

The following documentation relates to the Energy Consumer Reforms, specifically in relation to 2. *Improving the ability to switch to the best offer.*

As a consumer, I went through the process of attempting to switch to a better offer, and the processes were akin to having to jump through many hoops.

I'd like to document the specifics of my scenario and highlight what I would like to see in the future.

In doing so, I'll discuss three separate products being offered by the Retailer to myself:

- **Product 1** is the cheapest possible product available to me (based on my usage)
- **Product 2** is the next cheapest Product available to me.
- **Product 3** is the most expensive product available to me.

Today is 19/11/2024 (for example). I am currently contracted under Product 1 and have been so for approximately 11 months.

Today, I receive a Rate Change Notification from my Retailer. It tells me that in the coming weeks, Product 1 will expire, and I will be moved to Product 3 (i.e. the most expensive) on say, 15/12/2024.

Within the Rate Change Notification, I also receive a Best Offer Message, telling me that Product 2 is also available to me and is cheaper than Product 3.

Expected results:

Upon receiving the Rate Change Notification on 19/11/2024, I should be able to communicate with my retailer **that day** (phone, online / portal, email) and let them know that:

- I want to remain on the cheapest product (Product 1) until it naturally expires on 14/12/2024
- From 15/12/2024, I want to be moved to Product 2 (i.e. the best offer found in the rate change notification).
- The exact rates of the Best Offer should be made available to me within the Rate Change Notification (as opposed to just an estimated Yearly Saving comparing Product 2 with Product 3).

Thus, in one communication, I have successfully moved from the cheapest Product (up until the day it expired), to the best offer available to me. I have avoided being contracted under the most expensive Product (Product 3). I have achieved all of the above in one step / process.

Actual Results (in my case).

On the day I received the Rate Change Notification, I called the retailer and asked to remain on Product 1 until it expires, then move to Product 2 (i.e. the Best Offer from the Rate Change Notification).

I was told they could make the change **now**, but Product 1 would be closed **now** (not 14/12/2024).

If I wanted to move to the Best Offer after Product 1 expires, I would need to call back that day.

The product associated with the Best Offer as displayed in the Rate Change Notification (Product 2) provided no details on the actual charges and rates. I requested these details be provided to me.

A week passes and I received nothing, so I sent an email requesting the charges / rates associated with Product 2.

I receive nothing.

I call the retailer the day before Product 1 expires and ask to be moved to Product 2 (best offer). I again ask to see the rates associated with Product 2.

More time passes and I receive an Invoice.

The charges on the invoice are associated with **Product 3**.

All of the above led to an ombudsman case, which was later resolved.

It required multiple phone calls, multiple emails, etc.

The above scenario (in terms of Product 1, 2 and 3) will be an extremely common scenario, in the event the prices for energy increase.

As a consumer, I should have the ability act upon Rate Change Notifications, and I should not have to wait or make multiple phone calls to get the best product available to me (i.e. I should be able to make prospective decisions about my product offering).

I should not need to hold a concession card or be going through hardship processes in order to be on the best available product (over time) – this should be for all consumers.

Thank you for hearing me out.

Damien.