



# Supplier Guidance on Achieving and Maintaining 99% - Half Hourly Performance

## Who is this document for?

If you can answer 'yes' to these questions then this document is for you:

- Are you a Half Hourly Supplier?
- Do you need to improve your percentage of actual data performance or assistance to maintain the performance standard?
- Are you looking to learn or re-learn the principles and approach to good Settlement performance?

## What's the purpose of this document?

When we talk about 99%, we mean a Supplier's obligation<sup>1</sup> to settle 99% of its total Half Hourly (HH) metered energy on Actual Meter Readings. This document is to help Suppliers meet and maintain this BSC obligation. Whilst this is a challenging task, there are many Suppliers that have successfully obtained and maintained the standard so it can be done.

## Finding your way around



Depending on your knowledge and experience you may want to jump to the most relevant section, rather than read the whole document.

The first section explains why 99% is important, where it fits into the Balancing and Settlement Code and the critical people you will need to work with to achieve 99%.

The second section talks about the approach you may wish to take to understand what is causing the underperformance and how we monitor performance.

The last section goes through some typical activities that help in achieving 99%.

<sup>1</sup> As set out in [BSC Section S-1](#)

## How to Use this Document

This document assumes a certain amount of knowledge and use of terminology. To help people who may be new to the industry or the world of performance assurance we have included information points. If you're looking for an overview of how Settlements works then a good place to start is our [website](#).

### Keep an eye out for information points



Throughout the document whenever an important term or concept is mentioned an information point will be shown to briefly define what we mean. It's important you understand what we mean by these terms, and so if you require more information please check on our [website](#) or with your [Operational Support Manager \(OSM\)](#).

Every Supplier has different systems, customers, staff, business strategies and so on. How best to achieve 99% will also therefore differ between Suppliers. What works for one Supplier may not work for another. This document draws on the experience of Suppliers that have achieved 99% and the expectations that [ELEXON](#) and the [Performance Assurance Board \(PAB\)](#) have for achieving 99%. It is by no means an exhaustive list of activities and solutions to improve % actuals.

You'll need to ensure that you properly assess any action you take to ensure that it will deliver the benefit that you expect and that you are aware of any adverse effects.



OSMs offer dedicated operational support to you our customers – BSC Parties and Party Agents. If you're not sure who your OSM is please check the [Qualified Persons Workbook](#).

## Some context for 99%

Before we get into the detail it's important to understand the context and requirements around 99%.

When you qualified<sup>2</sup> as a Supplier you agreed to abide by the rules and regulations set out in the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) and its Code Subsidiary Documents. This includes the requirement to settle 99% of your total HH energy on actual data:

- At SF for Measurement Class C (100kW HH Metering Systems)
- At R1 for Measurement Class E, F and G in aggregate (Sub 100kW HH Metering Systems)

If you are not achieving 99% you may be placed in [Error and Failure Resolution](#) (more on this later) and asked to submit an action plan detailing the problems and the solutions.

**We are here to help.** Your **OSM** is there to provide support and guidance for you to achieve 99%. We would really encourage you to make the most of this relationship.

We measure your HH % of actual performance using [PARMS](#)<sup>3</sup> serial [SP08b](#) for 100kW HH Metering Systems and [SP08c](#) for sub 100kW Metering Systems.

## PARMS

### What is PARMS?



The **Performance Assurance Reporting Monitoring System** or **PARMS** is a database that holds Supplier and Supplier Agents performance metrics. SP08 is used for monitoring Settlement performance and is submitted by a BSC Agent known as the SVAA. The other main areas PARMS measures is the Supplier appointments process, transfer of key data items and quality of key data items. More details on PARMS can be found on our website.

The BSC requirement is to achieve 99% is for each Grid Supply Point (GSP) Group and Supplier charges apply based on GSP Group performance. ELEXON's performance reporting, which we use to identify concerns and determine if further action is required, is performed at an aggregate Supplier ID level. Therefore we focus and manage your % actuals at both the Supplier ID and GSP Group level as appropriate.

Therefore, when we are referring to the 99% standard in this document, it is measured differently (and may require different areas of focus and reporting from you) depending on the purpose:

- ELEXON's weekly and monthly monitoring provides information at GSP Group level but measures the standard in aggregate using Import only estimated and actual data.
- Supplier Charges area applied at a GSP Group level and use Import estimated and actual but also Unmetered Supplies and line losses.
- The Standard for Measurement Class C is 99% at SF and Supplier Charges are applied from SF.
- The Standard for Sub 100 kW Metering Systems (Measurement Classes E, F and G) is 99% at R1 but Supplier Charges are applied at RF.

There is a table on page 12 which sets this out in more detail.

<sup>2</sup> More information on Qualification can be found on the [BSC Website](#).

<sup>3</sup> For more information on PARMS see [BSCP533](#) (including [Appendices A and B](#)).

Measuring your % actuals performance is just part of the [Performance Assurance](#) we do on behalf of the industry. We take a risk based approach to Performance Assurance as detailed in the [Performance Assurance Framework \(PAF\)](#).

If you have a significant volume of energy under the standard for three consecutive months or you remain below 99% for a prolonged period we will likely initiate the [Error and Failure Resolution \(EFR\)](#) process.

