

Domestic Supplier liaison

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Lead
9.30 - 9.45	Teams link open for arrivals	
9.45 - 9.55	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actions from 10 Feb 2021	Jess Hawker Meadley and Suzi Cassie EHU
9.55 - 10.05	Consumer Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations Update	Jess Hawker Meadley Citizens Advice
10.05 - 10.15	ADS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations update	Pamela Stewart Advice Direct Scotland
10.15 - 10.55	EHU Domestic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations Update• New Priority Process• Industry trends, including an update on self-disconnection	Natasha Gilmour, Angus McMillan & George Holmes EHU
10.55 to 11.05	Break	
11.05 - 11.20	Citizens Advice Energy Policy Team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy update	Alex Belsham - Harris Citizens Advice
11.20 - 11.35	Energy Advice & Business Development programme update	Sue Davies Energy Advice Development Manager Vicki Prout Business Development Strategic Lead
11.40 - 11.55	Ombudsman Services: Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations Update	Jonathan Lenton Ombudsman Services: Energy
11.55 - 12:00	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next date 4th August 2021	Jess Hawker Meadley Citizens Advice

Supplier Liaison update

citizens
advice

Jess Hawker Meadley
Operations

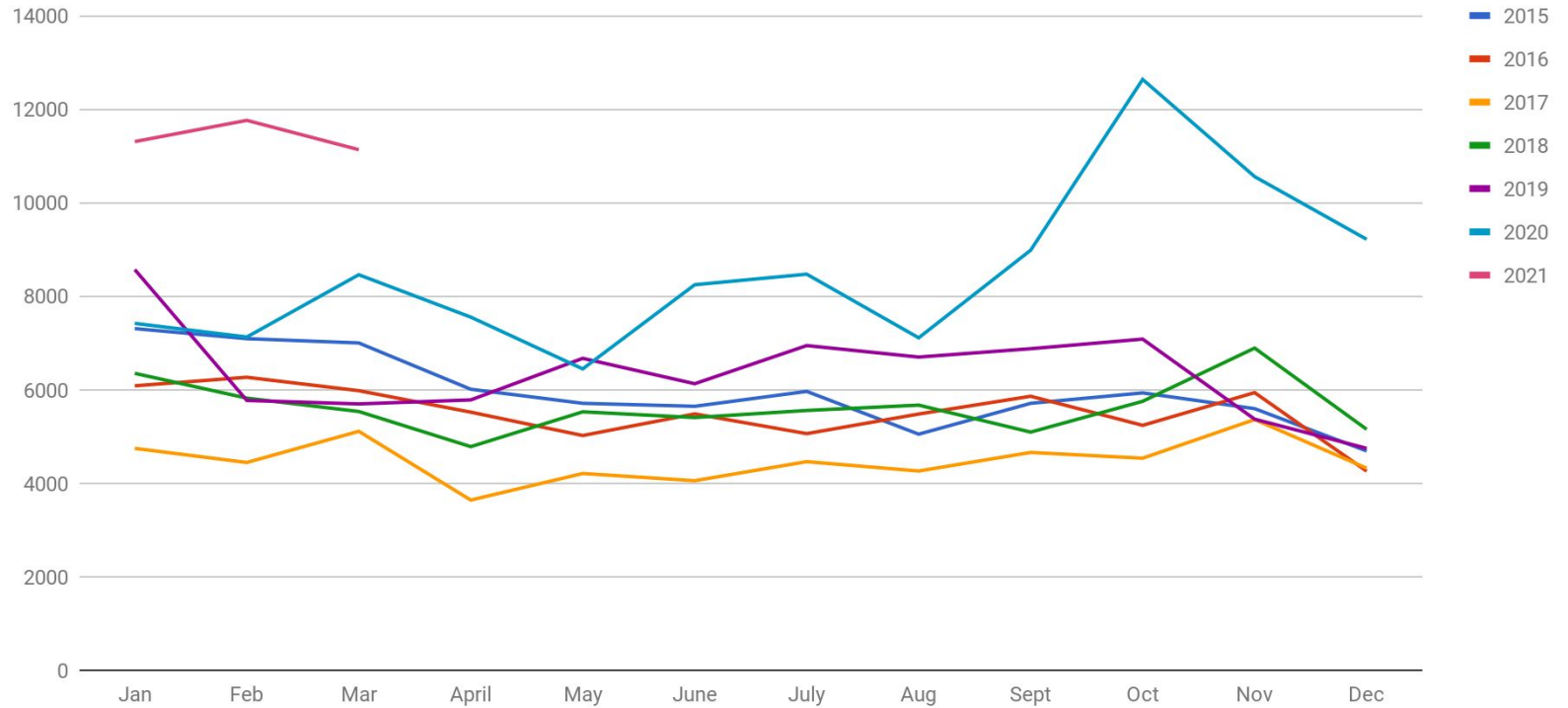
Performance and Operations Q4

- Key points from Q4 are:
 - Preparing systems and processes for the transfer of Scottish contacts from 1st April
 - Holding delivery centre meetings across 4 centres remotely looking at key areas of work such as:
 - performance
 - adviser wellbeing
 - equity, diversity and inclusion work.

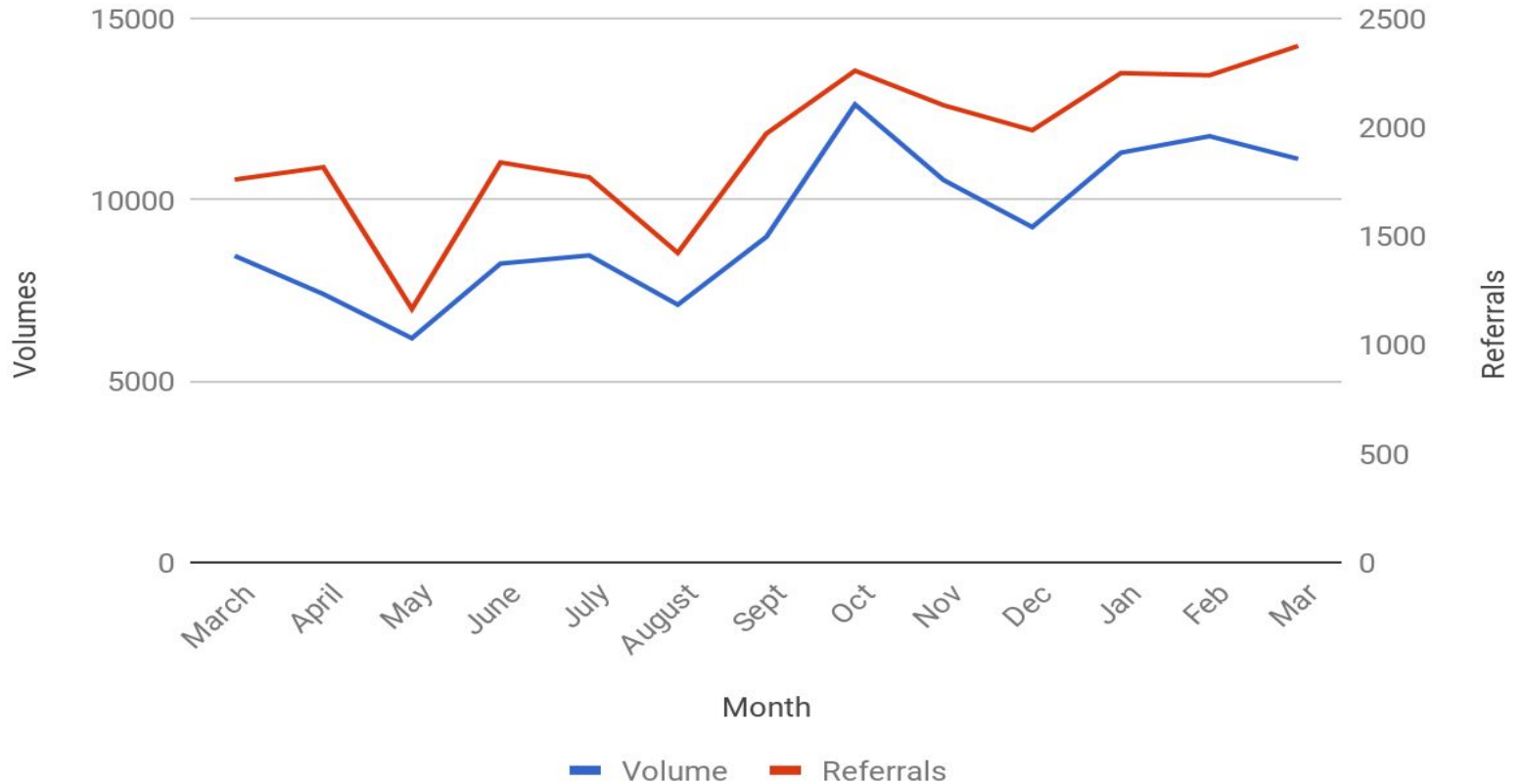
Contact volumes comparison

Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	7304	6080	4745	6357	8566	7416	11304
February	7089	6263	4440	5817	5768	7124	11758
March	6997	5976	5107	5531	5693	8456	11138
April	6007	5517	3612	4779	5779	7430	
May	5706	5017	4205	5524	6668	6234	
June	5642	5480	4051	5402	6125	8102	
July	5961	5057	4458	5553	6941	8348	
August	5046	5477	4283	5667	6695	7009	
September	5706	5857	4655	5090	6874	8820	
October	5929	5235	5261	5749	7079	12536	
November	5592	5935	5359	6887	5367	10546	
December	4687	4255	4319	5150	4743	9249	
Total	71,666	66,149	54,492	67,506	76,298	101,914	34,200

