



YOUR HOME ENERGY CHECKLIST



Action for Warm Homes

Follow these steps to help you manage your energy bills and keep your home warm.

Take a meter reading

Take regular meter readings and submit them to your energy supplier as this will help you keep an eye on your energy use and keep your bills accurate.

If you receive a bill and it has an 'E' marked against the meter reading then this means it is 'estimated' by your supplier. You may not be paying the right amount for your energy. Having several estimated readings can sometimes lead to large unexpected bills.

Meters are read from left to right. Don't include any numbers that are red or in a red box.

Contact your supplier to discuss your energy debt

If you are in debt to your energy supplier and struggling to get on top of it, then speak to your supplier as soon as possible. If they know there is a problem they can work with you to find a solution.

Ask to set up a payment plan and be realistic about what you can afford to repay. You don't want to leave yourself short for other essential bills.

You can also get advice on energy debt from [Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline](#) on **03454 040506** or your local [Citizens Advice](#). TextPhone users should use **18001 03454 040506** (call charges may apply).

Maximise your income

Make sure you are claiming the correct benefits. This could increase your income as well as make you eligible for other types of assistance. Take advice from your local [Citizens Advice](#) or call the [Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline](#) on **03454 040506** (call charges may apply) or visit www.gov.uk/browse/benefits.

Check if you can receive other discounts and payments

Contact your energy supplier to see if you are entitled to a **Warm Home Discount**. This is best done around October each year. This is a discount of £140 on electricity bills for the winter period. Those who receive the **Guarantee Credit** element of **Pension Credit** should get the discount automatically. Energy suppliers may offer the discount to other low-income and vulnerable households who meet the qualifying criteria.

If you were born on or before a specific date (this date changes each year) you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a '**Winter Fuel Payment**'. It is paid automatically between November and December if you have claimed before or are in receipt of some other benefits. Others will need to apply for it. Call the **Winter Fuel Payment Centre** on **0800 7310160**.

In addition some households could be eligible for a **Cold Weather Payment** of £25 per qualifying week. This is paid automatically to those on certain benefits when the average temperature in their area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below for seven consecutive days. You'll get £25 for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

Register for priority services

You can sign up to a **Priority Services Register** to receive extra help from your energy supplier as well as from your distribution network operators (the companies that operate and maintain your gas and electricity supplies).

You can receive the services available if you:

- are of pensionable age
- are disabled or chronically sick
- have a long-term medical condition
- have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs
- are in a vulnerable situation including certain mental health conditions, physical injury as well as temporary situations of vulnerability
- have a child under 5 living with you

Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register.

A wide range of support is available including:

- information provided in accessible formats
- advance notice of planned power cuts
- identification scheme, password protection and nominee scheme for a family member or carer on behalf of the customer
- priority support in an emergency
- arrangements to ensure that it is safe and practical for the customer to use a prepayment meter
- meter reading services

Contact your gas/electricity supplier and distribution network operator for more information and to register. Details of your distribution network operator can be found on your energy bill.



Check to see if you are getting the best deal for your energy

You could save hundreds of pounds a year on your bills by switching supplier or changing tariffs with your current supplier. Use one of the Ofgem-accredited price comparison sites listed below, which should all display the Ofgem Confidence Code logo. Have a copy of your most recent bill or annual statement to hand as this should tell you how much energy you have used in the past year.

Make sure that the supplier also offers you any discounts you may be entitled to such as the Warm Home Discount, and any special tariffs you need such as Economy 7 or Economy 10.

If you have a smart meter you should still be able to switch but you may lose the 'smart' functions of your meter.



Ofgem accredited price comparison sites

Website	Phone	Website	Phone	Website	Phone
energyhelpline.com	0800 074 0745	simplyswitch.com	0800 011 1395	uswitch.com	0800 688 8557
energylinx.co.uk	0800 849 7077	switchgasandelectric.com	03333 700 600	runpathdigital.com	
moneysupermarket.com	0800 177 7087	theenergyshop.com	01259 220 270	quotezone.co.uk	
myutilitygenius.co.uk	0203 468 0461	unravelit.com	0333 344 0031		

Use your heating and hot water controls

Make sure you are using your boiler and heating controls correctly and use the programmer to set up the system to match your heating and hot water needs. For example, setting your heating to come on half an hour before you get up in the morning and half an hour before you go to bed. If you are out during the day set a heating pattern that matches your needs.

