

Table of Contents

1.0 Billing

- 2.0 Billing - Credit Limit
- 3.0 Billing - Data Protection
- 4.0 Billing - Fraud
- 5.0 Billing - Inaccurate Invoices
- 6.0 Billing - Inaccurate Meter Reading
- 7.0 Billing - Incorrect Account Details
- 8.0 Billing - Lack of Information
- 9.0 Billing - Mis-Information
- 10.0 Billing - Missing Payment
- 11.0 Billing - No Bill Received
- 12.0 Billing - Non Requested Disconnection
- 13.0 Billing - Payment Method
- 14.0 Billing - Quality of Customer Service

21.0 Transfer

- 22.0 Transfer - Contract Cancellation
- 23.0 Transfer - Data Protection
- 24.0 Transfer - Fraud
- 25.0 Transfer - Incorrect Action Taken
- 26.0 Transfer - Incorrect Billing
- 27.0 Transfer - Installation
- 28.0 Transfer - Lack of Information
- 29.0 Transfer - Loss of Service
- 30.0 Transfer - Mis-Information
- 31.0 Transfer - Non Requested Disconnection
- 32.0 Transfer - Requested Disconnection
- 33.0 Transfer - Request not Actioned
- 34.0 Transfer - Quality of Customer Service

1.0 Billing

1.1

C complained to the supplier about the large electricity bills received following an accurate meter reading being provided. It was evident that C's previous bills had been calculated using estimated readings due to not being able to gain access. However, the length of time involved was not such that the supplier should consider canceling some of the balance. Nonetheless C had still received some poor customer service, with the supplier acknowledging that it could have taken control of the situation. The supplier also outlined that it had failed to provide C with advice on a trust fund it was operating for cases such as this and also highlighted a self-read scheme from which C may benefit.

In resolution of the complaint the supplier was required to send a letter of apology, make a goodwill credit to the electricity account, provide an accurate bill and a full written breakdown of the account clearly showing how this has been calculated, and agree a payment plan with C taking into account their ability to pay.

C was also advised that they may wish to consider contacting the supplier's Trust Fund to see if they qualified, and the supplier's customer service department regarding the self read scheme.

1.2

C advises that they received bills with high usage on them and queried this with their supplier. C advises they have now received a cheque for the overpayment they have made but would like compensation for the stress C says this has caused. The supplier advises it has already made an award as a gesture of goodwill.

The Ombudsman found that the supplier had rectified the inaccuracies with C's bills but considered the delay in doing this, nine months, to be a shortfall in the service C received. However, the gesture of goodwill already applied to C's account was considered sufficient in addressing this matter. However, the supplier had not proactively kept C updated and this was considered to be a further shortfall in the service C had received. The supplier was required to apologise to C and award a further gesture of goodwill in recognition of this.

1.3

C disputed their electricity bill and the Supplier stated the day and night reads had been transposed. The Supplier corrected a discrepancy with the meter reads and a credit was added to the account. C experienced a poor level of customer service.

Although the Ombudsman was pleased the Supplier had corrected the error that had occurred, they considered a shortfall in customer service had occurred. The Supplier

was required to make a goodwill payment and write a letter of apology. The Supplier was also required to make a payment arrangement with C.

1.4

C received notification from the supplier that the Direct Debit amount was to be increased. C was not happy with this so cancelled the Direct Debit. C later received demands for payment from a Debt Collection Agency and Disconnection Notices due to non payment of the bill. C paid the outstanding amount but continued to complain to the supplier. The supplier confirmed that it had acted correctly as C had cancelled the payment method. C sent a final letter to the supplier but received no response

The Ombudsman concluded that there had been a shortfall in customer service and required the supplier to issue a written apology, credit the account with a goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service and renegotiate a Direct Debit payment if C required this.

1.5

C advises that they moved house and contacted their supplier to set up an account. Their account was not set up for a further eight months and then they were sent a bill for eight months usage. C also complains of unreturned calls, unanswered emails and letters. The supplier advises it did not set up C's account due to an administrative error and that it has already awarded a goodwill gesture in recognition of any calls C has had to make.