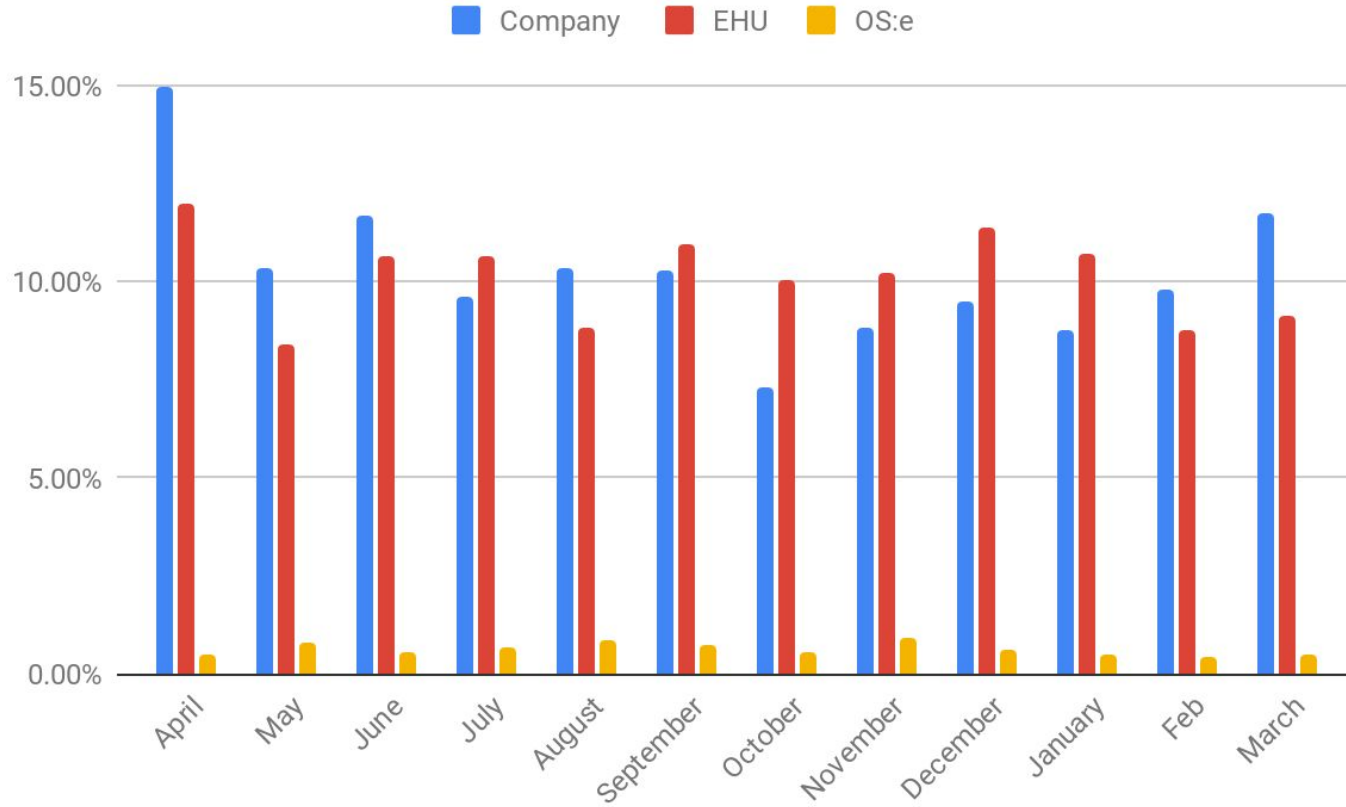
Contact volumes comparison 2015 - 2021



Referrals against volumes Mar 20 - present



Referral proportions Apr 20 - present



Recorded information on the IVR

	Priority calls	Supplier switch & price increase	Coronavirus advice	Supplier of last resort
Aug	808	848	70	764
Sept	1192	1183	103	990
Oct	1485	1382	61	2082
Nov	1330	1499	128	1398
Dec	1194	922	89	1200
Jan	1226	1093	0	1857
Feb	1165	1511	0	2113
Mar	1293	2152	0	1878

Client by nation Q4

Nation	% split	Volume
Anon	1%	201
England	88.46%	17,332
Scotland	6.8%	1,332
Wales	3.72%	729



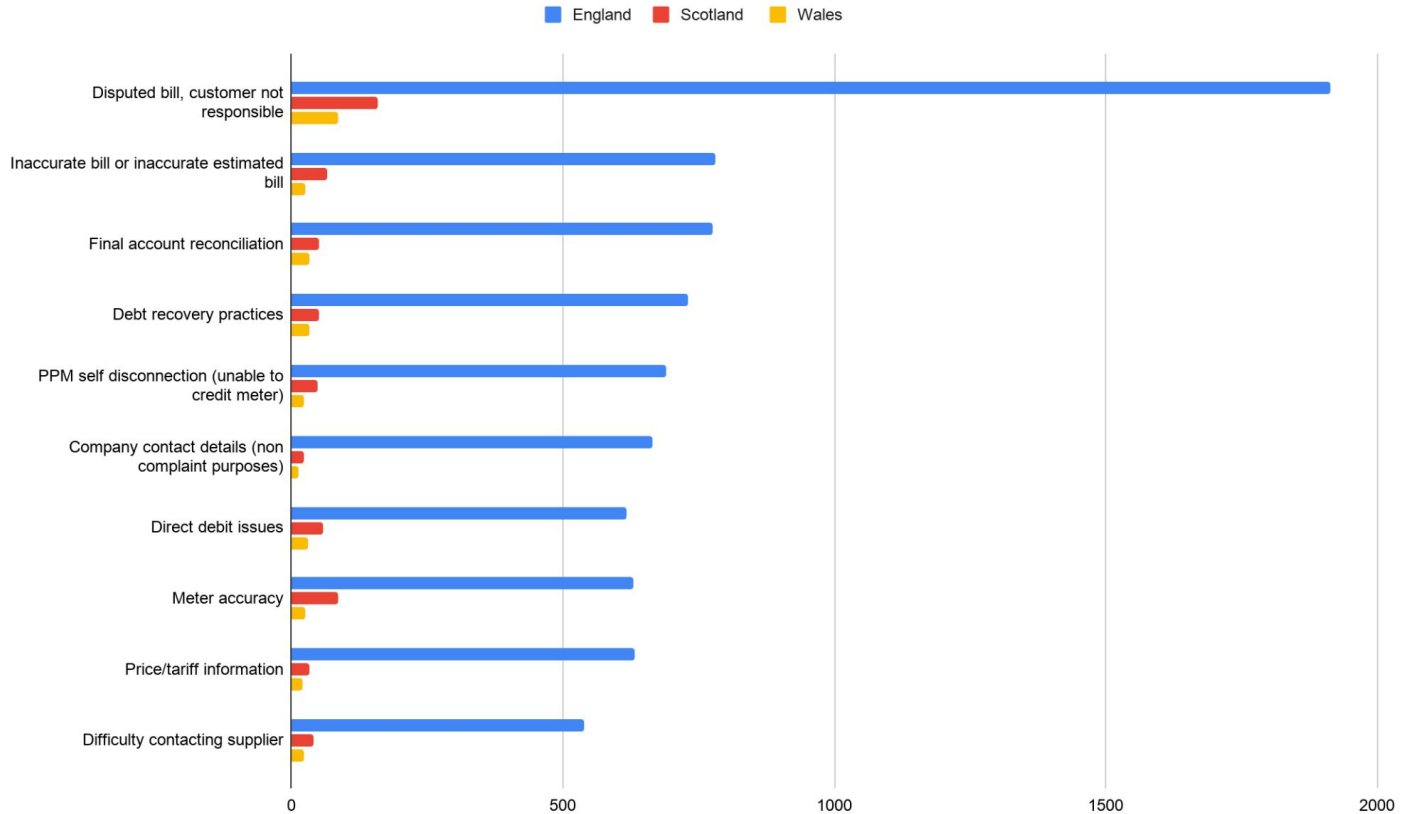
Trends

Quarter 1 Apr - June 20	Quarter 2 Jul - Sep 20	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec 20	Quarter 4 Jan - Mar 21
Disputed bill, customer not responsible (2498)	Disputed bill, customer not responsible (1717)	Disputed bill, customer not responsible (1840)	Disputed bill, customer not responsible (2177)
Final account reconciliation (852)	Debt recovery practices (781)	Debt recovery practices (869)	Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (874)
Direct debit issues (839)	Final account reconciliation (612)	Final account reconciliation (851)	Final account reconciliation (862)
Price/tariff information (721)	Direct debit issues (568)	Company contact details (non complaint purposes) (759)	Debt recovery practices (821)
Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (611)	Meter accuracy (424)	PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (749)	PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (761)
Difficulty contacting supplier (561)	Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (420)	Direct debit issues (749)	Meter accuracy (746)
PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (576)	PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (417)	Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (611)	Direct debit issues (712)
Debt recovery practices (556)	Price/tariff information (357)	Meter Accuracy (595)	Company contact details (non complaint purposes) (705)
Meter reading/data collection (436)	Company contact details (non complaint purposes) (337)	Warm Home Discount (513)	Price/tariff information (699)
Company contact details (non complaint purposes) (435)	Meter provision or exchange (331)	Price/tariff information (468)	Difficulty contacting supplier (612)

