

COMPLAINTS BRIEFING

In light of the recent news, that Ofgem has ordered 11 suppliers to improve their handling of complaints, we take a look at our approach to complaints.

THE OFGEM COMPLAINT SURVEY

Every 2 years Ofgem organises a survey to test customer satisfaction with how suppliers have handled their complaints. Traditionally the survey has been solely for the “Big 6” British Gas, EON, SSE, EDF, Scottish Power and Npower. For the first time this year’s survey included Medium size companies including: First Utility, Utility Warehouse, OVO, Utilita and Cooperative Energy (GB Energy included as part of Coop). Some 3000 domestic customers were contacted as part of the survey.

KEY AREAS TESTED IN THE SURVEY

- Ease of making a complaint
- Professionalism and experience of staff
- Reference to complaint procedure
- Expectation of how long issue would take to resolve?
- Is the customer kept informed?
- Is the customer made aware of alternative resolution routes and where to find them?
- Are vulnerable customers recognised?
- Are they happy with the time taken to resolve the complaint?
- Are they happy the complaint has been fully resolved?

WHAT CAN DDC OS DO TO ENSURE COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED COMPLIANTLY?

Every new agent joining DDC Outsourcing Solutions (DDC OS) undergoes an extensive training programme with a focus on great complaint handling. New agents receive full training to recognise what a complaint is and record on our CRM any dissatisfaction raised. We currently achieve resolution of complaints over 80% of the time, by close of play the next working day (in conjunction with our clients).

If a complaint cannot be resolved the complaint is automatically acknowledged and the customer is made aware of our complaint process and where to find full details on the relevant website.

An escalation process is explained at each stage if the complaint cannot be resolved, and more complex complaints are escalated to our dedicated complaints team with many years' experience of handling utility complaints. Every response to a customer is tailored to that individual and we recognise any vulnerable clients and go the extra mile to help resolve the complaint to the customer's satisfaction. Our aim is to resolve complaints as soon as possible but we will contact our customers to keep them informed of any delays for example when we are awaiting industry operations to update their systems. We only close a complaint down when we are sure we have resolved the customer's complaint to their satisfaction.

We inform our customers as necessary to relevant third party firms such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Energy Ombudsman as necessary for independent advice but make every effort to resolve the issue ourselves to the customer's satisfaction and as quickly as possible.

SURVEY RESULTS

Full details of the survey results can be seen on the Ofgem website:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2018/09/quadrangle_ofgemchs2018_researchreport.pdf and

a summary on the BBC:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-45663030>

We helped Cooperative Energy Supply to be the Best Medium size performer for customer satisfaction after a complaint, least likely to complain again, and highest proportion resolved after 8 weeks from when complaint made.

The Energy Ombudsman commented that currently some 40% of all complaints are currently coming from relatively new and small sized suppliers and recommends they are included in the next survey