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DP241 'Interoperability Checker Update'

Modification Report

Version 0.1

5 May 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.

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1. Summary

This proposal has been raised by Robin Seaby from the Data Communications Company (DCC).

Amendments are required to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Interoperability Checker, to improve the consumers' user experience and provide additional information on Smart Meter availability. The current generalised results based on Device Models and outdated Supplier Interoperability Data contribute to cause confusion and inconsistency. This Draft Proposal recommends assessing improvements that would provide more personalised results based on actual transaction data and utilising the DCC's location-based data to provide additional information to consumers waiting for Smart Meter installations.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

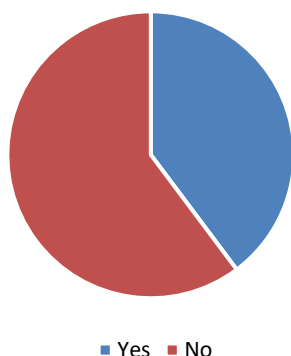
The Interoperability Checker is a tool available on the Citizens Advice website that advises consumers on whether their Smart Meter is operating in Smart Mode and which Suppliers they could switch to while keeping or regaining Smart functionality. The data used to populate the Interoperability Checker is based on the Responsible Supplier's indication of which Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specification (SMETS) Device Models it is capable of operating.

The Smart Energy Code (SEC) Section H16 'Provision of Data by Suppliers to the DCC' requires the DCC to collaborate with Citizens Advice to provide the tool.

What is the issue?

Currently, the Interoperability Checker's results may not reflect a consumer's actual experience with their Smart Meter. This inconsistency has resulted in confusion among some consumers. Citizens Advice ran a survey from 17 November 2022 to 10 March 2023. There were 88 responses. One question that was asked was "Was the tool helpful to you?" 35 respondents answered "Yes" and 53 answered "No".

Citizen Advice Bureau consumer feedback



The Interoperability Checker Service has issues with providing accurate information to consumers on their Smart Meter's capabilities and the likelihood of having one installed. The current generalised results are based on Device Model instead of personalised information and contributed to confusion and inconsistency in results.

Comments from consumers who completed the survey included:

- *"The pages (for both meters) say my meter is working but my account says that no meter readings since 24/10/22."*
- *"It said it cannot get readings, but my supplier does get them. I know my meter is SMETS1 and want to see if it's been upgraded"*
- *"info taken from gas and electric bills together with postcode but said i was not connected to smart meter network - wrong i am!"*
- *"It says my meter SHOULD be working in Smart mode not IS WORKING so I suspect the tool just checked that a Smart meter was installed, not that it was actually signalling readings back to my supplier. Waste of time."*

When asked what could make the tool more useful, suggestions from consumers included:

- *"Absolute Confirmation that the meters are sending data."*
- *"Yes. How do I know it is functioning correctly. That would help."*
- *"yes , a less ambiguous answer to whether or not my smets1 meter had been upgraded. If this can't be answered via this tool then that should be made clear ."*
- *"An answer from the tool that discusses the possibilities why there is no reply from the meter."*

What is the impact this is having?

The lack of an independent source of personalised information for consumers waiting for a Smart Meter installation also leads to queries being raised to the DCC. There is a need to improve the

Interoperability Checker's user experience and provide additional information on the likelihood of having a Smart Meter installed.

Impact on consumers

Consumers are impacted negatively due to the Interoperability Checker's results not reflecting a consumer's actual experience with their Smart Meter. The use of Device Models instead of personalised transaction data and reliance on outdated Supplier Interoperability Data can cause confusion and inconsistencies for consumers. This lack of accurate information can lead to frustration and potentially prevents consumers from making informed decisions about their energy usage. Furthermore, the absence of a reliable source of personalised information for consumers awaiting Smart Meter installations can result in a high number of inquiries to the DCC, creating further inconvenience and delays.

3. Assessment of the proposal

Areas for assessment

Would updating Supplier Interoperability Data be better for user experience?

To make the Interoperability Checker more user-friendly and accurate, the Proposer suggests updating the Supplier Interoperability Data using recorded transaction data, and utilising transaction data to establish the status of a Smart Meter. The Proposer believes that this will allow users to get personalised and tailored results based on their specific needs. The Proposer also believes this will save time and frustration and help users make informed decisions about their energy usage. This option will be assessed along with any other options during the Refinement Process.

Would leveraging the DCC's location-based data to provide personalised information to consumers be better for user experience?

This modification aims to provide additional information to consumers who do not have a Smart Meter installed. It also proposes to leverage the DCC's location-based data. By using this data, the DCC can provide independent sources of personalised information to consumers, without requiring queries to Suppliers or the DCC. This will reduce the burden on Parties' customer service teams and ensure that consumers are able to access the information they need quickly and easily. Additionally, this modification aims to create a user-friendly interface that allows consumers to easily access this information and make informed decisions about their energy consumption. Overall, the aim is to improve the customer experience and provide added value to consumers.

Sub-Committee input

SECAS will engage with 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	OPSG to advise on operational requirements needed to improve the Interoperability Checker's user experience
SMKI PMA	No input required
SSC	Seek input on whether any necessary adjustments or assessments should be taken into consideration before progressing
TABASC	To review if there are any potential risks or challenges that could arise during implementation

Appendix 1: Progression timetable

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	5 May 2023
Presented to CSC for initial comment	16 May 2023
CSC converts Draft Proposal to Modification Proposal	16 May 2023
<i>Modification discussed with OPSG</i>	<i>1 Jun 2023</i>
<i>Modification discussed with SSC</i>	<i>13 Jun 2023</i>
<i>Modification discussed with Working Group</i>	<i>5 Jul 2023</i>
<i>Modification discussed with TABASC</i>	<i>6 Jul 2023</i>
<i>Preliminary Assessment requested</i>	<i>10 Jul 2023</i>
<i>Update provided to CSC</i>	<i>19 Sep 2023</i>

Italics denote planned events that could be subject to change

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
DCC	Data Communications Company
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CSC	Change Sub-Committee
OPSG	Operations Group
SEC	Smart Energy Code

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
SECAS	The Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SMETS	Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specification
SMKI PMA	Smart Metering Key Infrastructure Policy Management Authority
SSC	Security Sub-Committee
TABASC	Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee