



**CORE**  
SUSTAINABLE  
HEAT MANAGEMENT

PART OF NORTH WEST  
CAMBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT



# **CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER**

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## WELCOME TO CORE

Core is a customer focused company which provides services relating to the heating and hot water across the North West Cambridge Development, situated in Cambridge between Huntingdon Road, Madingley Road and the M11.

Core operates the Energy Centre and District Heating Network across the Development. These responsibilities also include communicating to customers in relation to maintenance of the system, and also handling payments in return for the heating and hot water service.

Located in the heart of Eddington, a new district in Cambridge which opened in 2017, the Energy Centre provides heating and hot water to properties within the Development through the heating network. Choosing to provide heating and hot water services in this way allows for efficiencies in energy distribution, which helps you, as residents, to minimise your own carbon footprint. It is just one way that sustainability at the North West Cambridge Development is considered and is helping people to lead more sustainable lives.

This Customer Service Charter sets out the high standards that we at Core strive for and how we work to achieve them. All of our team work to these standards. We strive to provide high levels of customer service, and to optimise our efficiency and improve your customer experience.





## OUR COMMITMENTS

We pledge to make the following commitments to our customers

### OPEN COMMUNICATION

We are always pleased to hear from our customers. You can contact us for all Heat and Hot Water queries through our online account service, by email and telephone.

### TRANSPARENT BILLING

We aim to read your meter every month. Where estimate readings are used we will bill you based on your past average usage. We will provide a clear breakdown of your usage on your bills.

### FAIR PRICING

Our prices will be fair and linked to the utility market conditions in which we operate. We will give you at least 31 days' notice if the price you pay is going to change. The basis on which we charge for heat and hot water is explained further in the Core Tariff document.

### EFFICIENT COMPLAINTS PROCESS

We aim to resolve all complaints and queries in a swift, efficient and fair way. Please contact us by email or telephone.

## QUALITY OF SERVICE

Whether we are dealing with a routine enquiry, arranging maintenance work, discussing your bills or any other Core related activity, we are committed to the following quality standards

### IN OUR COMMUNICATION

- We work to the highest safety standards for the well-being of yourself, your home and our staff
- We will carry out any actions in a fair, honest, transparent and professional way
- The information we give you (whether verbally or in writing) will be complete, accurate and truthful. We will use clear and plain language in our communication with you
- We will always act promptly and courteously to help you
- If something goes wrong we will work with you to fix this without a fuss
- We will make it easy for you to contact us

### THROUGH OUR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORK

- We will, where possible, arrange all maintenance work (that we consider to be cyclical preventative and part of our regular programme to maintain the system) at a date that is convenient for you
- We will call you prior to attending your home to give you an estimated time of arrival where possible
- At your request we will use a password scheme for your security when visiting your home

# BILLING AND PAYMENTS

We have selected Vital Energi to provide billing services who act on our behalf. As a company, Vital Energi manages over 36,000 meters throughout the country and has worked with the University of Cambridge for many years.

As part of our commitment to a high quality customer service level, we promise to ensure:

- ACCURATE BILLING
- QUALITY INVOICES
- EFFICIENT RESOLUTION OF QUERIES
- FLEXIBLE OPTIONS TO PAY
- POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

## ACCURATE BILLING

We will collect heat consumption data from residents' heat meters and generate accurate billing for all our customers.

## QUALITY INVOICES

Unless we are billing you quarterly, our invoices will be generated monthly. They will be delivered to you by post or electronically.

Invoices are calculated by applying the current tariff to the metered energy use and will include standing charges as agreed. Invoices will include, but are not limited to:

- Customer name and address
- Bill number and bill date
- Current and previous meter reading
- Energy use since previous bill
- Comparison of energy use for property type against historical usage
- Current tariff and charges
- Amount due including a VAT statement and Core's VAT number
- How to pay and contact for payment difficulties
- Customer services information
- Emergency contact details



## EFFICIENT RESOLUTION OF QUERIES

We will respond to enquiries and complaints quickly and effectively.  
We aim to resolve any issues within five working days.

