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**ENERGY  
BEST  
DEAL**



[www.ofgem.gov.uk](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk)



[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

# Energy best deal

A quick guide to getting the best deal by shopping around and making the most of the help available

## How to get the best deal

Developments in the energy market have made it easier for you to shop around and choose the best energy deal. Suppliers are now required:

- to provide better information on bills,
- to provide you with an annual statement,
- to allow card, key or token meter customers to switch even if they have debts of up to £200<sup>1</sup>,
- to not charge you more for one payment type than another, unless the charges can be justified by cost, and
- to have their doorstep salespeople provide you with written estimates and sales literature that is clear, accurate and easy to understand<sup>1</sup>.

If you have never changed your energy supplier you could be paying more than you need to for your gas and electricity.

Depending on where you live, on average you could save<sup>2</sup>:

- £92 a year if you pay by Direct Debit,
- £99 a year if you pay by card, key or token meter, or
- £78 a year if you pay by cash or cheque.

Financial help is also available for some people from suppliers and Government. Help found through the Energy Best Deal has resulted in:

- a lone parent on low income receiving help from the Warm Front scheme which paid for a replacement boiler, loft insulation and energy saving light bulbs.
- a disabled person notifying their energy company about their disability and the company changed their meter and put them on a cheaper tariff.

# Who can switch?

Nearly everyone can switch supplier. You can change energy supplier even if you have a token, key or card meter and have debts of up to £200. However there are times when changing may not be possible, for example, if you rent your home and pay the landlord for gas.

# Comparing prices

To see if you are getting a good deal for your energy you need to find out how much you are paying. If you haven't received your annual statement yet or won't be getting one for a while it's a good idea to get a copy of your last couple of bills or, if you use a card, token or key meter, to have an idea of how much you spend a week/month on energy.

**You also want to have the following information before you contact suppliers, go on the internet or telephone price comparison services:**

- name of your current supplier(s)
- tariff name
- your post code



# Next steps

There are **three ways** to find out about the prices charged in your area.

- 1 Phone round the energy supply companies** to find out what deals are on offer and compare them with your current deal. See the numbers at the end of this booklet.
- 2 Or you can use one of the approved online price comparison services.** These are listed on the Consumer Focus website: **[www.consumerfocus.org.uk](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk)** You can also download a pricing factsheet for your area from the Consumer Focus website.
- 3 If you cannot access the Internet you can call Consumer Direct on 08454 040506** for a pricing factsheet as well as general consumer advice.

## What do I do when I have chosen my supplier?

Once you've chosen a new deal that meets your needs, contact the supplier you would like to switch to and they will take responsibility for organising it.

The whole process can take up to 6-8 weeks. During that time your gas or electricity will continue to be supplied by your old supplier. You will not be cut off or be without gas or electricity.

## Is there anything I need to do?

You don't need to contact your old supplier. Your new supplier will take responsibility for contacting you and taking you through the switching process. You should take a meter reading on the day you change supplier, so you can then check that the final bill from your old supplier and the first one from your new supplier are correct.

It's also worth checking each year if your current supplier is still offering you a good deal, this can be done when you receive your annual statement.

Most energy suppliers **offer help for customers on low incomes** who are struggling to pay their bills.

5

## Making the most of the help available

If you are elderly, disabled or chronically sick you should contact your supplier to make sure you are on their Priority Service Register.

This entitles you to a range of free services including quarterly meter reads if you have difficulty reading the meter.

**Energy suppliers also offer a range of help and advice in using energy more efficiently.**

Give them a call to find out more.



Your **first step should be to call your supplier** to see how they can help (see the contact numbers on pages 9-10).

6



# Where to find help

## Industry initiatives

- **Home Heat helpline 0800 33 66 99**

This is a free national helpline run by energy suppliers for customers having difficulties paying their fuel bills. It offers advice on things like cheaper payment schemes and grants for insulating your home. Give them a call on **0800 33 66 99** or visit their website at **[www.homeheathelpline.org](http://www.homeheathelpline.org)**

## Government initiatives

There are government initiatives available to some customers that can make energy more affordable. The key ones are:

- **The Winter Fuel Payment** which helps with the costs of keeping warm in winter for people aged 60 or over. Payments vary between £125-400 depending on individual circumstances.

For more info contact **08459 15 15 15** or visit **[www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel/home.asp](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel/home.asp)**

- **Energy Saving Trust Advice Centres**

Your local Energy Saving Trust can help you with advice and help on energy efficiency. Contact your local advice centre on **0800 512 012**.

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## England

- **Warm Front** can provide a package of insulation and heating improvements up to the value of £3,500 (or £6,000 if oil, low carbon or renewable technologies are recommended).

For more information contact the Warm Front team on **0800 316 2805** or go to **[www.warmfront.co.uk](http://www.warmfront.co.uk)**

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## Wales

- **The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme** provides a package of heating and insulation improvements up to the value of £3,600.

For more information contact the Home Energy Efficiency Society on **0800 316 2815** or go to **[www.heeswales.co.uk](http://www.heeswales.co.uk)**

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## Scotland

- The **Energy Assistance Package** is funded by the Scottish Government and gives advice and support to help consumers cut fuel bills and make homes warmer / comfortable. Depending on circumstances consumers could benefit from a maximum of £6,500 of work being done to the home to improve the energy rating (through insulation, new boiler, draught proofing etc).

For more information please contact them on **0800 512 012** or go to **[www.energyassistancepackage.com](http://www.energyassistancepackage.com)**

# Energy suppliers' contact numbers



British Gas 0800 072 8629

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EBiCo 0800 458 7689

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Ecotricity 0800 0302 302

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EDF Energy 0800 096 9000

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E.ON Energy 0800 479 2211

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First Utility 0845 215 5000

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Good Energy 0845 456 1640

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Green Energy 0845 456 9550

Npower 0845 675 0425

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Scottish Hydro Electric 0845 300 2141

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Scottish Power 0800 027 8792

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Scottish and Southern Energy  
Southern Electric 0845 7444 555

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Spark Energy 0845 869 4002

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Utilita 0800 027 9000

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Ovo 0800 599 9440