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To Mr Jon Dixon

Chair of the REC Performance Assurance Board

By email

Thursday 30 November 2023

Dear Jon,

Timeliness of the Resolution of Service Management tickets related to 'missed messages'

The Data Services Contract (DSC) Contract Management Committee (CoMC) wishes to highlight concerns regarding the timeliness of the resolution of Service Management tickets related to 'missed messages' and the priority assigned to such tickets by the Switching Operator.

Since the introduction of the Central Switching Service (CSS) in July 2022 the Central Data Services Provider (CDSP) has been reporting the performance of the Gas Retail Data Agent (GRDA) to the CoMC. The GRDA is a role performed by the CDSP (on behalf of Distribution Networks) in accordance with licence obligations placed upon the Distribution Network Operators. The GRDA is responsible for receiving messages from CSS and ensuring that the details contained within those messages are maintained and used in Settlement processes undertaken by the CDSP provided that they are received in line with the Retail Energy Code, the Uniform Network Code and the IGT Uniform Network Code. This detail is also provided to DSC Parties to support their Settlement processes. Of material importance is the effective receipt of Secured Active messages at Gate Closure in order for Settlement processes to accurately reflect Registration.

Since CSS implementation there have been circa 82,600 instances where messages have not been received in the Gate Closure period. Of these the vast majority, 82,210, were associated with the CSS P1 Incident that occurred in July 2023, approximately 400 instances of missing messages have occurred between CSS and the GRDA systems. It is acknowledged that not all instances of missing messages were caused by CSS – specifically due to server drift the GRDA incorrectly rejected 122 messages on 2nd August 2022 and GRDA architecture was subsequently amended in order to be able to identify these as otherwise, these

messages were indistinguishable from the other days on which such messages were caused by CSS. Crucially the response from CSS took around 30 working days which far exceeds the obligation to respond to any Priority Incident (as set out below).

5.2. The [CSS Provider](#) shall support the response and resolution times for the following [Switching Incident](#) categories.

- (a) Priority 1 – for [Switching Incidents](#) causing critical impact and significant financial loss / disruption - 30 minute response with a four hour resolution time;
- (b) Priority 2 – for [Switching Incidents](#) causing non-critical impact with non-significant financial loss / disruption - one hour response with a 24 hour resolution time;
- (c) Priority 3 – for [Switching Incidents](#) causing adverse impact but can be reduced to moderate adverse impact - three [Working Hour](#) response with a three [Working Day](#) resolution time;
- (d) Priority 4 – for [Switching Incidents](#) causing minimal impact - one [Working Day](#) response with a 10 [Working Day](#) resolution time.

Analysis of 20 tickets raised between 16th January – 24th August 2023 (and excluding any associated with the CSS P1 incident) had resolution on average at 26 working days, with 7 responded to within the P4 resolution timescale, and a 49 working day resolution on the 90th percentile. Note, 'resolution' in these instances is notifying the GRDA whether the Registration progressed or was cancelled and consequently does not require a technical resolution.

The CoMC considered that both the response and resolution times that we have reported to them are not acceptable. The Switching Operator should be able to respond to tickets related to the status of a Registration significantly sooner than is currently experienced. The CoMC also observed that given the impact to gas downstream processes, these incidents should have a higher priority resolution assigned to them based upon the description within the CSS Service Definition.

We understand that the REC Performance Assurance Board (REC PAB) receives reports from the Switching Operator regarding its performance. We understand that their reports indicate that the Switching Operator is not meeting their necessary standards however, the CoMC also considers that the Switching Operator should:

- respond to missing messages with a higher priority than they are currently assigning to such tickets;
- place greater emphasis on remedying their processes such that they are able to meet the required 'resolution' timescales;
- not be utilising the full resolution time when a technical resolution is not being undertaken and the response is to simply confirm whether a Registration has progressed or has been cancelled. The consequence of a Registration progressing in CSS but not in the UK Link system means complex adjustments are required to be undertaken by gas industry parties leading to increased costs and the greater the period of discrepancy the greater the impact is to the gas industry.

The Committee would like to understand from the REC PAB what measures are being placed upon the Switching Operator to ensure that the performance

standards are met. We would welcome the opinion of the REC PAB as to the additional recommendations above, and the extent to which these are supported by the REC PAB.

Please note that this letter has been shared with the UNC Modification Panel and IGT UNC Modification Panel.

In the meantime, if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

By email

Bob Fletcher

Chair of the DSC Contract Management Committee

Cc UNC Modification Panel, IGT UNC Modification Panel