### ACCOUNT QUERIES

If you contact us by e-mail or telephone, we aim to acknowledge your query within three working days and send you a response within five working days.

### COMPLAINT HANDLING (STEP ONE)

We will handle all complaints with the utmost attention. Fundamental to handling any complaint is good communication. As a standard, we aim to acknowledge receipt of any complaint within one business day of it being received.

Once an initial complaint is received our customer service team will undertake an investigation to answer each individual point raised in the customer complaint. We aim to resolve complaints within ten working days. Our aim will always be to minimise the response time and keep you informed of our progress.

When we receive a complaint a dedicated member of the Customer Service team will thoroughly investigate to determine a complete understanding of the problem and its cause. We will respond to any complaint with the following:

- A full understanding of the problem and an explanation of its cause
- Details of any action required to resolve the complaint or a full and clear explanation if we believe no action is required

- Details of any action taken to ensure there is no reoccurrence of the problem that led to the complaint, if possible
- A full and frank apology where one is justified

If you are unhappy with our initial response to your complaint and wish to dispute it you must formally do this within 10 working days of receiving our response.

### DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If you wish to dispute our initial response to your complaint then you can contact our Head of Customer Relations through our email ([core@eddington-cambridge.co.uk](mailto:core@eddington-cambridge.co.uk)) or telephone line (01254 296 000). A full review of your complaint will then take place.

We aim to resolve complaint reviews within 10 working days. Our aim will always be to minimise the response time and keep you informed of our progress. After the review is completed we will send you a final letter setting out our final position on the complaint.

If you are unhappy with our final position you may contact the Ombudsman for Energy who can deal with your complaint on your behalf. If the Ombudsman for Energy takes on your complaint any decision it makes will be final and binding for both the customer and Core.

## FLEXIBLE OPTIONS TO PAY

We offer a number of ways to pay your energy bill to suit your preferences and help you budget.

### WAYS TO PAY

We offer a number of ways to make payment. These include Direct Debit, Standing Order, credit/debit card payment online or by telephone.

### PAY MONTHLY

Direct Debit or Standing Order are our best payment options and let you spread your costs over a 12-month period. We can either offer a fixed payment which will be reconciled annually or a monthly variable direct debit.

### PAY ON RECEIPT OF INVOICE

To make a payment on receipt of the bill you have a number of options. You can make a payment:

- Online through the Vital Glass platform (resident.vitalenergiglass.co.uk)”
- by telephone with a credit/debit card
- by cheque following the instructions on your bill

Please do not send us cash in the post.

### PAYMENT ERRORS

If we make an error in the handling of a Direct Debit, Standing Order or credit/debit card payment, we will refund on proof any bank charges or financial loss incurred. Once it has been agreed that there has been an error, we will aim to resolve the error within five working days.

If you write to us asking to change the way you make payment for your bills and we cannot meet the request, we will notify you within five working days of receiving your instruction.

## POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

We will deal with all our customers promptly, politely and fairly, and provide ways to contact us by email or telephone.

### ONLINE BILLING

The The Vital Glass platform (resident.vitalenergiglass.co.uk) provides tenants with the ability to view their bills anytime from anywhere via web-connected device.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE

The Core website contains information that can help you reduce your energy usage in a number of ways. You can compare your previous year’s usage profiles against the current year and see how much energy you are using. You can set monthly targets to help reduce the amount of energy used within a given period.

### BEING THERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Our customer service team can be reached easily by email and telephone. If you contact us out of office hours, please leave a message and one of our team will respond.



# PRICE & TARIFFS

## OUR PRICES

We believe in charging a fair price for the supply of heat to your home. Our prices are directly linked to the amount that we pay to generate and deliver heat to your home. To ensure that the amount we charge you for heat is competitive we regularly compare the amount we charge you to the Heat Trust calculator. (<http://heattrust.org/index.php/heat-cost-comparator>)

## OUR TARIFF

Details of our tariff are available on our website.

