



WARM AND SAFE HOMES

YOUR HOME ENERGY CHECKLIST



The information in this leaflet will help guide you through financial help available and practical steps you can take to help keep your home feeling warmer this winter.



© National Energy Action 2022

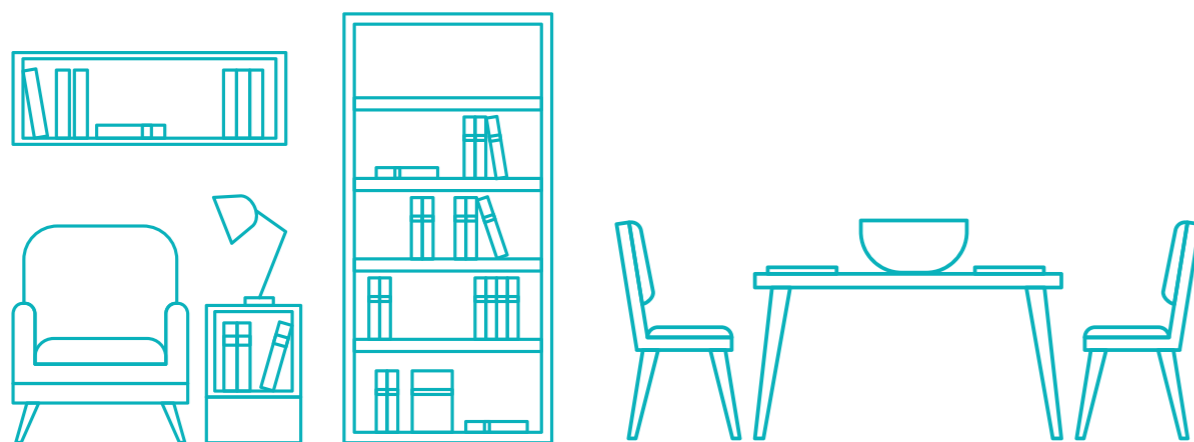
NEA is an independent charity, Registration No. 290511. Company limited by guarantee.

Registered in England and Wales No. 1853927.

Contents

In this leaflet you will find information on:

- Cost of Living Support Package
- Contacting your energy supplier
- Maximising your income
- Taking regular meter readings
- Power cuts and Priority Services Register
- Energy Efficiency
- Energy Discounts and payments
- What to do if your energy supplier goes out of business
- Staying Safe at home



Cost of Living Support Package

The Government has announced a series of one-off measures to help households with the high cost of energy this winter, as well as a windfall tax on oil and gas companies to raise £5bn. These are:

Targeted support

- Low-income Cost of Living Payment: People on lowest incomes/means-tested benefits – 8 million households – will receive a one-off ‘cost of living payment’ of £650, to be paid in July and autumn directly to bank accounts.
- Pensioner Cost of Living Payment: Pensioners who are in receipt of Winter Fuel Payment will receive a one-off pensioner cost of living payment of £300.
- Disability payment Disabled people in receipt of non-means-tested disability benefits will receive a one-off disability payment worth £150.

Universal support

- The previously announced £200 ‘heat now, pay later’ rebate will be doubled to £400 and has been changed to a grant, which means it does not need to be paid back.

Other

- Household Support Fund, distributed through local authorities, will be extended by £500 million from October and there will be legislation to extend it to all devolved nations.
- Council Tax Rebate: The Government has introduced a £150 council tax energy rebate for householders in bands A to D in England, payments will be made between April 2022 – September 2022.

Contact your energy supplier to check that you are on the cheapest tariff or discuss energy debt

Your energy supplier is required to work with you to set up an affordable repayment plan and the sooner you contact them to let them know you're struggling, the quicker you can get help.

You may be able to access hardship funds to help with repaying your debt, so talk to your local advice agency or contact **Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline** on **0808 223 1133** (Textphone users call **18001 0808 223 1133**) (call charges may apply). or visit your local Citizens Advice.

Maximise your income

Make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. This could increase your income and make you eligible for other types of assistance. It is a common myth that you must be out of work to be eligible but there are lots of in work benefits too, so it is worth doing check online – it only takes around 10 minutes to check www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators.

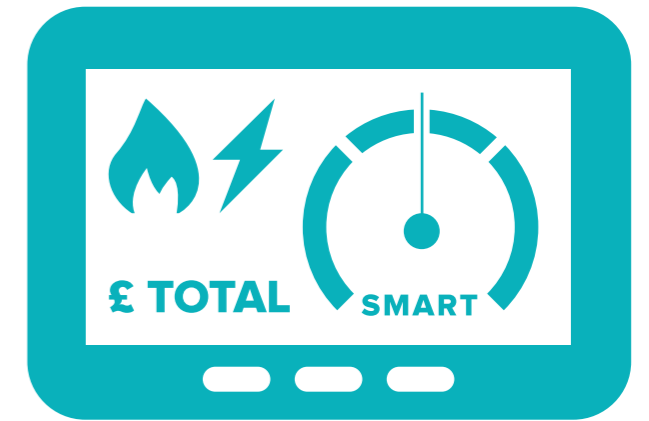
If you would like extra support with checking your entitlement or making a claim, contact your local Citizens Advice or call the **Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline** on **0808 223 1133** (Textphone users call **18001 0808 223 1133**) (call charges may apply).

You can also contact National Energy Action for a full benefit entitlement check via our **Warm and Safe Homes Advice Service** – call **0800 304 7159**.



Take regular meter readings

Taking regular meter readings and submitting them to your energy supplier helps you to 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 and you may not be paying the right amount for your energy. Estimated readings can lead to large, unexpected bills so regularly submit your accurate readings. You can also ask your supplier if you can have a smart meter installed which means that your supplier can take automatic readings and can provide a more accurate bill by having a smart meter fitted.



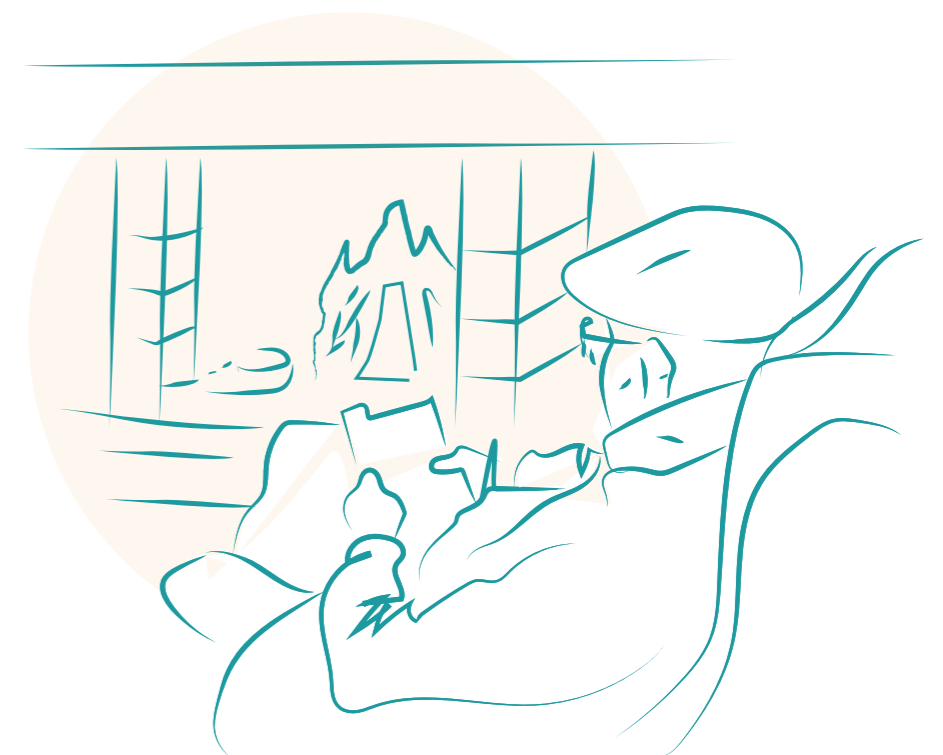
Power cuts and the Priority Services Register (PSR)

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

It's really important that both your supplier and Distribution Network Operator (DNO) know 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 non-financial services such as password security or information in different formats.

All energy suppliers and network operators maintain their own registers but with your consent they can share information with each other, so you don't have to register separately for both. Details of your distribution network operator can be found on your energy bill.



Energy efficiency

It's important that you use the energy you need to keep warm, safe and healthy at home. Making small changes to the way you think and use your energy can often have a big impact on bills. Take a look at our leaflet '**Electricity Consumption in the Home**' to see how much appliances might be costing you and how you might be able to cut costs or visit energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy/.

Making your home as energy efficient as possible is the best way to reduce your costs and keep your home feeling warmer. There are some low-cost actions you can take yourself such as:

- Draught-proofing can be a cheap way of making your home warmer, products are available at your local DIY store.
- Radiator reflectors behind your radiators can help keep more of the heat coming into the room.
- Use thermal underlay beneath carpets and close curtains at dusk to keep more heat in.



Loft and cavity wall insulation can also make a big difference to bills and comfort, as can replacing an old inefficient boiler. You may be eligible for free or discounted insulation or heating measures - contact your energy supplier and see if you qualify for the **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** or your local council and ask about any schemes operating in your area. For more information on what grants might be available visit www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/grants.

If you rent your home, then by law landlords must ensure it is safe and habitable. If you are worried your privately rented accommodation is not safe or habitable, contact your local authority's Environmental Health team who can assess the property for health and safety hazards and require your landlord to make improvements out of their own funds.



Check if you can receive any energy discounts or payments

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount rebate is a payment of £150 off your electricity bill paid automatically to eligible customers.

The 2022/23 scheme is different to previous years as you will no longer need to apply but will receive an **automatic payment** if you meet the required criteria under one of the core groups:

- **Core Group 1:** Individuals of pensionable age and in receipt of pension credit
- **Core Group 2:** Individuals dependent on means-tested benefits **and** with high energy costs. Eligible benefits are:

Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
Income Support
Housing Benefit
Universal Credit
Child Tax Credits
Working Tax Credits
Pension Credit Savings Credit (PSCS)



Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before a specific date (this date changes each year and is currently 26 September 1955 and can be found on the Gov.uk website) 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.

Cold Weather Payment

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.

What to do if your energy supplier goes out of business

If your energy supplier goes out of business, the regulator Ofgem will automatically move you to a new supplier within a few weeks. Don't try to make any changes to your energy supply until your account is moved to a new supplier. You might find it harder to get any money you're owed if you switch before this happens.

Wait for your new supplier to contact you and in the meantime:

- take regular meter readings and a photo of them if you can
- keep any old bills you have - these can help prove your payment history, credit balance or debt
- download any bills from your app if you have an online-only account
- make a note of your account balance - you'll find this on your most recent statement



Your new supplier will write to tell you when your new account has been set up. You should contact your new supplier if you don't hear from them within two weeks. Your new supplier will also put you on a new tariff so speak to them to make sure it's their cheapest deal. You can switch without paying an exit fee if you're not happy with your new supplier or tariff.

For more information visit: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/problems-with-your-energy-supply/check-whos-taken-over-your-energy-supply/.



Stay safe

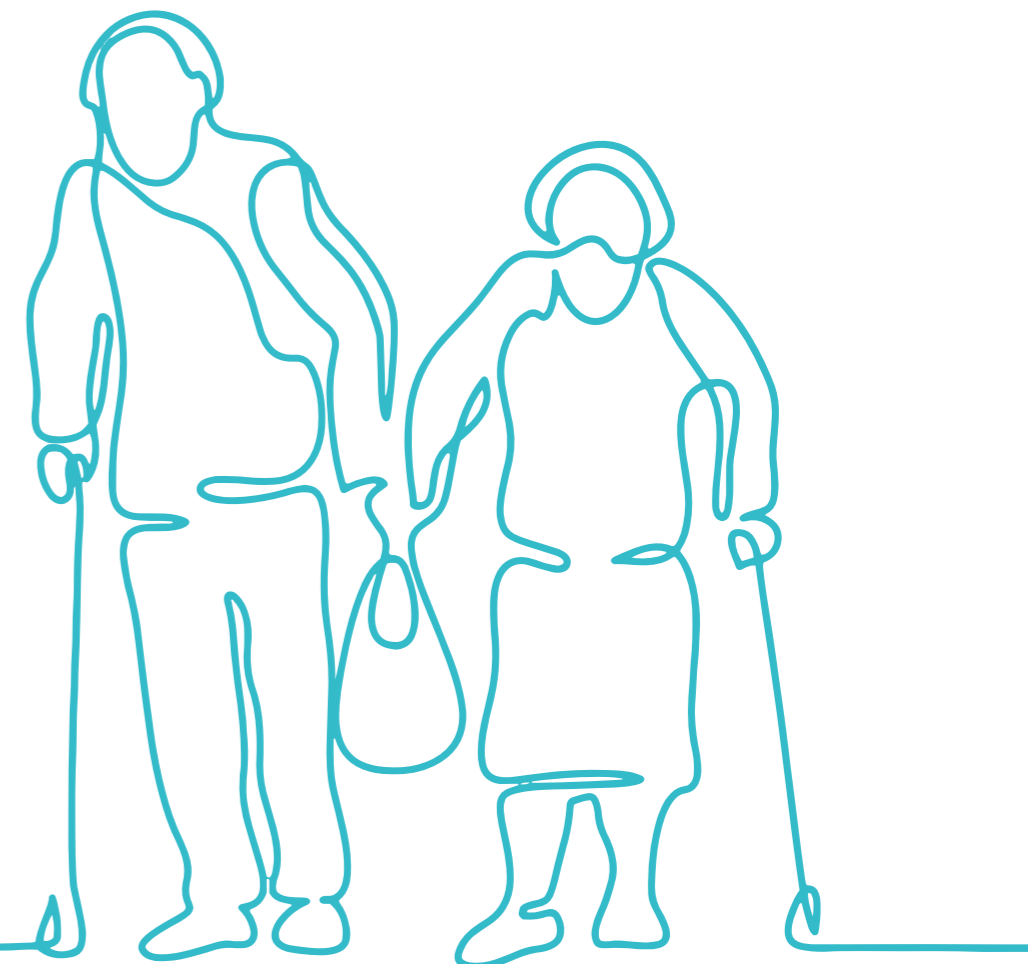
Carbon monoxide is a deadly gas that cannot be seen, smelt, or tasted. The common signs of carbon monoxide are gas flames burning orange or yellow instead of the normal blue, soot stains on or above the appliance and/or coal or wood fires that burn slowly or go out. Carbon Monoxide can be produced by faulty fuel burning appliances.



Make sure that appliances such as fires, boilers and gas cookers are regularly serviced by a qualified engineer. For gas appliances, engineers must be Gas Safe registered and show proof of this. You can also install a Carbon Monoxide alarm. These can be bought from DIY stores and supermarkets; they cost around £15 and could save lives.

If you rent your home, by law landlords must carry out an annual safety check and provide you with a Gas Safety Certificate. 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. If you smell gas call the **24-hour Gas Emergency Hotline on 0800 111 999**.

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



Further Information

NEA provides free leaflets to help you read your bills and meters, provide energy efficiency advice, use your central heating system, avoid damp and condensation and using the Economy 7 tariff in the best way.

These can be found on our website www.nea.org.uk under **Get Help**.

Our energy advice page www.nea.org.uk/energyhelp is regularly updated with the latest announcements.

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), however they are usually included in free call packages.

See more information at www.gov.uk/call-charges.

Below you can find a list of the organisations mentioned throughout the leaflet and some other organisations that might be able to help you:

Consumer

Citizens Advice Consumer Service

Citizens Advice Consumer Advice Line: **0808 223 1133**. You can call the Citizens Advice consumer line for help and support with debt, income maximisation or about your energy bills or visit their website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk

If you can't hear or speak on the phone, you can type what you want to say: **18001** then **0808 223 1133**.

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 280 2816**

National Debtline
www.nationaldebtline.org **0808 808 4000**

Income maximisation

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

If you want some help with 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**

Emergency food and crisis support

Your local authority should be able to direct you to available crisis support.

To find your nearest food bank visit www.trusselltrust.org.uk/get-help/find-a-foodbank – you will usually need to obtain a food voucher from a local agency or alternatively contact the free helpline on **0808 208 2138** to speak with a trained Citizens Advice adviser.

If you have a smart phone, apps like **OLIO** and **TooGoodToGo** will let you know if there is food being sold at low cost near to you.

Energy efficiency

For guidance on available grants visit www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/grants or contact **0800 444 202** for help using the site.

Energy Saving Trust offer guidance on ways to save energy around the home. Visit their website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

NEA's **Warm and Safe Homes** advice service is available Monday – Friday 10-12 on **0800 304 7159**.

Other

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.