

Large print version



# Help with your energy costs during the coronavirus outbreak

You may be worried about your energy bills during the coronavirus outbreak. Here is some information to help.

**1. If you have a gas or electricity prepayment meter** and are worried about being able to top this up, speak to your supplier about options available. This might include:

- nominating someone to top up your meter for you,
- having additional credit added to your meter or,
- being sent a pre-loaded top-up card.

**2. If you have a standard credit meter** and are worried about affordability or are in energy debt then contact your supplier. Options might include:

- changing your bill payment plan,
- taking a payment break,
- reducing how much you pay or asking for longer to pay off debts.

In some cases, they may be able to help you access hardship funds.

**Whatever your situation, you won't be disconnected during the crisis.**

**3.** It's really important that your supplier knows if you are in a vulnerable situation so they can include you on their **priority services register**. This includes people who are of pensionable age, have children under 5, a disability or long-term medical condition. Being on the register means that you will be prioritised in the event of a power cut and you will receive additional help such as password security or information in different formats.

If you find your supplier is busy then instead you could try registering with your Distribution Network Operator (DNO), the company that owns and operates the power lines in your areas. You can find your DNO's contact details on your electricity bill or via [energynetworks.org/info/faqs/who-is-my-network-operator](https://energynetworks.org/info/faqs/who-is-my-network-operator). Contact your DNO and when prompted you can give permission for your data to be shared with your gas and electricity supplier.

**If you have a power cut, call 105 for free.**

**4.** Make sure that you are **claiming all of the benefits** that you are entitled to. Benefits may differ across Great Britain. For more information visit:

- England [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- Scotland [gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance](https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance)
- Wales [gov.wales/coronavirus](https://www.gov.wales/coronavirus)

You can also visit [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk), or contact NEA for a full benefit entitlement check via our **Warm and Safe Homes Advice Service – call 0800 138 8218**.

**5.** It's important that you use the energy you need to keep warm, safe and healthy at home. Making small changes in how you use this can often have a big impact on bills. For more information on how to save energy and water visit [simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk).

**6.** Switching supplier can save hundreds of pounds on your energy bills. Choose an online price comparison site which displays the 'Ofgem confidence code'.

*Please note that as energy suppliers are reporting high volumes of calls you may find it quicker to try online options of contact first if this is possible.*



The Warm and Safe Homes Advice Service is run by charity National Energy Action. It provides advice to people struggling to afford their energy and water bills, either directly or via referrals from others.

**[nea.org.uk/advice/wash-advice](https://nea.org.uk/advice/wash-advice)**

## **Sources**

Information provided by National Energy Action, April 2020



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