

NonDomesticRetailPolicy@ofgem.gov.uk

## Appendix 2

### Complete list of Call for Input questions

Q1. Do you have evidence of suppliers not being proportionate or reasonable regarding charges necessary to secure a contract, including security deposits? If so, please provide us with details.

Yes we experienced this with REDACTED who advised us there were no fixed contracts or better deals available

Q2. Do you have suggested solutions to the concerns around high costs requested to secure a contract and manage risk?

There needs to be another body between consumer and provider before going down the Ombudsman route who has the power to deal with disputes

Q3. Do you believe there has been an improvement in terms to contract as market conditions start to show signs of improvement? Please explain your answer.

We have seen no evidence of this

Q4. Do you have evidence to support the allegation that suppliers have been inflating prices in response to the introduction of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme? If so, please provide us with details.

Yes and the consumers are worse off than ever. The suppliers seem to be benefiting from this scheme not the consumers as the charges continue to skyrocket

Q5. What issues are you aware of businesses having in relation to deemed contracts?

We had a deemed contract with REDACTED after acquiring a public house in late 2019. At first this was the best deal to be on which also offered us a no-penalty early exit. However, suppliers then used this to "blame" consumers for not contacting them to switch to a better deal despite there being no available fixed contracts at the time due to covid/war.

Q6. Are there any other matters not discussed above related to pricing and contractual behaviour that you would like us to explore? Please provide details and your reasons.

REDACTED and REDACTED have been issuing credits for the previous full year and reissuing bills with higher charges. This was as a result of us querying the higher bills which has just added extra confusion and paperwork to an already complicated situation with their pricing structure

Q7. Do you believe there has been an increase in offers to contract in the past year as wholesale market conditions improved, or are there are segments of the market that are still struggling to secure contracts?

We have not seen any offers to contracts

Q8. Are suppliers following the best practice steps around debt management and disconnection that we highlighted in our December 2022 letter or do you think that licence conditions need amending? Please provide evidence for your views and details of any specific examples.

We have an ongoing dispute with REDACTED, they had a system issue which did not generate any of our electricity bills for almost a year and we sent several messages asking for the bills to be uploaded to our online account. When they finally arrived the bills were 185% higher in 2022 compared to 2021. We reached deadlock when we queried this, after credits and rebilling, and referred the matter to the Ombudsman in November 2022, after initially contacting Ofgem who could not intervene at the time. The Ombudsman originally found REDACTED not at fault but we challenged the decision and further evidence was sent of our messages requesting our electricity invoices be uploaded so that we could pay the bills. We have yet to receive a final response. However, the costs forced our business to close last year and we are no longer trading. REDACTED continue to send us reminders and penalty charges for late payment.

Q9. Are suppliers' complaints process easy to find on their websites, or elsewhere? Do you believe we need to strengthen the rules around complaints processes? Please explain the reasons for your response.

It is extremely difficult contacting REDACTED, we have several complaints relating to several business accounts which we have received no reply for. One complaint relates to REDACTED charging us for someone else's site which is not related to us in any way. Several complaints were sent in Sept last year and we have still not received a response or refund. REDACTED have also started charging us for a gas meter which we are in contract with to REDACTED until 2025. Again, I've received no response from REDACTED about this and they continue to send us bills. The only method of contact is via the online webform. WhatsApp doesn't work for business. Email doesn't work and phone lines are impossible to get through to and no one has time to be held in queues for hours on end for there still to be no resolution or at times even get disconnected. There has to be a dedicated email address or WhatsApp service for business. There also needs to be an easier way for non-domestic customers to contact suppliers as that too is impossible to sort out extortionate domestic bills. This leaves no choice but to pay them to avoid the penalty charges.

Q10. To what extent do you believe the communication you receive from your non-domestic supplier is clear and transparent? Please provide examples where possible.

There is no communication from suppliers. Only sky-high bills are received and no way/no efficient way of contacting them to complain.

Q11. Do you think the issues around Change of Tenancy/Occupier are significant? What potential solutions would you suggest to address the perceived shortfalls in the existing Change of Tenancy and Change of Occupancy processes, that do not exacerbate the potential for fraud?

Yes changes are needed here as we are dealing with REDACTED for a REDACTED bill relating to a previous tenant. A public house we purchased had tenants living upstairs plus the previous owner we bought the property from, he has since gone bankrupt and we are being harassed into paying the bill that is not our responsibility. REDACTED demand to see the lease but there was no lease as the previous owner was still living there until he could find alternative premises to move to and the other tenant passed away. The bill relates to 2016 which was sent to us in July 2022 having never previously received this. It has been ongoing ever since. They refuse to accept that it is statute barred because they say a statement was sent in the post in July 2017, again this was never received despite their last email message sent to us dated 28/7/2016, ie no email attempts at contacting us re the debt, no reminders or breach of contract or legal action etc.

Q12. Are there any other issues you would like to highlight related to competition in the non-domestic supply market? Please provide detailed explanations.

Smaller suppliers are being eaten up by the big six which is reducing competition, ie consumers who switched to a smaller provider have now been automatically transferred to one of the big six after those companies failed and finding themselves moved onto much higher tariffs.

Q13. Do you believe that there are segments of the non-domestic supply market, other than microbusiness customers, where there is not sufficient market pressure to correct any potential inappropriate supplier behaviours? Please provide detailed descriptions of these customers and evidence to explain your view, including what aspects of harm the regulations would need to help protect against.

The suppliers we use, ie REDACTED and REDACTED need to have a dedicated email address and/or WhatsApp service to help deal with issues, queries and complaints in a timely and efficient manner. Currently the REDACTED auto-reply service quotes 7 days but it is much longer than that, in our case months.

Q14. If you responded yes to question 13, please suggest how these customers could be defined in the supply licence and identified by suppliers and customers.

Q15. If we expanded the definition of microbusiness customers or created a new class of customers, what are the possible implications and costs of doing this?

Q16. What additional protections do you think might need to be put in place to protect domestic customers who are supplied via a non-domestic contract? Please provide an explanation or evidence of the areas of harm any new regulation would protect against.

Q17. Do you agree with the definition of, and clarifications around, what is a domestic customer as described in Appendix A? Are there other areas where further clarification is required?

Q18. Do you have any further comments about how the non-domestic market is currently segmented?