

# ISG238-SPAR

Issue 62 - Published 15 February 2021

## System Price Analysis Report

The System Prices Analysis Report (SPAR) provides a monthly update on price calculations. It is published by the ELEXON Market Operations on the Elexon Website and issued to the Imbalance Settlement Group (ISG) at their monthly meeting.

This report provides data and analysis specific to System Prices and the Balancing Mechanism. It demonstrates the data used to derive the prices. The data is a combination of II and SF Settlement Runs.

This month's report shows System Price graphs previously featured in the Trading Operations Report (<https://www.elexon.co.uk/data/key-data-reports/trading-operations-report/>) (TOR). These graphs show the market length over the past year, daily average System Prices compares to previous months, balancing volumes by Fuel Type and historic monthly MIP and System Price averages.

## Reporting on January 2021

### 1 System Prices and length

This report covers the month of January. Where available, data uses the latest Settlement Run (in most cases 'II' or 'SF'). In this report, we distinguish between a 'long' and a 'short' market when analysing System Prices, because the price calculation differs between the two scenarios.

When the market is long, System Prices are based predominantly on the System Operator's 'sell' actions such as accepted Bids. When the market is short, System Prices are based predominantly on the System Operator's 'buy' actions.

#### System Price summary by month (£/MWh)

This table gives a summary of System Prices for January, with values shown in £/MWh.

| System Length | Min   | Max     | Median | Mean   | Std.Dev |
|---------------|-------|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| Long          | 0.00  | 60.00   | 40.10  | 34.64  | 15.42   |
| Short         | 50.00 | 4000.00 | 77.95  | 110.71 | 231.91  |

Source: Elexon

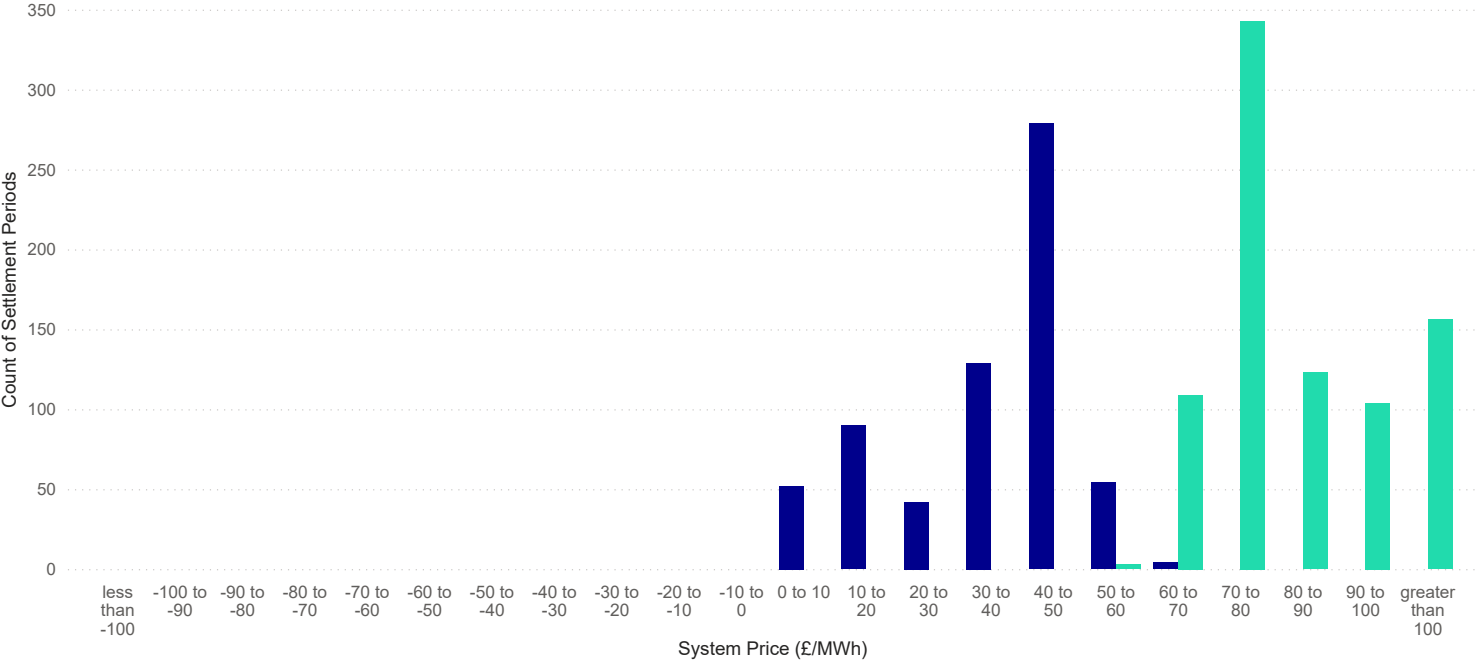
#### Frequency of System Prices over last month

This graph shows the distribution of System Prices across Settlement Periods in January 2021 when the market was long and short. 80% of System Prices were between £21.14/MWh and £100.03/MWh regardless of system length. When the system was long, 80% of prices were between £10.05/MWh and £49.10/MWh. When the system was short, 80% of prices were between £68.74/MWh and £138.66/MWh.



1.2 Frequency of System Prices over last month

System Length ● Long ● Short



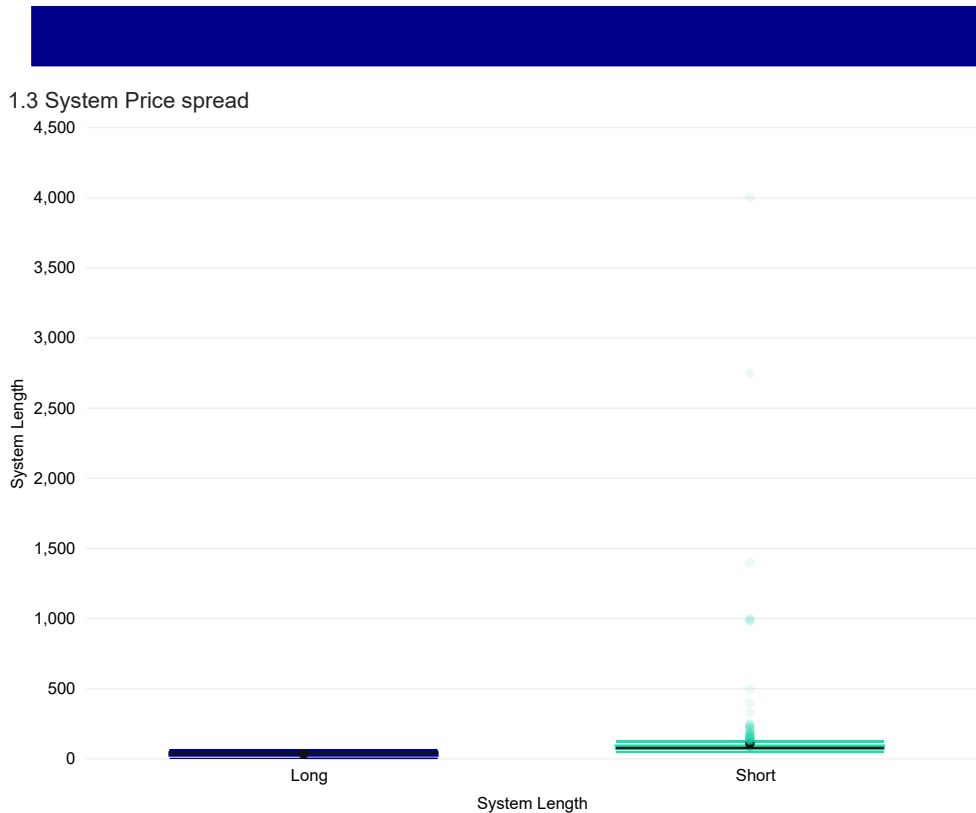
Microsoft Power BI



System Prices were £100/MWh or more on 156 occasions in January 2021, compared to 82 times in December 2020. There were four Settlement Periods where the System Price exceeded £1,000/MWh on 7 and 8 January. The highest System Price of the month, £4,000.00/MWh, occurred in Settlement Periods 39 and 40 on 8 January. The price was set by three Offers from the same two CCGT BMUs in both Settlement Periods. These were the two highest System Prices since 2001. The third highest System Price also took place on 8 January in Settlement Period 35 (£2,750/MWh).

There were no Settlement Periods where the System Price was less than £0/MWh in January, with the lowest System Price of £0.00/MWh occurring in 24 Settlement Periods across January. Ten of these Settlement Periods occurred in the Peak demand period.

**System Price spread** The graph below displays the spread of System Prices in January 2021 as a box plot diagram, split between a short and long system.



Microsoft Power BI



The middle line in each box represents the median System Price of the month, which is £77.95/MWh for short Settlement Periods and £40.10/MWh for long Settlement Periods. Each box edge represents the lower and upper quartiles (25th and 75th percentile respectively), with the Interquartile Range (difference between the Upper and Lower quartiles) being £22.38/MWh for short System Prices and £22.49/MWh for long System Prices.

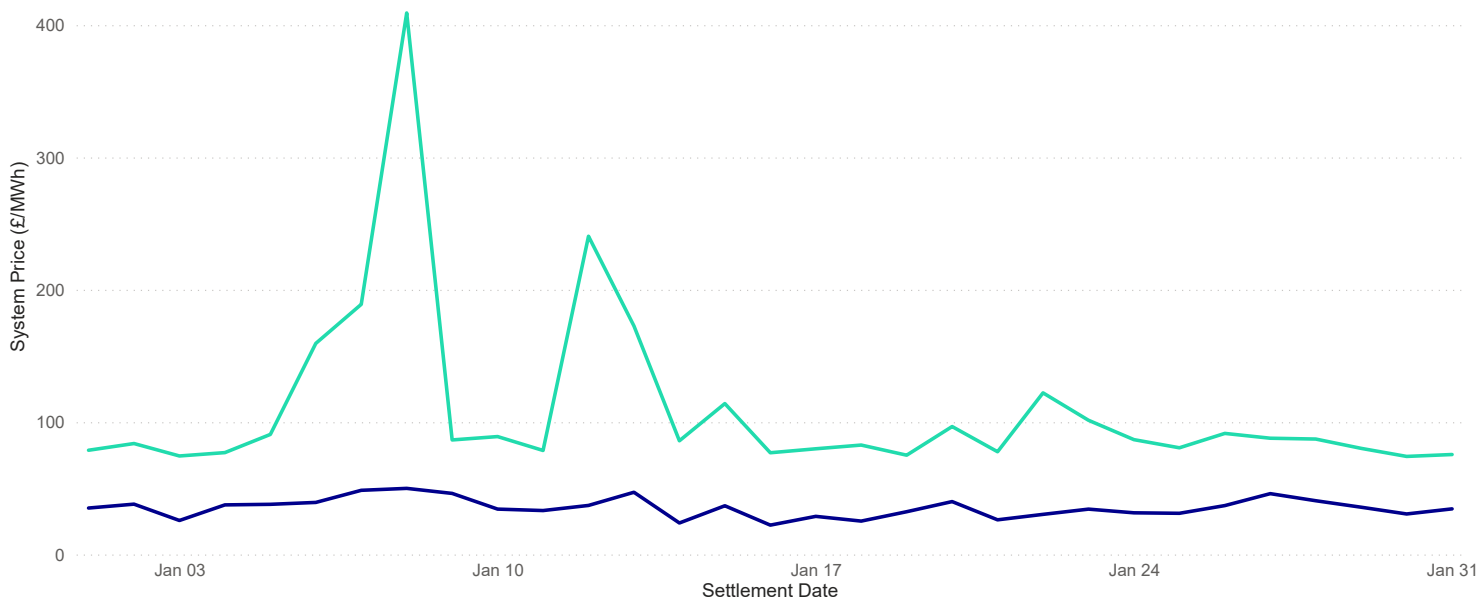
Outliers are shown on the graph as circles, and have been defined as being greater than 1.5 times the Interquartile Range (IQR) away from the Upper and Lower quartiles. Under this definition, there were 94 short System Prices in January that were outliers. All 94 outliers were greater than the upper outlier boundary. The highest System Price of the month, £849.82/MWh, was 12.59 times the median short System Price for the month.