EFR is a key remedial technique in ELEXON's Performance Assurance Framework. It assures [ELEXON](#), the [Performance Assurance Board \(PAB\)](#) and the rest of the industry that you understand identified performance issues and have robust plans in place to correct them in a timely manner. As part of the EFR process, you agree with us what steps you'll take to resolve the identified performance issues. We also use EFR to provide you with advice and guidance.

If we initiate EFR for not achieving 99%, we'll ask you to provide an action plan detailing the steps you'll take to resolve the issue and the timescales for completion. You'll need to keep your OSM updated on the progress against each step or milestone.

By providing this information, we can monitor how you are doing trying to reach 99%. When all actions are completed and you're achieving 99%, the cessation of the EFR process will be agreed with us and/or the [PAB](#). More information on [EFR](#) can be found [here](#).



#### **What is PAB?**

The [Performance Assurance Board](#) is a BSC Panel sub-committee responsible for providing assurance that all participants in the BSC arrangements are suitably qualified and that the relevant standards are maintained. The committee is made up of industry experts who act impartially and must not represent any one Party or class of Parties.

## How to get to 99%

This section will talk you through some of the issues and areas you will need to consider when trying to **reach or maintain 99%**.

First it is worth highlighting why 99% matters. Put simply, estimated data is bad for Settlement and for your business because:

- It may adversely affect your customer billing and increase customer queries, complaints and poor customer service.
- Distribution and Transmission Use of System charges (DUoS & TUoS) are based on Settlements data
- You risk exposing yourself to greater Imbalance Charges (for details on how Imbalance Charges are calculated please see our [Beginners Guide to the Electricity Arrangements](#)). If you've been basing your trading forecasts largely on estimated data you may be buying too much or too little energy. The longer you wait to find out what your customers have been consuming the longer you have to wait to get your money back
- You agreed to settle 99% of your data on actuals when you acceded to the Code
- You are charged for any underperformance at SF and R1 for Measurement Class C and at RF for Measurement Classes E, F and G via the [Supplier Charges](#) technique
- Investigating the root causes of poor performance can be costly in time and money and therefore it is sensible to invest in putting good business processes in place as early as possible.

## Do you have management commitment?

The issues that underlie % actual performance are likely to emanate from across the business and resolving them will require a **significant level of cooperation** between the various teams and departments that are responsible for the process.

For example, some issues can be mitigated if addressed during the sales process, while others will require changes to core IT systems.

If you want a successful project to address % actual issues the **first priority should be obtaining support from management** at the appropriate level to deal with the cross business issues that will be encountered by the project team. Without this commitment, the project will struggle to achieve any significant or lasting improvements.

It is likely the level of resource needed in order to address the root causes affecting % Actuals will require senior management approval. Ensuring that a **senior manager sponsors the project** will help secure this investment. If you need to complete an EFR action plan we would ask you to include this manager on the plan. It is also worth highlighting at manager level that, if your performance is beneath the standard, this is a material non-compliance with the Balancing and Settlement Code and you should consider adding this non-compliance to any list of corporate non-compliances or business risk register held by your organisation.

Management commitment cannot be over-emphasised, especially in a large organisation, where differing locations, conflicting business targets and internal politics have great influence on performance. High visibility of the target and education, buy-in and engagement of staff throughout the business is critical to the success of the project. Staff will not give commitment to achieving a target if they do not understand the requirement or how it affects their business.

## Do you need a project?

Suppliers that aren't reaching the standard often asked if a formal project is really needed to achieve 99%. Similarly Suppliers who are maintaining the standard but recognise that there are future risks to performance may consider whether a project is required. Our experience has shown that it is very rare for a Supplier whose business as usual activities are not resulting in 99% to get there without the use of a project. We therefore strongly encourage you to set up a project to address your Settlements performance and consider how these activities can be brought into business as usual.

The project should resolve existing issues and fix the underlying causes, such that businesses as usual activities maintain 99%.

The scope and structure of this project will depend on your assessment of the activities needed to address the problems. Whether the EFR action plan is a summary of your project or one of the same will also depend on the scope and size of the project. Ultimately it is for you to decide. Either way you should use appropriate and recognised project mechanisms to ensure that the project is successful.

## Who should be involved in the project?

Most Suppliers who have achieved improvements in this area have said that a **dedicated team** is very important. **Appropriate skills and capability** must be appropriately allocated to realise the goals of the project. Again we cannot emphasise enough that committing and completing a successful 99% plan takes time and effort.

We suggest that a core of experts be involved in the project team in order to deliver real benefits. You will also need to take care that other areas of their business do not suffer if they divert key resources to these issues. All of these considerations should be captured as part of a properly managed project.

## Where do my Agents fit in?

As a Supplier you are responsible for your performance and your Agents. You will need to **work with your Agents to achieve 99%**. You should review your contracts with your Agents to ensure that they will deliver the performance that you need. Contracts with Agents (both directly appointed and those that are customer appointed) should include services that link with your obligations. Agents should be involved and 'buy in' to any improvement plan. The agent may also be best placed to highlight where a simple change can lead to improvement.

