



# Treating Customers Fairly

2019 REPORT

[www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk)



## Welcome to BES...

Thank you for choosing BES as your business energy supplier and welcome to our 'Treating Customers Fairly' Report for 2019.



This document is designed to let you know about some of the steps we take to ensure you receive the highest level of customer care.

We aim to provide you with a service which is fair, transparent, honest and professional, and we continue to invest heavily in our people, processes and systems to improve our customer engagement.

If you have cause to contact BES with a query or complaint then we want to resolve this quickly and, most importantly, to your satisfaction. Please contact us via the details provided on page 11.

**Andy Pilley**  
Managing Director

## Getting the best from the Report

We've designed this Treating Customers Fairly Report to highlight some of the steps we take to provide you with a great service. Although we have covered some key topics in this document, if there is anything else you need to know, please contact us via the details

shown on page 11. We'd also love to hear from you if you have any feedback on how to improve this or any other customer communication.

The report has been designed to be viewed online, so some of the policies or procedures referred

to are accessible via the orange hyper links. If you're reading a hard copy and want to view any of this information, please just log onto our website [www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk) or contact us if you need any help.

## Introducing Ofgem's Standards of Conduct for Energy Suppliers

In 2013, the gas and electricity regulator, Ofgem, introduced new rules known as the Standards of Conduct. The Standards of Conduct are a set of rules which specify how energy suppliers should behave to ensure customers are treated fairly, and you can find more information about this on Ofgem's website, [www.ofgem.gov.uk](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk).

Not only do we want to make sure we comply with these rules, but we want to go over and above them to ensure you receive the best possible service from BES. This is our Report for 2019, and we will publish an update every year to let you know about the action we are taking to continually improve our service.

# Investing in our Customer Services

At BES we are committed to providing the highest standard of customer service and over the last year we have invested heavily in our people, processes and systems to help us deliver this.

■ We've recapped some of the headlines of the last twelve months below, but please also be assured that our investment will continue as we move into 2019 and beyond.

During 2018 we replaced our previous contact number with a new local call rate (0344) telephone number. Calls to 03 numbers are generally included in your mobile phone plan's inclusive minutes, and should cost the same as a local call if using a landline (please be sure to check with your provider for exact costs).

We understand that our customers are busy people and that making a phone call isn't always possible, so we've also introduced a new live-chat facility via our website, [www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk). You can use this option to contact our team with any questions you may have.

Going above and beyond our customers' expectations is what sets us apart from our competitors, so we now attempt to call back anyone who has dropped out of our telephone call queue – the same day! If you phone us during a busy period you can also dial 1 for a call back from one of our team when the lines are less busy. Again, we will do our best to phone you back the same day wherever possible.

As part of our plan to grow our business while delivering a first class service, during 2018 we announced, and recruited employees, to fill 50 new positions at our Head Office in Fleetwood, plus recruited around 30 new staff at our Contact Centre in Cape Town, South Africa.

Towards the end of last year we also launched social media pages for BES on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram as we strive to find new ways to engage with our customers and other industry partners. We embrace feedback as we look to improve our service, so if you do have any reason to contact us, it's likely that we'll ask you to consider leaving us a review on Trustpilot.

We are not complacent and we still have much more to do before we achieve our service goals, so we'll continue to invest in recruiting and developing our



people to be sure we can meet and exceed your needs. Over the coming year we will be rolling out a new e-learning system for our employees to complement our existing classroom and other training modules, plus we are establishing new group coaching sessions with our teams to focus on key compliance topics including "treating customers fairly", complaint handling and data protection.

# BES Leads the Way for Fair and Transparent Sales

BES has in place a number of measures to ensure anyone selling our products provides a fair, honest and professional level of service.



■ These include a market leading post-sale comfort call, which we first introduced in 2012 to help ensure customers fully understand, and are happy with, the product they have agreed to. Brokers representing BES are subject to ongoing compliance monitoring to ensure they meet the high standards we require, and last year introduced enhancements to our sales complaints procedure, which will enable us to respond swiftly to any potential concerns.

As business to business contracts do not contain a cooling off period, we encourage customers to ensure they fully consider, understand and are happy with the terms being offered before entering into a contract with any supplier.

# Accurate Billing - Setting Off on the Right Foot

At BES we want to make sure we bill your account accurately from the outset, and we do our best to ensure all accounts are opened using a confirmed meter reading.



■ In order to help achieve this, our Customer First Team makes every effort to contact new customers by telephone, email and letter to obtain an opening meter reading.

Please do your best to provide us with a meter reading as we approach your transfer date, so that your first bill is accurate. This will also help us in the unlikely event of a query with your previous supplier about the transfer meter reading.

# Access your Online Account - Anywhere, **Anytime**

We understand that, for our business customers, time is precious and you may not always have the time to call us during normal office hours.

As such, we have created an online account facility, which provides customers with access to their energy accounts at any time. You can view and print bills, make payments, provide meter readings and also raise queries or let us know about changes to your account, such as if you move business premises.

The online account portal also offers a range of easily accessible forms that will automatically be submitted to us upon completion. These range from VAT declaration forms to Direct Debit mandates.

If you haven't already, we recommend you register for an online account [here](#). If you're reading this in a hard copy, to register for your online account please visit our website [www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk) and follow the instructions.



# Prompt and Easy Access to your Energy **Bills**

As confirmed when you agreed your contract with BES, to help keep costs low for customers and to ensure correspondence reaches the right person at your business, we send you a link via email when your invoices are ready to view online - a full PDF is then loaded onto your online account portal.

