

Consultation on a New Supplier Code of Practice on Bills and Statements

1. *Do you agree that where this consultation has an impact on the groups listed, those impacts are likely to be positive in relation to equality of opportunity for energy consumers?*

Budget Energy agree that the impacts are likely to be positive in relation to equality of opportunity for energy consumers.

2. *Do you consider that the proposals for the development of the code of practice on bills and statements need to be refined in any way to meet the equality provisions? If so, why and how. Please provide supporting information and evidence.*

We would agree that the proposals for the new supplier code of practice on bills and statements meet equality provisions.

3. *Do you support the development of a code of practice on bills and statements that is based on high level principles and includes specific rules where required? If not, what approach do you suggest the UR takes in order to develop a code of practice on bills and statements?*

Yes, Budget Energy supports the development of a code based on high level principles and specific rules.

4. *What is your view on the proposed arrangements for the monitoring of compliance with the code of practice on bills and statements?*

We agree and understand that suppliers will be required to keep record of their compliance and provide information to the UR for monitoring purposes. We welcome this, with the provision that it is not too onerous & prescriptive.

5. *Do you support the breakdown of the code of practice on bills and statements into the categories as detailed above? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative breakdown?*

Yes, we agree with the breakdown of the code of practice as detailed in the consultation document.

6. *Are there any other aspects related to bills and statements or to the billing processes which you think should be covered under the code of practice which are not mentioned above?*

Budget Energy suggests that suppliers provide information on composition of charge analysed between energy costs / network costs / policy costs / other costs in line with REMM reporting and also ensuring this does not result in bills being too complex for customers or too onerous for suppliers.

7. Do you support the overarching principle that “all bills and statements are clear and easily understandable”? If not, please explain why and provide alternative overarching principles.

Yes, we agree that all bills and statements should be easily read and understandable.

8. With regard to domestic customer, do you agree with the use of the definition of “average consumer” taken from the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008? If not, please explain why and provide an alternative definition.

Yes Budget Energy agrees with the definition of “average consumer”

9. Do you support the principle that 2 “a customer is able to find quickly and understand important on the bill or statement”? If yes, please indicate what you deem to be the most important information on a bill or statement. If no, please explain why you do not support this principal

Yes – most important elements are:

- Total balance due
- When due
- Time period covered by bill
- Consumption in period
- Tariff price

10. Do you support the principle that a “customer will know immediately what action is required from them when reading a bill or statement”? If yes, please indicate what you deem to be the most important information on a bill or statement. If no, please explain why you do not support this principle.

Yes – Amount Due

11. Do you support the principle that “bills and statements are based on accurate information and up to date meter reads where possible”? If not, please explain why you do not support this principle.

Yes

12. Do you support the principle that “domestic customers will be made aware id there are cheaper tariffs available to them? If yes, please indicate which of the three options presented above for domestic customers is the most appropriate way of making this information available to customer (and explain the rationale for your choice)? If no, please explain why you do not support this principle.

Yes – strong preference is for 3rd option where supplier will highlight to the customer that cheaper tariff options are available and direct customer to the source of this information (pages 38- 40, is the one that probably has the biggest impact on suppliers)

13. Do you support the principle that “non-domestic customers will be made aware if there are cheaper tariffs available to them”? If yes, please indicate how you think this information would be presented to non-domestic customers. If no, please indicate why you do not support this principle.

No – As the vast bulk of non-domestic customers are obtained through competitive quote / tender and are usually subject to a contractual term, we feel that existing competitive market forces are sufficient in ensuring that non-domestic customers are getting the most competitive price.