It is important that good management and operational relationships are established and maintained with Agents. You should consider regular meetings with your Agents to discuss issues and agree solutions. Action plans between you and your Agents may be needed to monitor and agree timescales for events. These meetings can form part of the operational escalation process where normal operational contacts have failed to resolve an issue.

Operational plans to improve or maintain your performance will not be success without your agents involvement and the following will be important considerations:

- Ensuring that the work with the agents covers correction and prevention as two separate topics;
- Suppliers need to clearly define the performance requirements/criteria to the agent to ensure they're both monitoring and working on the same Metering Systems;
- The data view provided from Data Collector and Data Aggregator may be different if there are data exceptions which require investigation.
- Contact details and Site access/meter location information for site visits need to be maintained – don't leave this until the meter fails and a site visit is unsuccessful;

- Ensuring the end user customer understands the importance of allowing access to read the meter and the potential frequency of the visits when the Metering System cannot be remotely read.



Do your Data Collectors (DCs) have the right manual read frequency in place if communications issues prevent Metered Data being collected for a site?

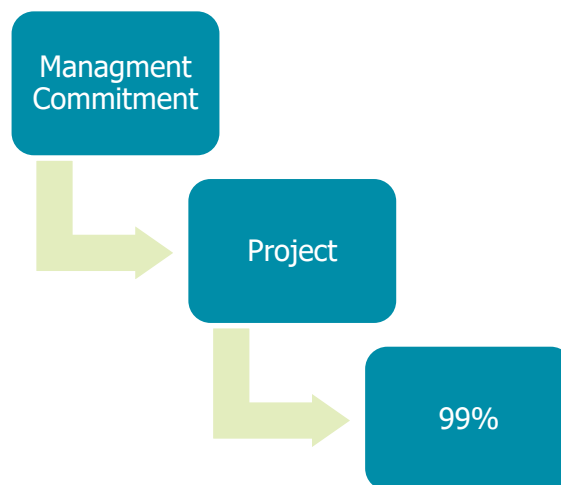
## Some questions to think about:

- How often do you need to meet with your Agents?
- How are your Agents performing?
  - Do you have sufficient Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place with your Agents?
  - What Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) do you have for your Agents performance?
- What reports, advice and information can they provide you?

For example, one simple measure could be to measure % actual performance per Data Collector (DC) and per Half Hourly Meter Operator Agent (HHMOA). If the relationship between a Data Aggregator (DA) and a DC is simple, (i.e. you always appoint them in pairs) you can measure % actual for a DC by DA and therefore understand the DC's performance.

However, if Agent appointments are not simple then you need to consider how you will measure the HHDC's performance. Many HHDCs will provide this type of reporting for you if you ask. We believe that this type of reporting is very valuable to you and encourage you to talk with your DCs about the reports that they can provide for you. Including, for example, the reasons for estimation, length of fault resolution, reasons why faults are not resolved, where customer engagement could be achieved jointly between Supplier and agent. If you are unable to obtain DC performance reports from your Agents you should use the data available to you (set out below) until you are able to agree more regular and granular reporting from your agents.

## Summary





## 99% Plans and Investigations

Before you can manage your % actuals you need to do some analysis to understand your existing performance and portfolio. You'll need to know where processes are not working or could be improved. This section covers some of the data sources available and how to identify problems. If you need to provide ELEXON an action plan as part of EFR this section also includes some suggestions on how you may want to present your findings.

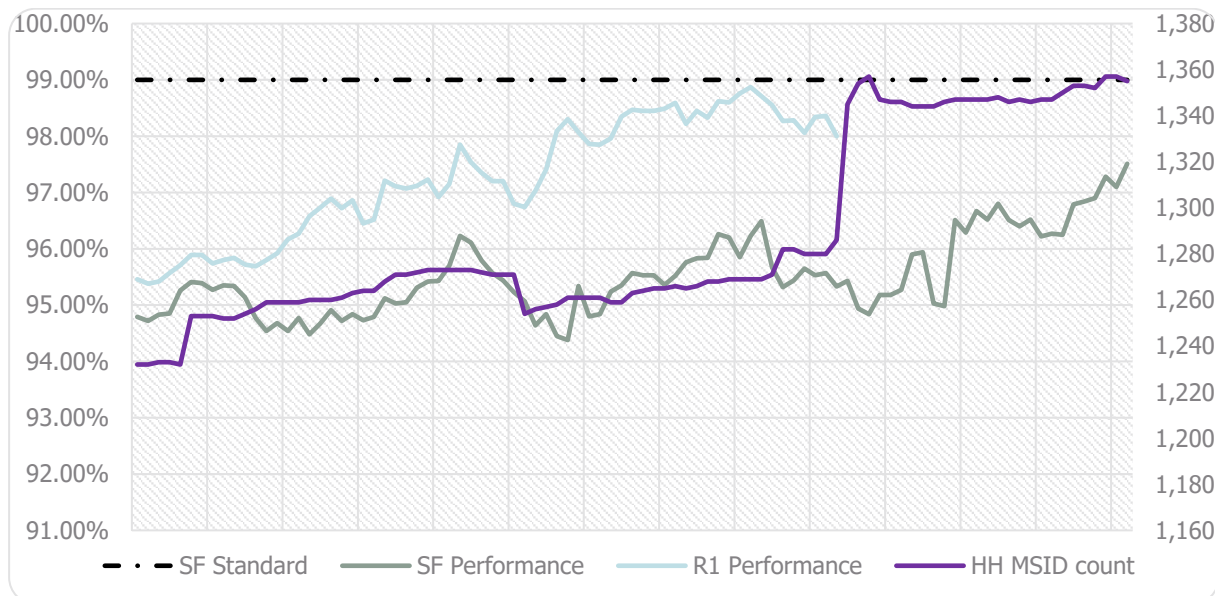
### How do you know how you're doing?

