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## **1.0 Billing**

### **1.1**

C complained to the supplier about a billing issue as they were receiving their neighbour's bills and vice versa. The supplier acknowledged the error but then failed to take the necessary corrective action. This resulted in further billing problems, as well as reminders and letters threatening legal action being received by the neighbour. The supplier then advised this matter had been rectified, including a goodwill credit in consideration of C's problems. However, this happened after a complaint had already been received by the Ombudsman, whilst C called again to complain about another letter being received for their neighbour.

It was concluded there may still be some errors on the account and that C had not received an acceptable level of customer service. Therefore the supplier was required to send another letter of apology, review the accounts and ensure all necessary action was taken, make a further goodwill credit and confirm that no adverse credit information had been recorded.

### **1.2**

C contacted supplier and provided it with meter readings as C was going to move out. When C received a bill from supplier this was high. Upon query it was discovered that supplier had no records of the original meter reading when the exchange took place. Despite suppliers attempts to obtain further information from the new occupants of C's former address it was not possible to determine when the meter had been exchanged and if so, what reading had been taken. Supplier advised it would send an estimated bill and base charges on average use.

The Ombudsman appreciated the circumstances of the case, but considered that a reduction should be applied to the account as a goodwill gesture.

### **1.3**

C moved property and provided supplier with a meter reading. Due to C receiving a high bill from supplier a complaint was made. The supplier discovered that the meter had not been read for 4.5 years and an estimate had been provided to C during this time. C asked supplier to consider the Code of Practice for Accurate Bills. The supplier stated that the two year rule did not apply as bills had been produced on a regular basis. The supplier proposed that C be allowed to pay the outstanding balance over a two year period.

The Ombudsman considered that supplier should have taken a meter reading within two years as mentioned by the Code of Practice for Accurate Bills. Since supplier had not obtained a meter reading for 4 ½ years the Ombudsman required supplier to provide C with a goodwill payment to take into account the latter 2 ½ years.

#### **1.4**

C complained that the supplier failed to bill them correctly and then sent a demand for arrears. C complained but got no response. C complained to the Ombudsman. The supplier then investigated and stated account details were missing for tracking payments; the payments that had been made had not been accounted for on C's account, but that action was being taken to rectify this.

The Ombudsman considered C had experienced poor customer service for which an apology was required, along with a new invoice and a goodwill payment.

#### **1.5**

C had a meter change on C's meter supply. The Supplier continued to bill C as if the meter had not changed. C made several calls to C to advise of this but Supplier did not alter the billing and C was left with a large balance to pay. C requested details of the Ombudsman service but was refused this by Supplier.

The Supplier has since made a goodwill payment to C.

The Ombudsman required that the Supplier make a further goodwill payment and written apology to C. She also required that Supplier offer C a payment plan and ensure that the C's credit file was not negatively impacted.

#### **1.6**

C moved into property and provided meter readings. Supplier issued bills, but these were incorrect based on estimates. There were three separate reference numbers created. It was disappointing to learn that supplier has failed to provide the Ombudsman's Office a copy of case-file details relating to C's account, despite requests being made.

The Ombudsman required Supplier to provide an apology for poor customer service levels and in recognition provide goodwill payment. This also covered costs incurred and inconvenience suffered; to provide a full statement of account for C's usage; to advise what meter readings Supplier held; to issue C with an amended bill taking into account actual meter readings; to cancel the remainder of the erroneous accounts; to advise what payments Supplier had received from C and confirm receipt of a cheque from a certain period and to provide assurance that no adverse information has been recorded against C's name in relation to the matters raised in the complaint, and if any had, it had now been removed or amended.

#### **1.7**

C had a prepayment meter with Supplier. C received a statement saying C was in credit. C called to request a refund of credit owed but Supplier said it has not advised C that account was in credit.

The Ombudsman was satisfied that Supplier had sent C a statement to advise C was in credit but by the time the next invoice came, the credit had been consumed by further usage. However, The Ombudsman considered that the Supplier caused the

C confusion by not explaining this properly. The Ombudsman required that the Supplier make a goodwill payment and an apology to C.

