



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Paul O'Brien
OFGEM

Via email only

Social Justice and Social Security
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Email: SJSS.committee@parliament.scot

06 February 2023

Dear Paul O'Brien,

Utilities Warrants in Scotland

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee is undertaking some work around applications for utility warrants in Scotland to try to establish how the process works and what protections there might be for customers who are struggling to pay their bills. We are aware that Ofgem is also looking at protections for vulnerable customers in the wider context of switching to prepayment meters, and we will follow your activities with interest.

The Committee is aware Ofgem has recently ordered all suppliers to suspend the practice of forcibly installing prepayment meters.

Notwithstanding this, the Committee would be grateful if you could share any information you have in the following areas:

- the number of warrants applied for by energy companies in Scotland each year over the past five years – broken down by warrants to disconnect supply and warrants to install prepayment meters if this information is available
- what communication Ofgem expects energy providers to have with their customers before moving to disconnect/install a prepayment

member – and where relevant, what the legal or regulatory basis for the requirements are

- what process an energy company is expected to follow between an initial decision to disconnect/install a prepayment meter and applying to court for a warrant to enter a customer's home. It would be helpful to have as much detail as possible about this process – eg. numbers and medium of communication and any content communications are expected to cover. Again, links to any legal or regulatory requirements underpinning the process would be useful.
- whether there are specific or additional steps energy suppliers should be taking to identify and support vulnerable customers which are not covered in the above processes.

The Committee would be grateful for a response by 27 February. We have also written to Energy UK asking for similar information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Don', written in a cursive style.

Natalie Don MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee