

ENERGY BEST DEAL

**citizens
advice**

ofgem

This booklet is aimed at consumers in England, Scotland and Wales. Unless otherwise indicated, information is valid in all three countries. The booklet has been produced by Ofgem, Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland as a guide to help you get the best deal from your energy supplier. It also highlights the help that is available from both energy suppliers and government if you are struggling to pay your energy bills.

All information in this booklet is correct as of September 2015.

A yellow semi-circular graphic with a flat bottom edge, containing the text 'ENERGY BEST DEAL' in orange, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**ENERGY
BEST
DEAL**

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1

Shop around to reduce your energy costs by switching tariff, payment method or supplier

Understanding your **choices**

To make sure you are on the best energy deal, have you asked yourself:

- Would switching supplier(s) save me money?
- Am I on the best energy tariff, most suitable for my needs? For example, there are online, fixed, single and dual fuel tariffs. For more information on different tariffs visit citizensadvice.org.uk/energy-tariffs.

Top tip...

Most energy suppliers offer fixed price tariffs, where the price of a unit of energy will stay the same for the length of the energy deal. These may be cheaper than other tariffs but be aware that you may need to pay by direct debit, and that the amount you pay could increase if you use more energy.

There could be penalties if you switch before the end of the current deal, however, at the end of the deal your supplier must transfer you to their cheapest variable tariff with no end date.

- Am I on the best payment option? For example, you can pay with a pay-as-you-go meter, quarterly by cash or cheque or by monthly or quarterly direct debit.
- Could I get a grant to improve the insulation and energy efficiency of my home?
- Could I get welfare benefits and could I get the Warm Home Discount?

Top tip...

Shop around for the best deals. Remember, sales representatives such as those who knock on the door or have a stall at the supermarket often work for one energy company and may only be able to show you deals from that particular supplier.

When considering any deal, check your annual statement or latest bill to see how much you are currently paying and how much you use.



Simpler clearer fairer

In 2014 Ofgem, the energy regulator, made changes that mean it is now easier to shop around and choose the best energy deal.

Simpler

Making it easy to compare energy deals:

- one charging structure, a standing charge and a unit rate
- only two cash discounts can be offered, one for dual fuel and one for managing your account online
- suppliers are limited to four tariffs for gas and four tariffs for electricity.

Clearer

Suppliers must keep you informed by:

- telling you which of their tariffs is cheapest for you on bills and other communications
- giving you an annual summary telling you which of their tariffs you are on and which tariff is cheapest for you, the amount of gas or electricity used for the past 12 months with that supplier and a personal projection that estimates your likely energy costs over the next 12 months
- explaining price changes in pounds and pence
- providing tariff information labels to make comparisons easier
- displaying tariff comparison rates on bills and other communications so that you can quickly and approximately compare the price of tariffs.

Top tip...

Give regular meter readings to your supplier so that your annual statement reflects your usage accurately.

Fairer

New rules to ensure suppliers treat customers fairly, suppliers must ensure:

- advance warning is given of any price changes and when your fixed energy deal finishes
- no exit fee is charged after your tariff end notice
- they move you to the cheapest variable deal with no commitment when your fixed term deal ends.



How to find the **best deal**

What you need before you start:

- the name of your supplier and the tariff you are currently on
- how much energy you used in the last year
- how you currently pay for your energy
- your postcode.

This information is on your bill and annual statement from your energy supplier.

Alternatively you can use your QR code

In 2015 QR codes were introduced to all energy bills. A QR code is a bit like a barcode. You can scan it with a smartphone camera and information about your energy tariff and billing will be uploaded straight to your device. You can use this information to accurately compare different tariffs offered by energy suppliers.

You'll need to download an app to be able to use a QR code. Search for 'energy bill QR codes' in the app store on your device.