**Daily average System Price**

The graph below shows daily average System Prices over the last month.

### 1.4 Daily average System Price

System Length ● Long ● Short



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In January, the average System Price was £34.64/MWh when the system was long and £110.71/MWh when the system was short. The highest daily average price when the system was short was £409.18/MWh, and occurred on 8 January; the system was short for 34 Settlement Periods on this day. On 8 January, National Grid ESO issued an Electricity Margin Notice (EMN) from Settlement Period 33 to 38. Settlement Periods 35, 39 and 40 on this day had a System Price over £1000/MWh. Elexon published a News article following high prices at the beginning of January: System Prices spike due to 'Beast from the East 2' (<https://www.elexon.co.uk/article/system-prices-spike-due-to-beast-from-the-east-ii/>).

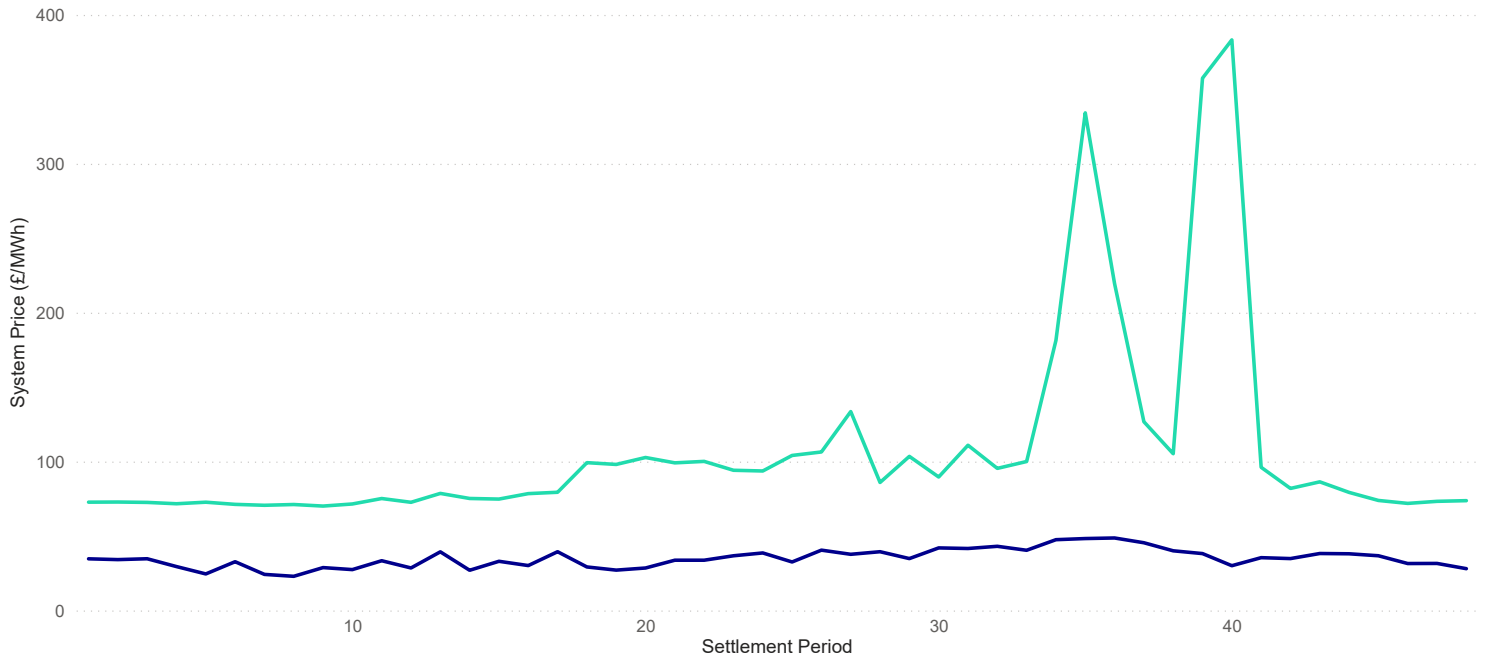
The lowest daily average price when the system was long was £22.22/MWh on 16 January. The system was long for 18 Settlement Periods on this day.

### Average System Price by Settlement Period

The graph below shows the variation of average System Prices across the day.

1.5 Average System Price by Settlement Period

System Length ● Long ● Short



Microsoft Power BI



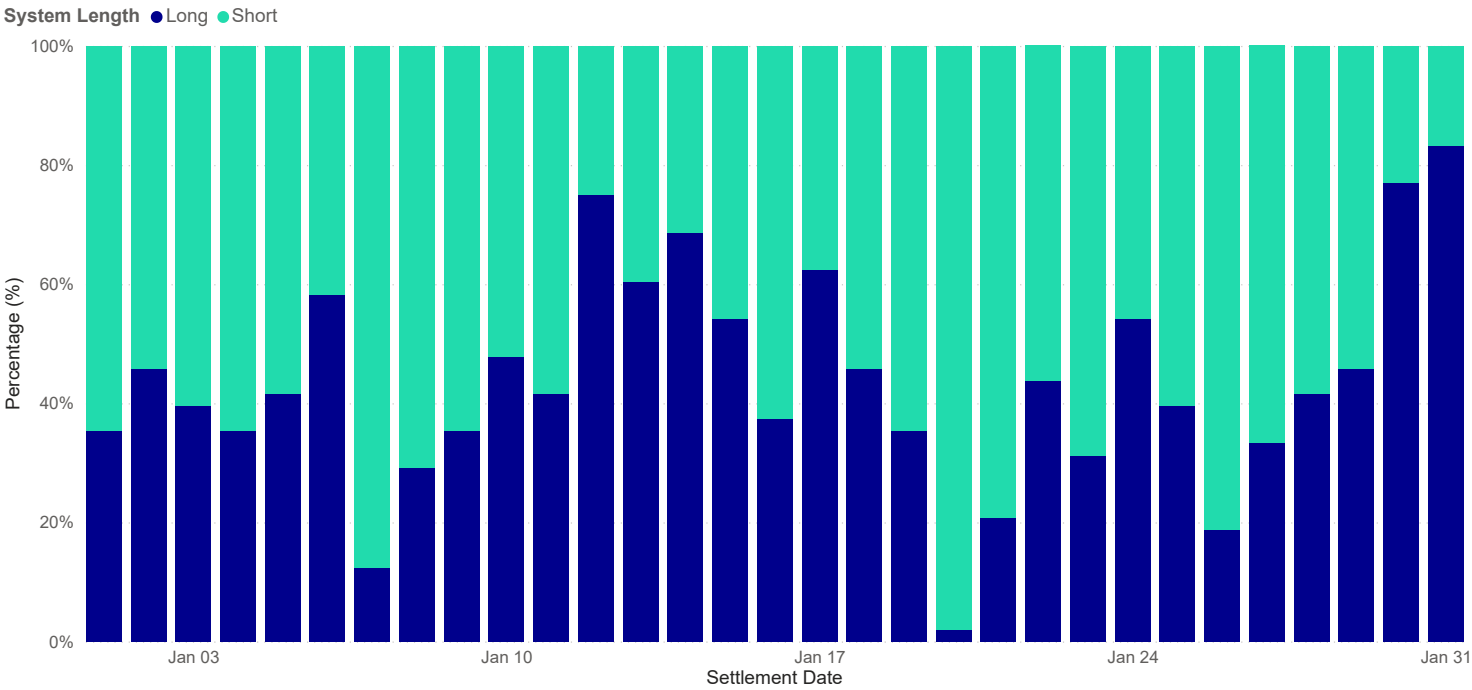
Short prices were highest in Settlement Period 40, with long prices lowest in Settlement Period 8. The lowest average System Price, regardless of market length, occurred during Settlement Period 10, when the System Price was £43.13/MWh. The daily average long Settlement Period System Prices ranged between £22.98/MWh and £48.72/MWh. Average short Settlement Period prices varied from £70.15/MWh to £383.24/MWh.

Daily System Length

This graph shows system length by day.



