

FAO Neil Barnes

I am a self-employed cost management consultant within the Auditel franchise network. I am writing this letter in response to the recent OFGEM document, "Energy Supply Probe – proposed retail market remedies".

I would like to offer my support to your proposals, I found Chapter 5 particularly relevant to my business and my clients.

I would like to give my specific support for the second bullet point within Chapter 5, referenced in 5.14:

- *to eliminate suppliers' ability automatically to roll small business consumers on to a fixed-term contract when their existing contract expires;*

I believe this slightly unfair practice has been going on and remained unmentioned by the suppliers. Eliminating such practices will not only benefit the consumer through increased choice, knowledge and understanding, but it should also benefit the suppliers as well, as it will cause a greater mutual trust between the consumer and supplier.

Consumers often find themselves trapped in contracts they did not agree to, due to legislation like this not yet existing but this will remedy the problem.

I would also like to lend my support to section 5.11:

- *We propose that suppliers provide their customers with timely, clear and understandable information regarding the terms and conditions of their contracts and their rights and responsibilities at the end of any fixed-term contract period.*

I believe this will make the market a great deal fairer and prevent suppliers using underhand tactics to retain customers, but by giving the consumer clear information and choice in a timely manner – ie. before the expiry of the agreement and any notice period - they will have more chance of retaining consumers in a more positive way as once again this will build trust and confidence from the consumer.

In addition I certainly agree that timely notification should be provided to customers where an objection to transfer is raised and that this should provide clear and understandable information as to the reason for the objection.

Chapter 6 is another section I would like to agree with, regarding increased transparency of suppliers and generators as anything that increases consumer confidence, consistency across companies and supplier accountability within the energy market can only be a positive move.

Overall I believe that these proposals will be beneficial to my clients, giving them strengthened protection, higher levels of confidence and a clearer information provision. I would like to add that the document is a well thought out and comprehensive solution to some of the problems that exist within today's energy market.

Kind Regards,



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