

Switch your energy supplier



citizens
advice

You can often save money on your gas and electricity bills by switching to a new supplier. To switch, you'll need to compare suppliers and tariffs to find the best deal for you.

A 'tariff' is the amount you pay for your energy. You can pay for energy in lots of different ways. Some payment methods might limit your choice of tariffs.

You might have to pay a penalty (exit fee) if you change supplier or tariff before your current deal ends. There's no exit fee if you switch when your contract ends.

You can also ask your current supplier if there's a cheaper tariff you can move to. Your supplier must tell you which of their tariffs is cheapest for you.

If you rent your home, you can switch unless the energy account is in your landlord's name.

If you're in debt to your energy supplier

If you're on a prepayment meter, you can switch if you owe less than £500 for gas and £500 for electricity. Your debt will transfer with you, so you'll owe the money to your new supplier.

If you're not on a prepayment meter, you can switch if either:

- you've owed the money for 28 days or fewer
- it's not your fault you're in debt – for example, if your bills were wrong

The debt will be added to your final bill. If you've owed the money for more than 28 days, you can switch when you've paid it back.

Choose the right energy tariff

Before you switch, it's a good idea to think about the sort of tariff you want.

If you want the cheapest option

A 'fixed price' tariff with a contract is usually cheapest. The cost of your energy won't go up during the contract, but you might need to pay by direct debit. If you switch before the end of the deal, you'll have to pay an exit fee.

If you want a flexible tariff

If you don't want to be tied into a contract, you can get a 'standard variable' or 'default' tariff. The cost of energy can go up or down. There's no exit fee, but a flexible tariff is usually more expensive. It might be a good option if you're moving soon.

If you use most of your electricity at night

You can get a 'time of use' tariff, like Economy 7, for electricity. This is sometimes called a 'differential' tariff. On an Economy 7 tariff, electricity costs more during the day and less at night.

This is useful if you have electric storage heaters, as these 'charge up' at night. It's not worth getting Economy 7 if you use most of your electricity during the day.

If you have a prepayment meter

You'll usually be restricted to prepayment tariffs, where you pay for your energy in advance in small amounts. The choice of tariffs is limited.

Prepayment tariffs are more expensive than other tariffs. You could also be left with no gas or electricity if you pay late.

If you're not in debt to your supplier, you might be better off switching to a normal meter. Ask your supplier about this.

Compare tariffs and suppliers

Before you start, it's useful to write down:

- your current supplier and tariff
- how much energy you use
- how you pay for your energy
- your postcode

You can find this information on your energy bill.

If you get the Warm Home Discount, check whether you'll still get it if you switch. Not all suppliers offer it.

You can compare deals using our price comparison website: <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk>.

If you can't access the internet, you can contact your local Citizens Advice.

Switch your supplier

When you've chosen a new supplier and tariff, follow these steps:

- 1 Contact the new supplier and tell them – they'll set up the switch
- 2 Take a meter reading on the day you switch – your old supplier will use this to work out your final bill
- 3 Pay your final bill to your old supplier or get a refund if you're in credit

Your old supplier will tell you if you're in credit and refund you.

When you switch, you get a 14-day 'cooling off' period when you can cancel the contract if you change your mind. This starts the day after your new contract begins.

Contact your supplier if you have any problems when you switch. You can also call the Citizens Advice consumer service for help.

Citizens Advice consumer service

English helpline: 0808 223 1133

Welsh helpline: 0808 223 1144

Textphone: 18001 + helpline number

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