1.6 System Length by day

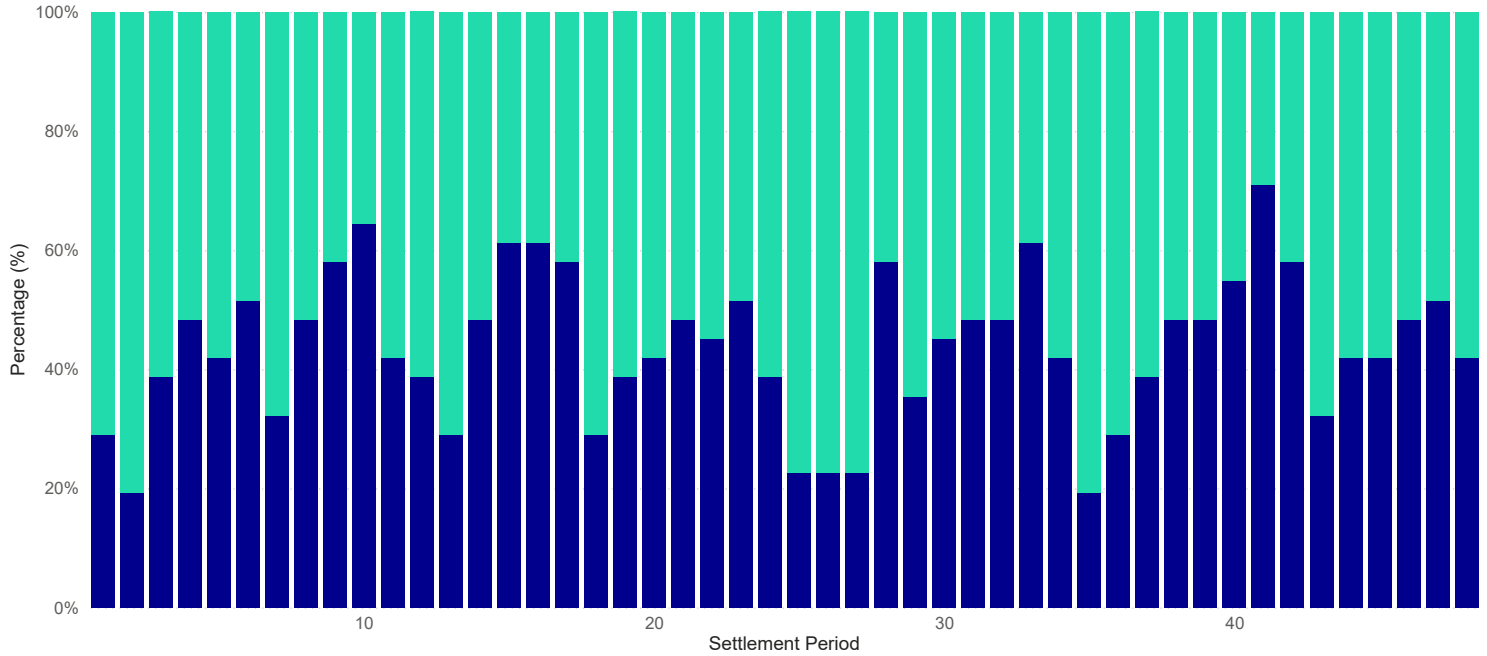


System Length by Settlement Period

This graph shows system length by Settlement Period for January.

### 1.7 System Length by Settlement Period

System Length ● Long ● Short



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The system was long for 44% of Settlement Periods in January.

On 20 January, the system was short for 47 of 48 Settlement Periods. The long Settlement Periods on this day had an average NIV of -23MWh. The daily average NIV on this day was 396MWh.

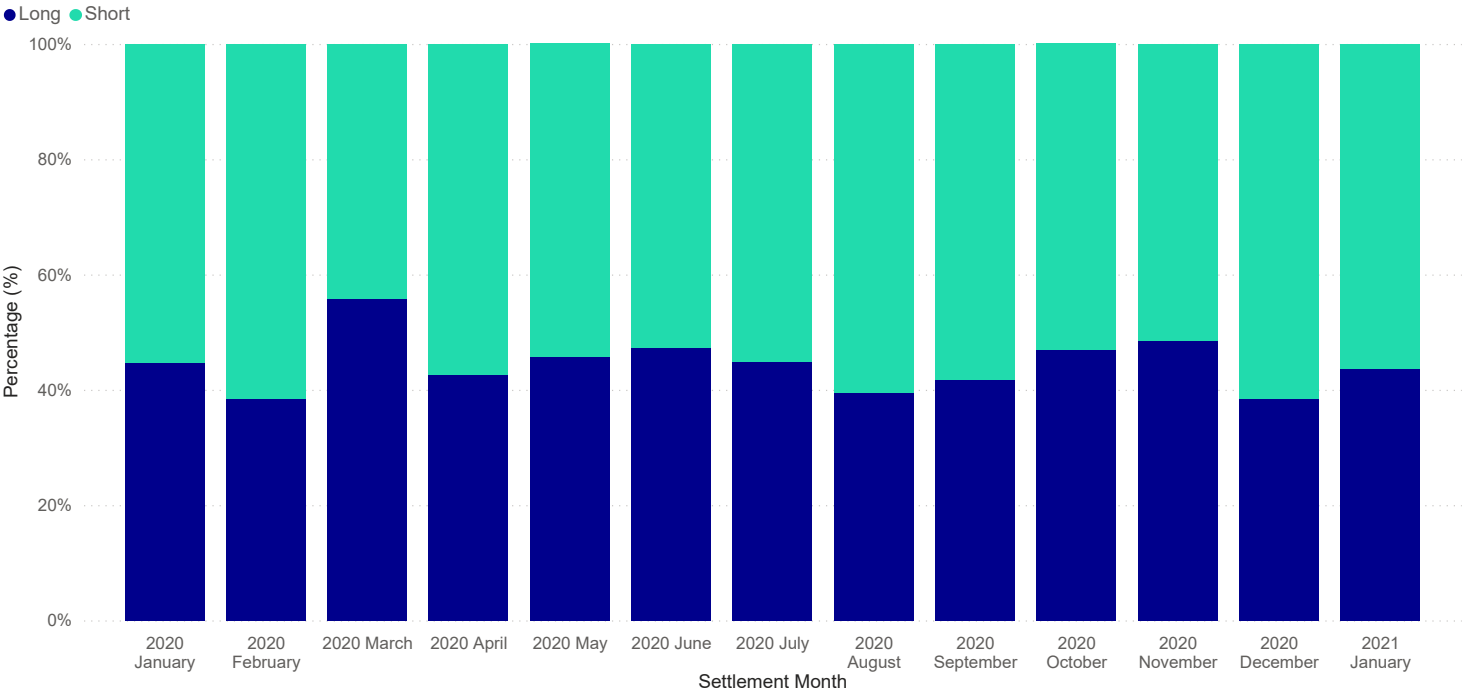
Settlement Period 41 had the highest number of long Settlement Periods, with 71% of them being long this month.

### Historic long vs short market

This graph shows the percentage of long and short Settlement Periods over the past year. 44% of Settlement Periods in January 2021 were long, compared to 45% over the previous 12 months.



1.8 Historic Long vs Short Market



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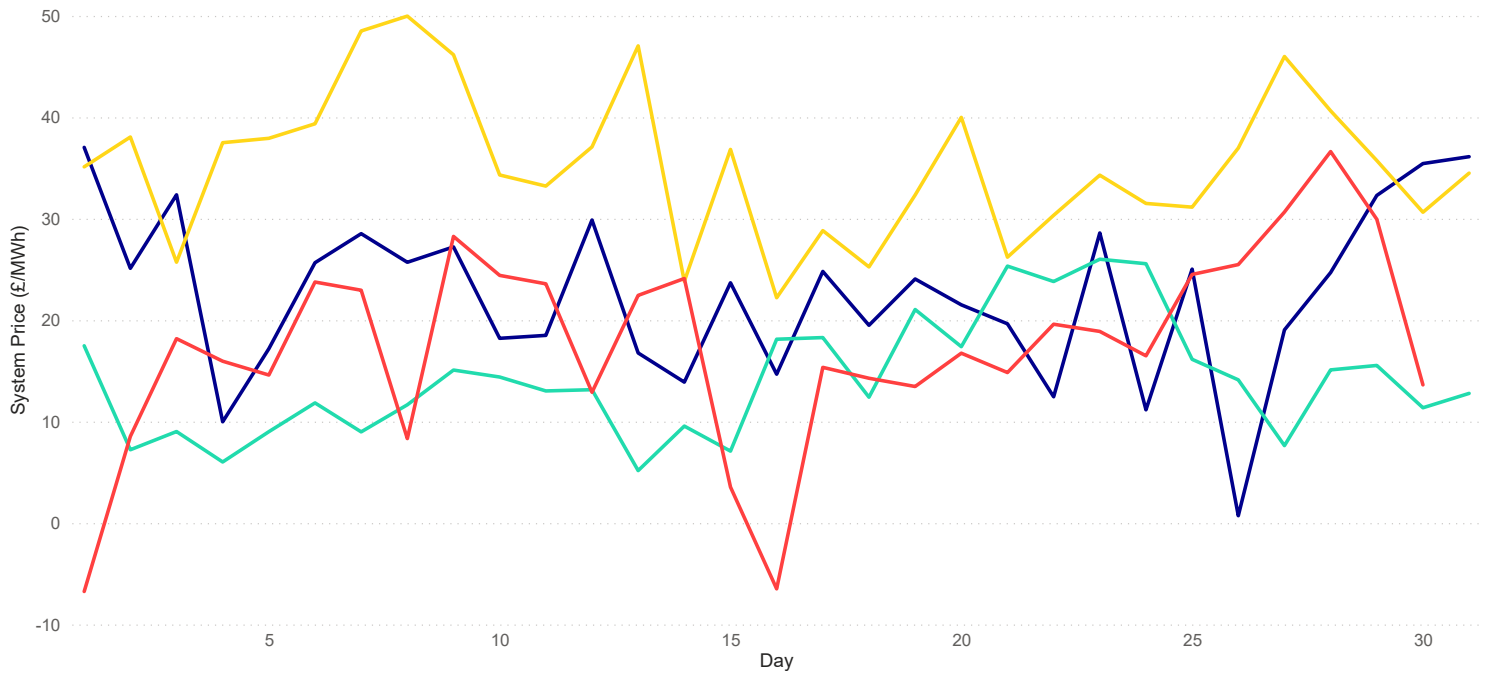
Average Daily System Price when Long by Settlement Day

The graph below displays the daily average System Prices in January 2021 when the system was long compared to the two previous months and the same month last year.



### 1.9 Average Daily System Price when Long by Settlement Day

Month ● Dec 20 ● Jan 20 ● Jan 21 ● Nov 20



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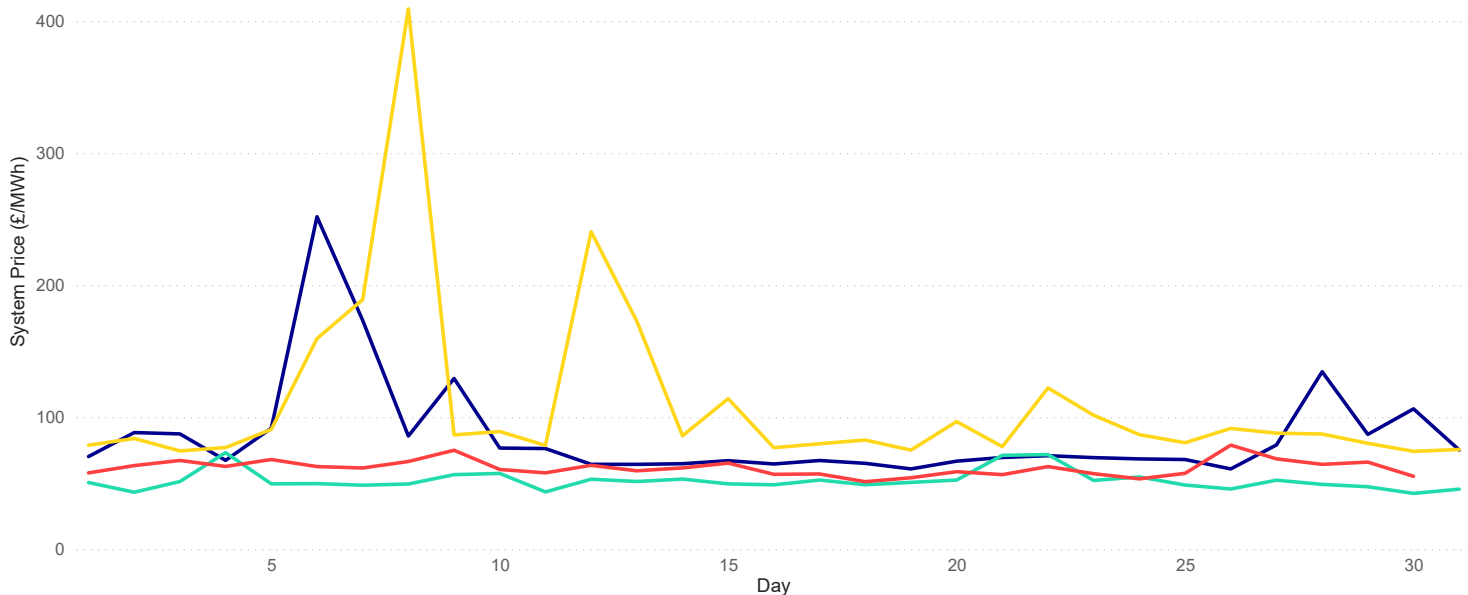
During January 2021, daily average long System Prices were £21.22/MWh higher than the same month in 2020.