If you have any questions regarding your invoice, you can simply raise a query via the portal and a member of our team will be in contact. If you require a paper invoice we will apply a charge of £2.00 (+ VAT) each time to cover the cost of sending out the hard copy.



# Our Back Billing **Promise**

Providing timely and accurate bills plays a big part in making sure our customers get a great service.



Although we work hard to make sure your bills are correct, on very rare occasions things can go wrong, particularly as we rely on information which is shared between ourselves and other industry partners (such as meter reading companies and meter operators). If we do have to issue a "back bill" and you are not at fault for the previous undercharging, we will limit the period of back billing to a maximum of 12 months and you can also have peace of mind that we'll work with you to find a solution if you can't pay the entire amount all at once.

Please help us ensure your bills are correct by checking them regularly, providing meter readings and letting us know about any changes to your occupancy details, or other potential problems.

# Moving Business **Property?**

Moving in and out of a property can be a stressful time, so our specialist Change of Tenancy Team will do everything they can to make the process as smooth as possible for you.



Please let us know as early as you can if you're moving premises. We will provide you with a Business Move form and ask that you return this to as soon as possible. We may ask you to send us various information to help us process your change of circumstances, including a photograph of your meter reading, a copy of your lease and contact details for the landlord. More information is available on our website [here](#).

We ask for your co-operation to help us process any change of details as quickly and efficiently as possible.

# Championing Smart Metering

BES has been a champion of smart metering for many years. We attempt to fit a smart meter, free of charge, for all of our electricity customers.

Smart meters work using similar technology to a mobile phone meaning that, in most cases, we can obtain a meter reading every month without having to visit the property – this is fantastic news for customers, as it means that we can provide an accurate bill every month and only charge you for the electricity you actually use. We're proud that our smart meter reading accuracy is consistently high, meaning you can have confidence that your bill is accurate (occasionally there may be a technical or connection issue which means we have to estimate a reading.)

We're currently working hard to update our systems and processes to ensure we can deliver the Government's smart meter rollout plan, which will see every domestic and small business in the UK offered a smart meter. You can find out more about this on the Government's website here, or by visiting [www.gov.uk/guidance/smart-meters-how-they-work](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/smart-meters-how-they-work).



# Guaranteed Standards of Performance - Visiting Your Property

At BES, we appreciate how valuable your time is. We work with our industry regulator, Ofgem, to ensure we meet certain Guaranteed Standards of Performance (GSoP), which relate to visits to your property.



In the unlikely event we fail to meet these Standards due to a failure by BES or one of our third party metering agents, we will make a GSoP payment to you of £30.00. This amount will be credited to the relevant gas or electricity account. If we do not make the GSoP payment to you within 10 working days, we will also credit you with a further £30.00.

We have in place a process to identify any failures and we will contact you in writing to confirm if a payment is made; however, if you do have any concerns about the making and keeping of metering appointments then please don't hesitate to contact us.

BES is a member of The Industrial and Commercial Shippers and Suppliers (ICoSS) group. You can find more information about our obligations under these Guaranteed Standards of Performance on the ICoSS website: [www.icoss.org](http://www.icoss.org).

# Complaint Handling

Although we try and ensure you receive a first class service all the time, we realise that occasionally things can go wrong. We have a clear complaint handling procedure for you to let us know if you're unhappy with any aspect of our service.

Our contact details are shown on page 11, and you can find more information about our complaints procedure on our website [here](#). We can also provide you with a copy of this in writing free of charge, if you contact our Customer Services Team.



# Clearer Communications



We're working hard to ensure that every time we contact you, the information we provide is clear, complete and easy to understand. We welcome your feedback as part of this process and you can send this via our website, [www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk).

# Problems Paying Your Bill? We're Here to Help

We recognise that some businesses may be experiencing difficult times.

■ We want to support customers who may be struggling with their energy (or other) debts and our advisers are trained to offer a range of payment options.

If you're struggling to pay your bill, it's important that you contact us as early as possible. There are ways we may be able to help, but the sooner we know about the problem, the more we will be able to do.

If you have any concerns about payment, please email [debtsupport@besutilities.co.uk](mailto:debtsupport@besutilities.co.uk) or use any of the contact details on page 11.



## Proud to Partner Business Debtline

BES is a proud funder of the national charity, Business Debtline.

■ In 2015 we joined forces with Business Debtline, who provide free, independent and confidential advice to self-employed people and small businesses on a range of debt and cash flow issues.

You can call Business Debtline free on 0800 197 6026 or visit their website [businessdebtline.org](http://businessdebtline.org).



## Introducing the Business Energy Solutions Fund

■ We want to help your business to thrive. As well as working closely with Business Debtline, BES has gone one step further and created the first fund of its kind in the business energy market. This is designed to help business customers get back on track with their energy payments, by freezing and writing off historic debts, provided the customer can demonstrate a commitment to paying future bills on time.

The BES Fund is independently managed by Charis Grants, who administer funds and trusts on behalf of a number of leading energy and water companies, plus local authorities. For more details on how to apply to the Business Energy Solutions Fund, visit our website [here](#).

## Keep In Touch with Us

You can get in touch with BES Utilities via the method that's best for you – our details are shown below. To help us deal with your query or complaint without delay, please include your account number on any correspondence, or have it to hand when you call us.

### Online

[www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk)

### Telephone

0344 5678 472

Our offices are open Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 5.30pm

### Live Chat

Visit [www.besutilities.co.uk](http://www.besutilities.co.uk)

**BES**  
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