



Communications Hubs & Networks Consultation on Changes to the Communications Hub Supporting Information (CHSI) 2026

A consultation on proposed changes to the Communications Hub Supporting Information to address issues with LED behaviour

Date: 9 March 2026

Respond by: 17:00 on 7 April 2026

Author: consultations@smartdcc.co.uk

Classification: DCC Public

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1. Introduction and context

1. The Data Communications Company (DCC) is Britain's digital energy spine, supporting the transformation of the 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 (SMETS2) smart meters, as well as the migration of existing first-generation (SMETS1) meters onto its network.
2. This document consults on proposed changes to the Communications Hub Supporting Information (CHSI) to address concerns raised by SEC Parties relating to LED behaviour during the installation of a Communications Hub (CH). The only DCC costs associated to our proposals are administrative.

1.1. Background

3. The CHSI contains additional information for SEC Parties in relation to the packaging, labelling, Advanced Shipment Notification file formats, CH Status Information of Communications Hubs (both 2G/3G and 4G) and outline descriptions for aerial types. The current CHSI (v2.0) can be found on the DCC website¹ as required by SEC Appendix H 'Communications Hub Handover Support Materials' (CHHSM) clause 1.4.
4. The CHSI provides:
 - Information regarding CH labelling;
 - Advanced Shipment Notification (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.
5. 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.
6. The previous update to the CHSI was in 2024 when DCC consulted² on changes to support the introduction of new 4G CHs and include a new 4G Cellular CH Variant. Version 2.0 of the CHSI went live on the 18 July 2024.
7. Concerns have been raised by SEC Parties regarding 4G CH LED behaviour. It has been confirmed that CH LEDs, from the initial batch of 4G CHs (Toshiba, firmware 0.8.07), continue flashing once unseated from a powered ESME (Tamper) and can take up to 25 minutes before it stops. This can cause a field engineer to spend additional unnecessary time during a site visit as it is unclear when a CH has completed a reset process.

¹ <https://www.smartdcc.co.uk/media/kdged1me/communications-hub-supporting-information-v20.pdf>

² <https://www.smartdcc.co.uk/consultations/chn-consultation-on-the-communications-hub-supporting-information/>

8. The 25-minute period is due to the super capacitor, designed to store energy for transmitting power outage alert after outage confirmation period of 3 minutes. In tamper mode the energy is not expended, and the super capacitor takes longer to fully discharge. DCC believes that a 1-minute wait period is sufficient for the CH to complete its shutdown and reset processes irrespective of LED behaviour.
9. This LED behaviour has been addressed in the 4G firmware Maintenance Release 1 (MR1), meaning that for updated devices the LEDs will turn off promptly after the CH is unseated from a powered ESME (usually within 10 seconds), the CH can then be resealed after a wait period of 1 minute to allow for the CH to reboot.
10. However, CHs that have not yet received a firmware update through MR1, for example where devices have been in storage, remain a concern and could continue to impact field engineers. Therefore, following discussions with SEC committees, DCC has agreed to provide clear guidance so that CH installers are aware of the tamper and reset processes and the 1-minute wait period to avoid installation errors and unnecessary job failures.
11. This consultation proposes changes to the CHSI that provides clear guidance to CH installers and is expected to impact Large and Small Suppliers. This consultation will close on 7 April 2026 at 17:00.

2. Proposed changes to CHSI

2.1. Engagement

12. DCC has engaged on CH LED behaviour, the MR1 firmware update and associated guidance proposals with the following SEC committees.
- Technical Architecture and Business Architecture Sub-Committee (TABASC) on the 7 November 2025 where the technical aspects of 4G CH LED behaviour were discussed, noting that the MR1 firmware updated CHs would be consistent with 2G/3G devices; however, there remained a requirement to provide clear guidance to engineers for devices that had not yet received the MR1 update.
 - SEC Operations Group (OPSG) on the 24 November 2025 where DCC presented a problem statement and DCC agreed to update the CHSI to include LED related guidance proposals. The DCC proposed approach to consult on changes to the CHSI was finalised with OPSG on the 10 February 2026.
 - Technical Specification Issue Resolution Subgroup (TSIRS) on the 11 December 2025 where DCC presented a problem statement and a proposal to update both the DCC Guidance Note - Communications Hubs Usage³ (GP18) and the CHSI with guidance relating to wait timings during the CH reboot and shutdown process.
13. There were no objections made or amendments suggested to the proposed CHSI guidance that this document is consulting on.