Q4 Trends split by nation

England	Scotland	Wales
Disputed bill, customer not responsible (1914)	Disputed bill, customer not responsible (158)	Disputed bill, customer not responsible (86)
Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (780)	Meter Accuracy (87)	Final account reconciliation (32)
Final account reconciliation (775)	Supply Point Administration Query (MPRN/MPR) (86)	Debt recovery practices (32)
Debt recovery practices (731)	Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (65)	Direct Debit issues (31)
PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (689)	Direct Debit issues (57)	Inaccurate bill or inaccurate estimated bill (26)
Company contact details (non complaint purposes) (664)	Debt recovery practices (51)	Failure to credit/refund (25)
Price/tariff information (633)	Final account reconciliation (50)	Meter accuracy (25)
Meter Accuracy (629)	PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (47)	Difficulty contacting supplier (24)
Direct debit issues (616)	Difficulty contacting supplier (40)	PPM self disconnection (unable to credit meter) (23)
Difficulty contacting supplier (538)	Price/tariff information (34)	Erroneous transfer (23)

Q4 Trends split by nation



Moving forwards

- Rolling out refresher sessions for OS:e and EHU referrals

Presented by: **Jess Hawker Meadley**
Date: **19 May 21**

**citizens
advice**



Advice Direct Scotland

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

Advice Direct Scotland



energyadvice.scot

Report – April 2021





SUMMARY

- Scottish Service Live - 1 April 2021
- Contacts above Forecast (**14.5% above**)
- Supplier Partnership Working Underway
- Service Enhancement Working Group
- EHU Partnership
- Ombudsman Partnership
- Voluntary Change to Bills/Licence Change

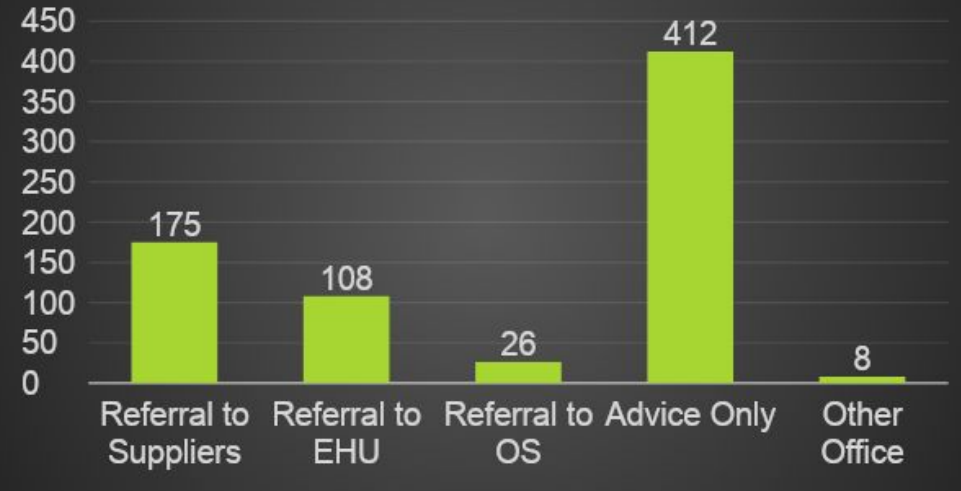


energyadvice.scot

Volume

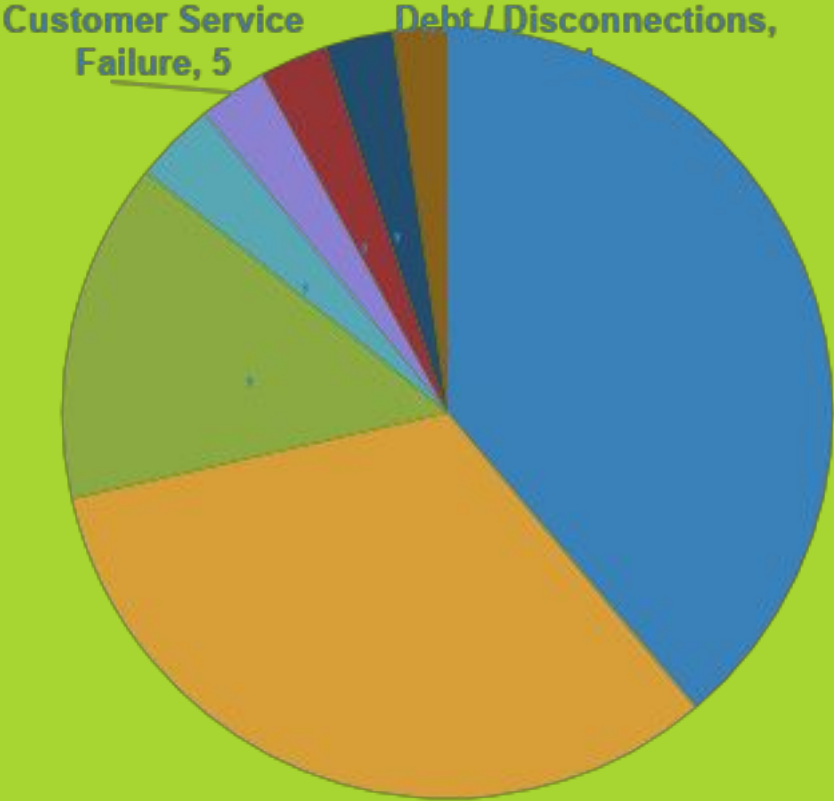
- Forecast for Month: **635**
- Actual Volume: **729**

Volume By Referral Type



energyadvice.scot

Suppliers Referral Reasons





Supplier Partnership Working

Npower

EDF Energy

Utility Point

So Energy

Smartest Energy

ScottishPower

EON



energyadvice.scot



Contact Required:

Boost (Ovo)

British Gas Evolve

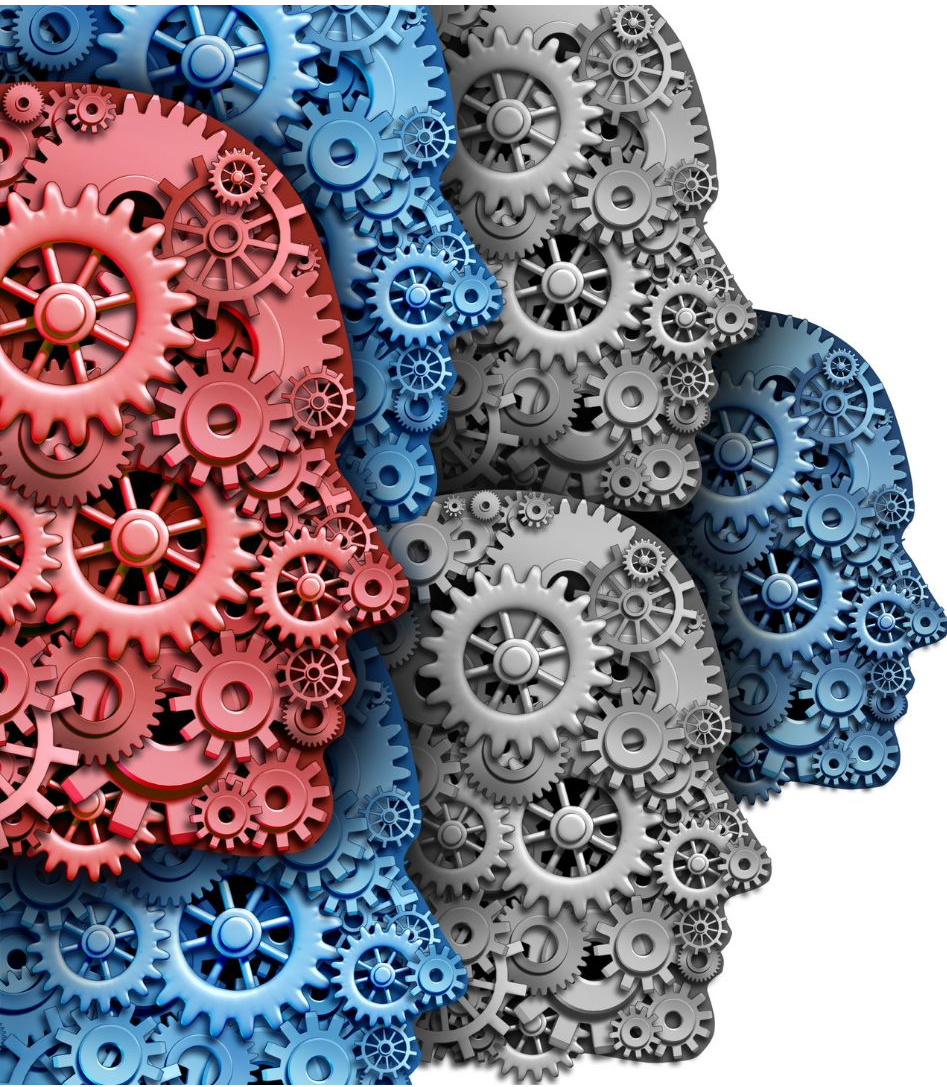
British Gas Lite (Business)

Money Plus Energy

support@energyadvice.scot



[energyadvice.scot](https://www.energyadvice.scot)

