GUIDANCE NOTE – LONG TERM VACANT (LTV) PROCESS DURING COVID-19

GUIDANCE EFFECTIVE 21 MARCH 2020-31 DECEMBER 2020

ELEXON has been contacted by a number of electricity Suppliers in the NHH market, raising concerns about the management of Long Term Vacant (LTV) sites during the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ELEXON convened a group of industry experts, including NHH Suppliers and Supplier Agents, who met on 23 April 2020, to discuss this issue and provide guidance to the industry. The group discussed numerous options and concluded that the following approach was the best available to Suppliers wishing to ensure that Settlement is as accurate as possible. The Performance Assurance Board (PAB) has discussed and agreed this approach and encourages Suppliers and Supplier Agents to follow the guidance below.

As Government lockdown restrictions are being relaxed the expert group reconvened on 28 July 2020 to agree a proposed timetable for ending the COVID-19 lockdown derogations. The PAB agreed the findings of the expert group and these have been reflected in this guidance.

There are two key requirements in the LTV process in BSCP504 paragraph 4.15.3, which it is acknowledged may be difficult to maintain during the lockdown period. In order to continue treating a site as LTV, a Supplier must:

1. Receive a D0004 from the NHHDC with the J0024 data item populated with the 02 code at least once every 215 calendar days for the Metering System; and
2. At least once every 215 calendar days, the Supplier must make further proactive attempts to identify the owner of the property in order to obtain a Meter Reading (examples of which are detailed in BSCP504 paragraph 4.15.1, criterion 3) or, if the owner is known, then the Supplier must continue to attempt to contact them to arrange a Meter Reading. Auditable records must be kept for all attempts to obtain a Meter Reading.

Due to the restriction on movement put in place by Government in relation to the COVID-19 lockdown, it may not be possible to be able to visit sites within the timescales set out in BSCP504. Therefore, that when this process is examined by the BSC Auditor for the 2020/2021 BSC Audit (and any future BSC Audits, subject to any further future period(s) of lockdown), the days during the lockdown, and for three months subsequently (to allow the industry to undertake the backlog of work and return to normal operating timescales), should not be counted towards the 215 day LTV requirements. This position is conditional upon the Supplier being able to provide evidence to the BSC Auditor (or ELEXON), upon request at any time, which demonstrates why a site visit could not be completed during the lockdown period (such as communication from the Supplier Agent that the site visit cannot occur).

This guidance applies for such a time period(s) as the PAB determines that manual site visit activities may not be possible, whether nationally, by business sector or geographical region, in line with the lifting of restrictions. ELEXON will communicate these dates with the Industry, giving a three month notice period before the ending of each instance. On the 1 October 2020, the -PAB issued a three month notice period to end the grace period for the initial lockdown period.

Therefore, days after 1 January 2021 will count towards the 215 days for checking a site should remain in LTV process again. These sites should therefore be targeted for site visits to avoid them dropping out of the process.

The PAB also noted that the economic effects of the pandemic may result in an increase in future LTV sites, which will require site visits to establish.

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The PAB will also confirm any further shut down dates following any further restrictions put in place by the Governments of Great Britain. In the event that further guidance is required, this document shall be updated and re-issued.

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