



**Monday 1 August 2011**

## **ON-LINE MONEY SAVING ADVICE LAUNCHED IN WELSH LANGUAGE**

**Welsh Environment Minister John Griffiths launches the Welsh language on-line version of Energy Best Deal today at the Eisteddfod**

- **Welsh consumers who have not switched pay around £170 more on average for their energy\***
- **At least seven out of ten domestic electricity consumers in Wales have never switched**
- **Campaign provides advice on keeping energy bills as low as possible and on consumers' "energy rights"**

Environment Minister John Griffiths today launches the Welsh language version of the **Energy Best Deal** on-line initiative at the Eisteddfod in Wrexham. The consumer awareness campaign is run jointly by **Citizens Advice** and energy regulator **Ofgem**.

Welsh-speaking consumers are now just clicks away from getting impartial advice from Citizens Advice and Ofgem on how to keep the cost of energy as low as possible through energy efficiency and getting a better deal in the energy market.

Through a series of short videos, consumers are made aware of their "energy rights" when it comes to dealing with energy companies. The videos cover dealing with doorstep sales people, debt and disconnection, and getting help for consumers struggling to pay their energy bills.

John Griffiths said: "With rising fuel prices it's important that people have the necessary information to help them be energy efficient and get value-for-money from energy providers. I'm delighted that these videos are now available in both our languages and I encourage everyone to watch them."

Earlier this year, Ofgem's Retail Market Review showed that energy companies make higher profits from consumers who do not switch. Significantly, at least seven out of ten domestic electricity consumers in Wales have never switched: on average consumers who have not switched pay around £170 more for their energy.\*

Sarah Harrison, Ofgem's Senior Partner for Sustainable Development, said: "Our latest research shows that consumers who are not active in the market are paying on average around £170 a year more than they have to. Energy Best Deal is here to help energy consumers become more active in the energy market. A large number of Welsh consumers have never switched energy supplier so our Welsh language online films will help them to shop around and get a better deal. This is particularly important as over a quarter of households in Wales are in fuel poverty\*\*

"While Ofgem is pushing ahead with reforms to make comparing energy deals even easier, consumers should still take advantage of recent improvements like annual statements and the advice in these videos to help reduce the cost of their energy."

Fran Targett, Director of Citizens Advice Cymru, said: "We are very excited to launch Energy Best Deal on-line with Ofgem. This will help give even more people the confidence to get the right deal. At a time when utility prices are once again rising, it is particularly important that hard pressed consumers don't spend more than they need to."

The established **Energy Best Deal** face-to-face advice scheme has already reached over 60,000 consumers since it was launched by Citizens Advice and Ofgem in 2008. Its key messages have been distilled into seven short videos - now available in Welsh - that explain, in an easy to understand way, actions that that everyone can take to keep their energy bills as low as possible.

**John Griffiths, Environment and Sustainable Development Minister, will launch the Welsh language videos at the Citizens Advice Cymru stand W05 – W06 at 4pm on Monday August 1.**

**Watch the videos on line here:**

<http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/cymraeg/yyfocal/Pages/yyfocal.aspx>

**Outline of each video:**

**Shopping around for the best energy deal:** this video is a guide to the simple steps you can take to look for a better energy deal, ensuring it's the right deal for you and how to switch supplier.

**How to be energy efficient:** handy tips on how to save money by using less energy in your home.

**Getting help with your energy bills:** gives advice on what your energy company can do to help you if you are in debt to them and what steps to take to avoid the possibility of disconnection.

**Dealing with sales people:** this video tells you what to expect from energy sales people (either in person or on the phone) and what you need to know to be confident you are getting a good and appropriate deal.

**How to make a complaint:** here you will find useful guidance on what to expect when making a complaint and what to do if you are not satisfied with the energy company's response.

**Avoiding debt and disconnection:** highlighting where you can go for help and advice.

**More money in your pocket:** this video shows two consumers from Kirklees discussing the savings they made following an Energy Best Deal session.

**Ends**

\*This is for an offline Dual Fuel Direct Debit customer switching to the best deal available in both England and Wales.

\*\* Welsh Assembly Government data January 2011

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/110117fuelpovertyimpacten.pdf>

## **Notes to editors:**

### **1. Hosting Energy Best Deal videos**

If you would like to host any of the Energy Best Deal videos for your website you can download the Welsh language versions from the following link:

<http://cdn.jacaranda.co.uk/static/ofgem/yyfo/partners.html>

And in English:

<http://cdn.jacaranda.co.uk/static/ofgem/ebd/partners.html>

**2. Energy Best Deal** builds on the research under Ofgem's Consumer First Programme which showed that many vulnerable customers needed:

- more information and guidance on tariff payment options
- access to grants to install insulation and central heating
- ways to manage bills through energy efficiency.

3. The campaign has been jointly developed between Citizens Advice and Ofgem and is delivered and managed by Citizens Advice who also involves other agencies as part of their Financial Capability Forums. An independent evaluation in 2010 showed that 98 per cent of consumers who received face-to-face Energy Best Deal information found the sessions useful and more than a third went on to look into getting a better deal on their energy.

4. Following a successful pilot phase funded by Ofgem, the first national roll out of the face-to-face campaign delivered by Citizens Advice across Wales and England in 2008/09 was funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change and supported by Ofgem. In 2009/10 the second phase of the campaign was funded by energy suppliers EDF Energy, E.On, npower and Scottish Power - with support from Ofgem. The face-to-face campaign continues this year with funding from energy suppliers.

5. The Citizens Advice service is a network of independent charities that helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice and by influencing policymakers. For more information in Wales and England see: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

6. Ofgem is the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets, which supports the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority, the regulator of the gas and electricity industries in Great Britain. The Authority's powers and duties are largely provided for in statute, principally the Gas Act 1986, the Electricity Act 1989, the Utilities Act 2000, the Competition Act 1998, the Enterprise Act 2002, the Energy Act 2004, the Energy Act 2008, the Energy Act 2010 as well as arising from directly effective European Community legislation.

**For more media information contact:**

**Ofgem**

**Nick Speed (Welsh speaker)** will be at the Eisteddfod on 1 August: 029 2044  
4042/ 07887 894686  
nick.speed@ofgem.gov.uk

**Alison Wright** for general media enquiries about Ofgem and the Energy Best Deal  
020 7901 7217  
Out of hours: 07766 511 470

**Citizens Advice Cymru**

**Alun Thomas, (Welsh speaker)** Press & Public Affairs Officer  
07726 902624  
Out of hours: 0845 099 0107  
alun.thomas@citizensadvice.org.uk