

How to make a complaint

You and your energy supplier

A series of five leaflets

Energy suppliers have a duty to resolve complaints in a timely and satisfactory manner. If you are not happy with their response there are steps you can take.

There are four stages in the complaints process

- Tell your energy supplier
- Contact Consumer Direct – they can send your complaint back to your energy supplier and ask them to look at your case again
- Take your complaint to the Energy Ombudsman – they will either tell your energy supplier what they must do to resolve your complaint or decide that your complaint is not valid
- Your energy supplier has 28 days to do what the Energy Ombudsman says

Making a complaint to your energy supplier

If you have a complaint, you should tell your energy supplier about it first. You can do this:

- by telephone
- in a letter or email
- in a form on their website

Your energy supplier's contact details will be on the back of a gas or electricity bill, or on an annual statement if you use a pre-payment meter.

If you are finding it very difficult to register a complaint with your energy supplier, you can take it straight to the Energy Ombudsman.

The big six energy suppliers are:

- British Gas
- EDF energy
- EON
- npower
- Scottish Power
- SSE (Southern Electric, Scottish Hydro, SWLAEC, Atlantic)

How quickly will a complaint be dealt with?

All energy suppliers have eight weeks to resolve your complaint. The deadline begins from when you first make your complaint and doesn't change if you later send them further information.

If you are not happy with what your energy supplier says they will do, you can contact Consumer Direct for assistance.

If you are still not happy with what your energy supplier's response or they decide they cannot resolve your complaint, a deadlock letter will be sent to you.

A deadlock letter will be sent if:

- there is no more information to be exchanged between you and your energy supplier
- all complaint procedures have been followed
- you and your energy supplier cannot agree on how to resolve your complaint and having more time will not make a difference

You will need the deadlock letter to take your complaint further with the Energy Ombudsman.

How to take a complaint to the Energy Ombudsman

You have six months from the issue date on the deadlock letter to send it to the Energy Ombudsman.

The Energy Ombudsman can tell the energy supplier:

- the action they must take to help you
- to apologise to you in writing
- to write to you with an explanation
- to offer you a financial award

You have two months to accept the Energy Ombudsman's decision. If you do accept it, the energy supplier then has 28 days to do what they have been told. Your energy supplier cannot appeal against the decision.

If you decide not to accept the decision, you can still take legal action.

The Energy Ombudsman

Can be contacted by:

Telephone: 0330 440 1624 or 01925 530 263 or 0845 055 0760

Textphone: 0330 440 1600 or 0845 051 1513

Website online form: www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk

Email: enquiries@energy-ombudsman.org.uk

How Consumer Focus can help – www.consumerfocus.org.uk

Energy suppliers' details are on the Consumer Focus website.

How Consumer Direct can help – **08454 04 05 06**

Consumer Direct is a free independent advice service and they can:

- 1 tell you what your rights are
- 2 give you independent advice
- 3 give you information about free services from energy suppliers

You and your energy supplier – a series of five leaflets

What to do when it is difficult to pay your energy bills

Are you missing out on free services and other benefits?

How to make a complaint

How to switch energy suppliers

Switching energy suppliers when you owe money to your current supplier

For more information, or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format, please telephone on 020 7799 7900 or via email contact@consumerfocus.org.uk.