



Making a positive difference
for energy consumers

The Company Secretary

Direct Dial: 0207 901 1883
Email: switchingcompensation@ofgem.gov.uk

Date: 12 July 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: SUPPLIER GUARANTEED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE FOR SWITCHING

On behalf of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority, Ofgem is writing to suppliers to seek information in connection with the Electricity and Gas (Standards of Performance) (Suppliers) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (the 'Regulations').¹ The specific information we are requesting from you is set out in Annex 1 below and in the response template provided with this document.

The information is being requested on a voluntary basis pursuant to the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority's general market monitoring functions under section 34 of the Gas Act 1986 and section 47 of the Electricity Act 1989. You should note that the information we receive may be used for any purposes relating to Ofgem's functions including, but not limited to:

- use in connection with the contents of any advice and information which is to be published pursuant to section 35 of the Gas Act 1986 and section 48 of the Electricity Act 1989 in order to promote the interests of consumers; and
- facilitating policy development in relation to domestic customers, possibly with a view to making proposals to modify the Electricity and Gas (Standards of Performance) (Suppliers) (Amendment) Regulations 2019.

We would ask you to endeavour to provide us with as detailed and accurate information as possible.

Background to this request

In our Final Decision on the Statutory Instrument introducing the Regulations, we noted that the Regulations currently allow for a maximum of one Additional Standard Payment to be made by suppliers for a single failure.² In this document, we note that we expect

¹ See "The Electricity and Gas (Standards of Performance) (Suppliers) (Amendment) Regulations 2019", at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/218/contents/made>.

² See "Supplier Guaranteed Standards of Performance for Switching – Final Decision and Statutory Instrument" at https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2019/02/final_decision_on_si_for_switching_compensation.pdf, p2

suppliers to record the length of time taken to resolve issues of the type covered by the Regulations. We also state that:

“We will use this data to assess the impact of an effective cap on the number of additional standard payments upon consumers. Based on this data, we will consider whether the exemption from making more than one additional standard payment under Paragraph 2 of Regulation 9 of the Principal Regulations should continue to apply to Regulations 6A to 6D, and whether to make further changes when we introduce further Guaranteed Standards with a new Statutory Instrument.”

We are taking this opportunity to request that suppliers provide additional data to inform a decision on whether to amend the Regulations to allow further Additional Standard Payments to be made for episodes of unresolved consumer detriment. This data relates to the time typically taken by suppliers to return credit balances to customers. In Annex 1 to this letter, we set out the additional data that we are requesting from suppliers to inform this decision.

This Request for Information

This letter is provided in addition to the mandatory Request for Information (RfI) to monitor suppliers' compliance with the Regulations. We are requesting the information in this letter in order to assist in informing and developing our policy with regard to the application of Additional Standard Payments. Unlike information collection to monitor ongoing compliance with the Regulations, it is our intention to request the information in this RfI on a one-off basis. With this in mind, we encourage suppliers to provide any information that they have available to help us to build this evidence base.

The data that we are requesting for this particular Request for Information is set out in Annex 1 below, and also in a separate spreadsheet file.

Confidentiality and disclosure

Any information provided to Ofgem which relates to the affairs of an individual or a particular business will be subject to statutory restrictions on disclosure under section 105 of the Utilities Act 2000. However, you should note that there are exceptions to the statutory restrictions, including where the disclosure is necessary to facilitate the statutory functions of Ofgem (e.g. the publishing information to promote the interests of consumers) or other public bodies.

You should note that Ofgem cannot provide any assurances in relation to the treatment of information which may be the subject of a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('FOIA'). However, we can confirm that Ofgem will always consider whether the statutory restrictions on disclosure apply to the requested information and therefore whether one or more of the FOIA exemptions apply.

Before deciding whether to publish any information relating to the affairs of a particular licence holder, Ofgem is required to consider whether it is appropriate to redact any information on the basis that the information would or might, in our opinion, seriously and prejudicially harm the interests of that person ('confidential information'). In order to conduct this assessment, we would ask that you indicate in your response whether you consider any information to be confidential information and provide brief reasoning in support of your views. Where appropriate, we may seek further representations from licence holders at a later stage in respect of any specific information Ofgem is proposing to publish.

Your response

We request that suppliers provide this information by sending the completed electronic spreadsheet response template via email to switchingcompensation@ofgem.gov.uk by 5pm on Friday 30 August 2019.

If you are reading this as part of an email attachment, the spreadsheet template will form a further attachment to that email. We have included a hard copy in the letter sent to suppliers for convenience. Should you not have received a copy of the electronic version, Ofgem will provide a copy on request. If you choose to encrypt this information, please ensure that we are provided with appropriate information to allow us to access it.

Whilst Ofgem has issued separate information requests to each relevant company which holds a gas/electricity supply licence, we request that suppliers provide one consolidated reply on behalf of all the relevant licence holders which received the information request. Furthermore, where a licence holder is part of a corporate group with multiple licence holders, we are happy to receive a single reply on behalf of all the applicable licence holders. If you choose to do this, please indicate the basis upon which you are replying in your response.

If there are any aspects of this RfI that you find unclear, or would like further information on, then please do not hesitate to contact us at switchingcompensation@ofgem.gov.uk or via telephone on 020 7901 1883.

Yours faithfully,



Rachel Clark
Programme Director, Switching Programme

ANNEX 1 - Data requested to inform Ofgem's decision on Additional Standard Payments

Regulation	Data for collection	Calendar Year 2018	Calendar Year 2019 (to date)
6D	The average (mean) time taken to return a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill.		
6D	The maximum time taken to return a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill.		
6D	The number of credit balances refunded 11 – 20 (inclusive) working days after issuance of a final bill.		
6D	The number of credit balances refunded 21-30 (inclusive) working days after issuance of a final bill.		
6D	The number of credit balances refunded more than 30 working days after issuance of a final bill.		

ANNEX 2 - Guaranteed Standards Response Template for Data Returns and Explanatory Notes (to be completed in electronic format emailed separately to your company's relevant contact)

If you have not received this template by email please contact James Crump using our designated Switching Compensation mailbox (SwitchingCompensation@ofgem.gov.uk).

Response template

TEMPLATE FOR DATA RETURNS (Non-mandatory)				
Supplier Name				
Regulation ID	Data for collection	Calendar Year 2018	Calendar Year 2019 (to date)	Comments (optional)
6D	The average (mean) time taken to return a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill.			
6D	The maximum time taken to return a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill.			
6D	The number of credit balances refunded 11 – 20 (inclusive) working days after issuance of a final bill.			
6D	The number of credit balances refunded 21-30 (inclusive) working days after issuance of a final bill.			
6D	The number of credit balances refunded more than 30 working days after issuance of a final bill.			

Supporting information

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR DATA ENTRY SHEET		
	Column Name	Explanatory Note
<p>This section explains the context for the submission you are making, please take note of the meanings of the column names and examples.</p>	supplier_name	This should be the name used by the supplier on its supply licence. If a supplier holds more than one licence, please compile a report for each instance.
	The average (mean) time taken to return a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill.	Please record the mean length of time taken to repay a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill, if this is available.
	The maximum time taken to return a credit balance after the issuance of a final bill.	Please record the longest time taken to return a credit balance to the customer after the issuance of a final bill. You may wish to record the reason in the Comments section.
	The number of credit balances refunded 11 – 20 (inclusive) working days after issuance of a final bill.	Please calculate the number of credit balances which are repaid between 11 and 20 working days after issuance of a final bill in the relevant period, i.e. where the supplier would pay a Standard Payment had the Guaranteed Standard been in place in this period.
	The number of credit balances refunded 21 -30 (inclusive) working days after issuance of a final bill.	Please calculate the number of credit balances which are repaid between 21 and 30 working days after issuance of a final bill in the relevant period, i.e. where the supplier would pay an Additional Standard Payment had the Guaranteed Standard been in place in this period.
	The number of credit balances refunded more than 30 working days after issuance of a final bill.	Please calculate the number of credit balances which are repaid 31 or more working days after issuance of a final bill in the relevant period.

