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1.0 Billing

1.1

C received a large bill from The Supplier even though C's online electricity account showed the account to be in credit. It was explained that this was because The Supplier had not carried out regular meter readings which led to a false impression being formed. The account was relatively new and the Direct Debit that was set therefore relied on the information provided when setting up the contract. The Direct Debit that was set proved to be too little for C's usage which led to a shortfall in the payments made against the actual usage. This caused the large bill to be delivered.

The Supplier was required to provide a letter of apology in respect of the poor customer service experienced, to provide a goodwill gesture, in the form of a credit to C's account, to confirm the outstanding balance and to confirm that C was free to end this contract, without penalty, if C should wish to.

1.2

C experienced incorrect billing on account which resulted in a refund but when billing was corrected later it left C with a large debt. After the account had been stabilised C complained and the supplier offered a discount in the form of a credit to the account. C refused this offer and asked that all the debt be waived. The supplier refused to increase its offer. The offer was considered to be reasonable as it was noted that whilst there had been poor customer service the service had also been used.

The supplier was required to provide the discount credit that had been offered, to provide a new account showing the balance on the account after the credit had been provided and to provide a letter of apology for the poor customer service experienced.

1.3

The Supplier underestimated C's bills and on adjusting the account found a debt had accrued. The Supplier failed to review C's method of payment and agree a suitable payment plan considering C's ability to pay. The Ombudsman welcomes the Supplier's previous goodwill gesture to the account in light of the issues raised. In summary the Ombudsman requires the Supplier to offer a payment plan in consideration of C's ability to pay; and to issue a letter assuring C's credit history has not been adversely affected by its actions relating to this complaint.

1.4

C contacted the energy supplier to complain about receiving a large bill and requested a refund. The supplier maintained the charges and C paid the bill in full. However, C continued to complain to the supplier about the charges and the customer service received.

The supplier contacted C to discuss the complaint and agreed to provide C with a refund for some of the disputed charges and included a goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service. C accepted the supplier's proposal.

1.5

C was receiving dual rate electricity supplies via a prepayment meter and complained that he was being charged excessively by the meter. The supplier investigated, found transposed readings and took corrective action with data collector. The supplier replaced meter and conducted various tests to diagnose problem. The supplier was let down by meter contractors on two occasions, but rebooked promptly and compensated C with £20 on each occasion. Cause of high consumption was traced to high night time usage and was believed to be caused by storage heaters that C maintained were switched off. The supplier concluded that problem was caused by appliances on C's side of meter and was C's responsibility to have checks by qualified electrician. The supplier offered C energy efficiency advice, but this was refused.

Ombudsman agreed that the supplier had acted promptly and to the limits of their ability and that problem lay with C's appliances. Ombudsman complimented the supplier on quality of response.

1.6

C complained to the supplier about its failure to implement its price protection promise. The Sp reviewed this matter and agreed that this should be amended. However, C remained unhappy believing the review had failed to take into accounts previous payments and credits. A number of breakdowns were produced by the supplier in an attempt to resolve this matter, in addition to fitting a check meter following a further complaint about overcharging. This showed that the meter was working correctly.

On review there was no evidence to suggest the supplier had not already taken all necessary remedial action. However, it had been the supplier's initial error which had caused the confusion, with C complaining about the subsequent service received.

In resolution the supplier was required to send a letter of apology, make a goodwill credit to the account and provide an understandable breakdown of both accounts covering the full disputed period.

1.7

C contacted the energy supplier to complain that bills received were incorrect. This was due to the day rates being transposed with the night rates. Several credits and refunds

were provided to C's account, but the billing problem was not resolved for a very long time, which caused C a great deal of stress and inconvenience. C sent many letters to the supplier and although responses were sent, these contained inaccurate information on some occasions, which further confused matters.

The Ombudsman concluded that the energy supplier had provided C with a very poor customer service over a long period of time. The company had already provided many credits to C's account and these were considered to be adequate in the circumstances. However, the supplier was required to provide C with written information to show how the final bill was calculated and was also required to send a letter of apology.

1.8

C's bills were estimated for a short period and when an actual reading was taken C received a large bill. C disputed the bill but Supplier maintained that it was correct. Supplier monitored C's account for some months to ensure that further problems did not occur and when it appeared that C's usage was increasing supplier recommended that C increased the Direct Debit. C refused and the debt grew.

