Code of Practice on Payment of Bills (Electricity Supply)

firmus energy

transitioning to net zero carbon

The purpose of the Code of Practice on Payment of Bills is to inform customers what actions firmus energy takes to help domestic energy customers cope with energy bills and avoid and/or manage debt. Should you have any queries on the information contained in your bill please do not hesitate to contact our Customer Services team who will be happy to talk this through with you. Alternatively, we have a guide on how to read and understand your bill on our website.

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.

Definition of debt

"For the purposes of the Code of Practice on Payment of Bills only, debt will be defined as any amount which remains unpaid outside the payment terms in the supplier's terms and conditions. For example, if a customer's payment for a bill is due within 14 days from the date of the bill, then this amount would be defined as debt if it remained unpaid from day 15."

We understand that circumstances can lead to difficulties in making payments from time to time. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you wish to discuss any bill that you have received, to query the reads or amount, or to advise your payment is processing. We will be happy to help.

Identifying customers in difficulty

firmus energy will distinguish, so far as is reasonably practicable, those customers who may have difficulty in paying bills through misfortune or inability to cope with credit terms.

We will do this by:

- Forming relationships with advice giving organisations and charitable organisations which seek to help customers who are, or may be at risk of, having difficulty paying bills. We can provide a list of organisations that may be able to offer support or may be able to refer you to them directly.

- Proactively seeking to identify and communicate with customers having difficulty or at risk of having difficulty paying their bills and ensuring all relevant services are offered by our trained staff to assist these customers. We may also contact you via telephone, letter or email in an effort to offer support with your account.

- Communicating with customers to improve customer insight data to help identify customers having difficulty, or at risk of having difficulty paying their bills.

- Using customer records to identify those who have experienced difficulty in the past and offer early intervention to prevent debt building up.

- Increasing customer awareness of debt advice services.

- Encouraging customers having or at risk of having difficulty with payments to self-identify to us as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us, we are here to help and will work with you to find a solution to fit your needs.

Appropriate training has been given to relevant staff to help them identify customers having or at risk of having difficulty paying bills. If you are experiencing difficulties paying bills, or you have had a change of circumstances such as redundancy or incapacitating illness, please contact our Customer Service Team on 0330 024 9000 (Monday to Thursday, 9am – 5pm; Friday 9am -3.30pm).

In addition, our trained staff can provide energy efficiency advice to enable customers to reduce electricity consumption and costs. More information is available in our Code of Practice on the Efficient Use of Energy. This is available on our website.

Payment arrangements for recovering debt

firmus energy will put in place arrangements which enable Customers in difficulties to pay in instalments the charges accrued for the supply of electricity. We will work with you to arrange an agreeable solution.

Depending on your circumstances, payment of arrears may be organised by way of instalments paid via direct debit, cash, cheque or prepayment meter.

firmus energy will always endeavour to ensure that repayments and the repayment period are appropriate for the customer's individual circumstances. firmus energy has specifically trained staff to help assess a customer's ability to pay. In addition, where appropriate, and with the customer's consent, we shall use information provided by other persons or organisations to ascertain the ability of customers in difficulty to comply with payment arrangements.

We will monitor all debt repayment plans that have been put in place and reassess the level of repayment if it is apparent that the customer is having difficulty in keeping up with the repayments. We would encourage any customer whose payment plan is no longer suitable to contact us as soon as possible so that we can reassess.

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Failure to adhere to your payment plan (as agreed with the firmus energy credit control department) may result in an administration fee being charged. If an administration charge is applied, we will notify you that you have defaulted on the payment plan and the fee has been added to your account

firmus energy will ensure that its correspondence is friendly, helpful and supportive of its customers' individual needs.

If you are experiencing any difficulties with your current repayment plan, then please contact our Customer Service Team on 0330 024 9000 (Monday to Thursday, 9am – 5pm; Friday 9am -3.30pm)

Prepayment meters

If a customer fails to comply with the instalment arrangements set out by firmus energy, we may organise the installation of a prepayment meter (where safe and practicable to do so). We will notify you in advance of any meter exchange taking place.

Taking into account your ability to pay and your individual circumstances a prepayment meter can be adjusted to recover debt owing. The rate of recovery from each top up will be a maximum of 40%.

For more information regarding the repayment of debt through a prepayment meter, please contact our Customer Service Team as detailed above, or see our Code of Practice on Services for Prepayment Meter Customers. This is available on our website.

For more information regarding debt repayment and billing, please:

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

e-mail: furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk

Or write to us at the below address:

firmus energy
5 Trench Road
Mallusk
Newtownabbey
BT36 4TY

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. If you remain unhappy with the level of repayment offered the Consumer Council may be able to offer further support.

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

Telephone ☎ 0800 121 6022
Email: contact@consumercouncil.org.uk
Web: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

www.firmusenergy.co.uk

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