RETAIL ENERGY CODE

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NON-CONFIDENTIAL CONSOLIDATED INFORMATION REQUEST RESPONSES FOR DISTRIBUTION NETW0RK OPERATORS (DNO)

I0278 – ESTABLISHING THE SAFE ISOLATION PROVIDER (SIP) AS A STANDALONE REC METERING PARTY

On 13 February 2026 the Code Manager issued an information request to industry to seek feedback from DNOs on the Issue I0278.

The purpose of this document is to consolidate the responses and for the Code Manager to answer any questions raised within those responses.

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LEAD ANALYST	Francine Peyroux-Sissoko

DATE INFORMATION REQUEST ISSUED	13 February 2026
RESPONSE DEADLINE	27 March 2026

Question 1:	**What is your organisation's policy regarding fuse sizes and processes or guidance for upgrading them (for both legacy cut-outs and new connections)?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	New supply: Our standard single-phase whole current supply uses a 100A cut-out with a 80A fuse. However, for new installations a 100A fuse may be used provided that the as-installed rating of all assets (cut-out, meter and service cable) is adequate to carry the load and after consideration of factors affecting the ratings, such as solar gain, temperatures in an enclosed or insulated location, have been considered. Upgrade: For normal domestic or cyclic loads, we will install an 80A fuse which can provide a 100A supply in these circumstances. We will undertake this upgrade to the connection at no cost to the customer. Lower rated cutouts might require replacement with a 100A cut-out before a 80A fuse is fitted.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	The maximum fuse size we allow in a 100A single phase cut out is 80A, and we endeavour to replace any 100A fuse we find with an 80A. An 80A fuse can still support typical domestic demand that may reach around 100A for extended periods, but it prevents the sustained load levels that could otherwise overload the service equipment. This limit is increasingly important as EVs, heat pumps and domestic batteries create higher and longer duration loads.	Thank you for your response.

Question 1:	**What is your organisation's policy regarding fuse sizes and processes or guidance for upgrading them (for both legacy cut-outs and new connections)?**	
	Requests normally arrive through our standard contact channels or via ENA Connect Direct. Before we increase a customer's fuse size, we assess the service equipment to confirm it can safely support the higher rating. Some arrangements, such as looped services, cannot support even an 80A fuse and must remain at a lower level. If there is a need to exceed the 80A maximum, approval must be obtained before the connection is made. Uprating of cut out fuses must still be validated by the DNO in the event of any widening of SIP accreditation.	
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	We only have 100-amp fuses.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SSEN's Policy position is outlined in the following document TG-NET-ENG-043 Limitation of Cut-Out Fuse Size to a Maximum of 80 A For Domestic Type Applications – Design Standard. This document is publicly available on the SSEN G81 Website (G81 Library - SSEN). It should be read in conjunction with PR-NET-ENG-032 Fuse and Earth Fault Loop Impedance Requirements for Secondary Plant, Networks and Low Voltage Cut-outs – Design Standard which is also publicly available on the SSEN G81 Website (G81 Library - SSEN). The following internal documents are also used by SSEN Staff. • WI-NET-CAB-146 Load Checks – Preliminary Checks and On-Site Inspections (SSEN Internal Only)	Thank you for your response.

Question 1:	**What is your organisation's policy regarding fuse sizes and processes or guidance for upgrading them (for both legacy cut-outs and new connections)?**	
	• WI-NET-ENG-050 Replacement of Low Voltage Cut-Out Fuses Following Operation – Maintenance Instruction (SSEN Internal Only) Currently only SSEN Staff and Framework Contractors are permitted to upgrade cut-out fuses in accordance with the above.	

