Making a positive difference
for energy consumers

Ofgem Decision to Approve DCRP/MP/25/06: Modification to Distribution Operating Code 6 of the Distribution Code to introduce the Demand Control Rotation Protocol

Decision:	The Authority[1] determines that this modification should be made[2]
Target audience:	Distribution licensees, Distribution Code Review Panel, distribution network users and other interested parties
Date of publication:	30 July 2026
Implementation date:	13 August 2026

Background

Distribution Code Operating Code 6 (DOC6)[3] contains the tools which enables the National Energy System Operator (NESO) and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to reduce demand on the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) to either avoid or relieve operating problems, via reducing or disconnecting demand on the Distribution Network. Demand Control is instructed by NESO under existing Grid Code provisions. The provisions within DOC6 align to the provisions within Grid Code Operating Code 6 (OC6)[4], and are designed to be used at no or short notice.

During 2023, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero ran a series of Electricity Shortfall Prioritisation Review (ESPR) workshops, which reviewed and identified improvements in the prioritisation of electricity supplies during a supply shortfall. This included a review of the existing industry Demand Control tools within Grid Code OC6. We approved two previous Grid Code modifications and one Distribution Code modification that stemmed from the ESPR, seeking to make improvements to OC6 and DOC6 (GC0161[5] , DCRP/MP/23/03[6], and GC0162[7].

[1] References to the "Authority", "Ofgem", "we" and "our" are used interchangeably in this document. The Authority refers to GEMA, the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority. The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) supports GEMA in its day-to-day work. This decision is made by or on behalf of GEMA.
[2] This document is notice of the reasons for this decision as required by section 49A of the Electricity Act 1989.
[3] https://dcode.org.uk/
[4] Grid Code documents | National Energy System Operator
[5] https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/gc0161-authority-decision
[6] DCRP/MP/23/03 Authority Decision | Ofgem
[7] https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/decision/gc0162-authority-decision

The ESPR also reviewed the Governments Electricity Supply Emergency Code (ESEC), which sets out a process for ensuring fair distribution of electricity rationing during a period of electricity shortage. It determined that the ESEC better minimises the impact on individual customers compared to other Demand Control tools set out in OC6 (and DOC6) by distributing demand disconnections across the country and rotating the customers off supply. [8]

Existing OC6, and consequentially DOC6, Demand Control tools allow for the disconnection of up to 20% of a DNOs total demand via pre-determined load blocks, each nominally 5% of demand, at no or very little notice. Demand disconnections beyond this require day-ahead warnings from NESO, or are delivered on a best endeavours basis, via pre-determined load blocks. This means that the same group(s) of customers are disconnected each time the tools are used.

Under ESEC, each DNO splits 90% of its total demand into 18 pre-determined load blocks, each nominally 5% of demand. These load blocks are to be disconnected according to pre-determined schedules, rotating the blocks disconnected in a nominal 3-hour cycle resulting in Rota Load Disconnections (RLDs). ESEC Load Blocks are also assigned an identifying letter, which is listed on customer bills therefore better facilitating public communications around load disconnections. Subsequently, ESEC demand disconnections are more fairly distributed across the country, better reducing societal impacts, when compared to existing OC6 and DOC6 tools.

ESEC requires the use of Government emergency powers to enact and is designed for use on prolonged electricity supply shortages. It is therefore not suited for short notice use as existing OC6 and DOC6 tools are. The ESPR recommended introducing an ESEC style tool to OC6, designed to be initiated as quickly as possible to better reducing societal impacts of demand disconnections.

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electricity-supply-emergency-code

The Demand Control Rotation Protocol (DCRP) was created to fulfil this purpose. In 2024, the DCRP was formalised in collaboration with, and endorsement from industry through the Governments Electricity Task Group (ETG). The DCRP will be implemented in the Grid Code via Grid Code modification GC0176, for which our decision is published alongside this decision. This modification proposal seeks to make the necessary Distribution Code changes to facilitate the DCRPs implementation through the Grid Code provisions provided by GC0176.

The modification proposal

DCRP/MP/25/06 was proposed by the Energy Networks Association on 4 December 2025. Prior to this, the DCRP was developed in collaboration with industry via the ETG and ESPR. It has been progressed via a joint Grid Code – Distribution Code working group alongside Grid Code modification GC0176. It seeks to make changes to DOC6 to allow the DCRP to be implemented where it is instructed by the National Energy System Operator under the associated Grid Code arrangements (implemented via GC0176).

The DCRP is a Demand Control tool designed in alignment with ESEC, that is initiated by NESO. The DCRP can only be enacted where there is at least 8 hours advance warning of an electricity shortfall, and where relevant NETS Notices have been issued by NESO. This is because DNOs need to reconfigure their networks to facilitate the RLDs.