C remained unhappy and accused supplier of mis-managing his account. Supplier offered a goodwill gesture which C did not accept so Supplier issued a deadlock letter.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that Supplier had not mismanaged C's account to any great extent. The Ombudsman required Supplier to maintain its goodwill offer and send C some literature on energy efficiency.

1.9

C received a revised bill due to be charged at the metric rather than the imperial rate. C would like the bill waver and it confirmed that they are now being billed correctly. The Supplier advises that C is now being billed correctly and as a gesture of goodwill it has only back billed C for a period of 12 months. The Supplier advises it has offered C a payment plan to pay the outstanding balance off.

The Ombudsman found C was now being billed correctly and that the back billing of C's account for a period of 12 months only was sufficient as a gesture of goodwill in addressing the shortfalls in the incorrect billing of C's account. The Supplier was required to maintain its offer of a payment plan taking into account C's ability to pay. The Supplier was required to apologise for any distress and inconvenience that had been caused by this matter.

1.10

C received fluctuating bills from the supplier. Having received a complaint from C, the supplier conducted that revealed that C's meter reference and address details did not match. Subsequently, C received gas bills relating to another person's usage. The supplier resolved this issue.

The Ombudsman directed the supplier to provide C an extended payment arrangement to repay the outstanding account balance.

1.11

C received a large bill as their account had been under estimated. The Supplier explained that it made regular attempts to read C's meter and asked them for up to date reads but they failed to provide these. The Supplier made a goodwill offer, which C declined.

The Ombudsman appreciated C's frustration but considered that if they had provided the Supplier with meter reads when requested the complaint could have been avoided. The Ombudsman considered the Supplier's goodwill offer to be reasonable. The Supplier was required to fulfill its goodwill offer and make a payment arrangement with C.

1.12

C only received gas and electric from the supplier for a short period of time and queried the final balances. The supplier withdrew some of the costs, but C remained dissatisfied and complained to the supplier.

It was agreed with C after reviewing the bills that C had made the correct payments to the supplier, as credits had already been applied. Therefore no refund was due, as it appeared that C had assumed one payment had been made to the electricity bill, but this was credited to the gas account. C had underpaid on the electricity account and the balance had been cleared as a gesture of goodwill. The supplier also agreed to send C a small goodwill payment for any shortfall in customer service and enclose a letter of apology.

1.13

C received a bill based on estimated readings showing a large outstanding balance. C queried this with the Supplier. C provided the Supplier with an actual reading and was advised that the account would be placed on hold until a revised bill was sent. C later received demands for payment and a Disconnection Notice. A revised bill was sent, still based on estimated reading and showing a larger outstanding balance. C complained and it was suggested that the meter may have been exchanged at an earlier date. An appointment was arranged to check the meter. The Supplier missed this appointment and a further appointment was arranged. It was agreed that the meter had been exchanged some time ago but that the Supplier had not been made aware of this. The Supplier gave conflicting information as to when the exchange took place. The account was re-billed and a discount was offered however C remained unhappy.

The Ombudsman concluded that C had experienced a shortfall in customer service and required the Supplier to issue an apology, confirm when the meter exchange took place, ensuring the account was re-billed correctly, if applicable to clear any previously unbilled

charges prior to one year before the corrected bill was produced, offer a goodwill payment to reflect the shortfall in customer service, offer a payment to reflect the missed appointment and to offer C a suitable payment plan to pay the outstanding balance taking into account C's ability to pay.

1.14

C received a large gas bill due to them not having their Direct Debits reassessed within an 18 month timeframe. C would like the bill waived. C also complains that their tariff was changed and they were not pre warned of this. The Supplier submitted evidence that C had been pre warned of a tariff change. As a gesture of goodwill it had re-billed C from the date of the tariff change to date on a more preferential tariff. The Supplier advises it has also offered C a payment plan to pay the outstanding balance off.

The Ombudsman found that the Supplier had warned C of the tariff change and considered the actions the Supplier had taken in re-billing them on a more preferential tariff to be sufficient in addressing this matter. The Supplier was required to maintain its offer of a payment plan and award a gesture of goodwill for not reviewing C's Direct Debit within 12 months.

