faulty meters, but in certain circumstances this will occur. Again it would only be a customer on the PSR that would be bypassed and dependant on electricity. Any bypass is logged with our contact centre at the time of installation.	Only as a last resort where there is vulnerability identified on site.
UKPN	Non-Confidential	Yes. For customers in a vulnerable situation and where we cannot make contact with their supplier to arrange the faulty meter to be changed.	Only as a last resort where there is vulnerability identified on site.

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SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	Yes, we will carry out meter bypasses for faulty meters if the customer is deemed vulnerable. Such bypasses are generally carried out out-of-hours and when it is not considered safe to leave the customer without a supply.	Only as a last resort where there is vulnerability identified on site.
<p>Working Group Conclusions: The DNOs who said they only carry out bypasses as a last resort where there is vulnerability identified on site.</p> <p>It was noted by 3 DNOs that these bypasses are only carried out if the supplier was unable to be contacted, ie out of hours.</p>			

Company	Confidential/ Anonymous	4. To Distributors Faulty meters 4. If you responded yes to Q1 please provide volumes for the number of meter bypasses for faulty meters you have performed in the last 12 months period (1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023).	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
BUUK	Non-Confidential	We completed 12-meter bypasses during between 1st November 2022 and 31st October 2023.	12
Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	Our records indicate that we have not carried out a meter by-pass for a faulty meter in the last 12 months i.e. between 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023.	zero

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Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)	Non-Confidential	<p>As noted in responses 1 and 3, we are not able to provide a breakdown of bypasses undertaken based on faulty meters vs non-faulty meters. The below figure represents meter bypasses undertaken between 1 November 2022 – 31 October 2023, and will have been undertaken for the reasons outlined in response 3.</p> <p>We have approximately 3.9 million customers and carried out 162 bypasses across all Suppliers during this period.</p> <p>We receive a vast number of calls from Supplier customers experiencing supply related issues for whom we do not undertake a meter bypass.</p>	162
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	Not easy to collate though it would be less than 400, approx. 100 per licence area.	Aprox 400, 100 for each licence area.
UKPN	Non-Confidential	Assumption is that Q3 was meant to have been referred to in this question. If so, the answer is four. If not, then the answer is zero.	noted
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	<p>SPEN volumes for the period January to date are:</p> <p>SPD is 431 – 84 are Bypass & 347 have dry meters installed.</p> <p>SPM is 93 – 11 are Bypass & 82 have dry meters installed</p> <p>Meter installs includes the DNO fitting single rate meters to get the customer back on supply as a short term solution until the supplier rectifies the metering issue.</p> <p>Note, the volumes are for faulty and non-faulty meters as the split is not available.</p>	<p>SPD is 431 – 84 are Bypass & 347 have dry meters installed.</p> <p>SPM is 93 – 11 are Bypass & 82 have dry meters installed</p>

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Working Group Conclusions: The conclusion was that these bypasses are very rare.

Company	Confidential/ Anonymous	5. To Suppliers Non-faulty meters 5. What are the volumes for non-faulty meter bypasses in your portfolio in the last 12 months period (1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023)? Split the volumes by GSP group and under what circumstances you have been made aware of the bypass and if the customer is on your PSR register?	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	<p>Currently, we have identified receiving confirmation of meter bypasses via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a D0001, or • a D0126, • various email addresses, and • SDEP under PT0031 – Contract Manager Query. <p>Given the variety of means we have received notifications, it has been/is a problematic task of properly accounting for all the notifications received and then filtering them as required. This is a good reason in and of its own for a formal process to be established. Some of the communications we receive note vulnerabilities, but don't usually identify if they were already on the PSR register. The reasons for the bypass vary, sometimes leaving very little information at all</p>	Stated they had been unable to quantify the values and highlights that if a formal process is adopted, it would close the gap of not being able to report on the volumes of bypasses.
BUUK	Non-Confidential	Not applicable.	Noted

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Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	No comment	Noted
UKPN	Non-Confidential	No comment	Noted
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
Working Group Conclusions:			

Company	Confidential/ Anonymous	6. To Suppliers Faulty meters 6. What are the volumes for faulty meter bypasses in your portfolio in the last 12 months period (1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023)? Split the volumes by GSP group and under what circumstances you have been made aware of the bypass and if the customer is on your PSR register?	Working Group Comments
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COLLATED RFI RESPONSES WITH WORKING GROUP COMMENTS

Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	Volumes of bypasses are hard to verify, as per the previous question. Most bypass notifications regarding faulty meters listed they were performed as the supplier was outside usual operating hours	As per Q5
BUUK	Non-Confidential	Not applicable.	Noted
Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	No	Noted
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SEN)	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	No comments	Noted
UKPN	Non-Confidential	No comment	Noted
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	N/A	Noted
Working Group Conclusions:			

