Farrah Bhatti  
Clerk to the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA  

10 February 2015  

Dear Farrah  

Thank you for your email of 4 February inviting us to supply further information as requested by the Chair and Committee members during our evidence session on 3 February. I am very happy to provide the detail requested. The specific questions that we were asked to provide information on and our answers are below:

**How many employees have been disciplined for giving inaccurate information, the amount of compensation paid and what information is provided on your websites about compensation arrangements?**

We can confirm that none of our telesales agents have been disciplined for mis-selling. Where knowledge gaps are identified those agents are relieved of their duties and additional training is provided. We have therefore not paid any compensation due to inaccurate information being provided to users.

In addition, our approach to quality control means that all advisors have two sales call monitored per week (8-10 calls per month) by the quality team. Non-sales calls are monitored by the Senior Advisors and coaching is delivered weekly.

If any of our advisors fall below the minimum quality target a coaching plan is delivered with increased coaching time.

At the present time our website does not contain a specific section on compensation for users however we do provide information about how to easily access our customer service team and we seek to resolve any customer issues as soon as possible.

**Providing a full transcript of phone call(s)**

We have provided a full transcript of the phone conversation between one of our agents and the mystery shopper in Annexe I. The transcript has been redacted to avoid disclosing personal information including names and address details.

**Switching for dynamic teleswitching customers**

At the moment we have no service for switching these users however we do allow users on Economy 7 supplies to compare suppliers. We are continually reviewing our proposition and always look to ensure the widest degree of comparison on the market for all energy users.
What was the number of people clicking ‘no’ in response to the ‘today’ question or similar / proportion of people that actively choose not to see the whole market view in response to this sort of question?

Due to the way our proposition is set out this question is applicable for other comparison websites rather than comparethemarket.com. In terms of tariff display our website defaults to Whole of Market.

I would like to thank the Chair and the Select Committee members in addition to you and your team for providing us the opportunity to give evidence on this important issue. As I said in my evidence, we believe that the retail energy market in the UK is broken and that Price Comparison Websites can play a key role in helping to mend it, primarily through promoting switching which we know can save the average household at least £200.

My colleagues and I would be very keen to continue working with the Committee on this issue to see policy and regulatory initiatives implemented that we believe would promote effective competition in the market. These include:

- Agreeing a standardised bill template to allow consumers to easily understand their energy costs.
- Introducing an annual trigger to prompt consumers to review their energy contracts.
- Creating a Switching Guarantee, like that offered for bank accounts, in order to provide reassurance for energy users and to improve service standards amongst energy suppliers.

Yours sincerely

Paul Galligan
Managing Director
comparethemarket.com
START OF TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee: Hello.

Facilitator: Oh hello there good afternoon to you. May I speak to a XXXXXX please?

Interviewee: Yeah, that’s me.

Facilitator: Hello, how do you do? I’m calling from CompareTheMarket, hello sir.

Interviewee: Hi, thanks for giving me a call back.

Facilitator: You’re most welcome. I understand you’re trying to save some money on your home gas and electricity, is that correct?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Facilitator: Wonderful stuff, thank you. My name is XXXXXX; I’m your energy advisor today.

Interviewee: Thanks XXXXXX, I just - I just wanted to say it's just the gas.

Facilitator: Just the gas?

Interviewee: Yeah, we're tied into our electricity.

Facilitator: Oh okay.

Interviewee: There's an exit fee.

Facilitator: We'll just - okay, thank you for clarifying that, I really appreciate it. Okay that’s great. Now for your information all calls are recorded for quality and training purposes, okay?

Interviewee: Okay.

Facilitator: Now - thank you. Are you the person responsible for the electricity bills?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Facilitator: Thanks great. Okay. I know you’ve already visited our website; I do need to gather your information again to make sure it gets a good comparison, okay?

Interviewee: Okay.
Facilitator: Thank you. Now may I have your postcode please?

Interviewee: Yeah. It's Xxxxxx.

Facilitator: That's fantastic, thank you very much. Yes, you're right, Xxxxxx and can you confirm this postcode is for your home sir?

Interviewee: Yeah it is yeah.

Facilitator: Excellent. Of course you kindly mentioned that this is just really for the gas so I'll just make a note here on the system. Who is the supplier with at the moment?

Interviewee: It's British Gas, standard tariff.

Facilitator: Standard thank you. Thank you very much for that, I appreciate that. How do you currently pay your bills, by monthly direct debits or when you get the bill?

Interviewee: When we gone - when we get the bill.

Facilitator: Okay, that's fine, thank you. All right then.

Interviewee: I'd be happy to change to direct debit because it's a bit cheaper isn't it?

Facilitator: Okay. I will arrange - you're absolutely correct, I will arrange that for you as well. Now do you have an annual statement on your usage in kilowatt-hours?

Interviewee: I've got it written - yeah my wife's written it all down for me because...

Facilitator: Excellent.

Interviewee: ...this is my task for the day. Yeah, it's Xxxxxx.

Facilitator: Okay, thank you. That's Xxxxxx kilowatt-hours with British Gas, thank you. I'll make a note of that here for you. Now monthly direct debit is generally the cheapest payment method, are you happy to pay by direct debit? Of course you just said you'd be interested in doing that, that's excellent.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Facilitator: What you be happy to manage your account online as well?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's right, yeah.
Facilitator: That always helps when we do the comparison you see?

