

Six monthly report on electricity and gas complaints statistics

This report gives the total workload for the six months from 1 April to 30 September 2016, overview of the issues in complaints received in the period, and providers' share of complaints that reached deadlock. The term 'deadlocked' refers to a complaint that is unresolved after a period of time, or if the Commissioner is satisfied certain criteria have been met.

Please note that the figures used in this report are a point in time snapshot. In particular, the "Provider share of complaints reaching deadlock" fluctuates on a monthly basis. Our goal in presenting this six-monthly report is to provide insight into a possible range of fluctuation.

Total workload

The total workload at Utilities Disputes Ltd is measured by the number of enquiries and complaints. Utilities Disputes recorded 2047 enquiries, up 18.3% on the previous six-month period. Complaints decreased by 10.6% with 1162 recorded complaints.

Complaints reaching deadlock, decreased by 33.7% against the same six-month period in 2015. Deadlocked complaints accepted for the Commissioner's consideration in the six-months from 1 April to 30 September 2016 were 137, down from 206.

Issues in complaints

Billing issues of various types continue to be the most common issue in complaints, followed by customer service, disconnection, and meters. Many complaints have more than one issue, therefore these figures are calculated by looking at the frequency of the issues in all complaints. The table below shows the top four complaint issues for the six-month period compared to the same six-month period in 2015, and the previous 12 months.

Issue	% of complaints in period 1 April to 30 September 2016	% of complaints in period 1 April to 30 September 2015	% of complaints in 12 months to 31 March 2016
Billing	50%	44%	41%
Customer Service	22%	20%	27%
Meter	7%	10%	5%
Disconnection	9%	5%	3%

Provider share of complaints reaching deadlock

Since October 2012 the Utilities Disputes Board has published the number of complaints reaching deadlock per provider. This information is presented separately for retail and lines providers, and shows the share of such complaints and market share for the category. Most providers, 149 out of 232, did not have any complaints reaching deadlock. The Board notes - the fact a complaint reaches deadlock does not necessarily mean the company is at fault. It simply means that a complaint will begin the Utilities Disputes complaint resolution process.

Retail	Number of deadlocked complaints	Share of category complaints that reached deadlock	Market share of ICPs
Contact Energy	17	17.50%	21.0%
Flick Electric Co.	1	1.0%	0.40%
Genesis Energy Ltd (Includes Energy Online)	11	11.3%	23.60%
MegaENERGY	1	1.0%	0.20%
Mercury (Includes GLOBUG and Tiny Mighty Power)	14	14.4%	15.40%
Meridian Energy	17	17.50%	9.50%
Nova Energy	15	15.50%	1.30%
Powershop	1	1.0%	2.50%
Pulse Energy (Includes Just Energy, Grey Power Electricity and Black Box Power)	1	1.0%	2.40%
Trustpower (Includes Energy Direct NZ)	17	17.50%	12.20%
Wise Pre Pay Energy	2	2.10%	>0.0%

Lines	Number of deadlocked complaints	Share of category complaints that reached deadlock	Market share of ICPs
Aurora Energy	2	5.0%	5.0%
Counties Power	1	2.50%	2.50%
Northpower	1	2.5%	2.4%
PowerCo	8	20.0%	18.0%
The Lines Company	6	15.0%	1.0%
Top Energy	4	10.0%	1.3%
Unison	2	5.0%	4.7%
Vector	15	37.5%	20.9%
Wellington Electricity	1	2.5%	7.1%

The Board acknowledges providers' role in ensuring consumers know they can access Utilities Disputes. Providers who comply with this obligation promote trust in the industry through improving consumer access to external, independent complaint resolution.

Complaints reach deadlock for several reasons, including:

- A problem with a provider's systems, customer service, or complaint handling processes
- A provider's belief they are not liable and the dispute about this remains unresolved
- A provider may extend the Commissioner's jurisdiction to consider a particular complaint
- The complaint involves complex and unusual events that present unexplored issues.

Utilities Disputes is the approved resolution scheme for complaints about electricity and gas providers. All electricity and gas providers must join Utilities Disputes and tell customers they are providers. Utilities Disputes can consider complaints up to \$50,000, or up to \$100,000 with agreement from the provider.

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