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# DP178

## ‘Removing DSP validation against the SMI join status for SR8.8.x’

### Modification Report

Version 0.3

21 September 2021

Corporate member of  
Plain English Campaign  
Committed to clearer  
communication

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## About this document

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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 one annex:

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

## Contact

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## 1. Summary

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

An issue has been brought to the DCC's attention whereby the on-site Device Installation and Commission (I&C) process fails when the Data Service Provider (DSP) does not receive successful messages for joins of Service Reference Variants (SRVs) 8.7.x. This prevents the Service User from being able to send an Unjoin command as the business validation on the SRV 8.8.1 'Unjoin Service (Critical)' or 8.8.2 'Unjoin Service (Non-Critical)' commands check that a Device is joined to the Smart Metering Inventory (SMI) to allow it to be un-joined. This results in Devices failing the I&C process which must then be fixed by manually updating the SMI database.

## 2. Issue

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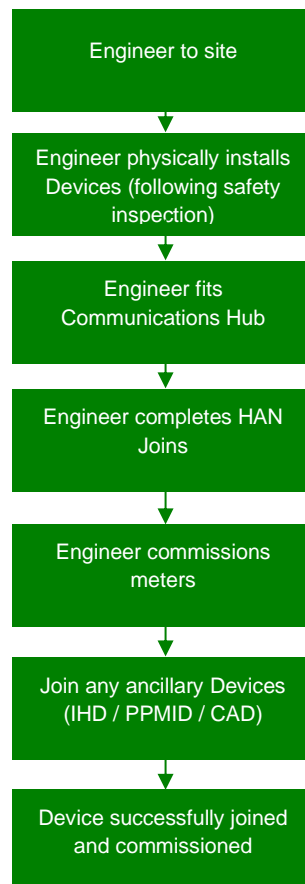
### What are the current arrangements?

It has been reported by Suppliers to the DCC that the on-site I&C process for Devices can fail where the DSP does not receive successful messages for joins of SRVs 8.7.x. For example, there may be problems joining a Consumer Access Device (CAD) to an Electricity Smart Metering Equipment (ESME).

When this occurs, currently, the only way to complete the I&C process is a manual update of the SMI database. This is completed by the DCC at a cost of £2,000 per update. This is because:

- it is not possible to continue the I&C process by retrying the Join; and/or
- there have been instances where the Device will reject the retry of the Join command (SR8.7.x) if a previous Join was already successfully completed.

The flow diagram below sets out the current step-by-step procedure of the on-site Device I&C process:



### What is the issue?

Since August 2020 there have been four cases (across different Suppliers) where the response to the SRV 8.7.2 'Join Service (Non-Critical)' is not received by the DSP despite the join working within the ESME. Hence, the Service User is unable to send an Unjoin command as the business validation on the SRV 8.8.1 'Unjoin Service (Critical)' or 8.8.2 'Unjoin Service (Non-Critical)' commands check that only Devices joined in the SMI may be un-joined. Note that SRV 8.8.1 is used with Critical commands, while SRV 8.8.2 is used with non-Critical commands.

There are instances where if the Service User sends SR 8.7.2 again to the ESME then this will pass through the DSP, but it is then rejected at the ESME as it is already joined.

Smart Energy Code (SEC) Schedule 8 'GB Companion Specification' (GBCS) mandates that Devices should accept a re-send of the SR 8.7.x 'Join Service' command, even if the Device is already joined (for example, it is already in the Device Log).

The DSP currently updates the SMI and sets up the join relationship depending on the response to the Join command. As part of the Unjoin command, SRV 8.8.2 validates the SMI join relationship. For example, the system only allows the Unjoin command (SR 8.8.x) if Devices are already joined to each other, otherwise the DSP will reject the Service Request with the following error code:

DCC User Interface Specification	
Response Code	Response Code Description
E080801	According to the DCC Systems Smart Metering Inventory the 'Other Device' is not joined to the Business TargetID Device

It should be noted that there are no Smart Metering Technical Specifications (SMETS), GBCS, Security or any other SEC requirement mandating that the DSP must apply such validation other than what is defined in the DCC User Interface Specification (DUIS).

### What is the impact this is having?

If the issue identified under this proposal is not addressed, there will be:

- Further I&C failures; and
- an ongoing cost to manually correct the SMI database to allow Users to reuse any Devices.

