An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

Network Incidents

Users' Guide for ComReg's Portal for Reporting Security Incidents

Information Notice

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An Coimisiún um Rialáil Cumarsáide
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Additional Information

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1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The Commission for Communications Regulation ("ComReg") is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications (telecommunications, radiocommunication and broadcasting networks), postal and premium rate sectors in Ireland in accordance with European Union ("EU") and Irish law. ComReg also manages Ireland's radio spectrum (or "spectrum") and national numbering resource[1].

The on-line portal for the reporting of incidents ("Portal") was introduced in 2019 to facilitate online incident reporting while the data required by it for reporting continued to be that set out in the previous Incident Reporting Form 14/02a[2] . The Portal not only enabled the on-line reporting of a new incident but also facilitated the updating of information in relation to an incident in progress. Security features of the Portal includes two-factor authentication, with only registered users and their authorised representatives having access to the portal. In December 2022, ComReg added the reporting of 'Storm' Incidents.

1.2 Communications Regulation and Digital Hub Development Agency (Amendment) Act 2023

In 2023, following the transposition of the European Electronic Communications Code ("EECC") by the Communications Regulation and Digital Hub Development Agency (Amendment) Act of 2023, Act No. 4 of 2023 (the "Act of 2023"), ComReg published a consultation[3] introducing changes to the framework for the reporting of security incidents[4]

[1] ComReg Doc 21/136 – https://www.comreg.ie/publication/radio-spectrum-management-strategy-statement-2022-to-2024-designed-version-comreg-21-136

[2] ComReg Incident Reporting Template – https://www.comreg.ie/publication/comreg-incident-reporting-template/

[3] Network Incident Reporting Thresholds, A consultation to revise and replace ComReg Document 14/02 (Reporting & Guidance on Incident Reporting & Minimum Security Standards) – ComReg Document 23/36 – https://www.comreg.ie/media/2023/04/ComReg-2336-2.pdf.

[4] Security incidents, as defined in section 5 of the Act of 2023, and henceforth "Incidents" and security incidents are used interchangeably in both this document and in the Portal.

("incidents"). Then, in 2024, ComReg published a Response to Consultation and its associated Decision Instrument[5].

Following the publication of ComReg Document 24/23 and its Decision Instrument D08/24, the Portal has been updated for consistency with these documents. The Portal now has newly added functionality, including:

- the selection of a security incident type ('Storm', 'Isolated' and 'Malicious');
- the selection of a security incident sub-category;
- reporting for security Incidents affecting Number Independent Interpersonal Communication Service ("NI-ICS") providers; and
- updating the service and network asset types to reflect those used in the provision of modern networks and services.

This document ComReg 24/41 is the user's guide for ComReg's Portal for reporting security incidents affecting providers of ECN, ECS and NI-ICS and replaces ComReg 19/98[6].

While the document structure is similar to its predecessor, there are some notable changes including:

- updated security incident type selections ('Isolated', 'Storm', or 'Malicious');
- new security incident sub-categories (Authenticity, Availability, Confidentiality, or Integrity);
- the addition of NI-ICS provider services; and
- updated asset types reflecting modern networks and services.

[5] Network Incident Reporting Thresholds: Response to Consultation, On the revision and replacement of ComReg Document 14/02 (Reporting & Guidance on Incident Reporting Minimum-Security Standards) - ComReg Document 24/23 – https://www.comreg.ie/publication/network-incident-reporting-thresholds-response-to-consultation

[6] User Guide for ComReg's Network Incident Reporting portal – https://www.comreg.ie/publication/user-guide-for-comregs-network-incident-reporting-portal

1.3 Structure of this document

This document is structured as follow:

- Section 2 (Account Activation and First Login), provides the URL and the steps to register, activate an account, and login for the first time;
- Section 3 (Reporting security Incidents), provides the steps to create, update, and close a security incident under Isolated and Malicious types; and
- Section 4 (Reporting Storm Incidents), provides the steps to create, update, and close a storm incident.

In order to clarify for the user when using this guide, the page names and the button[7] functions to press are indicated as below:

- ***Italic and Bold*** font, indicates the page's name – i.e., ***Network Incident Reporting*** page.
- "Inverted Comma" and underlined font, indicates the button's function (press button) – i.e. click on "Report new incident".

In case of issues using the Portal, and for further questions, please contact ComReg via the following dedicated email (incident@comreg.ie).

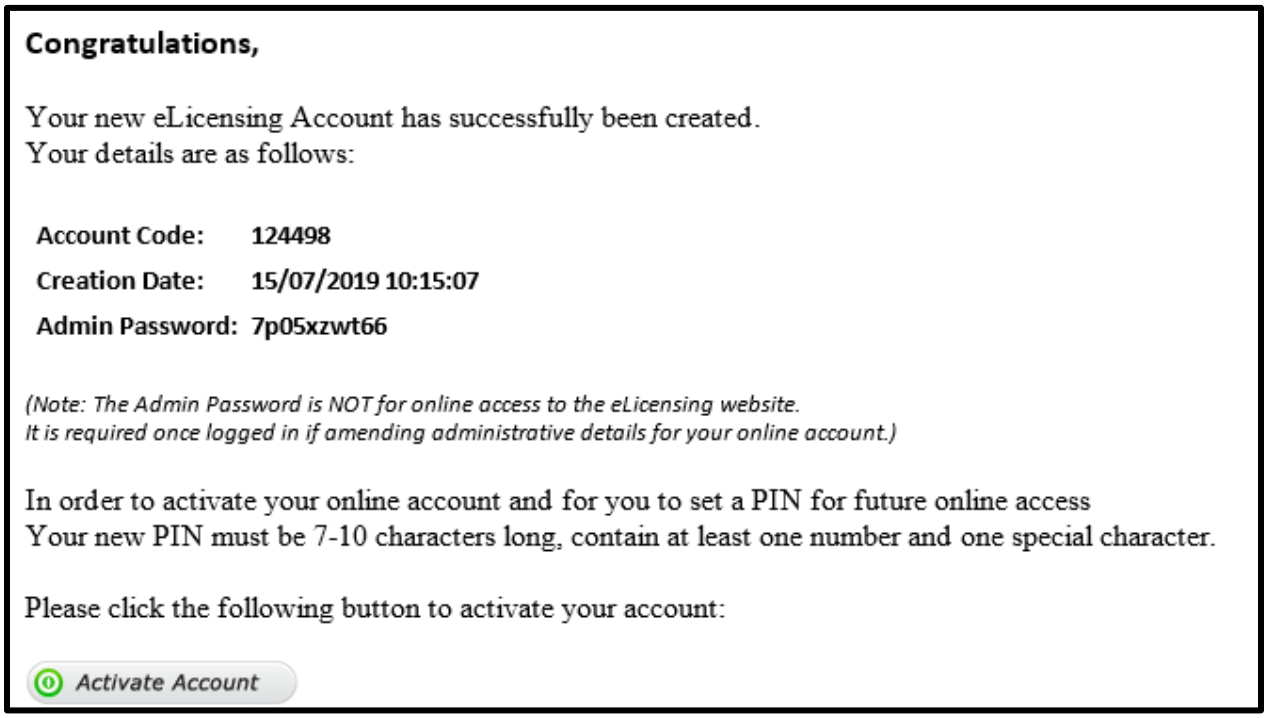
[7] All functionality is accessed by clicking on tagged buttons on each part of the form. The guide takes the operator through the steps, including buttons to press, to report an incident.

2: Account Creation and Logging In

When registering to use the Portal for the first time[8], ComReg will request users to provide at least one contact who is tasked with submitting security incidents to the Portal. In order to complete the registration and the account setup to become a user, the following information needs to be supplied via the dedicated email (incident@comreg.ie):

- Company Name;
- Office Address;
- Name of Contact Person(s);
- Contact Number; and
- Email Address.

After ComReg creates the account, an email will be sent to the contact person(s) advising them of the account creation and with instructions as to how to activate the account. A screenshot of the email template is shown below:



Congratulations,

Your new eLicensing Account has successfully been created.
Your details are as follows:

Account Code: 124498
Creation Date: 15/07/2019 10:15:07
Admin Password: 7p05xzwt66

(Note: The Admin Password is NOT for online access to the eLicensing website.
It is required once logged in if amending administrative details for your online account.)

In order to activate your online account and for you to set a PIN for future online access
Your new PIN must be 7-10 characters long, contain at least one number and one special character.

Please click the following button to activate your account:

Activate Account

Figure 1: Email Confirming Account Creation

[8] Existing users do not need to re-register to use the updated Portal. They can use their existing account number and PIN to login and use the Portal.

Clicking on the "Activate Account" function (Figure 1 above), will redirect the user to the ***Reset PIN for eLicensing*** page. The user inputs the newly generated account code and the new PIN. The new PIN must be 7-10 characters long, containing at least one number and one special character. A screenshot of the ***Reset PIN for eLicensing*** page is shown in Figure 2 below. **Please Note,** if a company wishes to assign multiple users to use the Portal, the users will need to share and use the same PIN (7-10 characters), therefore, it is advised to use a strong, unique PIN. Choose a PIN that is unique from any PIN you have previously used.

