

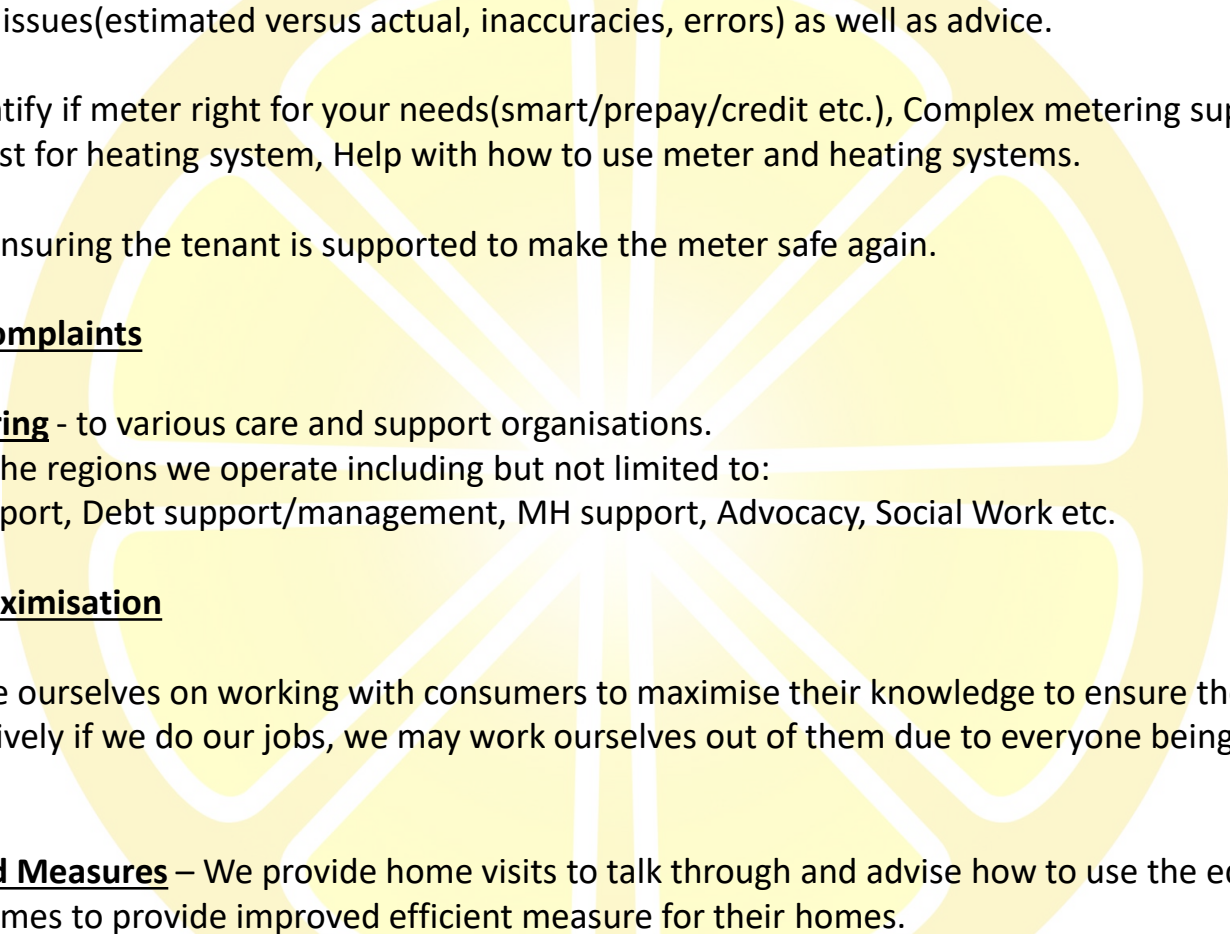
Lemonaid/Citrus Energy

(Fuel Poverty Service)

- Lemonaid is a service with a focus on a people first approach to fuel poverty assistance for the most vulnerable in our communities.
 - As well as a focus on energy/fuel poverty we try to provide advice/support on other major issues in peoples life's such as benefits, debt, health and wellbeing.
 - We do this either internally through our staff who have varied backgrounds and experience or through our network of partners we have cultivated over the years.
- Citrus Energy is a social enterprise commercial energy broker who helps businesses small and large and everything in between to access better deals for their utilities. Any profit made(taken from energy suppliers) from this is then redistributed to the Lemonaid service where we can then make a positive impact on the energy needs and lives of domestic energy customers. If anyone would like further details on this part of our service, please feel free to get in touch.
- Lemonaid and Citrus has been providing their services from 2013 in both North and East Ayrshire and a few years later in Dumfries and Galloway and has made major impacts on the lives of the people in our communities. We have been able to assist over 60,000 domestic customers reducing fuel debt by over £5.5 million.
- Currently our East Ayrshire service is working with Energy Action Scotland on the Safe and Warm in Scotland's communities project funded by SGN as part of the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance funding providing our usual levels of support with an increased focus on Carbon Monoxide and Priority Services Register awareness. We have also increased our focus on ensuring all clients through this service are provided access to Benefits entitlement checks and income maximisation support where required.