The Ombudsman considered the eight months the supplier had taken to set up C's account to be a shortfall in the service they received and the supplier was required to apologise and award a gesture of goodwill in recognition of this.

1.6

Supplier failed to update a meter exchange on C's account causing C to be billed incorrectly. C complained and Supplier agreed to put things right. Supplier failed to keep C informed of progress and C complained to the Ombudsman.

After the Ombudsman's request for a case file Supplier contacted C to advise that the meter exchange had been updated. Supplier also offered C a credit which was accepted as full and final settlement.

1.7

The Supplier reassessed C's Direct Debit payments and increased them. C disputed the amount to which the payments had been increased. The Supplier confirmed its initial recalculation had been incorrect and reduced the payment amount. C remained unhappy with the adjustment and cancelled the Direct Debit. C moved to a new

Supplier, but disputed the charges on the final bills from the Supplier as the Direct Debit discount had been removed. The Supplier refused to apply the discount as C had cancelled the Direct Debit.

The Ombudsman considered the way in which the Supplier calculated adjustments to Direct Debit payments to be a commercial decision. However, the Supplier's miscalculation, and the conflicting information C received about the amended payments was considered to be reflective of a shortfall in customer service. In addition, it was noted the Supplier had incorrectly cancelled the Direct Debit on one of C's accounts. The Supplier was required to provide C with details of its Direct Debit policy, apply a small credit as a gesture of goodwill and apply the relevant Direct Debit discount to each of the accounts.

1.8

C complained after it was discovered that their energy account had been underestimated for several years. This had led to C suddenly receiving a bill for a large outstanding balance. C complained to the supplier as readings had been taken from the meter during this time but it appeared that they had not been used. The supplier did agree to reduce the balance and offer a payment plan but C was not happy with the offer made. C continued to complain and wrote a final letter to the supplier to which no response was received. The supplier later agreed to apply the code of practice for accurate billing to the account and only re-bill for charges incurred over the past two years.

The Ombudsman concluded that there had been a shortfall in customer service and required the supplier to issue a written apology, maintain the offer to reduce the balance only for charges over the past two years, offer a suitable payment plan and credit the account with a further goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service.

1.9

C moved into the property and did not receive a bill until some time later despite requesting this. The bill that C received showed a large outstanding balance. C did not feel that the Supplier could ask C to pay the full amount as it should only have back-billed for one years usage as per the Code for Accurate Billing. C contacted the Supplier and it stated that this code did not apply to C. C continued to complain but the Supplier refused to reduce the balance.

Following the Ombudsman's request to the Supplier for a case file, the Supplier contacted C offering to reduce the balance issuing a new bill. A new payment plan was then agreed with C. The Ombudsman received confirmation from both parties that the complaint was resolved.

1.10

C complained against supplier due to it making a number of errors on C's account. This ranged from sending C bills, which contained an incorrect address, mixing C's details

with someone else's account, and making mistakes with C's Direct Debit details. The supplier apologised for its error and advised of the credits it applied.

The Ombudsman investigated the matter and noted that further errors on the account had occurred. Although there was evidence of poor service the Ombudsman considered that the credits already applied to the account were fair and reasonable. However, a further goodwill credit was required to be applied to the account. The Ombudsman also required the supplier to assign a dedicated member of staff to the account to check whether C's next bill was correct. Since the Energy Supply Ombudsman's Office could not guarantee that no further mistakes would be made by supplier indefinitely, as an alternative, C was recommended to consider an alternative supplier should this be necessary.

1.11

C moved into a property and C's first bill showed a large balance. C's daughter queried this and it was suspected that as C lived in a flat that there could be a mix up over which meter was being used to bill the property. C's daughter carried out a test on the meter and it could be seen that a different one was in use when C was using the appliances. The supplier tried to resolve the issue regarding the meter serial numbers and a meter reader was sent to look at the meters. The meter reader failed to gain all of the information needed and C was asked to carry out the test again. During this time C was being sent Disconnection Notices due to non payment. The supplier did eventually resolve the issue and billed C correctly.

