GUIDANCE NOTE – HALF HOURLY (HH) AND NON HALF HOURLY (NHH) SITE INSPECTIONS DURING COVID-19

GUIDANCE EFFECTIVE 21 MARCH 2020-31 DECEMBER 2020

ELEXON has been contacted by a number of electricity Suppliers and Supplier Agents, raising concerns about the ability to perform site inspections during the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ELEXON convened a group of industry experts, including 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.

There are requirements within BSCP502 and BSCP504 for site inspections to take place regularly. BSCP502 section 3.4.1.3 requires HHDCs to perform a visit to a de-energised SVA HH Metering System (MS) without communications equipment (or without functioning communications equipment) on an annual basis. BSCP502 section 4.1.8 requires HHDCs to perform site visits for Measurement Class (MC) C sites with polyphase MSs at least annually, and MC C single phase MSs at least every two years. BSCP504 section 3.4.1.1 (footnote 99) requires NHHDCs to visit a de-energised SVA NHH MS on an annual basis.

ELEXON recognises that it will not be possible to carry out site inspections during any period(s) of lock down. Further to this, ELEXON recognises that, following restrictions being lifted or eased (whether nationally, by business sector or geographical region), the priority for field staff could be to obtain meter readings and perform meter fault investigations. This means that site inspections could be delayed.

With this in mind, with agreement of the Performance Assurance Board (PAB), ELEXON will not consider any non-compliances for site inspections which have not been attempted, if these were due to take place during any period(s) of lock down. The initial period of lockdown is defined as starting on 21 March 2020 (or 24 March 2020, depending on the nature of the customer's business), in line with the government initial directive to close certain businesses, until ~~such a time as the PAB determines that the lockdown has ended~~31 December 2020. ~~The PAB's assessment will consider when it believes that manual data collection activities and field visits could be able to be resumed (reflecting the re-opening of sites and HHDCs ability to be able to complete site visits) and will take into account the easing or lifting of restrictions whether nationally, by business sector or geographical location. Following any PAB determination ELEXON will communicate this date/these dates to the Industry, giving~~On 1 October 2020 the PAB issued a three month notice period for site inspections ~~to be carried out~~required once more. From 1 January 2021 Site Inspection Visits due are expected to resume (although backlogs of visits that were due during the lockdown period and missed are not expected to be caught up on) and non-compliances will be raised against Parties who do not complete these going forward.

It is envisaged that there could be further lockdown periods in the future, therefore in any subsequent instances, where additional or supplementary guidance is required this document shall be updated.

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