1.15

C advises that they moved into their property in 2004 but did not receive an electric or gas bill until June 2007. C would like to be able to pay back one years usage only and to receive confirmation of the tariffs C has been charged at. The Supplier advises it has back billed C two years only in line with the Energy Retailers Association Code of Practice for Accurate billing. It has also offered C a payment plan to pay the remainder off and a further gesture of goodwill.

The Ombudsman found that the Supplier had correctly implemented the back billing rule and proposed not further action regarding this point. Taking into account C had accrued this outstanding balance through no fault of their own the Supplier was required to maintain its offer of a payment plan. It was found that C had made numerous calls and been inconvenienced. The Supplier was required to maintain its offer of a goodwill gesture in recognition of this.

1.16

C advised the Supplier on their meter readings on regular occasions. The Supplier incorrectly noted the meter readings. The Supplier corrected the error but C was left with a large bill. The Supplier applied the Code of Practice for Accurate Billing which reduced C's balance. C experienced a poor level of customer service.

The Ombudsman was concerned by the Supplier's failure to take appropriate action. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to make a goodwill payment and write a letter of apology for the shortfall in customer service that had occurred. The Supplier was also required to make a payment arrangement with C.

1.17

C transferred their supply away from their Supplier then some months later they received a letter advising that their old Supplier was setting up a Direct Debit to take payment. The Supplier advises that C's electricity account was not closed when C transferred away, this has now been done, the charges have been waived and C's account stands at Zero. C would like compensation for postal and telephone costs they have incurred as a result of this matter.

The Ombudsman found that the continuing billing of C's account when they had transferred was a shortfall in the service C had received. It was also found the Supplier had not responded to C's letters in a timely manner. The Supplier was required to apologise for these shortfalls and award a gesture of goodwill in recognition of them and the incidental costs C had incurred.

1.18

The Complainant transferred suppliers and received a large bill. The Complainant complained to the Supplier and it was found that the final meter reading had caused this large bill. Upon investigation it was found that the Supplier had been using estimated readings and had ignored actual readings. The Ombudsman found that the Complainant had given the Supplier a reading which resulted in a large refund however this reading was incomplete and was too low by a factor of ten. The Supplier continued to base its charges on this low reading and failed to investigate the account. When the Complainant transferred the account the Supplier used an actual reading and a large bill was produced. The Complainant challenged this bill and as a result the Supplier reduced the bill considerably. The Ombudsman concluded that the reductions applied were appropriate in this case and required the Supplier to take no further action.

1.19

C complained because having closed an account with The Supplier it continued to bill the account. When this was challenged it was accepted that the account should have been closed earlier and the account was amended. C continued to dispute the amended figure but The Supplier explained that a number of payments had not been made by C and that an outstanding balance had already been building up on the account before the payments were missed. As there was some ambiguity as to the balance it was felt advisable to clarify the outstanding amount and how this had built up.

the supplier was required to provide a letter of apology in respect of the poor customer service identified in this investigation, to confirm the current outstanding balance on the account and demonstrate this with copies of the account information historically in order that the build up of the outstanding balance could be seen, to provide a goodwill gesture in the form of a credit to the account and to offer a payment plan to assist with the repayment of the outstanding balance.

1.20

C complained about receiving a high bill for a gas account. The Supplier stated this was due to the account being billed based on a under estimated usage over a four year period. The Supplier maintained the charges, but offered a payment plan for the balance to be paid off.

The Ombudsman appreciated C's concerns, but was of the opinion that supplier had done nothing wrong according to industry guidelines set by the regulator, Ofgem. However, readings were taken by the Supplier and not used for a four year period and this was considered to be a shortfall in service levels. The Ombudsman required The Supplier to make a goodwill gesture credit, against the outstanding balance, contact C directly and discuss a re-payment plan for the balance remaining taking into account ability to pay and send a letter of apology for the service shortfalls highlighted in the report.

1.21

C's account was based on estimated readings. A meter reading was taken and C received a large bill. The Supplier explained that Meter Operators were unable to take readings from C's meter due to its information being incorrect. The Supplier confirmed this had been corrected. The Supplier made a goodwill payment. C experienced a poor level of customer service.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier had failed to take actual readings from C's meter, which was in breach of the licence Conditions. However, the ombudsman found the goodwill payment made by the Supplier to be reasonable. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to write a letter of apology and make a payment arrangement with C.