### **1.8**

C had gas supply with Supplier. The C received a bill which C disputed. When C contacted Supplier, C was advised that account was on hold whilst it investigated. However C started to receive debt collection letters.

Following the complaint to the Ombudsman, the Supplier identified that it had miscalculated the bill and sent a cheque to C, which included some legitimate charges being waived.

The Ombudsman considered that the cheque sent by the Supplier was sufficient to address the complaint. The Ombudsman required that the Supplier provide the C with a written apology.

### **1.9**

C had an electricity account with Supplier. The Supplier started to bill the C for two separate supplies. The C complained and received a further bill. After complaining again, the C received a third bill from the supplier for a separate meter.

The Supplier has since closed the duplicate invoice and reset charges. The C had been offered a goodwill payment but did not feel it covered the inconvenience caused.

The Ombudsman considered that the goodwill payment previously offered was sufficient and The Ombudsman required that the Supplier maintain the offer. The Ombudsman also required that it send a written apology to C.

### **1.10**

C had gas supply with Supplier. The gas was charged at estimated readings for a period. When C provided a meter reading, the Supplier realised that it had the C linked to a meter at a different address. Since this period, the company has not been able to supply a correct account reading, despite the C requesting it.

The Ombudsman required that the Supplier provide C with a correct bill for C's own meter and provide a goodwill payment and apology for the delay in resolving the complaint.

### **1.11**

C complained that supplier chased for payment relating to C's old property despite C moving address. C advised supplier at the time that C was moving and provided it with a forwarding address, a meter reading and paid the final bill when C vacated the property. Supplier advised that the account was overlooked when actioning a change of tenancy.

The Ombudsman required the supplier to provide an apology for poor customer service levels and in recognition provide goodwill payment, to provide a goodwill payment for charges incurred for obtaining a credit report; to provide C with assurance that no adverse information had been recorded against C's name in relation to the matters raised in C's complaint, and if any had, it had now been removed or amended.

### **1.12**

C complained to the supplier about an incorrect initial bill which was raised and the company failing to stop this being taken by Direct Debit. C managed to make a successful indemnity claim through the bank, but this matter was further compounded by a systems error which resulted with the disputed amount being raised and re-credited a number of times. C contacted the supplier a number of occasions with advisors incorrectly reading the account and suggesting a number of cheque refunds had been cashed when they hadn't.

It was evident that C had experienced a number of billing errors and had received a poor level of customer service throughout. In resolution of this matter the supplier was required to send a letter of apology, ensure the gas meter was correctly attached to the account, make arrangements to obtain a current meter reading, provide an accurate bill, make a goodwill credit to the account, ensure no adverse credit information had been recorded, and provide written confirmation of all action taken.

### **1.13**

C moved into a new house with a prepayment meter. C considered the rate at which the credit was used up to be excessive and contacted the supplier. The supplier agreed to send an engineer. C complained that out of six appointments made, an engineer only attended twice. The supplier changed C's meter and confirmed the tariff was correct. It offered C the opportunity to do a seven day accuracy test, which C declined. C remained unhappy with the charges incurred and maintained the meter rate was incorrect. C wrote a letter of complaint but did not receive a reply.

It was noted that the supplier had confirmed C's tariff was correct only after the meter was exchanged. However, it was unclear if the rate at which C was charged was correct prior to the exchange. The supplier was required to confirm the rate prior to the meter exchange and refund any overpayments C may have made if the rate was found to be too high. It was noted that engineers had visited C's house five times, but had been unable to gain access to the meter on two occasions. C was considered to be responsible for ensuring the engineers had access to the property on the appointment dates and the Ombudsman was satisfied there had not been a shortfall in customer service. It was noted C's account details had not been updated. the supplier was required to send a letter of apology; monitor C's account to ensure the details were updated and provide C with written confirmation that it had done this; maintain its proposal to check the payments C had made to the account and contact C for proof of any additional payments C believed had been made and offer C the opportunity to do a seven day accuracy test.

### **1.14**

C complained that bills from the Supplier were incorrect. C called the Supplier and sent letters of complaint but received no response or resolution. The Supplier said that it did hold the incorrect details and was attempting to resolve the problem.

The Ombudsman said that based on the information provided C had received inadequate and poor customer service from the Supplier. The Supplier failed to resolve the problem with the account even though nine months previously it was noted that the address had been missed up with a similar address. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to contact C to discuss the complaint, ensure the correct account and meter details were held, re-bill C for usage, award a nominal goodwill payment and send a written letter of apology.

### **1.15**

C complained that the Supplier failed to provide C with final bills for four months. On receipt of the final bills C said the electricity bill was incorrect. C sent letters and emails to the Supplier but received no response. The Supplier said that C's new address had not been updated on records which were why C did not receive the final bills. The Supplier said that the final bills were correct based on the readings provided by C.

The Ombudsman said that the delay in providing final bills to the correct address was viewed as poor customer service. The Ombudsman said that the Supplier had also not used the correct final readings for the electricity bill. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to recalculate the final electricity bill, award a nominal goodwill payment and provide a letter of apology.

### **1.16**

C complained that the supplier added a charge, refused a refund and changed C's regular account payment. The supplier investigated and justified the charge, but conceded that it was not well explained to C. It offered to reduce the outstanding balance.

The Ombudsman considered the offer by the supplier was appropriate, but it was also required to make an apology and goodwill payment for the poor explanation and shortfall in customer service given to C previously.

### **1.17**

C says that they received a large bill due to estimated readings being underestimated and then an actual reading being taken. C now on a prepayment meter which C is unhappy about. C also complains of poor customer service.

The supplier advises C put has been offered on a prepayment meter and is being allowed to pay the outstanding amount owed off over a lengthy period of time. It also advises that it has already awarded a gesture of goodwill.

The Ombudsman required the supplier to apologise for shortfalls in customer service and give C the option to change back to their old meter and set up a payment plan.

### **1.18**

The Supplier failed to resolve a crossed metering problem and seems to have taken little action over the last four months. C brought the matter of crossed metering to the Suppliers attention however it has failed to provide updates or resolve the issue. The Ombudsman considers the customer service on this case has been poor. In summary the Ombudsman requires the Supplier to contact C to arrange a site visit to check the meters; provide regular updates on the progress of the resolution to this problem; take the appropriate action to amend the account details with the correct meter serial number and contact MPAS or the National Grid to advise; if possible recalculate C's bills based on the usage recorded on the correct meter and provide a refund if there has been an overpayment, if not provide a refund in goodwill equivalent to 25% of payments made to the incorrect account; make a goodwill gesture in recognition of the customer service issues raised, the failure to act in accordance with its Guaranteed Standards, the inconvenience C has experienced and the costs incurred; and to issue a formal letter of apology.

### **1.19**

C complained to the supplier after receiving a red reminder gas bill. It was established that C normally received the bills for a property they rented to tenants, but due to an error transferring data, the first line of the address had been cancelled on the account. C complained about the distress and upset this had caused both them and the tenant after legal collection letters were received. The supplier stated the error had since been corrected and proposed that an apology was sent to both parties. It is also proposed the cancellation of all administrative charges and reminders, to enable a new bill to be produced. The supplier also assured that no adverse credit information had been recorded.

The supplier was required to maintain these proposals, and required to make a goodwill credit to the account.

### **1.20**

C called The Supplier to check on a bill and was told that the account was clear. Payment was collected shortly after that call. The Supplier explained that the Direct Debit is applied for in advance of the payment being made by the bank and that at the time of the call the account would have shown that the payment had been applied for and therefore shown the account as clear. As C accepted that no further enquiry was made after that advice and that clearly C was aware there was an outstanding amount no criticism was made of The Supplier. It was found that The Supplier had failed to provide call backs and answer letters and this was found to be poor customer service.