We were able to make this impact in a variety of ways. Some of which I have listed below:

- **Provide an impartial service** - helping advocate on behalf of home energy users whether over the phone or within a home visit, or in outreach sessions.
 - This can range from: Best Advice either face to face or over the phone ensuring consumers are best equipped to deal with the energy sector and its issues to Advocacy to speak with Energy suppliers, collections agencies, grant facilitators, DWP etc. to ensure a positive resolution to any issues they are experiencing.
- **Helping with Self Disconnection** - this remains a major issue in the region we operate with a lot of tenants are forced to choose between heating or eating or the choice between gas and electric while they try to manage their low income as much as they can. Through our energy work we aim to reduce expenditure where possible while also providing income max assistance as well where available for individuals.
- **Emergency Fuel Vouchers** - FBF, HACT(RSL only), SIGMA(SP only), Now with VCMA SGN funding as well.
- **Help pay down fuel debt** - variety of sources for this. Supplier specific funds, Tenancy Support Fund(EAC TSF (UC Support team))
- **Debt recovery rate re-negotiation** - Try to extend repayment plan periods to allow for more affordability of monthly payment. If this is done along with debt reduction we can see a large impact on the monthly expenditure.
- **Warm Homes Discount** - As well as this we will also help identify and if possible, apply for any funded schemes to ensure the person has the most support possibly made available to them.

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- **Billing Advocacy** - Help with issues(estimated versus actual, inaccuracies, errors) as well as advice.
 - **Meter support/advice** - Identify if meter right for your needs(smart/prepay/credit etc.), Complex metering support and identifying different meter types ensuring it is best for heating system, Help with how to use meter and heating systems.
 - **Tampered meter support** - Ensuring the tenant is supported to make the meter safe again.
 - **Complaints/Ombudsman Complaints**
 - **Signposting and Cross referring** - to various care and support organisations.
 - Over 150 agencies in the regions we operate including but not limited to:
 - HSCP, LA, Benefits support, Debt support/management, MH support, Advocacy, Social Work etc.
 - **Benefits Checks/Income Maximisation**
 - **Energy Education** – We pride ourselves on working with consumers to maximise their knowledge to ensure they can better manage their energy going forward. Effectively if we do our jobs, we may work ourselves out of them due to everyone being better equipped against energy suppliers going forward.
 - **Energy Efficiency Advice and Measures** – We provide home visits to talk through and advise how to use the equipment available efficiently and we also ask funded schemes to provide improved efficient measure for their homes.

Positive outcomes for us during our most recent provision of the Safe and Warm in Scotland's communities' project, this echoes a lot of the impact we have been able to have over the years.

Consumer presented to us with issues with their Gas bill (£3000 in debt),

- We completed a home visit to provide face to face support, a CO monitor and PSR sign up was completed, metering advice and support was provided while at the property.
- A benefit check was completed when we returned to the office however the persons income was already maximised.
- We then provided advocacy with the persons supplier where we found that at that time, they had £230 per month Direct Debit charges which we found should only have been £90 per month when the account was billed accurately, and the billing errors were resolved.
- After an investigation we established that instead of the debt being £3000, due to errors from the supplier there was a credit of £3990.36, we had a refund processed within 1 week for the customer.
- Currently we are still working with this client to provide Blue badge support, energy efficiency support and advice for their energy needs.

Cancer patient undergoing radiotherapy came to our service.

- She was in receipt of Statutory Sick Pay which has resulted in her experiencing a greatly reduced income.
- We then helped perform a Benefit Entitlement Check followed by further support to maximise her income. She was then awarded UC and was provided further support with ADP (review to increase from lower rate to higher rate).
- Through the current SGN funding we facilitated a boiler service being completed
- We also provided a CO monitor and advice/information and a PSR sign up done.
- FBF vouchers provided as she had a prepayment meter with a view to provide a SGN voucher as well as we head in to winter and she uses the gas for heating a lot more.