



## Cost of Living and Discretionary Support

[Updated March 2023]

On 8 September 2022 the UK Government announced a new **Energy Price Guarantee** to cap the average unit price of energy so that the average household energy bill would be £2,500 per year. This is not a cap on the total amount paid, but a cap on the unit price of energy – if you use more than the average you will pay more, and if you use less than the average you will pay less. The current Energy Price Guarantee is in place up to the end of March 2023. The ‘average’ energy consumption is based on using 2,900 kWh of electricity and 12,000 kWh of gas. How much a household’s annual energy bill is will depend on how much energy they use. Use more, pay more.

The **average unit price** for dual fuel customers on standard variable tariffs subject to Ofgem’s price cap, paying by direct debit, is limited to 34.0p/kWh (pence per kilowatt hour) for electricity and 10.3p/kWh for gas, inclusive of VAT, from 1 October 2022 through to March 2023. These are average unit prices, but the specific unit rates each customer sees will vary by region and payment type.

From April 2023 the Energy Price Guarantee will be increasing so the average bill will be £3,000, again this is not a cap on the total people will pay – you use more you will pay more.

### Cost of Living Support

The UK Government have announced a series of one-off measures to help households with the high cost of energy this winter, many of which have already been paid.

For more information on the help announced visit [www.gov.uk/helpforhouseholds](http://www.gov.uk/helpforhouseholds).

Below you can find a summary of what has been made available since Summer 2022 and what we expect to be paid next year.

### Universal Support – Energy Bill Support Scheme

The previously announced £200 ‘heat now, pay later’ rebate was changed to a one-off £400 non repayable grant known as the Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS). **This does not need to be paid back.** Payments are being issued in monthly instalments of £66/£67 pounds from October 2022 to March 2023.

The time you will receive your payments will depend on how you pay your energy bills. You do not need to apply for this grant if you have an existing relationship with your electricity supplier – if you pay by direct debit your account will be credited automatically, if you have a smart prepay meter your meter will be credited automatically and if you have a traditional (non-smart) pre-payment meter you will receive vouchers.

Please ensure your supplier has the correct contact details for you to receive the vouchers. Please be aware of scams relating to the rebate scheme. As above, you do not need to claim it and you should not enter your details on any third-party website.

If you have not yet received your voucher please contact your supplier who can arrange a re-issue of your voucher.

### **Alternative Funding (launched 27 February 2023)**

For people who do not have a direct relationship with their electricity supplier and therefore have not been able to receive the **Energy Bill Support Scheme** directly you will need to apply through the UK Government [online application form](#) which launched **Monday 27<sup>h</sup> February 2023**.

Be aware of scams, the link to the application will **never** be sent to you directly and you will never be contacted directly to share your personal details over the phone.

If you struggle with the online form, or are unable to access it then please call the **Helpline: 0808 175 3287, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm**.

### **Discretionary Hardship Support**

- Local authorities across England are issuing support through their Household Support Funds this has been extended to the end of March 2023. Contact your local authority to find out what help might be available to you. Find your local authority at [www.gov.uk/find-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)
- The Welsh Government is continuing to provide additional crisis support via its:
  - **Fuel Voucher Scheme** with the Fuel Bank Foundation, to help households in crisis who must pay for their energy in advance (on or off-grid fuels). Households may contact Advicelink Cymru on 0800 702 2020 to find out more.
  - **Discretionary Assistance Fund**, through which households in financial hardship can apply for emergency assistance payments to help top-up gas and electricity prepayment meters, or oil and LPG. Visit [gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf](http://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf) for more details.

## Cost of Living Support in 2023/2024

Details on the cost of living support for next year are still being finalised, but the UK Government has announced the approximate timeline for payments to be issued across 2023-2024.

- Low income cost of living payment will be £900 paid to those on means-tested benefits. Payments will be paid in three instalments. £301 in Spring 2023, £300 in Autumn 2023, and £299 paid in Spring 2024
- Pensioner cost of living payment will be £300 to be paid in the Winter 2023/24, this will be paid to those in receipt of Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) and likely to be paid with the WFP or around the same time.
- Disability cost of living payment will be £150 for those in receipt of a non-means tested disability benefit. This will be paid in Summer 2023.

## Targeted Cost of Living Support in 2022/2023

The previously announced targeted cost of living support has now been paid to eligible customers. This included:

- **Low income cost of living payment** was £650 paid in two instalments. All eligible customers should have received this direct to their bank accounts from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Payments were issued between Summer and Autumn 2022.
- **Pensioner cost of living payment** of £300 was issued to those in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment, and all payments should now have been issued.
- **Disability cost of living payment** of £150 for those in receipt of a non-means tested disability benefit was issued in Autumn 2022.
- A **Council Tax Rebate** of £150 for householders in bands A-D (England) was made between April 2022-September 2022. In Wales this extended to households who also received Council Tax Reduction irrespective of Council Tax band.
- In Wales, as well as the above, Welsh Government also issued an expanded £200 **Welsh Fuel Support Scheme** payment to help towards energy bills, regardless of how households pay for their energy and whether they use on-grid or off-grid fuels. Eligible households needed to claim this via their local council between 26 September 2022 and 28 February 2023. It was available to households in receipt of one of numerous qualifying benefits, including Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, and related legacy benefits, as well as child tax credits, pension credits, disability benefits, carers allowance, contributory benefits, or those receiving help via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

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