The Supplier was required to provide a letter of apology in respect of the poor customer service in this matter and to provide a goodwill gesture to reflect the shortfall of customer service experienced by C.

### **1.21**

C complained to the supplier about a number of errors on the electricity and gas accounts following a request for these to be put in joint names. The supplier acknowledged that this led to the accounts being incorrectly charged in line with fixed term protection rates, with additional errors surrounding the Direct Debit payments and credit transfers.

It was concluded that avoidable errors and delays had been experienced, and that C had received some poor customer service. In resolution the supplier was required to send a letter of apology, clarify if C wanted to cancel the accounts without penalty, and make goodwill credits to both accounts as a gesture of goodwill.

### **1.22**

C took electricity from Supplier. The Supplier was using estimated bills, but then C provided actual readings. The Supplier did not use the readings and continued to underestimate the bills. This resulted in the C receiving a large bill when the meter was read.

The Ombudsman required that the Supplier make a goodwill payment and written apology to C for failing to bill using the correct readings. The Ombudsman considered that the bills were correct as C had used the electricity that Supplier was charging for.

### **1.23**

C complained that the supplier had applied an arrears bill that they should not be responsible for. This was because C paid for services with a prepayment meter. The supplier investigated and found that when there were price rises it had been unable to implement them on C's meter. Consequently it was not until C moved that the supplier was able to gain access and calculate the arrears. When C complained the supplier offered to reduce the arrears by a substantial amount. It also offered a repayment plan at a very low rate.

The Ombudsman considered the offers of the supplier were generous and required that they were implemented. No additional action was considered necessary.

### **1.24**

C provided supplier with a final meter reading and was advised a refund was due. Despite contacting the supplier on a number of occasions only a partial amount was refunded. The supplier later discovered that the cheque had been sent out to the incorrect address. The supplier provided assurance that it has now issued C the remainder of the refund.

The Ombudsman required supplier to provide an apology for poor customer service levels and in recognition provide goodwill payment and to ensure the cheque refund was sent C's forwarding.

## **5.0 Billing - Inaccurate Invoices**

### **5.1**

C complained that the supplier failed to change occupant's names when C moved address. Consequently C was left without gas and had a payment card sent in the previous occupier's name. C complained and the supplier investigated; it acknowledged a problem and agreed a goodwill payment, but this too was sent in the previous occupier's name. It took several weeks before C had a fully updated and corrected account.

The Ombudsman considered C had experienced poor customer service and required the supplier to confirm the payments put on the card were used to C's benefit and not pay off the former tenant's debt, ensure the goodwill payments already suggested had been paid and make an additional goodwill payment in recognition of the delays and errors. As the supplier had already apologised in writing, it was not required to do so again.

## **6.0 Billing - Inaccurate Meter Reading**

### **6.1**

C complained that their meter was faulty but the supplier refused to change it. C also complained that their account was set up incorrectly. The supplier investigated and found an account correction was needed however, it did not consider the meter was faulty.

The Ombudsman considered C had been billed correctly, but there had been a shortfall in customer service for C. The supplier was required to make an apology for the confusing advice provided, for the errors and to provide a goodwill payment.

## **7.0 Billing - Incorrect Account Details**

### **7.1**

C went abroad, but arranged for a final energy bill to be forwarded on, as prior to leaving the UK C had made arrangements to change supplier. C received an estimated final bill for charges that were greatly in excess of the costs C had expected. C returned to the UK and contacted the supplier to dispute the charges. The Supplier found the meter information it held against C's account was incorrect, which had resulted in a large bill being issued. The supplier amended the information and issued a correct bill. It agreed to credit the final charges as a gesture of goodwill. C was unhappy with the response and wanted the supplier to pay for the travel costs incurred returning to the UK to resolve the problem.

The supplier acknowledged that the incorrect bill had been sent to C, even though the charges seemed excessive. This was considered to be reflective of a shortfall in

customer service. However, the Ombudsman did not believe the supplier was responsible for C's decision to return from abroad in order to deal with the problem, or the charges C had incurred in doing so. The credits the supplier had already provided in acknowledgement of its error were considered to be reasonable. The supplier was required to send a letter of apology.

