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Action:	For Discussion

OPSG Issues Log – Progress Report

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the status of actively managed entries on the Operations Group (OPSG) Issues Log, together with any activities planned to take place during the following month.

The OPSG is requested to note the contents of the paper and approve the recommended next steps.

Actively Managed Issues

This section presents the Issues which are being actively monitored by OPSG.

No meters on Hubs

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

Some Communications Hubs (CH) are being commissioned and appear on the Smart Meter Inventory (SMI) as not having any meters connected to them. This could indicate that some of the information held within the SMI is incorrect. Users are responsible for ensuring that the data held within the SMI is correct.

Status

The Users which are responsible for the greatest number of installed CHs without a meter attached to them in the SMI have been identified and the DCC is in discussion with those Users. Three causes have been identified:

- a) Users are not completing the install & Commission process. For example, they send the Service Request (SR) 8.11 but not do not follow up by sending SRs 6.X, which leads to a change in ownership status of Meters;
- b) Users may install a CH but encounter issues during the Commissioning process which means they need to leave the site and arrange a second visit to fix the issue. During the time between the two site visits, the CH could appear as not having a meter associated with it; and
- c) Users may have a significant number of CHs in their warehouses for triage and the meters used during triage may not have been properly decommissioned.

The DCC has identified around 109k instances which fall into the three categories set out above and is working with the relevant Users to lower their numbers.

Next Steps

Users have mentioned that they are starting decommissioning activity imminently; the DCC is to regenerate the data and quantify the improvement to OPSG.

Multiple GSMEs per site

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

The DCC SMI shows multiple Gas Meters at a single site. This could indicate that some of the information held within the SMI is incorrect. Users are responsible for ensuring that the data held within the SMI is correct.

Status

DCC Service Centre informs Users every week, advising them of the list of MPxNs in their estate that have duplicate entries, and that the entries should be cleared with priority. A fortnightly Summary Report is also completed by the Technical Operating Centre (TOC) to identify the most negative trends (in terms of Service User performance).

Next Steps

DCC to continue reporting to and raising the issue with the top offending Users and encourage them to take corrective actions. If improvements are not seen for certain Users, this issue will be escalated to OPSG.

Spurious Alerts

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

Parties are experiencing large numbers of spurious Alerts. Impacts range from overloading of Wide Area Network (WAN) systems, delays in fault diagnoses, and breach of Party obligations.

Status

Following a release of a new CH Firmware Version, a significant number (approximately 41 million) of 8F3Es have cleared from the WAN network. There are a few live assets that still need to be updated to this Firmware version, which are responsible for the majority of the outstanding 8F3Es. Following the release of R2 Firmware, the 8F12 Alert volume has significantly declined.

Next Steps

The DCC is working with identified Service Users above to further reduce 8F3Es and is monitoring the cumulative volume of both Alert types. We expect these numbers to continue to drop.

Communications Hub Exceptions

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

The DCC's reports to OPSG include a large number of Exception reports, which appear to have multiple causes. Impacts vary from non-functioning Home Area Networks (HANs) and Wide Area Networks (WANs), to lack of connectivity for multiple consumers.

Status

There are various types of Exceptions; the four main types are:

- Installations being aborted by the Service User, without corresponding SRs (8.14.2/8.14.3);
- Service Users not following Communications Hub Installation and Maintenance Support Materials (CHISM) recommendations. Either:
 - they do not install the recommended CH, fail to install an aerial, or install in areas against the recommendations of the WAN Coverage Database; or
 - they provide insufficient address details (or none at all) for the MPxN field in SR 8.14.1.
- Communication Service Provider North (CSP N) see CHs appear on its network but then do not see any traffic to or from the CHs for more than 10 days.

Next Steps

Breakdowns by SEC Party have been identified, and the DCC is to continue monitoring the scale of Exceptions. Weekly high value incident workshops with Suppliers have been instituted to gain traction on decommissioning efforts with the identified parties. There is also a simultaneous action to correct misalignments in data between CSPs for incidents raised, a problem that is slowing progress on resolving Exception based incidents. This data cleansing is approximately 70% complete.

Incorrect DNO certificates on meter

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

Incorrect (or no) certificates are being placed on meters, preventing the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) from contacting the affected meters.

Status

Missing Certificates:

DCC Problem Record PBI000000121298 refers for the requirement for Service Users to progress SRV 6.15.1. TOC Data, as of Monday 8 February, evidenced a figure of 62,000 ESMEs across 63 separate Service Users required to progress this Service Request. In addition to Guidance Notes, TOC Reports scaling the issue are generated and uploaded to customer SharePoint each week.

Incorrect Certificates:

Initial TOC Data, as of Monday 8 February, provided a combined figure of ~17,683 failures (incorporating both SRV 6.15.1 and SR 6.21 failures) in the Production environment.

Next Steps

DCC to invoke investigations against each of these issues to determine the failure cause and progress toward full resolution.

Capacity Management Concerns

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

OPSG members have expressed concerns around capacity management of the DCC systems and networks following various recent incidents. There is a further concern that DCC and the CSP information is not always consistent.

OPSG should have a clear understanding of exactly what these capacities and restrictions are in the entire end to end architecture, but do not feel they currently have sufficient visibility of the situation and roadmap to provide confidence.

Status

[MP119 'CH Alert Storm Consideration'](#) was discussed at the Working Group in January and will be taken to the Smart Metering Design Group (SMDG), to discuss the proposed solution as part of a wider project of network improvements being undertaken by CSP N.

