

Code of Practice on Provision of Services for Persons who are of Pensionable Age or Disabled or Chronically Sick

www.firmusenergy.co.uk



This Code of Practice outlines the firmus energy (Supply) Limited (firmus energy, us, we, our) policies in relation to the provision of services for customers who are of pensionable age or disabled, including in particular domestic customers who are disabled by virtue of being blind, partially sighted, deaf or hearing impaired or chronically sick.

firmus energy's vision is to become Northern Ireland's 1st choice energy provider for industrial, commercial and residential customers. We aim to do so by simply putting our customers first.

At firmus energy we understand that no two customers are the same and it is important to have a range of services to meet their differing needs. It is our objective to provide the best service possible to all of our customers.

To help try and make life as easy as possible for our customers who require special services, for example elderly or hearing impaired customers, we have developed this Code of Practice, where we have set down our commitments to providing those special services via our firmuscare scheme for gas customers. These services are offered free of charge and all information provided is completely confidential.

Customers can register for the firmuscare scheme if they are of pensionable age, chronically sick or disabled and living alone. If you are not living alone but with a minor or another person of pensionable age, chronically ill or disabled you may also be eligible for firmuscare.

We will ensure that our staff is adequately trained to implement this Code of Practice, and we will work closely with organisations representing customers with special needs to ensure that we continue to provide the appropriate services.

Services provided to firmuscare customers

Where reasonably practicable and appropriate, and for no cost, we will:

1. Provide special controls and adaptors for gas appliances and meters and arrange repositioning of meters (including prepayment meters) by the network operator.
2. Provide special I.D. for employees authorised by us to visit households. This will include the operation of a password scheme.
3. Provide advice on the use of gas appliances and other gas fittings (where appropriate) to any such customer that requests it.

4. Operate a nomination or bill redirection service for those customers who wish to have their bills redirected to a nominated person in addition to a copy of the bill sent to the actual customer if requested. We will ensure that the nominated person has agreed to receive the bills.
5. Arrange to read the meter at least once each quarter and advise the customer of that reading where the customer or no one else in the household can read the meter.
6. Arrange for a free annual gas safety inspection of the gas appliances and other gas fittings. Please Note - This only applies to households where all occupants are either of pensionable age, chronically sick, disabled or under 18 years old. This also does not apply where the landlord of the customer is responsible for the annual inspection in accordance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. The safety inspection will be undertaken by an approved 'Gas Safe' registered specialist.
7. Provide alternative formats of communications for those domestic customers who require it, including as a minimum, terms and conditions, billing information, Codes of Practice and complaints procedures. We will also assist blind or partially sighted, or deaf or hearing impaired customers to enquire or complain about any bill, statement or service provided to them.

Disconnection

firmus energy will never disconnect any firmuscare scheme customer (where all occupants are either of pensionable age, chronically sick, disabled or under 18 years old), who has not paid their bill, during any winter period. This is any period beginning with 1 October in any year and ending with 31 March in the following year.

Similarly we will always take reasonable steps to avoid disconnecting the supply to premises during any winter period, where a bill has not been paid and where a household includes an occupant who is of pensionable age or disabled or chronically sick.

Customers who are finding it hard to pay their gas bills should arrange to contact us immediately on 0330 024 9000 (Monday- Thursday, 9am-5pm, Friday 9am – 3.30pm). We promise to deal with all enquires in a sensitive and professional manner. Further details on our policies may be found in our Code of Practice on Payment of Bills.

The firmuscare Register

As part of our regulatory obligations, firmus energy will establish and maintain a register of all customers on the firmuscare scheme. We will ensure that the register holds sufficient information of the age, disability or chronic illness of domestic customers to allow their specific needs or requirements to be identified.

From time to time we may contact our firmuscare scheme customers and request information required to keep the register up-to-date and relevant.

The information collected for our firmuscare register is completely confidential, however, in line with our licence requirements and data protection provisions, we share data held in relation to customers' accounts with the Network Operator. This includes data on registered vulnerable customers, to ensure they are provided with the additional services provided by the Network Operator. In the event that we are unable to provide customers with a gas supply, the Network Operator may forward all data they hold to the Supplier of Last Resort appointed by the Utility Regulator.

How to register to the firmuscare scheme

Customers can register for either scheme by:

- Providing the necessary details on application to become a firmus energy customer.
- Contacting firmus energy at any time when there is a change in customer requirements at the property.

For more information or to join our firmuscare scheme, please:

Phone our Customer Service Line on **0330 024 9000** (Monday- Thursday, 9am-5pm, Friday 9am – 3.30pm)

e-mail: furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk

Or write to us at the below address:

firmus energy
A4 & A5 Fergusons Way
Kilbegs Road
Antrim
BT41 4LZ

A copy of this Code of Practice is available on our website or can be provided free of charge by contacting us using any of the above methods.

Other useful information and advice is also available from the Consumer Council.

The Consumer Council
Floor 3
Seatem House,
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast
BT2 8EN

Complaints:
Telephone ☎ 0800 121 6022

Email: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

Web: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

www.firmusenergy.co.uk

