



Office of Utility Regulation

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OUR wants to hear from electricity customers

The Utilities Regulator is seeking electricity customers' views on how they pay their bills and whether any changes are needed to the options available to them.

The consultation, which will be published on Monday, into GEL's approach to billing domestic customers aims to assess whether customers are encountering any problems either directly or indirectly as a result of its approach to billing.

"The consultation looks at all aspects of GEL's billing practices but we would particularly like to hear respondents' views on the requirement for deposits from certain groups of customers, such as tenants in fully furnished and part-furnished accommodation, given the specific arrangements GEL has for such customers," said Nienke Hendriks, Director of Policy at the OUR.

"Other utility service providers in Guernsey, such as Guernsey Water and the telecommunications companies, do not insist on a deposit in these circumstances and it does not seem to be common practice in the UK. We want to assess whether any change is needed."

Based upon the responses received to this consultation, the OUR will consider how best to take the issue forward.

Separately, the OUR has concluded its review of the support available for micro-generation through the Buy-Back rate GEL pays for electricity generated from such sources. Following a consultation last year, as part of the work implementing the Energy Policy report, the States' Energy Policy Group ("EPG") indicated that greater overall benefits, in the bid to reduce Guernsey's carbon emissions, can be achieved through a greater focus of government action on encouraging energy conservation in

the home rather than on promoting the uptake of domestic micro-generation. As a result it has decided to conclude this workstream.

The Buy-Back Information Notice (OUR 09/17) and the consultation on GEL's Approach to Billing Domestic Customers (OUR 09/18) will be available from Monday on the OUR website www.regutil.gg, or by calling the OUR on 711120. The closing date for receipt of comments to the consultation on GEL's Approach to Billing is the 19th October 2009.

ENDS

Information for the Editor

About the OUR

The Office of Utility Regulation was established in 2001 to regulate the three utilities of post, telecommunications and electricity in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. The Office is headed up by Director General, John Curran and has five staff.

The role of the OUR is to protect the interests of Guernsey consumers and the economy. It does this by ensuring that customers receive the best in price, choice and quality services in the three regulated sectors, while at the same time ensuring that those sectors are vibrant and robust so that they can positively contribute to and underpin a successful Guernsey economy.

The OUR licenses and regulates telecommunications operators, Guernsey Electricity Ltd and Guernsey Post Ltd. Wherever possible, the OUR promotes the introduction of competition by ensuring that there is fair play and a level playing field between the operators. Where competition is not yet effective or where it is not feasible, the OUR regulates prices and quality of services to end customers. More information is available from the OUR website www.regutil.gg, or by contacting the Office of Utility Regulation on 01481 711120.