## OUR HEAT TARIFF COMMITMENTS

- We promise to provide fair and competitive prices which are linked to the market conditions in which we operate
- We will give you at least 31 days' notice if the price you pay for your heat is going to increase
- We will always strive to procure the lowest price available for any service or product involved in the generation of heat
- We will help registered vulnerable customers if they are struggling to pay their bills
- On request we will provide an annual statement detailing a breakdown of your annual consumption





## **SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

### **DIFFICULTIES WITH PAYING YOUR BILL**

As part of our promise of providing you with high quality customer service, we will help you when you need it most. This promise includes doing our best to prevent you from encountering difficulties in paying for your Core bill.

#### **HOW WE CAN ASSIST WITH PAYMENT PROBLEMS**

We will try to work together to find a solution so that you can manage your payments. If you need help with your heat bill, please contact our customer service team.

#### **PAYMENT PLANS**

To help you manage any arrears payments to Core, we are able to create a payment plan based on your circumstances which will allow you to continue receiving heat while reducing the amount of your heat debt.

If you wish to arrange a payment plan, please contact our customer service team.

#### **DISCONNECTION**

We don't ever want to disconnect your heat supply and we will always explore every alternative. However if no solution can be found we will install a 'pay as you go' meter, which means unless regular payments are made your heating and hot water supply will be cut off.

Before we install a 'pay as you go' meter we will provide written notice of at least two weeks in advance.

If you are placed on a 'pay as you go' meter, 50% of the payments made will go towards paying off any outstanding Core debt.

If you are having any payment difficulties, please contact us to discuss your circumstances. We will never knowingly disconnect the energy supply if you are a registered vulnerable customer.

## SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

As your heat supplier we have special responsibilities to help protect any of our customers who may be in a vulnerable situation. Whether it's because of your age, your health or your income, please let us know if you require any special assistance.

### **OUR COMMITMENTS TO REGISTERED VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS**

- We can schedule calls or visits for a time when you have a friend, carer or relative present
- We will never knowingly disconnect your energy supply unless we need to undertake essential maintenance, or for safety or emergency reasons
- We will add you to our priority register to ensure our staff and our sub-contractors are aware you may need extra assistance
- We can, if you wish, deal with your account through a representative
- Upon request we will provide large print, braille, or talking bills
- We will offer alternative forms of heating if we cannot repair the system within our response time of 24 hours on a reactive call out



# MAINTENANCE

We will undertake planned and reactive maintenance to the entire District Heating Network and Energy Centre.

## **REGULAR CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE**

Regular cyclical maintenance will be undertaken, where possible, without any impact on service delivery. At times when we may need to access your property to undertake this maintenance, we will contact you in advance.

## **REACTIVE MAINTENANCE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSES**

All reactive maintenance or system failure will be responded to within four hours of the call out and we plan to complete the necessary system repairs within 20 hours of the failure assessment.

Where the reactive maintenance means that service delivery is disrupted we will prioritise this work to try and get the problem resolved within 24 hours of the initial call-out.

Our maintenance partners are committed to excellent service levels, and will always seek to keep you informed on progress with maintenance work in your area.

## CONTACT US

We are always pleased to hear from our customers and happy to help on heating and hot water related matters. You can get in touch through the methods below and visit our website: [core.eddington-cambridge.co.uk](http://core.eddington-cambridge.co.uk)

### EMAIL:

If you have a general enquiry, please email: [core@eddington-cambridge.co.uk](mailto:core@eddington-cambridge.co.uk)

If you have an enquiry about your heating and hot water bill, please email: [accounts.core@eddington-cambridge.co.uk](mailto:accounts.core@eddington-cambridge.co.uk)

### TELEPHONE:

You can also reach us by telephone: **01254 296 000**

Our contact centre is open from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) for customer service enquiries. Calls outside of these hours will divert to a voicemail for you to leave a short message for the team to follow up.

**For emergencies please call our 24 hour support partners at Portal Estate Management: 03332 079501**

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