Before you can make any detailed decisions, and to ensure that those already made are good, some form of performance monitoring is required. This will let you see the impact your actions are having.

As well as your own reports, you can use the reports that we send you which shows your % actual performance across the Settlement Runs.



The graph below is an extract from such a report.



ELEXON also provides data in the same report that can be very helpful in aligning our data to yours to ensure that you are aware of all estimating Metering System Identifiers (MSIDs) for each GSP Group. Our estimating Metering Systems count includes de-energised Metering Systems

Settlement Date	SF Volumes							SF Performance
	SF E Count	SF E Volume	SF A Count	SF A Volume	SF Total count	SF Total Vol		
22/10/2019	1,000	115.39	5,144	9,171.38	6,144	9,286.77	98.76%	
23/10/2019	991	102.40	5,152	9,215.03	6,143	9,317.43	98.90%	
24/10/2019	981	99.70	5,158	9,150.03	6,139	9,249.73	98.92%	
25/10/2019	986	94.28	5,161	8,946.37	6,147	9,040.65	98.96%	
26/10/2019	990	86.13	5,158	7,546.76	6,148	7,632.89	98.87%	
27/10/2019	991	144.69	5,156	7,412.87	6,147	7,557.56	98.09%	

You should monitor exceptions created within your business processes. You will need to have the ability to prioritise the data flows and exceptions you manage. Understanding the reasons why exceptions are created will assist you in improving the process and help avoid exceptions.

Visibility of exception levels is key to understanding how your processes are working. We recommend that you seek information from your [Agents](#) on how they are reducing exceptions they have relating to your Metering Systems (e.g. number of HH Data Aggregation exceptions i.e. D0235s<sup>6</sup>).

## What data can I use for Root Cause Analysis?

You should already have a variety of data sources where you can measure the performance of your business processes. You will need to make judgements about the necessity and priority of each measure.

You should consider implementing routine monitoring of key control points in Settlements so that you are aware of any failure or underperformance before it affects the overall performance. The earlier you can capture problems the quicker you can fix them.

The flows set out in the table below can help you to determine some of the most common points of failure. However, it is important to agree good quality and regular reporting with all your agents to enable you to put the right controls. Suppliers with daily, or at a minimum, weekly reporting of all HH estimation with the right collaboration with agents and service level agreements in place to address issues prior to SF (for Measurement Class C) and R1 (for sub-100 kW Metering Systems) and those that review and action exceptions and Metering Fault issues on a daily basis will be those most likely to maintain performance above the standard.

Flow number	Flow Name	How it can help
D0004s	Notification of Failure to Obtain a Reading	This flow sets out the reason for failure, many of which the supplier can assist with resolving.
D0036	Validated Half Hourly Advances for Inclusion in Aggregated Supplier Matrix	This flow shows the Half Hourly Periods of consumption for each Metering System and flags where estimated data is used for a Settlement Day. It can help to identify when Metering Systems are estimating. This is helpful for billing but also for determining potential impact of estimation on a given Settlement Day. This flow is sent by a HHDC to HHDA and Suppliers when agreed with the Supplier and before the next Volume Allocation Run ( <a href="#">BSCP502</a> 3.4.1.12).
D0022	Estimated Half Hourly Data Report	This flow lists the dates over a period for which HH data has been estimated including the total consumption estimated. It will help Suppliers determine their total estimation and the volume of energy associated with it. This flow is sent by a HHDC to a Supplier and Licensed Distribution System Operator ( <a href="#">BSCP502</a> 3.4.1.11). You will need to work with your agents (HHDCs and HHMOAs) to understand the root causes of estimation and categorise these issues so that you are able to efficiently address the reasons for each of the root causes.
D0040	Aggregated Half Hour Data File	Aggregated line loss adjusted HH consumption figures by Supplier and GSP Group. This should enable you to match the data provided by ELEXON to help you monitor your performance but is usually reported to Suppliers approximately a week earlier than ELEXON

