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SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT REPORT

I0180 - CLARITY ON USE OF ON HOLD FOR SWITCHING ISSUES, INCLUDING THE OBLIGATIONS OF CSS USERS

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SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Within the CSS system, some Switching Incidents are on hold waiting for resolution. The CSS Service Desk team have a process to chase every three days, escalate and make phone calls. However, the incident cannot be closed until confirmation is received from the end-user and information is verified from their systems.

There are issues engaging with Suppliers within the incident management process, issues with the correct contact details being held and that tickets are assigned to an individual person rather than an organisation.

The Switching Operator puts these tickets on hold, which is an approved business process from the Switching Programme. This is not reflected in the obligations on Switching Data Service Provider (SDSP) or other REC Service Providers, where there is no on hold concept. Further there are no obligations on CSS Users to respond in a defined timeframe. This means that the REC obligations do not reflect current practice, and many tickets remain open much longer than necessary.

Note. This does not apply to Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and SDSPs with service desks and is more specifically, Energy Suppliers. This is because they already have defined Service Level Agreements in place.

The Code Manager has identified four solution options to address the issue raised, which will be issued for impact assessment.

PROPOPSED SOLUTION OVERVIEW

Option 1

- Establish the on-hold concept in the REC.
- Establish an obligation on Energy Suppliers to respond to these on hold messages.
- Establish performance assurance of Energy Suppliers that consistently do not respond to messages (which will require reporting on this behaviour).

This solution would introduce a new clause within Schedule 26, setting out Market Participant responsibilities for the resolution and closure of Switching Incidents.

The Code Manager would require reporting from the Switching Operator to identify parties that are disengaged with the process and be subject to Performance Assurance Techniques.

The draft legal text for Option 1 can be found here

Option 2

This option defines an approach to provide CSS Users with a timeframe to respond to incidents and enables the Switching Operator to close the incident, after an agreed period of no response.

Suggested wording in the Switching Operator Service Definition:

Where a Priority 3 or Priority 4 Incident has been assigned to a Market Participant and has been set to a status of pending awaiting confirmation of resolution, the Switching Operator may set the Incident status to resolved where:

- The Incident is over 60 days old;
- Minimum communications to the Market Participant have been made, defined as at least:
    - one email has been sent to the Market Participant requesting confirmation of resolution;
    - one phone call has been made to the Market Participant requesting confirmation of resolution; and
    - One attempt to contact the REC Contract Manager as an escalation route;
- No update from the Market Participant has been provided for 15 Working Days;
- It is not related to a CSS certificate, change or problem;
- It Is not awaiting a data fix; and
- It is not related to a child or parent ticket.

The draft legal text for Option 2 can be found here

Option 3

This option suggests a timescale for Market Participants to provide a positive response, however if this lapses, and the Switching Operator have chased and there is no response then the Switching Incident can be closed.

Suggested wording in the Switching Operator Service Definition:

Where a Priority 3 or Priority 4 Incident has been assigned to a Market Participant and has been set to a status of pending awaiting confirmation of resolution, the Switching Operator may set the Incident status to resolved where:

- The timescales within section 14.2 of the Switching Service Management Schedule have been exceeded;

1.1. An email has been sent to the Market Participant requesting confirmation of resolution;

- Where a contact number is available, a phone call has been made to the Market Participant requesting confirmation of resolution;

1.2. The REC Contract Manager has been utilised as an escalation route;

- No update has been provided for 15 Working Days;
- Is not related to a CSS certificate, switching change or Switching Problem;
- Is not awaiting a data fix; and
- Is not related to a child or parent ticket.

The draft legal text for Option 3 can be found here

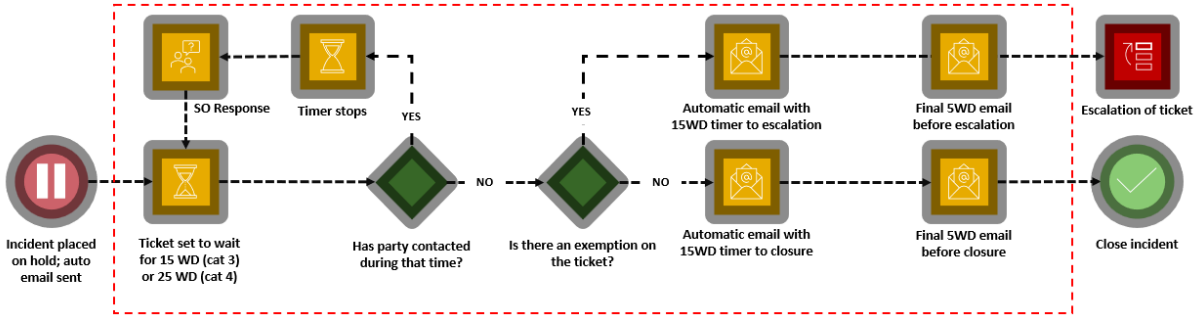
The difference between Option 2 and 3, is that Option 2 introduces a timeframe of 60 working days for an Incident to be placed in a status of pending/ on hold, with no obligation on a Market Participant to respond under any set timescales and therefore is not subject to Performance Assurance. After which case, the Switching Operator can close the Incident, providing the criteria proposed in the Switching Operator Service Definition and CSS Service Definition, have been met.

Option 3 would place the same obligation on Market Participants as Option 1enabling Performance monitoring, however where a market Participant has not met its obligations and the Switching Operator has completed the required level of follow up, the Incident can be closed.

Option 4

Introduces an automated system within which the System Operator would follow a standard protocol for closing on hold Category 3 and 4 tickets after a certain amount of time has lapsed with no response from a User.

The process is described in the diagram below



The process involves sending an initial automated email to notify the relevant Party when a ticket is placed on hold. This is followed by a second automated email at a set interval (15WDs for Category 3 and 25WDs for Category 4) warning of a potential closure after a further 15WD waiting period. 5 days before the end of the timer, a final email will be sent to all contacts from the relevant Party as a last attempt to resolve the ticket. If no action is taken, the ticket will be closed, though users have 3 WDs to reopen it if required.

For tickets with exemptions, the second email will alert the relevant Party that the ticket will be escalated rather than closed after a further 15 working days. 5 days before the end of the timer, a final email will be sent to all contacts from the relevant Party as last attempt to resolve the ticket. If no action is taken, the ticket will be escalated. Further information on the escalation process will be provided as part of the PIA, however this is expected to be a Code Manager activity at this stage.

Cat. 3 and 4 tickets that are exempt are the following:

- The ticket is related to a CSS Certificate, Switching Change or Switching Problem;
- The ticket is awaiting a data fix; and
- The ticket is related to a child or parent ticket.

Should a response be received from the Party whilst the ticket is in the on-hold process, the timer will pause until acknowledged by DCC, after which the ticket will return to the beginning of the process.

This would only be applicable to Category 3 and 4 incidents, and any technical solution will be accompanied by legal text, mapping out the obligation of CSS users to actively engage with the tickets they have raised.