It uses the same 18 Load blocks as ESEC, totalling 90% of total demand. Like ESEC, up to 10% of total demand is reserved for Protected Sites (sites on the ESEC Protected Sites List, as defined by ESEC) which are excluded from disconnections. Unlike ESEC, 4 blocks, defined as Fast Load Blocks, are reserved for emergency disconnections under existing OC6 provisions. The remaining 14 blocks, representing 70% of total demand, is made available for demand disconnections in accordance with an Implementation Rota Plan created by NESO for the specific event, with load blocks disconnected in alphabetic sequence on a nominal 3-hour cycle. On receipt of notification of DCRP actuation, DNOs must make 8 Load Blocks available for disconnection within 8 hours, and all 14 Load Blocks available within 24 hours, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

DCRP/MP/25/06 proposes to make a number of changes to Distribution Code documents to:

- introduce a new section within DOC6, DOC6.8. This DOC6.8 sets out the DCRP requirements, how the DCRP will be initiated, what Load Block(s) DNOs will be required to disconnect, instructions to stop using the DCRP, and the process for updating the DCRP
- introduce new definitions relevant to the DCRP
- amend existing DOC6 provisions to align with the DCRP requirements
- correct minor glossary and definition inconsistencies identified

The proposer considers that DCRP/MP/25/06 will better facilitate Applicable Distribution Code Objectives (a), (c), and (d), by facilitating better management of the system under events when there is a shortfall in supply to ensure system stability, in alignment with the Grid Code. The proposer considers that DCRP/MP/25/06 will have a neutral impact on all other Applicable Distribution Code Objectives.[9]

Distribution Code Review Panel[10] comments and licensee recommendation

At the Distribution Code Review Panel (the Panel) meeting on 9 June 2026, the Panel recommended that DCRP/MP/25/06 should be submitted to Ofgem for approval. They also recommend that Ofgem should approve the modification, and that it should be implemented in line with GC0176.

Our decision

We have considered the issues raised by the modification proposal and in the Final Report dated 12 June 2026. We have considered and taken account of the responses to the consultation(s) on the modification proposal which are included in the Final Report.[11] We have concluded that:

- implementation of the modification proposal will better facilitate the achievement of applicable objectives (a), (c), and (d) of the Distribution Code, and will have neutral impact on all other Distribution Code Objectives

[9] As set out in Standard Condition SLC 21.4 of the Electricity Distribution Licence available at: Licences and licence conditions | Ofgem
[10] The Distribution Code Review Panel is established in accordance with SLC 21 of the Electricity Distribution Licence.
[11] Distribution Code proposals, final reports and representations can be viewed at: Current Areas of Work and Consultations

- approving the modification is consistent with our principal objective and statutory duties[12]

Reasons for our decision

We consider this modification proposal will better facilitate Distribution Code objectives (a), (c), and (d), and has a neutral impact on the other applicable objectives.

(a) permit the development, maintenance, and operation of an efficient, co-ordinated, and economical system for the distribution of electricity

Emergency tools to reduce the demand on the system during a supply shortfall are an essential last resort component of system operation. As set out in the introduction, ESEC demand disconnections are more fairly distributed across the country, better reducing societal impacts, when compared to existing OC6 and DOC6 tools. However, ESEC demand disconnections are not suited for implementation on short notice. This modification proposal introduces the DCRP, which closely resembles ESEC and can be implemented within 8 hours of notification of its implementation by NESO. We consider this modification proposal better facilitates efficient and coordinated demand disconnections when compared to existing DOC6 tools, and therefore consider it better facilitates this Distribution Code Objective.

(c) efficiently discharge the obligations imposed upon distribution licensees by the distribution licences and comply with the Regulation and any relevant legally binding decision of the European Commission and/or the Agency for the Co-operation of Energy Regulators

DNOs have a licence obligation to comply with the Grid Code and Distribution Code. We note that our decision to approve Grid Code modification GC0176 is published alongside this decision. This modification proposal ensures Distribution Code alignment with the changes made via GC0176. We therefore consider it better facilitates this Distribution Code Objective.

(d) promote efficiency in the implementation and administration of the Distribution Code

As the modification proposal corrects minor glossary and definition inconsistencies identified, we consider it marginally positively facilitates this Distribution Code Objective.

[12] The Authority's statutory duties are wider than matters which the Panel and licensees must take into consideration and are largely provided for in statute, principally in this case the Electricity Act 1989.

Decision notice

In accordance with SLC 21.10 of the Electricity Distribution Licence, the Authority hereby directs that the modification to the Distribution Code set out in the Final Report to the Authority of 4 December 2025 be made.

Shilen Shah
Head of Strategic Planning, Codes and Standards
Signed on behalf of the Authority and authorised for that purpose