



Promoting choice and value
for all gas and electricity customers

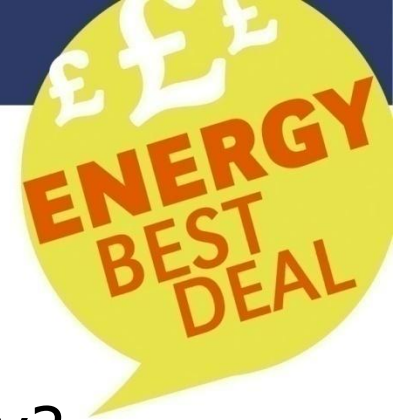


Energy Best Deal



- Gas and electricity prices are rising but there are ways to cut the cost of your energy bills.
- Ensure you are receiving the best energy deal for your circumstances; if bills are a struggle - get help from suppliers or government schemes and implement energy efficiency measures around your home.
- Energy Best Deal can help you pay no more than you need to.

To save ask yourself (annually)



- Would switching supplier(s) save me money?
- Am I eligible for welfare benefits?
- Am I eligible for a grant to improve the energy efficiency of my home?
- Am I on the best energy deal and/or payment option? (dependent on your needs)

Information required in making an informed choice



- Annual statement or copy of last few bills;
- If you use a card, token or key meter have an idea of how much you spend a week/month on energy;
- The name of the tariff you are currently on (if you don't know contact your supplier);
- How much was spent on energy in the last year;
- How you currently pay for your energy; and
- Your postcode.

How to find better energy deals

- Talk to your supplier or view their website.
- Use an approved online price comparison site, these are listed on www.consumerfocus.org.uk
- If you can't access the internet call the Citizens Advice consumer service for a pricing factsheet - 08454 04 05 06.
- Or phone other suppliers direct to hear what they can offer you.



Before making a change



- Suppliers offer a range of payment options, ensure you choose one that is right for your circumstances.
- If you have an outstanding debt to your supplier find out what your options are.
- Fixed price tariffs may be the cheapest but there could be penalties if you switch before the end of the deal/offer.

Switching supplier – one option



- Most people can switch supplier, this includes people on token, key or card meters.

BUT

- If you rent your home the landlord may say in the lease that you cannot change your supplier.

If you switch

- There is no danger of your energy supply being disconnected.
- You will not need a new meter.
- The gas and electricity you receive in your home will remain the same.
- The only difference you will see is that your bill will be from your new supplier.



Don't have to switch supplier, could save money by:

Dual fuel option - many suppliers offer a discount if you buy both your gas and electricity from them.

Getting a fixed rate option - this means the price of your energy will not change for the duration of the deal (note that there may be a penalty for leaving the deal early).

Internet deals - offer discounts for customers who move to online accounts (note that there may be a penalty for leaving the deal early).

Payment options could save you money or help you budget:

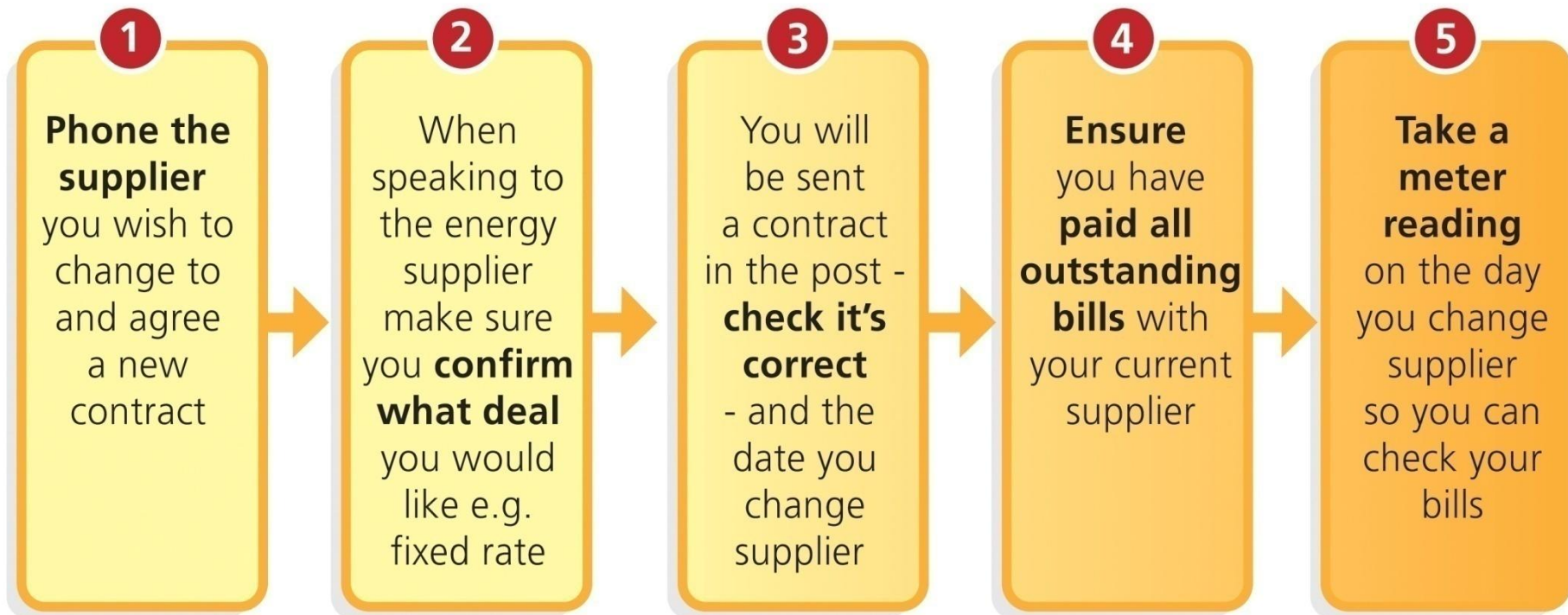
Direct debit - payments for your energy come straight out of your bank account.

Standard credit - paying your bill by cheque, cash or credit/debit card.

Token, key or card meters - pay in advance for your energy by charging a card, key or buying tokens.



How to switch your supplier



Getting help with your energy bills



- Most energy suppliers offer some form of help to their customers who are struggling to pay their energy bills.
- If you receive certain state benefits you could get money off your bills, for example through the Warm Home Discount scheme. Talk to your supplier to find out if you are eligible.
- If you owe your supplier money, they must offer a payment arrangement that takes account of your financial circumstance and ability to pay. Talk to them about your options.
- The Home Heat Helpline also offers advice – call them on 0800 33 66 99

Help from the Government



Winter Fuel Payment – annual payment to people aged 60 and over to help keep warm in winter. Payments vary between £100 to £300 depending on your individual circumstances. If you have not been receiving this payment call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 08459 15 15 15.

Cold weather payments – eligible households who experience temperatures below zero degrees Celsius over seven consecutive days between 1 Nov – 31 March will automatically receive £25 for each seven day period.

Initiatives where you live



ECO (England, Scotland and Wales): provides a package of insulation and heating improvements, for householders in older properties and those on benefits or from low-income households, including boiler replacement/repairs and basic insulation measures . Call **the Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS) on 0300 123 1234**

NEST(Wales): provides energy improvement work if you receive a means tested benefit, your property has an energy efficiency rating of F or G and is privately owned or privately rented. Call Nest on **08088 082 244.**

Energy Assistance Package (Scotland): provides advice and support to make homes warmer. Call **0800 512 012.**

UHS (Scotland): provides energy efficiency measures depending on where you live. To find out if you live in a UHS area and what they can offer you call the Home Energy Scotland Hotline on **0800 512 012**

Developments in the energy sector



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 £500.
- To not charge you more for one payment type than another, unless the charges can be justified by cost.
- To have their doorstep salespeople provide you with written estimates and sales literature that is clear, accurate and easy to understand.

Cutting your energy bills by making your home more energy efficient



- Energy suppliers are obliged by the government to offer you help in doing this.
- So contact your energy supplier to see what help is available. Help may include free insulation.
- The Energy Saving Trust can offer advice on energy efficiency on 0800 512 012.



ANNEX

Green Deal



- Enables energy efficiency improvements to your property without having to pay up front. You can pay for it by installments on your electricity bill, for a period of up to 25 years.
- Payments are agreed at the start, and the loan stays with the property after the bill payer moves on.
- For further details

http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/consumer_green_deal_e.htm

The 2012/13 Energy Best Deal campaign is supported by:

- British Gas
- EDF Energy
- E.ON
- Scottish and Southern Energy
- Scottish Power

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**ENERGY
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