The Ombudsman concluded that there has been a shortfall in customer service and required the supplier to issue an apology, credit the account with a goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service and offer a payment plan to allow C to pay the outstanding balance taking into account C's ability to pay.

1.12

C complained that the supplier sent a very large bill without explanation. When C complained the supplier stated this was due to a meter exchange and arrears that had not been settled. C disputed this as there had been no meter exchange and stated the property in question was unoccupied for much of the time, using little energy. The supplier later advised that the meter exchange data was incorrect, offered a goodwill payment and reduced the bill. C rejected this and offered a much smaller final payment.

The Ombudsman considered the offer from C was not adequate as they had used the energy provided by the supplier, after the error it had made was rectified. However, a further goodwill payment was required for unnecessary debt collection escalation and poor customer service. C was recommended to clear the balance via a payment plan.

1.13

C provided supplier with meter readings for usage and meter readings were taken by supplier. However, C was billed for about three years based on estimated usage. Furthermore, due to the switch for the night rate being faulty C complained when a high bill was received. The supplier applied a credit and apologised for the estimated billing charges.

The Ombudsman required supplier to provide an apology for the shortfall in service levels and in recognition a goodwill gesture; to provide a full breakdown and explain how it applied the credit; and allow C to pay off the outstanding balance over a five year period as agreed by supplier.

1.14

C paid supplier via Direct Debit every month. However, received an unexpected bill from supplier asking for money. Supplier advised that a mistake had been made which prevented the payments from being collected.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that C had received a shortfall in service levels due to suppliers error and required the supplier to provide an apology for poor customer service levels and in recognition apply a credit as a goodwill gesture; to provide an explanation of how it calculated the outstanding balance on the account; and to provide its previous proposal to allow C to pay the disputed outstanding balance on the account over a payment plan.

1.15

The Supplier exchanged C's meter from a token to a key meter. However while it was on the token metering system the Supplier failed to reset the meter in line with price rises therefore C had been underpaying for ongoing use. The Supplier apologised for its service failure and applied an initial goodwill credit equivalent to over 50% of the balance on the account. It made a further credit for the remainder of the balance but delayed in providing the refund of overcharges. It was noted the Supplier made an additional payment in recognition of C's contact costs.

The Ombudsman considers C's complaint was justified and the Supplier had failed to administer the case in an effective manner however and was satisfied the company had taken action to resolve the matter and no further action was required

1.16

C claims the Supplier failed to allow the transfer of the gas account so it could keep C's account and charges its high prices. No evidence was submitted for review that supported C's claims and the Supplier maintained it had only received one transfer that it had blocked due to an outstanding balance on the account.

The Ombudsman could find no evidence of a service failure therefore did not require any further action from the supplier.

1.17

C complains of high usage and says their bills are inaccurate. C would like the bills reassessed. The Supplier advises that it has offered to get a check meter fitted but C declined this when C was informed if no fault was found it would be chargeable. The Supplier advises C had now transferred supplier.

The Ombudsman found that the Supplier had offered C sufficient alternatives to check the accuracy of C's bills and could not be held responsible that C had declined this. It was found that not all the points raised in C's letters had been addressed and this was found to be a shortfall in the service C received. The supplier was required to apologise for this shortfall and award a gesture of goodwill in recognition of it.

1.18

C received a large bill and contacted Supplier to advise that C believed the meter was faulty. Supplier sent an engineer who confirmed that the meter was faulty. C complained as C believed that C must have been over charged for an unspecified period of time. Supplier looked into the account and realised that the meter was not faulty, it had just transposed the day and night readings. Supplier agreed to recalculate the bill.

C sent a letter of complaint to supplier but it failed to respond.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that there was a shortfall in customer service in this case. The Ombudsman required supplier to send the recalculated bill along with a letter of apology and a goodwill payment.

