



The voice of the energy industry

H.M Coroner
Leicester City and South Leicestershire
The Town Hall
Town Hall Square
Leicester
LE1 9BG



2 May 2014

Dear Mrs Brown

RE: Michael Joseph Hirrell (CEM/AMO/00321-2013)

In my letter dated 26th November 2013 responding to your report into the death of Michael Joseph Hirrell, I set out Energy UK's intention to review the Energy UK Safety Net to ensure it provides appropriate protections from disconnection for vulnerable domestic consumers who make use of a shared non-domestic supply.

As identified in your report, six of Energy UK's retail members (British Gas, EDF Energy, E.ON, npower, ScottishPower and SSE) are signatories of the Energy UK Safety Net. The Safety Net was established in 2004 by the Energy Retail Association (now Energy UK) as a voluntary minimum standard to help protect vulnerable customers from disconnection. Under the Safety Net, suppliers have agreed to never knowingly disconnect a vulnerable customer at any time of year, where for reasons of age, health, disability or severe financial insecurity, that customer is unable to safeguard their personal welfare or the personal welfare of other members of the household.

Working with suppliers, Energy UK has undertaken a review of the relevant Safety Net section regarding domestic consumers with a non-domestic supply. The matter was discussed in detail at a meeting of Energy UK members on the 11th December 2013. It was agreed that the Safety Net should be amended to clarify that where the supplier determines that a member of a domestic household, which takes its energy through a non-domestic supply, is, for reasons of age, health, disability or severe financial insecurity, unable to safeguard their personal welfare or the personal welfare of other members of the domestic household, the non-domestic supply will not knowingly be disconnected for reasons outside the domestic household's control.

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Following further discussions with suppliers, Ofgem and Consumer Futures, final amendments to the Safety Net were agreed by all signatories last month. The amendments clearly set out the steps that suppliers will take as a minimum, to ensure that vulnerable consumers whose domestic household makes use of a non-domestic supply are not knowingly disconnected for reasons outside of their control. An updated version of the Safety Net was subsequently published on Energy UK's website on the 17th April: <http://www.energy-uk.org.uk/publication/finish/30-disconnection/308-era-safety-net.html>. A copy of the updated Safety Net document is also enclosed with this letter.

As you are aware, suppliers are responsible for putting the principles of the Safety Net into practice and may do this in different ways, depending on how their businesses are structured. All signatories, however, aim to have implemented the required systems and processes to deliver the new protections for domestic consumers with a non-domestic supply as soon as practicable and will have done so by the end of 2014. Energy UK is also committed to keeping the operation of the Safety Net, including the new provisions, under constant review. This includes audits of suppliers' systems and processes by an independent auditor.

I hope you would agree that by adopting the steps and protections now clearly set out in the Safety Net, industry minimises the risk that any vulnerable domestic consumer who make use of a shared supply, and who may, therefore, not have a formal legal relationship with the energy supplier, as was the case with Mr Hirrell, are disconnected for reasons outside of their control.

Mindful that you are extremely busy, if you have any questions or require additional information please contact me directly on 020 7747 2930 or at angela.knight@energy-uk.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



Angela Knight CBE
Chief Executive

c.c.

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