

# **DCC Out-of-Region Communications Hub Installations - Closure of Temporary 2G/3G North Connection Arrangements**

Citizens Advice response

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April 2026

This response is not confidential and may be freely published.

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the discussions regarding the potential further extension of temporary 2G/3G North connection arrangements. When the SEC modification MP308 was approved by Ofgem in December 2025<sup>1</sup>, Ofgem noted in their decision that there were approximately 46,000 consumers affected through having smart meters installed using Out-of-Region 2G communication hubs in the North region. Of those 46,000 consumers, 16,000 are prepayment (PPM) customers, 21,000 on the Priority Services Register (PSR), and an estimated 9,000 customers who would be both PPM and PSR consumers. Currently, the Data Communications Company (DCC) consultation notes that there are estimated to be around 30,000 affected consumers, and therefore it is likely that there would be approximately a third (based on the Ofgem decision numbers) who would be PPM customers (approximately 10,000). A percentage of the currently affected 30,000 consumers would be both PPM and PSR consumers.

The extension of 2G communications connection in the North region was required to allow for more time for suppliers to contact affected consumers to have remediation of meters through fitting of 4G communication hubs. Without the change to the meters, customers would continue with supply but would lose smart functionality. This loss of smart functionality would more severely affect those on PPM tariffs as they will be forced to use a manual workaround that may be cumbersome or difficult for those with vulnerabilities.

We supported the MP308 modification to allow for further time for suppliers to contact consumers to make remediations and to ensure that any final connection loss to the 2G network would only be during the summer months when any affected consumer would be less impacted.

We have consulted with supplier representatives of both large and small suppliers, and have identified that there appears to be limited appetite to continue the extension. This is because suppliers feel that they have used all reasonable endeavours to contact affected consumers to access homes, including notices, emails, calls, and home visits. They believe that a further

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<sup>1</sup> Ofgem decision to approve SECMP308: Out of Region Communications Hubs, December 2025

extension will not result in significant changes to the numbers of remediations able to be made prior to 'switch-off' at the end of May 2026.

We understand that Ofgem has written to all suppliers on this matter with an instruction for suppliers to treat consumers fairly.

We do, however, recommend that suppliers:

- Continue to make every effort to reach affected consumers, particularly those on PPMs and the PSR, to ensure that they understand the implications of the 2G 'switch-off' and to seek access to homes to make remediations.
- Ensure that any uncontacted or unresponsive prepayment customers are switched to credit mode or otherwise set so that they will not disconnect supply before losing contact with them to prevent the risk of vulnerable consumers on prepayment losing power
- Ensure that there are sufficient engineers available to rapidly respond to consumers once the 'switch-off' occurs on 31 May 2026.
- Prioritise proactively reaching out to PPM consumers in advance of 'switch-off' to see whether they would prefer to move to credit mode where they can't have their meters remediated before 31 May 2026. We understand that some consumers would not wish to move from PPM tariffs for fear of building debt and that this solution is not a universal answer for all PPM consumers.

We also ask Ofgem to monitor supplier actions and ensure that suppliers make all reasonable endeavours to support consumers, treat them fairly, and prioritise consumers on PPMs and those on the PSR.

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