



budgetenergy

Northern Ireland's **Electricity** Company

Code of Practice
on
Complaints Handling

CODE OF PRACTICE ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

This Code of Practice outlines our commitments to our customers regarding their complaints and the complaint handling procedures of Budget Energy. This Code applies to all of our Northern Ireland customers.

This Code covers any aspect of the service provided to you by Budget Energy. This code does not however cover any issue which is the subject of ongoing legal proceedings.

Our customer service model is straightforward – we will provide our customers with quality, timely, effective customer enquiry handling.

We will strive to get it right for our customers. However, if you feel something is not right then please tell us about it and give us the chance to put it right. If you have a complaint, we are committed to:

- Dealing with your complaint quickly and sympathetically
- Dealing with you with utmost respect and confidentially
- Finding a solution to your complaint as fairly as possible
- Apologizing for any mistakes that are made and
- Learning and adopting any changes noted as needed

If you wish to receive a free copy of this Code, including a hard copy, please contact:

Customer Service
Budget Energy Ltd Energy House
30-32 Ballinska Road
Springtown Industrial Estate
L'Derry
BT48 0LY

Phone: 0800 012 11 77

Email: info@budgetenergy.co.uk

Accessible copies including large print, and braille copies are also available on request

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

There are a number of ways to contact us if you wish to make a complaint or make any expression of dissatisfaction:

- By phone: The quickest way to get a resolution is to phone us on our Freephone number on:
 - 0800 012 11 77

This number is open Monday to Friday from 8am - 8pm and from 11am – 4pm on a Saturday. If you have a query outside of these hours, you can leave a voice mail and we will call you back the next working day. These calls will be free however you may be charged if you use a mobile phone.

- 028 7126 4444

Please note calls to this number will be charged at the local call rate and charges for mobiles may vary.

- By email: You can send an email to: info@budgetenergy.co.uk
- By post: You can send a written request to:

Customer Service
Budget Energy Ltd Energy House
30-32 Ballinska Road
Springtown Industrial Estate
L'Derry
BT48 0LY

- By fax: You can fax your request to: 02871 275099

HOW WE WILL HANDLE YOUR COMPLAINT

All complaints are dealt with sympathetically and in every case we will deal with it fairly and aim to reach a prompt, mutually agreeable resolution.

We make every effort to deal with all complaints as soon as we receive them. We will review your complaint and also the activities and history on your account. This is to ensure that the customer service representative has all the relevant information required to resolve your query as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Unfortunately, some complaints cannot be resolved there and then. If we cannot resolve your complaint as soon as we receive it we shall provide you with an acknowledgement that we have received your complaint within 5 working days. This acknowledgement and any contact from Budget Energy in response to a complaint will generally be made through the means the complaint was made. This means if your complaint is made by phone we shall respond by phone, or if in writing the response shall be in writing etc.

The acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint shall also outline how long we expect it will take to deal with the complaint.

Budget Energy endeavours to investigate and resolve all complaints within 10 days. At maximum Budget Energy will resolve any complaint within 3 months. Furthermore, if we cannot resolve the complaint within 10 days we shall aim to agree a time frame for resolution with you.

We will always:

- Give you the name of our Customer Service Agent who has received your complaint.
- Give you a reference number to use for further contact about the issue.
- Make a written record of your complaint.

- Where applicable we will suspend payment of the bill and all credit action until the issue is resolved.
- Keep you informed of progress.
- Ensure that when a complaint is made by a customer who is especially vulnerable we take all necessary additional steps to ensure the complaint is handled as appropriately and promptly as possible.

If you are a customer of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick your complaint shall be dealt with on a priority basis both at the point of receipt, with the complaint being automatically being escalated to a manager, and on a continuing basis where we shall try to expedite your complaint so that it is resolved within 7 days. Your complaint will still be dealt with on a priority basis where you have appointed someone to represent you, or make the complaint on your behalf. We shall also clarify the most appropriate means of communication for responding to your complaint based on any difficulties you face.

RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINT

How we resolve your complaint will depend on the nature of the complaint however the following remedies are generally available:

- An apology.
- An explanation regarding your complaint.
- Assurances of process changes to ensure the issue causing your complaint does not occur again.
- Where appropriate remedial action to address any loss suffered.
- The award of compensation.

We will compensate you (in accordance with condition 29 of our supply license) if we fail to meet our commitments as set out in this Code of Practice. £25.00 will be applied to your account within 10 working days of agreeing that we failed to meet our commitments. Following the resolution of the complaint, if a refund is due on your account, it will be issued within 45 working days from the resolution date. This will be issued using the same method as used to pay your bills (e.g. if you pay by Direct Debit, the refund will be issued directly into your bank account, if you pay by cheque a refund cheque will be issued to you).

If you are not happy with the resolution or you feel your query or complaint has not been adequately dealt with, you can talk to our Customer Service Team Leader. The Customer Service Agent dealing with your complaint will transfer you to our Customer Service Team Manager without delay or dispute

If our Customer Service Team Manager is unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you can request he refer your complaint to our Legal and Compliance Department.

If you are not satisfied with our attempt to resolve your complaint you can contact the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland. This is an independent body with statutory remit to represent electricity customers that seeks to resolve complaints and offer advice free of charge. This does

not affect your statutory rights to refer your case to court. You can contact the Consumer Council at any time, their contact details are as follows:

Telephone: 0800 121 6022

Email: contact@consumercouncil.org.uk

Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Address: Floor 3, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN By
fax: (your query or complaint to) 028 90 251 663

This Code of Practice is available in alternative formats upon request.