Shop around:

- Use our price comparison service or an Ofgem accredited switching site to compare tariffs (see below).
- If you get the Warm Home Discount such as a discount on your electricity bill (see page 25 for more information), it's worth checking whether you will still get this help if you switch.
- Look out for the Tariff Information Label which contains key facts about an energy tariff. Every tariff will have a label and you'll find them on energy suppliers' websites or you can request it from them free of charge.
- The Tariff Comparison Rate (TCR), which is provided for every tariff, can be a handy starting point when comparing tariffs. A TCR calculates the effective cost of fuel per kWh by using the average household usage and including standing charges and discounts.

There are different ways you can find out about potentially better energy deals:

- use our comparison website
energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk
- use one of the approved online price comparison services listed on goenergysshopping.co.uk/confidence-code. These websites are accredited to the Confidence Code, run by Ofgem the independent regulator.
- talk to your current supplier or look at their website. Please note they will only be able to advise you on their own tariffs.
- contact other energy suppliers to compare deals (refer to page 34).
- if you cannot access the internet, you can call the Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** (English language) or **03454 04 05 05** (Welsh language). For textphone, dial **18001** followed by the helpline number



Top tip...

Download Ofgem's Be An Energy Shopper guide from goenergyshopping.co.uk – it includes a comparison notepad you can use to record the energy deals you're comparing.



Key fact

If you rent and you are responsible for energy bills, you have the right to switch. A landlord only has the right to choose the energy supplier if they are paying the energy bills. Further information is available at goenergyshopping.co.uk/tenants



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How to choose the best payment option for you

Energy suppliers offer several ways to pay for your energy. Before deciding what's best for you, it's important to consider the disadvantages as well as the benefits for all payment types.

Common Payment Methods

Key: ● Benefits ● Disadvantages

Pay-as-you-go (pre-payment meter)

- Pay in advance for your energy supply.
- You can better budget what you spend on energy and manage how much energy you use.
- If credit runs out there is limited emergency credit before supply is disconnected.
- You only pay for what you use, so no estimated bills.
- Limited choice of tariffs means you could end up paying more
- Can be inconvenient to top up or access the meter.
- Daily standing charges can build up a debt on the meter even when a fuel is not being used.

This option might suit you if you want to avoid getting into debt or if you want to manage an existing debt.

Quarterly Bill

- Payment is every 3 months. When you receive your bill you will need to pay it by a certain date.
- There are a number of different options for paying your bill. Most suppliers allow you to pay by cash, cheque, standing order and credit or debit card.
- Risk of being charged a late payment charge if you forget to pay.
- The payment will cover 3 months of energy so you will need to pay a larger amount in one go compared with breaking it up into fortnightly or monthly payments.

This option might suit you if you are good at budgeting or don't have a bank account.

Fuel Direct

- Payment for current use of energy and debt is taken directly out of benefits by the Department for Work and Pensions and given straight to your supplier.
- If you use more than the amount deducted from your benefits, your debt will increase and so will future payments.

This option might suit you if you find it difficult to manage your money and are on certain benefits.

Weekly/fortnightly/monthly budget payments

- Smaller payments on a regular basis using a payment card provided by your supplier.
- You can pay your bill for free at a number of different places. Depending on your supplier, you can pay at the Post Office, PayPoint and Payzone outlets. All of these outlets accept cash, cheques and credit/debit cards. Find your nearest outlet at paypoint.com or payzone.co.uk.
- Risk of being charged a late payment charge if you forget to pay.

This option might suit you if you don't have a bank account, or you are repaying any debts.

Monthly or quarterly direct debit

- Payment is the same time and amount every month, which may help with budgeting.
- You may be paying too much or too little if bills have been estimated.

This option might suit you if you have a regular income or have a bank/building society account.

What if I am in debt to my supplier?

If you use a pay-as-you-go meter and owe your energy supplier less than £500 for each fuel (gas and electricity), you can still switch. Your debt will transfer with you but you may benefit from a lower price and potentially be able to pay it off faster.

If you don't have a pay-as-you-go meter and have an outstanding debt to your energy supplier, they have the right to prevent you from leaving until you have paid off your debt to them. Your supplier can't stop you from leaving them if it is their fault you are in debt, for example, if they billed you incorrectly.

If you have a debt with your gas or electricity supplier and are struggling to make payments or cannot agree a payment plan with them, contact the Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** (English language) or **03454 04 05 05** (Welsh language). For textphone, dial **18001** followed by the helpline number.

Or visit your local Citizens Advice. Search for your nearest at citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice/ (in England and Wales) or cas.org.uk/bureaux (in Scotland).

How to change your **tariff or supplier**

Staying with your current supplier

If you are staying with your current supplier but changing to a different payment option or tariff, your supplier will arrange the change. Simply get in touch with them and tell them what you want to do. They should then write to you confirming the details of your new contract.

Switching to a new supplier

If you have chosen a new supplier follow these steps:

- **1** Contact the supplier to agree a new energy deal.
- **2** Make sure you confirm what deal you would like, for instance the name of the tariff.
- **3** You will be sent a contract – check it's correct and that the date you change supplier is correct.
- **4** Ensure you have paid all outstanding bills with your current supplier.
- **5** Take a meter reading on the day you change supplier so you can check your bills. You may also need to provide this reading to your old and new suppliers.

1 Contact the supplier to agree a new energy deal: You can do this face-to-face with a salesperson, over the telephone or on the internet. The process to transfer supply from one company to another should only take 3 days after the end of a 14 day cooling-off period. The cooling-off period is the time you have to change your mind after you've agreed to a new energy deal.

2 Confirm what deal you want: Suppliers should contact you to make sure you understand that a contract has been entered into and that you are happy with the way the sale was made. You have the right to cancel the contract within a 14 day cooling-off period.

3 Check the contract: You will be sent a contract, check it's correct and check the date you are due to change supplier.

4 Pay any outstanding bills: If you don't do this, your existing supplier may block the transfer. Cancel any direct debits or standing orders set up to pay your existing supplier.

5 Take a meter reading: Your new supplier will read the meter, or ask you to take a reading, around the time of the switch. The old supplier will use the meter reading to work out the final bill and the new supplier will use it to start the new account. Keep a note of the reading in case of any future dispute.

If you experience any problems during the switching process you can either contact your old or new supplier or the Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** (English language) or **03454 04 05 05** (Welsh language).

For textphone, dial **18001** followed by the helpline number.

Key fact

Suppliers must allow card, key or token prepayment meter customers to switch supplier even if you have debts of up to £500 per fuel.

How to make further savings through group buying

Collective purchasing and switching

There are benefits to joining together with your neighbours and combining your buying power to get better electricity and gas deals.

For more information visit [gov.uk/collective-switching-and-purchasing](https://www.gov.uk/collective-switching-and-purchasing).

Oil clubs – joining an oil club means they will negotiate with suppliers for the best bulk purchase price for heating oil. The club can help your cash flow by allowing you to order smaller amounts four times a year but still benefit from the bulk pricing.

For more information visit the Citizens Advice website: citizensadvice.org.uk/oilclubs.



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Cascading the Energy Best Deal message

Rosie* is a parent who attends a project called Healthy Families. One of the sessions was an Energy Best Deal session. Rosie's husband dealt with all the utilities in their household and so she had no idea that there are so many different suppliers and tariffs. Rosie, to her own surprise, found learning new information about gas and electricity very enjoyable.

Rosie had been helping her mother, Margaret, who had recently queried her energy supplier over a rather substantial bill during the winter months. Like Rosie, Margaret's husband had normally dealt with all the bills. He passed away a few years ago and Margaret had stayed with the same supplier. Recently she had thought about switching, but Rosie had advised her mum that maybe it was better to stick to what you know.

When Rosie learnt about the different energy tariffs and the potential savings, Rosie felt bad that she had not listened to her mother when she wanted to change supplier. Armed with her new knowledge and some helpful leaflets, Rosie felt prepared to help her mother shop around for a better deal on her gas and electricity. She also felt confident in helping her check whether there were any discounts she may be eligible for. Rosie also took some booklets away to pass on to her friends and colleagues so that they can benefit from potential savings as well.



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*names have been changed

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Where to go for help if you are struggling with your energy bills or services

How you can access extra **free services**

The **Priority Services Register** is a scheme which offers extra services free of charge if you are of pensionable age, are disabled, chronically sick or have sight/hearing difficulties. The scheme is designed to provide additional support for those most in need. Priority Service customers may be able to access the following services from their energy supplier and distribution network.

Improved access to your meter

If you have a prepayment meter and are unable to access it, you can ask for it to be moved or replaced with a credit meter. Please note, there may be a charge for this.

Where you are unable to access your electricity or gas meter, suppliers can arrange to read that meter for you each quarter and inform you of the reading.

Password protection scheme

Suppliers can agree a personal password for use by their staff when they visit your home, so you know they are genuine.

Bill nominee scheme

Suppliers can arrange for your bills to be sent to the address of a friend, relative or carer so that they can help to arrange payment, their agreement is required for this to happen.

Advance notice and support during interruptions

Energy companies recognise that consumers in vulnerable situations may be more at risk than others if their gas or electricity supply is interrupted. For example, they may rely on their energy supply to:

- operate medical or mobility equipment
- store medicines
- stay warm.

If you rely on your energy supply in this way, tell your network distribution company. If they know about your situation they will make special efforts to give you advance warning of supply interruptions and support during interruptions.

If you are not of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick but feel that you need one of the services listed above, you should still contact your energy company to discuss your situation. They may be able to help you.

Services for customers with impaired hearing or vision

Suppliers can provide you with large print, Braille and talking bills and must also offer suitable facilities to handle complaints and enquiries from customers who are visually or hearing impaired.

To ensure you can access these additional services, contact your energy company directly. Remember that if you have two different suppliers for your gas and electricity, you will need to contact both.

Free gas appliance safety check

This is a check to make sure gas appliances are safe and not giving out a harmful level of carbon monoxide. You can get a free annual check from your energy supplier if you are an owner-occupier on means tested benefits and:

- live alone and are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick
- live with others and all household occupants are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick, or under 18
- have a child under the age of five living in the household.

If you are renting your property:

- your landlord is responsible for providing a free annual gas safety check.



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How to get help paying your energy bills

If your bill is unexpectedly high, contact your gas or electricity supplier to have the meter read or give your own reading. An unexpectedly high bill may be caused by the meter being misread, or by a number of underestimated bills followed by an accurate bill. Energy suppliers will work with you if you are struggling to pay your bills. Always contact them as soon as you can to find out whether they can help.



Managing energy bills

Depending on your supplier and your circumstances, you could receive other help. For example:

- rebates if you are older, on certain benefits or on a low income
- money off your energy bill, for example the Warm Home Discount, refer to page 25 for more information
- benefit entitlement checks to ensure you get all welfare benefits you are entitled to
- trust funds which offer grants for things like writing off debts or buying new energy efficient appliances.

Debt repayment

If you are in debt to your supplier, they must offer you an affordable payment arrangement that considers your financial circumstances and your ability to pay.

For example, you could repay your debt by cash or cheque, by direct debit, using a payment card, through a pay-as-you-go meter, or through the Fuel Direct scheme, which is mentioned in more detail on page 10 of this booklet.

Avoiding disconnection

If you let your energy debts build up, there is a risk that you will eventually be disconnected, which means having your energy cut off by your supplier. Most energy supplier will fit a prepayment meter as an alternative to disconnection. However, if you are threatened with disconnection, there are strict rules as to whether or not this will be allowed to happen. You cannot be disconnected in the six months between October and March if you are of pensionable age and live alone, or if you live with people who are of pensionable age or under 18. If you have a pensioner living with you, you should tell your energy supplier as they must take all reasonable steps not to disconnect. The same rule applies if someone living in your home is chronically sick or disabled.

There is also a voluntary agreement you should be aware of if you buy your energy from any of the six main suppliers. These are British Gas, SSE, E.ON, npower, EDF Energy and ScottishPower. All these companies have agreed to not knowingly disconnect vulnerable customers from electricity or gas supplies at any time of the year. You may be considered vulnerable for reasons such as your age, health, disability or financial status.