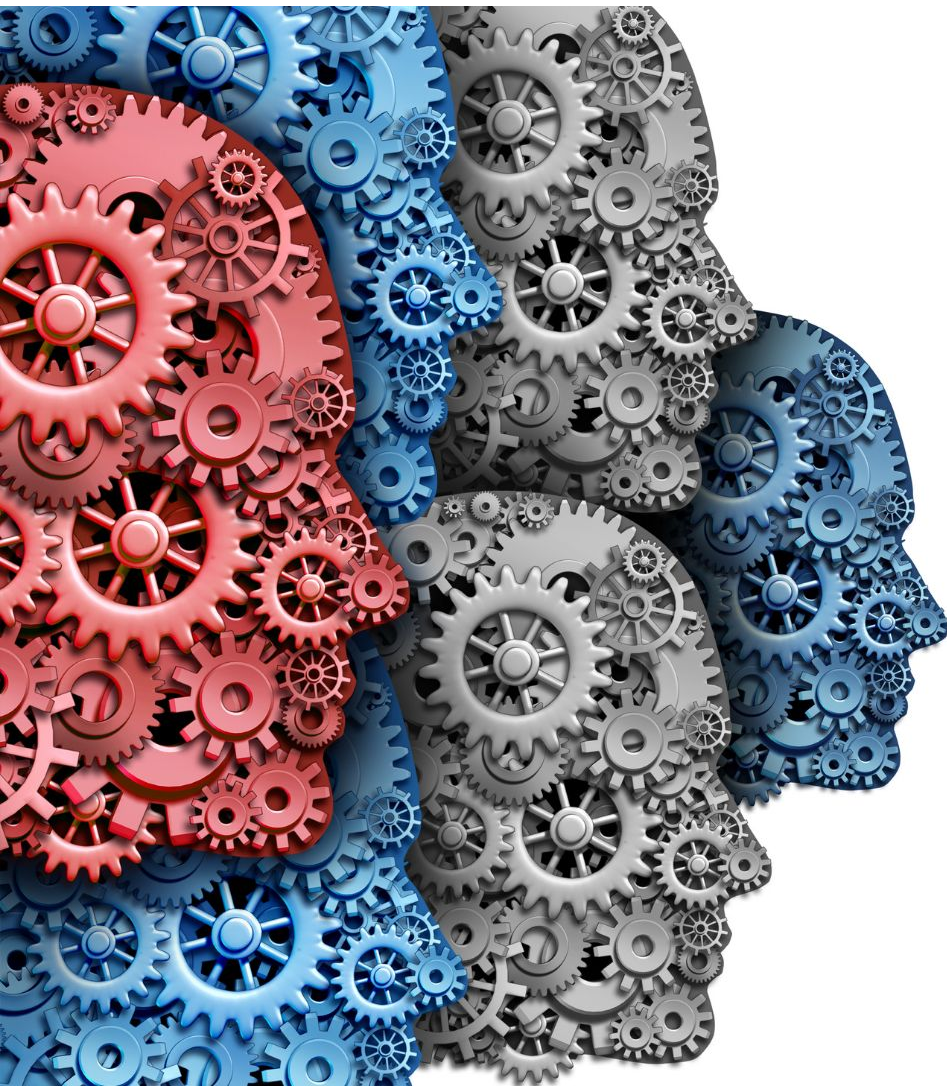


Service Enhancement Working Group

- Pass on details to appropriate person or team
- Shape the Scottish Service
 - Maintaining the quality service in place
 - Enhancing portal connectivity
 - Enhancing training and communication between suppliers and ADS
 - Enhance reporting
 - Media support



energyadvice.scot



Service Enhancement Working Group

support@energyadvice.scot



energyadvice.scot



Voluntary Change / License Change

- SG working with OFGEM on Licence change
- Voluntary Change
 - Webchat in place
 - Shorter Customer Journey
 - Website



energyadvice.scot

Extra Help Unit

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

Extra Help Unit Domestic - Supplier Liaison Meeting Q4 2020/21

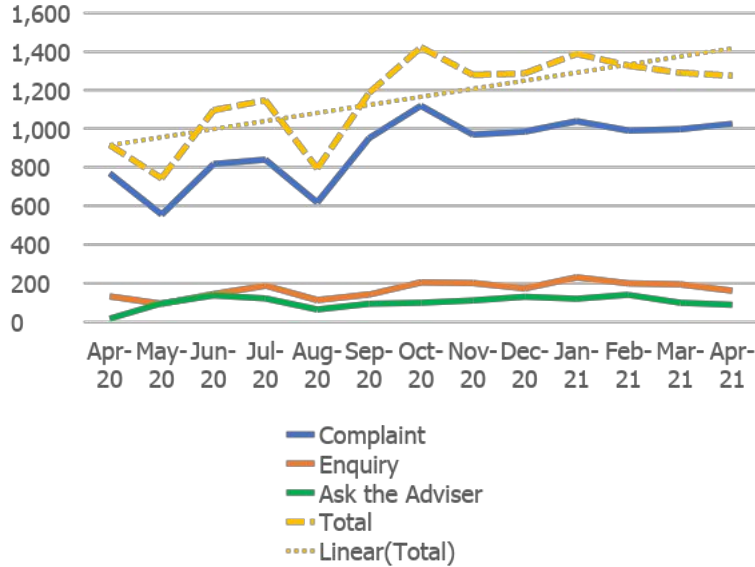
May 2021

www.ehu.org.uk

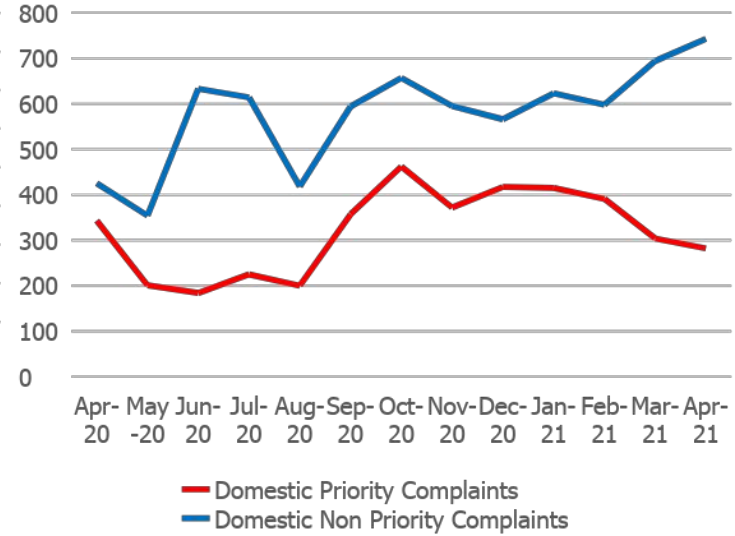


EHU workloads

Domestic casework volumes



Composition of Complaints

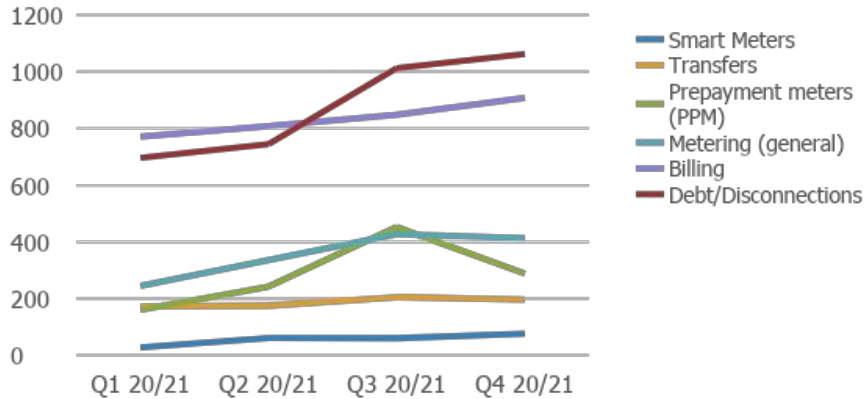


Changes from Q3 to Q4 20/21:



EHU Q4 20/21 – High level complaint trends

Complaints themes



Key Changes Q3 to Q4 20/21

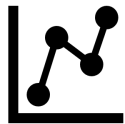
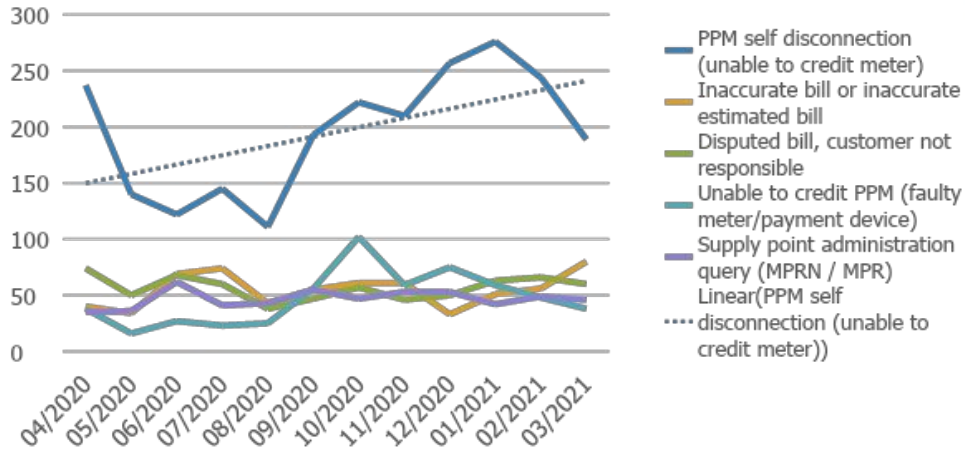


- **PPM** ↓ 36%
- **Billing** ↑ 7%

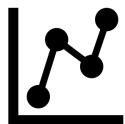


EHU Q4 20/21 – category codes

Top 5 complaints across GB



Across the nations, prepayment self disconnection accounts for only 17% of complaints in Scotland, but slightly higher proportions in England and Wales of 24% and 21% respectively.