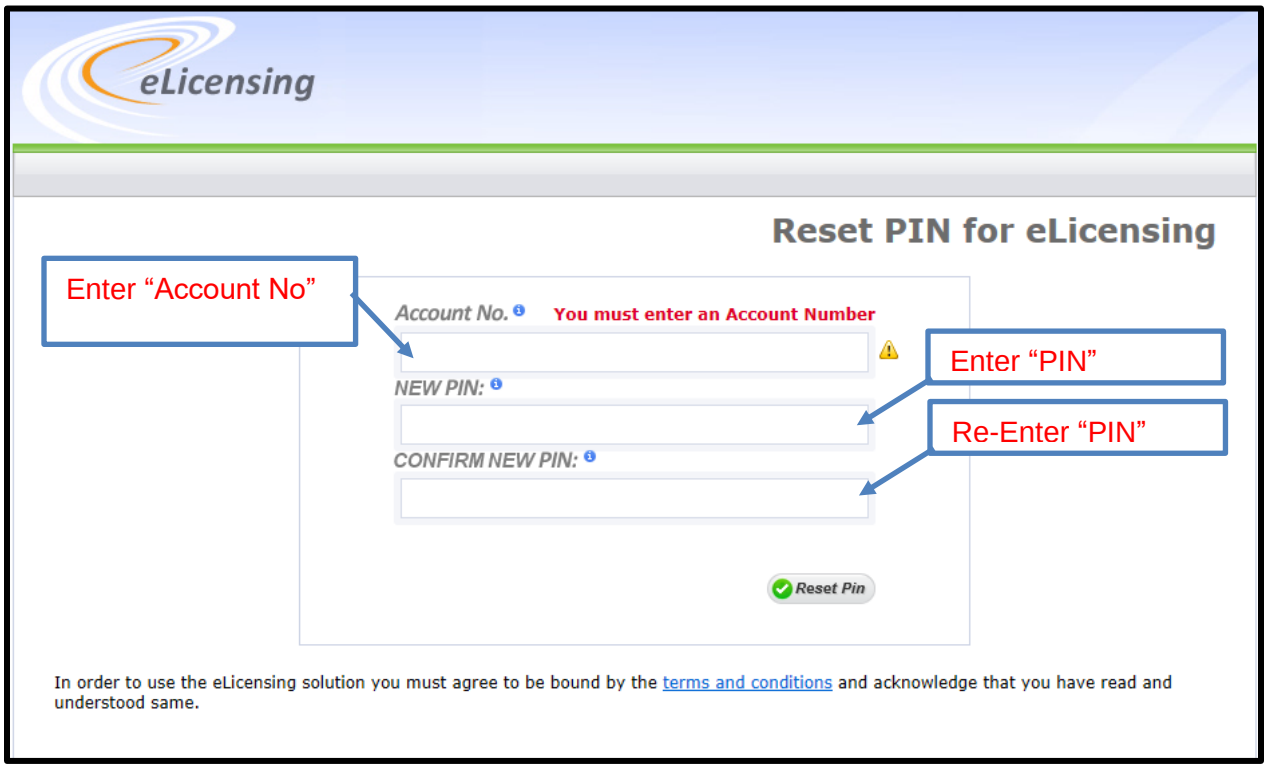


Figure 2: Reset PIN for eLicensing Page

After resetting the PIN, a new page will open, advising the user that the eLicensing account has been successfully activated, as shown in Figure 3 below.

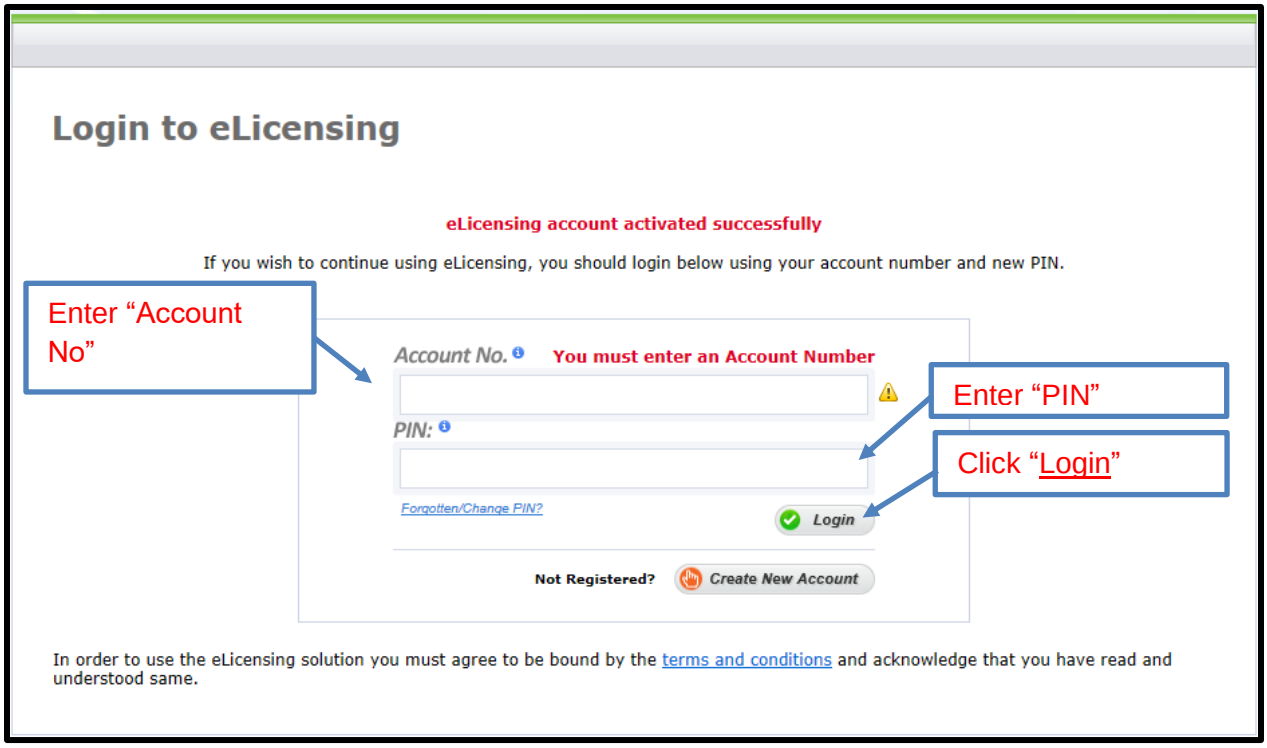


Figure 3: eLicensing Account Activation

The user can now login to the Portal. The user will be asked to provide the "Account No." and "PIN". After clicking the "Login" function, the user will be asked to read and accept the terms and conditions of the eLicensing website when logging in for the first time. Figure 4 below shows a screenshot of this page.

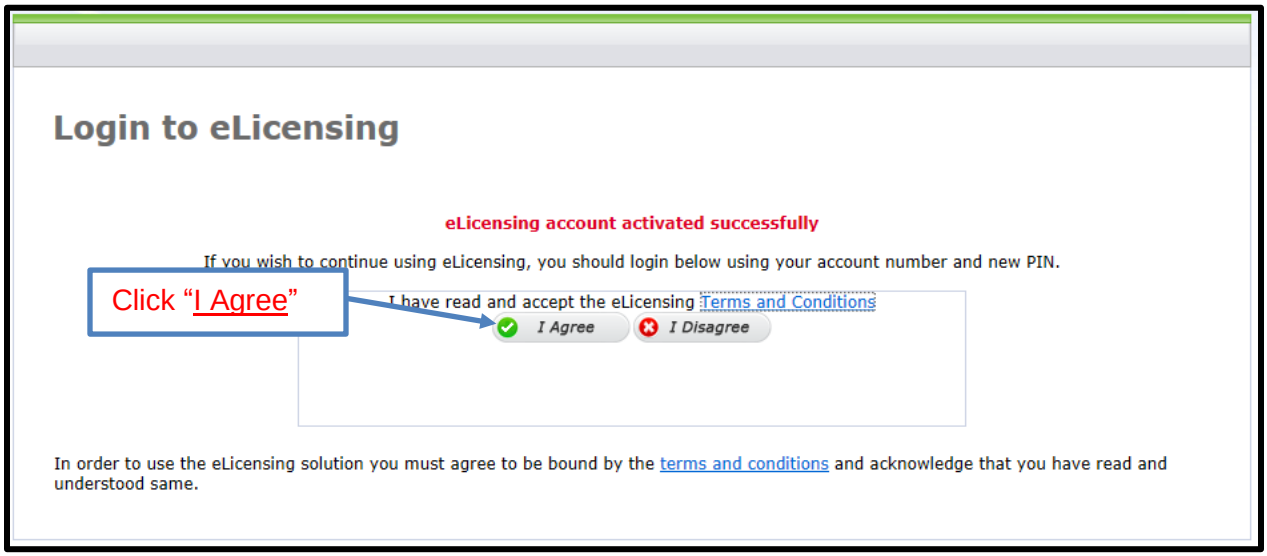


Figure 4: eLicensing Terms and Conditions Page

As part of two-factor authentication, the user will then be asked to select their name from the dropdown list and click on "Request Authentication Code" as shown in Figure 5 below.

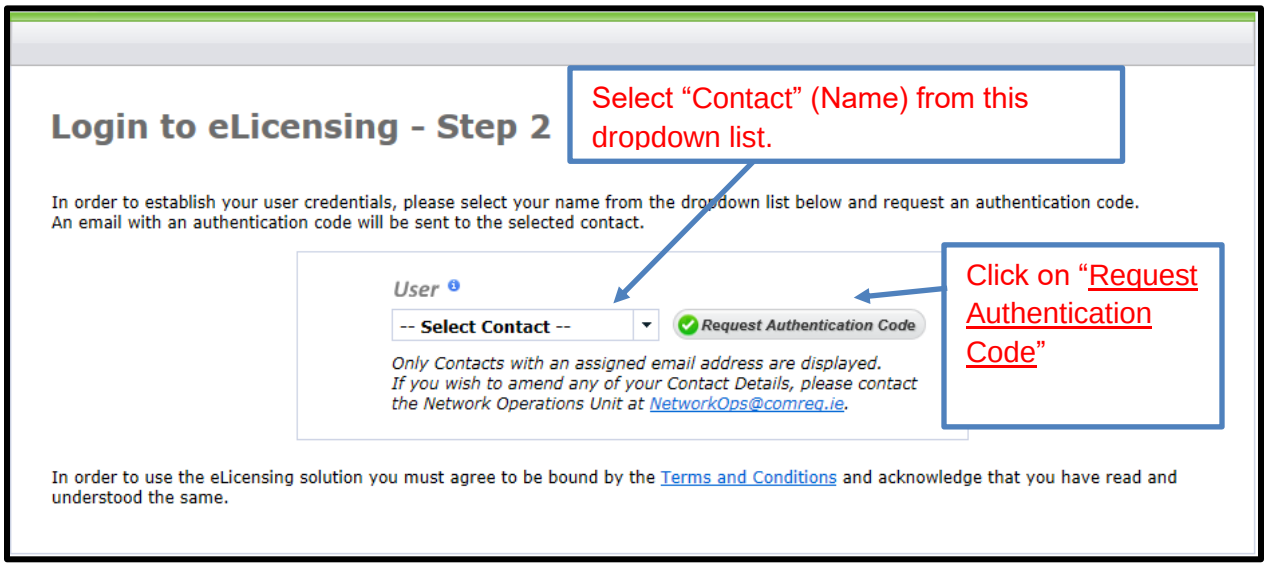


Figure 5: eLicensing Login – Two-Factor Authentication

The authentication code, which will be valid for 10 minutes, is then sent to the registered email address associated with the user. In the ***Login to eLicensing – Step 3*** page, input this authentication code to the field and click on "Complete Login", as shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: eLicensing Login – Two-Factor Authentication

The user is now routed to the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page.