2.2. Updating the CHSI to provide additional guidance for CH installers

14. DCC are proposing changes to the CHSI to provide additional guidance for CH installers. These proposed changes are also visible as track-changes within 'Attachment 1: communications-hub-supporting-information-v2.1-Tracked Changes', available alongside this consultation.
15. The proposed change is to include additional text within CHSI 'Appendix C – Reset (Reboot and Power Down) Timings and Processes'. **Section C.1. Communications Hub Wait Timings**, which now includes the draft text within Table 17 (Page 35) as highlighted below.

Table 17: Communications Hub wait timings (extract)

Region	CH Variant	Soft reset (Reboot)	Hard reset (Power down)
4G North/Central/South Region	4G Cellular Communications Hub	The 4G Cellular DB Communications Hub can either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be unseated from a powered ICHIS host for at least 1 minute, irrespective of LED behaviour and then re-seated; or • remain seated on the ICHIS host and power removed from the ICHIS host for at least 5 minutes, irrespective of LED behaviour 	

16. DCC has also included 'irrespective of LED behaviour' to the existing Table 17 North, 2G/3G Central and South Regions sections so they remain aligned with the additional 4G text.

³ <https://smartenergycodecompany.co.uk/documents/sec/dcc-guidance-ch-usage-v1-11/>

17. Separately to the Communications Hub wait timings updates described in earlier within this section, DCC has also updated the SEC defined Region references within the CHSI. References to '4G Central/South' have been updated to '4G North/Central/South' and 'North' to 'LRR North', throughout the document. This aligns with the changes made to the SEC by DESNZ⁴ in May 2025 and can be viewed as track changes within 'Attachment 1: communications-hub-supporting-information-v2.1–Tracked Changes'.

Q1

Do you agree with DCC's proposals to include additional text within the CHSI that provides guidance on 4G LED behaviour? Please explain your response.

Q2

Do you agree with DCC's proposals to update references to Region within the CHSI to align with the SEC? Please explain your response.

Q3

Do you have any additional comments?

3. Next steps

3.1. Conclusions

18. Following the closure of this consultation, DCC will take into account respondents' views and publish our conclusions and next steps. Depending on stakeholder responses to this consultation DCC will publish an amended version of the CHSI on the DCC Website along with a DCC response document outlining the decision to do so. We propose to publish a new version of the CHSI as soon as reasonably practicable following consultation closure and subject to the views of respondents.
19. DCC is satisfied that other than the proposed changes, the CHSI remains fit for purpose.

⁴ <https://smartenergycodecompany.co.uk/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero-desnz-smart-metering-implementation-programme-consultation-on-changes-to-the-smart-energy-code-to-support-the-extension-of-the-dccs-4g-services/> & <https://smartenergycodecompany.co.uk/sec-v113-0-published-for-4g-north-and-fsm-platform-designation/?highlight=North>

4. How to respond

20. Please provide responses by 17:00 on Tuesday 7 April 2026 to DCC at consultations@smartdcc.co.uk.
21. Consultation responses may be published on our website www.smartdcc.co.uk. Please state clearly in writing whether you want all or any part, of your consultation to be treated as confidential. It would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. Please note that responses in their entirety (including any text marked confidential) may be made available to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (The Department) and the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the Authority). Information provided to The Department or the Authority, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information legislation (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If The Department or the Authority receive a request for disclosure of the information, we/they will take full account of your explanation (to the extent provided to them), but we/they cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.
22. If you have any questions about the consultation documents, please contact DCC via consultations@smartdcc.co.uk.

5. Attachments

- Attachment 1: communications-hub-supporting-information-v2.1- Tracked Changes
- Attachment 2: CHSI Consultation 2026 Response Template