Flow number	Flow Name	How it can help
		provides performance data. This should provide you with time to investigate and notify ELEXON of any unexpected issues in relation to your performance.
D0235	Half Hourly Aggregation Exception Report	<p>This flow provides details of exceptions raised by the HHDA on incomplete/inconsistent data received from HHDCs against that received from the Supplier Meter Registration Service (SMRS). If there is a difference between the views of estimated data provided by your HHDC and that provided in the D0040 this is very likely to be due to an aggregation exception which requires addressing. It is beneficial to ensure that D0235s are viewed and actioned on a daily basis and that controls are in place with your agents to address these promptly to maximise your ability to address issues before SF or R1. The HHDA sends a D0235 following a data aggregation exception to the HHDC and the Supplier (<a href="#">BSCP502</a> 3.4.2.3).</p> <p>Categorising the root causes of your D0235s will help you to identify common issues that you can then work to prevent the issues re-occurring as well as addressing each of the specific instances that occur.</p>
D0001 and D0002 flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request Metering System Investigation</li> <li>- Fault Resolution Report or Request for Decision on Further Action</li> </ul>	<p>D0001s are used to request investigation into suspected metering faults due to possible Meter Advance Reconciliation (MAR) discrepancies, invalid meter readings, timing device or meter or communications fault. They can be raised by a Supplier or Licensed Distribution System Operator (LDSO) to a HHDC to investigate inconsistencies or by a Supplier of HHDC to an MOA to investigate a Meter fault. D0002s are used to close of the faults process or request a decision or further action and sent from the MOA to HHDC and Supplier.</p> <p>Having controls in place to monitor agent performance in recognising and addressing faults and to take any necessary action as a Supplier is crucial in achieving and maintaining a good Half Hourly performance. It is also important to categorise the root causes of any faults and put in place measures to address these and prevent re-occurrence of the issue. Some of these flows will also be requesting assistance from a Supplier or requesting action from a Distribution System Operator which the Supplier can support with.</p>

## ELEXON and BSC Performance Monitoring



### What is SP08b and SP08c?

SP08b and c are the PARMs serials used to monitor Supplier's percentage of energy settled on actuals. SP08b monitors HH Metering Equipment at above 100kW premises and SP08c for HH Metering Equipment at below 100kW premises. Any underperformance against SP08 a, b or c will incur a Supplier Charge. Details on Supplier Charges can be found [here](#), and can be discussed with your OSM.

The data used to calculate the Supplier Charges is a little different than the data used by ELEXON to monitor performance. We apply the standard in the Code that states that for all MC C metering systems across all Settlement Runs (from SF onwards) Suppliers should settle 99% of energy on Actuals. However our performance monitoring data currently looks at an aggregated, high-level view of Supplier's performance across all GSP Groups in a month. This is different to the provisions of the Code, which states that a Supplier should adhere to performance levels each Settlement Day and in each GSP Group. The data items included in the Supplier Charge monitoring is also different to those in ELEXON's monitoring.

Actual and Estimated Energy from:	Metered/ Unmetered	Import/E xport	CCC <sup>4</sup> Ids for above 100kW	CCC Id for sub 100kW	Included in Supplier Charges <sup>5</sup>	Included within ELEXON's monthly monitoring
<b>Consumption/ Generation</b>	Metered	Import	1 (act) 9 (est)	23, 42, 54 (act) 28, 45, 57 (est)	✓	✓
		Export	6 (act) 14 (est)	36, 48, 60 (act) 39, 51, 63 (est)	X	X
	Unmetered	Import	2 (act) 10 (est)	N/A	✓	X
		Export	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Metering System specific Line Losses</b>	Metered	Import	3 (act) 11 (est)	25, 43, 55 (act) 30, 46 58 (est)	✓	X
		Export	7 (act) 15 (est)	37, 49, 61 (act) 40, 52, 64 (est)	X	X
	Unmetered	Import	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		Export	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Metering System non-specific Line Losses</b>	Metered	Import	4 (act) 12 (est)	26, 44. 56 (act) 31, 47, 59 (est)	✓	X
		Export	8 (act) 16 (est)	38, 50, 62 (act) 41, 53, 65 (est)	X	X
	Unmetered	Import	5 (actual) 13 (est)	N/A	✓	X
		Export	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>4</sup> Consumption Component Class

<sup>5</sup> In accordance with [Annex S-1](#) 2.2.4- 2.2.11 and [Annex X-2](#) Table 8

## How to put an improvement plan together?

If you're not in EFR then you won't need to submit an action plan to ELEXON. However, it may still be useful to use this approach if you want to improve or maintain % actuals.

Before you can write the plan you should undertake some analysis to understand where the underperformance is rooted. Once each failing is understood and quantified, it can be included in the plan and the expected improvements can be tracked.

The accumulation of each improvement will provide a forecast for achieving 99%. The plan should include suitable milestones that allow the project to be monitored and any slippage to be quickly addressed. It may be that you need to revise your action plan over time and return to the planning stage based on the monitoring and results from your plan to date.

The milestones you set should be realistic and based on quantitative data that can be linked to particular initiatives or actions. Ideally a 99% plan should include a milestone for achieving 99%. However, if it is not clear how you will reach 99% then your plan should have milestones that detail how you will reach a stage where 99% can be included in the plan. A template for your action plan (and the EFR process) can be found in [BSCP538](#).

Your improvement plan will need to take account of the root causes of your under-performance, preventative action to reduce the likelihood of the issue occurring to the same extent in future and consideration of how this will improve your performance once addressed.

ELEXON has a template for setting out these preventative actions which can be requested from your OSM.