3: Reporting Security Incidents[9]

After logging in, the user will be routed to the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page, which provides the option to report a new security incident and also lists the security incidents that have already been created.

3.1 Reporting a new Security Incident

In order, to create a new security incident report, click on "Report new incident" as shown in Figure 7 below.

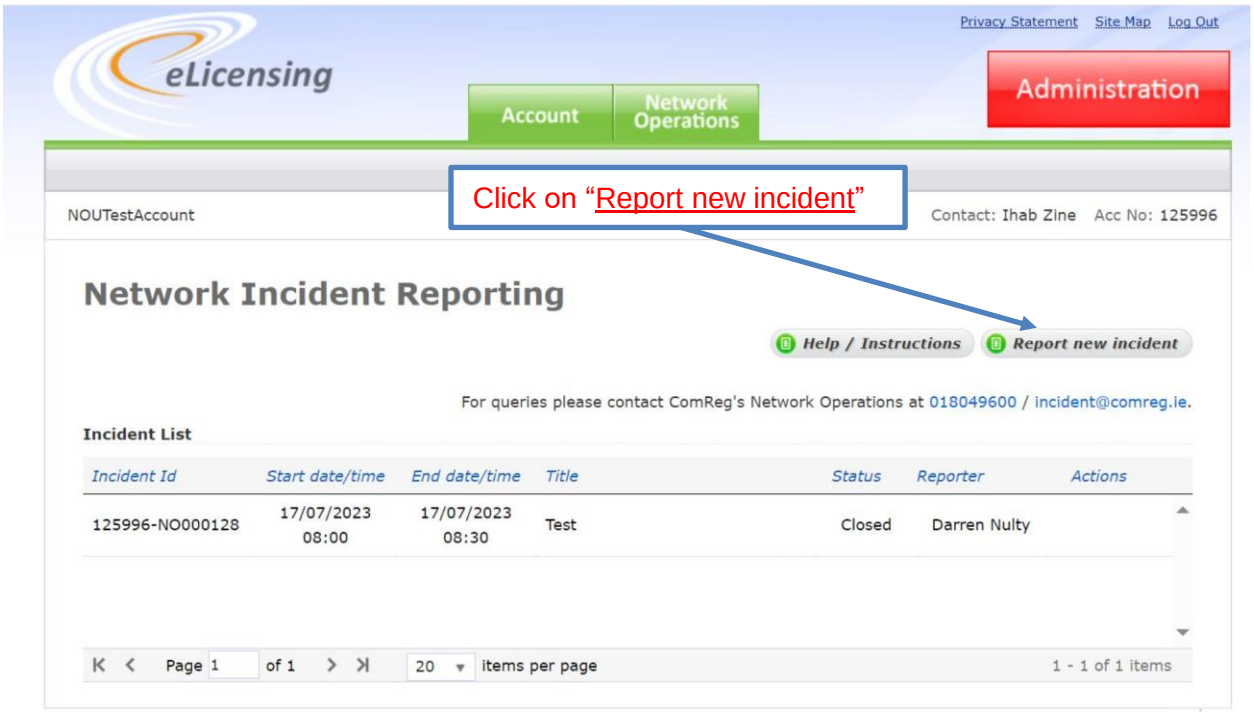


Figure 7: Network Incident Reporting Page

[9] This section provides guidance for reporting security incidents under the Isolated or Malicious types. The process and template are the same for reporting such security incidents. The difference is in some of the required information, relevant to each type.

Next, the user will be routed to the ***Create Incident Report*** page, as shown in Figure 8 below. In this page the user is required to do the following:

1) Select the security incident type (Isolated, Storm, or Malicious[10])
2) Select the sub-category[11] (Authenticity, Availability, Confidentiality, or Integrity).
3) Provide the relevant summary information: Title, Date and Time, and Description of the incident;
4) Tick the boxes of the services affected; under Fixed Services, Mobile Services (or both), or NI-ICS Services; and
5) Click on "Create Report" when the required information has been provided.

[10] This type is intended to catch security incidents including but not limited to those caused by the malicious actions of a third party, whether of a cyber or other origin (i.e., arson, physical damage etc.).

[11] a security incident may feature more than a single sub-category. Therefore, providers should use any or all of the sub-categories that accurately describe the security incident in progress.

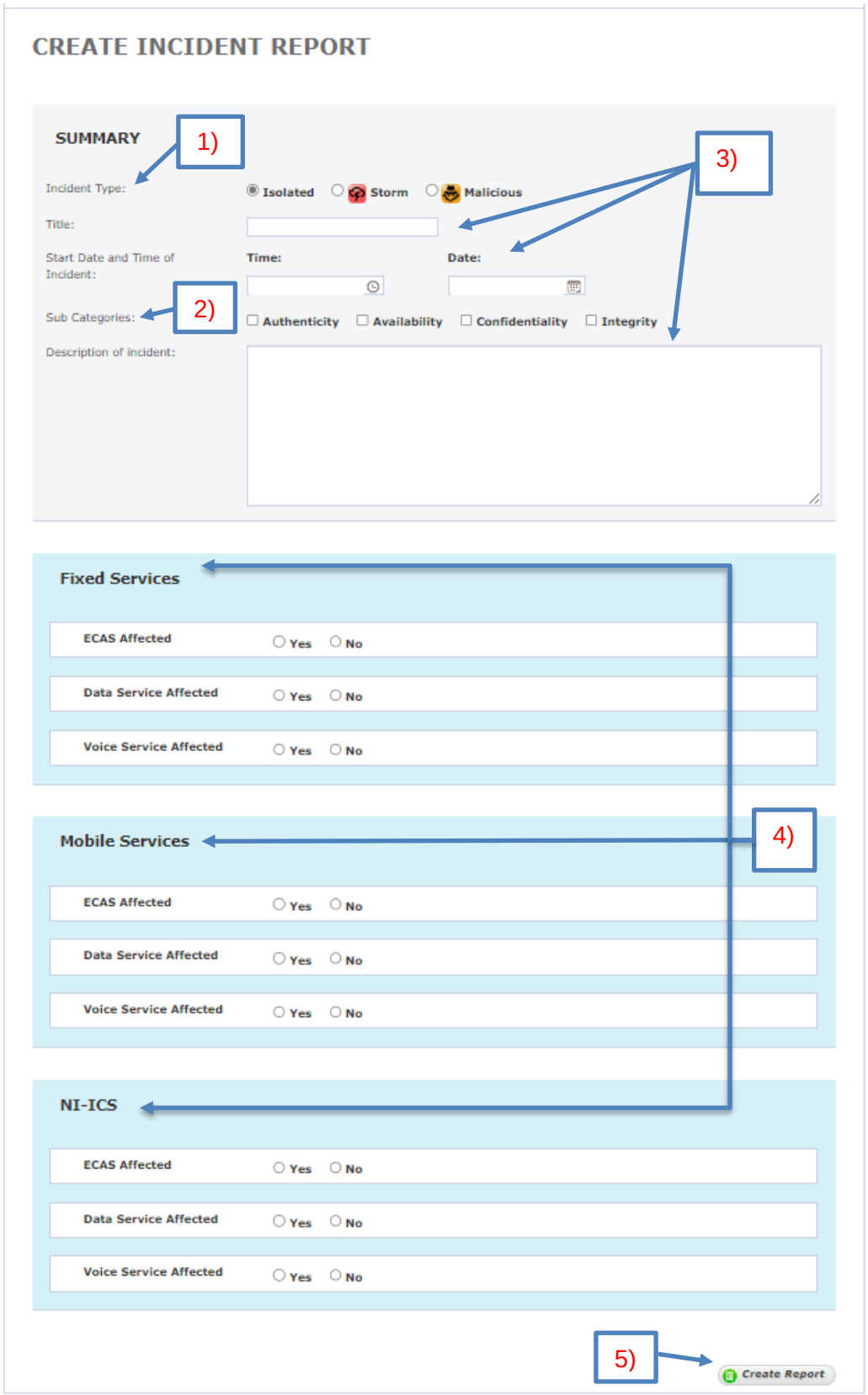


Figure 8: Create Incident Report Page

Note that when the user ticks the "Yes" box for Fixed Services, Mobile Services, or NI-ICS, the user will be required to select if the security incident has impacted the Service Offering(s) for Retail or Wholesale. In addition, the user will be required to provide further information on the Number of End Users Affected and Quantity of Sites Affected, as shown in Figure 9 below.