Next Steps

OPSG to continue monitoring progress against these Modifications.

Power Outage Reporting

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

Current Power Outage Reporting Performance Measures may not be appropriate, leading to a lack of information reliability for DNOs.

Status

DCC is in conversation with the DNOs on this issue, on redefining the obligation measure, addressed via SEC modification proposal [DP096 'DNO Power Outage Alerts'](#) (currently in Development stage). The Modification has been put on hold as the DCC completes multiple projects related to the issue identified, approved via the Delivery Hub Working Group.

Next Steps

Following TABASC recommendation for the Draft Proposal to be converted into a Modification Proposal and enter the Refinement Process, this Proposal is due to go to the Change Sub-Committee in the next couple of weeks. A Working Group will then be held to discuss the proposed solution.

Forecasting Obligations

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

The current requirement to provide the DCC with message volume forecasts is difficult for Suppliers to comply with. Additionally, there are also discrepancies in the numbers of Service Requests reported by Parties and the actual demand observed over the DCC networks.

Status

The proposed way forward is for the DCC to use its internal data to predict demand and volume, and for the Users to confirm those DCC produced forecasts (and be held to those forecasts). This Modification [MP116 'Service Request Forecasting'](#) has entered the Refinement Process. DCC are working on applying machine learning to their SR Forecast Models; currently this model is under test.

Next Steps

Following from the work to improve forecast accuracy, the DCC will work with SECAS to create a second draft of the legal text before returning to the Working Group in March.

Stability within the HAN

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

The stability of the Home Area Network (HAN) is often disrupted by a Hub reboot. A primary operational impact is that this process likely kicks the Display Device off the HAN, and results in manual Rejoin processes, potentially also causing a significant number of Alerts.

Status

The Technical Specifications Issue Resolution Sub-group (TSIRS) will be investigating HAN Stability moving forward and have established a HAN Stability Tracker (HANSIT) with the DCC. As per the latest HANSIT, the (anonymised) Device/Device combinations for which the defect and the scale of the issue have been identified are:

- MM¹ (Stack related Issues & Meter Defects): 5700
- MM2 (Meter APS ACK & Meter Defects): 42300
- MM3/CH¹² (Meter Tunnel Defect): 1400
- MM3/CH2 (Unknown Reason for Drops): 5485
- MM4 (Meter Defects): 3900

The total current number of ESMes dropping off the HAN is estimated to be approximately 59k.

Next Steps

The DCC to perform Lab Analysis and Root Cause Analysis on the observed combinations, and to continue reporting on the metrics identified above. The expectation is that, by the end of Q3 2021, mass roll out new Firmware on Communications Hubs and ESMes will cause a significant reduction in the numbers observed above.

Alerts with Duplicate Headers

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

Some DNOs have highlighted that they are receiving Alerts with duplicate Originator Counters (and therefore duplicate Headers) from live ESMes. The impact is that DNOs are unable to differentiate between real instances and duplicate instances of the Alert (assuming the Meter is behaving unexpectedly), and therefore, may not be able to act upon any critical information contained within the Alert.

¹ MM is used as an acronym for Meter Manufacturer

² CH is used as an acronym for Communications Hub

Managed by

Status

TS1353 was raised to address this issue, however, following clarification that Meters are not expected to produce duplicate Originator Counters, this issue has been closed. The DCC has narrowed the issue down to a single meter manufacturer and Firmware version. Relevant logs have been sent to this party to aid internal testing and to investigate potential meter defects.

Next Steps

DCC has weekly calls with the aforementioned manufacturer, and expect to hear back shortly regarding its investigations.

‘Other User’ Data Retrieval

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

A few Parties acting in the ‘Other User’ role encounter issues while retrieving data from Devices, especially when they ask for 13 months half hourly data via SR 4.8.1. The provision of up-to 13 months’ worth of data to Other Users is mandated by the SEC, so a lack of this functionality implies non-compliance to regulation.

Status

Testing of the Other User role in DCC’s Manchester labs concluded that a single meter manufacturer was at fault. This party has now accepted that their Device is defective, mentioning that their plan is to correct this defect in their next Firmware release (scheduled to be tested towards the middle of year).

Next Steps

An additional problem that was identified in this investigation is that some live assets continue using older Firmware, despite there being newer Firmware that addresses a lot of faults. DCC and SECAS to investigate with OPSG the challenge of deploying newer Firmware onto Devices in the field as quickly as possible.

MPxN issues on Churned/Crossed Meters

Current Stage



Issue and Impact

Some ESMEs in the SMI are associated with the wrong MPANs. This presents a problem, especially during a CoS instance, following which Supplier communications to the Devices are impeded. Neither the gaining nor the losing Supplier is able to correct the wrong association via SR 8.4.

Status

This issue was discussed at OPSG 43, where a process update was provided by the DCC, and at DRF, where a manual correction was agreed as the correction method that was required by SEC Appendix AC and that was most suited. An alternative was to introduce DCC/DUIC changes, which were not pursued because of the potential security implications.

Next Steps

DCC to request Industry's help to understand the scale of the issue and provide Guidance to ensure that accurate processes are followed by all parties.

Recommendation & Next Steps

The OPSG is requested to:

- **NOTE** the contents of this paper; and
- **APPROVE** the recommended next steps for each issue.

Abhay Soorya

SECAS Team

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