

# Request for DCUSA Party feedback February 2024

## DIF 70: Meter Bypasses

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### 1. Purpose of this Document

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to seek Party feedback to understand in what circumstances a Distributor (DNO/ IDNO) would perform a integral works on a meter where a supplier or other party would need to be made aware, the communication channel/platform between parties on when the this work is undertaken and also to understand what support suppliers offer to self-disconnecting customers so a Distributor (DNO/ IDNO) is aware of what options self-disconnecting customers have before deciding if metering work is required or not.
- 1.2 To respond to the questions posed in Section 3.1 of this document, please complete the RFI response form found in Attachment 1.

### 2. Summary

- 2.1 DIF 70 was discussed at a Standing Issues Group (SIG) meeting held on 27 October 2023. The original issues form can be found in Attachment 2 of this document.
- 2.2 The proposal states that Distributors are carrying out meter bypasses. It was noted by a member that they did not carry out meter bypasses for non-faulty meters and that they and other Distributors would likely only carry out a meter bypass for a faulty meter in exceptionally rare circumstances , for example, when the customer is vulnerable and receiving end of life care and is unable to be moved, and the customer/Distributor is unable to contact the responsible Supplier out of hours to fix the meter.
- 2.3 It was noted that at present there is no set way for DNOs / IDNOs to communicate meter bypasses to suppliers and MOPs and therefore there is a risk that the Supplier is unaware of meter bypasses.
- 2.4 It was noted that meter bypasses could potentially occur on faulty meters or non-faulty meters, and it was important to differentiate between them both. It was noted that Ofgem is making changes to Supplier licenses to require them to provide a 24-hour service for customers with faulty meters, which may mean the root cause of an issue is resolved, as customers would always be able to contact their supplier in the event of being off supply. It was also noted that, in the interim, the ENA is in discussions with Ofgem regarding what support they can provide to Suppliers over the forthcoming winter prior to the new licence conditions being implemented.

- 2.5 An initial RFI was issued to gain further information from the industry and the responses and conclusions to this initial RFI can be found within Attachment 3 of this document.
- 2.6 It was noted on review of the initial RFI responses that it is not only meter bypasses that create issues but other metering work such as meter exchanges, identification of a faulty or damaged meter and other issues such as damaged or loose meter tails.
- 2.7 It was also noted that understanding the support suppliers offer to self-disconnecting customer would also aid in a solution as it would help distributors to understand if the customer's supplier could be of help.
- 2.8 SIG members agreed that further understanding of the issue and supplier processes would aid in the development of a solution.
- 2.9 SIG members will use the responses to this RFI to aid them in determining next steps.

### 3. Feedback Request

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- 3.1 The SIG is keen to seek DCUSA Party views on the following:
  - 1. The SIG identified the following scenarios where they would expect a distributor to inform the supplier or other parties/agents that further action is required by them : meter bypass, meter exchange, informing of a faulty meter (blank display, cracked meter screen etc). Do you agree with these scenarios, and can you think of any others? Please provide further details.
  - 2. In a scenario where the distributor would need to inform a supplier or other parties/agents that further work is required, which is the best platform for this to be communicated via, e.g., SDEP, email, a dataflow or phone call?
  - 3. What other industry codes would be potentially impacted if a change was to mandate that a distributor must inform a party that further work is required?
  - 4. In the gas industry the UNC <sup>1</sup>permits the fitting of a gas meter by-pass subject to prescribed conditions and processes. With cross code engagement in mind, should any proposed solution for electricity meter bypasses be, to some extent, consistent with the solution present in the gas code.

#### **To Suppliers only**

- 5. What sort of support do you offer to self-disconnecting customers?
- 6. Do you have any friendly non-disconnect hours/days for PAYG customers and if so, what are those hours/days?

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<sup>1</sup> Transportation Principle Document M2.4, a gas meter bypass may be fitted in accordance with "GDN/PM/GT2" (as defined at M2.1.12 as the document entitled Management Procedures for Requesting a Gas Transporter to: Authorise for the Setting and Sealing of Regulators and Associated Safety Device(s) as published by the Transporter from time to time and can be found on the Energy Networks Association Website)

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**All**

7. Any other comments?

3.2 Please respond to the above questions by completing the consultation response form found in Attachment 1.