**Complaints**

A standard complaint will normally be referred to the Extra Help Unit by email. The EHU has 5 working days to send a Complaint Form to the relevant supplier; however normally we would send the complaint to the company within 1 – 2 working days.

Companies should investigate the complaint and issue a written response to the EHU within **10 working days**. This response should include copies of any letter(s) sent to the consumer to resolve the complaint. Complaints will remain open until we have received a completed Complaint Form and are confident that the matter has been resolved.

As a general rule, the best format for a response to the EHU is:

* The completed Complaints Form which will summarise why an issue has arisen and what action has been taken to resolve it (no case will be closed without this)
* A written letter to the consumer which provides an easily understood explanation of what has been done to resolve the situation and offering an apology when this is appropriate
* A copy of any supporting documentation on which the response relies, such as bills, explanations of an account balance, previous letters sent to the consumer, etc.

It will not be possible for all cases to be resolved within 10 working days. In these circumstances we would still expect an update on what actions have been taken, and when we can expect the next update or resolution. Typically we would expect written updates, however we are also happy for supplier’s complaint handlers to phone our Caseworkers and discuss how the case is progressing. When appropriate we would encourage suppliers to provide written or verbal updates to their customers too.

The Extra Help Unit prioritises achieving the correct result for consumers over meeting targets/KPIs and recognise there will be occasions when it will take time to resolve a complaint due to its complexity or the consumer’s capacity to take necessary actions. However the Unit targets closing 75% of cases within 35 working days and 90% of cases in 66 working days. We would be concerned if a supplier was regularly missing these targets with a significant number of cases.