1.19

C moved into a property with a prepayment meter but received several bills for a credit meter. C contacted supplier on numerous occasions to try and get this resolved and was promised call-backs which C did not receive. Supplier placed the alleged debt for a credit meter onto C's prepayment meter. C involved energywatch and wrote to Supplier but the complaint remained unresolved.

Supplier has now updated its records to reflect that C has a prepayment meter. It has cleared all debts and agreed to refund the cost of all calls and any overpayments that C has made.

The Ombudsman was pleased that the situation was resolved but was of the opinion that there was a shortfall in customer service and required Supplier to maintain its offers, apologise, make a goodwill payment to C and confirm its actions in writing.

1.20

C's bill details were incorrect and C contacted supplier to complain. Supplier did not correct the details and C moved to another service provider. Supplier advised C that C would need to contact the new supplier to update meter details.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that there was a shortfall in customer service in this case and required supplier to credit C's account as a goodwill gesture.

1.21

C complained that they lost power due to a faulty prepayment device, but the supplier failed to assist and C found obtaining a replacement difficult. C complained to the supplier which stated that there should not have been a problem and sent an engineer to apply an emergency credit. It also provided a goodwill payment, but this was rejected by C as inadequate.

The Ombudsman considered that there was an element of poor customer service for C and required an additional goodwill payment as a contribution towards C's costs to be awarded on top of the payment previously made.

1.22

C advises they were in credit in 2005 and then went into debit in 2006 on the account. C is querying this and the amount of bills and has been sent asking for different amounts. C also complains that they had to make numerous calls trying to resolve this matter. The Supplier advises C's payments were not covering their usage and advises it has few contact notes about C.

The Ombudsman found that C's monthly payments were not covering their usage and no refund was due. C had their meter changed but the reading taken was not used and instead estimated readings continued to be used. The Supplier was required to apologise for this shortfall and award a goodwill gesture in recognition of it.

1.23

The Supplier failed to open new gas and electricity accounts for C despite chasing it to do so. The Supplier advised C to continue to use the former occupier's payment methods and in doing so C's payments were credited to another person's accounts. The Supplier opened new accounts after a period of months and then delayed in transferring all C's payments to the correct account. The Ombudsman considers these accounts were poorly administered causing C inconvenience.

In summary the Ombudsman required the Supplier to close the accounts with clear balances; make a goodwill gesture in recognition of the poor administration and customer service demonstrated in this review; and to issue a formal letter of apology including a statement of payments received on both accounts showing the accounts are closed with nil balances.

1.24

The Supplier failed to set up an account and activate its billing for over 18 months. The Code of Practice applies to this case and the Ombudsman welcomed the Supplier's previous offer to discount the balance by 10%.

The Ombudsman required the Supplier not to back-bill for a period of more than one year from the date that the billing is activated; to maintain the previous offer to discount the balance on the account by 10%; to make a goodwill gesture in recognition of the customer service issues raised, poor administration of the account, the inconvenience caused to C and the out of pocket expenses C incurred when seeking resolution to the complaint; offer C an extended payment plan; and to issue a formal letter of apology;

1.25

C took service with Supplier. The C said that C had been guaranteed a fixed rate but the Supplier maintained that the rate was standard. The C made several complaints to Supplier but much of C's correspondence was not responded to. The Supplier did re-price some of C's bills at fixed rate but gave no explanation why it chose to do so. The Supplier advised C that the fixed rate bills would be re-priced back to standard rates.

The Ombudsman considered it likely that the C had been offered a fixed rate, though it was not possible to establish with certainty how long this was for. The Ombudsman required that the Supplier honour the bills previously invoiced at fixed rate and provide C with a goodwill payment and written apology for its failure to respond to C's correspondence.

1.26

C experienced a problem with their account when the supplier migrated the account to a new billing system. The old account was left open leading to C being charged for two accounts. C complained to the supplier asking it to close the old account and to credit the new account with the remaining balance. It eventually transpired that the problem had been caused by the migration onto the new system. The supplier agreed to close the account but it failed to action this request.

