



The Consumer Council

Elizabeth House
116 Hollywood Road
Belfast
BT4 1NY

Linda Beirne
Gas Directorate
Queens House
14 Queen Street
Belfast
BT1 6ED

9 January 2012

Dear Linda,

Re: BGE (NI) Price Control Review 2012-17, timetable and approach. PID 200101121

The Consumer Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

The Consumer Council is an independent consumer organisation set up in legislation to safeguard the interests of Northern Ireland consumers, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged. We work to promote and protect consumer interest and bring about change to benefit consumers. Our aim is to make the consumer voice heard and make it count.

We represent consumers in the areas of transport, water and energy. We also have responsibility to educate consumers on their rights and responsibilities and to equip them with the skills they need to make good decisions about their money and manage it wisely.

With fuel poverty levels in Northern Ireland at 44 per cent, many households are struggling to adequately heat their home, it is important that the regulatory structures aim to protect consumers and minimise the cost of energy to consumers. In dealing with network price controls the Utility Regulator, (the Regulator) must keep in mind that its' primary objective is to protect the interests of consumers.

We would expect to see that the aim to protect consumers is made explicit when the Price Control Proposals are published in March.

If you wish to discuss this response in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Williams on 028 9067 4895 or by email at rwilliams@consumercouncil.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Williams', written in a cursive style.

Richard Williams
Senior Consumer Affairs Officer