



Communications Hubs & Networks

DCC conclusions on proposed changes
to the Communications Hub Supporting
Information (CHSI)

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1. Introduction and context

1.1. Purpose of this document

1. The purpose of this document is to conclude on the Data Communications Company's (DCC's) recent consultation on proposed changes to the Communications Hub Supporting Information (CHSI) to support the introduction of 4G Communications Hubs (CHs). These changes sought to confirm elements for 4G CHs such as the labelling and Advance Shipment Notification (ASN) format, CH status information and reset and reboot procedures.
2. We sought stakeholders' views prior to publishing an updated version of this document.

1.2. DCC and the CH&N programme

3. The DCC is Britain's key enabler to a future smart energy system. DCC is licensed by the Government and regulated by the energy regulator Ofgem to connect smart meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain to a single secure, digital network. DCC supports the roll-out of second-generation (Smart Metering Equipment Technical Specifications (SMETS2)) smart meters, as well as the migration of existing first-generation (SMETS1) meters onto its network.
4. The Communications Hubs and Networks (CH&N) Programme is a DCC initiative to define and deliver future-proofed Communications Hubs and Networks in the Central and South Regions with an efficient supply chain and a targeted longevity of at least 15 years. To ensure this longevity of smart functionality DCC is developing a solution to allow for the introduction of new CHs which use the 4G network. To achieve this, DCC established the CH&N Programme to assess the development and implementation of options for a 4G solution.

1.3. Background

5. Smart Energy Code (SEC) Appendix H 'Communications Hub Handover Support Materials' (CHHSM) clause 1.4 requires DCC to publish the CHSI on the DCC Website. The CHSI provides:
 - information regarding CH labelling;
 - ASN file formats;
 - additional graphical information supporting the definition of Significant Metallic Obstruction;
 - description of the way in which light emitting diode (LED) indicators depict the operational status of a CH;
 - description of the aerial types DCC make available within the South and Central Regions; and
 - definition of the wait times necessary to initiate reboot functionality and to completely power down the CH.
6. In accordance with SEC Appendix H clause 1.5, DCC is required to undertake reasonable consultation, give due consideration to consultation responses received, and publish a statement of its reason to amend content, prior to publishing a new version of the CHSI.

1.4. Consultation responses and next steps

7. This consultation sought views on:
 - Amendments to the CHSI to distinguish between requirements for the 2G/3G Central and South Regions and the 4G Central and South Region.

- Changes to clarify the 4G CH labelling and ASN requirements.
 - Additional clarifications and guidance around 4G CH Status Information and LED behaviour.
 - Changes to confirm wait timings for the resetting and rebooting of 4G CHs.
 - Changes to clarify that the status for 4G CH Orders and Consignments is aligned with the existing terms for the Central and South Regions.
 - Housekeeping amendments to align the CHSI with other DCC documents and branding, and the removal of requirements that no longer apply for 2G/3G CHs.
8. DCC received four responses to the consultation, most of which agreed with the proposed changes. Section 2 of this document summarises the consultation responses received and DCC's response.
9. Based on stakeholder feedback and a further review of the proposed CHSI changes, DCC has made amendments to the CHSI drafting consulted upon, which are summarised in section 3 of this document. These include:
- Changes to ensure terminology aligns with the equivalent defined terms in the SEC, including ensuring acronyms are defined with their full term at their first occurrence
 - Additional clarity to note that that aeriels are only available in the 2G/3G Central and South Regions
 - The deletion of an erroneous paragraph within Appendix B of the CHSI
10. DCC will publish the updated CHSI on its website on 18 July 2024.

2. Analysis of responses

11. DCC received written responses from four parties including two Large Suppliers, one Other SEC Party and a response from the Smart Energy Code Administrator and Secretariat (SECAS) on behalf of the Communications Transition Group (CTG) and the Operations Group (OPSG).
12. The joint CTG/OPSG response advised they were broadly supportive of the changes and provided comments against the CHSI drafting rather than detailed responses to each of the questions posed in this consultation. Their comments are summarised in section 2.7 (question 7) of this document.
13. DCC has analysed the feedback provided. This section sets out an overview of the responses on the topic and DCC's response.

