

Six monthly report on electricity and gas complaints statistics

This report gives the total operations workload of the Energy Complaints Scheme operated by Utilities Disputes¹ for the six months from 1 April to 30 September 2017. It also gives an overview of the issues in complaints received in the period, and lists 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.

Operations workload

The operations workload for the Energy Complaints Scheme is measured, amongst other factors, by the number of enquiries and complaints. We recorded 1716 enquiries, down 16.2% on the previous six-month period. Complaints decreased by 7.8% with 1071 recorded complaints.

Complaints reaching deadlock, decreased by 33.1% against the same six-month period in 2016. Complaints reaching deadlock, accepted for the Commissioner's consideration in the six-months from 1 April to 30 September 2017 were 74, down from 137.

Issues in complaints

Billing issues of various types continue to be the most common issue in complaints, followed by customer service, supply, disconnection, and meter. 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 five complaint issues for the six-month period compared to the same six-month period in 2016, and the previous 12 months.

Issue	% of complaints in period 1 April to 30 September 2017	% of complaints in period 1 April to 30 September 2016	% of complaints in 12 months to 31 March 2017
Billing	39%	46%	45%
Customer Service	28%	20%	21%
Supply	7%	5%	5%
Disconnection	6%	8%	8%
Meter	5%	6%	6%

¹ Utilities Disputes is a not-for-profit organisation that provides dispute resolution and related services in the utilities sector. The Energy Complaints scheme (formerly the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Scheme) is the approved scheme to which all participants in the electricity and gas providers must belong, unless exempt.

Provider share of complaints reaching deadlock

Since October 2012 we have published the number of complaints reaching deadlock per provider. This information is presented separately for retail and distribution providers, and shows the share of such complaints and market share for the category. Most providers, 220 out of 246, did not have any complaints reaching deadlock, accepted for consideration. The fact a complaint reaches deadlock, or reaches deadlock and is accepted for consideration, does not necessarily mean the company is at fault. It simply means that a complaint has reached the stage where it may be accepted into Utilities Disputes' resolution process.

Retail brand	Number of complaints	Share of complaints	Market share of ICPs (or equivalent)	Total ICPs (or equivalent)
Contact Energy*	2	5.4%	20.26%	518,348
Ecotricity	1	2.7%	0.05%	1,343
Elgas	4	10.8%	0.97%	24,786
Flick Electric Co.	3	8.1%	0.75%	19,162
Genesis Energy	2	5.4%	21.39%	547,256
GLOBUG	1	2.7%	1.14%	29,050
Grey Power Electricity	2	5.4%	ICPs under Pulse Energy	
Just Energy	2	5.4%	ICPs under Pulse Energy	
Mercury NZ	3	8.1%	15.09%	386,069
Meridian Energy	9	24.3%	8.60%	220,126
Nova Energy*	5	13.5%	5.68%	145,246
Pulse Energy	1	2.7%	2.38%	60,838
Tiny Mighty Power	1	2.7%	ICPs under Mercury NZ	
Trustpower*	1	2.7%	11.67%	298,519
Total	37	100%	87.97%	2,558,425†

*Only includes retail ICPs (or equivalent)

†Overall total of ICPs

Distributor	Number of complaints	Share of complaints	Market share of ICPs (or equivalent)	Total ICPs (or equivalent)
Alpine Energy	1	2.7%	1.36%	32,175
Aurora Energy	2	5.4%	3.71%	87,640
Counties Power	4	10.8%	1.75%	41,184
Eastland Network	1	2.7%	1.08%	25,419
Horizon Energy Distribution	2	5.4%	1.04%	24,536
Powerco	4	10.8%	18.04%	425,721

The Lines Company	4	10.8%	0.99%	23,444
Top Energy	1	2.7%	1.33%	31,484
Unison Networks	1	2.7%	4.66%	110,054
Vector	11	29.7%	27.83%	656,817
WEL Networks	2	5.4%	3.80%	89,735
Wellington Electricity Lines	4	10.8%	7.06%	166,555
Total	37	100%	72.67%	2,359,798†

†Overall total of ICPs

NB: The ICP and equivalent total is calculated as at 28 February 2017 from ICPs on the electricity and gas registries, and customer numbers obtained from providers.

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.

Media contact:

Zoe Priestley

z.priestley@utilitiesdisputes.co.nz

+64 4 914 4525