### Average Daily System Price when Short by Settlement Day

This graph looks at System Prices from the same months as the previous graph, but when the System was short.

## 1.10 Average Daily System Price when Short by Settlement Day

Month ● Dec 20 ● Jan 20 ● Jan 21 ● Nov 20



Microsoft Power BI



Short daily average System Prices in January 2021 were higher than January 2020 every day by an average of £57.85/MWh. On the 8 January 2021, the daily average System Price of £409.18 was £359.77/MWh higher than 8 January in 2020.

**Accepted Volumes Accepted Offer Volume by Fuel Type** This graph displays the Offer volumes of fuel types that participated in the Balancing Mechanism during January 2021. Offers are balancing actions taken to increase the level of energy on the System. Balancing volumes in these graphs do not include volume from Balancing Services Adjustment Actions (BSAAs).



During January, 90% of Offer volume came from Gas BMUs and 5% from Pumped Storage BMUs.

81% of Bid volume came from Gas BMUs with a further 8% from Wind BMUs.

## 2 Parameters

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In this section, we consider a number of different parameters on the price. We consider:

- The impact of Flagging balancing actions;
- The impact of the Replacement Price;
- The impact of NIV Tagging;
- The impact of PAR Tagging;
- The impact of DMAT and Arbitrage Tagging; and
- How these mechanisms affect which balancing actions feed into the price.

### Flagging

The Imbalance Price calculation aims to distinguish between ‘energy’ and ‘system’ balancing actions. Energy balancing actions are those related to the overall energy imbalance on the system (the ‘Net Imbalance Volume’). It is these ‘energy’ balancing actions which the Imbalance Price should reflect. System balancing actions relate to non-energy, system management actions (e.g. locational constraints).

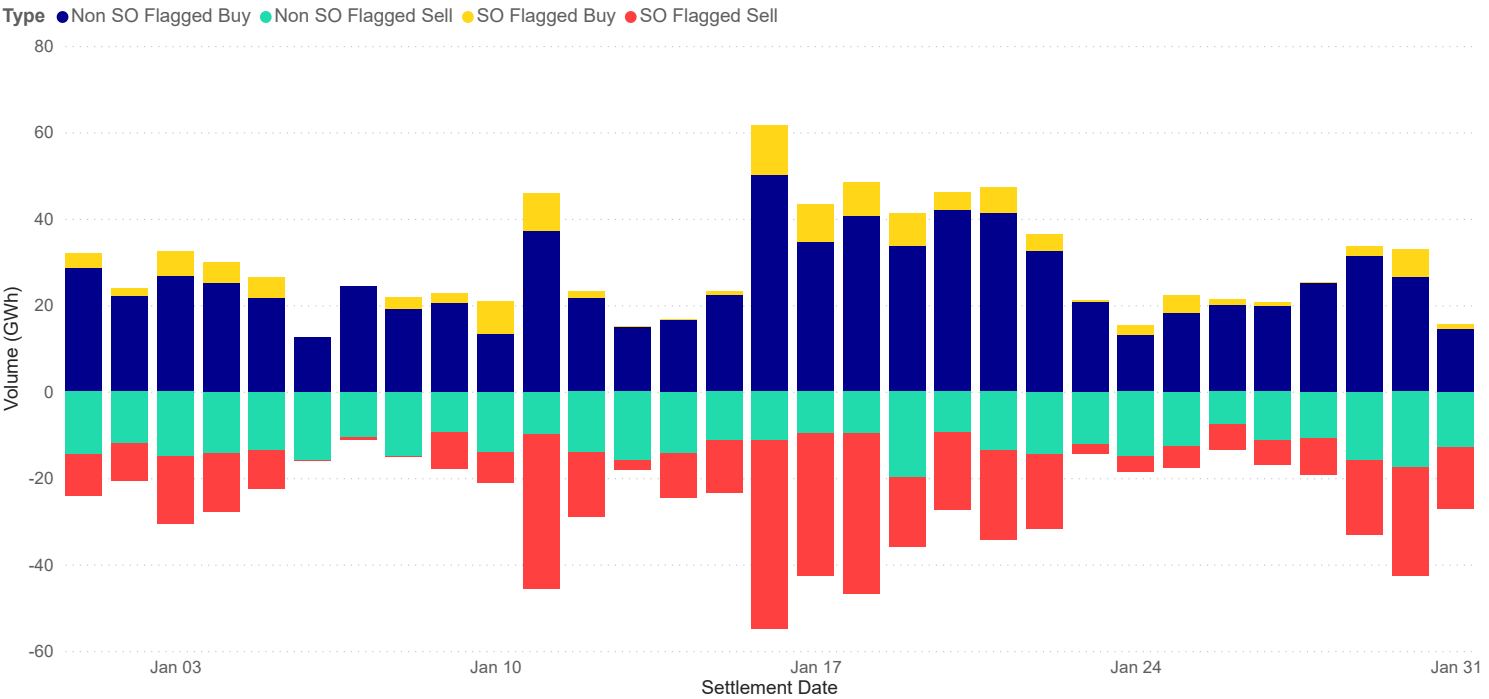
Some actions are ‘Flagged’. This means that they have been identified as potentially being ‘system related’, but rather than removing them completely from the price calculation (i.e. Tagging them) they may be re-priced, depending on their position in relation to the rest of the stack (a process called Classification). The System Operator (SO) flags actions when they are taken to resolve a locational constraint on the transmission network (SO-Flagging), or to correct short-term increases or decreases in generation/demand (Continuous Acceptance Duration Limit (CADL) Flagging).

#### **Daily volume of SO-Flagged/non-Flagged actions**

This graph shows the volumes of Buy and Sell actions in January 2021 that have been Flagged by the SO as being constraint related. On 18 January, 80% of Sell volume was SO-Flagged.



2.1 Daily volume of SO Flagged/non SO Flagged actions



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51% of Sell balancing action volume taken in January had an SO-Flag, compared with 72% the previous month. 49% of SO-Flagged Sell actions came from CCGT BMUs, 36% came from Balancing Service Adjustment Actions (BSAAs) and 12% from Wind BMUs. The average initial price (i.e. before any re-pricing) of a SO-Flagged Sell action was -£13.54/MWh.

12% of Buy balancing action volume taken in January had an SO-Flag, compared to 22% in December. 65% of SO-Flagged Buy actions came from CCGT BMUs and 35% from BSAAs. The average initial price of a SO-Flagged Buy action was £87.56/MWh.

Any actions with a total duration of less than the CADL are flagged. The CADL is currently set at 10 minutes.

0.6% of Buy action volume and 0.6% of Sell action volume were CADL Flagged in January. The majority of CADL Flagged Buy actions (95%), and CADL Flagged Sell actions (82%) came from Pumped Storage BMUs, with CCGT BMUs accounting for a further 11% of CADL Flagged Sell Actions.

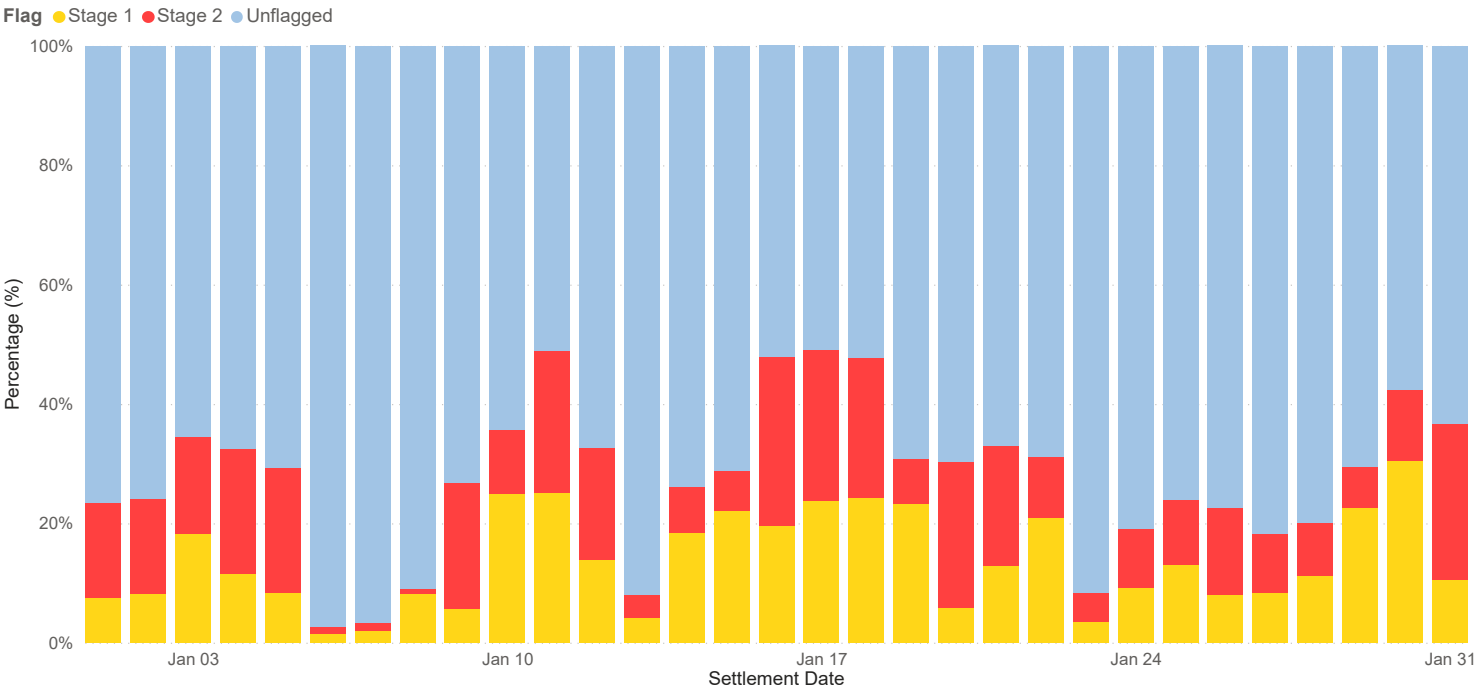
SO-Flagged and CADL Flagged actions are known as 'First-Stage Flagged'. First-Stage Flagged actions may become 'Second-Stage Flagged' depending on their price in relation to other Unflagged actions. If a First-Stage Flagged balancing action has a more expensive price than the most expensive First-Staged Unflagged balancing action, it becomes Second-Stage Flagged. This means it is considered a system balancing action and becomes unpriced.