Question 2:	**How do you think Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) should be notified by standalone SIPs of issues with their equipment that either does or does not prevent the installation of an isolator?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	By dataflow. SIPs should follow the same standard industry notification process currently used by metering agents.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	SIPs should notify DNOs of any issues with DNO equipment, whether or not the issue prevents the installation of an isolator, using the same notification routes that MOPs use under the Smart Metering Code of Practice. This keeps the process consistent and traceable and aligned with existing industry practice. SIPs should provide the network with an as-built inspection of the sealed cut out once their work is complete.	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager has reached out to the Party for further clarity.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	The same way for Category A/B/C issues as we are already.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SSEN believes the simplest approach would be to utilise the Data Transfer Network. The DTN is an already established communications method, used by supplier and MEM parties to notify DNOs of defects with their equipment which are preventing the installation of a smart meter within a property. It seems suitable to SSEN that with the correct training, SIPs could also use these to make us aware of defects with our equipment that are preventing the installation of an isolator. Furthermore, it would be welcomed that any information pertaining to	Thank you for your response.

Question 2:	**How do you think Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) should be notified by standalone SIPs of issues with their equipment that either does or does not prevent the installation of an isolator?**	
	our assets is also reported by SIPs via the DTN utilising the Service Termination Issues Reporting Guidance document held under the REC. Any alternative proposed solution must provide, as a minimum, the same functionality as the DTN.	

Question 3:	**When an issue prevents the installation of an isolator, what are your organisation's timescales for resolution?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	We would anticipate the timescales for equipment resolution will align with the current timescales for the same in DCUSA.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	SPEN currently has a resolution agreement with energy suppliers to remediate Category B defects within 40 working days after receiving an accurate and complete notification. A similar arrangement with SIPs would seem achievable.	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager has reached out to the Party for clarity on timeline.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	N/A – DNO does not fit an isolator.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	Currently, we adhere to the Service Level Agreement set by DCUSA to remedy all reported category A and B service termination defects. Again, this is when there is an issue preventing the installation of a smart meter. We attend category A defects within 3-4 hours of them being reported and make the situation safe. If further work is required that isn't completed on the initial visit, they adhere to a 40 working day timescale for resolution. For category B defects are remedied within 40 working days of them being reported, with the exception of B11s, which are resolved within 28 working days.	Thank you for your response.

Question 4:	**How do you think standalone SIPs should be notified of the resolution when an issue prevents installation?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	By dataflow. SIPs should receive the same standard industry notification currently received by metering agents for reports by them.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	SIPs will need to provide adequate contact channels so that networks can send and receive notifications, broadly in the same way that MEMs do.	Thank you for your response.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	We would send a flow back through the DTN, which usually would be to the Supplier. It may be that SIP's through accession to DCUSA have access to the DTN.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SSEN again believes utilising the DTN would be the most straightforward resolution. The DNO returns a D0126 flow to supplier and MEM parties currently to notify them of completed works, if SIPs were accredited and permitted to use the DTN, they could also receive the same D0126 flows.	Thank you for your response.

Question 5:	**What sealing options do you believe standalone SIPs should use and can you specify what possible impacts and tamper implications these may have?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	Where SIPs are a stand-alone party they should have their own sealing pliers with company identification marks. In the same way as metering agents and DNOs have their own identification marks on their sealing pliers.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	SIP staff should be suitably vetted for sealing activities and provided with equipment that complies with the relevant codes of practice so they can seal both network and supplier termination equipment correctly. SIPs should also provide an as-built inspection in a format that all networks can accept. This will act as an added security measure and help identify any signs of tampering or interference. It is essential that there is a database of sealing pliers and similar equipment so the DNO can trace each seal back to the SIP who applied it.	Thank you for your response.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	We believe that they should use the same as industry standard now, with sealing plyers. Anything else could lead to potential of wrongful accusations on customers for tampering.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SIPs sealing solutions should be of an approved and traceable specification, tamper-evident and compatible with our existing sealing arrangements. Seals should be unique and identifiable to the SIP organisation. Seals that are not traceable or are non-standard could lead to compromised asset security and issues with identifying unauthorised activity on the DNO equipment, which in turn would mean	Thank you for your response. The REC Schedule on Energy Theft Reduction is Schedule 7.