You cannot be disconnected if:

- You have a debt relief order (if you live in England or Wales) that includes existing energy debts. A debt relief order is a cheaper option than going bankrupt if you can't afford to pay off your debts. If you live in Scotland and have a debt payment programme that includes energy debts, it's unlikely that your supply will be disconnected. If you have any concerns about this, contact your debt adviser for advice. Wherever you live, you could still be disconnected if you build up new energy debts.
- Your debt is owed to a previous supplier.
- You have been made bankrupt and the debt relates to a period before you went bankrupt.
- The debt is not for the gas or electricity you have used but for some other service or appliance you have bought from your supplier.

Specific help is available if you have either been threatened with disconnection or have actually been disconnected.

You can find out more by calling the Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** (English language) or **03454 04 05 05** (Welsh language). For textphone, dial **18001** followed by the helpline number.

Or visit your local Citizens Advice. Search for your nearest at citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice/ (in England and Wales) or cas.org.uk/bureaux (in Scotland).

Help in winter

If you are of pensionable age, you may be able to get help with fuel costs with a Winter Fuel Payment or Cold Weather Payment.

The Winter Fuel Payment is an annual payment to help with the costs of keeping warm during the winter. Payments vary between £100–£300 depending on your circumstances. If you receive the state pension or another social security benefit (not housing benefit, council tax reduction or child benefit), this will be paid to you automatically. If you think you might be eligible and aren't paid automatically you can call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline on **08459 15 15 15** or visit gov.uk to find out more or make a claim. However, please note that you can't claim Winter Fuel Payment for this winter (2015 to 2016) after 31 March 2016.

Cold Weather Payments help some households in an area where a period of exceptionally cold weather has occurred. A payment of £25 will automatically be made for each seven-day period between 1 November and 31 March when the local temperature is an average of zero degrees Celsius or lower over seven consecutive days. Eligible households are those receiving certain benefits. Visit gov.uk, citizensadvice.org.uk/ or contact your local Citizens Advice to find out more.



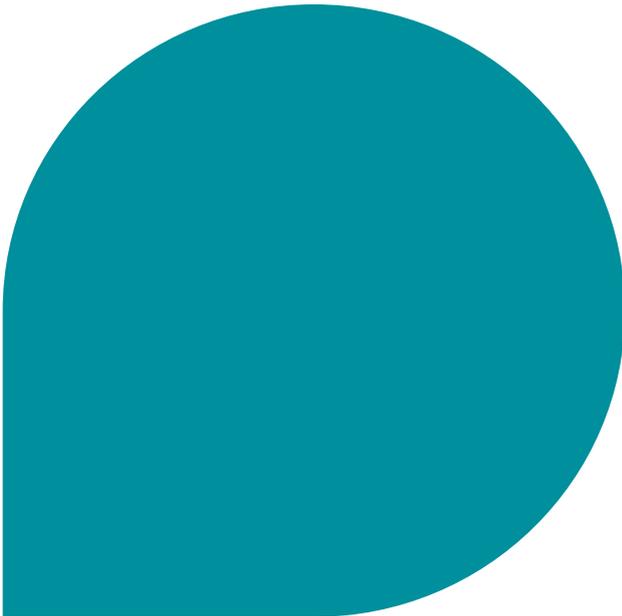
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Check if a previous supplier owes you **money**

When you switch energy suppliers or move house, your current supplier should refund any credit remaining on your account. This is money you've paid to them in advance for energy you didn't eventually use.

When you close your account the supplier must send you a closing statement telling you if there's credit on your account, or if you owe anything to them. Some suppliers won't always do this, so it's worth contacting them to see if you're owed money.

To find out if your previous supplier owes you money there is now a 'My Energy Credit' helpline **0370 737 7770** or go to myenergycredit.com.



Solving problems with your energy supplier

If you believe your supplier has done something wrong you should first tell them about the problem and ask them to put it right. You will find their contact details on your bill or energy statement.

If the problem is not solved in a reasonable time you should make a formal complaint to your supplier. Again the details of where to send this will be on your bill or statement. If you need some help in making your complaint you can contact the Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** (English language) or **03454 04 05 05** (Welsh language).