1.22

C received statements from supplier for gas and electricity accounts advising there was a credit due. C checked with the Supplier and was advised this was the case. Despite contacting the supplier on a number of occasions the credit was not forthcoming. Supplier advised the Ombudsman's office it was still in the process of investigating the matter.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that the supplier had spent an unreasonable length of time investigating the matter. The Ombudsman required the supplier to provide an apology for poor customer service levels and in recognition provide goodwill payment and to investigate whether any credits were due to C for the electricity and gas accounts. If so, these were to be issued in the form of the cheque payment.

1.23

C complained that since the meter exchange the bills increased and suggested there was a fault with the gas meter. Supplier maintained there was no fault and confirmed that current usage reflected previous usage and was in line with the latest prices.

The Ombudsman found there was no evidence from history records of there being a fault with the meter. However, the Ombudsman required supplier to provide an apology for any inconvenience caused in the matter and in recognition provide a free of charge meter test. If the meter was found to be operating outside the allowed prescribed limits then the account was to be adjusted to reflect the discrepancy.

1.24

C complained that supplier applied a charge despite there being a prepayment meter. The supplier advised that the meter had not been re-calibrated and later found an error on account. Supplier proposed to clear the balance.

The Ombudsman required supplier to maintain its proposal to clear the balance and apply a goodwill credit in recognition of the poor service.

1.25

C cancelled an account with the supplier and the final statement on the account showed a credit balance which was requested by C. When a refund was chased by C it was sent to the bank in error and then returned to the supplier. When C made enquiries with the supplier there was a great delay before it was established that the cheque had never been provided to C as it first claimed. The supplier accepted that it had made a mistake and that there had been poor customer service.

The supplier was required to provide a letter of apology for the poor customer service experienced and

Refund the original sum that was not properly refunded as well as provide a goodwill gesture in respect of the poor customer service experienced

1.26

C complained that supplier billed for gas consumption after a certain period of time. Supplier apologised and applied the Code of Practice for Accurate billing and cleared charges older than one year.

The Ombudsman examined C's account and noted there had been a shortfall in service levels due to the matter not being dealt within an appropriate manner and timescale. The Ombudsman required Supplier to provide C an apology for poor service and in recognition provide an additional goodwill payment.

1.27

The Supplier failed to amend C's direct debit instruction in line with C's usage. C complained the Supplier had failed to read the meter for seven years. This was found not to be the case and the meter was read but due to a technical problem the company's records were not updated by the meter operators. The Supplier arranged a meter check however then failed to advise C of the results in a timely manner as promised. The Ombudsman concludes the Supplier failed to effectively administer this case and C experienced a shortfall in customer service at times. In summary the Ombudsman required the Supplier to maintain the previous goodwill gesture credit to the outstanding balance on the account; offer the extended payment plan of six years; and to issue a formal letter of apology in view of the customer service issues raised.

1.28

C complained that the Supplier failed to bill C correctly. The Supplier billed C to a four digit meter when C has a six digit meter. C said that the meter had been read and readings had also been given by C but the Supplier failed to resolve the problem for four years. As a consequence C received a large bill. C disputed the bill and the Supplier offered a payment plan but no reduction.

The Ombudsman said that the incorrect billing for such a long period of time was unacceptable and constituted mismanagement of the account. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to apply the principle of the Billing Code of Practice and remove all previously unbilled gas charges more than 12 months old. The Supplier was also required to arrange a suitable payment plan taking into account C's ongoing usage and ability to pay.

1.29

C returned home after spending some time abroad. C discovered bills and a disconnection notice for a rental property that C owned. C contacted the supplier asking how this amount had been incurred. C explained that the property had been empty for some time and no gas had been used. C was also unhappy that the bills had been incorrectly addressed and therefore had been received by other residents in the block. The supplier had been estimating the readings since the last tenants had closed the account as it was not aware that the property stood empty. C wrote to the supplier but failed to receive responses to the letters. The supplier did eventually amend the address and the bill however C did not feel the complaint was fully resolved.

