

Press Release

17 May 2013

OFGEM WELCOMES GOVERNMENT DRIVE TO GET THE BEST DEAL FOR CONSUMERS

Ofgem's Senior Partner for Sustainable Development Sarah Harrison, said:

"We very much welcome the Secretary of State Ed Davey's endorsement of Ofgem's reforms for a simpler, clearer and fairer energy market for consumers. His warning that energy companies must not frustrate these necessary reforms is timely, since today we are publishing a statutory consultation on our standards of conduct.

"The standards of conduct, which will kick in this summer, will ensure that suppliers treat consumers fairly or risk financial penalties. It's the first part of our package of reforms which suppliers must use as a platform to transform the way they treat their customers and restore trust in the industry."

Further powers for Ofgem

Sarah Harrison added: "Ofgem has been campaigning for powers to regulate third parties in the energy market in order to better protect consumers, along with powers to order energy firms to pay redress to consumers when they breach rules to protect householders. We are very pleased that the Secretary of State has included both these sets of powers in the Energy Bill.

"At the moment, switching websites and energy brokers offer householders and businesses advice on changing supplier. Many domestic switching sites are signed up to Ofgem's confidence code and we are also considering options for a potential single Code of Practice for energy brokers in business market.

"The new power to regulate these activities will give Ofgem the ability to strengthen consumer protection in these areas by licensing these activities if necessary. We will be seeking views of consumers and small business groups as well as the industry to decide the best way forward."

Notes to editors

Ofgem's standards of conduct cover all aspects of customer liaison and care, including the handling of queries and complaints. We intend to introduce these rigorous, enforceable standards from this summer to ensure that consumers receive a fair deal from energy suppliers.

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