The Ombudsman concluded that C had experienced poor customer service. On this basis, the Ombudsman required the supplier to apologise for the shortfall in customer service, to confirm that the old account had been closed, to produce a revised statement and to issue C with a goodwill payment for the shortfall in customer service.

1.27

C complained to the supplier about incorrect savings being promised at the point of sale. C advised that the charges on both their gas and electricity accounts were in fact higher than those the previous supplier charged. The supplier reviewed this matter and provided a full written breakdown showing C was making some savings, and that the

accounts were correct. C then tried to transfer to another supplier. The supplier allowed C to transfer the electricity, but stopped the gas transfer due to the outstanding balance in line with Terms and Conditions.

It was concluded that the supplier had acted correctly throughout, with there being no evidence of charging errors, or poor customer service. No further action was proposed.

1.28

C complained that when the online contract was signed a lower unit price for energy was given. When C received a quarterly bill C noticed the price increased. Supplier maintained the amount and advised C that the price increase had been communicated via letter. C claimed no letter was received. The Supplier advised that the letters were issued to every customer, including those in the process of transferring supply, to advise of the increase to its prices. The supplier apologised if C didn't receive the letter, but stated the price increases were also included in widespread news coverage of the ongoing increases to the cost of gas and electricity.

Whilst the Ombudsman appreciated supplier's comments it couldn't be established with certainty that C received the price change letter. Since supplier took steps to inform its customers of the price increase there was no reason to doubt that a letter was not sent to C. Nevertheless, the Ombudsman considered C had a point in that the supplier should have communicated the price increase also online since this method was used to sign the original contract. However, due to there being uncertainty the Ombudsman required the supplier to apply a credit equivalent to half of the disputed amount as a goodwill gesture.

1.29

C moved into a new property and supplier installed the wrong meter. It took several months for supplier to install the correct meter. After the correct meter was installed the supplier billed C on the wrong tariff. When the supplier recalculated C's bills on the correct tariff it left a large outstanding balance. The supplier offered a discount as a goodwill gesture.

The Ombudsman was of the opinion that there were a series of errors over a prolonged period of time and required supplier to apply a greater discount to C's account.

1.30

C advises they transferred their gas supply and received a welcome letter advising of the prices they would be charged. When they received a bill the prices they had been charged differed to those stated in the welcome letter. The supplier advises that the prices advised in the welcome letter were incorrect and referred to old tariffs. The supplier has awarded a gesture of goodwill and proposed a further one in recognition of the mis information C had received but advised it could not charge C at the prices

advised in the welcome letter as C had requested. There had been a price rise since C became the supplier's customer.

The Ombudsman considered the mis advice C had received in the welcome letter to be a shortfall in the service they had received. However, energy prices can rise or decrease at any time and there was no evidence that C had been advised the tariff would be capped. It was found that the goodwill gestures the supplier had made and proposed were sufficient in addressing this shortfall. The Ombudsman found there had been a delay in the supplier responding to C. The supplier was required to maintain their gesture of goodwill and apologise for any inconvenience this matter had caused.

1.31

C advises they were an executor of an estate and they informed the supplier that the account owner had deceased. C advises they continued to receive bills and were threatened with debt collection. C advises they sent numerous letters and made numerous calls trying to resolve this. The supplier advises that the account has now been closed and C has received an apology and compensation has been provided in recognition of any phone costs C incurred.

The Ombudsman found that there had been an unduly delay in closing the account and issuing a final bill. C's letters had not been responded to in a timely manner and this was considered to be a shortfall in the service C had received. The Ombudsman found that the supplier had charged C a late payment charge and was required to waver this. In what was an unwarranted referral to a debt collection agency the supplier was required to ensure C's credit file was not affected. The supplier was required to apologise for the delay in closing the account, issuing a final bill and for the shortfalls in customer service C had experienced and award a further gesture of goodwill in recognition of this.