Your action plan will then need to consider how to most successfully and swiftly address the current issues impacting SF or R1 HH performance and set out actions and timescales along with the consequential uplifts for addressing those. Once again, ELEXON has a template which may be a helpful starting place for you:

Action	Details of resources allocated to work at Supplier and agents businesses	Details of expected response rates or clearance rates	Quarter 1/month 1 - Please label as required			Etc.			Etc.			Etc.		
			No of MSIDs targeted	No of MSIDs expected to be	% energy improvement expected	No of MSIDs targeted	No of MSIDs expected to be	% energy improvement expected	No of MSIDs targeted	No of MSIDs expected to be	% energy improvement expected	No of MSIDs targeted	No of MSIDs expected to be	% energy improvement expected
Initiative 1														
Initiative 2														
Initiative 3														
Initiative 4														
etc.														
etc.														
Expected improvement in period from work %			0.0000			0.0000			0.0000			0.0000		
Expected impact to hit SF (see prevention sheet)														
Net improvement in period %			0.00			0.00			0.00			0.00		
EFR Plan Milestones (starting position +net improvement)														

You could go further and identify risks and mitigations for each activity you plan to undertake. We strongly recommend that each activity has an owner who is responsible for delivering that initiative and that the plan is co-ordinated centrally with each owner regularly feeding in to the plan owner or co-ordinator.

It is unlikely that any initiatives you undertake will be 100% successful. For example if you plan to initiate a visits for 500 sites, you may only get a resolution from 100 of those. These 'success rates' should be taken in to consideration when forecasting your % actuals and setting your milestones.

As noted in previous section of this guidance, it is important that the Supplier works closely with its agents to design and agree the plan to ensure the best chance of success. It will also be important to monitor agent performance and to keep the agent informed of key dates throughout the plan.

## Recap

It sounds obvious to say, but a 99% action plan should detail how you plan to achieve and maintain 99%! There are four key elements:

- Identify the MSIDs that are failing at SF and R1 the root causes and the energy associated with the causes.
- Detail the action you plan to take to address each of the root causes and what you plan to prioritise.
- Forecast what impact your actions will have on your % actuals and when. These predictions should form the basis of your milestones. Milestones should ideally be monthly or quarterly until 99% is obtained and maintained.
- Plan for the unexpected and build a buffer level into your maintenance position to allow some ability to deal with problems without falling beneath the standard.

## **Some Example Root Causes Initiatives and Activities to help you Achieve 99%**

We will now go over some common root causes, initiatives and activities that have worked for other Suppliers. There is no one size fits all solution to achieve 99% and so you will need to work out what activities will work best for your company. There may be some short term or quick wins that you can do, before moving onto longer term activities which may require, for example, process changes or recruitment of new staff. However, at a high level you need processes which confirm the following:

- Have all the agents accepted the relevant appointment?
- Have you obtained actual HH data?
- Is the HH data of the correct magnitude to what they expected?

If the answer to any of the questions is no further investigation will be required.

## Communication Issues

If the remote retrieval of data is not successful due to an issue with communications infrastructure this can prevent the retrieval of Metered Data prior to SF or RF.

This could be due to an issue with the communications infrastructure from the Meter or with the Data Collector's infrastructure not supporting Meter Type or communication type.

Common issues include:

- SIMs not being novated upon a Change of Agent or Change of Supplier;
- Contractual disputes regarding who should provide and pay for the communications requirements if they have broken;
- Long timescales for fixing some communication issues when they occur – particularly if BT lines are required; and
- The deterioration of the reliability of the 2G cellular networks (which will increase in prevalence up until 2025).

Some actions that can be taken to address these issues are:

- Putting clear agreements in place between Suppliers, customers, agents and third party communication providers regarding commercial arrangements associated with communications equipment;
- Confirming with the communications owner has a SIM novation process (both for incoming and outgoing arrangements) in place;
- Setting up a process between incoming and previous communications line owners to agree that lines won't be cancelled until a novation attempt has been made;
- Putting clear agreements in place between Suppliers, customers and agents to agree actions that will be taken and the timescales (which support obtaining performance standards, where possible) for rectifying issues with communications equipment;
- Prior to appointment, ensure that your HHDC is able to communicate with the Meter type by checking the Protocol Approvals on ELEXON's website ([here](#)) and checking the communications type that your preferred HHDC is able to work with (GSM, GPRS, Satellite etc);
- Good fault resolution processes and reporting agreed with MOAs and ensure that associated SLAs are well monitored by Suppliers. This includes ensuring that flows from the fault resolution process are proactively managed and any supplementary information needed agreed. You will also need to ensure that the right SLAs are in place to obtain required information such as Meter Technical Details (MTDs); and
- Ensuring any necessary Meter Exchanges occur promptly and the right controls and SLAs are in place to support this.



## Agent Appointment Controls

You need to ensure that you appoint Agents for all Metering Systems for which you are the Registrant. Any failure in the Agent appointment process will inevitably lead to other issues. You should consider how you will ensure that the Agent appointment process completes successfully for all Metering Systems and where the common failure points are. Once you are aware of the failure points, you can implement the appropriate controls.

