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DP236

‘Commissioned Communication Hub SMI Status Remains as Pending’

Modification Report

Version 0.2

14 March 2023



About this document

This document is a draft Modification Report. It currently sets out the background, issue, and progression timetable for this modification, along with any relevant discussions, views and conclusions. This document will be updated as this modification progresses.

Contents

1. Summary.....	3
2. Issue.....	3
3. Assessment of the proposal	4
Appendix 1: Progression timetable	4
Appendix 2: Glossary	5

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1. Summary

This proposal has been raised by Chun Chen from the Data Communications Company (DCC).

When a Communications Hub is connected to the Smart Meter Wide Area Network (SM WAN), a notification known as 'Birth Event' is automatically sent to the Data Service Provider (DSP). The DSP will then update the Communications Hub Function (CHF) status from 'Pending' to 'Commissioned' and the Gas Proxy Function (GPF) from 'Pending' to 'Installed Not Commissioned' in the Smart Meter Inventory (SMI). If the 'Birth Event' notification is not received by the DSP, the CHF and GPF statuses are not updated in the SMI.

This means that the SMI status can be inconsistent and incorrect, which can lead to problems with subsequent processing with either Service User or DCC business processes. This failure to update the SMI status does not cause any immediate or direct impact to communication with the CHF or GPF. However there is a SEC compliance issue which requires the removal of any 'Pending' Devices that have held that status for more than 36 months. This requirement does not take into account other information which may indicate that the Communications Hub is active (installed and commissioned). The DCC has advised that there are approximately 100,000 cases for Communication Service Provider (CSP) South and Central, and 54,000 for CSP North where the CHF or GPF status has been pending for 36 months or more.

This issue impacts Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications 2 (SMETS2) Devices only.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

As part of the installation of a Communications Hub, when it is connected to the SM WAN for the first time, a notification known as 'Birth Event' is automatically sent to the DSP. The DSP will then update the CHF status from 'Pending' to 'Commissioned' and the GPF from 'Pending' to 'Installed Not Commissioned' in the SMI. If the 'Birth Event' notification is not received by the DSP, the CHF and GPF statuses are not updated in the SMI.

The role of the Communication Service Provider

CSPs have a requirement to notify the DSP upon a Communications Hub's first-time connection to the SM WAN via the DSP commissioning Automated Programming Interface (API). Please note that the Communications Hub generates the 'Birth Event' automatically, which then passes through the relevant CSP's systems to the DSP. This allows the DSP SMI status to be updated for the CHF from 'Pending' to 'Commissioned' and for the GPF from 'Pending' to 'Installed Not Commissioned'. Among other functionality, this status is used by DCC for billing Service Users and by Service Users to confirm that the Communications Hub is connected to the SM WAN.

What is the issue?

Although this failure to update the SMI status does not cause any immediate or direct impact to communication with the CHF or GPF, it does mean that the SMI status can be inconsistent and incorrect, which can lead to problems with subsequent processing with either Service User or DCC business processes. It will then be a SEC compliance issue to require the removal of any 'Pending' Devices that have held that status for more than 36 months.

The DCC has advised that there are approximately 100,000 cases for CSP South and Central, and 54,000 for CSP North where the CHF or GPF status has been pending for 36 months or more.

A facility is provided via Service Request (SR) 8.4 'Update Inventory' to correct the SMI status for the CHF or GPF, however this requires the Service User to identify the situation and to create and send the SR 8.4 request. This is not practical within the timeframes of an onsite Install & Commission (I&C) and is not being carried out by Service Users.

What is the impact this is having?

The SMI status is inconsistent and incorrect, and this can lead to problems with subsequent processing (either Service User or DCC business processes), and then leads to SEC non-compliance and the subsequent requirement for removing any 'Pending' Devices older than 36 months. These functioning Communications Hubs could be installed and commissioned; however current requirements will result in their removal from consumers' premises.

Impact on consumers

The removal of functioning Communications Hubs that have been left in a pending state for 36 months will be of major inconvenience to the consumer.

3. Assessment of the proposal

Areas for assessment

Sub-Committee input

SECAS will engage the Chairs from the Operations Group (OPSG), the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC), the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) and the Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority (SMKI PMA) to confirm what input is required from these forums. SECAS believes the following Sub-Committees will need to provide the following input to this modification:

Sub-Committee input	
Sub-Committee	Input sought
OPSG	Does this issue have any operational impact on the smart metering infrastructure?
SMKI PMA	No anticipated SMKI PMA impacts.
SSC	Does this issue or potential solution have any security impacts?

Sub-Committee input	
TABASC	Does this issue or potential solution have any technical or business architecture impacts?

Appendix 1: Progression timetable

This Draft Proposal was raised on 20 February 2023. SECAS will present the proposal to the CSC on 21 March 2023 for initial comment.

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	20 Feb 2023
Presented to Sub-Committees for initial comment	Feb – Mar 2023
Presented to CSC for initial comment	21 Mar 2023
<i>Discussed with Sub-Committee Chairs</i>	21 Mar 2023
<i>CSC converts Draft Proposal to Modification Proposal</i>	18 Apr 2023

Appendix 2: Glossary

This table lists all the acronyms used in this document and the full term they are an abbreviation for.

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
API	Automated Programming Interface
CHF	Communications Hub Function
CSP	Communication Service Provider
DCC	Data Communications Company
DSP	Data Service Provider
GPF	Gas Proxy Function
I&C	Install & Commission
OPSG	Operations Group
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SM WAN	Smart Metering Wide Area Network
SMI	Smart Metering Inventory
SMKI PMA	Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
SR	Service Request
SSC	Security Sub-Committee
TABASC	Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee