Data Communications Company



# Maintenance Deferral Policy

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**Author: DCC**

# Revision History

| Revision date | Summary of changes | Changes marked | Version number |
|---|---|---|---|
| January 2026 | Final draft – simplified process, removal of reasons for application and focus on the impact on an *event*. Temporary process while SEC MP293 is in development or ends March 2027. | Accepted | 0.4 |
| October 2026 | Amendments related to communication as requested in consultation feedback related to communications of deferral application, confirmation of decision, details of decision making and post application reporting. | Accepted | 1.0 |

Reviews:

| Name | Title / Responsibility | Review Date | Version number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ed Russell | Senior Change Manager | January 2026 | 0.4 |
| Rob Annable | Senior Service Manager | January 2026 | 0.4 |
| Richard Vernon | Senior Regulation Lead | January 2026 | 0.4 |
| David Rollason | Regulation | January 2026 | 0.4 |
| Bilal Ali, Ed Russell, David Rollason | Head of CRM, Practice Lead Change & Release, Regulation | November 2026 | 1.0 |

Approvals:

| Name | Title / Responsibility | Approval Date | Version number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ian Drummond | Managing Director - Operations | January 2026 | 0.4 |
| Bilal Ali | Head of CRM | February 2026 | 0.4 |
| Jack Bramhall | Deputy Director of Service OPS | February 2026 | 0.4 |
| Arik Dondi | Head of Regulatory Compliance | February 2026 | 0.4 |
| Ed Russell | Senior Change Manager | November 2026 | 1.0 |

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# 1. About this Document

## 1.1. Purpose of Process

1. Maintenance of DCC systems is vital in ensuring that services continue to be provided as expected. Maintenance is also required in order to deliver key project milestones as well as new or improved services, where deploying larger changes.

2. DCC completes different types of Maintenance as defined in the Smart Energy Code. Some types of Maintenance do not impact the provision of DCC services. Planned Maintenance is preplanned and pre-notified by DCC to SEC Parties since it impacts the provision of Services.

3. It is recognised that there are some scenarios where the continuation of DCC Services, and the deferment of Planned Maintenance, may provide a better service for DCC Users. Such scenarios may be during adverse weather events that risk the loss of supply to consumers. In these circumstances the continuation of DCC Services would ensure Network Parties have full data covering the loss of supply and can more efficiently manage reconnection activities.

4. This is an interim policy while we await the outcome of SEC MP293. This policy has been produced at the expressed request of Network Parties and may support those Parties in managing their own business and processes when supporting consumers who have lost supply.

5. The policy describes:

    - How Parties may request that the DCC defer Planned Maintenance events and the information they should provide when making such a request
    - How a decision to defer Maintenance will be made
    - When deferred Maintenance will be rescheduled
    - The requirements for reviews of this policy

6. This Policy may be updated following review under Section 5 of this document. It will be overridden by the outcome of SEC MP293, or will cease to apply from 30 April 2027, whichever is the earliest.

# 2. Process Overview

## 2.1. Planned Maintenance DCC SEC Obligations

7. SEC Section H 8.2-8.7 sets out the rights and obligations on the DCC to complete Maintenance of DCC Systems, including the volume of Maintenance, the timing of Maintenance windows provided as standard, the process for DCC to request additional Maintenance and the requirements to notify.

## 2.2. In Scope

8. The deferral of only High Impact Planned Maintenance (as described within the SEC) is covered by this policy.

## 2.3. Out of Scope

9. For the avoidance of doubt the following events are out of scope from this process:

    - Non-DCC Maintenance activity
    - SEC Releases
    - Maintenance activities other than High Impact Planned Maintenance
    - Previously deferred High Impact Planned Maintenance rescheduled as Unplanned Maintenance (unless extreme circumstances exist)
    - Negative impacts related to DCC regulatory position
    - Amendments to DCC Service provider commercial obligations

10. This Policy does not describe the events which might necessitate the deferral of Planned Maintenance. It focuses on the potential impact of the event and the consequences of continuing or deferring with Planned Maintenance.

## 2.4. Deferral logic

11. Maintenance releases are scheduled in advance and over time each Maintenance release builds on the last, where those releases need to be completed in a predetermined order. Often releases build up to larger programme deployments or SEC releases. As such, any delay to the deployment of a Maintenance release can have a significant impact on future Maintenance releases and the deployment of larger programmes.

12. In the event of a High Impact Planned Maintenance event being postponed DCC would aim to reschedule deployment of that Planned Maintenance within 48 hours of the originally planned deployment date. The SEC would define this rescheduled Maintenance as Unplanned Maintenance, and we consider that this should be an acceptable use of such Maintenance.

13. For consistency, DCC schedules the majority of High Impact Planned Maintenance to occur on Tuesday evenings, where a 48-hour deferral would see that maintenance rescheduled to the following Thursday evening.

14. To maintain the long-term Maintenance schedule, the integrity of the preapproved Annual Outage Plan and the deployment and availability of larger programmes of work. Deferred Planned Maintenance cannot be delayed more than 48 and the rescheduled Maintenance will not be subject to further deferral.

### 2.1. Costs of Deferral

15. Deferring any individual Planned Maintenance event will result in costs since DCC Service Providers will need to stand down their release capacity and work to stand up the release at a future date. Costs are expected to be greater where a decision to defer Maintenance is made closer to its planned deployment.

16. In addition, costs will be higher, should increasing numbers of DCC Service Providers be required to deploy updates within the same Maintenance release, and therefore more Service Provider would be impacted by the deferral event.

17. Estimated costs of each Planned Maintenance deferral are up to ~£711,000 (seven-hundred and eleven thousand).

## 3. Requesting a Maintenance Deferral

### 3.1. Making a Request

18. Any SEC Party may request for High Impact Planned Maintenance to be deferred at any time.

19. This Policy does not define scenarios in which Planned Maintenance deferral can be requested. One event that might necessitate deferral of Planned Maintenance is when adverse weather is expected following the issue of a Met Office amber or red weather warning. These events can result in power loss to energy consumers where Network Parties rely on data provided through DCC Services to understand power loss and power reconnection. Deferral of Planned Maintenance in such a scenario may allow the Network Party to manage their resources more efficiently.

20. Other scenarios that may benefit from Planned Maintenance deferral may also exist.

21. Before submitting a request, the Party should confirm through DCCs Annual Outage Plan, available on SharePoint, that High Impact Planned Maintenance impacting end-to-end communication is scheduled during the time period for which they consider it critical to ensure the continuity of DCC Services.

22. The request should be logged in DSMS with as much notice as possible, and ideally no later than 13:00 on the scheduled day of the High Impact Planned Maintenance (logged as Priority 3 incident). The Request should then be sent by e-mail to ServiceCentre@smartdcc.co.uk with the Service Managers copied in for formal invocation of this policy followed by a phone call to the Service Centre to confirm receipt.

23. The submission of a request does not guarantee the deferral of Planned Maintenance activity. A request should only be made where the Party considers deferral of High Impact Planned Maintenance to be absolutely necessary. The responsibility for providing a rationale on the need for a deferral sits with the applying Party.

24. The request should include the details of the circumstances causing the Party concern, , with as much detail as possible including:

    - The potential impact of those circumstances (or actual impact if already know), including on the Party and consumers. This should include the volumes of consumers / smart installations expected to be impacted, and where appropriate estimates of impact to Priority Service Register consumers

    - Why the impact cannot be managed during the Planned Maintenance event

    - The probability of the described impact being realised

- Why and how the continuity of Services is expected to lessen the impact to the Party and consumers

# 4. Decision Process

25. It is DCCs preference that any decision to defer Maintenance is made by a range of Parties, where that decision is informed through information provided by the applicant as described above, and by information provided by DCC including the cost of deferral and the operational impact on future Maintenance.

26. This policy, including this decision process, is a temporary solution while SEC MP293 remains in development. We consider that any enduring process should include broad SEC Party input into decision making rather that DCC. DCC has agreed to take responsibility for the decision-making process following an application for deferral of Maintenance until the solution to SEC MP293 delivered.

27. A request to defer Maintenance does not guarantee that deferral will be implemented. Requests should be made as soon as possible since it becomes increasingly difficult to defer Planned Maintenance closer to its scheduled deployment time.

28. The decision to defer Maintenance will consider:

    - Details provided by the applicant - DCC may request additional information to fully understand the risk of deploying Planned Maintenance, including the impact on Parties and consumers

    - Information and feedback provided by other SEC Parties, and the impact of deploying Maintenance or deferring Maintenance. DCC may seek feedback from other Parties since deferral of Maintenance by 48 hours could result in outage during times that negatively impacts other Parties. The consensus of Parties will be considered in the final decision

    - The ability of Service Providers to defer Maintenance

    - The cost implications of deferring Maintenance

    - The impact of deferring Maintenance on future Maintenance deployments, and the impacts of delays to future Maintenance Deployments

    - Rights and obligations in Service Provider contracts

29. Additional feedback on deferral applications may be sought via e-mail requests, bilateral engagement or through convening ad-hoc meetings. The applicant Party should provide robust evidence on the need for deferral of Maintenance at any such meeting that they may hold at that time.

30. DCC may seek input from other Parties through operational contacts already held, including by e-mail, phone or on-line meetings. Given that the decision timescales are likely to be short, these attempts will be on a best endeavours basis. DCC may also seek feedback and input from the SEC Operations Sub-Committee and its chair.

31. The final decision will be made by DCC Managing Director of Operations, or to a senior member of DCC staff with delegated authority,. The decision will be to either:

    - Approve the request for Planned Maintenance deferral

    - Reject the request for Planned Maintenance deferral

32. Where a decision to defer Planned Maintenance is approved, DCC will reschedule that Planned Maintenance and confirm the amended deployment time as soon as possible, this will most likely be to confirm the addition of Unplanned Maintenance 48 hours after the originally scheduled deployment time.

# 5. Communication with Parties

33. On receipt of a request for Maintenance deferral DCC notify as soon as possible the SEC Panel and all SEC Parties of that application through mass communication.

34. As soon as possible following DCC decision on Maintenance deferral, DCC will communicate that decision to all Parties and SEC Panel through mass communications

35. As soon as possible following a decision made under this policy, to cancel and reschedule Planned Maintenance, DCC will issue mass communications to inform on the changes to Maintenance activity, in compliance with SEC obligations.

36. Communication of the cancelation of Maintenance and the deployment of Unplanned Maintenance (the deferred Maintenance) will be completed in the usual manner.

37. As soon as possible or within 10 working days, following the decision to either defer Maintenance or continue as planned, DCC will provide a report to SEC Panel detailing the decision.

# 6. Review Process

38. Following each request to defer Maintenance, and regardless of the final decision, DCC and the applicant Party will review the implementation of this Policy, other Parties may be invited to provide comments. That review should consider:

    - The ease of implementing this Policy
    - If the scenario which prompted the deferral request resulted in the impacts provided in the application and whether the deferral was required in actuality
    - Where it is noted that the expected impacts did not occur and a Maintenance deferral was not required, how the applicant might approach future requests

39. Lessons learnt from the review may result in amendments to this policy and / or points to consider being shared with Parties when considering future deferral requests.

40. A post event report will be provided to SEC Operations Sub-Committee based on this review.