



**energy  
saving  
trust**



# Helping you with your energy bills



Citizens Advice and Energy Saving Trust have written this booklet together



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# About this booklet

This booklet has information about energy bills.

Energy bills means the money you pay for your gas and electricity.



It tells you about:

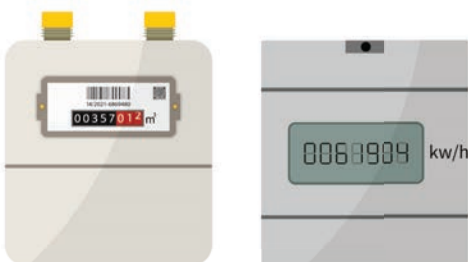
- energy suppliers

These are the companies you pay to give you gas and electricity.



- meter readings

Meters tell you how much gas and electricity you have used.



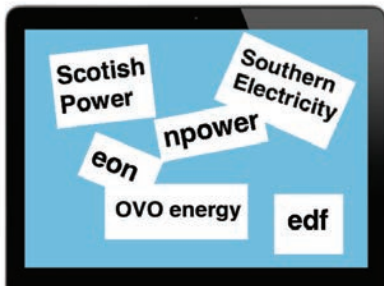
- saving money on your energy bills



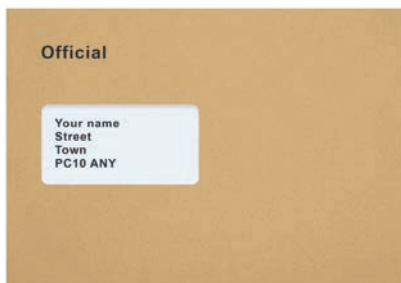
## What to do if your energy supplier suddenly closes down



You can still use your gas and electricity. You will not be cut off.

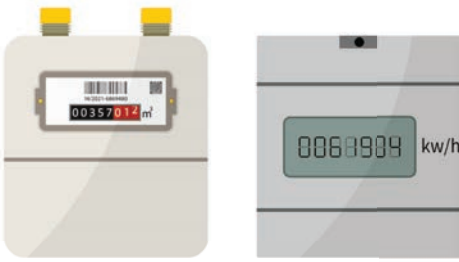


You will be given a new energy supplier.



Wait for your new supplier to get in touch with you.

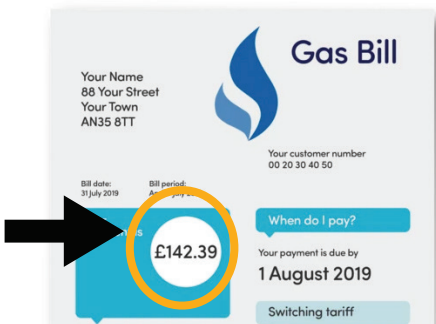
## Things you must do:



- take meter readings  
Write down the numbers on your meters and take a photo



- keep any energy bills you got in the last 6 months



- look at the bills to find out your account balance. This tells you how much you owe your supplier or if they owe you money



## Paying your bills by direct debit

A **direct debit** tells your bank to pay your energy bills.

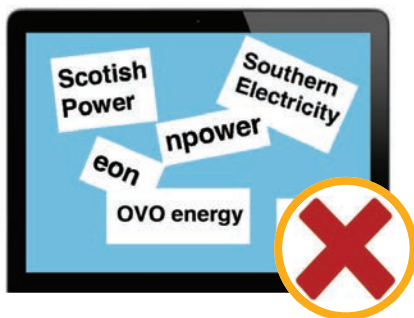


**If you pay your bills by direct debit:**

- you don't need to do anything. Your new supplier will be given your bank details



- do not set up a new direct debit



You must wait for your new supplier to get you set up. Then you can decide if you want to change your supplier.

# Help you might be able to get to pay your energy bills



## Warm Home Discount Scheme

This gives you £140 off your electricity bill if you are on a low income.



Talk to your energy supplier to see if they can give you the discount.



## Winter Fuel Payment

This is money you get from the Government. It is to help pay your energy bills in winter.



You will get this if you were born on or before **26 September 1955**.



If you don't get it contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre:

**Phone:**

**0800 731 0160**

**Textphone:**

**0800 731 017**



## **Fuel Vouchers**

Organisations like Citizens Advice can give out **fuel vouchers**.

The vouchers are for people who are struggling to pay for their gas or electricity.



# Energy tariffs



A tariff is the amount of money that companies charge for gas and electricity.



Companies have different tariffs. You can choose the one you think will be the cheapest.



**Standard tariff**

If you don't choose a tariff you will be put on a standard tariff. This may cost you more than other tariffs.



Check with your energy company to see which tariff you are on.



If they have a cheaper tariff available, you can change it to the cheaper one.

# Gas and electricity meters

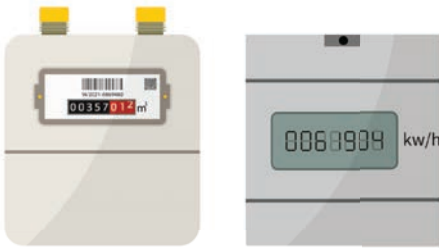
Gas and electricity meters measure how much energy you use.

The meters have to be read to work out what your bill is.