An example of a control point for the appointments process is where an Agent fails to accept or reject an appointment. At the very least there should be monitoring to ensure that a D0148 is sent to all Agents as part of the appointment process. **You can use PARMs serials** to see how you are performing in the appointments process. You can also use the serials to see how your Agents are performing in other key areas such as the transfer and quality of MTDs. It may also be a good idea to request the backing data for PARMs serials from the agents that report on the serials to get a more detailed look at the root causes of any agent appointment issues. Special attention needs to be given to the situation where Agents are appointed or de-appointed on a Change of Supplier (CoS). Often this can result in the Agents being appointed to the wrong Supplier. Good quality monitoring in this area would also allow you to pick up on erroneous CoS and Change of Agents (CoA) events, which could cause performance problems and impact the customer.

You should consider setting up a team to interface with your Agents. This team could arrange periodic meetings with each Agent where issues and solutions can be addressed.

Flow <sup>6</sup>	Name	Potential Performance Impact
D0148	Notification of Change to Other Parties	Essential for MOA to send MTDs to DC or DCs to chase MTDs (D0268s) – needed well before SF/R1
D0289	Notification of MC/EAC/PC	Essential for the DC to use appropriate estimation – needed before SF/R1
D0302	Notification of Customer Details	Essential for manual collection of data when necessary – must be up to date
D0151	Termination of Appointment	If sent to an agent before a new agent has accepted an appointment (D0011) can result in settlement issues.
D0261	Rejection of Agent Appointment	Suppliers should have a process in place to monitor and manage Rejection of Agent Appointments

Flows should be sent at the time of the appointment and not delayed. If appointment flow received by DC retrospectively performance can be damaged. Therefore, it is important to ensure the appointments process is followed accurately and in good time. Other retrospective flows, such as energisation status, can also negatively impact performance.

---

<sup>6</sup> Where agent appointments follow a bespoke model outside of the Data Transfer Network (DTN), a Supplier should ensure they have controls outside of the DTN to monitor and address any issues with this model. They should also ensure that these appointment are auditable.

## Customer Appointed Agents

Suppliers may come across a situation where a Customer has already selected a preferred Agent (DC/DA, MOP) and has contracted them for metering services. The Customer's ability to select their own Agents has evolved from the provision in the Electricity Act enabling customers to own their metering systems. However, the Electricity Act does not clearly specify that the Customer can appoint its own Agents as such. This practice has rather evolved from Customers being able to procure their meters and became widely acceptable as a result.

According to [BSC Section S](#), the Supplier is responsible for appointing all Agents for the Metering System, as well as their performance under the Supplier Hub Principle. This means that it is the Supplier who sends appointment flows to Agents, regardless whether they have a direct contract with that Agent, or not. The Supplier must ensure that by appointing a Customer preferred Agent, they are not in breach of their own BSC requirement to deliver 99% standard in HH performance. In practice, this means that there needs to be a discussion between a Supplier, Customer and Agent to agree an acceptable way forward, so all Parties involved can meet their BSC obligations.

It is worth noting that BSC does not cover any commercial aspects of this situation, and therefore any disputes regarding contractual arrangements when appointing a preferred Customer Agent by the Supplier need to be discussed and resolved between the Supplier, Customer and Agent involved. Many Suppliers have a framework contract with agents to proactively address the requirements as highlighted earlier in the document.

## Point of Sale Information

Your registration team will have a greater chance of success if the information provided to them by the sales function is fit for purpose. You should consider **implementing a registration quality gate** that verifies the data received from the sales team prior to initiating the registration process. You should have a clear set of criteria for this quality gate so that the sales team is fully aware of what is needed for a successful registration and customer set up. **This could include site access details and agreements.** This is especially important for customers with difficult to access premises (e.g. water sites, telephone masts or military installations).

If the right information is not recorded and past on at the point of sale the following issues can occur:

- The necessary data flows are not sent on gain in the correct timescales – this can be exacerbated if customer agents are used and the Supplier does not have the correct information;
- Agents can't find the correct customer site or Meter; and
- Access is not provided to site in order to resolve Meter or communication issues or to take reads.

Knowing the information you require when on-boarding a new customer and ensuring it is received is a key element to some of the initiatives that are linked to resolving this root cause:

- Documenting everything you consider you need to obtain a read and correctly process it and regularly reviewing this to ensure nothing has changed;
- Mapping the list to internal and external business processes to ensure that there is a clear process, timescales and responsibility in place to deliver everything on the list;
- You will need to carefully consider engaging with customer appointed agents to ensure the customer and agent are able to provide everything necessary or that the Supplier agrees to appoint alternative agents to do this. For example, building into customer contracts the ability to appoint different agents if the customer contracted agent does not deliver;
- Careful consideration also needs to be given to liaising with internal sales staff or brokers to ensure that the necessary information is obtained at the start of the process; and
- Ensuring agent agreements are in place to ensure all flows are submitted as required and closely manage these SLAs.

## Access issues and manual read issues

For sites where remote communication is not available permanently or temporarily, manual or hand held reads will be required to obtain the half hourly data required for Settlement. Access issues can stop agents obtaining a read or fixing faults when they occur. Alternatively manual reads may not be scheduled quickly enough to ensure that data is obtained in time for the performance standards to be met. Suppliers can consider setting up framework agreements with their agents to enable them to take proactive action in relation to the issues below.