Flagged Balancing Volumes

This graph shows First and Second-Stage Flagged action volumes as a proportion of all actions taken on the system. Note these are all the accepted balancing actions – only a proportion of these will feed through to the final price calculation.

In January, 28% of balancing volume received a First-Stage Flag with 49% of this volume going on to receive a Second-Stage Flag. On the 17 January, 49% of balancing volume was flagged; with 52% of this volume receiving a Second Stage Flag.

2.2 Flagged volume percentage



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The Replacement Price

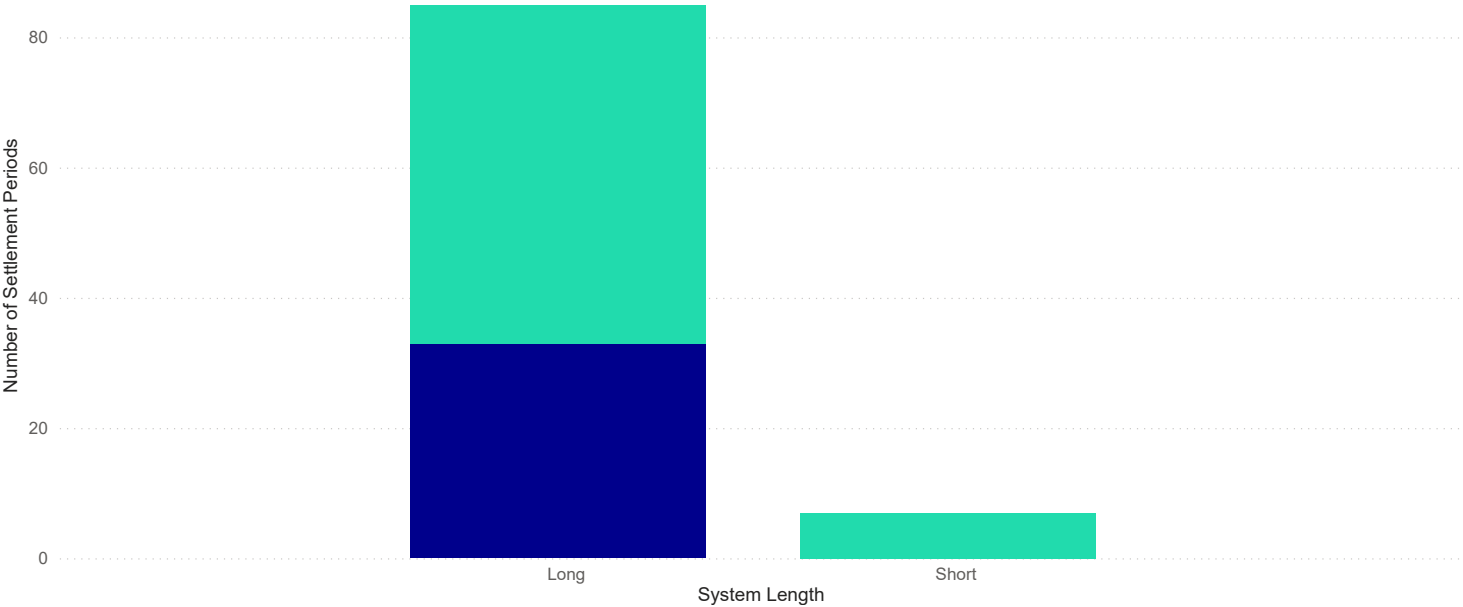
Any Second-Stage Flagged action volumes left in the NIV will be repriced using the Replacement Price. The Replacement Price is either based on the Replacement Price Average Reference (RPAR currently based on the most expensive 1MWh of Unflagged actions), or if no Unflagged actions remain after NIV Tagging, the Market Index Price (MIP). In January, 59 (4%) Settlement Periods had a Replacement Price based on the RPAR and 33 (2%) Settlement Periods had a Replacement Price based on the MIP. However, the majority of Settlement Periods (94%) did not have a Replacement Price.

**Number of Settlement Periods with Replacement Price by System Length** displays the count of Settlement Periods which had a Replacement Price applied, split by the system length and if the Replacement Price was based on RPAR or the MIP.



2.3 Number of Settlement Periods with Replacement Price by System Length

Replacement Price Type ● MIP ● RPAR



Microsoft Power BI



Average Price and Replacement Price by System Length

This table displays the average original and Replacement Price of Second-Stage Flagged actions

| System Length | Original Price | Replacement Price |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Long          | 15.81          | 37.49             |
| Short         | 97.43          | 77.14             |

Source: Elexon

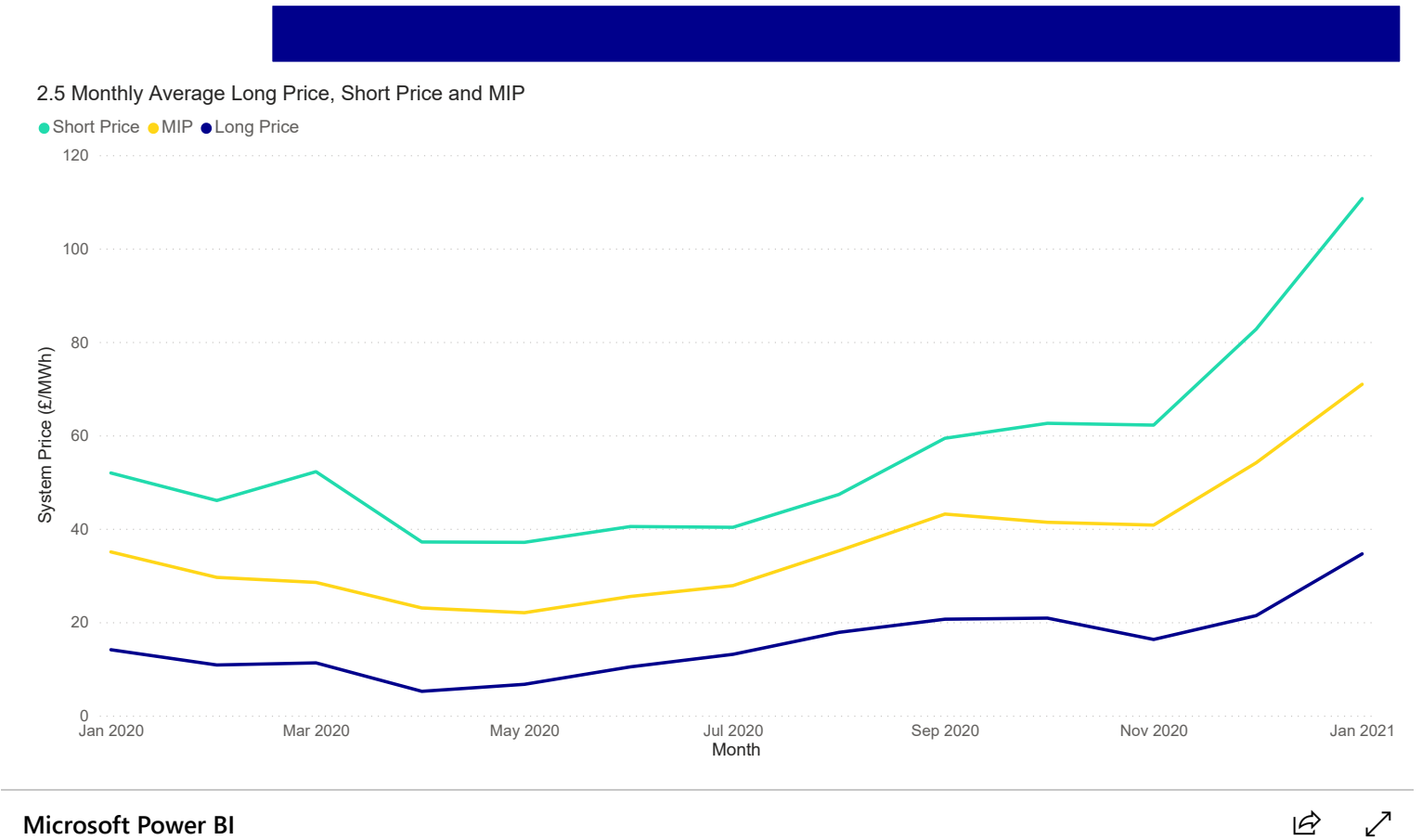
Sell actions will typically have their prices revised upwards by the Replacement Price for the purposes of calculating the System Price. In total, 52% of Sell volume in January was Flagged. Of this Flagged Sell volume, 4% was assigned a Replacement Price. The average original price of a Second-Stage Flagged repriced Sell action was £15.81/MWh and the average Replacement Price for Sell actions (when the System was long) was £37.49/MWh.

13% of Buy volume were Flagged; 1% of this volume had the Replacement Price applied. This is the first time all monthly Buy action volume has not received a Replacement Price.

If there are no Unflagged actions remaining in the NIV, the Replacement Price will default to the MIP. This occurred in 33 long and zero short Settlement Periods in January, compared to 68 long and four short Settlement Periods the previous month.

Monthly Average Long Price, Short Price and MIP

This graph compares the monthly average MIP to the monthly average long and short System Prices for the past 13 months. The monthly average long price increased by £31.23/MWh to £34.64/MWh, the short price increased by £27.96/MWh to £110.71/MWh and the MIP increased by £16.81/MWh to £70.95/MWh. January 2021 saw the highest monthly average MIP and second highest monthly average short System Price since the implementation of BSC Modification P305 (<https://www.elexon.co.uk/mod-proposal/p305/>) on 5 November 2015.



### NIV and NIV Tagging

The Net Imbalance Volume (NIV) represents the direction of imbalance of the system – i.e. whether the system is long or short overall.

