



Guaranteed Standards of Service  
Gas Distribution - Notice of Rights  
January 2016

## A) Introduction

This document explains the individual standards of performance you can expect from firmus energy Distribution Ltd (firmus energy) and outlines the compensation you could receive if we fail to deliver these standards. The document has been written in accordance with the Gas (Individual Standards of Performance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014. firmus energy's vision is to become Northern Ireland's 1<sup>st</sup> Choice energy provider for Industrial, Commercial and Domestic customers. We aim to do this by simply putting our customers first.

firmus energy is a licensed natural gas distribution business responsible for the safe delivery of natural gas throughout its network area. firmus energy operates the natural gas network from Derry/Londonderry in the North West down to Ballymena and from Antrim down to Newry along the South North pipeline. This covers the towns of Derry, Coleraine, Limavady, Portstewart, Bushmills, Ballymena, Antrim, Ballyclare, Moira, Lurgan, Craigavon, Portadown, Tandragee, Armagh, Newry, Warrenpoint, Banbridge, Bessbrook, Glenavy and Crumlin.

### **Our contact details;**

firmus energy (Supply & Distribution)

A4-A5 Fergusons Way

Kilbegs Rd Antrim

BT41 4LZ

**Telephone:** 0800 0324567

**Internet:** <http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk>

### **Our Office Hours;**

Monday to Thursday 9:00am to 5pm

Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm

## **B) Individual (Guaranteed) Standards of Service**

### **1) Meter Disputes**

If you are a Domestic customer and advise us that you suspect your meter to be operating incorrectly, we will provide you with an explanation on the probable cause within 15 working days. If an appointment is necessary, we will offer this within 7 working days to investigate. If you inform your supplier of an issue, your supplier must report this to us within 1 working day. Where we are notified after 4pm on a working day or at any time on any other day, the period will commence on the next following working day. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic customers will receive £25.

### **2) Meter Mix-ups**

If you are billed an incorrect amount by your gas supplier due to us having incorrectly advised your gas supplier of the meter assigned to your property, Domestic customers will receive £50 and Non-Domestic customers will also receive £50.

### **3) Prepayment Meters**

If you are a Domestic customer with a prepayment meter and you notify us that your meter is not operating so as to allow the supply of gas to your premises, we will deal with the reported failure of your prepayment meter within 4 working hours. If you inform your supplier of a problem with your prepayment meter, your supplier must notify us of any report of the problem within 4 working hours. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic customers will receive £25.

### **4) Appointments**

If you are a Domestic customer we will offer and keep any appointment with you within the time bands 8.30-13.00 or 12.00-17.00 or, if requested, within a minimum two hour time band. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic customers will receive £25.

### **5) Supply Restoration**

firmus energy will restore supply of gas to your property within 24 hours if this has been discontinued as a result of a failure of, fault in or damage to our pipe-line system. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic customers will receive £50 plus a further £25 for each additional period of 24 hours in which you are without supply, up to a maximum of £1,000.

However, Non-Domestic customers (whose annual consumption is less than 73,250kWh) will receive £125 plus a further £25 for each additional period of 24 hours in which you continue to be without supply, up to a maximum of £1,000.

These payments will not apply where the fault occurred because of an act or default on the part of the customer, or the event caused the loss of supply to more than 20% of customer's premises.

## **6) Reinstatement of Customer's Premises**

firmus energy will reinstate your premises within five working days following completion of work to a service pipe and any associated work to a distribution main where the pipe or main lies under or within your premises. If we fail to meet this standard Domestic customers will receive £50 plus a further £25 for each additional period of five working days until the premises are reinstated, up to a maximum of £1,000.

Non-Domestic customers will receive £100 plus a further £25 for each additional period of five working days until the premises are reinstated, up to a maximum of £1,000.

However, these payments do not apply if the work is required because of the actions of the customer.

