

Are You Getting The Best Deal From Your Energy Supplier?



Saving money on your energy bills?

There are two ways to potentially save money on your energy bills:

- By switching your payment method
- By switching your energy supplier

Switching your Payment Method

There are four main ways to pay for gas and electricity:

1. Direct debits and managing your account online
2. Standard direct debit, paying by direct debit but still getting paper bills
3. Standard credit, paying by cash, cheque or payment cards each quarter when the bill arrives
4. Prepayment meters, paying in advance to top up a card or key

Prepayment meters and standard credit are the most expensive ways to pay for energy; if possible try switching to a direct debit, this can save as much as £300 a year. Direct debit also allows you to spread payments over the year, rather than ending up with high bills in the winter. If you want to change your payment method, contact your energy supplier.

If you change from a prepayment meter to another payment method, you will need a new meter. Your energy supplier can arrange this for you. Some companies do charge for this so check this with your supplier.



Affordable Warmth
Network

Switching your Energy Supplier

There is great competition among energy suppliers and you can save up to £325 per year by switching to a cheaper supplier, perhaps even more now that energy prices have once again increased.

Note: You cannot change energy supplier if there is an outstanding balance on your account, but contact your local Affordable Warmth Network (0800 107 0044) to discuss ways of clearing this debt.

The easiest way to find the best deal is to use an independent comparison service. They will be able to give you a free, impartial, comprehensive list of suppliers in your area. Have your old bills handy (preferably your annual statement) to get the most accurate results.

Uswitch is a free, impartial online and telephone comparison and switching service of gas & electricity tariffs that you may wish to try. They can be contacted on 0800 051 5493 or go online to www.uswitch.com

There are a few ways to get the best deals:

- Companies offer discounts for managing your account online. This includes paying your bills and entering meter readings online.
- If you can get both your gas and electricity from the same supplier they can offer discounts for this (known as dual fuel).
- Ebico is a non-profit energy company who do not charge more for residents on prepayment meters, so it's worth getting a quote from them if you are on this type of meter (contact details below).

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Switching Process

Changing your energy supplier should be an easy, straightforward process. All you need to do is:

1. Choose a new supplier
2. The paperwork is then handled for you by your new and old supplier
3. Both suppliers arrange your transfer – this can take up to six weeks
4. Your new supplier will keep you updated and confirm your switch date
5. Your old supplier will send you a final bill – pay this and cancel any direct debits
6. Take a meter reading on your switch date and give it to both suppliers

Struggling with your bills?

If you are in debt with your supplier, contact them as soon as possible and ask about setting up a debt repayment scheme. This will help you to pay off your debt at a reasonable cost. They must offer you a suitable method of payment and take into account your ability to pay. For more advice on specific problems with energy companies, including issues with disconnection and making a complaint, contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

Energy Supplier's Contact Details

British Gas	0800 048 0202	www.britishgas.co.uk
Ebico	0800 458 7689	www.ebico.co.uk
EDF Energy	0800 096 9000	www.edfenergy.co.uk
E.ON	0800 051 0760	www.eonenergy.co.uk
First Utility	0845 215 5000	www.first-utility.com
Npower	0845 078 2925	www.npower.com
OVO energy	0800 5999 440	www.ovoenergy.com
Southern Electric	0845 7444 555	www.southern-electric.co.uk
Scottish Power	0845 2700 700	www.scottishpower.co.uk

FOR MORE ADVICE ON ENERGY MATTERS CONTACT THE AFFORDABLE WARMTH HELPLINE ON 0800 107 0044



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