Question 5:	What sealing options do you believe standalone SIPs should use and can you specify what possible impacts and tamper implications these may have?	
	more time spent investigating suspected tampering or illicit activity. SSEN would expect any sealing framework to define clearly seal ownership and accountability as well as reporting requirements for removing or replacing seals. SSEN considers that standalone SIPs should be subject to obligations no less stringent than those set out for Metering Parties under Schedule 14 of the Retail Energy Code, including requirements relating to metering system integrity, competence and controlled intervention. In addition, where seal removal or replacement occurs, equivalent obligations under Schedule 12 (Theft of Energy) should apply to ensure preservation of evidential integrity and appropriate reporting of suspected interference.	

Question 6:	**What possible knock-on effects do you believe standalone SIPs could have on DNOs?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	Other than the effects outlined in the submission paper, with the increased visits to supply points by SIPs it could result in an increase in service termination issue defects reported to DNOs which could impact on their ability to timely resolve the issues. This would impact meter operators and suppliers. Depending on the outcome of Q7, it could result in more requests for authorisation by DNOs.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	A key knock-on effect should be a reduction in unregulated SIP activity, along with the related security and safety risks it creates. A possible negative knock-on effect is that the safety and integrity of the network is compromised if, for example, cut out fuses are uprated for convenience without the necessary load and capacity modelling.	Thank you for your response.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	If they are qualified, then there should be no knock-on effects.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	There are several operational and governance implications for DNOs. There is a high potential for an increased amount of defect reporting and the management and monitoring of asset interventions. There is also potential for inconsistency in workmanship standards and the potential for boundary ambiguity between SIP, Supplier, MEM and DNO	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager is looking to develop a clear governance structure with high safety standards and a streamlined Accreditation with a strong Qualification process for SIPs

Question 6:	What possible knock-on effects do you believe standalone SIPs could have on DNOs?	
	responsibility, the latter occurring where installation activity identifies legacy non-compliance or degraded service terminations. Safety, asset integrity and clarity of responsibility and liability is paramount. The current liability for any physical damage referenced in DCUSA may require review, however SSEN does see the benefit to the customer experience that this change could bring.	and will address these considerations during the Working Group sessions.

Question 7:	**If an agreed methodology of training and assessment were to be developed, would you be supportive of SIPs operating on DNOs' networks without additional authorisation?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	DNOs must always be able to reserve the right to require their specific authorisation for operatives to work on their network. If a scheme is created similar to that of the EU skills register (EUSR) and operative training is to a recognised standard, we may consider a similar scheme as that for authorising EUSR meter operatives.	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager will address these considerations during the Working Group sessions.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	Yes, but only where the training and assessment are robust. SP Energy Networks currently permit accredited SIPs to operate on our network without additional SP Energy Networks Safety Rules Authorisations. The current SIP training and assessment model, based on MOP requirements, is well regulated and provides confidence in health and safety and technical standards. However, there is a risk that widening access to smaller organisations or individuals may weaken the robustness of the training, assessment or compliance.	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager will address these considerations during the Working Group sessions.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	This should be done through the EUSR's Smart Meter Referring Scheme which includes cut-offs that can and cannot be performed, any PPE required to work on equipment and the requirements for sealing.	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager will address these considerations during the Working Group sessions.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SSEN would be supportive in principle of SIPs operating on the DNOs network, provided a robust and standardised training and accreditation framework is developed. This should include competency assessments on both practical and theoretical components. Clear governance arrangements would have to exist under the REC with insurance and liability arrangements being explicitly addressed. SSEN would not	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager will address these considerations during the Working Group sessions.