## Standard meters

These are the usual type of meter.



You may need to read the meter yourself. You can contact your energy company if you don't know how to do it.



You need to send your meter readings to your energy supplier.



If you don't send your meter reading you will get a bill that has an **estimated reading**.

**Estimated readings** are when the energy company guesses how much gas and electricity you have used.

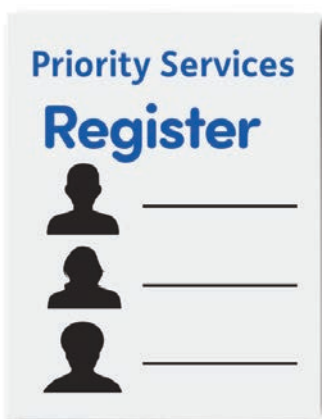


With an estimate reading your bill may be too high or too low.



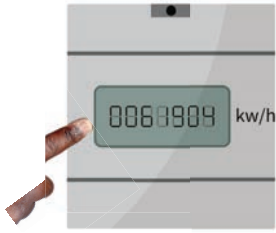
## Smart meters

Smart meters are a newer type of meter. They send the meter readings straight to your supplier.



## Extra help from your supplier

If you have a disability, are a pensioner or are sick you can sign up to the **Priority Services Register**.



You can then get help with things like:

- reading your meter



- getting your bill sent or copied to your carer

## What to do if you owe money for your gas or electricity



### Grants

You may be able to get a grant to help pay off your debts.



These organisations may be able to help you with a grant:

- your energy supplier
- your local council
- the British Gas Energy Trust



## Organisations who can help

### British Gas Energy Trust

Website:

[www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/british-gas-energy-trust](http://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/british-gas-energy-trust)

Phone:

0121 348 7797



### Simple Energy Advice

Website:

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

Phone:

0800 444 202



### Citizens Advice debt helpline

Phone:

0800 240 4420





## Payment Plans

You can agree a payment plan with your energy supplier. This will be for a set amount of time to pay off what you owe.



If you find that you can't afford the payment plan you need to talk to your supplier again.

## Prepayment meters

If you still can't pay the money you owe, your supplier might make you have a prepayment meter.



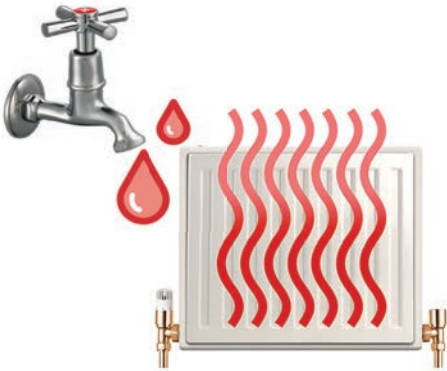
This means you have to pay for the gas or electricity before you use it.

## Pay off your debt through your benefits

The **Fuel Direct Scheme** lets you pay off what you owe your supplier from your benefits. Speak to your job centre about this.



# How to use less gas and electricity



## Keeping warm

More than half the energy we use is for heating and hot water.

## Money-saving ideas:



- **use your thermostat**  
your **thermostat** helps you to control the temperature of your rooms



- spend less time in the shower  
This way you can use less water.



- draught-proof your home  
This means sealing up gaps in windows, doors, and letterboxes. You can also close your curtains and internal door at night to keep the heat in.



## TVs, computers, lights, kettles, and other electric appliances

An **appliance** is any piece of equipment in your home such as a cooker, washing machine or fridge.

### Money-saving ideas:

- switch off your TV, radio, and other appliances at the plug when you are not using them.



If they are left plugged in they are on standby and use electricity.

- use your dishwasher and washing machine less often
- Wait until you have a full load
- Hang your washing out to dry as tumble dryers use a lot of electricity
- fill the kettle with the amount of water you need, and no more







- turn off lights when you are not using them



You could save a lot of money if you do most of these things.



## Get help to make your house more efficient

If anyone in your house is getting benefits speak to your energy supplier.

You might be able to get some help to keep your home warm.

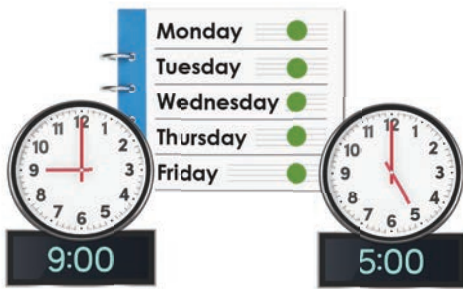


You could also talk to your local council. They will know if there is any help available in your area.



## Where to go for help

Get help and expert advice from Citizens Advice. It is free to phone us.



We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.



For energy advice call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline.

**Phone:**  
**0808 223 1133**



**Welsh language phone:**  
**0808 223 1144**



If you are having problems with money or debt call the Citizens Advice debt helpline



**Phone:**  
**0800 240 4420**

## Who we are



### Citizens Advice

Problems with things like money and housing can be complicated and hard to deal with.



Citizens Advice can give you good, independent advice to help you with your problem.

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### Energy Saving Trust

The Trust is an independent organisation that gives advice about:

- using energy more sensibly
- using renewable energy such as using wind, sun and waves to make electricity
- having transport that is better for the environment



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