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**ENERGY  
BEST  
DEAL**

# Energy Best Deal

- Gas and electricity prices are rising but there are ways to cut the cost of your energy bills.
- Make sure you're getting the best energy deal for you; if bills are a struggle - get help from suppliers or government schemes and make your home more energy efficient.
- 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.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/domestic-consumers/switching-your-energy-supplier/confidence-code](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/domestic-consumers/switching-your-energy-supplier/confidence-code)
- 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.
- Not all suppliers will offer the same discounts. If you currently receive a discount check that you will continue to receive it.
- 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.
- If you rent and you are responsible for energy bills, you have the right to switch. The landlord only has the right to choose energy supplier if they are responsible for paying energy bills.

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 - though dual fuel isn't always the cheapest. Sometimes it can be cheaper to get gas and electricity from different suppliers.

Getting a fixed rate option - 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). But bills could still increase if more energy is used

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

**1** Contact the supplier to agree a new energy deal.

**2** Make sure you confirm what deal you would like e.g. fixed rate.

**3** Tell your existing supplier that you are switching to a new supplier.

**4** You will be sent a contract – check it's correct and the date you change supplier.

**5** Ensure you have paid all outstanding bills with your current supplier.

**6** Take a meter reading on the day you change supplier so you can check your bills.

# 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 and see [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk).
- 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 older people 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 or visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk).

**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)**: insulation and heating improvements, for older properties and householders on low incomes.

**Green Deal (England, Scotland and Wales)** : improvements to energy efficiency paid by an extra cost added to your electricity bill over 25 years.

For information on **ECO** and the **Green Deal** visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau or call **the Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS) on 0300 123 1234** or **Home Energy Scotland 0808 808 2282**.

**NEST(Wales)** : to help householders in Wales reduce fuel bills. Call Nest on **08088 082 244**.

**Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS)**: help and advice to make homes warmer. Call **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282**.

# Developments in the energy sector

Suppliers are now required:

- To provide better information on bills and an annual statement.
- To allow card, key or token meter customers to switch even if they have debts of up to £500 per fuel.
- 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.
- In 2014, the number of tariffs will be limited and more changes will be introduced to make it easier to get a better deal.

# 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 0300 123 1234 or Home Energy Scotland 0808 808 2282.

The 2013/14 Energy Best Deal campaign is supported by:

- British Gas
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- First Utility
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