For textphone, dial **18001** followed by the helpline number.

Your supplier should resolve your complaint or send you a 'deadlock letter' saying there is no more they can do. If you receive a deadlock letter, or the formal complaint has been outstanding for more than eight weeks, you may take your complaint to the independent Energy Ombudsman who can make a ruling which the supplier must accept. You can visit their website ombudsman-services.org/energy or call them on **0330 440 1624**.

Remember, if you have not received a deadlock letter and it is less than eight weeks since you made your formal complaint the Ombudsman cannot pursue the matter.



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How to save money and use less energy in your home

Where to find help

Home Heat Helpline

This is a free national helpline run by the six main energy suppliers. If you are having difficulties paying your fuel bills, it offers specialist advice on benefits, grants for free home insulation, reduced tariffs and special payment options that energy suppliers provide. The Home Heat Helpline is open 9am–6pm Monday to Friday and is free to call – **0800 33 66 99** (or **0333 300 3366** if you're calling from a mobile) or visit the website at homeheathelpline.org.uk.

Warm Home Discount scheme

Participating electricity suppliers offer a discount of £140 off your electricity bill if you are eligible. You will automatically qualify for the discount if on 12 July 2015 all of the following apply:

- your electricity supplier was part of the scheme
- your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
- you were getting the guarantee credit element of pension credit (even if you get savings credit as well).

You may also qualify if you are on a low income or receive certain other benefits.

To see if you qualify call your supplier or visit citizensadvice.org.uk.

Schemes to improve **energy efficiency and save money**

There are government initiatives available that can help you save money by being more efficient with energy. The key ones are:

- in England, the Energy Companies Obligation (ECO)
- in Wales, ECO and Nest
- in Scotland, ECO and the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS).



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Energy Companies Obligation

This scheme aims to get efficient boilers and insulation into the homes of vulnerable people across Great Britain.

It can help you in three ways:

- **Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO)**
focuses on hard to heat homes, for example by funding solid and cavity wall insulation.
- **Home Heat Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO)**
also known as the Affordable Warmth Scheme, helps with the cost of loft or cavity wall insulation, boiler repairs and replacements if you or someone else in the household gets certain benefits. You must also own your home, have a mortgage or be a tenant in a privately owned property.
- **Carbon Saving Communities Obligation (CSCO)**
helps with insulation and glazing if you live in a specified postcode area or live in a low-income household in a rural area. A rural area means you live in private or social housing, in a population of under 10,000 homes and you or someone who lives with you gets certain benefits.

Find out more in England and Wales by visiting your local Citizens Advice. You can also call the **Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS)** for advice and to see if you are eligible on **0300 123 1234**.

Find out more in Scotland by calling **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282**.

Nest (Wales only)

Nest is the Welsh Government's scheme to help households in Wales reduce their fuel bills. Nest can advise and support you in how to save energy, make your home more energy efficient, check your benefit entitlement to ensure you're getting all the income you are entitled to and advise you on money management. You could also get energy improvement measures for your home at no cost, if you receive a means-tested benefit such as child tax credit and live in a property that is privately owned or privately rented and has an energy efficiency rating of E, F or G, which often applies to older and larger homes.

For more information contact Nest on **0808 808 2244** or go to nestwales.org.uk.

Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS) (Scotland only)

HEEPS is the Scottish Government's initiative launched in 2013 to help households reduce bills and make their homes more energy efficient. It includes these schemes:

Area Based Schemes (ABS).

These are local schemes to your area and are being run by local authorities to provide help to households experiencing fuel poverty. They are funded partly by the Scottish Government and partly through the Energy Companies Obligation (ECO). Measures available could include solid wall insulation, cavity wall insulation and heating systems.

Cashback Scheme

The Scottish Government is offering owner occupiers, private and social tenants and registered private sector landlords a rebate towards installing eligible energy efficiency measures for properties that are in council tax bands A to C. The measures must be recommended in a pre-install Green Deal Advice Report for the property. The scheme is available on a first come, first served basis and is subject to available funding. Landlords can receive loan funding for a maximum of 5 properties.