2.1. Question 1

14. DCC sought views on the proposed changes to distinguish the requirements for the 2G/3G Central and South Regions and the 4G Central/South Region.

Q1

Do you agree with DCC's proposal to amend the CHSI to distinguish the requirements for 2G/3G Central and South Region and 4G Central/South? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

15. DCC received three responses to this question.

16. All the respondents agreed with the proposed changes to distinguish the requirements for 2G/3G Central and South Region and 4G Central/South. One respondent noted the changes will ensure that there is clarity for Suppliers to operate 4G CHs.

DCC response

17. We acknowledge the support for the proposed changes to distinguish the requirements for the 2G/3G Central and South Regions and the 4G Central/South Region. We have made no changes to the version of the CHSI that was consulted upon, other than those described in our response to question 7 below.

2.2. Question 2

18. DCC sought views on the proposed changes to the CHSI for 4G CH labelling and ASN requirements.

Q2

Do you agree with DCC's proposed changes to the CHSI for 4G CH labelling and ASN requirements? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

19. DCC received three responses to this question.
20. All the respondents agreed with the proposed changes to the CHSI for 4G CH labelling and ASN requirements. One respondent noted that keeping labelling and ASNs consistent will ensure a smoother transition to a high-volume rollout of 4G CHs.

DCC response

21. We acknowledge the support for the proposed changes to the CHSI for 4G CH labelling and ASN requirements. We have made no changes to the version of the CHSI that was consulted upon, other than those described in our response to question 7 below.

2.3. Question 3

22. DCC sought views on the proposed changes for CH Status Information and LED behaviour.

Q3

Do you agree with DCC's proposed changes to the CHSI for CH Status Information and LED behaviour? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

23. DCC received three responses to this question.
24. All the respondents agreed with the proposed changes for CH Status Information and LED behaviour. One respondent noted that changes away from the five flashing lights has the potential to lead to incorrectly removing metering equipment. Therefore, aiming to keep the new 4G CHs consistent with the 2G/3G CHs will help minimise the potential for this to happen.
25. One respondent queried whether there would be a further change to the CHSI to provide guidance on operational states following successful power on of the 4G CH.

DCC response

26. We note one respondent's question on whether there will be a further change to the CHSI to provide guidance on operational states following successful power on of the 4G CH. However, we can confirm that the operational states for 4G CHs are covered in Section 5.4 and Appendix B.4 of the updated CHSI. Therefore, we have no further plans to make changes to the CHSI for CH&N.

2.4. Question 4

27. DCC sought views on the proposed changes for the reset and reboot procedures for the 4G CH.

Q4

Do you agree with DCC's proposed changes to the CHSI for reset and reboot procedures for the 4G CH? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

28. DCC received three responses to this question.
29. All the respondents agreed with the proposed changes for the reset and reboot procedures for the 4G CH.

DCC response

30. We acknowledge the support for the proposed changes for the reset and reboot procedures for the 4G CH. We have made no changes to the version of the CHSI that was consulted upon, other than those described in our response to question 7 below.

2.5. Question 5

31. DCC sought views on the proposed changes for the order and consignment status for the 4G CH.

Q5

Do you agree with DCC's proposed changes to the CHSI for order and consignment status for the 4G CH? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

32. DCC received three responses to this question.
33. All the respondents agreed with the proposed changes for the order and consignment status for the 4G CH.

DCC response

34. We acknowledge the support for the proposed changes for the order and consignment status for the 4G CH. We have made no changes to the version of the CHSI that was consulted upon, other than those described in our response to question 7 below.

2.6. Question 6

35. DCC sought views on the proposed housekeeping changes.

Q6

Do you agree with the housekeeping changes to the CHSI? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

36. DCC received three responses to this question.
37. All the respondents agreed with the proposed housekeeping changes the CHSI. One respondent advised that the 'communications hub data sheets' cannot be found via the link referred to in paragraph 6.1.2.