Each manual database correction is charged to the DCC at an average of £2,000. Any firmware fixes of meter defects normally take more than 12 months to deploy.

There have been four incidents with this problem since August 2020, and further incidents are expected.

### Impact on consumers

If the issue is left unresolved, consumers will be left with Devices that have not been commissioned and are therefore not providing smart functionality.

## 3. Assessment of the proposal

### Observations on the issue

#### SECAS's views

During the Development Stage, the Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) advised that removing any form of validation may cause potential security risks and the proposal should instead focus on the root cause of the issue and understand why the DSP has not received the response to the Join SRV.

SECAS investigated this with the Proposer during the Development Stage. The DCC commented that it is difficult to understand why the SRVs do not reach the DSP as the Suppliers are responsible for sending them rather than the DCC / DSP. The DCC further advised that if the DSP is not aware the SRV has or hasn't been sent, it will be extremely difficult for the DSP to investigate any further.

### Views of the Change Sub-Committee

The proposal was presented to the Change Sub-Committee (CSC) for initial comment. SECAS informed the CSC that an RFI would be issued to better understand the scale of the issue and the impact it is having. The CSC approved of this approach and provided no further comments.

### Views of the SEC Sub-Committees

No comments were provided by the SEC Sub-Committees during the Development Stage, however, once in the Refinement Process, SECAS will present the Proposed Solution to the Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee.

### Request for information responses

During the Development Stage, SECAS issued an RFI consultation to better understand the impact the issue is having on SEC Parties. SECAS received three responses to the RFI (two Large Suppliers and one Other SEC Party). Two of the three respondents stated that the issue impacts their organisation.

The respondent that is not impacted (a Large Supplier) stated that their organisation's orchestration does not rely on the unjoin being successful when removing a Device. This is because the command could be failing because the Device is faulty. They advised that the cost of any Proposed Solution developed should be compared to the number of manual corrections being requested by Users.

The second Large Supplier stated that it was supportive of the need to address the issue, but is concerned as to why the DSP is not receiving the keys in the second 8F12 Alert. The DCC has since responded to state that this issue is separate as it involves the CSPs and their Alert delivery success. The Large Supplier commented that a preferred solution would be to reduce the current £2,000 cost to amend the SMI. This would allow the security protocols to remain in place. Further comments were given where the respondent is not convinced that the cost benefits to the DCC will outweigh the security benefits. This will be investigated during the Refinement Process, but currently the DCC does not believe there is a security risk by removing the validation.

The Other SEC Party commented that successful SR 8.7.2s are not always registered within the DSP systems, which prevents, if required, the subsequent SR 8.8.2 from succeeding. It stated that it is directly impacted when it attempts to add or remove Type 2 In Home Displays (IHDs) or CADs. It felt the need for a SEC Modification to address the issue as it results in a negative customer experience as it can take a long time, possibly several weeks, for the SMI to be updated.

## Appendix 1: Progression timetable

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SECAS will present the Draft Proposal to the Change Sub-Committee (CSC) for final comments and with the recommendation of progression to the Refinement Process. SECAS will then work with the Proposer to develop the business requirements for any solution.

Timetable	
Event/Action	Date
Draft Proposal raised	15 Jul 2021
Presented to CSC for initial comment	27 Jul 2021
Problem Statement discussed with Sub-Committees	Aug 2021
Request for information issued to industry	Aug 2021
Presented to CSC for final comment and decision	28 Sep 2021
Business requirements developed with Proposer and DCC	Oct 2021
Business requirements discussed with the requirements workshop	1 Nov 2021
Modification discussed with Working Group	1 Dec 2021
Modification discussed with TABASC	2 Dec 2021
Update provided to CSC	21 Dec 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
CAD	Consumer Access Device
CSC	Change Sub-Committee
DCC	Data Communications Company
DSP	Data Service Provider
DUIS	DCC User Interface Specification
ESME	Electricity Smart Metering Equipment
GBCS	Great Britain Companion Specification
I&C	Installation & Commission
IHD	In Home Display
PPMID	Prepayment Meter Interface Device
SEC	Smart Energy Code
SECAS	Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat
SMETS	Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications
SRV	Service Reference Variant
SR	Service Request
TABASC	Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee