



YOUR HOME ENERGY CHECKLIST

National Energy Action is the national charity helping you with energy bills. This leaflet will guide you through the financial help available and practical steps you can take to help keep your home feeling warmer and your energy more affordable.





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SPEAK TO YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills or starting to fall behind with payments, contact your energy supplier as soon as possible. They can discuss your energy use, check whether a more suitable tariff or payment method is available and tell you about any support they offer. If you owe money to your supplier, they must work with you to agree an affordable repayment plan based on what you can afford. You may also be able to access a hardship fund or other help towards your energy debt.

For independent advice, contact National Energy Action's **Energy Advice and Support Service** on **0800 304 7159**.

You may be able to save money by changing your tariff or energy supplier. Before switching, check whether your current tariff has an exit fee and how any outstanding debt could affect the switch.

You can also contact the **Citizens Advice Consumer Service** on **0808 223 1133**. If you cannot hear or speak on the phone, use Relay UK by dialling 18001 followed by 0808 223 1133. Calls to this 0808 number are free, including when using Relay UK.

TAKE REGULAR METER READINGS

Taking regular meter readings and submitting them to your energy supplier helps ensure your bills are accurate. If an 'E' appears next to a meter reading on your bill, this usually means the reading has been estimated. Estimated readings can be inaccurate and may lead to an unexpected bill.

You can ask your supplier about having a smart meter installed. Smart meters send readings automatically, while the in-home display can help you understand your energy use and estimated costs. If your smart meter is not sending readings automatically, contact your energy supplier.

Find out more about smart meters at **www.smartenergygb.org**.





PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER (PSR)

The **PSR** provides additional support for people who may need it because of age, health, communication needs or circumstances. Ask to join if you:

- have reached State Pension age
- are pregnant or have young children
- have difficulty speaking or reading English
- have a disability, mental health condition or long-term medical condition
- rely on medical equipment that requires electricity
- need temporary support following an injury, hospital stay, bereavement or job loss

Support can include advance notice of planned power cuts, help during interruptions to your energy supply, password security and information in an accessible format.

Your energy supplier and network operator maintain Priority Services Registers. With your consent, they can share your information, so you should not normally need to register separately. Contact your supplier or go to **www.thepsr.co.uk**.

STAY SAFE AT HOME

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that cannot be seen, smelled or tasted. Warning signs of an unsafe appliance include:

- gas flames burning orange or yellow instead of blue
- soot or staining around an appliance
- coal or wood fires that burn slowly or go out

Symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, weakness, confusion and breathlessness. For more information, **www.nhs.uk/conditions/carbon-monoxide-poisoning**. Gas appliances, like boilers, fires and cookers, should be serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer. If you rent, your landlord must arrange a yearly gas safety check and provide a Gas Safety Record.

Install a CO alarm and test it regularly. If the alarm sounds or you suspect CO, stop using the appliance, leave the property and seek medical advice. Call **999** if anyone is seriously unwell. Some homeowners may qualify for a free annual gas safety check. Ask your energy supplier for details. If you smell gas, call the **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999**.





DON'T MISS OUT ON MONEY

Make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. This could increase your income and help you qualify for other financial support. You do not have to be out of work to receive benefits, as support may also be available to people who are working.

You can complete a free benefits check at **www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators**.

If you would like extra support with checking your entitlement or making a claim, contact National Energy Action's Benefits Advice and Claim Support Team on 0800 304 7159.

Alternatively, you can visit your local Citizens Advice office or call them on the Citizens Advice

Adviceline **0800 144 8848** (Textphone users call **18001 then 0800 144 8848**). Calls to these numbers are free from UK landlines and mobiles.



National Energy Action has partnered with Sign Video to offer a Video Relay service for BSL users **National Energy Action Advice Sign Video Live – 08003047159 – qr.nea.org.uk/bh39kB**

HELP WITH ESSENTIAL COSTS

You may be able to get help if you cannot afford essential living costs. In England, local councils provide support through the Crisis and Resilience Fund. In Wales, support is available through the Welsh Government's Discretionary Assistance Fund.

Support could include help with:

- energy and water bills
- food and essential household items
- housing costs
- unexpected expenses or a sudden loss of income

You may still qualify even if you do not receive benefits. Eligibility, how to apply and the support available vary between schemes.

In England, visit **www.gov.uk/cost-living-help-local-council**.

In Wales, visit **www.gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf**.





ENERGY DISCOUNTS AND PAYMENTS

WARM HOME DISCOUNT

The Warm Home Discount provides eligible households with a one-off discount on their energy bill during the colder months.

In England and Wales, eligible households normally receive the discount automatically if the person receiving a qualifying means-tested benefit is named on the electricity account on the scheme's qualifying date. This is usually during August, but the exact date can change each year. It's always best to ensure that the person with the qualifying benefit is named on the account.

Eligibility rules, qualifying benefits and deadlines can change between scheme years. Check the latest information at **www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme** or contact your energy supplier.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

You will normally receive a Winter Fuel Payment if you have reached State Pension age by the scheme's qualifying week and live in England or Wales. Most payments are made automatically.

If your individual income is above the threshold set by the government, HMRC will recover the full payment through the tax system. Eligibility rules, payment amounts, income thresholds and the qualifying week can change. Check the latest information at **www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment**.

COLD WEATHER PAYMENT

You may receive a Cold Weather Payment if you receive certain benefits and the average temperature in your area is recorded or forecast to be at or below zero degrees Celsius for seven consecutive days during the scheme's winter qualifying period.

Payments are made automatically for each qualifying period of very cold weather. Eligibility rules, payment amounts and the qualifying period can change. Check the latest information at **www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment**.





ENERGY EFFICIENCY

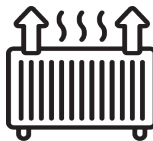
The more efficiently you use energy, the less you need to use to keep warm, safe and healthy at home. Go to **www.nea.org.uk/get-help** or ask our advisers for our leaflets including energy saving tips.

Insulation, heating and low-carbon upgrades can make your home cheaper to heat. In England, homeowners and private renters may be eligible for funded improvements through the Warm Homes: Local Grant, depending on their household circumstances, property and the funding available locally: **www.gov.uk/apply-warm-homes-local-grant**. This forms part of the government's Warm Homes Plan, which supports improvements to homes through grants, finance and other programmes. Ask your council what schemes are available locally.

Making your home more energy efficient can help reduce costs and keep it feeling warmer. Some low-cost actions include:



Draught-proofing doors and windows without blocking essential ventilation.



Fitting radiator reflector panels, particularly behind radiators on external walls.



Closing curtains at dusk to help keep heat in.

If you rent your home and are concerned about inadequate heating, damp, mould or other hazards, report the problem to your landlord. If it is not resolved, contact your local council housing or environmental health team.

In Wales, the Welsh Government's Nest scheme provides free energy advice and funded home improvements for eligible households. These may include insulation, heating improvements, heat pumps and solar panels. Visit **www.gov.wales/get-help-energy-efficiency-your-home-nest** or call 0808 808 2244.





DAMP, CONDENSATION AND MOULD

Damp can be caused by condensation, leaks, rising damp or rain penetration. Signs include wet patches, peeling wallpaper, staining, musty smells and mould. Identifying the cause is essential to finding the right solution. Condensation occurs when warm, moist air meets a cold surface. Reduce it by following **HIVE**:

- **Heating:** Keep your home consistently warm.
- **Insulation:** Helps keep surfaces warmer.
- **Ventilation:** Use extractor fans, keep vents open and open windows regularly.
- **Excess moisture:** Use lids on pans, close doors when cooking or showering, avoid drying clothes on radiators and wipe away condensation.

Good ventilation helps remove moisture, pollutants and stale air. As homes become more airtight through insulation and draught-proofing, effective ventilation is increasingly important.

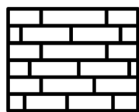
Areas likely to be affected by condensation:



Rooms where a lot of steam is created, such as kitchens and bathrooms



Cold surfaces such as tiles, mirrors, windows and window frames



Outside walls, walls in unheated rooms, corners of rooms, behind furniture



In wardrobes and cupboards

Mould can damage your home and affect your health, especially if you have a respiratory condition. Use a mould-removal product, but note that mould is likely to return if the underlying cause is not addressed.

If damp, condensation or mould persists, have the cause and ventilation assessed. If you rent, report it to your landlord. If the issue is not fixed, contact your local council's housing or Environmental Health team.

More information: www.nea.org.uk/get-help/resources/damp.





OFF-GRID HEATING

If your home uses heating oil, LPG, wood or another solid fuel, plan ahead and check your fuel level regularly. Prices can vary between suppliers, so compare prices before ordering. Buying a larger quantity or joining a local oil-buying group may reduce the price, but only order what you can afford and safely store.

HEATING OIL

If you or someone in your household is aged 75 or over, ask your heating-oil distributor about the free Cold Weather Priority scheme.

Participating suppliers use the scheme to identify customers who may need priority deliveries during very cold weather or supply shortages. It does not guarantee an immediate delivery.

Find out more at **www.ukifda.org/cold-weather-priority-initiative**.

LPG

If you use bulk LPG, check your contract before changing supplier. You can switch during or at the end of your contract, although an early termination fee may apply. Compare prices and contract terms before agreeing to a new supply.

Find out about your switching rights at **www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-switch-your-bulk-liquified-petroleum-gas-supplier**.

WOOD AND SOLID FUEL

Use fuel that is suitable for your appliance and follow any local smoke-control rules. Have your appliance serviced and chimney swept regularly. Keep permanent ventilation clear and make sure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm.

Find safety advice and registered installers, servicing technicians and chimney sweeps at **www.hetas.co.uk**.





USEFUL RESOURCES AND HELPLINES

Below you can find a list of the organisations mentioned throughout the leaflet and some other organisations that might be able to help you. We regularly update our energy advice page www.nea.org.uk/energyhelp with the latest announcements.

CONSUMER

Citizens Advice Consumer Service

For independent advice about an energy supplier, energy bill or another consumer problem, call **0808 223 1133** or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

If you cannot hear or speak on the phone, use **Relay UK** by dialling **18001** followed by **0808 223 1133**. Calls are free.

Welsh-speaking Citizens Advice Consumer Service number: **0808 223 1144**

DEBT OR MONEY WORRIES

If you are struggling with debt, it can be difficult to know where to get help that you can trust.

The **Money Helper** website www.moneyhelper.org.uk has a list of free debt advice services that may be able to help including:

- **StepChange Debt Charity**
www.stepchange.org.uk
0800 138 1111
- **PayPlan**
www.payplan.com
0800 316 1833
- **National Debtline**
www.nationaldebtline.org
0800 808 4000

BENEFIT ENTITLEMENT

Get benefits help with National Energy Action: www.nea.org.uk/get-help/benefits-help/ or call our helpline: **0800 304 7159**

You can complete a quick benefits check at home using www.entitledto.co.uk or www.turn2us.org.uk.

If you want help checking your entitlement or making a claim, then contact your local Citizens Advice or phone Adviceline (England) on **0800 144 8848** / Advicelink (Wales) **0800 702 2020**





LIGHTNING REACH

The secure **Lightning Reach** portal allows you to find and apply for support from multiple providers, quickly and easily. Use the **National Energy Action** referral link:

www.lightningreach.org/application-portal?referral=nea.

EMERGENCY FOOD AND CRISIS SUPPORT

Your local council can tell you what crisis support is available in your area.

For information about accessing emergency food, visit **www.trussell.org.uk/emergency-food**. You will usually need a food bank voucher from a local referral organisation.

You can also contact **Trussell's** free Help through Hardship helpline on **0808 208 2138** for confidential advice and emergency support in England and Wales. **www.trussell.org.uk/help-and-advice/help-through-hardship-helpline**.

Apps such as **OLIO** and **Too Good To Go** can help you find free or reduced-price food locally.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

GOV.UK. Recommendations that could make your property cheaper to heat (England and Wales). Visit **www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency** for more information.

ENERGY SAVING TRUST offers guidance on ways to save energy around the home. Visit their website **www.energysavingtrust.org.uk**.

National Energy Action's ENERGY ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE is available on **0800 304 7159**.



More useful resources and helplines

SAFETY

IF YOU SMELL GAS or suspect a gas leak, call the **NATIONAL GAS EMERGENCY SERVICE** 24 hours a day on **0800 111 999**. If you are D/deaf or hard of hearing a text phone service is available on **18001** then **0800 371 787**.

IF YOU HAVE A POWER CUT call the national power cut line on **105**.

Most fire services offer a **SAFE AND WELL VISIT**, also called a **HOME FIRE SAFETY VISIT**, especially for people who might be at higher risk such as people with health conditions or young children in the home – contact your local fire service for more information. They will check your home for any fire risks and offer advice and guidance on how to reduce those risks.

IF YOU ARE STILL STRUGGLING, CONTACT NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION'S ENERGY ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ON 0800 304 7159 OR [WWW.NEA.ORG.UK/GET-HELP](http://www.nea.org.uk/get-help).

You can translate National Energy Action's website and leaflets into over 160 languages - and get text-to-speech in over 100. You can also adapt text for neurodiversities, including ADHD and dyslexia, and visual impairments.



Accessibility & Language

Use our Recite Me button on www.nea.org.uk

National Energy Action is the national fuel poverty charity, helping everyone to have a warm, safe and healthy home. Go to www.nea.org.uk.

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