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MP156 'Unit Inconsistency'

Modification Report

Version 0.5

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Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer
communication

592



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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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This document also has tone annex:

- **Annex A** contains the request for information (RFI) responses.

Contact

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1. Summary

This proposal has been raised by David Walsh from the Data Communications Company (DCC).

For DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS) Tables 97 and 98, the Maximum Meter Balance and Maximum Credit Threshold are measured in millipence (1,000th of a pence or cent) and this is also true for Credit Maximum Credit Threshold and Maximum Credit Max Meter Balance in Message Mapping Catalogue (MMC) Table 101. This differs for the Great Britain Companion Specification (GBCS), where Table 14.1 measures Maximum Credit Threshold and Maximum Meter Balance Threshold in Currency Units (whole currency units only).

On 2 February 2022 the Proposer stated they have decided to withdraw the Modification in accordance with the Right to Withdraw provisions in SEC Section D.

2. Issue

What are the current arrangements?

The Maximum Credit Threshold is set by the Supplier as the maximum total credit value that can be recorded on the Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME) or the Gas Smart Metering Equipment (GSME). Its value is interpreted by the Device in Currency Units (either pound sterling or euro).

There is currently a discrepancy between the unit values stated in DUIS Tables 97 and 98, MMC Table 101 and the unit values in GBCS Table 14.1. This is causing an issue for Suppliers where the value they set can be interpreted as a much larger sum of money by the Device.

SEC Appendix AD 'DCC User Interface Specification'

DUIS Tables 97 and 98 state the Max Meter Balance Threshold and Max Credit Threshold is in 1,000th (thousandths) of a pence or euro cent (0.001p).

UpdatePrepayConfigElectricity Definition

Data Item	Description / Valid Set	Type	Mandatory	Default	Units
MaxMeterBalance	The Meter Balance threshold in Currency Units above which an Add Credit Command is rejected.	xs:int	Yes	None	1000 th pence / cent
MaxCreditThreshold	The maximum credit which can be applied by any Add Credit Command	xs:int	Yes	None	1000 th pence / cent

Table 1 : UpdatePrepayConfigElectricity (sr: UpdatePrepayConfigElec) data items

UpdatePrepayConfigGas Definition

Data Item	Description / Valid Set	Type	Mandatory	Default	Units
MaxMeterBalance	The Meter Balance threshold in Currency Units above which an Add Credit Command is rejected.	xs:unsignedInt	Yes	None	1000 th pence / cent
MaxCreditThreshold	The maximum credit which can be applied by any Add Credit Command	xs:unsignedInt	Yes	None	1000 th pence / cent

Table 2 : UpdatePrepayConfigGas(sr: UpdatePrepayConfigGas) data items

SEC Appendix AF ‘Message Mapping Catalogue’

The same logic applies to MMC Table 101:

Specific Body Data Items

Data Item	Description / Valid Set	Type	Units	Sensitivity
CreditMaxCreditThreshold	Maximum amount of credit permitted per top up.	xs:integer	1000 th pence / cent	Unencrypted
MaxCreditMaxMeterBalance	Maximum amount of credit permitted on the meter.	xs:integer	1000 th pence / cent	Unencrypted

Table 3 : Read Prepayment Configuration MMC Output Format Body data items

SEC Schedule 8 ‘Great Britain Companion Specification’

DUIS Tables 97 and 98 and MMC Table 101 are inconsistent with GBCS Table 14.1, which states that the Maximum Credit Threshold and Maximum Meter Balance Threshold are to be interpreted by the Device in whole currency units only (pounds or euros):

Defined Term	Meaning
Maximum Credit Threshold	Shall be the maximum value of any single Prepayment Top Up. Its value shall be interpreted by the Device in Currency Units (whole currency units only)
Maximum Meter Balance Threshold	Shall be the maximum total credit value recorded on the ESME / GSME. Its value shall be interpreted by the Device in Currency Units (whole currency units only)

Table 14.1: Meanings of Defined Terms

Current DCC processing for SMETS1

The Maximum Credit Threshold and Maximum Meter Balance Threshold are not part of Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications (SMETS) 1 functionality.

For SMETS1, Meter Manufacturers' Devices behave in the below way:

- Aclara – Holds the value in whole currency units on the meter (for ESME and GSME). Instant Energy is received in millipence and converted to whole currency units
- Elster – Holds the value in millipence on meter, aligned with the DUIS
- Itron – MaxMeterBalance and MaxCreditThreshold are not supported
- Secure – Holds the value in millipence on meter, aligned with the DUIS
- L+G – Holds the value in millipence on meter, aligned with the DUIS

This indicates that for SMETS1, the DCC System aligns with DUIS.

What is the issue?

During User Integration Testing (UIT) for the SMETS2, an issue was raised by a customer who highlighted an inconsistency between the DUIS & the MMC and the actual DCC System behaviour for Max Credit Threshold and Maximum Meter Balance within Service Request (SR) 2.1 for SMETS2 meters (which aligns to what is stated in GBCS Table 14.1).

This issue has been previously raised with the Technical Specification Issue Resolution Sub-group (TSIRS). The behaviour of the DCC Total System for SMETS2 is in line with the GBCS. As per the explanation to the [TSIRS document TS0319](#), published in January 2016, the units of measure for both Maximum Credit Threshold and Maximum Meter Balance in Commands to ESME and GSME are whole numbers of pounds or euros.

