Data Communications Company

Price Cap Instruction Document

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Document control heading

Revision history

Revision date	Summary of changes	Changes marked	Version number
18/12/2023	First draft		V0.1
03/01/2024	Second draft		V0.2
12/03/2024	Third draft		V0.3
07/06/2024	Forth draft		V0.4
27/08/2024	Fifth draft, addition of DCC actions		V0.5
23/10/2024	Change Board voted to approve SEC MP253, for implementation November 2024 SEC Release. Where the SEC obligation becomes active 7 August 2025. Finalised as V1.0		V1.0

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1. Introduction

1.1. Document Purpose

1. This document has been published in accordance with Smart Energy Code (SEC) Appendix AB 'Service Request Processing Document'. It defines the obligations on SEC Parties during Price Cap Update Events (PCUE).

1.2. Change Control

2. In accordance with SEC Section Appendix AB 'Service Request Processing Document', DCC shall only make changes to this document where it has:

- undertaken reasonable consultation with SEC Parties and Sub-Committees regarding proposed changes;
- given due consideration to, and taken into account, any consultation responses received; and
- received approval from the SEC Panel to make such changes.

3. Following SEC Panel approval of any changes DCC shall publish an updated copy of this document on the DCC Website.

1.3. Management Strategy

4. While it is noted that any and all Service Reference Variants (SRV) related to PCUEs, as well as normal system traffic, should be processed by DCC systems as quickly as possible, there is a need to prioritise traffic to protect consumers and manage overall demand.

5. A considered approach to management of the PCUE traffic has been taken, in collaboration with Parties, which will help to distribute the system traffic across a longer time period. While spreading the system traffic across a longer time period helps to reduce peak demand it is also important to consider whether any consumer group needs to be prioritised, either for protecting that consumer groups' services or vulnerability, or for ensuring Supplier Parties can continue to serve the group with efficiency. Parties have provided insight into the requirements of consumer group prioritisation for these purposes.

6. The rules set out in this document will help to distribute PCUE traffic over a longer time period and prioritise that traffic in the following order:

    1. Prepayment consumers.
    2. Monthly billed credit consumers where the bill cycle ends on the PCUE date.
    3. Monthly billed credit consumers where the bill cycle ends on the day after the PCUE date.
    4. All other credit consumers.

7. The following rules require that Parties send SRs for these groups of consumers at a particular time depending on the PCUE date.

8. The rules also require Parties to consider the PCUE date, where specific actions are required should the PCUE date, or the day after the PCUE date, fall on the first working day of the week. These rules are in place on the understanding that prepayment vend activity is often greater on the first working day of the week following the non-working

day non-disconnect period. The rules help to ensure that prepayment vend activity is not negatively impacted by the PCUE activity.

9. These rules apply for domestic customers only. However, Parties should avoid high volume of traffic on the dates and times described below for their non-domestic customers.

2. Supplier Party Requirements – SMETS2

10. This section sets out the action Supplier Parties will take to manage the demand they place on DCC systems. This section relates to actions required for consumers who have SMETS2 meters. Supplier Parties will follow the requirements of this section. All times quoted below are in 24hr clock format.

2.1. Prepayment consumers

11. For SR 1.1.1 & SRV 1.2.1 on the day of the PCUE:

- Parties will execute only prepayment customer updates and complete them between 00:00-05:00. Noting the importance of tariff updates to this consumer group, SRs beyond 0500 are acceptable but Parties must take all reasonable steps to ensure their completion before 05:00.
- Parties will use Device Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these Device Future Dated SRVs between 00:00 and 05:00 of the PCUE date.
- Where the above action has been taken but On Demand updates are still required, Parties will evenly distribute them between 00:00-05:00.

2.2. Credit consumers monthly billed on the day of the Price Control Event

12. For SR 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 on the day of the PCUE:

- SEC Parties will execute only monthly billed customer updates (where the bill is due on the PCUE date), from 0500 onwards.
- Parties will use Device Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these Device Future Dated SRVs between 0500 and 2359 of the PCUE date.
- In order to safeguard prepayment vend activity, where the PCUE occurs on the first working day and the week, Parties will
    - evenly distribute the activation times of these SRVs between 0500-2359 but avoid the window 0600-1200;
    - will not send On Demand updates between the window 0600-1200.

2.3. Credit consumers monthly billed on the day after the Price Control Event

13. For SRV 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 on the day after the PCUE:

- Parties will execute monthly billed customer updates (where the bill is due on the day after the PCUE date), only from 0000 to 06:00. These can be resumed post 12:00 if required.
- Parties will use Device Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these Device Future Dated SRVs between 0000 and 0559 and after 12:01.
- In order to safeguard prepayment vend activity, where the PCUE occurs on a non-working day and the day after the PCUE is a working day, Parties will
    - evenly distribute the activation times of these SRVs but avoid the window 06:00-12:00.[1]

2.4. Other credit consumers

14. For SRV 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 on the day after the PCUE:

- Parties will begin the execution of credit customer updates from 1200.
- Parties will use Device Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these SRVs over a minimum period of two and a half days beginning at 12:00 on the day after the PCUE.