1.32

C attempted to change suppliers but the account was returned to Supplier under the erroneous transfer procedure after problems were found with the account. Supplier found that it had incorrectly recorded a meter exchange at C's property causing it to bill C incorrectly. It advised that industry records would need updating before it could put things right but there were considerable delays. C also received a visit from Meter Operators after C had been advised by supplier that the appointment was cancelled. Supplier advised that it will inform all relevant thirds parties linked to the national database update its records and ensure C is billed only for the electricity C has used.

The Ombudsman welcomed this proposal but also required a goodwill gesture for the delays and shortfalls of customer service in this case.

5.0 Billing - Inaccurate Invoices

5.1

C complained that the Supplier had estimated C's bills which resulted in C receiving a large bill. C said that meter had been read and C had provided meter readings on several occasions. The Supplier requested a large increase in monthly payments which C remained dissatisfied with. The Supplier confirmed that it had estimated C's usage.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier had estimated C's usage for such a long time and was also concerned that it had failed to use actual readings provided. The Ombudsman was also concerned that the Supplier failed to arrange a more suitable payment plan taking into account C's ability to pay. In recognition of the service received and the estimated bills the Ombudsman required the Supplier to award a goodwill payment, contact C to arrange a suitable payment plan and send a letter of apology.

6.0 Billing - Inaccurate Meter Reading

6.1

C complained that the supplier sent a very large bill and then threatened forcible entry to C's home, despite alerting it they would be away. The supplier accepted that the entry warrant was inappropriate and that there had been poor customer service. It diagnosed the large bill being due to C's meter running backwards. This was later rectified.

The Ombudsman considered there had been poor customer service and required the supplier to increase the goodwill payment in recognition. It was also required to make an apology and provide a new itemised account breakdown to show the final bill, credits and amount outstanding.

6.2

C had electricity service with Supplier. The C's day and night meters were transposed, causing the Supplier to undercharge for a long period. C brought the problem to Suppliers attention and this led to C receiving a very large invoice.

The Supplier made a reduction on C's bill to try to resolve the matter.

The Ombudsman considered that the reduction applied by the Supplier was sufficient to address the complaint. It also required the Supplier to send a written apology to C.

6.3

C contacted the supplier as the electricity meter was failing to provide a reading. This led to a catalogue of missed engineers appointments, failed call back requests, and lengthy delays before the meter was finally repaired. C stated that as a landlord this had led to a loss of rental income as they were unable to rent the property. The supplier

disputed this point stating there was a supply to the property throughout. The meter was eventually repaired, with the supplier ensuring all charges over this period were cancelled, and offering a goodwill payment in consideration of the missed appointments and poor customer service. This was refused by C.

It was concluded that C had received very poor customer service, but that the supplier could not be held responsible for the loss of rental income as this did not stop C renting out the property. However, it was also concluded that a larger goodwill payment should be made in full consideration of the service received, the missed appointments and the avoidable delays. This was required to be sent with a letter of apology.

6.4

C moved house and provided the Supplier with a final meter reading from the old address. The Supplier issued a bill, which showed charges calculated using a meter reading that was higher than the reading C had given. C queried the bill and the Supplier advised that the meter could be faulty. The Supplier did not investigate the matter further despite contact from C, and passed the account to a debt collection agency.

The Supplier's failure to investigate the disputed meter readings and reply to C's complaint was considered to be reflective of a shortfall in customer service. It was required to calculate a final bill based on C's previous usage, make a payment as a gesture of goodwill, send a letter of apology and confirm C's credit rating had not been affected. It was also required to ensure all correspondence was sent to the correct address.

7.0 Billing - Incorrect Account Details

7.1

C complained that their Supplier had billed C on an economy 7 rate, even though C was no longer using economy 7 services. C complained to the Supplier but the Supplier failed to respond.

After the Ombudsman asked for a case file, the Supplier made C an offer to resolve the complaint. The Supplier offered to recalculate the bill on the correct rate and reduce the amount outstanding as a goodwill gesture. C accepted the offer. The Ombudsman was pleased that a satisfactory resolution had been reached and closed the case.