## **7.2**

C complained that the supplier failed to provide bills to properties that were let. C complained and the supplier reported that the accounts were still in C's name. C complained to the Ombudsman and the supplier then stated that all account names were correct and that C had no outstanding balance.

The Ombudsman decided that this had not been made clear to C before and that there had been a shortfall in customer service for C. The supplier was required to make an apology, provide a goodwill payment and confirm there was no outstanding balance in C's name.

## **7.3**

C complained that the supplier billed them incorrectly and changed their Direct Debits. C complained but the supplier failed to respond adequately. The supplier did investigate C's complaint and concluded that the changes in payment were due to changing C's profile in proportion to usage and that an on-line tariff had not been applied as requested.

The Ombudsman considered there had been poor customer service for C and required the supplier to make an apology for this and provide a goodwill payment.

## **14.0 Billing - Quality of Customer Service**

### **14.1**

C complained that the supplier added a charge when a change was completed to their account. The supplier investigated and justified the charge, but conceded that it was not well explained to C. It offered to reduce the outstanding balance.

The Ombudsman considered the offer by the supplier was generous; it was required to complete the offer and make an apology for the error in a letter.

### **14.2**

C complained that the supplier maintained incorrect billing on a tariff that was no longer applicable. C complained and the supplier accepted there was a problem but did nothing to rectify it. C complained for several more months, but without finding a resolution. The supplier eventually offered a goodwill gesture and took steps to resolve the issues raised, but not before C had reported them to the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman considered there had been very poor customer service for C and required an additional goodwill payment along with those already offered, but as the supplier had apologised in writing already, it was not be required to do so again.

## **21.0 Transfer**

### **21.1**

C contacted the Supplier to set up an energy account. Due to a system error the Supplier was unable to set up an account and there was a long delay before the problem was resolved. C experienced a poor level of customer service.

The Ombudsman recognised that a system error had occurred but considered that a clear shortfall in customer service had occurred. The Supplier was required to make a goodwill payment and offer C a payment plan.

## **26.0 Transfer - Incorrect Billing**

### **26.1**

C complained that the supplier failed to bill them correctly, failed to close the account before late payments were taken by Direct Debit and later stated the account was not set up correctly in the first place. C doubted the validity of the bills, given the confusion over the account. C complained and the supplier accepted that there had been errors made, but that the billing had been corrected in accordance with readings agreed with the new supplier.

The Ombudsman considered there had been poor customer service for C and required a review of C's payments and readings; if there were any late payments they were to be refunded to C. The supplier was also required to make an apology for the shortfall in customer service and provide a goodwill payment.

## **33.0 Transfer - Request not Actioned**

### **33.1**

C complained that the supplier failed to take the correct action after they decided not to go ahead with a transfer to another supplier. The supplier stated this was partly due to the manner in which the other company chose to cancel the transfer.

The Ombudsman decided there had been poor customer service for C, not least from the lack of expected call backs or anyone taking ownership of C's complaint. The supplier was required to make an apology and provide a goodwill payment.

## **34.0 Transfer - Quality of Customer Service**

### **34.1**

C took out a new gas supply with Supplier. Due to an error in the records, it transpired that the Supplier had not been supplying the gas to C and another supplier had. C made numerous calls to Supplier to correct this but experienced a long delay. In the meantime C was receiving payment demands from the company that was actually supplying the service. The Supplier eventually refunded all charges on the account.

The Ombudsman required that the supplier make a goodwill payment and apology to C for long delay and inconvenience caused.

## **50.0 Sales - Request not Actioned**

### **50.1**

C had a pre-payment meter for gas with Supplier. The C changed supplier and was left with a credit balance. The C requested a cheque for this balance but, in spite of numerous telephone calls and letters, the C has not received a cheque.

The Ombudsman required that the Supplier make a goodwill payment and written apology to C for the delay. The Ombudsman also required that the Supplier should send the cheque for the balance.