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USWITCHFORBUSINESS.COM COMMENTS ON OFGEM FINING BRITISH GAS £2.5MILLION

Today's announcement that Ofgem has fined British Gas £2.5million for failing to handle customer complaints properly places a spotlight on the importance of improving customer service for both households and small businesses, says uSwitchforbusiness.com, the independent business energy broker and sister-site of uSwitch.com:

- **Only 58% of residential customers are satisfied with supplier customer service and only 45% are satisfied that their supplier has them on their best deal^[1]**
- **Just over half of consumers (52%) would recommend their energy supplier to somebody else^[1]**
- **40% of SMEs see the business energy market as more confusing than the household energy market, and 37% view it as more complicated^[2]**
- **A quarter (24%) of small businesses don't think the energy market is competitive enough and one in five (19%) doesn't like the way the big suppliers dominate^[3]**
- **A quarter of small businesses (25%) have had to pay an upfront sum to secure an energy contract – the average amount paid is £300^[4].**

James Constant, Director of uSwitchforbusiness.com, says: "Ofgem's fine sends a very clear message to suppliers that the treatment of customers and handling of complaints needs to improve. No matter what their size or type, all energy customers should expect excellent customer service and competitive prices. Instead, just over half of domestic energy customers are satisfied with the customer service from their supplier and less than that would recommend their supplier^[1]. And in many ways, small business customers are getting an even worse deal.

"Our research shows that for too long, business energy customers have felt they are the poor relation, with a quarter of business energy customers going as far as stating that the market is uncompetitive^[3]. With 40% of SMEs viewing the business energy market as more confusing than the domestic one^[2], a shakeup is long overdue.

“Whether you are a business or domestic customer you can take customer service issues into your own hands. If you aren’t happy with your provider and they aren’t prepared to listen to your concerns, vote with your feet and shop around for one that will ensure excellent customer service.”

For more information visit www.uswitchforbusiness.com or call 0800 051 5343

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Notes to editors:

1. Survey conducted by YouGov online between 10th – 13th August, 2010. A total of 5,070 UK energy customers took part in the survey. Reference to satisfied customers includes only those who responded positively that they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied. Only those who responded as fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied are referred to as ‘dissatisfied’.

All other statistics:

Research was conducted in May 2011 on behalf of uSwitchforBusiness.com by Onepoll amongst 1,003 small business owners or key decision makers within SMEs.

2. In response to: ‘How does the small business energy market compare with the household energy market?’, 40.2% responded ‘more confusing’
3. In response to: ‘What don’t you like about the business energy market’, 23.50% said ‘its not competitive enough’
4. In response to: ‘Has your business ever been asked to pay a lump sum upfront to your supplier to secure your contract?’ 25.1% of respondents said yes – of these 10.9% said ‘yes – but only when we started up’. The average amount entered by all respondents was £300.

About us

uSwitchforBusiness.com is a free, independent energy brokerage service focused on helping business customers get the best gas and electricity contracts. It also provides a range of additional products and services, including insurance and communications, which are tailored specifically for customers who own, run or hold responsibility for procurement in a business.

uSwitchforBusiness.com is the sister site of uSwitch.com, the free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service which has been helping consumers to save money for over 10 years. uSwitchforBusiness.com was launched in November 2008 in response to requests from business customers wishing to benefit from the same impartial and independent support when buying energy.

uSwitchforBusiness.com offers a dedicated contact-centre manned by a team of business energy specialists, as well as a freepost ‘Send us your bill’ service, whereby businesses can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCHFORBUSINESS, to get a free call back from a dedicated business specialist. Customers can also call 0800 051 5343 or email brokerteam@uswitchforbusiness.com.

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