Question 7:	**If an agreed methodology of training and assessment were to be developed, would you be supportive of SIPs operating on DNOs' networks without additional authorisation?**	
	support an approach where accreditation alone removes appropriate oversight of activity on DNO-owned assets. Any such framework must ensure that DNO statutory safety obligations are not diluted. Under the REC metering accreditation regime (Schedule 15 and associated Consolidated Metering Code of Practice), accredited metering parties are subject to periodic compliance audits by an independent Metering Scheme Auditor. SSEN considers that, if SIPs are permitted to operate on DNO assets under the REC, equivalent audit obligations should apply. This would include both REC audits and provisions enabling SSEN to carry out audits of works performed by SIPs on DNO owned assets, with the scope and frequency agreed in advance. Such an approach would ensure ongoing competence, compliance, and work quality, whilst maintaining clear accountability and preserving DNO statutory safety obligations.	

Question 8:	**The REC Code Manager's current view is that standalone SIPs should be able to identify theft/meter interference. Would you be supportive of that approach?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	Yes. SIPs should be trained to at least the same standard as meter operatives with regard to electricity theft and meter interference.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	Yes. The ability to recognise and report theft or meter interference should be an essential part of any agreed training and assessment process for SIPs.	Thank you for your response.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	We believe that they should notify the Supplier or Crimestoppers if there is a suspicion of theft.	Thank you for your response.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SSEN would support this approach in principle, on the basis that SIPs undergo appropriate training to correctly identify theft or illegal activity, understanding the differences between potential DNO and supplier theft. SSENs Network Protection team will always request photographic evidence of tampering or illegal activity to assist with desktop investigation prior to instructing a Revenue Protection Officer to attend. Defects or other issues can also be identified, that aren't necessarily related to theft, and these would need to be reported to us in the correct manner. Service termination defects would be reported as explained above, either via the Emergency Service Centre (ESC) or the DTN. Other issues related to potential illicit activity can be reported via Secure Data Exchange Portal (SDEP) or by contacting the Network Protection department. Issues around safety would be reported to the ESC. SSEN would like to understand if there is any proposed plan on how this training would be delivered and whom by.	Thank you for your response. Some of this is subject to REC Issue I0292 which has been raised in October 2025 and is currently following the Change Process.

Question 9:	**What other impacts and/or benefits do you believe SIPs as a standalone Party could have on DNOs?**	
RESPONDENT DETAILS	**RESPONSE**	**CODE MANAGER COMMENTS**
Northern Powergrid (Distribution Network Operator)	We often receive calls from customers requesting a temporary isolation or an isolator fitting to accommodate electrician's work. We advise them to call their supplier since the availability of SIPs is currently very limited. Increasing the pool of SIPs will likely reduce the number of isolation requests we receive from customers.	Thank you for your response.
SP Energy Networks (Distribution Network Operator)	SIPs could bring wider benefits if their competency set includes tasks such as fuse upgrades (where there is a demand) and minor repairs to service termination equipment, for example replacing rating stickers, labels, terminal bungs and other small fixes that restore the equipment to a safe and compliant condition.	Thank you for your response.
BUUK (Distribution Network Operator)	Consideration should be taken as to whether a SIP visit could constitute an inspection for an audit, if this was recorded correctly.	Thank you for your response. The Code Manager will address these considerations during the Working Group sessions.
SSEN (Distribution Network Operator)	SSEN sees the benefit to customers this proposal could bring, such as reduced lead times for metering upgrades and in turn a potential reduction in routine isolation activity for DNOs, meaning less operational burden. However, there are potential risks involved too such as increased asset condition reporting which could lead to operational strain for DNOs. Other risks include a potential varying quality of	Thank you for your response. Please refer to the answer to question 6.

Question 9:	What other impacts and/or benefits do you believe SIPs as a standalone Party could have on DNOs?	
	installation standards and potential ambiguity in liability if faults were to occur following a SIPs working at a premises. SSEN would encourage that the REC defines clear asset boundary definitions, agrees a scope of permitted activity and defines reporting obligations.	