

Utilita Services Limited

Code of Practice for Customers Reference

What if you need to make a Complaint?

Contact Utilita

Website	www.utilita.co.uk
Email:	customerservices@utilita.co.uk
Call:	0845 450 4357
Write:	PRI House, Moorside Road Winchester SO23 7RX

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1 Sometimes we make mistakes, sometimes we don't

It's true our staff are human and sometimes make mistakes. Hopefully, not too often and not the same one twice, but if we do we will own up and put it right. The aim of this code of practice is to make it clear how to make your complaint. This Code provides details of where and how you can make a complaint about any aspect of our service. It also advises how we will deal with your complaint, the timescales for dealing with the complaint, and who to contact if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

If we have failed to give you the level of service you expect from us we will acknowledge any mistakes and apologise. We will consider and deal with each case individually taking into account:

- The nature and extent of your complaint.
- Whether it has happened to you before.
- The length and degree of any discomfort or inconvenience you may have experienced.
- Any special needs that you may have.

We supply your utility services but we do not own the pipes and wires needed, these are provided by national or local grid and pipeline companies ('Network Operator Companies' NOC's). These Network Operator Companies carry out the same duties for us as for any other national utility supplier under the terms of their licences. In some cases a Network Operator Company might need to work on the pipes and wires that connect to your home or business, in most cases we will give you advanced warning, but in cases of service interruption and emergency they may contact you directly. (See Code of Practice; 'Visiting your home or business').

If we do not reach the standard of service specified by the regulator you may be entitled to compensation. Where compensation is due, we will send you a cheque or transfer the funds direct to your account, please let us know which option you prefer.

Our customer service team are aware through our training programmes of issues you may have when you contact them. They will advise you of issues that may fall under this Code of Practice. You may request a copy of any code at any time. A full list of Codes available can be found at the end of this Code. If you require a further copy of this, or any other Code (free of charge), please contact us. All our Codes are also available in large print and Braille. If your first Language is not English and you would like information in another language, please contact us.

2 When is a complaint needed

We would like to hear from you if you have any kind of comment even if you do not want to complain as we can learn from this feedback and hopefully improve our service. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction you may have with us, our policies, products or services. Our service is designed to provide a quick and effective reply to your complaints about any aspect of our service. This would include (but not be limited to) the following areas of our business:

- Supplying utilities to our customers' premises
- Ensuring the supply and fitting of metering equipment in our customers' premises
- Reading and testing of meters, including prepayment meters
- Sending statements and bills and collecting payments for energy supplied to your home
- Giving advice and information on all the above matters and in particular about using energy efficiently.

2.1 How to tell us about your complaint

There is no need to fill in a lengthy form - you can make a complaint to us by contacting us in any way you choose. If you are elderly, disabled, chronically sick, or your first language is not English and you feel you are unable to voice your complaint yourself through normal channels you may choose another way to advise us of your concerns (e.g. through a friend or relative). If your first language is not English, we will arrange for a translation or interpretation service (free of charge), if you ask us. We will do everything we can to establish an effective line of communication with you.

2.2 Resolving your complaint

It is in everyone's interest to resolve all complaints as quickly and effectively as possible, so if you have contacted us by telephone it helps if you raise your concerns immediately to the member of staff involved. Our representatives are all trained to deal with complaints, if they cannot help you they will ask for a senior manager to help. You may also ask for a senior manager if you are unsatisfied with the service you are receiving. If we cannot solve the problem there and then and we have not done so within 24 hours, or if the matter is not resolved and requires further investigation, we will write to you to let you know what is going on within the next 5 working days.

If your complaint is serious the best way to send us your complaint is in writing either by letter or email. This gives us all a firm record of the nature of the complaint. If you write to us with your complaint by letter or e-mail we will get back to you within 72 hours. If we have not been able to resolve your complaint immediately we will advise you of this within 3 working days and explain any next-steps we plan to take. You should expect to receive a full and detailed response within 5 working days of our first letter or e-mail.

In all of the above cases, you should expect a fully investigated and detailed response within 5 working days. If you are still not satisfied we will pass your complaint on to the Customer Services Manager or another qualified person nominated by the Customer Services Manager. You should expect to receive a final letter within 5 working days of the Customer Services Manager receiving your complaint.

2.3 A real person

If we cannot deal with your complaint on the spot we will assign a named individual to monitor your complaint to resolution. In this way you will not have to explain the situation more than twice to a member of the customer service team.

3 If your complaint has still not been resolved

If you are still unhappy about the result or how we have handled your complaint, you can refer the matter to Consumer Direct a government helpline providing advice and information by telephone and online. They look after the interests of customers and are completely independent. The contact details for Consumer Direct can be found at the end of this Code. Independent advice can also be obtained from your local Citizens Advice Bureau. The addresses and telephone numbers of your local bureau can be obtained from telephone directories or by calling our Customer Service Centre on 0845 450 4357.