The Ombudsman concluded that the supplier had acted correctly in estimating the readings as it was not aware that the property was empty. It was acknowledged that there had been a shortfall in customer service and the Ombudsman required the supplier to offer C an apology, confirm the outstanding balance, confirm that this had no effect on C's credit rating and to offer a goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service.

1.30

C did not understand their bills and requested a breakdown from the Supplier. C did not receive any response from the Supplier despite several complaints. C experienced a poor level of customer service.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier had failed to respond to C. The Ombudsman was of the opinion that a clear shortfall in customer service had occurred. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to provide C with a breakdown of their account, make a goodwill payment and write a letter of apology.

1.31

C was billed using estimated readings for nearly two years. When C received an actual bill there was a large outstanding balance. During the two years C had been advising Supplier that its estimates were incorrect and Supplier had been taking actual readings but failing to use them.

Supplier applied generous goodwill credits to C's account but C remained unhappy.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that C had used but not paid for the gas and the charges were correct. However, there were customer service shortfalls and the Ombudsman required supplier to maintain its credits, apologise and offer C a payment plan which took into consideration ability to pay.

1.32

C attempted to move to an alternative Supplier but Supplier objected as C had debts on C's gas and electricity accounts. C called supplier and paid what Supplier advised was the full amount by debit card. C attempted to transfer again but supplier objected as there was still debt on the account.

Supplier had mis-advised C as it had only advised C on the debt on the gas account, not the electricity account. C paid the debt on the electricity account also but in the interim received some confusing letters and had to contact Supplier to discuss. C was not happy with Supplier's letter in response to the complaint. Supplier offered a goodwill credit which C refused. C still has outstanding balances on both accounts.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that there were shortfalls in customer service in this case. Although the Ombudsman agreed that the outstanding debts were correct, she required Supplier to offer a payment plan, apologise and provide a goodwill payment to C.

1.33

C has a single rate meter but was billed as if C had a two rate meter. C complained to Supplier and it largely ignored her complaints. When the Ombudsman made a case file request, Supplier agreed to bill C on the correct tariff and reduce the outstanding balance as a goodwill gesture.

1.34

C says their house is divided into flats and one of the flats received bills for a person who has never lived there. C says it took two years for the Supplier to rectify the incorrect details. In the meantime C received debt collection letters. C says they have experienced missed appointments which they would like compensating for and compensation for the distress this matter has caused. The Supplier did not submit a case-file within the required timescales which meant its views could not be considered in relation to this complaint.

The Ombudsman found that C had experienced one missed appointment. The Supplier was required to compensate C for this as stated under its Guaranteed Service Standards. In what was an unwarranted referral to a debt collection agency the Supplier was required to ensure C's credit file was not adversely affected. The delay in correcting the account details was considered to be a shortfall in the service C experienced. However, the goodwill gesture already offered from the Supplier was considered sufficient in addressing this matter. The Supplier was required to maintain this offer.

1.35

C received an extremely high bill from the supplier. C believed this bill to be inaccurate and felt that this did not reflect the actual gas usage. C complained to the supplier sending several letters. The supplier failed to respond to C's complaints. The amount was later passed to a debt collection agency. The supplier advised that C's readings had been estimated for some time and this could have caused an inaccurate bill.

The Ombudsman concluded that there had been a shortfall in customer service and required the supplier to: issue C with an apology; contact C to obtain an actual reading also providing him with a number he could contact to give this reading if necessary; recalculate the bill using the actual reading; offer a goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service and if nothing further was owed to stop any debt collection proceedings ensuring that this has had no adverse affect on his credit rating.

1.36

C has a prepayment meter but received a bill for a large outstanding balance. C says they queried this and was advised the amount was under investigation. C says the Supplier then agreed to waive the bill. C then received a letter advising their meter would need to be reset to pay back an outstanding balance that differed to the original bill that had been sent. The Supplier did not submit a case-file within the required timescales which meant its views could not be considered in relation to this complaint.

The Ombudsman considered it reasonable to accept the explanation of C and the Supplier was required to waive the outstanding balance as a gesture of goodwill in recognition of the mishandling of C's account. It was also found C had not been called

when agreed. In addition, the Supplier was required to apologise for the service shortfalls C had experienced.