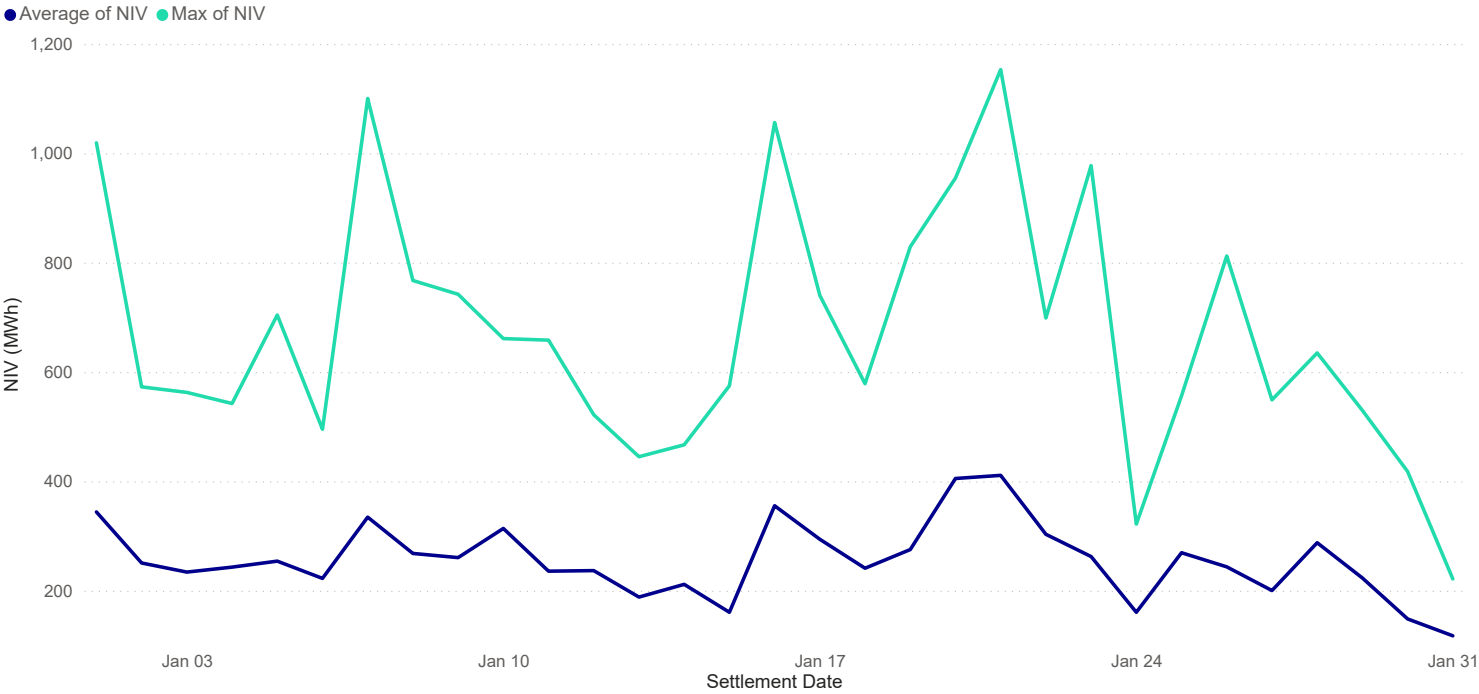
#### Short system NIV

This graph shows the greatest and average NIV when the system was short.

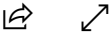




2.6 Short System NIV



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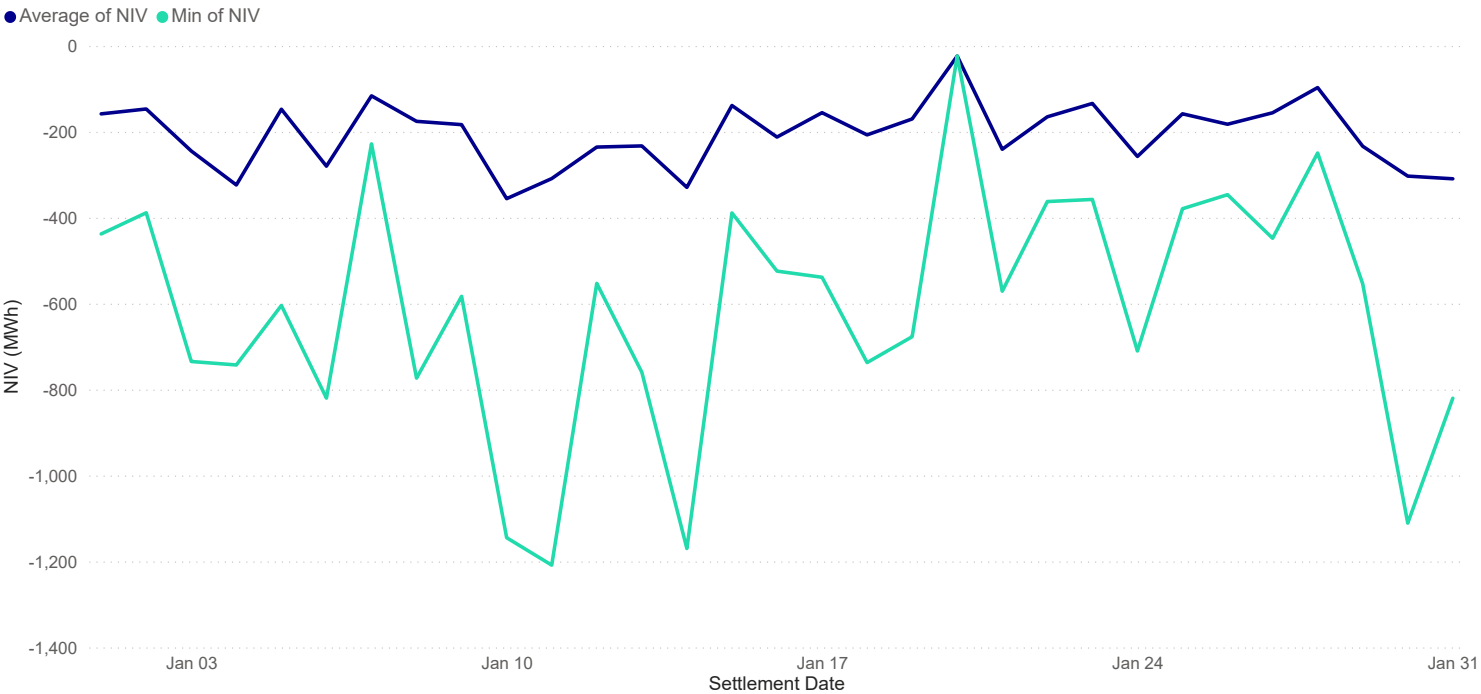


Long system NIV

This graph shows the minimum and average NIVs when the system was long. Note short NIVs are depicted as positive volumes and long NIVs are depicted as negative volumes.



2.7 Long System NIV



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In almost all Settlement Periods, the System Operator will need to take balancing actions in both directions (Buys and Sells) to balance the system. However, for the purposes of calculating an Imbalance Price there can only be imbalance in one direction (the Net Imbalance). ‘NIV Tagging’ is the process which subtracts the smaller stack of balancing actions from the larger one to determine the Net Imbalance. The price is then derived from these remaining actions.

NIV Tagging has a significant impact in determining which actions feed through to prices. In January, 77% of volume was removed due to NIV tagging. The most expensive actions are NIV Tagged first; hence NIV Tagging has a dampening effect on prices when there are balancing actions in both directions.

The maximum short system NIV of the month (1,153MWh) was seen in Settlement Period 36 on 21 January, where the System Price was £99.00/MWh.

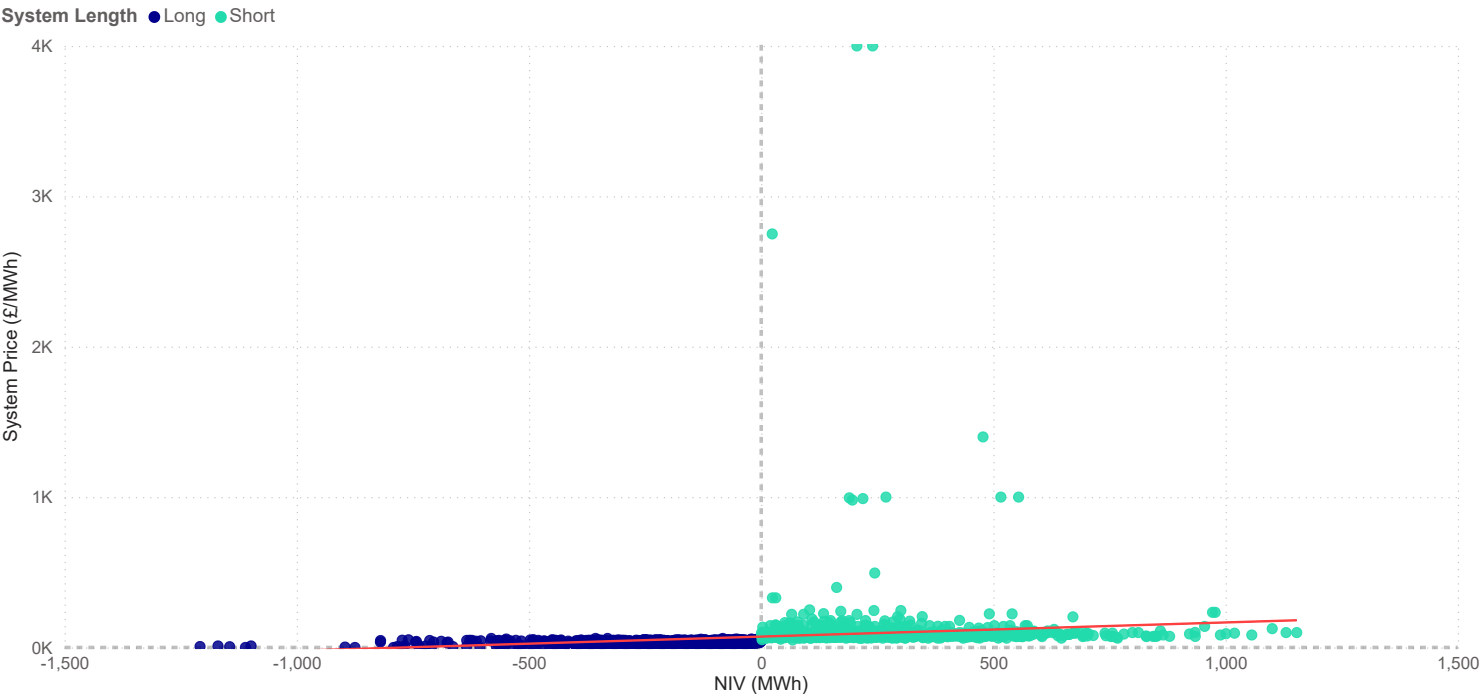
The minimum long system NIV of the month was -1,208MWh, in Settlement Period 40 on 11 January, where the System Price was £6.25/MWh.

Net Imbalance Volume and System Price

This graph displays a scatter graph of Net Imbalance Volume and System Prices. The dashed lines display a 0MWh NIV and a £0.00/MWh System Price, the red line is a trendline with the expected System Price from a particular NIV based on the month's data.