Use a room thermostat to control the temperature in your home. Ideally this should be set between 18°C and 21°C in cold weather but some people may need it a little higher for comfort.

Remember not to leave electric hot water immersion heaters on for longer than you need as this wastes energy

Use night storage heaters correctly

Some homes have night storage heaters. These store heat overnight when electricity is cheaper, which is then released throughout the next day. Homes with storage heaters should be on an Economy 7 or Economy 10 tariff.

If you are not using your storage heaters correctly you could be faced with a large bill. Look online at nea.org.uk/advice for more advice on how to use your storage heater.

Make your home energy efficient

Preventing draughts can be a cheap way of making your home warmer. Draught-proofing products are available at DIY stores. Close curtains at dusk to keep the heat in, and use thermal underlay beneath carpets. Loft and cavity wall insulation can also make a big difference to bills and comfort, as can replacing an old boiler. You may be eligible for free or discounted insulation or boiler replacements. Contact your local council or [Citizens Advice](#) and ask about any local schemes operating in your area.

Stay safe

Carbon monoxide is a deadly gas that cannot be seen, smelt or tasted. It can be produced by faulty fuel burning appliances in your home such as a gas boiler or gas fire/heater where there is poor ventilation.

Take the following steps to protect yourself and your family:

1. Make sure that fuel burning appliances such as fires, boilers and gas cookers are regularly serviced by a qualified engineer. For gas appliances, engineers must be Gas Safe registered. It is also recommended that engineers working on oil or solid fuel appliances are registered with a trade body such as OFTEC or HETAS. Ask your engineer for proof of their registration.
2. Install an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm. These can be bought from DIY stores, supermarkets and high street shops; they cost around £15 and could save lives!
3. Know the danger signs. These are:
 - Gas flames burning orange or yellow instead of the normal blue
 - Soot stains on or above the appliance
 - Coal or wood fires that burn slowly or go out.

If you rent your home then by law landlords have to carry out an annual safety check of gas appliances in the home and provide you with a Gas Safety Certificate. If you haven't already seen the certificate ask your landlord for a copy.

If you are a homeowner and on certain benefits you may be eligible for a free annual gas safety check. Contact your gas supplier to check your eligibility and ask about registering with their Priority Services Register.

If you **smell gas** call the 24 hour **Gas Emergency Hotline** on **0800 111 999**

If you have a **power cut** call the **national power cut phone line** on **105**

For further information on carbon monoxide safety go to co-bealarmed.co.uk

Avoid damp and condensation

When it is cold, condensation can be a big problem in many homes. Try the following:

- **Keep temperatures in all rooms above 15°C.** This will reduce condensation forming on outside walls
- **Insulate your home**
- **Keep your home ventilated.** Make sure vents and air bricks are not covered or obstructed
- **Try not to dry washing in the house.** If you do, use an ailer and don't dry clothes on radiators. Opening windows slightly will allow moisture to escape but be aware of security
- **Open window trickle vents during the day or when going out**
- **Wipe down windows/mirrors/tiles/shower with an absorbent cloth**
- **Open windows after bathing or washing** and leave them open for a short while to release steam if it is safe to do so.

Call charges

Calling advice lines and other services may incur call charges. 0800 and 0808 numbers are free from landlines and mobiles. Standard rates apply for 01, 02 and 03 numbers (typically 9p-13p per minute from landlines and 3p-55p from mobiles depending on your network) but these calls are usually included in your free call packages. See more information at www.gov.uk/call-charges

National Energy Action is the national fuel poverty charity, working to ensure that everyone in England, Wales and Northern Ireland can afford to stay warm in their homes. For more advice visit www.nea.org.uk/advice

NEA, West One, Forth Banks, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3PA

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