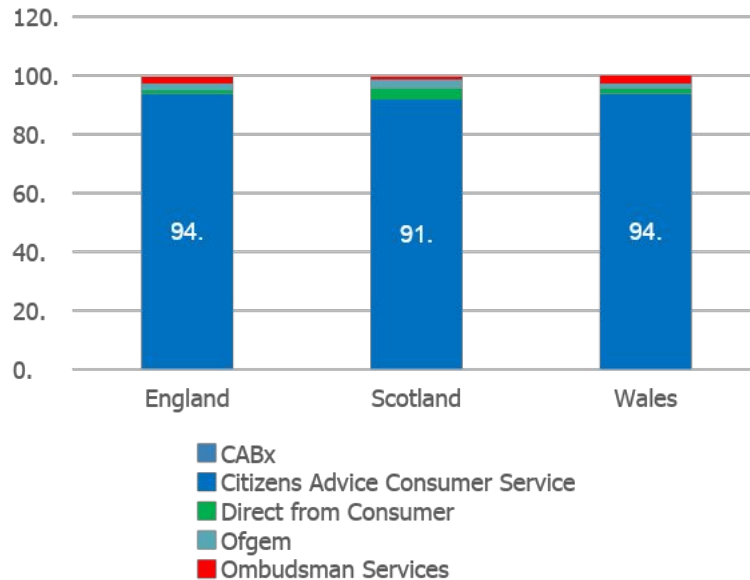
Disputed bills, inaccurate bills, unable to credit prepayment meter (fault) and supply point administration queries account for 4-5% of overall complaints individually.

Self-disconnection was the most common sub category of complaint, accounting for **23%** of domestic complaints in Q4.



EHU Q4 20/21 Referral Partners

The Citizens Advice consumer helpline remain responsible for the majority of cases logged by the EHU, accounting for 94% of complaints logged.



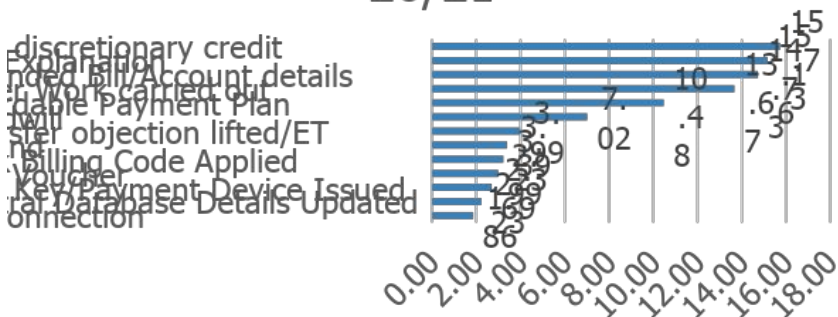
EHU Q4 20/21 KPIs and Performance

KPIs and Measures	April to June 2020	July to September 2020	October to December 2020	January to March 2021
Complaints Received	2228	2,583	3,269	3,240
Complaints Closed	2499	2,300	2,795	3,164
Enquiries	372	435	593	611
Ask the Adviser	272	308	386	416
Quality Assessments: 70% of cases categorised as green 90% of cases categorised as green or amber *	Green = 71% Green or Amber = 92%	Green = 78% Green or Amber = 95%	Green = 78% Green or Amber = 94%	Green = 74% Green or Amber = 96%
Financial Redress **	£439,651	£614,177	£472,075	£510,448
DOMESTIC Casework				
60% of cases closed within 35 WD	66%	63%	66%	57%
75% of cases closed within 66 WD	84%	82%	86%	81%
Tangible outcome (80%) ***	85%	85%	85%	84%
Accent customer satisfaction survey: Consumers satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of service (85%)	90%	90%	91%	92%

EHU Q3 20/21 - Securing positive outcomes

- In **85%** of domestic complaints, a positive outcome was secured.

Key outcomes - domestic Q4 20/21



'I liked the fact that the Extra Help Unit don't just leave you after phone call, they follow up with emails and phone backing. Supporting you till you are fully satisfied. The support stays with you.'

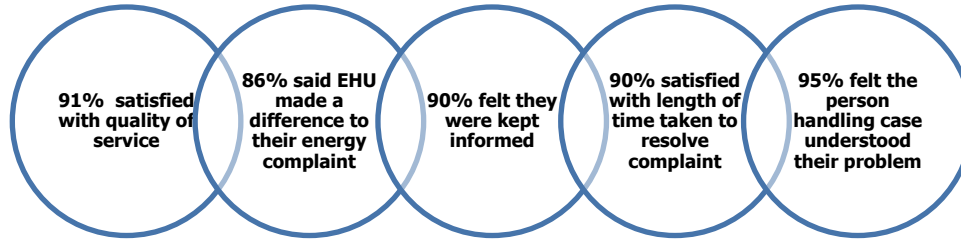
'The lady was lovely and helpful. I don't think it would have been sorted without them'



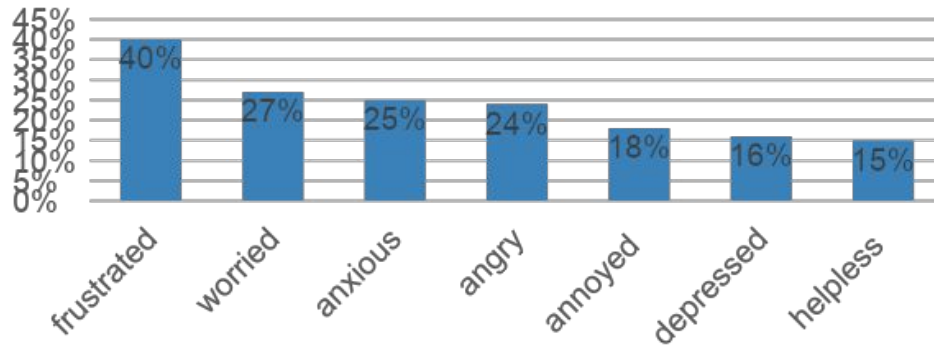
Accent January 2021

EHU Q4 20/21 – Customer satisfaction Survey

Cases closed September to November, report received in January 2021



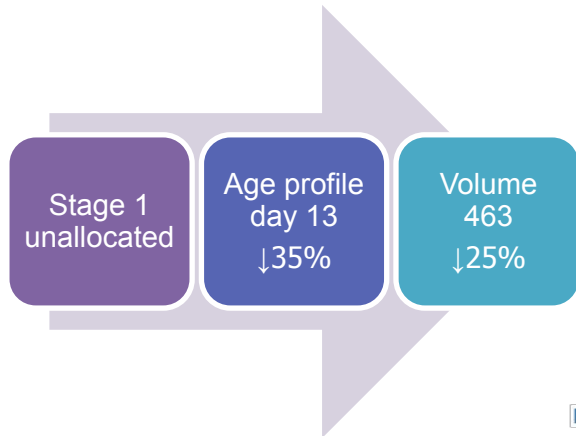
How consumers felt when dealing with their energy supplier during covid



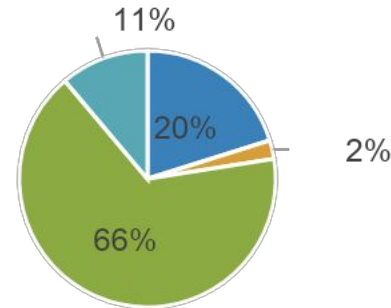
Operational update

Workloads and initiatives undertaken to cope with backlog of new cases

- Business Case 21/22
- Resource changes – impact on recovery



Liveload 17.5.21



■ Complaint (stage 1) ■ Enquiry ■ Stage 2 ■ Stage 3



Expansion of Priority Team

- Team of six now taking the vast majority of priority calls
- Offline on a Wednesday when the rest of the team cover priority calls.
- New dedicated priority line coming soon

New Priority Process

- Circulated on 6th April solidifying how EHU expect suppliers to handle the most urgent cases.
- Caseworkers to be contacted within 2 hours of logging a priority with supplier
- Supplier to respond to priority forms within two working days

Transition of first tier energy advice to Advice Direct Scotland

- Change on 1st April 2021
- Smooth transition
- EHU receiving the expected referrals with little/ no impact on consumers.



Servicemail replacement project

- Project officially underway and Project Board formed
- CAS working with Waterstons IT consultancy assisting CAS IT with new System selection process
- Identified 3 suppliers who are going to bid for tender
- Identifying all requirements for the system
- Workshops planned with key stakeholders, suppliers and EHU team
- Successful supplier session held on 5th May 2021 – thanks to all those involved at short notice
- Aim is to have new system in place for April 2022.

Home Heat Fund

- EHU gained **£27k** for 37 Scottish consumers to assist with energy debt and ongoing consumption
- Scottish Government crisis funding administered by ADS

Fuel Bank Foundation

- Established new partnership to gain access to fuel vouchers where suppliers unable to assist any further



New supplier expectations document

“A regulated provider must, after discussion with the Council, put in place appropriate arrangements to deal effectively with section 12 and 13 complaints.... in an appropriate and prompt manner.”