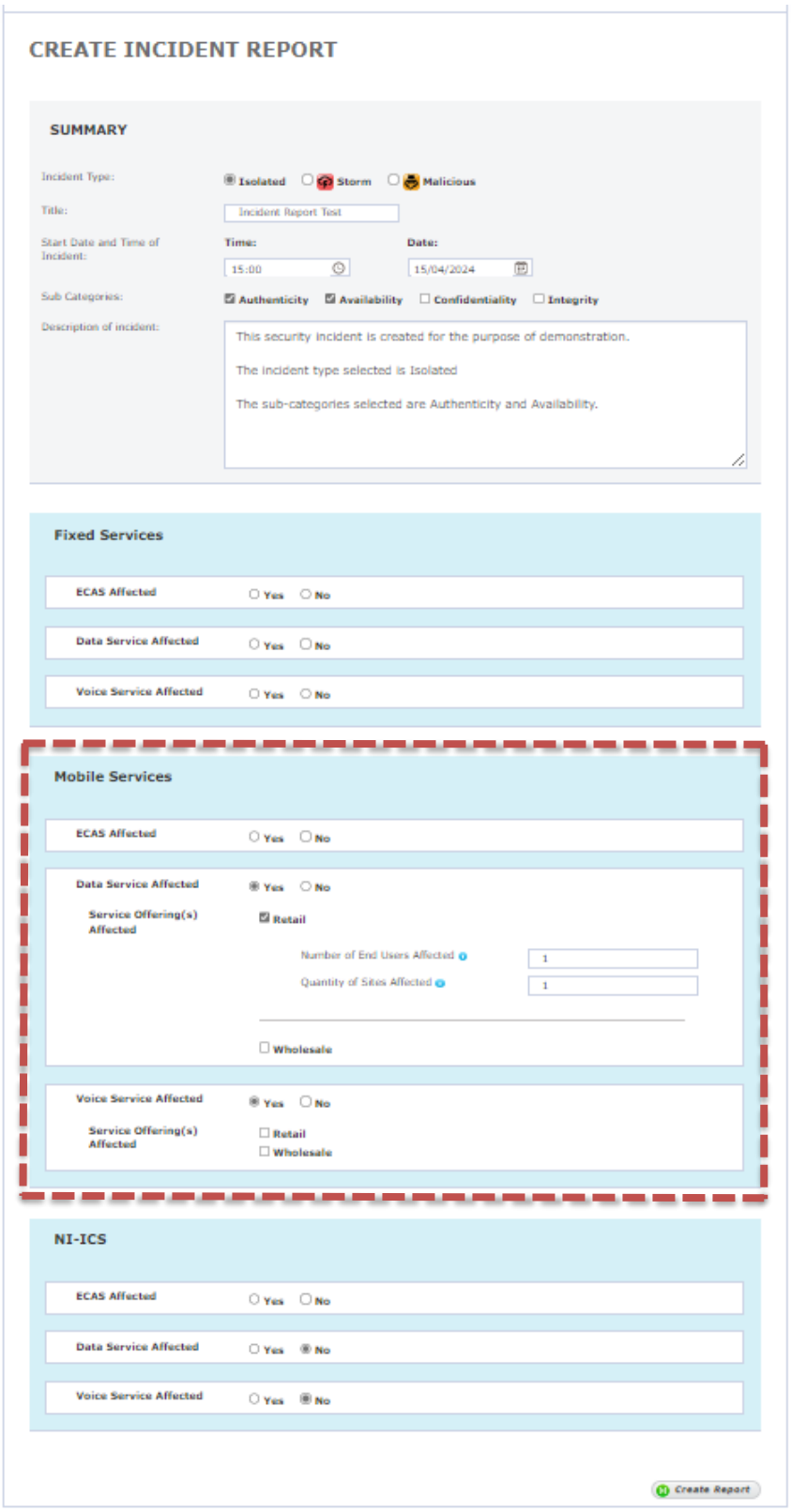


Figure 9: Example of the Create Incident Report Page with Mobile Services Affected

After Steps 1 to 5 on page 14 have been completed and the function "Create Report" has been clicked, a pop-up window called ***Incident Created*** will appear, giving the user two options, "Update Incident Report now", or "Update Incident Report later" – this is shown in Figure 10 below.

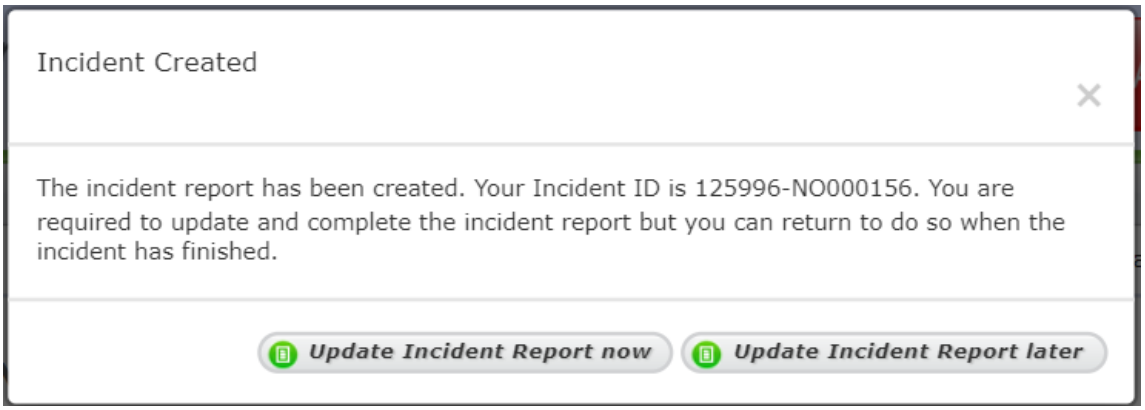


Figure 10: Incident Created Pop-Up Window

Sub-Section 3.2 below, provides the steps that are required to update an existing security incident report.

3.2 Update a security Incident Report

The user is required to update the submitted information while a security incident remains open and complete the report.

An existing security incident report can be updated by logging into the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page. From the Incident List, the report to be updated can be chosen. Note that, only open security incidents in the list will have the update button available, and therefore, can be updated.

The required steps to update a report as follows:

1) As shown in Figure 11 below, click on "Update";

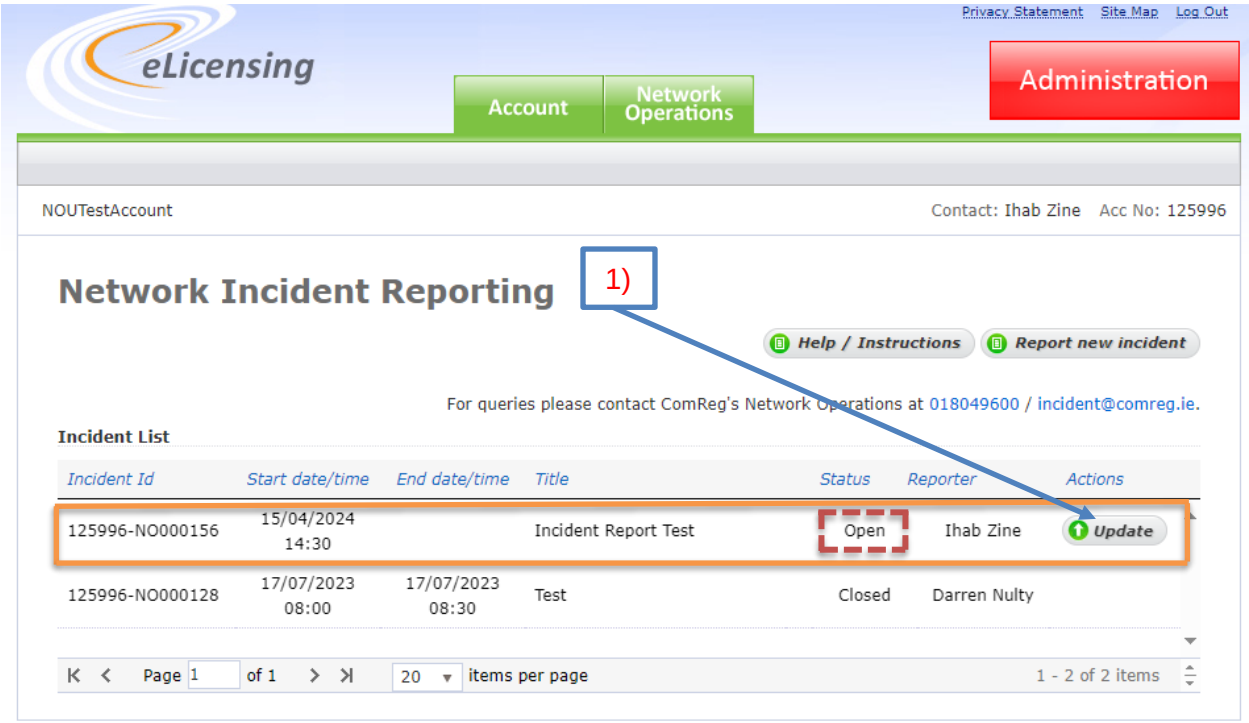


Figure 11: Network Incident Reporting Page

2) Next, in the ***Incident Details*** page - Figure 12, and Figure 13- provide the required information. Then, click on "Save Changes"; and

3) If the security incident is still open, and the user wishes to exit from the ***Incident Details*** page, click on "Network Operations" function. The user will be routed back to the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page**.**

