



5 May 2021

Supplier Parties, the DCC, the Authority (Ofgem), the SEC Panel, other SEC Parties and other interested parties

Dear Colleague,

SMART METERING IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME: DIRECTION THAT THE INTEROPERABILITY CHECKER SERVICE SHALL BE ACTIVATED FROM 12 MAY 2021

1. On the 16 January 2020, Government confirmed it would be introducing an Interoperability Checker Service that would endure during the migration period of SMETS1 smart meters. Associated regulatory changes came into effect in March 2020. These changes came on the back of a consultation that took place between 11 September 2019 and 14 October 2019.
2. The Interoperability Checker Service makes certain information available to consumers on request from a date specified in a direction by the Secretary of State. Access to this information will enable consumers to establish whether they have an enrolled Smart Metering System, whether it is a SMETS1 or SMETS2 installation and, in the case of SMETS1, identify which energy suppliers have indicated they are able to operate their enrolled meter in 'smart mode'.
3. Citizens Advice (CA) and Citizens Advice Scotland are an independent non-profit, consumer focused advisory service who will act as the host provider for the Interoperability Checker Service and be responsible for consumer messaging provided by the tool. CA plan to make the Interoperability Checker Service available via their website to energy consumers from 12 May 2021.
4. The Data Communications Company (DCC) has developed and built the data API that has subsequently been provided to CA. The DCC engaged with energy suppliers to confirm the process for submitting information to populate the data API from April to June 2020. Training materials on the process were released to all relevant Energy Suppliers in August 2020 together with bilateral sessions that were offered to support the submission of information to the Interoperability Checker Service.
5. Following scrutiny of the end-to-end system, the DCC's Chief Information Security Office (CISO) and the Security Sub-Committee (SSC) have confirmed that there are no security issues associated with the design of the checker that should impact go live. Additionally, DCC has put in place a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) to

minimise any data protection risks. Information to end users on the DPIA is available on Citizen's Advice website.

6. CA provided stakeholders with an opportunity to review the energy consumer journey in a consultation issued on 3 June 2020. CA has published a summary of the consultation responses they received and how they responded to those responses.
7. The messaging to the tool has also been informed by customer user testing carried out by CA to ensure the tool meets the needs of consumers. This included testing of pre-development designs using a prototype and testing of the fully developed tool following the completion of initial research to understand the requirements for users. To raise customer awareness of the Interoperability Checker Service, CA has conducted early communication within the organisation so that its advisers can encourage clients and consumers to use the tool. In addition, energy suppliers are encouraged to make the Interoperability Checker Service available to their customers.
8. We conclude that it is appropriate for the Interoperability Checker Service to be operationally activated on the 12 May 2021 (when CA plans to make it available) by a direction provided below. It is currently expected that the Service will be de-activated at the end of the SMETS1 migration period. De-activation would be subject to a further Secretary of State direction.

Direction

This direction is made for the purposes of the Smart Energy Code designated by the Secretary of State pursuant to the smart meter communication licences granted under the Electricity Act 1989 and the Gas Act 1986 (such code being the "SEC").

Words and expressions used in this direction shall be interpreted in accordance with Section A (Definitions and Interpretation) of the SEC.

Pursuant to Section H16.5(a) of the SEC the Secretary of State directs that the Interoperability Data shall be capable of being accessed by an Energy Consumer from 12 May 2021.

This direction is also being notified to the SEC Administrator.

Yours faithfully,



Duncan Stone

Deputy Director & Head of Delivery,
Smart Metering Implementation Programme

(An official of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy authorised to act on behalf of the Secretary of State)