## **7) Connections<sup>1</sup>**

firmus energy will provide an accurate Standard Quotation for obtaining a new connection or altering an existing connection within 10 working days. A *Standard Quotation* means a quotation (excluding a self-quote) that can be determined without visiting your premises. If your quotation is non-standard and we need to visit your premises, we will provide an accurate quotation within 28 days. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic and Non-Domestic customers will receive £50 plus a further £50 for each additional working day we fail to provide a quotation, up to a maximum of £250 (for a new connection or altering an existing connection up to and including 275kWh per hour) or £500 (for a new connection or altering an existing connection greater than 275kWh per hour), or the quotation sum, whichever is lowest.

## **8) Notification of Planned Interruption**

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<sup>1</sup> Excludes Domestic developments, Non-Domestic developments, complex connections, and excluded connections. Please contact firmus energy for further details <http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk>

firmus energy will give customers at least 3 days notice if their supply is to be interrupted by planned maintenance or replacement work to our pipe-line system. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic customers will receive £25 and Non-Domestic customers will receive £50.

## **9) Responding to Complaints**

i) Where a telephone complaint or written complaint is received, and we are unable to provide a substantive response without visiting your premises or make enquires of persons other than officers, employees or agents of our company, you will receive an initial response within 10 working days. This will include the name, telephone number and address of an employee you can contact regarding your complaint. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic customers will receive £25 and Non-Domestic customers will receive £25.

ii) Where an initial response to a complaint has been provided, we will provide a substantive response within 20 working days from the date the complaint was received. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic and Non-Domestic customers will receive £25 plus a further £25 for each additional period of 10 days which expires for a failure to provide a substantive response, up to a maximum of £100.

iii) Where a telephone complaint or written complaint is received and we do not need to visit your premises or make enquires of persons other than officers, employees or agents of our company we will send you a substantive response within 10 working days from the date the complaint was received. If we fail to meet this standard, Domestic and Non-Domestic customers will receive £25 plus a further £25 for each additional period of 10 days which expires for a failure to provide a substantive response, up to a maximum of £100.

Please Note that the aggregate compensation limit for the failure to provide an initial and / or substantive response under points i, ii, & iii (above) is £100.

## **10) Making Standard Payments**

If firmus energy fails to provide you with your compensatory payment within 20 working days, we will make an additional payment of £25 for both Domestic customers and Non-Domestic customers.

Please note that payments will be made automatically (on condition that you have provided relevant details to firmus energy), with the exception of Standards 7 and 8 which require you to claim the payment from firmus energy. Claims made under Standard 8 must be received by us within 3 months. Claims can be made by contacting our offices during working hours, which are set out at the start of this document.

## C) Exemptions

The Gas (Individual Standards of Performance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 detail a number of circumstances where the guaranteed standards may not apply. These include:

- Where you inform us that you do not want us to take any action or further action;
- Where you agree that any action we have taken (or promise to take) meets the requirement of the guaranteed standard;
- Where we require information from you in order to meet our standard, you either telephone a number or send the information to an address other than the one which we provided, or you contact us outside our normal working hours; and
- Where we could not have reasonably been expected to meet our Guaranteed Standard(s) due to:
  - Severe weather conditions;
  - Industrial action by our employees or contractors;
  - The actions of a third party;
  - Inability of firmus energy to gain access to relevant premises;
  - The possibility we may break the law by complying with the guaranteed standard;
  - The effects of an event for which emergency regulations have been made under Part 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (8);
  - Delays imposed by a requirement to obtain a permit for street works under the Road (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 (9); and
  - Other exceptional circumstances beyond our control.
- Where information provided by the customer is considered frivolous or vexatious;
- Where you are responsible for damage to our natural gas equipment<sup>2</sup> or have failed to pay outstanding charges; and
- Where you have been disconnected or refused connection<sup>3</sup> to our network.

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<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Section 10 of the Energy Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with our licence, as held under Article 8 (1) (a) of the Gas Order

## D) Disputes

If you wish to dispute any decision made by firmus energy regarding payment for failing to meet any of our guaranteed standards, you can refer your query to the Utility Regulator, whose contact details are as follows:

Utility Regulator

Queens House

14 Queen Street Belfast

BT1 6ED

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 28 9031 1575 **Fax:** +44 (0) 28 9031 1740

**Email:** [info@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:info@uregni.gov.uk)

**Internet:** <http://www.uregni.gov.uk/contacts/>