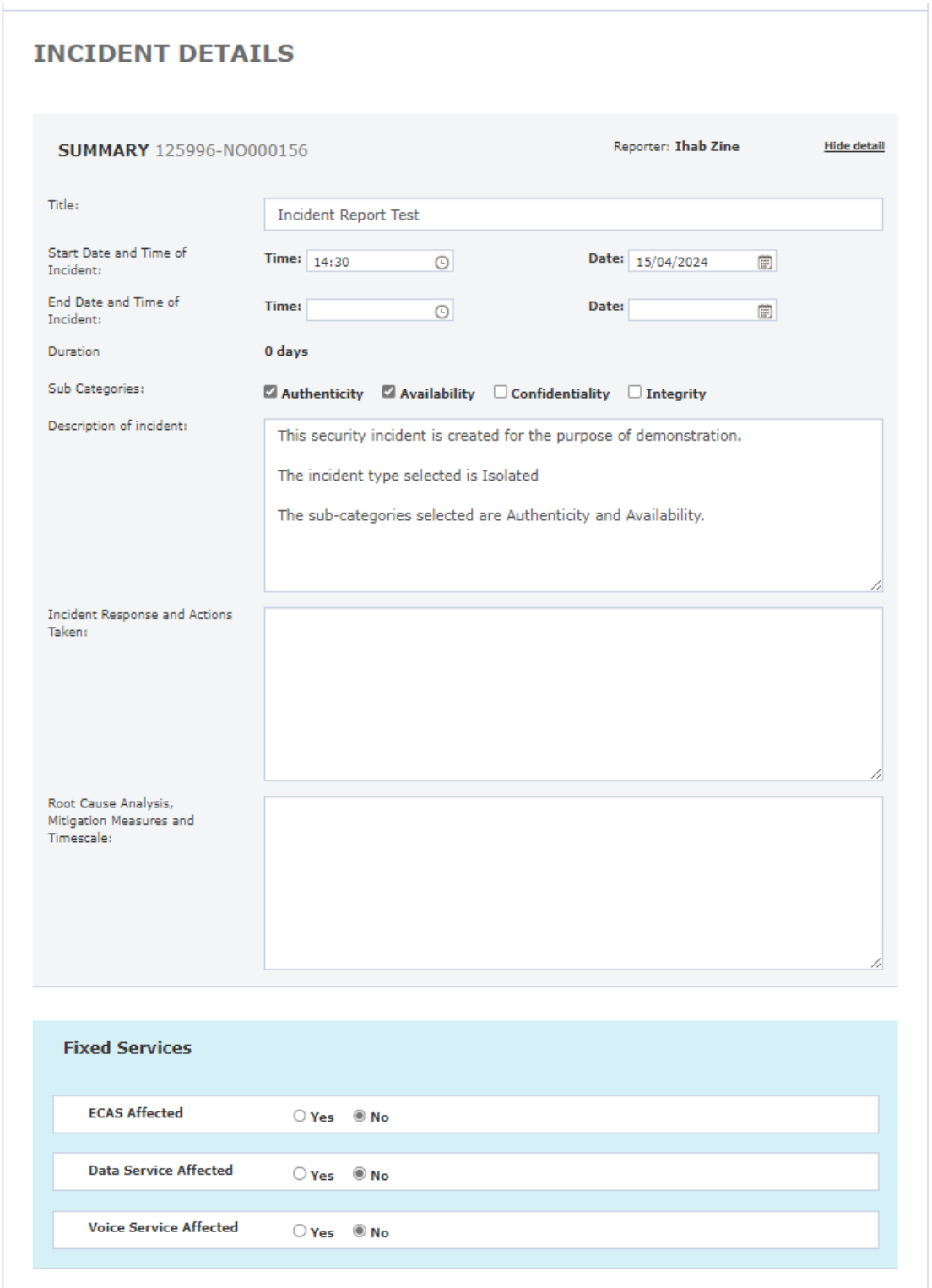


Figure 12: Incident Details Page (a)

Figure 13: Incident Details Page (b)

If the security incident has ended, and the root cause analysis has been satisfactorily completed by the user concerned to ComReg's satisfaction, then the user can follow the required steps in sub-section 3.3 below to close the security incident report.

3.3 Close a security Incident Report

As the security incident has ended, and the root cause analysis has been satisfactorily completed by the user concerned to ComReg's satisfaction, the report can be closed as follows:

1) Click on "Save Changes"; then
2) click on "Close Incident" as shown in Figure 14 below.

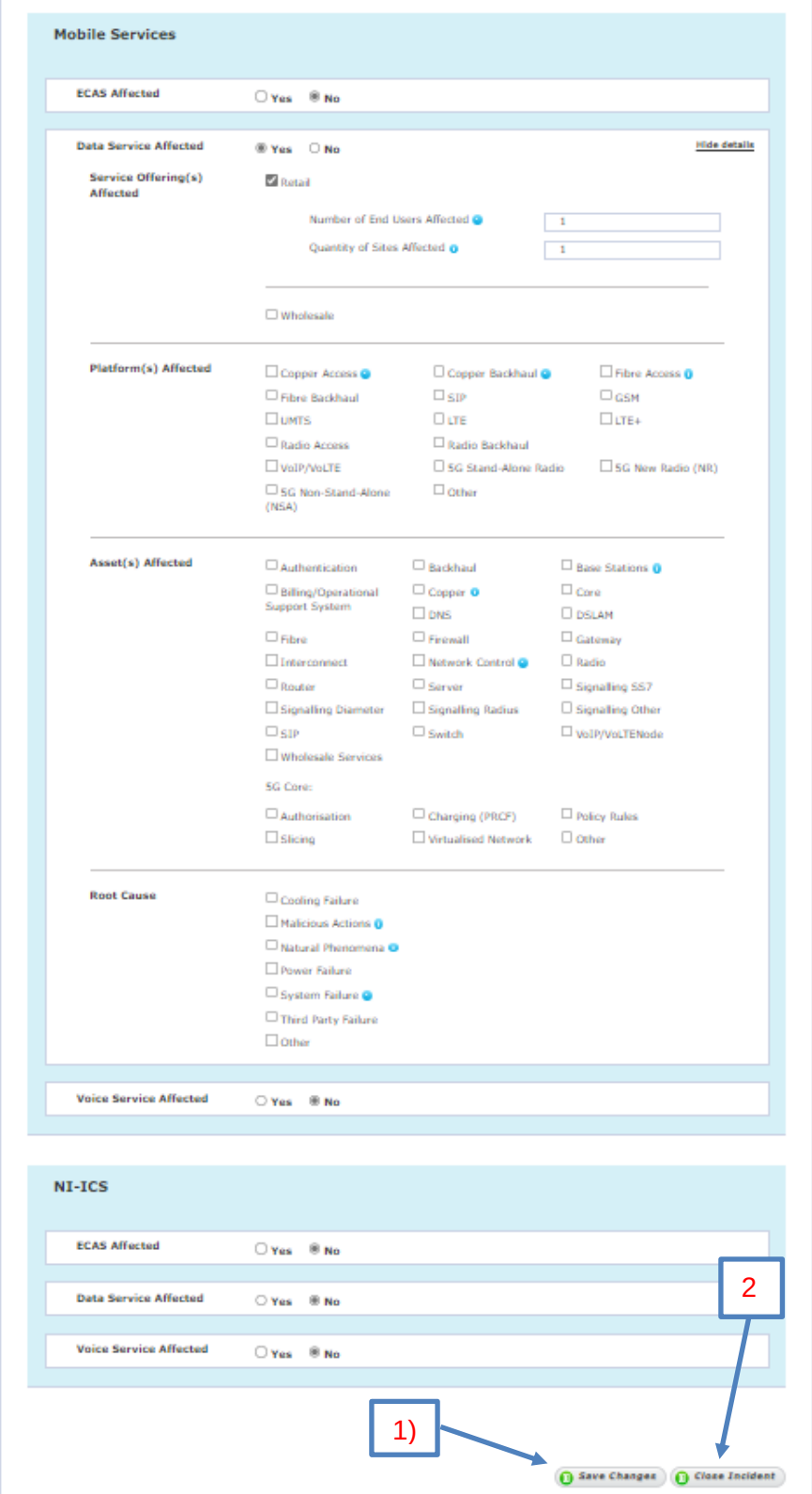


Figure 14: Incident Details Page

A pop-up window called ***Incident Closed*** will appear to confirm that the incident has been closed successfully as shown in Figure 15 below.

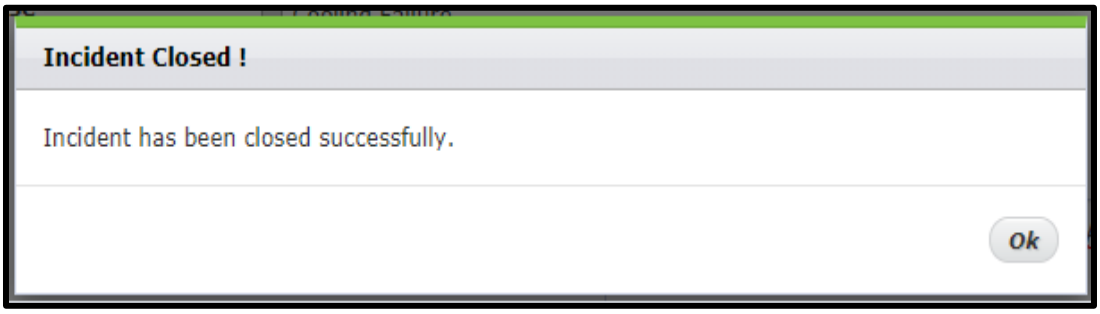


Figure 15: Incident Closed Pop-Up Window

Once the security incident report has been closed, the update function will be deactivated and the status of the report will be indicated as closed, as shown in Figure 16 below.

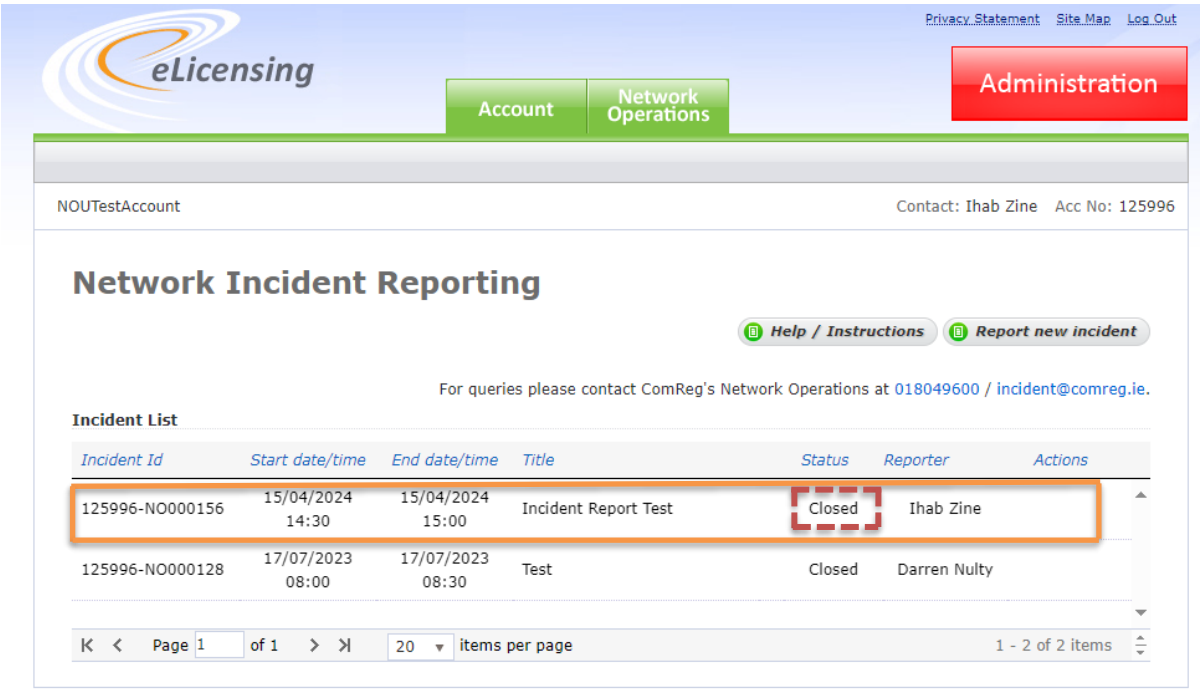


Figure 16: Network Incident Reporting Page with Closed Incident

Note that, as the security incident report has been indicated as closed, it will not be possible to open the report or make any further changes. Should it be required by the user, ComReg, in exceptional circumstances and at its sole discretion, may reopen the report, to allow the user to make any corrections or to submit further information.

