



Energy Suppliers Statement on DTI Energy Billing and Metering Consultation

Our bills and meters are at the heart of the energy retail business and are one of the ways that as customers we have contact with our energy company. Energy companies send out 200 million bills each year with a range of information about our energy accounts. Against the background of climate change and high wholesale energy prices customers have never taken more interest in their bills.

Work to date

The DTI's consultation paper provides a unique opportunity to review how our energy is used and measured. It will allow energy suppliers to build on the work of suppliers over the last year. This includes:

- In July the industry launched a Code of Practice for Accurate Bills which will be independently audited to ensure that all energy companies have consistent and robust billing systems.
- The Code is backed up by the Energy Supply Ombudsman, which was set up by the industry as an independent body specifically to deal with complaints where the customer was not satisfied with the response from their energy supplier. The decision of the ombudsman is binding on the company but not on the consumer.
- A number of the suppliers have also redesigned their bills during this time.

Energy Bills

Current regulations stipulate the content of 80% of our electricity and gas bills. We welcome this consultation which will hopefully allow us the opportunity to review the content and presentation of energy bills in the future.

Overall the industry has past record of year on year reductions in complaint levels. According to energywatch's September monthly report on complaints statistics, "energywatch has so far received this financial year 18,314 complaints that is 7% less than in the same months last year". These complaints only represent 0.01% of the 25 million energy customers.

Smart Meters

Britain's energy suppliers have been running trials of "smart meters" for many years, which allow more information to be sent to the meter and more information to be available in our homes. For example, we could have displays in our kitchen that are easier to read than the meter under the stairs. We are excited about this new technology and it's now a matter of how we make these new devices affordable for everyone.