New ways of working

2017 was the first full year of working with Ofgem and Citizens Advice as a tripartite group – one of the key improvements made following the Energy Ombudsman Review in 2016. As a result, Ofgem updated its process to better cover these areas of concern.

In 2017, Ombudsman Services addressed several recurring issues that affected several suppliers. We tackled problems such as annual statement inaccuracies and calorific value issues. For the latter in particular, Ombudsman Services noticed an energy supplier using the wrong value, which resulted in incorrect bills. We raised this with the company, which corrected the issue and worked with us to determine a fair award for all affected customers. We then identified this was an issue several other companies were affected by and discussed with the regulator, Ofgem.

The regulator welcomed the positive outcome from our collaborative approach with the first company affected and it was content for us to work with the other companies in a similar way, without the need for formal action.

Complaint trends and collaboration with stakeholders

Switching replaces back-billing as the hot topic in the energy sector for 2017. Ombudsman Services was involved in the original version of Energy UK’s Energy Switch Guarantee and we worked with Energy UK again, running workshops
at our offices to generate sector wide discussion on improvements to the guarantee. The Energy Guarantee Switch is now a voluntary code of practice aimed at encouraging best practice and consumer confidence beyond the regulatory requirements.

Back-billing, part of the voluntary code of practice for accurate bills, worked well for the majority of suppliers and has now been put into Standard Licence Conditions (SLC) to ensure a minimum and consistent standard of application across the energy sector.

As the Smart Meter rollout continued and we received complaints in regard to this, we responded by setting up an internal Smart Meter Champions team, to assist our staff with the latest news, guidance and key information.

Our colleagues have been better placed to understand the issues consumers bring to us around smart meters, to investigate these complaints and give helpful information to consumers, companies and other stakeholders.

Customer satisfaction

In January 2017 we launched our customer satisfaction programme to key stakeholders of the Energy Ombudsman – consumers, participating companies and key external stakeholders such as Ofgem, Energy UK, EHU and Citizens Advice.

The 360° feedback we received during 2017 has helped us to understand perception of the service; our independence and impartiality; where we influence and add value to key external stakeholders.

Feedback received from users of the service has helped us to understand consumer’s experience of the customer journey, which has driven process improvements in an effort to maximise overall consumer satisfaction.

In 2017, overall consumer satisfaction in the energy sector was 73% - an increase in satisfaction of 10 percentage points from 2016. Overall speed and efficiency saw an increase in satisfaction of 22 percentage points from 2016 to 79% in 2017.

For more information about what we do and examples of how we handle complaints, please visit our website www.ombudsman-services.org/energy
## Energy at a glance

### Total initial contacts

- **88,423** total initial contacts

### How these contacts got in touch

- **43,261** telephone contacts (49%)
- **45,066** written contacts (51%)

### Of those written contacts

- **54%** via web forms
- **37%** via email
- **9%** via letters
- **>0%** via fax

### Of contacts were inside our terms of reference (ITOR)

- **54%**

### Of contacts were outside our terms of reference (OTOR)

- **46%**

### Contacts outside of terms of reference

- **38%** - More information was required
- **26%** - Premature complaint
- **5%** - Not yet complained to the company
- **7%** - Not a customer of the company
- **24%** - Other

### Complaints resolved

- **48,737** complaints resolved

### Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- **100%** of correspondence actioned within 10 days
- **87%** resolved in under 6 weeks
- **96%** resolved in under 8 weeks

### Top complaint types

- **57%** Billing
- **9%** Customer service
- **8%** Switching

### Of the complaints resolved

- Upheld: **63%**
- Not upheld: **8%**
- Settled: **8%**
- Maintained: **21%**

### Awards and remedies

- **£0%** Financial
- **10%** Non-financial
- **90%** Both