Note also that, if the user fails to close out the security Incident report within 30 calendar days, an email will be sent reminding them to do so. This ensures that cases are closed, once root cause analysis is completed.

4: Storm Incidents Reporting

To allow for a simplified storm reporting operators are required to report storm incidents via the incident reporting portal.

When Met Éireann indicates that a named storm is expected and that Orange Level warnings[12] are expected to be in operation; ComReg will e-mail registered operators notifying them that reports on the condition of their networks and services will be required. The deadlines for reporting the impact of the storm on registered Operators' networks and services will remain the same; at the times of 10H00 and 16H00.

4.1 Report new Storm Incident

After logging in to eLicencing Portal (as shown by Figure 5 to Figure 7 in section 2 above), the user will be routed to the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page, which provides the option to report a new incident.

[12] Met Éireann uses and issues different warning levels (Yellow, Orange, Red) depending on the expected severity of the weather event. The warning levels are defined as follows:

- Yellow: Weather that does not pose a threat to the general population but is potentially dangerous on a localised scale.
- Orange: Infrequent and dangerous weather conditions which may pose a threat to life and property.
- RED: Rare and very dangerous weather conditions from intense meteorological phenomena.

For more details see: Weather warnings explanation - Met Éireann - The Irish Meteorological Service

In order, to create a new storm report, click on "Report new incident" as shown in Figure 17below.

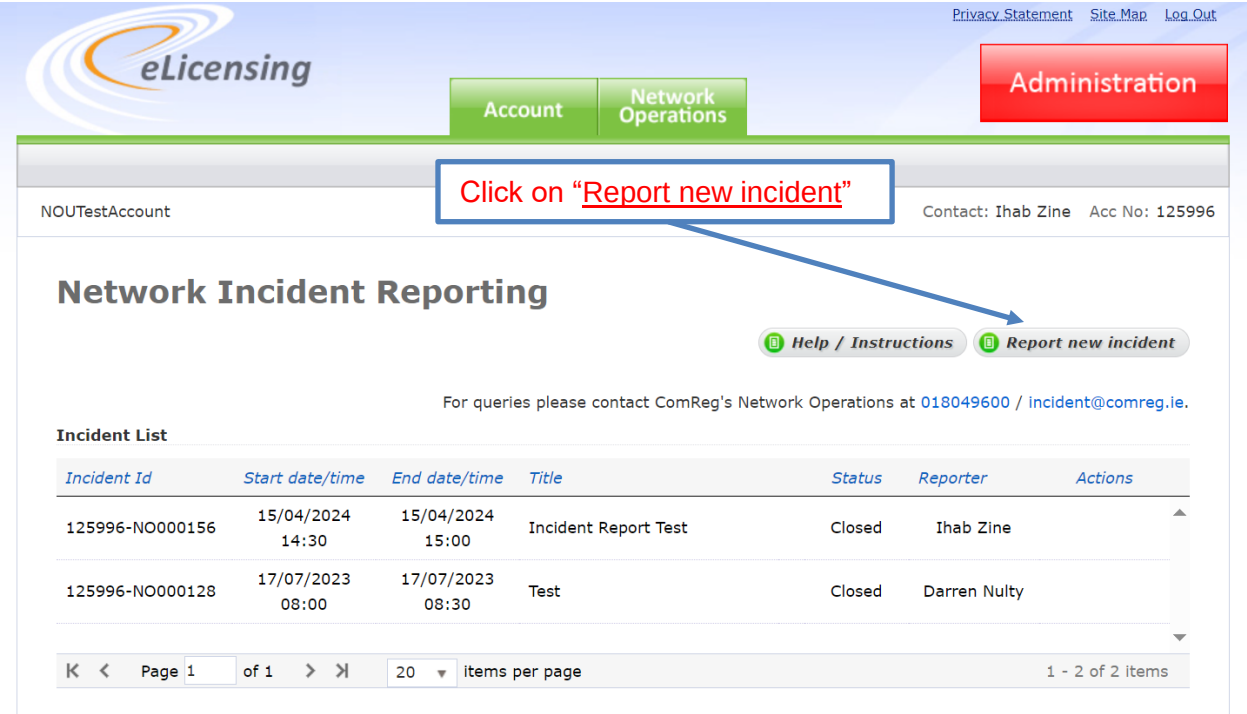


Figure 17: Create Storm Report from Network Incident Reporting Page

Next, the user will be routed to the ***Create Incident Report*** page, as shown in Figure 18 below. In this page the user is required to do the following:

1) Tick the box for "Storm", as shown below;
2) Provide the relevant summary information Title (Name of the Storm), Date and Time, and Description of incident;

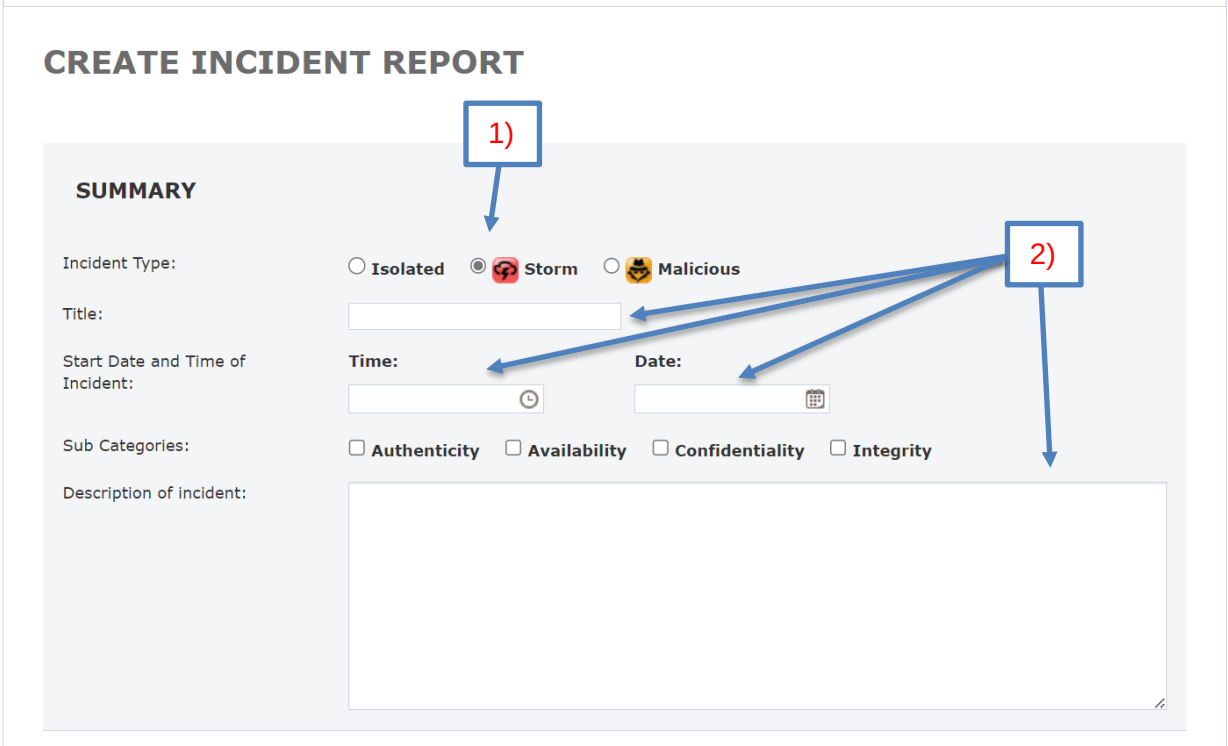


Figure 18: Create Storm Incident

On ticking "Storm" the following page, shown in Figure 19, will appear:

3) In this page, provide the relevant information. Depending on the services affected (Fixed services, Mobile services, or Both), the provided information should include:
   3.1) an estimate of the number of users affected for each service;
   3.2) the number of nodes or base stations ("BS") affected; and
   3.3) in the free text box, a brief description of the locations affected (Counties) and causes of the outage.

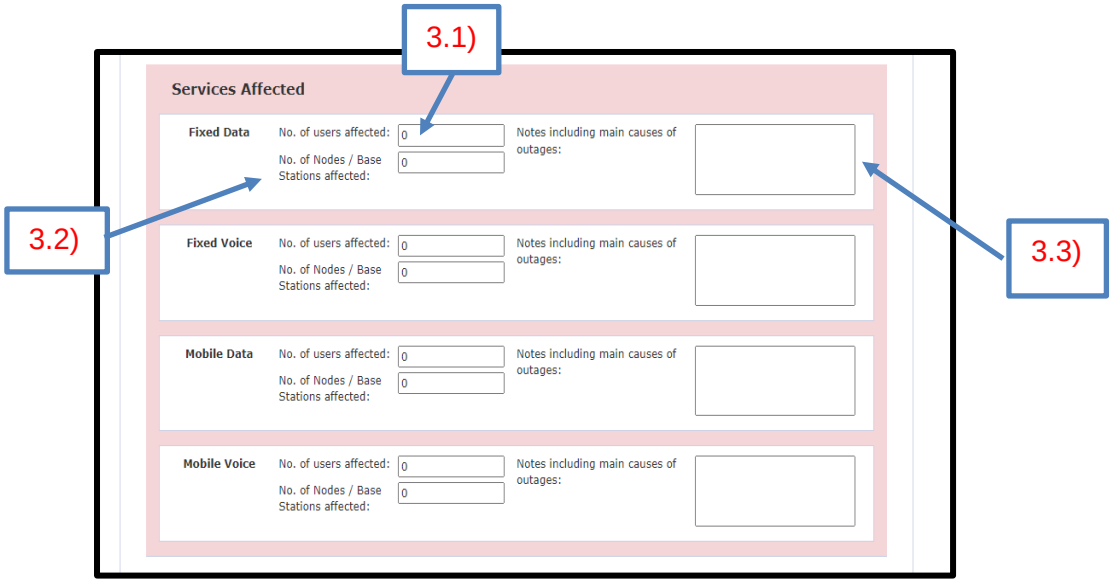


Figure 19: Strom Report required Information

4) Leave the ticked option "No" in the lower half of the page (Figure 20 below) as default. Please note, as a default the "No" option is always ticked. When reporting a storm, the user is not required to make any changes to these default options;

5) Click on "Create Report" when the required information has been provided.