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Company	Confidential/ Anonymous	7. Distributors and Suppliers. In cases where a Distributor has bypassed a meter, what mechanism should be followed to report such instances and what would be a reasonable timescale for reporting such bypasses	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	A new data flow would be the preferred method to report bypasses, as it would provide the easiest way to allow procedures to be created and provide the easiest means of reporting. The timescale for a Distributor to report a bypass should ideally be the next working day, two days max. To allow the fastest response for a Supplier to attend the site and fit a new meter.	New data flow. Highlights it would provide an easy way to report against. This would require REC involvement. States the window to contact the supplier to inform them of a bypass should ideally be the next day, two days max
BUUK	Non-Confidential	We would usually contact the Supplier the next business day and send flow D0136.	Stated the use the D0136 flow currently (irregaulr metering work) and this is sent the next day the work is completed.
Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	If a meter was by-passed, we would inform the supplier using the same process as we currently use for reporting to the supplier that we have provided the supplier with an urgent metering service, i.e. by email using the standard contact centre supplier contacts. We aim to send such urgent metering service emails by the end of the next working day.	By email using contact centre supplier contacts. These are sent by the end of the next working day.
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)	Non-Confidential	If metering faults are identified outside of the Energy Supplier's operating hours and a meter bypass is deemed to be required for a customer in a vulnerable situation or emergency circumstance, then SSEN is required to make the appropriate Supplier aware of such work via email. This would	By email.

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		include meter details such as serial number, current meter readings and date of bypass being applied. Suppliers would be prompted to contact their customer regarding removal of the bypass.	
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	The DNO should report to the supplier within the next working day where a bypass has been installed. It is not that easy to find the correct details or email account for suppliers to send the details.	States this should be reported to the supplier the net working day.
UKPN	Non-Confidential	We have a process in place followed by our Control Centre which coordinates these activities. See attached process flow for a description of this.	By email and call and reported the next working day.
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	The Metering Data Return form should be updated to allow information to be included detailing any action taken (e.g. if a meter bypass has been necessary), this can then follow the same process and timescales.	
Working Group Conclusions: The consensus was any bypasses should be communicated to suppliers the next working day. A range of methods are currently used to report this from email, SDEP, calls and in one instance, the sending of a D0136 flow			

Company	Confidential/Anonymous	8. Distributors and Suppliers 8. Any other comments?	Working Group Comments
Utilita Energy Limited	Non-Confidential	There have been instances that we have attended sites only to find that a bypass had previous taken place. A formal process should help avoid this and should be implemented as soon as possible to ensure all bypasses are	States a formal process for reporting bypasses is required and that they

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		<p>accounted for. A bypass should only be implemented as a last resort when a Supplier is unable to attend, and the meter is faulty. Or there are genuine safety concerns and action needs to occur as soon as possible. It should not be performed on a functional prepayment meter. The only exceptions should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a customer has a vulnerability that requires the use of electricity and is not on the PSR and is unable to directly contact their Supplier to inform them (as procedures should be in place with the Supplier to remotely switch this customer to credit mode when informed). DCUSA RFI DIF 70 Page 4 of 4 1.0 • Or, if work is required around the meter location and there is no other safe way to carry it out 	should only be carried out as a last resort.
BUUK	Non-Confidential	None.	Noted
Northern Powergrid	Non-Confidential	No	Noted
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SEN)	Confidential	We receive a vast number of calls from Supplier customers experiencing supply related issues for whom we do not undertake a meter bypass. The volume of calls we receive increases significantly during evenings and weekends when Suppliers do not have provisions for customers to contact them	Noted
National Grid Electricity Distribution	Non-Confidential	No comment	Noted

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UKPN	Non-Confidential	Authorisation of meter bypass is from the Duty Shift Manager – a single point of reference in our Control Centre for all three DNOs ensuring consistency.	Noted
SP Distribution plc and SP Manweb plc	Non-Confidential	The volume of emergency meter changes has increased substantially over recent months and the availability of a Supplier response service operating 24/7 is required to better manage customer needs once a meter change is identified.	Noted
<p>Working Group Conclusions:</p> <p>The sub group were not able to land on a method for reporting at this stage and agreed to reconvene in 2024 to review the merits of reporting via email, using SDEP, phone calls or a new or existing flow. It was also agreed that whilst the Ofgem change introducing an out of hours service obligation on suppliers would remove a large number of bypasses being carried out, a formal process would still be required for the exceptions where the DNO has to carry the bypass out.</p> <p>It was also agreed to explore sending suppliers an RFI asking what their friendly non disconnect hours are as this could help inform DNOs and engineers of when a PAYG meter is due to disconnect for non payment which may reduce bypass volumes as its believed some customers try to obtain a bypass when they have no credit or are running out of credit on a PAYG meter.</p>			