Interviewee: I see.

Facilitator: That's excellent, okay. I'll confirm the details you gave me and this is the information I use for the comparison. You're with British Gas on a standard type paying on receipt of the bill at the moment and your gas and your usage is XXXXX kilowatt-hours. Now you would like to pay by monthly direct debit and you prefer all tariffs. I am now comparing your prices with a wide range of suppliers available through CompareTheMarket.com to see how much you can save on your energy bills, okay?

Interviewee: Thanks.

Facilitator: You're very welcome. Now before we do the comparison just to let you know that your personal projection is coming out at £817 per year and your comparison is based on that figure. I need to check if you have any cancellation fees on your existing tariff and the good news for you of course is that there are no cancellation fees to worry about.

Interviewee: Great.

Facilitator: Now - yeah, absolutely great. Now when you went on our website was there a particular tariff you were interested in going with?

Interviewee: I - to be honest with you XXXXX I didn't really get very far on the website, I'm not very - I know it sounds awfully old fashioned but I don't really like using that - for this sort of purpose so I just thought - I got to the first page and then just thought I'd phone you instead.

Facilitator: That's absolutely fine, that's what I'm here for in any case but thank you very much. Well I've got some good news for you by the way. In actual fact we've got some very good savings.

Interviewee: Great.

Facilitator: I am going to read out for you - because we are independent I am going to read out the top three suppliers on the market, okay?

Interviewee: Yeah.
Facilitator: These are fixed deals. In third place there's a company called npower, in second place we have ScottishPower and in first place we have Green Star Energy. Now with - if we take ScottishPower they've got a tariff called the Online - it's a bit of a mouthful actually, it's called the Online Fixed Price Energy February 2016 Tariff. Now with them you’re actually saving over the year £270, that’s a fantastic 32 per cent savings and your total spend with them would be approximately £547, that’s...

Interviewee: That’s with npower?

Facilitator: No, that’s with ScottishPower, sorry.

Interviewee: Oh, sorry, sorry. ScottishPower was £547.

Facilitator: That’s £547 yeah that’s with ScottishPower, that’s the second cheapest for you, all right, ScottishPower. Of course with ScottishPower there are no tie in or cancellation fees as well...

Interviewee: All right, okay.

Facilitator: ...so that’s an advantage there. Now yeah in top place the cheapest for you is actually Green Star Energy. With Green Star Energy they’ve got a long name for their tariff, it’s called the Rate Saver 12 Months Fixed 1501 Paperless Tariff. That actually has got a 4* customer service rating. With Green Star Energy which is the cheapest you would be saving £279 over the year, that’s an amazing 34 per cent savings.

Interviewee: What’s - sorry XXXXXX, what’s that as a figure then?

Facilitator: Okay so that - basically over the year that £538, that’s your estimated spend over the year...

Interviewee: The highest rate, right.

Facilitator: ...for both gas and electricity and that - that’s - sorry, just for your gas I meant.

Interviewee: That’s just gas isn't it?

Facilitator: Sorry yeah, I’m so used to saying both, you know.

Interviewee: I’d be getting excited at that.
Facilitator: Yeah. That means that your monthly - estimated monthly direct debit, by the way, would be £44.81, that's with Green Star Energy and that's for your gas.

Interviewee: That's the cheapest - that's the cheapest deal, the Green Star one.

Facilitator: That is the cheapest deal, that runs for 12 months, obviously there is a cancellation fee on that one but as long as you stay with them for 12 months you wouldn't have to worry about that anyway. It's really up to you now. I did mention npower but that's the third cheapest; I don't know that you'd be interested in them at all.

Interviewee: No, no I don't think so. I mean XXXXX as I'm sure you can tell I'm interested in getting the cheapest deal possible and if you're saying that Green Star is the cheapest deal possible I'll - I should be - is that right, that's the Green Star one?

Facilitator: That is - is Green Star is the cheapest and has the best customer service rating as well.

Interviewee: All right, well look have you got a phone number that I can maybe come back to you directly on, I'm going to have a chat with my wife and then give it some...

Facilitator: Okay, is she with you at the moment?

Interviewee: No, no she's not no.

Facilitator: Okay. I tell you the reason why because we can only hold this on the screen for so long. I'm happy to give you a call back in an hour if that would make it easier for you. Otherwise what will happen is that we have to run through this all the way from the very beginning again if we talk about this tomorrow for example.

Interviewee: Oh right, okay, so it could change a bit.

Facilitator: It could change a bit and I know we have had people say, you know, I spoke last week and it's changed et cetera et cetera.

Interviewee: Yeah, all right.
Facilitator: When is your - when will your wife be in do you think, when do you think?

Interviewee: It's probably going to be a couple of hours I think.

Facilitator: I leave at five o'clock. If I give you a call at four o'clock would that be okay for you because I could try - I could try and hold this for so when you come back to me or when I ring you back we don't have to go to the very beginning I can just take you from here.

Interviewee: Okay that's a joy. Thanks very much XXXXX.

Facilitator: Yeah. Okay I'll give you a call at four o'clock then sir, all right?

Interviewee: All right. See you.

Facilitator: Thanks. Cheers.

Interviewee: Bye.

Facilitator: Bye-bye.

END OF TRANSCRIPT