Consumer Direct may refer your complaint to Consumer Focus. This may happen if you have special needs or have been disconnected or are being threatened with disconnection. Please note that it is Utilita's policy not to disconnect any customer unless for safety reasons (if you are having difficulty paying please see our Code of Practices "Paying Your Bills" and "A Guide to Pre-payment").

In the event that your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction then you can take your case to an independent arbitration service who can help to resolve the issue. The arbitration service that Utilita is a member of is the Energy Ombudsmen. This service is completely independent, does not cost you anything, and any resolution is binding on Utilita (but you are NOT bound by it).

3.1.1 Independent Advice

If you have contacted us about a problem or have a complaint that you feel we have not resolved, you can contact a number of different independent advisors. However before doing we would ask you to give us the opportunity to resolve the issue without taking it further, indeed you may find that unless you have exhausted the complaint resolution programme with Utilita they may not be willing to intervene. The contact details for these organisations are listed below:.

4 Complaints involving third parties

We supply your utility services but we do not own the pipes and wires needed, these are provided by national or local grid and pipeline companies ('Network Operator Companies' NOC's). These Network Operator Companies carry out the same duties for us as any other national utility supplier under the terms of their licences. Details of these Network Operator Companies are at the end of this code. In some cases a Network Operator Company might need to work on the pipes and wires that connect to your home or business, in most cases we will give you advanced warning but in cases of service interruption and emergency they may contact you directly. (See Code of Practice; 'Visiting your home or business').

We use national Meter Reading Companies, these companies provide a service to read your meter so that you can get accurate bills and we can supply a quality service. All Meter Reading Company representatives that visit your home or business have identity cards. As with all energy suppliers, we make use of a number of systems that belong to third parties (who are also regulated by Ofgem) and they too are obliged to operate within minimum levels of standards. If the ultimate responsibility for your complaint lies with a third party we will pass on any compensation that is sent to us for you. We will ensure that this compensation is passed on to you within 5 working days. Please note that any apology on our part is not an automatic admission of liability and does not imply an automatic right to any compensation.

5 Other issues

5.1.1 Priority Needs Register

If you (or any member of your household) is elderly, disabled or chronically sick you should add your name to our Priority Needs Register so that we are aware of your circumstances. For more information please refer to our Code “What if I have Priority Needs” and “Seeing or Hearing Impaired”.

5.1.2 Guaranteed Service Standards

Guaranteed Service Standards, that are defined and monitored by the government, cover a wide range of the services that we offer you. If we fail to meet these standards you may be entitled to compensation. For further details please call us on 0845 450 4357.

5.1.3 Other Codes of Practice available

We also publish other Codes of Practice. They are:

- What if you need to make a complaint?
- Your chance to reduce global warming (for your business)
- Your chance to reduce global warming (in the home)
- Services provided to elderly, disabled and chronically sick customers
- Visiting your home or business
- Paying your bills
- A guide to prepayment

You can get any of these free of charge by contacting us:

Web: www.utilita.co.uk
Email: customerservices@utilita.co.uk
Telephone: 0845 450 4357
Write: PRI House, Moorside Road
Winchester SO23 7RX

This Code of Practice was prepared in consultation with energywatch (now Consumer Focus) and approved by the Office of gas and electricity markets (Ofgem). You can contact either of the above bodies if you have any queries about this Code or its implementation.

6 Contact Details

6.1.1 Ofgem Contact Details

London:

9 Millbank
London
SW1P 3GE

Telephone: 020 7901 7000
Fax: 020 7901 7066

Scotland:

Regents Court
70 West Regent Street,
Glasgow
G2 2QZ

Telephone: 0141 331 2678
Fax: 0141 331 2777

6.1.2 Consumer Direct Contact Details:

Consumer Helpline: 0845 404 0506
Minicom: 0845 128 1384
Web address: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

6.1.3 Consumer Focus Contact Details:

4th Floor Artillery House
Artillery Row
London
SW1P 1RT

Consumer Helpline: 020 7799 7900
Web address: www.consumerfocus.org.uk

6.1.4 Energy Ombudsman Contact Details:

PO Box 966
Warrington
WA4 9DF

Consumer Helpline: 0845 055 0760
Textphone: 0845 051 1513
(for deaf or hearing impaired consumers)
Web address: www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk
Email enquiries: enquiries@energy-ombudsman.org.uk

6.1.5 Citizens Advice Contact Details:

Web address:

www.adviceguide.org.uk (www.cas.org.uk in Scotland)