The following initiatives can help to control and mitigate access issues and insufficient manual reads:

- Ensuring in-house Sales teams are aware of importance of site access implications on Settlement accuracy. For example Suppliers could find out from the customer if there is a customer appointed agent and ask who it is or find out from the Electricity Central Online Enquire Service (ECOES) who the current agent is and consider re-appointing the agent to avoid inter-operability issues;
- Ensure that on-boarding arrangements cover arrangements for manual reads and site access arrangements;
- Ensure that these arrangements are regularly reviewed with customers and agents to capture any changes;
- Ensure that the appointed DC is able to obtain a manual read if and when required for each Half Hourly site in its portfolio;
- Ensure that manual read frequency is set with agents regularly enough to obtain performance standards (with the potential for quick turnaround re-visits if a visit is not successful); and
- Putting in place good business processes built in for scheduling site visits, undertaking pre-visit and on the day checks and for the reasons no reads are obtained to be regularly reviewed between Supplier, the customer and agents to further refine business processes.

## Meter Faults

Meter faults (other than communication issues) can result in data not being collected or being unsuitable for use due to errors. Fixing these issues will require similar co-ordination and monitoring as set out in the Communication Issues and Access Issues sections. In addition to this, it is worth considering the following points:

- Ensuring that good relationships and SLAs are built in for all MOAs to resolve faults promptly;
- Maintain good contacts and agreements with LDSOs to enable easy contact when work or access is required by them;
- Ensure that issues are diagnosed as quickly as possible so that the overall lead time for resolution is reduced as much as possible; and
- Consider which Meter types MOAs can support remotely through Meter manufacturer software for faults that can be rectified remotely. This is the sort of information which is important to capture when establishing a framework agreement with agents as there is no point in appointing a MOA that can't support the Meter type or the geographical area.

## Data Quality Team

Data is a key asset in the operation of any business and Data Quality is a key Supplier issue. You need to consider setting up a team to look after your data. This team will need the management support from all the departments that acquire, process, or rely on the data.

This team can be given responsibility to identify and ensure the resolution of any data quality issues. This may include monitoring all data entering and leaving the business processes. You should seek to identify where data quality is damaged and make recommendations for improvements. You should also implement controls that ensure that damage caused to your poor data quality is minimised. It is important that this type of team produce regular reports on performance so that the other departments can appreciate the effects of data quality.

Some actions that can be considered are:

- Ensuring that fault resolution activity, any issues with MTDs and D0235 exceptions are reviewed and actions taken promptly and that these procedures are documented in business processes;
- Ensure that sites estimating on zero have the right reviews and controls as Suppliers have encountered big performance and settlement impacts when sites are set to zero erroneously; and
- Whilst it is important to prioritise large volumes of estimation, don't stop resolving smaller sites for too long as these can have a significant cumulative impact. It is worth building up a buffer so that performance is above the 99% standard and all issues resolve so that when genuinely difficult one-off issues are encountered these don't result in your performance becoming non-compliant with the BSC.

## Training

Many problems that affect Settlement are due to operator misunderstanding of the Settlement processes and understanding of how the Supplier hub interacts, leading to misjudgement of the consequence of well-intentioned actions. You should review the level of Settlement training you provide to staff that make decisions about the way data is processed or the resolution of issues.

**Do your staff realise the impact of their work and the wider Settlement processes?**

**Can ELEXON help you by providing training? Why not ask your OSM?**

## Need more information?

If you have any other queries, please contact your [Operational Support Manager](#) (OSM). If you do not know who your OSM is, please email [OSMmanagement@elexon.co.uk](mailto:OSMmanagement@elexon.co.uk).

### Useful Links

- [Beginners Guide to the Electricity Arrangements](#)
- [BSC Section S-1](#)
- [BSC Section X-2](#)
- [BSCP533](#)
- [BSCP538](#)
- [Business Unit Settlement Risk Rating](#)
- [ELEXON](#)
- [Error and Failure Resolution](#)
- [Operational Support Manager \(OSM\)](#)
- [PARMS](#)
- [Peer Comparison graphs](#)
- [Performance Assurance Board](#)
- [Performance Assurance Framework](#)
- [Qualified Persons Workbook](#)
- [Supplier Charges](#)
- [Training](#)

For more information please contact the **BSC Service Desk** at [bscservicedesk@cgi.com](mailto:bscservicedesk@cgi.com) or call **0370 0106950**.

#### Intellectual Property Rights, Copyright and Disclaimer

The copyright and other intellectual property rights in this document are vested in ELEXON or appear with the consent of the copyright owner. These materials are made available for you for the purposes of your participation in the electricity industry. If you have an interest in the electricity industry, you may view, download, copy, distribute, modify, transmit, publish, sell or create derivative works (in whatever format) from this document or in other cases use for personal academic or other non-commercial purposes. All copyright and other proprietary notices contained in the document must be retained on any copy you make.

All other rights of the copyright owner not expressly dealt with above are reserved.

No representation, warranty or guarantee is made that the information in this document is accurate or complete. While care is taken in the collection and provision of this information, ELEXON Limited shall not be liable for any errors, omissions, misstatements or mistakes in any information or damages resulting from the use of this information or action taken in reliance on it.