

## Six monthly report on energy complaints

This report about the Energy Complaints Scheme operated by Utilities Disputes<sup>1</sup> gives statistics for the six months from 1 April to 30 September 2018. We include an overview of the issues in complaints received in the period, and list providers' share of complaints that reached deadlock and were accepted for consideration by the Commissioner's office. Note - 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 2,441 enquiries, up 43.0% on the previous six-month period. Complaints decreased by 1.6% with 1,055 recorded complaints.

Complaints reaching deadlock increased by 20.7% against the same six-month period in 2017 (from 203 to 245). Complaints reaching deadlock, accepted for the Commissioner's consideration in the six-months from 1 April to 30 September 2018 were 85, up from 74.

### 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 2017, and the previous 12 months.

Issue	% of complaints in period 1 April to 30 September 2018	% of complaints in period 1 April to 30 September 2017	% of complaints in 12 months to 31 March 2018
Billing	65%	43%	58%
Customer service	45%	33%	37%
Supply	9%	9%	8%
Disconnection	11%	8%	9%
Meter	11%	8%	8%

<sup>1</sup> 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 that all energy retailers and distributors must join, unless exempt.

## Provider share of complaints reaching deadlock

Since October 2012 we have published the number of complaints reaching deadlock, accepted for consideration 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, 260 out of 286, 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*	10	22.2%	20.1%	524,533
Ecotricity	1	2.2%	0.1%	2,826
Elgas	4	8.9%	1.1%	28,076
Flick Electric Co	2	4.4%	0.9%	23,084
Genesis Energy	7	15.6%	21.7%	566,185
GLOBUG	1	2.2%	1.1%	27,395
ID Power	1	2.2%	0.0%	55
Mercury	4	8.9%	15.3%	398,284
Meridian Energy	4	8.9%	8.6%	223,100
Nova Energy	1	2.2%	4.1%	106,671
OnGas	1	2.2%	1.1%	27,591
Pulse Energy	2	4.4%	2.8%	73,507
Slingshot Power	1	2.2%	ICPs under Switch Utilities	
Supercharged Energy	1	2.2%	0.0%	4
Switch Utilities	1	2.2%	0.5%	13,567
Trustpower	4	8.9%	11.3%	295,020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,608,178 †</b>

\*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)
Aurora Energy	7	17.5%	3.7%	89,074
Counties Power	2	5.0%	1.7%	41,980
Electra	1	2.5%	1.9%	44,578

Network Tasman	1	2.5%	1.6%	39,507
Northpower	1	2.5%	2.4%	57,888
Powerco	4	10.0%	17.9%	431,118
The Lines Company (TLC)	5	12.5%	1.0%	23,556
Top Energy	3	7.5%	1.3%	31,926
Unison	4	10.0%	4.6%	110,887
Vector	10	25.0%	18.3%	440,138
WEL Networks	1	2.5%	3.8%	91,136
Wellington Electricity (WE*)	1	2.5%	6.9%	167,093
<b>TOTAL</b>	40	100.0%	100.0%	2,407,324

†Overall total of ICPs

**NB:** The ICP and equivalent total is calculated as at 28 February 2018 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 energy providers. All energy retailers and distributors 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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