2.8 Net Imbalance Volume and System Price



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There were 650 long Settlement Periods and 838 short Settlement Periods in January. The two most expensive Settlement Periods had short NIVs of 240MWh and 206MWh. The average NIV short NIV in January 2021 was 272MWh.

PAR Tagging

PAR Tagging is the final step of the Imbalance Price calculation. It takes a volume-weighted average of the most expensive 1MWh of actions left in the stack. The value of PAR is set at 1MWh.

PAR Tagging is active in almost all Settlement Periods, the only periods not affected by the new parameter have a NIV of less than 1MWh.

During January, there were four Settlement Periods where PAR Tagging was inactive. Settlement Period 7 on 19 January had the lowest absolute NIV (-0.43MWh), and therefore was the most balanced Settlement Period of the month.

DMAT and Arbitrage Tagged Volumes

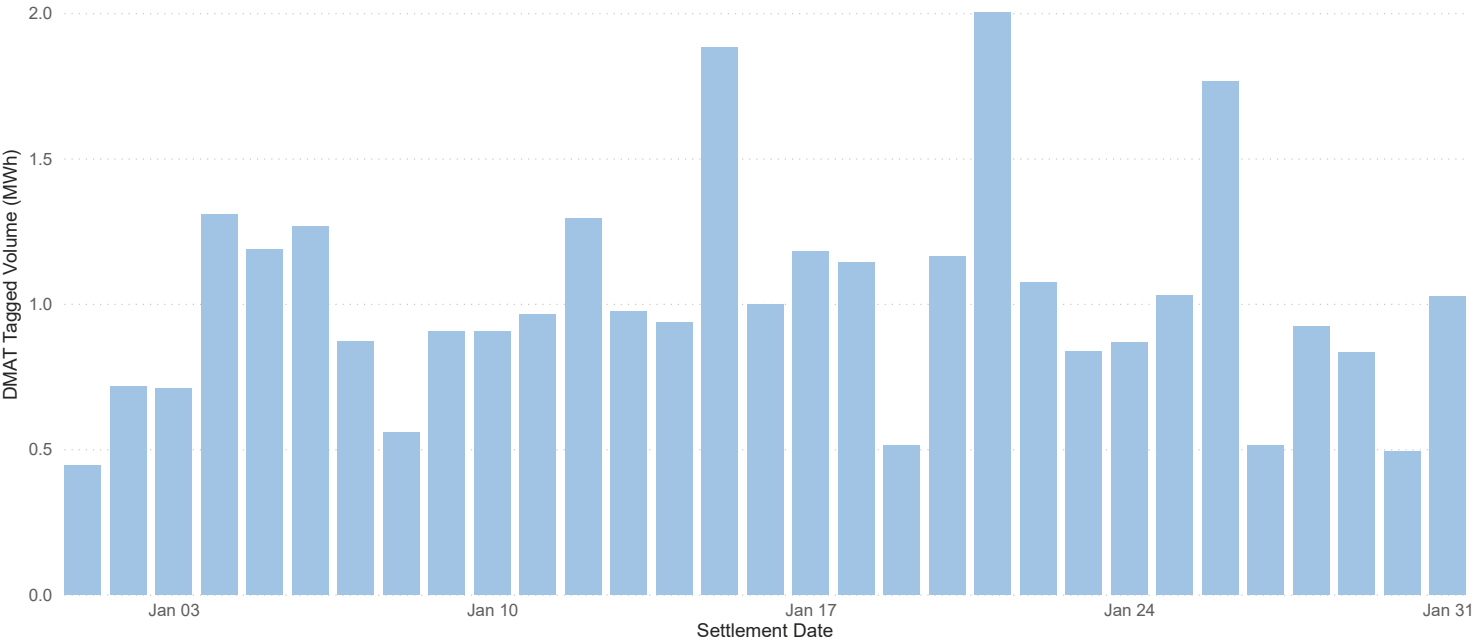
Some actions are always removed from the price calculation (before NIV Tagging). These are actions which are less than the De Minimis Acceptance Threshold (DMAT) Tagging or Buy actions which are either the same price or lower than the price of Sell actions (Arbitrage Tagging). The DMAT is set at 0.1MWh.

**Daily Volume of DMAT Tagged volume** This graph shows the volumes of actions removed due to DMAT Tagging.

## 2.8 Daily volume of DMAT Tagged volume



2.9 Daily DMAT Tagged volume

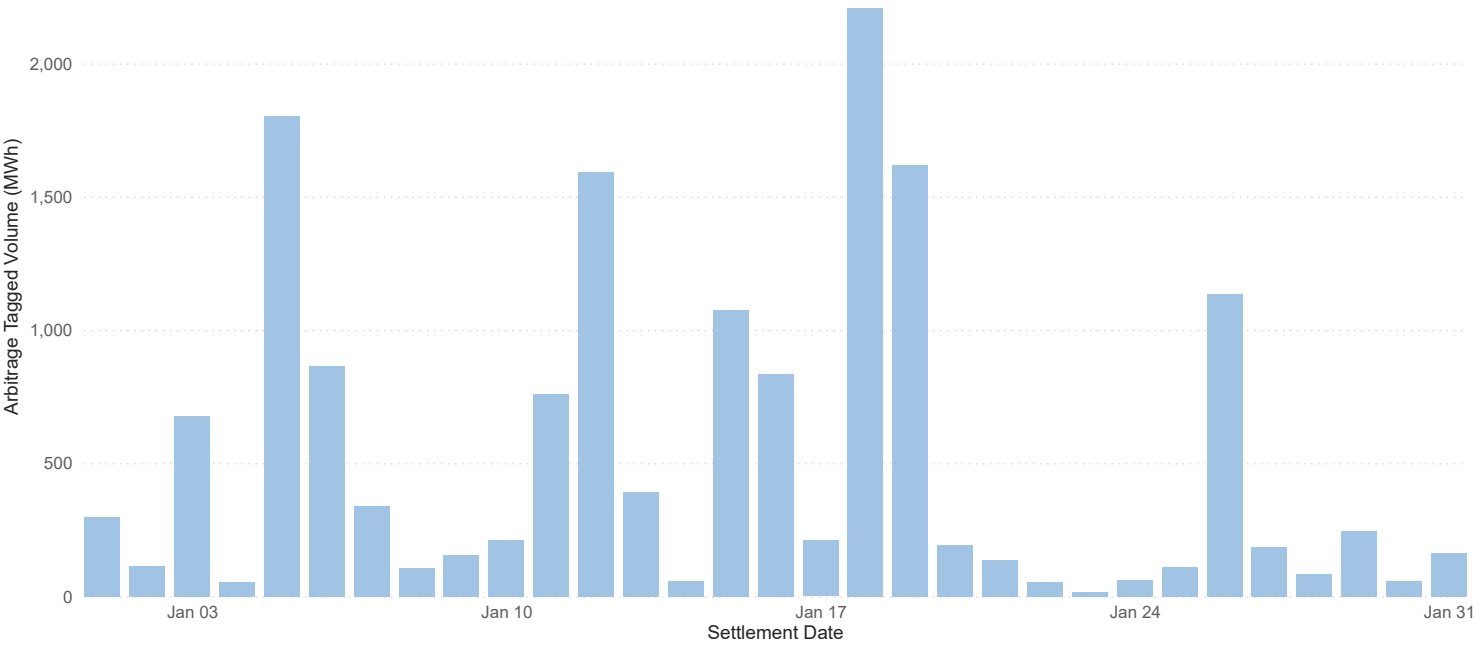


31.3MWh (0.002%) of total Buy and Sell volume was removed by DMAT Tagging in January, compared to 34.2MWh the previous month. 59% of the DMAT Tagged volume came from CCGT BMUs, 15% from other BMUs and 11% from Gas BMUs.

### Daily volume of Arbitrage Tagged volume

This graph shows the volumes of actions that were removed due to Arbitrage Tagging.

2.10 Daily Arbitrage Tagged volume



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15,818MWh (0.9%) of total Buy and Sell volume was removed by Arbitrage Tagging in January. 55% of the Arbitrage Tagged came from CCGT BMUs, 27% from BSAAs and 9% from Wind BMUs.

In January, the average initial price of an Arbitrage Tagged Buy action was £52.93/MWh, and for a Sell action was £74.49/MWh. The maximum initial price of an Arbitrage Tagged Sell action was £1000.00/MWh, and the lowest priced Arbitrage Tagged Buy action was -£59.40/MWh.

On 18 January, 2,207MWh of actions were Arbitrage Tagged, representing 2.3% of the daily volume of balancing actions. The average price of an Arbitrage Tagged Buy action was £68.62/MWh, and for a Sell action was £139.09/MWh on this day. 63% of the Arbitrage Tagged Volume came from BSAAs and 37% from CCGT BMUs.

### 3 Balancing Services

#### Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR) costs and volumes

This section covers reserve balancing services products that the ESO procures and can be taken inside or outside of the BM.

In addition to Bids and Offers available in the Balancing Mechanism, the SO can enter into contracts with providers of balancing capacity to deliver when called upon. These additional sources of power are referred to as reserve, and most of the reserve that the SO procures is called Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR).

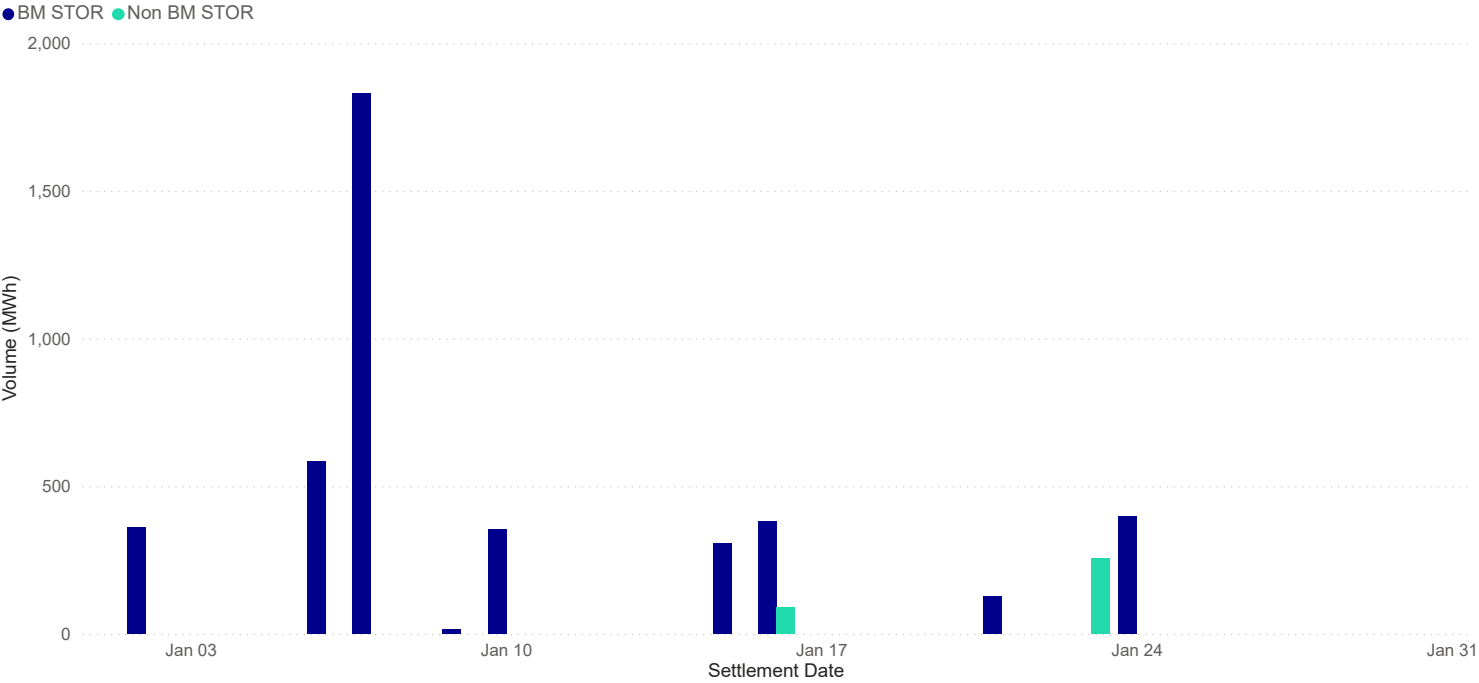
Under STOR contracts, availability payments are made to the balancing service provider in return for capacity being made available to the SO during specific times (STOR Availability Windows). When STOR is called upon, the SO pays for it at a pre-agreed price (its Utilisation Price). Some STOR is dispatched in the Balancing Mechanism (BM STOR) while some is dispatched separately (Non-BM STOR).