7.2

C tried to transfer gas supply but a problem arose with the meter point reference number. It was found that this was crossed with a neighbour. Once this error was resolved the Supplier informed C that C was owed a substantial refund. C received the

refund and checked with the Supplier several times that it was correct. C then banked the refund and spent some of the money. C was then informed that the refund was incorrect and the cheque was cancelled. The Supplier offered C a goodwill payment but C remained dissatisfied. C requested 50% of the refund.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier in error sent C the refund and also confirmed on several occasions that the refund was correct. The ombudsman required the Supplier to increase the goodwill payment and to send C a letter of apology.

7.3

C disputed bills with the Supplier as they were in the incorrect name and the Supplier was charging for usage prior to when C moved into the property. C complained that C had received threatening letters and the situation had caused C stress. The Supplier said that due to it not being informed that C had moved into the property it was not aware until March 2007 that the name was incorrect. The Supplier said it had now set up new accounts and billed C but the payments C had made had not been taken into account.

The Ombudsman was concerned that for approximately six months the Supplier has failed to resolve the problem and this was viewed as poor customer service. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to contact C to establish what payments had been received. The Supplier should then deduct these payments from the outstanding balance. The Supplier was also required to send C a full breakdown of usage and payments and to award a goodwill payment.

7.4

C provided the Supplier with final meter readings and C received a final bill and paid. C then received a further final bill from the Supplier which C disputed. Sp offered to reduce the balance by 50% but C remained unhappy. The Supplier informed the Ombudsman that an amended bill had now been produced showing a credit refund and this had been sent to C.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier continued to bill C incorrectly and failed to produce an accurate final bill until one year after C provided final meter readings. The Ombudsman was also concerned with the misinformation C had received. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to award a goodwill payment, send C a copy of the correct final bill, ensure C's credit file was unaffected and send a letter of apology.

7.5

C said that meter was changed but the Supplier failed to bill C correctly and used the old meter details. C called the Supplier and sent a letter of complaint but remained dissatisfied that the problem had not been resolved. The Supplier said it had obtained the meter details to now bill C correctly.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier failed to obtain the correct meter details for approximately eight months and this was viewed as unacceptable. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to obtain an up to date meter reading, provide C with an amended bill from the date of the meter exchange, award a goodwill payment for the delay and poor customer service received and to send C a letter of apology.

11.0 Billing - No Bill Received

11.1

C complained that Supplier failed to bill C for approximately one year after the meters had been changed to credit meters. The Supplier offered a 15% reduction but C remained dissatisfied with this response.

The Ombudsman said that the proposed 15% reduction was viewed as a reasonable award in recognition of the mismanagement of C's account. The Ombudsman was however concerned with service issues C had encountered and viewed this as a shortfall in customer service. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to reduce the outstanding balance by 15%, arrange a 12 month payment plan, award a nominal goodwill payment and send C a letter of apology.

11.2

C complained that the Supplier had not billed C for over a year. C had called the Supplier and sent letters but received no resolution. The Supplier said that due to a technical error it was unable to bill C. The Supplier said it was continuing to investigate with its technical team.

The Ombudsman said that although the error has cause C not to receive a bill that this was viewed as poor service. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to continue to investigate and once the account could be billed it should only back bill for one year. The Supplier was also required to keep C informed, award a nominal goodwill payment and to send a letter of apology.

11.3

C complained that the supplier sent an arrears bill, when they had not read the meter for a long time. C complained and the supplier first reduced the bill, and following C requesting to close the account, sent another smaller bill. The supplier stated there had been an error on the account; it recalculated the arrears and offered to remove a proportion of it, but maintained that the rest was payable.

The Ombudsman considered there had been a shortfall in customer service from the supplier in the way C perceived it had handled the complaint, but that the reduction was

appropriate. The supplier was required to reduce the balance as suggested; apologise for the poor customer service and provide an additional goodwill payment.

