

Energy Advice Line supports calls for crackdown on mis-selling

Submitted by: LexisClick

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The Energy Advice Line (<http://www.energyadvice.org.uk/>) has supported calls by Ofgem to be given new powers to crack down on rogue energy brokers who use unscrupulous sales tactics.

The UK's leading price comparison and switching service exclusively for business said the regulator should be given any powers necessary to force suppliers and rogue brokers to treat business electricity users fairly.

The Energy Advice Line campaigns for a better deal for UK businesses and has lobbied Ofgem and the government to force energy suppliers to abandon unfair selling practices such as cold calling.

Julian Morgan, managing director of the Energy Advice Line, said Ofgem's call this week for extra powers was better late than never.

"It's long overdue that Ofgem should be asking for extra powers to do what it believes is necessary to bring energy suppliers into line," Mr Morgan said.

"For example, until now, our Say No To Cold Calling campaign appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

"However, if the government gives Ofgem the extra powers it says it needs to act against brokers that mis-lead businesses, we might see the end of such unfair practices."

Ofgem is calling for more powers to take direct action against rogue brokers that mis-sell energy to businesses.

It also wants new powers to strengthen its proposed reforms to make the energy market clearer and fairer for non-domestic consumers.

Such powers could also be used to underpin plans to force suppliers to cut backbilling for businesses to one year. They could also be used if Ofgem decided to ban contract rollovers for business.

"Obviously any new powers that give business electricity users a better deal are very welcome, but they have been a very long time coming," Mr Morgan said.

"I hope that Ofgem now makes this one of its top priorities. As energy prices continue to spiral, small and medium sized firms now urgently need protection against supplier tactics that are costing them a fortune."

Ofgem has stated that reputable energy brokers play an important role in helping businesses to compare the market and many businesses understand the benefits.

However, rogue brokers remained a problem. It said consumer group Citizens Advice found that 42% of complaints it received from small businesses about misselling between November 2011 and October 2012

contained references to broker behaviour. Businesses were particularly concerned about cold calling, high-pressure sales tactics and the unprofessional behaviour of some brokers.

“Our advice to businesses is never to deal with cold callers, simply put the phone down,” Mr Morgan said.

“These rogue brokers are not independent or reputable. Use a service like the Energy Advice Line, which has no allegiance to any particular supplier and is completely transparent about pricing because it’s all there to see online.”

If your business has been affected by cold calling tactics by energy suppliers or rogue brokers, you can join the Say No to Cold Calling campaign and get further information at www.energyadvice.org.uk/say-no-to-cold-calling.php

You can also follow the campaign on twitter @SayNoToColdCall

If you believe you have been tricked into an expensive energy contract by a cold-caller, one of our team of business energy contract experts may be able to help – call 0800 915 1800.

The Energy Advice Line (<http://www.energyadvice.org.uk/>) is the UK’s only impartial business electricity price comparison and switching service exclusively for business. It has campaigned for utility companies to change their business energy contracts and billing arrangements to make it easier for firms to switch suppliers to get the best business electricity rates and gas deals.

For further information visit www.energyadvice.org.uk (<http://www.energyadvice.org.uk/>)