

**Affordable Warmth:**  
**How to manage your energy bills effectively**

# Consumer Responsibilities and Rights



September 2012

 **Kirklees**  
COUNCIL

As a consumer you have the right to shop around for your gas and electricity. Competition between energy companies means you can switch to a utility company offering better energy prices or a better service.

Consumers can face a number of problems when managing their energy bills from inaccurate billing to poor customer service and problems when switching.

## Association of energy suppliers code of practice

Here are some key rules that energy sales people and suppliers must follow, they:

- can call at your home only between 9am and 8pm (unless you ask for a visit outside these times)
- must say who they are and show you a valid identity card
- must do their best to make sure you understand any contract you've signed, and your right to cancel
- must not exploit consumers, give them false information or use high-pressure sales tactics
- must leave your home if you ask them to.

You can find a full copy of the code at Energy-UK, [www.energy-uk.org.uk](http://www.energy-uk.org.uk)

**Note:** Five of the big six energy suppliers have now agreed to stop door selling, however other energy suppliers may continue to carry out this form of marketing within your neighbourhood.

## Who do I contact if I have a dispute about my bill?

If you find that you are in dispute over an energy bill then you can make a complaint against your energy supplier, these are the steps to take:

- **Report your complaint to your energy supplier** - They are allowed up to eight weeks to resolve your complaint. If it is a complicated complaint it is a good idea to follow up your phone call with a letter or email so you have a record. Always keep any original documents for your records and send photocopies to your energy supplier.
- **Get in touch with Citizens Advice Consumer Service** – If you struggle to get your complaint sorted then they will be able to tell you what your rights are and will give you advice on what to do next. They cannot handle your complaint directly but will be able to pass your details onto Consumer Focus who can contact your energy supplier directly.
- **Contact the Energy Ombudsman-Services.** If your complaint has not been resolved by your energy supplier within eight weeks then Ombudsman Services will take your complaint forward.

**Note:** There is now a code of practice for accurate bills which states that if you do not receive a bill for more than a year and it is the energy suppliers fault, then you do not have to pay any outstanding debt for unbilled energy consumed more than one year previous to the bills issued.

## Poor customer service - what can be done?

- If you are experiencing or have experienced poor customer service from your energy supplier then it is important that you contact your energy supplier first to make a direct complaint. If you do not receive any progress then follow the steps stated above.



## I have switched to a new energy supplier by mistake, what can I do?

- You can contact either the original or the new energy supplier - they share equal responsibility for resolving the problem.
- The energy supplier you contact should explain clearly what action they're going to take and keep you updated with progress.
- You should receive written confirmation of the details provided above within five working days of first contacting the energy supplier.
- Within 20 working days you should receive confirmation that you are being returned to your original supplier.
- You shouldn't have to pay any bills from the 'new' energy supplier – you should just get a final bill from the original supplier.

If you find that your energy supplier has not followed the steps above and have not resolved the issue then contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service which can offer free, confidential and impartial advice on consumer enquiries and complaints. If you have an issue that is not related to a consumer enquiry then contact Trading Standards Institute.

## Contact details

### Citizens Advice Consumer Service

PO Box 833, Moulton Park3, Northampton 3, NN3 0AN3

Telephone: **08454 04 05 06**

[https://forms.adviceguide.org.uk/complaint\\_energy.aspx](https://forms.adviceguide.org.uk/complaint_energy.aspx)

### Consumer Focus

Fleet bank House, Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX

Telephone: **020 7799 7900** or visit

[www.consumerfocus.org.uk](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk)

Email: [contact@consumerfocus.org.uk](mailto:contact@consumerfocus.org.uk)

### Kirklees Citizens Advice

Telephone: **0844 848 7970** for online advice

Telephone: **01484 451381** for outreach appointments

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

### Trading Standards Institute

Telephone: **0845 608 9428** or **01268 582228**

[www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk)

### Ombudsman-Services

Telephone: **0845 055 0760** or visit

[www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org)

### Energy-UK

[www.energy-uk.org.uk](http://www.energy-uk.org.uk)

Note: Energy-UK does not handle individual customer enquiries or complaints.



## More information

For For more information please call **Kirklees Direct** on **01484 414888**. For general advice on domestic energy efficiency please call the **Energy Saving Trust** advice line on **0300 123 1234** see [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

# Information in other formats

Kirklees Council are committed to ensuring that our communication is clear, plain and available for everyone. This information can be made available in languages other than English. It can also be made available in large print, audio CD and Braille. Full details are available by telephoning 01484 414933.

یہ معلومات انگریزی کے علاوہ دوسری زبانوں میں، بڑی لکھائی میں، سی ڈی یا نیپ پر اور بریل میں بھی فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔ براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر فون کر لیں: (Urdu) 01484 414933

આ માહિતી અંગ્રેજી સિવાયની બીજી ભાષાઓમાં, મોટી છપાઇમાં, ઓડિઓ સી.ડી., ઓડિઓ ટેપ અને બ્રેઇલમાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે. મહેરબાની કરી 01484 414933 નંબર પર ટેલિફોન કરો. (Gujarati)

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ, ਵੱਡੇ ਆਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਛਪਾਈ, ਆਡੀਓ ਸੀ ਡੀ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 01484 414933 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ। (Punjabi)

这些资料备有其它语文、大字体、语音光碟、录音带和凸字版本可供索取。请致电 01484 414933 查询详情。(Chinese)

Te informacje można nabyć w różnych językach, w powiększonym druku, na płycie kompaktowej lub na taśmie i Braille. Proszę telefonować na numer 01484 414933. (Polish)

