



## RESOLVING A COMPLAINT

### This practice statement tells you

- What a complaint is
- What you must do when you receive a complaint
- What you must do when a complaint reaches deadlock
- What Utilities Disputes does when we refer a complaint to you

Certain rules apply to electricity and gas providers when dealing with a complaint. The Utilities Disputes' Energy Complaints Scheme document sets out these rules in its General Rules (GR) and Scheme Rules (SR).

### What a complaint is

A complaint is when someone tells you they are dissatisfied and, either explicitly or implicitly, expects a response.

A person can complain by letter, email, phone, text message, or a post on a social media page owned by the provider. This excludes someone complaining on a social media page owned by the complainant or someone else.

The GR say you may receive a complaint when:

- Someone complains to you directly, or
- Utilities Disputes refers a complaint to you

### What you must do when you receive a complaint

#### ***You must give the complainant certain information***

When you receive a complaint you must:

- Promptly tell the complainant you received the complaint, usually in writing or on the phone (GR 12)
- Give the complainant contact details for Utilities Disputes (GR 12f)
- Tell the complainant about your complaints process (GR 12c)

#### ***Refer the complaint to another provider if appropriate***

If you think another provider should manage the complaint, you must refer the complaint to the other provider promptly (GR 12e). Please tell us you have done this so our records are accurate.



### ***You have up to 20 working days to resolve the complaint***

You have up to 20 working days to resolve the complaint before the complaint reaches deadlock. You can take up to 40 working days to resolve the complaint if you have a good reason. If you wish to extend the time you must:

- Tell the complainant in writing you need more time before 20 working days are up
- Explain what the good reason is for needing more time
- Keep the complainant updated about your work on the complaint.

### **What you must do when a complaint reaches deadlock**

Complainants can ask Utilities Disputes to look into the complaint if the complaint reaches deadlock (GR 13).

Deadlock means one or more of the following:

- The complaint is not resolved at the end of 20 working days (or 40 working days if you gave the complainant a good reason in writing), or
- You have made it clear you do not intend to do anything further about the complaint, or
- The complainant would suffer unreasonable harm from waiting any longer, or
- Waiting longer would be unjust

When the complaint reaches deadlock you must:

- Give the complainant the contact details for Utilities Disputes (GR 12f)
- Tell the complainant they can complain to Utilities Disputes – even if you think Utilities Disputes won't be able to look into their complaint (GR 12g)

### **What Utilities Disputes does when we refer a complaint to you**

#### ***We close the complaint unless we hear back***

After we refer a complaint to you, we close the complaint in our system.

#### ***If the complainant contacts us, we check we can look into the complaint***

If the complainant asks us to look into the complaint, we check whether we can. We will let you know if we decide we can look into the complaint.

For information about when we can or cannot look into a complaint, see GR 14, GR 15, GR 18, GR 26, and SR Appendix 2.

### **We are here to help**

If you think we can help in any way to resolve the complaint, even if it has not reached deadlock, please call us. We can help you communicate with the complainant, including arranging a conciliation teleconference.

***Utilities Disputes also offers providers a workshop that focuses on the skills necessary to resolve complaints, including effective listening and talking. For more information, please call the office on 0800 22 33 40 or email [communications@udl.co.nz](mailto:communications@udl.co.nz)***