#### Daily STOR vs Non-BM STOR volume

This graph gives STOR volumes that were called upon during the month split into BM STOR and non-BM STOR. 7% of the total STOR volume utilised in January came from outside of the Balancing Mechanism.



3.1 Daily STOR BM vs Non BM volumes

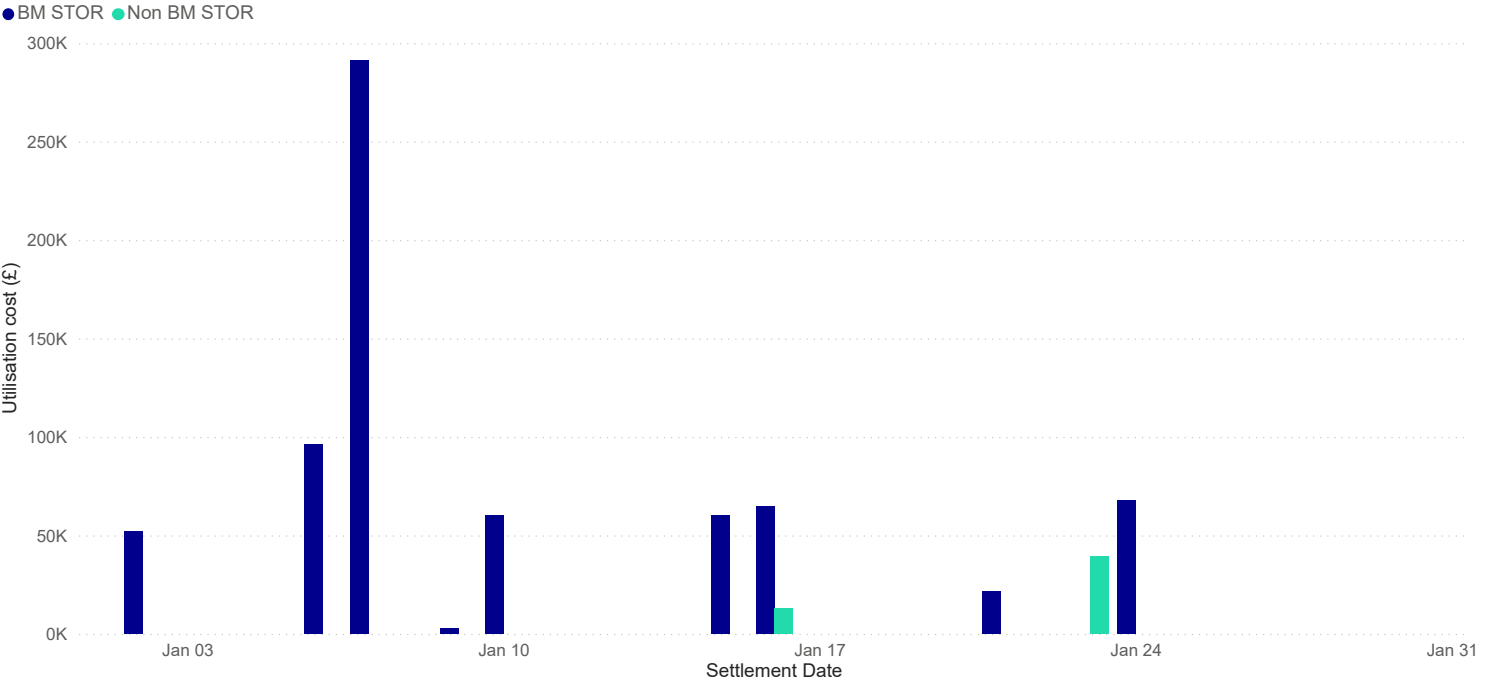


Daily STOR vs Non-BM STOR utilisation costs

This graph shows the utilisation costs of this capacity. The average Utilisation Price for STOR capacity in January was £163.67/MWh; £164.70/MWh for BM STOR and £150.86/MWh for non-BM STOR.



3.2 Daily STOR BM vs Non BM utilisation costs



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On 7 January the largest amount was spent on STOR volume for the month (£291,317), all of this cost was BM STOR. The utilised BM STOR volume on this day was 1,828MWh, compared to the average of 140MWh across the month.

### De-Rated Margin, Loss of Load Probability and the Reserve Scarcity Price

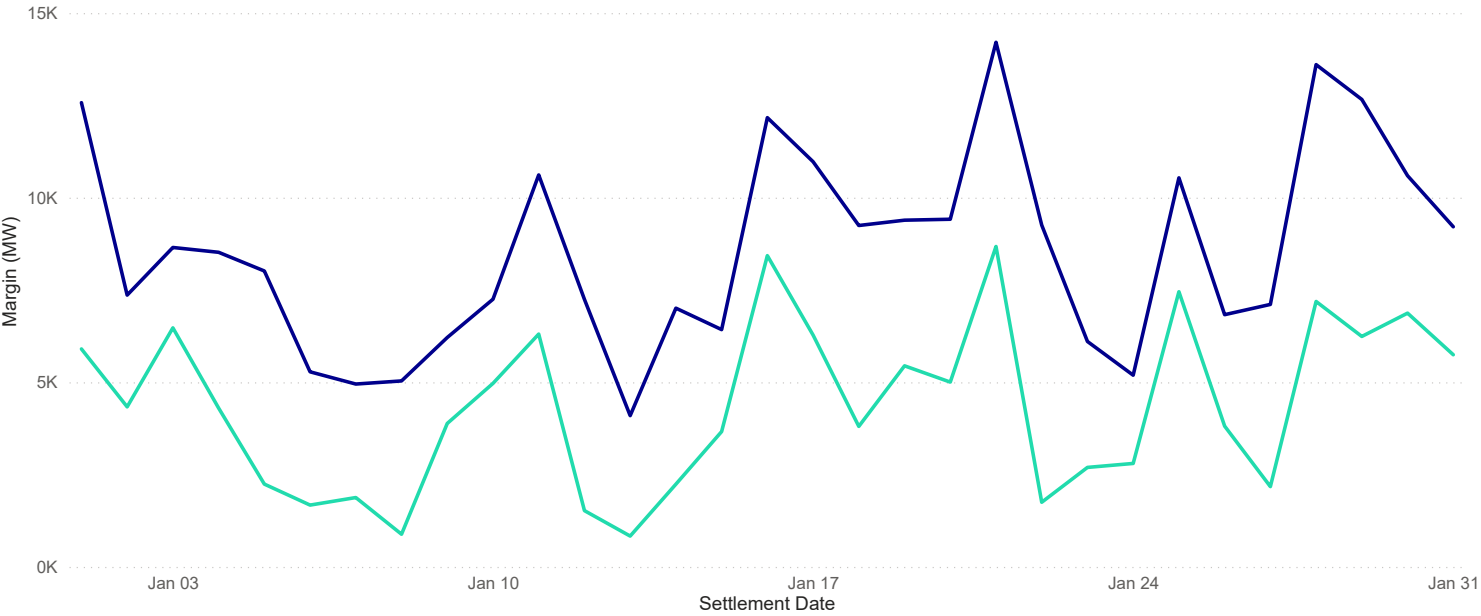
There are times when the Utilisation Prices of STOR plants are uplifted using the **Reserve Scarcity Price (RSVP)** in order to calculate System Prices. The RSVP is designed to respond to capacity margins, so rises as the system gets tighter (the gap between available and required generation narrows). It is a function of **De-Rated Margin (DRM)** at Gate Closure, the likelihood that this will be insufficient to meet demand (the **Loss of Load Probability, LoLP**) and the **Value of Lost Load (VoLL)**, set at £6,000/MWh from 1 November 2018).

**Minimum and average DRMs** This graph shows the daily minimum and average Gate Closure DRMs for January 2021.



3.3 Minimum and average DRMs

● Average of DRM ● Min of DRM



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The System Operator has determined a dynamic relationship between each DRM and the LoLP, which will determine the RSVP.

The minimum DRM in January was 836MW on 13 January in Settlement Period 35 (compared to 743MW in December). This DRM corresponded to a LoLP of 0.139 and a RSVP of £836.66/MWh (see **Top 5 LoLPs and RSVPs**).

The RSVP re-prices STOR actions in the Imbalance Price calculation if it is higher than the original Utilisation Price. Despite high RSVPs occurring on 8 and 13 January, there were no STOR actions taken on these days and no actions were repriced. No actions repriced with the RSVP throughout January 2021.

Top 5 LoLPs and RSVPs

| Settlement Date | Settlement Period | DRM (MW) | LoLP  | RSVP (£/MWh) | RSVP Used | System Price (£/MWh) | System Length |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------|-------|--------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------|
| 13/01/2021      | 35                | 836      | 0.139 | 836.66       | No        | 60.00                | Long          |
| 13/01/2021      | 36                | 855      | 0.133 | 800.90       | No        | 60.00                | Long          |
| 08/01/2021      | 36                | 885      | 0.126 | 756.13       | No        | 55.00                | Long          |
| 08/01/2021      | 35                | 1,077    | 0.084 | 503.09       | No        | 2750.00              | Short         |
| 08/01/2021      | 38                | 1,136    | 0.072 | 432.88       | No        | 55.00                | Long          |

Source: Elexon