



Complaint Handling Procedure

June 2008

Complaints Handling

Northern Gas Networks (NGN) own and operate the gas distribution network in the North of England. Our day to day operational activities are carried out by United Utilities (UU), supported by a number of contractors. As part of the contracted service provided by UU they also handle our complaints and customer service.

If there is a problem with the service you have received from NGN or our contracting partner UU, please contact us in writing, by e-mail or by telephone. It will be helpful, when contacting us, if you can provide any information relating to your case (i.e. reference numbers so that we can deal with your complaint more quickly).

We will use the information gathered from complaints in order to make improvements in the service we provide.

How to contact us

We will be better able to help you if you direct your complaint / query to contacts below.

A written complaint / query should be sent to:

Customer Service
United Utilities
1st Floor
1 Emperor Way
Doxford International Business Park
Sunderland
SR3 3XR

Telephone complaint / query: 0191 5116940 (office hours)
E-mail complaint / query enquirycustserv@uuplc.co.uk

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and have a Minicom or Textphone, you can use, contact us on 0800 371 787.

All correspondence is available in alternative languages, large print or braille on request.

Call received may be recorded and monitored for training purposes.

Record keeping

We record all complaints to accurately capture:

- Customer contact information
- Date received
- Method of Receipt (letter / fax / email / telephone)
- Nature of complaint
- Who is dealing with the complaint
- Progress
- Resolution

Standards of Service

Northern Gas Networks' activities are covered by a range of standards of performance. These standards cover things like restoring your gas supply after an unplanned interruption and getting a quote for a connection to our network. You may be eligible to receive compensation payments if NGN does not meet these standards. In such cases, NGN makes compensation payments to you directly or via your gas supplier. You can find details of our standards at www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk.

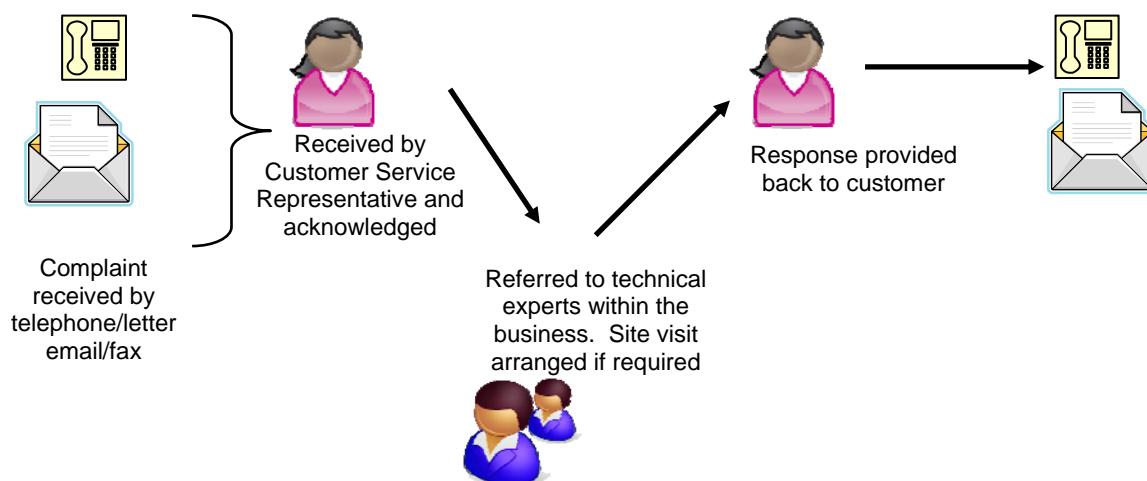
What we will do to put things right

We treat all complaints seriously and confidentially. Your complaint will be handled in a courteous, prompt and straightforward manner. A Customer Service representative will contact you to acknowledge receipt of your complaint and then carry out a full investigation. We aim to provide you with a substantive response within ten working days of receipt of your complaint.

The response will provide you with details of the investigation which has taken place and where appropriate an explanation and/or apology will be made. Where action is required to put things right, we will try to do this in a prompt and efficient manner. Confirmation of any compensation due under our standards of service will be provided, if relevant.

In some instances, in order to resolve your complaint, it may be necessary to make a home/site visit or contact third parties who are not our employees or contractors. Where this is the case, we will send you an initial written response explaining why we cannot provide a substantive response within ten working days together with contact details for the person who is dealing with your case. Where a site/home visit is required we will agree a mutually convenient time with you. In these instances we will aim to provide a substantive response within twenty working days of receipt of your complaint.

Step 1



Step 2

What next – If you're not satisfied

If you do not believe your issue has been resolved, then the matter can be escalated to the Customer Service Manager. Contact details are provided below.

Customer Service Manager
 1 Emperor Way
 Doxford International Business Park
 Sunderland
 SR3 3XR

Telephone: 0191 5116940
 Email: [complaints.noe.custserv @uuplc.co.uk](mailto:complaints.noe.custserv@uuplc.co.uk).

Our Customer Service Manager will investigate the matter and respond to you when all the facts have been examined. The response will provide you with details and the outcome of the additional investigation which has taken place. The Customer Service Manager will aim to respond to you within ten working days.

Step 3

What next – If you remain unsatisfied

If you are still unhappy with the response you have received, you may request for your complaint to be reviewed by a Director. You will need to reply to the Customer Service Manager stating this is your wish.

Your complaint will then be passed to the appropriate Director who will make an independent decision based on all previous correspondence and dialogue with appropriate parties concerned. The Director will aim to respond to you within ten working days.

Step 4

Independent review – The Ombudsman Service

We recognise that we may not always succeed in wholly resolving your complaint. If after step 3 above, you remain unhappy with the service you have received, you can seek the assistance of The Energy Ombudsman (www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk). The service is free and independent. They will investigate your complaint, listen to both sides of the story and look at the facts.

The Ombudsman will investigate your complaint but will expect you to have first approached NGN in accordance with the procedure as detailed above. He will consider whether NGN must take any further action to put things right for you. If the Ombudsman decides to make an award, and you accept it, then NGN will agree to keep to the Ombudsman's decision and take the action required.

The Ombudsman will accept your complaint if it remains unresolved for over eight weeks or if, following step 3, you have been issued with a 'deadlock' letter. This letter confirms that NGN has reached a position where we are unable to help any further.

The following paragraph will be included in the letter:

"I am sorry that we have been unable to resolve this matter. Regrettably we have now exhausted our internal complaints process and reached deadlock. This letter constitutes Northern Gas Networks' final position".

The contact details for the Ombudsman are provided below:

Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

Phone: 0845 055 0760, or 01925 530263 or 0330 440 1624

Fax: 0845 055 0765, or 01925 530264 or 0330 440 1625

Textphone: 0845 051 1513, or 01925 430886

Or write to:

Energy Ombudsman

PO Box 966

Warrington

WA4 9DF

E-mail: enquiries@energy-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk

Copies of this Document

Copies of this document can be downloaded from the NGN website www.northerngas.co.uk.

Copies are also available in alternative languages, large print or braille from our Customer Service Section (see contact details above).