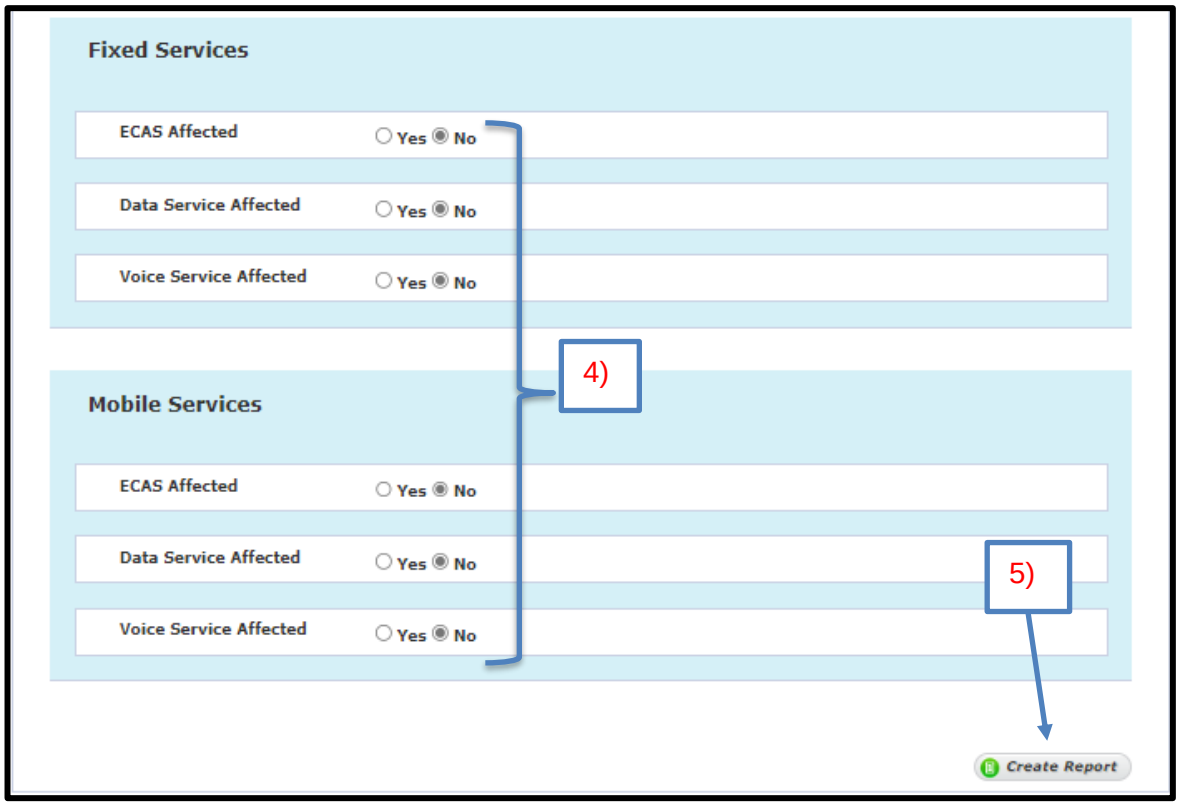


Figure 20: Storm Report Default Options – No changes Required

After steps 1 to 5 above have been completed and the function "Create Report" has been clicked, a pop-up window called ***Incident Created*** will appear, giving the user two options, "Update Incident Report now", or "Update Incident Report later" – this is shown in Figure 21 below.

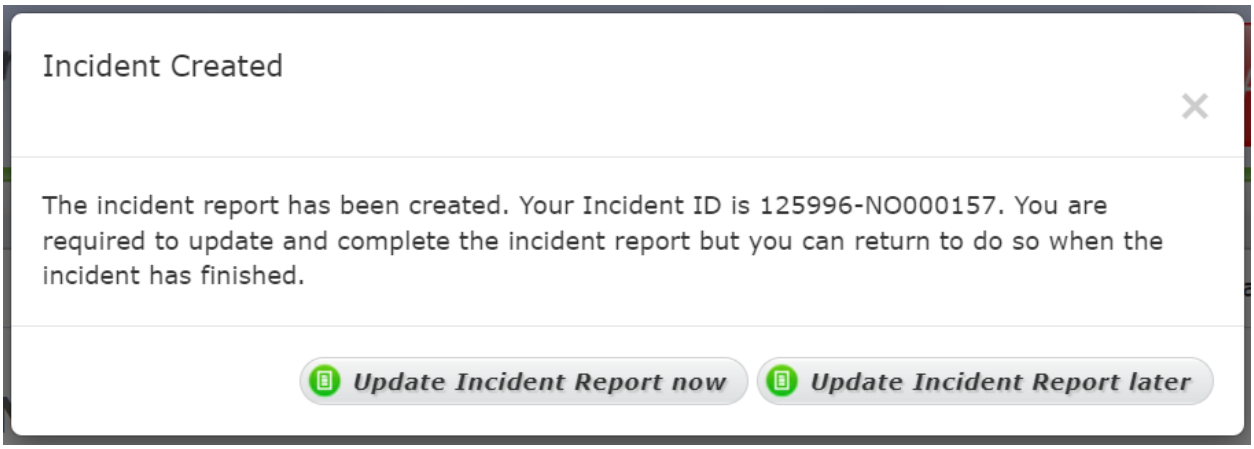


Figure 21: Incident Created Window

Section 4.2 below, provides the steps that are required to update a storm report.

4.2 Update Storm Incident Report

As a named storm and its Orange[12] (or above) level warning remines to be in operation, operators are required to provide and continue providing updates on impact of the storm twice a day at the times of 10H00 and 16H00.

An existing storm report can be updated by logging into the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page. From the Incident list, the report to be updated can be chosen. Note that, any storm report will be represented visually with a badge (as shown in Figure 22 below) to differentiate it from isolated and malicious incidents.

The required steps to update a storm report as follows:

1) As shown in Figure 22 below, click on "Update";

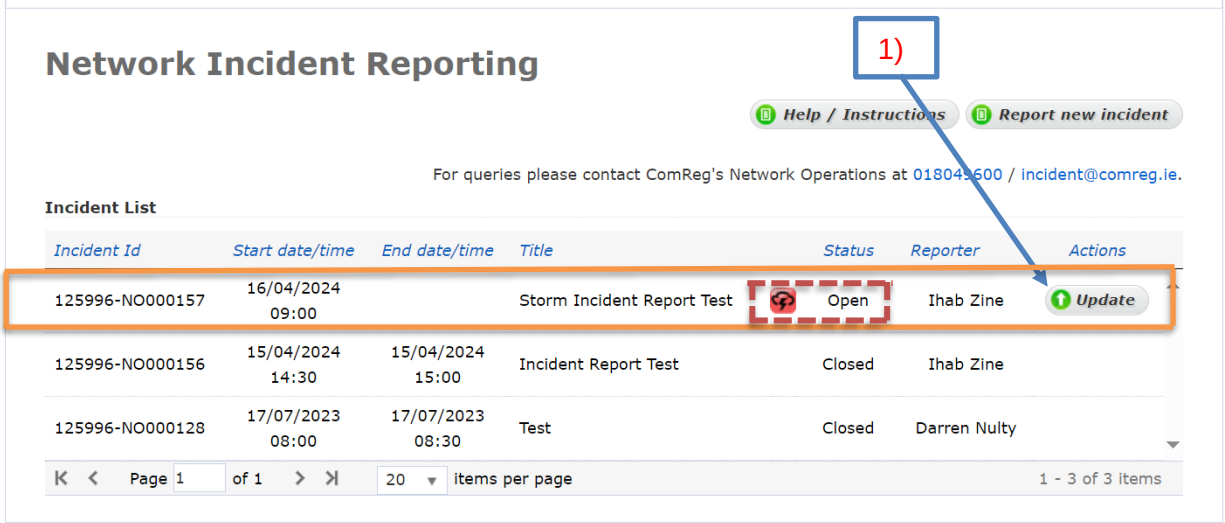


Figure 22: Network Incident Reporting Page

2) Next, the ***Incident Details*** page will appear – Figure 23 – in this page update the following information:

2.1) an estimate of the number of users affected for each service;
2.2) the number of nodes or base stations ("BS") affected; and

2.3) In the free text box, a brief description of the locations affected (Counties) and causes of the outage.

