

# Make energy better

Education resources



**citizens  
advice**

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## **Contents**

### **Activity 1 - What do you know about your energy meter?**

Comparing the differences between traditional meters and smart meters; this activity asks clients to think about and recall key information about their own meters. This will help to present a balanced consideration of smart meters.

- 1 x trainer sheet

### **Activity 2 - Switching meters**

True or false activity - dispelling the myths; this activity serves as a checklist of points learned. It can act as a checklist of points recalled from the 'ten things you need to know' leaflet.

- 1 x trainer sheet

### **Client answer sheet (for photocopying)**

You can download PDFs of these resources from our website at:  
**[citizensadvice.org.uk/make-energy-better](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/make-energy-better)**.

## **Introduction**

These two education resources are designed for to use to check clients have understood some of the key information around smart meters in the Make Energy Better pack.

Smart meters are a new type of energy meter for gas and electricity which are going to be offered to all households in Great Britain over the next few years. Although the official roll-out begins later this year, there are already people who have recieved early, 'smart' or 'advanced' meters, so it may be that members of your community already have experience of them. Each energy supplier is responsible for equipping their own customers with smart meters and so have different ways that they will be dealing with the roll-out with different timelines until 2020 when the rollout is scheduled to finish.

The two activities have been developed as a resource to help discussing smart meters with clients or at events, and is designed to be used in conjunction with the 'top ten things you should know about smart meters' leaflet which is also included in this pack. An additional blank worksheet has been provided in case time allows clients or participants to complete it.

Consider using this opportunity to remind clients about bogus callers and to be mindful of the need to be security aware, for example check IDs and setting passwords on accounts.

If the client is an older or disabled person, they may be eligible to join a priority services register. Please see the flyer enclosed in this pack for for information.

## Activity 1 - What do you know about your energy meter?

The differences between traditional energy meters and smart meters – Trainer sheet

	Traditional energy meter	Smart meter
<b>Where is your meter stored?</b>	<p>Usually the meter(s) will be located near the front door, outside the front door, cupboard under the stairs.</p> <p>It is important with any meter that you know how to locate it.</p> <p>If you're finding it difficult to access your meter seek further advice and guidance from Citizens Advice: <a href="https://citizensadvice.org.uk/energy">citizensadvice.org.uk/energy</a>.</p>	<p>Depending on whether you're having one or both replaced, you'll get a smart electricity meter and a smart gas meter. These normally go exactly where your old meters were. If they need to be fitted somewhere else, the installer will ask you first.</p> <p>You'll also be offered an in-home display – a portable display screen that you can put anywhere in your home. You don't have to have one, but it's the easiest way to see what energy you're using and what it's costing you and will be provided at no extra cost.</p>
<b>What different types of meter can you have in this format?</b>	Traditional, prepay and key card meters, economy 7, remote teleswitching	Smart meters can switch between credit and prepay mode and so they're all the same. However, some early smart meters can't switch between the two.
<b>How do you pay your bill?</b>	Quarterly, direct debit monthly, key card, prepayment meter	Quarterly, direct debit monthly, prepayment, mobile phone top-up via app (for prepay)
<b>How can you access your bills?</b>	Monthly or quarterly bill. Online.	Monthly or quarterly bill. Online
<b>How can you monitor your fuel usage?</b>	Be energy efficient, request monthly bills and regular meter readings.	Your smart meter will send automatic readings to your energy supplier in whatever detail you allow, you can view and monitor your in-home display to see near-real-time energy usage.
<b>Can you switch energy providers?</b>	Yes - if you are the bill payer you can request to switch.	Yes - if you are the bill payer you can switch providers.
<b>Where can you get more information?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy company</li> <li>• Citizens Advice consumer service</li> <li>• Local Citizens Advice service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy company</li> <li>• Citizens Advice consumer service</li> <li>• Local Citizens Advice service</li> <li>• Smart Energy GB does not give advice but does have a comprehensive FAQ section on its website <a href="https://www.smartenergygb.org">www.smartenergygb.org</a></li> </ul>

## Activity 2 - Switching meters

True or false activity - Dispelling the myths - Trainer sheet

	True or False?	
<b>Everyone must have a smart meter.</b>	<b>False</b>	<p>Smart meters are optional.</p> <p>While energy suppliers are obliged to offer smart meters to everyone by 2020 you don't have to accept one if you don't want one. It's likely that in the future, smart meters will be the only option available to replace old meters. However, you'll still be able to request that your supplier not use the smart meter functionality, meaning that it will act like a standard meter.</p>
<b>There is a charge for the smart meter.</b>	<b>False</b>	<p>There is no initial charge for a smart meter.</p> <p>The cost of smart meters will be covered through consumer bills just as current meters are, meaning there will be no direct charge or cost to have one.</p>
<b>Every household will be offered a smart meter by 2020.</b>	<b>True</b>	<p>All households in Great Britain will be offered a smart meter.</p> <p>The Government has made this mandatory. Whilst consumers do not have to accept one it may be that in the future these will be the only meters available.</p>
<b>You have to have a smartphone app to be able to view your account.</b>	<b>False</b>	<p>You do not have to have a smartphone app to view your account.</p> <p>You can download a smartphone app but you'll also be able to review your account online or through paper bills as you do now. In addition, you will be offered a in-home display (IHD) with your smart meter which will show you accurate, real-time information about your energy usage which you'll be able to monitor.</p>
<b>You can monitor your energy use more regularly with a smart meter, helping with your energy efficiency.</b>	<b>True</b>	<p>Yes, you can monitor your energy usage more with a smart meter.</p> <p>Using an in-home display, you can see what you're spending and you could use that information to make savings.</p>
<b>Smart meters are only for credit meters not prepayment meters.</b>	<b>False</b>	<p>No smart meters will be able to work both in 'credit' and 'prepayment' modes.</p> <p>Because of this, prepayment tariffs should become cheaper in the future. Smart meters will also allow for new ways to top-up your meter by phone, online or through an app in addition to current methods.</p>

## What do you know about your energy meter? The differences between traditional energy meters and smart meters

Make energy better - activity 1 - Client worksheet

	Traditional energy meter	Smart meter
Where is your meter stored?		
What different types of meter can you have in this format?		
How do you pay your bill?		
How can you access your bills?		
How can you monitor your fuel usage?		
Can you switch energy providers?		
Where can you get more information?		

## Dispelling the myths - Switching meters

Make energy better - activity 2 - Client worksheet

**Everyone must have a smart meter.**

**There is a charge for the smart meter.**

**Every household will be offered a smart meter by 2020.**

**You have to have a smartphone app to be able to view your account.**

**You can monitor your energy use more regularly with a smart meter, helping with your energy efficiency.**

**Smart meters are only for credit meters not prepayment meters.**

**True**

**False**

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