- The DCC populates the values in the GBCS Command (to set the values on a Device) using the same values as supplied by the DCC User in the corresponding fields in the Service Request.
- The DCC takes the values in the GBCS Response (when they are read from the Device) and places the same values in the corresponding fields of the Parse & Correlate (P&C) XML output.

Therefore, the units of the corresponding fields in the Service Request and P&C XML output are also integers of pounds or euros. The relevant Anomaly Detection Attributes (ADA) values are also integers of pounds or euros.

What is the impact this is having?

Without this correction, incidents (error messages) will occur due to the inconsistency between the DUIS and the GBCS. This will result in DCC Users receiving error messages when the described scenario occurs. The issue can also result in Suppliers becoming financially impacted, which has already been experienced by a User when their meter interpreted the MaxCreditThreshold as ten times what was intended.

Impact on consumers

The Proposer has stated that there is no known impact on Consumers.

3. Assessment of the proposal

Observations on the issue

Technical Specification Issue Resolution Sub-Group

The issue this modification aims to address has been discussed previously with the TSIRS. An instance was given where a Supplier believed that it had set the MaxCreditThreshold to £500; however, it was reported that a top-up of £5,368 had been accepted and added to the meter balance. The issue arose from the Supplier working to the DUIS document, meaning that the Max Meter Balance Threshold and Max Credit Threshold is measured in millipence, whereas the meter adhered to the GBCS. This resulted in the meter interpreting the Supplier's input as 100 times what was intended. This is causing additional work and the DCC is unable to resolve the customer's issue without clarification.

The DCC confirmed that it populates the values in the GBCS Command using the same values as supplied by the DCC User in the corresponding fields in the Service Request. Furthermore, the DCC takes the values in the GBCS response and places the same values in the corresponding fields of the P&C XML output. This means that the units of the corresponding fields in the Service Request and P&C XML output are also in whole numbers of pounds or euros. As a result, the values are 100,000 times greater than the 1,000th of a pence or cent stated in the DUIS and the MMC.

Change Sub-Committee

SECAS presented the Proposal to the Change Sub-Committee (CSC) for initial comment on 30 March 2021. An RFI was decided as the next step to understand the scale of the issue.

No further comments were received from the other SEC Sub-Committees during the Development Stage.

Following the RFI, SECAS returned to the CSC with the recommendation that the Draft Proposal is converted into a Modification Proposal and enters the Refinement Process. The CSC agreed with this progression.

A comment was received from a meter Manufacturer, regarding how urgent the modification was. SECAS responded that this modification is categorised as 'Low Priority' as per the SECAS Prioritisation Matrix. Further comments were made by a Network Party, requesting that the cost-benefit analysis is drawn out once a solution has been provided. They did however state that as a Network Party, they are not impacted by the issue.

Request for information – the scale of impact on Parties

Following initial feedback from the CSC and other SEC Sub-Committees, it was agreed that SECAS would issue an RFI. The intent of the RFI was to understand the scale of the issue and the impact it has on SEC Parties. SECAS received three responses to the RFI. All respondents were Large Suppliers.

Two respondents stated that the issue had no impact on them. One stated that their Maximum Meter Balance and Maximum Credit Thresholds were large numbers and are set in whole integer units on meters. The other respondent stated that if the Proposed Solution results in changes to the DUIS and/or the MMC, there will likely be an impact on the Party due to current processes.

The third respondent confirmed that the issue identified impacts them. They stated that they currently apply the Maximum Meter Balance Threshold using the millipence calculation which they believe is then misinterpreted to a significantly higher amount. Furthermore, they commented that it is the same for Maximum Credit threshold, however they have internal controls in place which prevent a consumer from topping up above a set amount.

Appendix 1: Progression timetable

MP156 has now entered the Refinement Process. SECAS will work with the Proposer to develop the business requirements, before discussing them with the Service Providers at the Requirements Workshop.

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	22 Feb 2021
Presented to SEC Sub-Committees for initial comment	Mar 2021
Presented to CSC for initial comment	30 Mar 2021
Request for information	23 Apr – 17 May 2021
Presented to CSC for final comment and conversion to a Modification Proposal	29 Jun 2021
Proposed Solution and business requirements developed with Proposer and DCC	Jul 2021
Business requirements discussed at Requirements Workshop	26 Jul 2021
Business requirements discussed with Working Group	4 Aug 2021
Business requirements discussed with TABASC	5 Aug 2021
Preliminary Assessment requested	9 Aug 2021
Preliminary Assessment returned	27 Aug 2021
Update provided to CSC	28 Sep 2021

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
ADA	Anomaly Detection Attributes
CSC	Change Sub-Committee

Glossary	
Acronym	Full term
DCC	Data Communications Company
DUIS	DCC User Interface Specification
ESME	Electricity Smart Metering Equipment
GBCS	Great Britain Companion Specification
GSME	Gas Smart Metering Equipment
MMC	Message Mapping Catalogue
P&C	Parse & Correlate
RFI	Request for information
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SMETS	Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications
SR	Service Request
TSIRS	Technical Specification Issue Resolution Sub-Group
XML	Extensible Markup Language