DCC response

38. We acknowledge the respondent's comment on the weblink provided to the Communications Hub data sheets. This link was incorrect and we can confirm that the data sheets can be found by searching for 'datasheet' in our [document centre](#). Paragraph 6.1.2 of the CHSI has been updated accordingly.

2.7. Question 7

39. DCC sought any other views from respondents.

Q7

Do you have any other comments on the updates to the CHSI or the approach to the Installer Training Plan? Please provide your rationale.

Respondent views

40. DCC received four responses to this question.
41. Three of the respondents did not have any other comments on the updates to the CHSI or the approach to the Installer Training Plan.
42. The joint response from the CTG and the OPSG noted the positive engagement from DCC on CH&N, having taking stakeholder views into account when developed this CHSI consultation. They added the collaborative approach is beneficial to all parties and encouraged DCC to take this forward in its other programmes.
43. The CTG and the OPSG advised they are broadly comfortable with all the changes proposed and did not provide comments to all of the questions. They provided the following comments on the drafting of the CHSI:
- They believed that several references to 'Regions' in the proposed drafting do not all align with the proposed Main Body SEC changes that have been laid before Parliament. They suggested that DCC should ensure that references to 'Regions' in the CHSI align to the proposed Main Body SEC definitions.
 - Where there are references to Communications Hubs anywhere in the document, DCC should ensure that these explicitly state whether they refer to 2G/3G Communications Hubs, 4G Communications Hubs, or both.

- Similarly, where the CHSI refers to 'aerials', it should be clear that aerials are only applicable to the 2G/3G Central and 2G/3G South Regions.

DCC response

44. We agree with the respondent's view that any references to 'Regions' should align with the proposed Main Body SEC Changes expected to be designated in September 2024 and we have updated the CHSI accordingly.
45. We acknowledge the respondent's suggestion that any references to 'Communications Hub' should specify whether they refer to 2G/3G Communications Hubs, 4G Communications Hubs, or both. However, we believe there is already sufficient identification in the various subheadings and main body text of the document. We note that we have since replaced all references to 'Comms Hub' with 'Communications Hub' to ensure alignment with the SEC.
46. We agree with the respondent's view that any references to 'aerials' should be clear that they are only applicable to the 2G/3G Central and South Regions. We believe this is already made clear in section 6 and Appendix A.1 within the CHSI. To provide further clarity, we have also added a footnote at section 2.1 of the CHSI, where aerials are first mentioned.

3. Summary of drafting changes

47. As a result of the consultation responses and to clarify the content of the drafting, DCC has made several changes to the version of the CHSI that was consulted upon, as follows:
 - All references to 'Regions' have been reviewed and updated to ensure they align with the proposed Main Body SEC Changes expected to be designated in September 2024
 - A footnote has been added to section 2.1 to clarify that aerials are only available in the 2G/3G Central and South Regions
 - References to 'Comms Hub' have been replaced with 'Communications Hub'
 - The erroneous addition of paragraph B.4.2 has been deleted with subsequent paragraph numbering updated accordingly
 - Several acronyms have been defined with their full term at their first occurrence

4. Next steps

48. DCC is of the view that it has had appropriate engagement and consultation with industry on the updates that have been proposed to the CHSI via this consultation. As the responses to the consultation and engagement in industry were supportive of the proposed changes, DCC will publish the updated CHSI on its website.
49. DCC has, where necessary, addressed the comments that have been received from industry. DCC does not believe that the views expressed result in fundamental amendments to the CHSI drafting and, as such, further consultation is neither necessary nor appropriate.
50. In summary, DCC considers that the revised CHSI is fit for purpose and it will now be published on our website under our [Document Centre](#).

5. Attachments

- Attachment 1: Communications Hub Supporting Information (Tracked Changes)
- Attachment 2: Communications Hub Supporting Information (Clean)