3. Supplier Party Requirements – SMETS1

15. This section sets out the action Supplier Parties will take to manage the demand they place on DCC systems. This section relates to actions requires to consumers who have SMETS1 meters. Supplier Parties will follow the requirements of this section. All times quoted below are in 24hr clock format.

3.1. Prepayment consumers

16. For SR 1.1.1 & SRV 1.2.1 on the day of the PCUE:

- Parties will execute only prepayment customer updates and complete them between 00:00 and 05:00. Noting the importance of tariff updates to this consumer group, SRVs beyond 05:00 are acceptable but Parties must take all reasonable steps to ensure their completion before 05:00.
- Parties will use Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these Device Future Dated SRVs between 00:00 and 05:00 of the PCUE date.
- Where the above action has been taken but On Demand updates are still required, Parties will evenly distribute them between 00:00-05:00.

[1] SEC Parties have highlighted the likely increase in Prepay vend activity on Day 2 as the non-disconnect period ends and consumers begin to top up.

3.2. Credit consumers monthly billed on the day of the Price Control Event

17. For SR 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 on the day of the PCUE:

- SEC Parties will execute only monthly billed customer updates (where the bill is due on the PCUE date), from 05:00 onwards
- Parties will use Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these Future Dated SRVs between 05:00 and 23:59 of the PCUE date.
- In order to safeguard prepayment vend activity, where the PCUE occurs on the first working day and the week, Parties will:
    - evenly distribute the activation times of these SRVs between 05:00-23:59 but avoid the window 06:00-12:00; and
    - will not send On Demand updates between the window 06:00-12:00.

3.3. Credit consumers monthly billed on the day after the Price Control Event

18. For SRV 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 on the day after the PCUE:

- Parties will execute monthly billed customer updates (where the bill is due on the day after the PCUE date), only from 00:00 to 06:00. These can be resumed post 12:00 if required.
- Parties will use Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these Device Future Dated SRVs between 00:00 and 05:59 and after 12:01.
- In In order to safeguard prepayment vend activity, where the PCUE occurs on a non-working day and the day after the PCUE is a working day, Parties will:
    - evenly distribute the activation times of these SRVs but avoid the window 06:00-12:00. 1

3.4. Other credit consumers

19. For SRV 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 on the day after the PCUE:

- Parties will begin the execution of credit customer updates from 1200.
- Parties will use Future Dated SRVs and evenly distribute the sending of these SRVs – they can be sent any time during the 30 calendar days preceding the PCUE date.
- Parties will evenly distribute the activation times of these SRVs over a minimum period of two and a half days beginning at 1200 on the day after the PCUE.

4. Supplier Party requirements - Other system demand / usage

20. For SRV 4.6.1

- SEC Parties will use scheduled 4.6.1 requests rather than On Demand requests to obtain price update meter readings.

21. For SRV 1.1.1 vs. SRV 1.2.1

- SEC Parties are encouraged to use SRV 1.2.1 in place of SRV 1.1.1 as SRV 1.2.1 is relatively smaller in size and returns fewer 8F66 alerts to SEC Parties.

22. DSP Overload Protection & On-Demand SRVs

- DSP Overload Protection is triggered by peak demand spikes in On-Demand traffic – and when activated it will restrict the flow of all On-Demand SRVs into DCC.
- SEC Parties must not use On Demand SRVs 1.1.1 or 1.2.1. to execute their updates.
- If DSP Overload Protection is activated, HTTP 503 errors will be returned to SEC Parties.
- This impacts On-Demand SRVs only – therefore SEC Parties who execute their price updates through On-Demand orchestrations may be particularly susceptible.
- These SRVs will NOT have been received by DCC and should be re-submitted, ideally after 30 minutes where practical to do so.

4.1. Non-essential activity

- Non-essential activities must be suspended on PCUE.
- Examples of essential activities include:
    - I&C,
    - CoS,
    - PPM actions,
    - any other actions that are required to be completed in short timescale (same day actions).

23. Parties are asked to consider their activity on the tariff update date, and where possible delay activity until a later date. This requirement should not stop or delay business activity that is required to be completed on the day of the tariff update.

5. DCC Actions

24. DCC will, where possible to do so, take steps to control the flow of Service Requests related to the PCUE in order to maintain service stability and protect price event outcomes.

25. Incidents will be managed in accordance with the established procedures.