Loan Scheme

The HEEPS Loan scheme is open to owner occupiers and registered private sector landlords in Scotland. An interest free loan of up to £10,000 is available to install measures such as solid wall insulation, double glazing or new boilers. The repayment period depends on the amount that you borrow. Successful applications will be subject to an administration fee. You must not start work until you have received an offer under the HEEPS Loan scheme. The scheme is available on a first come, first served basis and is subject to available funding. Landlords can receive loan funding for a maximum of 5 properties.

Gas Infill Loan Scheme

Under the HEEPS Loan programme loans are available to help owner occupiers and private sector landlords with the costs of connecting to the gas grid. The Gas Infill Loans scheme provides interest free loan funding for gas connection costs and installation of a gas central heating system. It is available for individuals wishing to connect to the gas grid, or where the property is included in a gas infill project or gas grid extension project. Loans are available between £500–£5,000. Landlords can receive loan funding for a maximum of 5 properties. Successful applications will be subject to an administration fee. The scheme is available on a first come, first served basis and is subject to available funding

You can get more details on these schemes, energy efficiency advice, information on low-cost energy tariffs and advice on how to make the most of your income by contacting Home Energy Scotland on **0808 808 2282** or visit energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland. You can also visit Energy Action Scotland at eas.org.uk for information on HEEPS.

Tips for saving energy

There are a range of things that you can do to make your house more energy efficient and to cut your energy bills. You can speak to your energy supplier or for independent advice contact **0300 123 1234** (Energy Saving Trust England and Wales) or **0808 808 2282** (Home Energy Scotland) or visit [gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator](https://www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator).

Top tips for saving energy:

- 1** If you have a timer on your central heating system, set the heating and hot water to come on only when required for example, 30 minutes before you get up in the morning and set it to switch off 30 minutes before you are due to leave or go to bed.

- 2** If you have a hot water tank, set the cylinder thermostat to either 60 degrees Celsius or 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Cylinder thermostats are usually fitted between a quarter and a third of the way up the hot water cylinder.

- 3** Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows and check for draughts around windows and doors.



4 Always turn off the light when you leave a room.

5 Don't leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave laptops and mobile phones on charge unnecessarily.

6 When you are doing the washing, try to fill up the machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher. One full load uses less energy than two half loads.

7 Try and ensure that you only boil as much water as you need.

8 A dripping hot water tap can waste enough energy in a single week to fill half a bath. Fix leaking taps and make sure they are fully turned off.

9 Get a smart meter and in-home display installed when you are offered one by your energy supplier. The in-home display will show you how much energy you are using so you can work out where there may be opportunities to use less energy and save money. The government wants all households to have a smart meter by 2020.

10 Do a home energy check to find out about savings of up to £250 a year on household energy bills. Visit the Energy Savings Trust home energy check at energysavingtrust.org.uk/domestic/home-energy-check in England and Wales and at energysavingtrust.org.uk/domestic/home-energy-check-scotland in Scotland. Use this check to get a full report with details of your home's energy use and the savings you could make.

Getting the best deal – pass it on



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Ron, an 80 year old pensioner, and Sayed, also aged over 60, attended an Energy Best Deal session delivered by Citizens Advice Barnet. Following the session Ron switched from his current supplier to a better deal with another company. Sayed, who was already with the company Ron had switched to, was also offered a better deal.

Over the following months, they consulted with each other and discovered that their supplier was offering a cheaper tariff than the one they were on. Both only use electricity (no gas) and they were able to get a further £20 per year discount.

In total Ron is saving £140 per year and Sayed is saving just under £100 per year. Both are much happier and have told their supplier that if they put the price up again they will look for a better deal!

Lawrence is a neighbour of Ron and Sayed. He also attended an Energy Best Deal session delivered by Citizens Advice Barnet. He wanted to make a saving like his neighbours so, following the session, he booked an advice appointment at the local Citizens Advice as part of the Energy Best Deal Extra scheme. The adviser helped Lawrence to save £120 per year by changing tariff with his current supplier and he also received an extra £10 from them as compensation for not putting him on the correct tariff.