1.37

C advises that there was a credit balance showing on their gas and electric prepayment meter account. They queried this and received a refund then to be told this refund should not have been issued. C says they have five different account numbers. C would like to receive the credit balance shown on their statement. The Supplier advises since receiving the complaint form it as contacted C and resolved the billing issues on C's account. C did have a number of different account number's due to some accounts being closed in error and being reopened under a new number; this has now been resolved. The Supplier advises the statement C received showing a credit did not take into account up to date usage therefore producing a false credit balance. The Supplier states it has apologised and provided C with a gesture of goodwill in recognition of the service shortfalls.

The Ombudsman found the billing issues of C's account had now been addressed. However, it was found that C had received notification of legal action regarding an outstanding balance on his account. Taking into account the mis-advice he had received the Supplier was required to ensure his credit file was not adversely affected.

1.38

C advises that they moved into an apartment and they received bills with the incorrect meter serial number, address and readings on it. C was receiving bills for their neighbours and vice versa. C would like to change suppliers, be correctly billed and receive compensation for the time spent trying to resolve this. The Supplier advises that it needs to complete its investigations for the gas and the electricity to ensure its and the industry records are updated with the correct information for C's energy supplies. Once this has been successfully completed it will then be in a position to consider a goodwill payment.

The Ombudsman required the Supplier to liaise with National Grid and ensure C's account details were corrected as soon as systems would allow. The Supplier was required to update C on a weekly basis until this was done. C had first notified the Supplier of the incorrect details on their account nine months previously. There was no evidence of any proactive ownership being taken to resolve this. The time this was taking to resolve and the lack of ownership was considered a shortfall in service. The Supplier was required to apologise and award a gesture of goodwill in recognition of this. It was also found C had a missed appointment which they had not been compensated for as stated under the Suppliers Guaranteed Standards of service. The Supplier was required to compensate C for the missed appointment.

1.39

C noticed the meter serial number on a bill did not match the meter serial number at the property and notified the Supplier. The Supplier agreed to investigate, but delayed taking any action. C contacted it several times, but the issue remained unresolved. The Supplier placed the account on hold, but was unable to issue a correct bill until the correct meter information was received.

It was noted the Supplier had been made aware of the incorrect meter information shortly after it began to supply C, but that it had failed to pursue the matter. When the issue was identified again, it raised a further investigation, but it was considered that it had not taken reasonable steps to obtain the necessary information until C escalated the complaint. The Supplier's failure to address the issue, and the delays C experienced were considered to be reflective of a shortfall in customer care. The Supplier was required to send a letter of apology, make a payment as a gesture of goodwill, and provides a timescale for resolution of the problem and issue of a correct bill and to keep C regularly updated about progress being made to obtain the correct meter information.

1.40

C claims that a gas leak was reported and the meter was changed the same day. C asked Supplier to clear the outstanding balance. The supplier applied a credit to the account, but confirmed that its records showed that the meter exchange had occurred a month later. The supplier concluded that if the gas leak had been serious then the meter would have been changed the same day. C advised to the contrary and claimed the meter had been changed the same day. Supplier applied a credit to the account and a separate credit for the delay.

The Ombudsman considered supplier's actions were fair and reasonable, but required it to provide a further credit for the delay in dealing with C's issues. C was expected to pay the supplier the remainder of the outstanding balance on the account.

1.41

C's account was erroneously transferred to the supplier. The supplier acknowledged this and closed the account. C complained that despite suppliers promise to close the account bills were still received.

The Ombudsman required the supplier to provide an apology for poor customer service levels and in recognition provide a goodwill gesture and to provide C with a confirmation advising that the accounts had been closed displaying nil balance.

6.0 Billing - Inaccurate Meter Reading

6.1

C complains about the supplier's failure to notice a meter change which occurred some years earlier. This was only discovered after C transferred to another supplier, with the transfer reading showing the supplier had been calculated charges based on a four digit meter when it should have been five. The supplier accepted errors had been made and reduced the bill in line with back-billing legislation. C remained unhappy and believed all new charges should be cancelled.

It was concluded that the new charges could have been avoided had the supplier taking necessary action when differing meter readings were provided. The complaint highlighted that avoidable delays and poor customer service had been experienced by C.

