



Non-Domestic (micro business) customer **complaints** and **enquiries**

Definition of micro business customers

The government defines a micro business as one with:

- an annual consumption of electricity of not more than 55,000kWh¹; or
- an annual consumption of gas of not more than 200,000kwh; or
- fewer than the equivalent of ten full time employees and an annual turnover or annual balance sheet total not exceeding €2 million.

What should you do if you have a complaint about an energy company?

If you have a complaint or enquiry about an energy supplier or network operator you should contact that company directly in the first instance. All companies are required through strict complaints handling standards to deal proactively with complaints from domestic and micro business consumers. They all have complaints procedures detailing how they do this.

What if the complaint is not resolved?

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction and either eight weeks have passed since the complaint was made or it reaches a point of deadlock (where the energy company says it can do no more to resolve the complaint, whichever is sooner), you can ask **Ombudsman Services: Energy** to investigate. The energy company will write to you at eight weeks or deadlock to tell you how to do this.

Who are Ombudsman Services: Energy and what can they do?

Ombudsman Services: Energy (OS:E) is the free independent redress scheme set up to investigate complaints from domestic and micro business consumers that the energy company cannot resolve (after eight weeks or deadlock). OS:E can require the company to correct the problem, apologise, explain what happened, and award compensation. Its decisions are binding on the energy company but not the consumer. Further information about OS:E can be found at: <http://www.ombudsman-services.org/energy.html>

¹ Following our Retail Market Review proposals, from 31 March 2014 the energy consumption thresholds will increase to 100,000 kWh for electricity and 293,000 kWh for gas.

Who can give me advice about my complaint or answer my questions about gas and electricity?

Citizens Advice consumer service is the government funded service offering advice and information by telephone and online on a range of consumer issues, including gas and electricity. As well as being able to offer practical, impartial advice, it can refer domestic and micro business consumers to bodies that are better able to assist.

You can contact Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** or visit http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e/consumer_energy_and_water_supply_e/consumer_energy_supply_e.htm. (Consumers can also find contact details for Citizens Advice consumer service on the back of their energy bills).

Specialist help

Citizens Advice consumer service will refer all consumers it identifies as being vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, threatened with disconnection, or who have been disconnected, to the Citizens Advice Service Extra Help Unit.

Citizens Advice Service also provides detailed customer-facing information and advice about energy issues. You can get further information about the Citizens Advice Service by visiting its website at: <http://www.cas.org.uk/about-us/consumer-advice>

Its powers include the right to investigate any domestic and micro business consumer complaint about actual or threatened disconnection and to investigate complaints from these vulnerable consumers.

What's Ofgem's role in complaints?

Ofgem doesn't have a direct role in dealing with individual disputes between customers and energy companies. We collect information from a range of sources as part of our market monitoring activity, and keep markets under review to ensure that all licensees comply with the relevant legislation and licence obligations. If you want to find out more about how we do this, please look at our factsheet "Protecting Customers: Ofgem's Enforcement powers".

Non-domestic large business customers – what should you do if you have a complaint?

If your annual consumption is more than the definition of micro business customers referred to above, you should contact the energy company directly in the first instance and follow any disputes procedure it has. Alternatively, large business customers may wish to consider seeking independent legal advice.