11.4

C complained that the supplier failed to provide a bill for many months. When it did so the arrears were substantial. C wanted to transfer to a new supplier and wanted a payment plan. The supplier objected to the transfer, but offered a payment plan. This was considered too short for C to be able to afford the payment rate required.

The Ombudsman considered there had been significant shortfall in customer service, but the goodwill payment offered by the supplier was considered appropriate. However the payment plan was required to be extended over a much longer period.

14.0 Billing - Quality of Customer Service

14.1

C's account was in credit and they requested a refund from the Supplier. C did not receive a refund and had to chase this several times. The Supplier explained that a marker had been placed on C's account which prevented a refund being made. The Supplier arranged the refund. C experienced a poor level of customer service.

The Ombudsman was concerned that the Supplier had failed to arrange a refund for C. The supplier was required to contact C to ensure they had received the refund. The Ombudsman was of the opinion that a shortfall in customer service had occurred. The Supplier was required to make a goodwill payment and write a letter of apology.

14.2

C complained that the supplier continued to bill them after an account should have been closed. The supplier investigated and found the final bill was incorrect, leaving an amount outstanding.

The Ombudsman considered there had been a shortfall in customer service for C over the final billing and the advice that may have been provided by its advisors. The supplier was required to make an apology for the error over the final billing and provide a goodwill payment.

14.3

14.4

C was not occupying the property but on return disputed the bill received from the Supplier. C sent letters to the Supplier but remained dissatisfied with the response. C underpaid the bill and requested that the remainder be credited as goodwill for the inconvenience caused. The Supplier said it had responded to all of C's letters and also explained that C's usage had decreased during the time the property was not occupied.

The Ombudsman examined the information provided and concurred that the Supplier had responded to all of C's letters within a timely manner and also answered all queries. The Ombudsman could find no evidence of a shortfall in customer service. The ombudsman noted however that the Supplier failed to provide C with the Ombudsman's details on several occasions and this was viewed as a service shortfall. The ombudsman required the Supplier to award a nominal goodwill payment.

14.5

C disputed a bill with the Supplier. C sent numerous letters to the Supplier but remained dissatisfied with the response received. The Supplier said that the bill was correct and this was explained to C but C did not accept the Supplier's response.

The Ombudsman examined the bill and could find no error or reason why the bill should be amended. The Ombudsman said that the Supplier had responded to C but was concerned that the Supplier delayed responding to C and this was viewed as a shortfall in customer service. The Ombudsman required the Supplier to award a nominal goodwill payment and send a letter of apology.

26.0 Transfer - Incorrect Billing

26.1

C disputed charges on the account. The Supplier addressed the issues and addressed the problems with charging and offered a payment plan. C accepted the Supplier's offer.

The Ombudsman was happy that a satisfactory resolution was made before investigation.

26.2

C complains that the supplier used estimated meter readings for some time and that when an actual meter reading was taken it was not used. As a result the usage was underestimated and a large bill accrued.

The Ombudsman found that there had been a shortfall in customer service and awarded a goodwill credit. The supplier was required to arrange a payment plan to pay off the accrued debt.

45.0 Sales - Erroneous Transfer

45.1

C complained that the Supplier transferred C's gas supply to it in error. The Supplier then did not resolve the problem or refer service back to preferred supplier for six months. The Supplier admitted that in error it had transferred the wrong service. It advised that this had now been resolved and a goodwill payment offered to C which was declined.

The Ombudsman said that the transfer error and the delay in resolving the problem were viewed as poor customer service. However the proposed goodwill payment was viewed as a reasonable award in this instance.

45.2

C complained that the Supplier failed to transfer gas supply and instead transferred daughter's gas supply from the address next door. C complained for approximately six months before the gas supply was transferred back to the previous provider. C complained had made numerous calls to the Supplier and requested compensation. The Supplier admitted it had in error transferred the wrong service. The Supplier said it had offered a goodwill payment but C declined.

The Ombudsman said that the transfer error and lack of resolution for so many months was viewed as poor customer service. However, the goodwill proposed by the Supplier was viewed as a reasonable award.