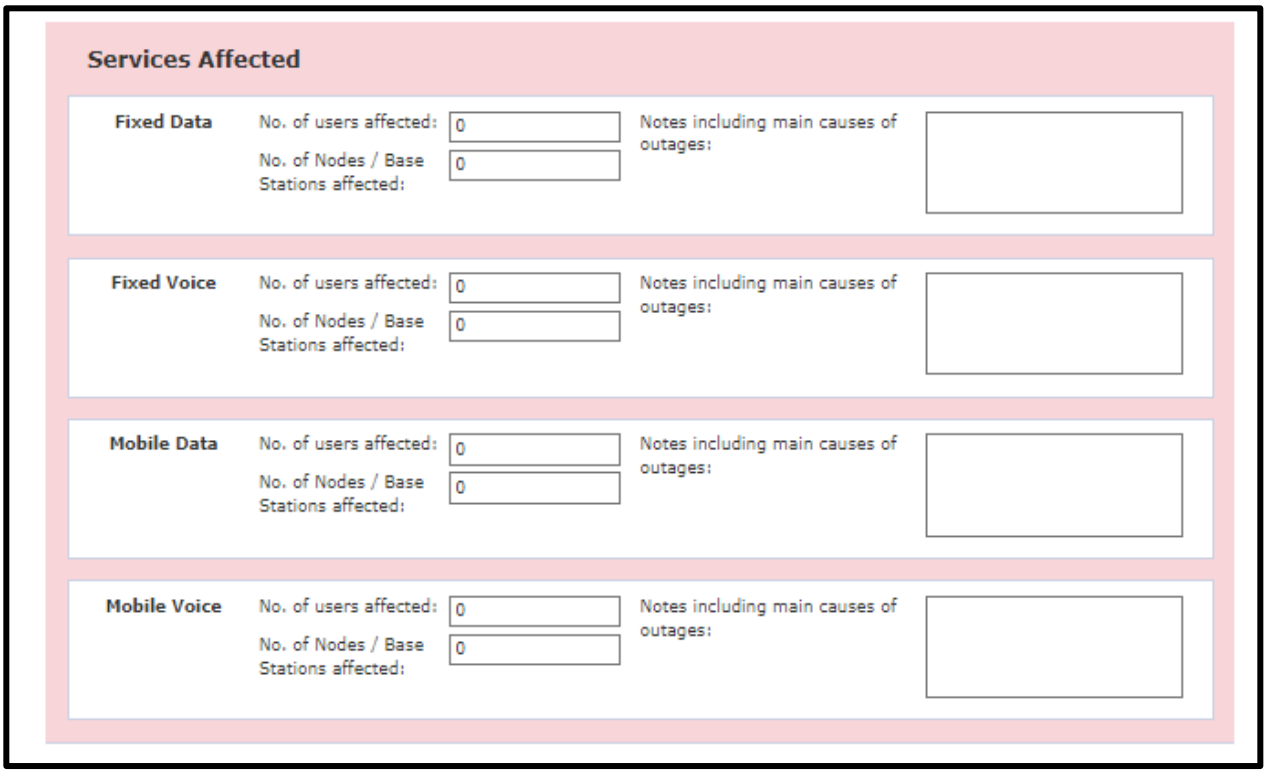


Figure 23: Incident Details Page for Storm Reporting

3) To exit from the ***Incident Details*** page, click on "Save Changes", then click on "Network Operations" function. The user will be routed back to the ***Network Incident Reporting*** page**.**

Section 4.3 below, provides the steps that are required to close a storm report.

4.3 Close Storm Incident Report

As a named storm and its Orange[12] (or above) level warning is no longer in operation and the operator's networks and services have returned to Business as Usual, the storm report can be closed. To do so, the required steps as follows (Figure 24):

1) Provide the end date and time of the storm report;
2) Provide information on Incident Response and actions taken; and
3) Finally, provide information on Root Cause Analysis, Mitigations and Timescale.

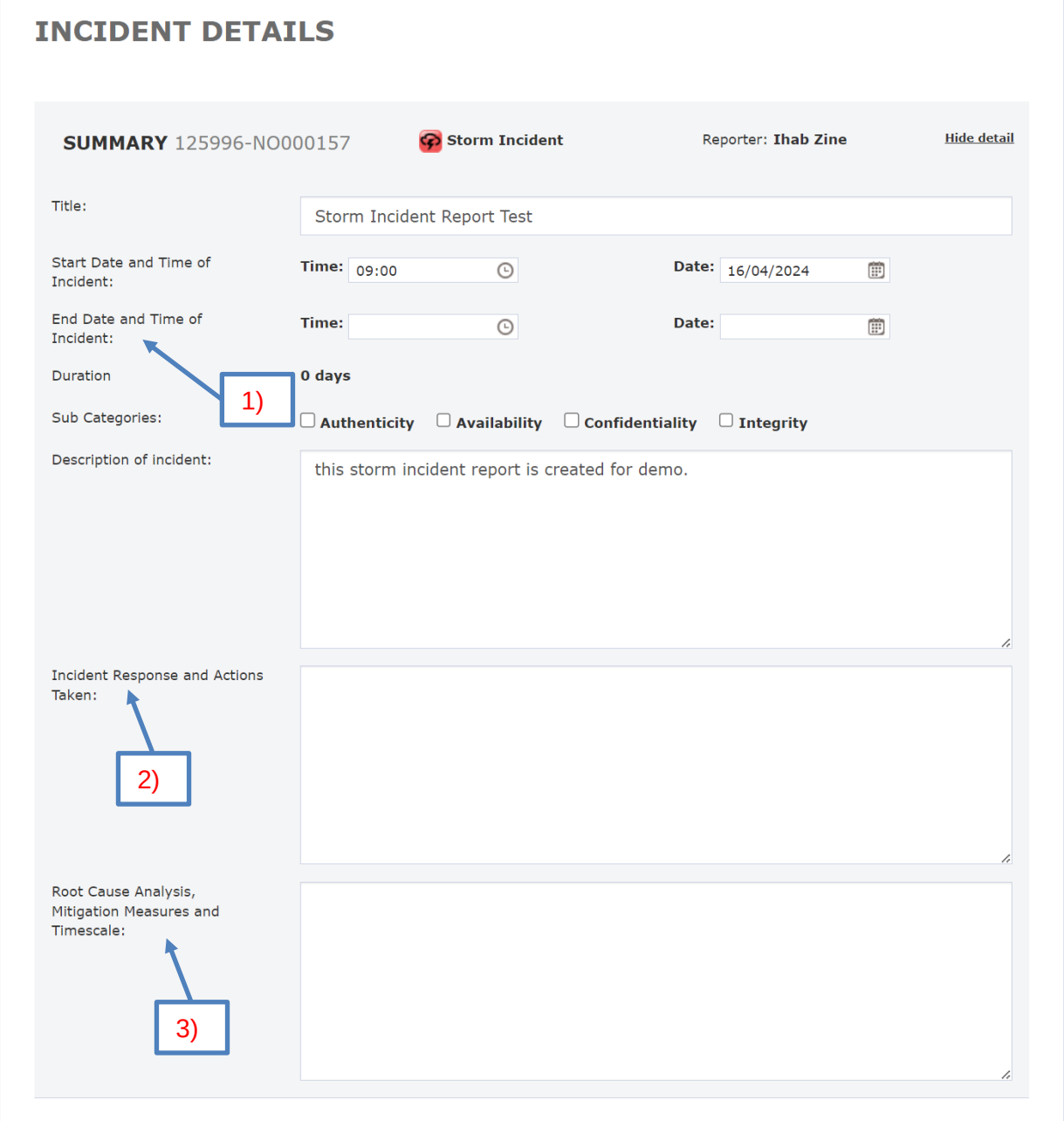


Figure 24: Incident Details – Information Required for closure

4) Next, click on "Save Changes", then click on "Close Incident".

A pop-up window called ***Incident Closed*** will appear to confirm that the report has been closed successfully as shown in Figure 25 below.

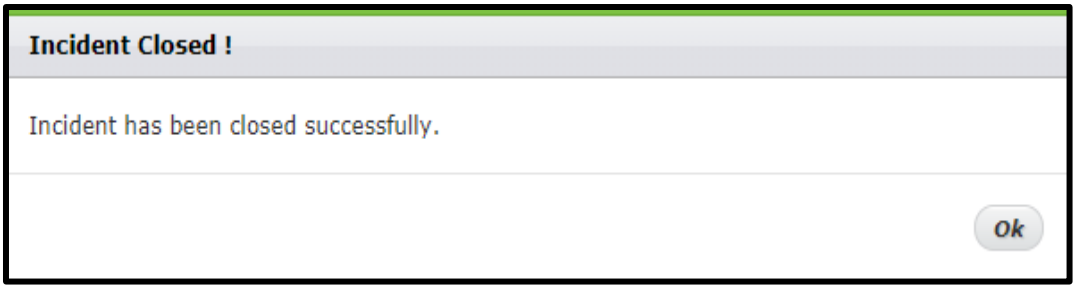


Figure 25: Incident Closed window

Once the storm report has been closed, the update function will be deactivated and the status of the incident report will be indicated as closed, as shown in Figure 26 below.

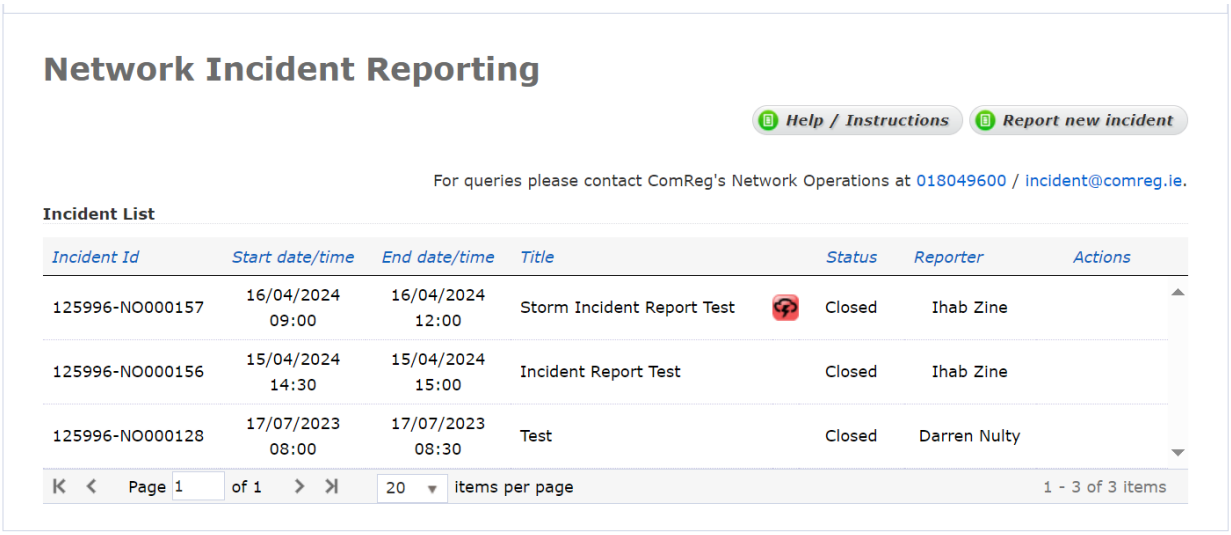


Figure 26: Network Incident Reporting Page – Closed Storm Incident