Provision 8 of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Complaint Handling Standards) Regulations 2008

- Variation across suppliers in how cases are managed can sometimes lead to unnecessary delays in case resolution and closure
- EHU working to update some processes, and expectation of significant efficiency gains from new database
- New document to set out basic expectations of standards we require suppliers to meet
- If these expectations are not consistently being met and there is no improvement following engagement, then matter could ultimately be referred to Ofgem for consideration



Industry Updates – looking ahead

Backbilling

- EUK workshop likely to be held in June (date TBC)
- Still some concerns over how some suppliers are interpreting regulations

Changes to disputes process

- Self disconnection and RPU exception removed

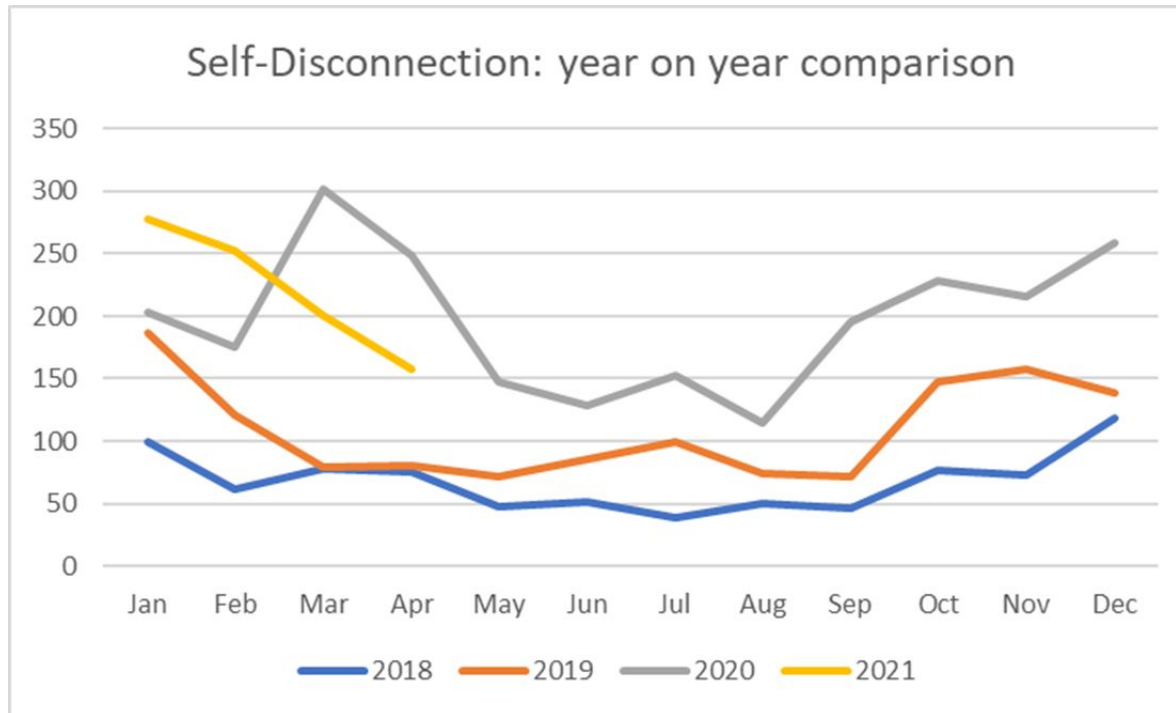
Self-disconnection

- EHU report circulated to suppliers in Q4
- Feedback provided to EHU
- Approach to compliance concerns
- Monthly analysis January – March



Self-Disconnection volumes April 2018 to date

- Although still some decrease in volumes during warmer periods, recent overall volume of self-disconnection cases remain high



Questions?



Break

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

Citizens Advice Policy team

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

Energy Team Update



Supplier Liaison Meeting
19th May 2021

Contents

1. Publications, blogs and consultation responses
2. Team updates
 - Energy Retail Markets
 - Future Energy Services
 - Energy Network and Systems
1. Issues using Fuel Vouchers

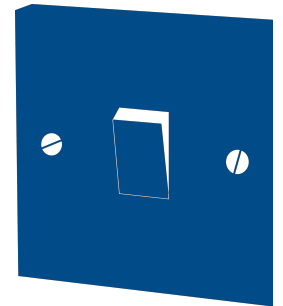
Recent publications

[Navigating net zero](#) sets out a framework to help to people to feel confident about making decisions and investing in the home energy improvements needed to help reach net zero

[Home truths](#) examines customer experiences of installing low carbon technologies or making energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

[Innovation in the tariff market](#) looks at how innovative tariffs can work better for people

[Good practice guide: Making sure heat network consumers get the right support and information](#)



Recent Blogs

- We've blogged about what [how to make a net zero energy retail market work for everyone](#) and the importance of [putting people at the heart of the transition to net-zero](#)

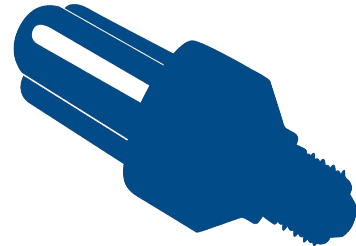
Consultation Responses

- Ofgem's working paper on the [impact of COVID-19 on the 7th price cap period](#)
- Welsh Government's consultation on [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy](#)
- Ofgem's consultation to [Review the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme](#)
- Ofgem's call for evidence on the [Review of the regulatory arrangements for the Data Communications Company](#)
- DfT and OZEV's consultation on the [consumer experience at public chargepoints](#)
- See all our consultation responses [here](#).

Energy Retail Markets Team: updates

Upcoming policy/advocacy work

- Our research on third party deductions will be out soon, following a workshop with stakeholders earlier this year.
- Research on the experience of the retail market for people who are digitally excluded or live in the private rented sector will be out later this summer.
- We're continuing to engage with government following the white paper and with Ofgem as it develops its retail strategy.
- We're thinking about support for consumers this winter, including how to make it easier to access and redeem fuel vouchers.



Future Energy Services Team: updates

Current policy/advocacy work

- Recent publications
 - [Innovation in the tariff market: Discussion paper on how new tariffs can work better for people](#)
 - [Good practice guide: Making sure heat network consumers get the right support and information](#)
 - [Navigating net zero: A framework to give people the confidence to invest in home energy technologies](#)
 - [Home truths: The challenge and experience of making home energy improvements](#)
 - [Look before you LAEP: Ending the postcode lottery of local area energy plans](#)

Coming soon - Research on Smart energy companies: user centred approaches to consumer protections



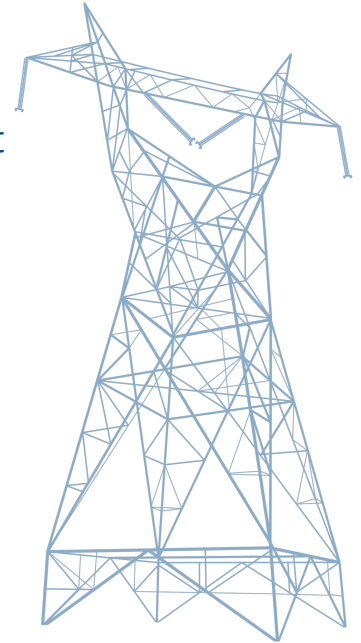
Energy Networks & Systems Team: updates

Current policy/advocacy work

- [RIIO-ED2](#) price control advocacy. Contributing to BEIS, Ofgem and ENA consultations, Ofgem working groups, and challenge groups.
- Codes and charging reviews and ongoing advocacy via industry codes.
- [Intervening in the RIIO-2 Price Control appeals](#). Seeking to ensure costs stay at the levels proposed by Ofgem.
- Advocacy on the transition to Distribution System Operators.

Coming soon

- Research on energy system governance at the distribution level.
- Review of consumer issues relating to IDNOs/IGTs



Issues using Fuel Vouchers

Analysis of consumer service cases and network panel results



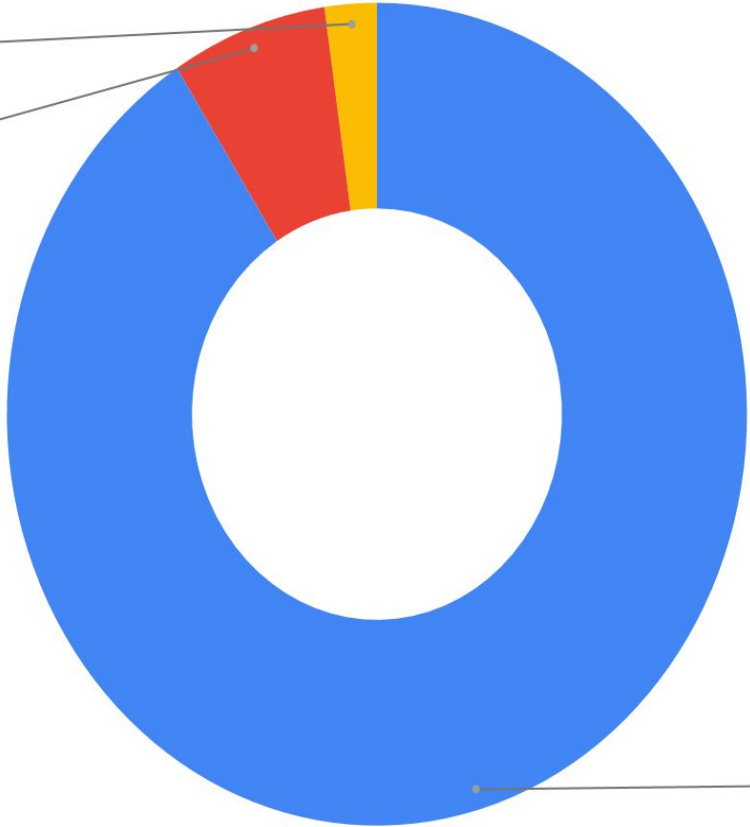
Consumer service cases (Feb 2020-2021)

Refused a fuel voucher

2.3%

Issues using a fuel voucher

6.8%



Obtaining a fuel voucher

90.9%

Consumer service cases: redeeming vouchers

- People usually contact the consumer service about redeeming a voucher when they've been **unable to do so and are off supply**.
- In many cases the **consumer has been to multiple outlets**. It is not always clear from the case notes if the issue is with the voucher or the staff being unable to redeem the voucher.

Common issues include:

- Being told the voucher code is invalid or is too long
- Being asked to verify the account holder
- Being asked to provide photo ID

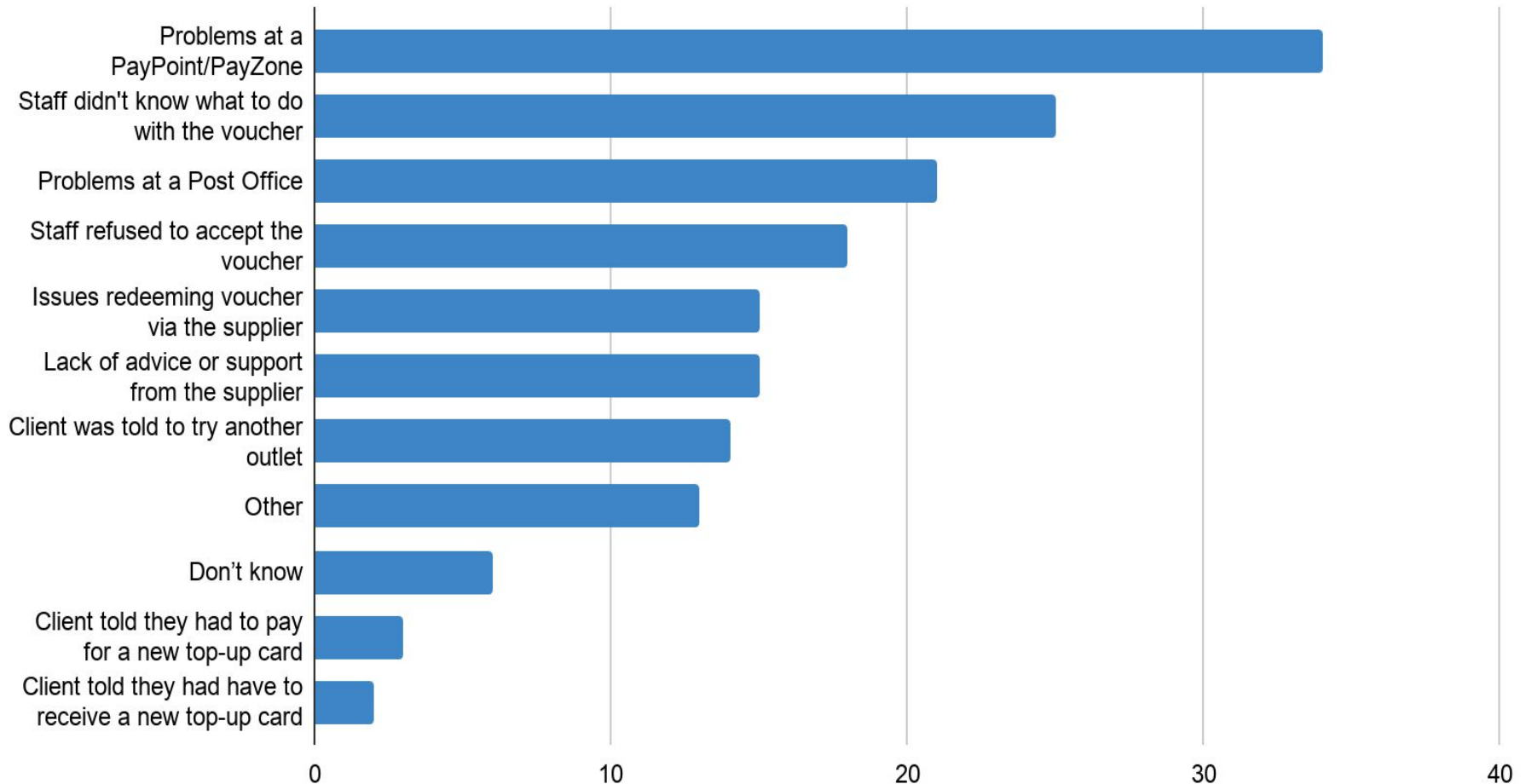
Consumer service Case Studies

Colin is disabled and is currently in emergency credit for his energy supply. Colin has received a fuel voucher from his local Citizens Advice office. Colin was told to go to a PayPoint outlet and show them the email he received to redeem the voucher. Colin went to his local Post Office but the staff said they had never heard of this type of voucher and that when they tried to enter the code it was invalid. Colin then went to other nearby PayPoint and Payzone outlets but no one knew how to redeem the voucher.

Sarah only has enough credit on her meter to last her the next 2 days. Sarah has been given fuel vouchers and visited her local Post Office to redeem them. The Post Office have been unable to redeem the vouchers and have told Sarah that the vouchers don't work and that the voucher code number is too long.

Kirsty has £1 emergency credit left on her prepayment meter and cannot to afford to top up for another week. Kirsty received a fuel voucher from her local Citizens Advice office. She has been to 3 local PayPoints but none of them were able to redeem the voucher.

Issues identified by Local Citizens Advice



Key issues identified by LCAs

- The main issues identified were that staff in some Paypoint shops or Post Offices were **not aware of the voucher scheme, did not know how to redeem vouchers and did not know what to do if the vouchers did not work.**
- This problem was mitigated when there was communication between the voucher provider and the outlet. Some clients were given **instructions to hand to the Paypoint or Post Office staff.** In other cases the **clients called PayPoint** and PayPoint were able to guide staff through the redemption process.

Key issues identified by LCAs

- Clients were more likely to encounter issues at **smaller Post Offices and PayPoint outlets** as the staff there were more likely to be unsure how to redeem vouchers.
- However clients were not always able to visit larger outlets. There can be a **limited choice of outlets in rural areas** and visiting a different outlets may require **extra travel and cost**.
- The delays created by these issues can mean the **client has to go back and forth** between the voucher provider and the outlet and they **may go off supply in this time**.

Other issues identified by LCAs

- Some outlets **tried to charge clients for redeeming vouchers** or told the client that they could only process the voucher if they bought something at the same time.
- In some cases customers who had lost their card/key were **charged by their supplier for a new one** in order to redeem the voucher, reducing the benefit they received.
- Clients sometimes had built up high levels of debt on the meter. This meant that money from the voucher was used to pay off the debt and left the client with very little credit.

Discussion

- Do these issues resonate with those seen by suppliers?
- What could make the process better for consumers and suppliers?

Next steps

- We've called for Ofgem to take a lead in setting out a strategic view on the role of fuel vouchers, including options for comprehensive delivery.
- We're working with LCAs and other charities to identify improvements in the process of redeeming vouchers ahead of this winter.

Energy Advice and business development programme

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

Energy Advice at Citizens Advice

How it all works

The logo for Citizens Advice, featuring the text "citizens advice" in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a white speech bubble shape that has a small tail pointing towards the bottom right. The entire logo is set against a solid blue background.

**citizens
advice**

Energy development 2020/21



Energy Discovery → Development project - looking to create seamless customer journeys / referral pathways across the services offered by Citizens Advice.



Digital Energy product team - creating a new digital tools and content for the public to access.



Development of a new energy e-learning programme, which is being into the Citizens Advice Core advice learning programme for all advisers. It will be mandatory for anyone to complete who delivers our energy advice programmes, e.g LCAs and external partners.



2 year transformation project to enhance our Energy Advice Programme and Big Energy Saving Network / Week 2021/22 to enable an all round delivery programme by 2022.

Our design approach

Discovery phase

Develop phase

Learn

Identify

Prioritise

Ideation

Testing

**Embed
Learning**

Research to understand client needs + context

Identify design opportunities

Prioritise opportunities to take forward

Generate ideas, refine and develop

Test, learn and iterate ideas through prototyping

Learnings and service concept(s) are embedded

The brief

How do we **connect-up** our services to maximise our impact, avoid clients falling through the gaps and create a **frictionless client experience**?

Who we've been working with

We worked with a range of people during our discovery phase:

Energy policy team

Funded programmes

EAP/ BESN operations

**Business development
team**

Consumer operations

**Consumer improvement
team**

As well as working with the following people our ideation, testing and development phase:

**Consumer service
advisers**

Local office advisers

Members of the public

Consumer operations

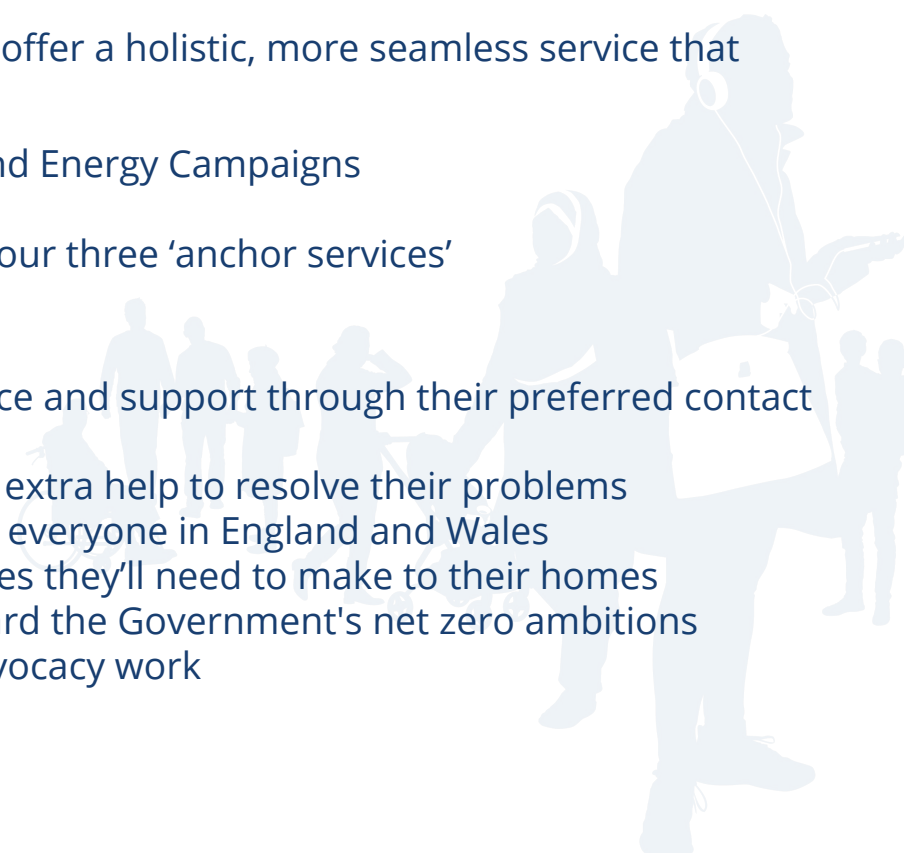
What we're aiming to achieve

By 2023 our **Citizens Advice Energy Service** will offer a holistic, more seamless service that delivers:

- ★ Awareness and guidance through year-round Energy Campaigns
- ★ Tailored digital advice
- ★ Personalised advice and casework through our three 'anchor services'

We will:

- ★ Reach more people, offering improved advice and support through their preferred contact channels
- ★ Provide better support to people who need extra help to resolve their problems
- ★ Have a service offer available year-round to everyone in England and Wales
- ★ Help people prepare for the net zero changes they'll need to make to their homes
- ★ Be the natural advice partner to drive forward the Government's net zero ambitions
- ★ Obtain better insight, strengthening our advocacy work



Digital Energy product team

Our vision is that in two years we will be providing tailored online energy advice to help users quickly and easily make decisions about their energy supply, ensuring they feel confident and in control. By fulfilling the vision we'll ensure the following for users:

- Clients quickly and easily find advice that's relevant to their situation
- Clients feel confident about what to do next
- Clients are able to solve their problems online wherever possible. Where this isn't possible, clients are seamlessly referred to get the help they need
- More clients with non-urgent problems find help

And for Citizens Advice:

- We will meet more existing demand online
- We will reach more people, increasing our positive impact

E-learning programme

The course contains 6 modules - everyone must complete the first 2 modules as part of the adviser learning programme

- Module 1 What is Energy
- Module 2 Helping consumers with key energy issues

The other 4 modules are more in-depth learning around the delivery of energy advice:

- Module 3 Energy contracts and complaints
- Module 4 Meters and paying energy bills - included debt and disconnection
- Module 5 Energy Efficiency and Smart Meters
- Module 6 Other fuels and areas of energy advice



Our reasons for enhancing the programme in light of Covid for 21/22 delivery



Consumers could see their bills increase by £96 a year from 1 April 2021 after an increase to the price cap was announced.



One in seven (14%) of people have [fallen behind on essential bills](#) - including energy, water, mobile phone and broadband bills, council tax, rent or mortgage payments - the equivalent of seven million people in the UK



Our delivery model has evolved and become more effective enabling us to provide personalised support and advice to all our clients, even those most hard-to-reach, when we can't see people face-to-face

The Purpose of Energy Advice Programme



The Energy Advice Programme (EAP) provides advice appointments to fuel poor and vulnerable consumers who are struggling to pay their bills. The service provides information on better energy deals, support and guidance on the most appropriate payment methods and information on how to access help from energy suppliers and government schemes



Clients receiving energy advice through the EAP project will become more confident at managing their problems. If they need further help in the future, they will know who to turn to at an earlier stage. This approach enables us to provide consistent, quality energy advice, which is integrated into our overall advice offer. We have launched a comprehensive new Advisor training programme in April 2021



The programme is backed by our Energy Advice quality framework as cases are quality assessed by the national CA energy quality assessor team. Continually looking at improving quality across our energy programmes



What our Energy Advice Programme has achieved to date

We collect quantitative and qualitative data across our energy services. The information below illustrates the **achievements of this service**, and the value it offers for clients.

Huge Saving for your customers:

Overall, clients who took action **saved on average:**

- **£720** after receiving support with an energy debt
- **£2,400** after receiving advice on benefits or tax credits

7,819 clients were provided with advice and support on the Warm Home Discount, and **4,933** were supported with fuel debt

The EAP provides vital support to vulnerable clients with at least **89%** being in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty, and **93%** recorded as having one or more vulnerability








In 2019/20 our Energy Advice Programme supported **12,585** clients with **63,524** issues related to energy, debt and benefits

Our energy advice helps clients to make significant saving on their energy bills, and the vast majority of respondents (**94%**) **found the advice helpful***

**Based on interviews with 1005 clients*

What an EAP appointment looks like for the client

An EAP appointment delivers tailored advice that helps the client deal with energy related issues such as:

-  Understanding tariffs, bills and fuel options
-  Advice, information and support in understanding selling methods, switching energy suppliers or tariffs, including carrying out a comparison to identify any financial savings a client may make
-  Providing advice on energy efficiency measures, thermal efficiency measures, and identifying grants available including Energy Company Obligation ECO grants
-  Providing benefit entitlement checks and/or assistance in claiming benefits. This includes checks for eligibility and applications for Warm Home Discount (WHD), rebates available from energy suppliers and the Priority Services Register
-  Support with complaints or customer service issues with an energy company
-  Advice on dealing with and reducing fuel debt, including accessing financial support to pay off fuel debts through charitable grants, and ongoing payment plans. Some clients benefits for a full financial capability assessment. This is aimed at giving clients long-term relief from fuel poverty.
-  Referrals for further specialist advice within the local Citizens Advice office, for example specialist debt advice and referrals to other organisations for additional support

Strengthened referral arrangements

In 2021/22 we will be working hard to embed new processes across delivery partners whereby all clients who have multiple debts will be referred through to a debt caseworker, taking into account the clients individual requirements.

Energy Advice programme appointment

tailored advice to support the client with their initial energy problem



Specialist casework support, Clients will be supported with producing an **income and expenditure form**. And to negotiate a **payment plan** with the supplier.

And, where needed....

Direct referrals in house to a debt adviser (within the Local Citizens Advice Office) *or*



Direct referral to the **CA National Debtline** for client to speak with a debt caseworker and / or direct link through to **debt webchat** service.

Joining up our energy and debt pathways will improve our advice and support, moving our clients off the debt cycle

Our offer to your customers from 2021



Education programmes: Big Energy Saving Network / Week and our local programmes across England and Wales



Outcomes for your customers: Providing longevity to our advice by educating consumers on all aspects of energy advice and debt **so they are more equipped to take on future issues for themselves** and **increasing the wellbeing** of our clients and their families*

*NOIR survey findings 2020: 50% of clients said that their issue was making their physical health worse. Of those, 66% said the advice they received from us made their mental health better. And 44% said their physical health got better



Better referral pathways: To our other core advice services including **in-depth casework for more complex problems**



Energy and debt advice: Increased access and capacity from our education programmes and our local offices to EAP across **England and Wales**. We will **target communities** where we know customers are fuel poor and most in need of support and advice. **All clients will be actively offered a debt advice appointment** with a debt specialist - via telephone or webchat

What this looks like for our funders from 2021 onwards

- ✓ Confidence that your customers who are fuel poor and most in need are able to access support and advice
- ✓ Confidence that your customers are getting the best quality advice
- ✓ Confidence that your clients are being educated on how to save money and better manage their utility bills and priority debts moving forward
- ✓ Confidence that your customers are accessing help from an organisation that has the ability to help them with so many more aspects of their lives should they need it
- ✓ Confidence you are doing everything for your clients
- ✓ Confidence that you are meeting your license conditions
- ✓ Confidence that you can meet the majority of your WHD 'permitted activities' through one wide ranging programme

Debt advice is a free, as we will be referring clients into our national debt programmes for priority debt support. And, this will no longer be an ad hoc process - **all clients will be offered this service.**

Ombudsman Services: Energy

citizens
advice

19th May 2021

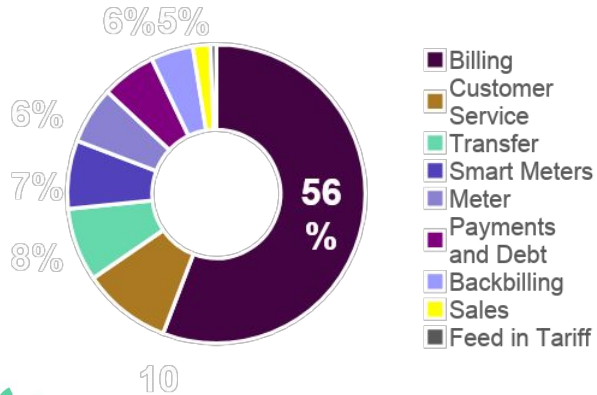
Ombudsman Services: Energy

May 2021 Update

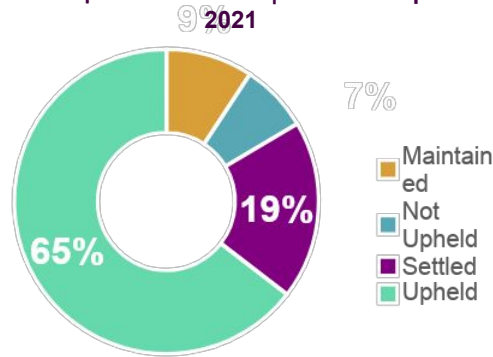
Total Ombudsman Services Demand in Energy



Split of Complaint Causes | Jan 1st to April 30th 2021



Split of Complaint Outcomes | Jan 1st to April 30th 2021



OS Performance

- Its been a challenging time, due to factors such as Covid and an increase in complaints.
- We are now meeting most of our regulatory-set KPIs.
- We expect to meet all KPIs in June 2021.

Our new operating model

- One case handler for each complaint, handling the complaint from beginning to end.

Energy Brokers

- Our pilot ADR scheme for complaints about energy brokers has ended.
- We have been engaging with brokers, suppliers and others and provided insight to Dfgem.

Backbilling

- Dfgem issued an open letter to suppliers in December 2020.
- Our approach to backbilling is published on our website.
- We are happy to discuss backbilling with any interested suppliers.

Sector Liaison Panel

- Will be held on 24 June 2021.
- There will be a focus on how suppliers explain billing to customers.
- We will also provide a forum to discuss ADR for brokers.

AOB

citizens
advice

19th May 2021