

Closed accounts with credit balances

Voluntary minimum standards for Micro Business customers

March 2015

Energy UK and ICoSS members have agreed to adopt the following voluntary minimum standards to help ensure credit balances from closed micro business accounts are returned to customers. The standards apply to interactions between the supplier and the customer and/or the customer's representative.

1. Suppliers will ensure their websites include a simple, clear and prominent description of their refund policy and any steps a micro business customer may need to take to request a refund where this approach is needed.
2. Suppliers will make clear on their websites that when a micro business customer moves premises they should take final meter reading(s) and send them to their supplier plus a forwarding address. Where a supplier is notified that a micro business customer is leaving a premises they will ask for the final meter reading(s) and for a forwarding address.
3. When a supplier sends a final bill/statement or other final communication to a micro business customer, it will make clear (on or with that final communication) if there is, or might be, a credit balance on the account, and what (if anything) the micro business customer needs to do to receive any credit, e.g. provide an actual meter read and/or a forwarding address on a Change of Tenancy.
4. Where the supplier is reasonably satisfied that it holds the correct information it will refund credit balances (based on a final actual meter read). Where the customer requests it, and the credit balance is genuine, the supplier will transfer the credit balance to another account of that customer.
5. Once the supplier has the full and correct details, refunds of genuine credit balances will be issued to micro business customers within 28 days of the final bill and the funds clearing or as soon as reasonably practicable.
6. To help ensure refunds are made in a timely manner to former micro business customers, on a Change of Supplier, the losing supplier will treat the agreed meter reading provided by the new supplier as part of the switching process as a final actual meter read, subject to any disputed reads first being resolved.
7. Where an old credit balance is identified and the micro business customers' identity can be verified the credit will be transferred to the customer's live account or will be refunded directly.
8. Suppliers will explore how, where a first attempt to refund a credit balance is unsuccessful (e.g. they have a former micro business customer's actual address, but have not been provided with sufficient information to issue a credit refund), they could proactively follow up in a meaningful way any credit balances of a proportionate amount.
9. Suppliers will consider any reasonable valid historic claim to a genuine credit balance from a former micro business customer.

This represents a minimum set of voluntary standards; individual suppliers may go beyond this.

Suppliers will be implementing these voluntary minimum standards as soon as reasonably practicable.