Lawrence said he wouldn't have had the confidence if it were not for the Energy Best Deal presentation, his neighbours' testimonies and the local Citizens Advice's advice and support.

Energy suppliers' contact numbers

Energy company	Website	Customer Service	Cheaper for Mobile *	Warm Home Discount
British Gas (including customers of Scottish Gas)	britishgas.co.uk	0800 048 0202		0800 072 8625 credit 0800 294 8604 prepay
e.on Energy	eonenergy.com	0333 202 4698		0345 052 0000*
EDF Energy (incl. customers of Seeboard and SWEB)	edfenergy.com	0800 096 4063	0113 820 7117	0808 101 4130
npower	npower.com/home	0800 073 3000	0300 100 3000	0800 980 5525
Scottish Power (including Manweb)	scottishpower.co.uk	0800 027 0772	0345 270 0700	0800 027 0139
SSE	sse.co.uk	0800 975 0485 0800 980 9440		0800 300 111
Better Energy	betterenergy.org.uk	0115 846 0438		
Cooperative Energy	cooperativeenergy.coop	0800 954 0693 0192 631 7650		0800 954 0693
E Gas and Electric	e-uk.com	0333 103 9575		
EBiCo	ebico.org.uk	0800 458 7689 0199 360 8404		0800 458 7689
Economy Energy	economyenergy.co.uk	024 7776 7296		
Ecotricity	ecotricity.co.uk	0800 030 2302 0143 575 6111		
Extra Energy	extraenergy.com	0800 953 4774		
First Utility	first-utility.com	0192 632 0700		0800 138 3342

Energy company	Website	Customer Service	Cheaper for Mobile *	Warm Home Discount
Flow Energy	flowenergy.uk.com	0800 092 0202	0330 333 7282	
GB Energy	gbenergysupply.co.uk	0800 644 4451		
Good Energy	goodenergy.com	0800 254 0000		
Green Energy UK	greenenergyuk.com	0800 783 8851	0192 048 6156	
Green Star Energy	mygreenstarenergy.com	0800 012 4510	0330 088 1619	
Gnergy	gnergy.co.uk	0125 249 4141		
iSupply Energy	isupplyenergy.co.uk	0330 202 0298		
LoCo2 Energy	loco2energy.com	0330 1241500 0845 074 3601		
M&S Energy	mandsenergy.com	0800 980 2473		0800 300 111
Ovo Energy	ovoenergy.com	0800 599 9440 0800 358 3532		
Sainsburys Energy	sainsburysenergy.com	0800 107 1879	0330 100 0014	0800 077 3827
Spark Energy	sparkenergy.com	0345 034 7474	0345 034 7474	
Utilita	utilita.co.uk	0330 333 7441		
Utility Warehouse (owned by Telecom Plus)	utilitywarehouse.co.uk	0800 131 3000		0800 781 7777

* Numbers starting with 01 or 02 are typically charged up to 9p per minute if you call from a landline; calls from mobiles between 8p and 40p per minute depending on your call package. Most providers offer call packages that allow calls free at certain times of the day. Numbers starting with 03 cost no more than calls to 01 or 02 numbers. Calls to 03 numbers from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages.

Other useful **contact numbers**

UK wide

Citizens Advice consumer service	08454 04 05 06
<small>For textphone, dial 18001 followed by the helpline number</small>	
To talk to a Welsh speaking adviser	08454 04 05 05

Winter Fuel Payments helpline	08459 15 15 15
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Home Heat Helpline	0800 33 66 99
or if calling from a mobile	0333 300 33 66

Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS)	0300 123 1234
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Scotland

Home Energy Scotland	0808 808 2282
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Wales

Nest	0808 808 2244
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Energy Best Deal is a consumer campaign run by Citizens Advice and its partners in England, Scotland and Wales. It offers household energy consumers and frontline advice workers (both paid and volunteers) the opportunity to attend an information session on getting a better deal on their energy bills. Ofgem has supported the campaign since its launch in 2008.

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