7.0 Billing - Incorrect Account Details

7.1

C complained about the supplier failing to update the gas and electricity records following a tenant moving into their property. It was evident the supplier had since corrected this point, but only after avoidable delays and costs had been incurred.

In resolution the supplier was required to send a letter of apology, confirm its actions and provide a written assurance that no adverse credit information had been recorded. It was also required to make a goodwill payment to C.

7.2

C moved into a property and notified the supplier. C received a bill which showed incorrect meter and account details. The Supplier amended the account details, but sent a bill which showed further incorrect charges, which related to the period prior to C's tenancy. C complained and the Supplier issued a corrected bill and made a payment as a gesture of goodwill. C was unhappy with the Supplier's resolution.

The Ombudsman's considered the Supplier's failure to set up the account correctly to be reflective of a shortfall in customer service. However, it was noted the Supplier had corrected the account details and the goodwill gesture paid to C was considered to be reasonable. The Supplier was required to apply a further small credit as a goodwill gesture as it has failed to carry a previous credit forward on the account balance.

13.0 Billing - Payment Method

13.1

C complained of various matters without providing any support at all for any of the various matters being complained about. One of the issues was The Supplier's failure to arrange a Direct Debit. The case records showed that both a Direct Debit mandate and a reminder had been sent. C also complained that a meter test had not been arranged. The Supplier showed that a permit had to be signed for this and had been sent but not returned by C.

The Supplier was required to send further copies of the Direct Debit mandate and meter test permit.

14.0 Billing - Quality of Customer Service

14.1

C complained that the supplier maintained billing with aggressive debt collection letters, after an account should have been settled. The supplier investigated and found that the account was previously billed with estimated readings, but C remained responsible for it as they had not sent accurate readings to the account.

The Ombudsman considered the supplier had not explained the situation sufficiently well and that the debt collection method was inappropriate. The supplier was required to make an apology for the poor customer service, confirming a credit for part of the debt, including an administration fee and make an extended payment plan available for C.

14.2

C complained that the supplier increased their regular payments without warning and were not making a saving as C stated the supplier had promised. C complained to the supplier that they had been mis-sold the contract. The supplier explained that when C agreed their contract it was at the time of national price increases and that there had been further such price rises. The supplier offered a goodwill payment and an apology.

The Ombudsman considered the price rises were to be expected, particularly as C had no agreement that included a price freeze. The goodwill gestures were also considered generous. However the supplier was required to make an apology for the lack of call backs, which was considered a shortfall in customer service.

14.3

C agreed to service with the Supplier. C complained that monthly payments were not increased to cover usage. C also complained that the Supplier failed to amend C's Direct Debit details. C sent several letters to the Supplier but remained dissatisfied with the response received. The Supplier said that it had not received details of the new bank. The Supplier said that the account had also been amended several times as the previous supplier had disputed the start meter reading used.

The Ombudsman noted that the Supplier had not received a letter from C's new bank informing it of the new bank instructions. The Ombudsman surmised that this was lost in the post. With regard to the account, the Ombudsman was concerned that C had been caused confusion because of the start meter reading being amended several times. Although the Supplier could not be blamed for this the Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier failed to inform C. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to award a nominal goodwill payment, arrange a suitable payment plan and send a letter of apology.

14.4

C had pre-payment meter installed but received conflicting information about the amount of debt owed. C also claimed that agreed payment plan was taking more than agreed. C complained to the Supplier but received no response or resolution.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier provided C with conflicting information and also failed to resolve the complaint within a timely manner. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to remove any remaining debt and award a goodwill payment. The Supplier was also required to provide C with a full breakdown of the account.

26.0 Transfer - Incorrect Billing

26.1

C complained about the supplier's closure of the electricity account when they changed supplier. They highlighted that the supplier disputed the meter readings supplied, while continuing to take Direct Debits for gas used.

C also complained about the supplier refusing to close the accounts even though numerous phone calls and various meter readings were provided. C stated that letters threatening debt collection and possible court action were also received.

When a complaint was received by this office, the supplier contacted C and offered to close both accounts and clear the balances. The supplier then contacted the Ombudsman advising that C was happy with this resolution as the balances had included charges they were responsible for.