Gas and electricity

Dealing with problems or making complaints can be complicated and time-consuming. In this section, we have provided information about how you can get help to deal with these matters and to get the best service possible.

Reading your energy meter

Your gas or electricity meter records how much energy you've used. Your energy supplier needs this to work out your bill. If you don't give them regular meter readings, they will estimate how much energy you have used. This can mean your bills may not be accurate.

If you don't have a smart meter your energy supplier may ask you to send meter readings every month, 3 months, or year as part of your contract. This will help to make sure your bills are accurate.

It's a good idea to give your supplier regular meter readings to make sure you only pay for energy that you have used.

For more information on how to read different types of energy meters visit the **Citizens Advice website**.

Submitting your meter readings

You can send your meter readings directly to your supplier on their website or by phone. Some Energy Suppliers have online live chat or an email address that you can send your meter readings to. This can be useful if the online system is busy.

Check with your supplier to find out how they would like you to submit your readings.

Problems submitting your meter readings

If you are unable to read your meter or submit a reading, contact your energy supplier to find out how they can help.

Your energy supplier, as well as the network operator for the gas and electricity in your area, will have their own **Priority Services Register** (PSR). You can register on the PSR if you are vulnerable and need help to read or submit your meter readings.

You can also use the **Priority Services Register website** to find your supplier information more easily with just your post code.

This service is for people with mental health or health conditions, children under the age of 5, a sensory impairment such as loss of sight, hearing, or smell, older people, people who use medical equipment that relies on electricity or water at home, people who need extra help temporarily, and people who need information in another format or language. Visit their website to find out if you are eligible and how to register.

Smart meters

Smart meters send accurate meter readings to your energy supplier. This means your bills are not estimated and you should not need to manually read your meters. You will still receive your energy bills in the same way (paper or online). Your bill should always be accurate with a smart meter.

When a smart meter is installed, you should be provided with an in-home display. This is a small monitor that you can use to see information about how much energy you are currently using. The in-home display is a guide, it is not always accurate, and so it is still important that you check your energy bills.

How to get a smart meter

To get a smart meter you will need to contact your energy supplier. Your gas and electricity supplier will then provide and fit your meter for you at no extra cost. You may not be able to have a smart gas meter if your electricity is with a different supplier.

For more information on smart meters visit the **Smart Energy GB** website.

Locking off your gas supply

Vulnerable people such as those with Alzheimer's or learning disabilities may need extra protection from gas leaks in their home. You can now request a locking cooker valve which can be fitted for free by a your gas provider. The valve allows carers to lock off the gas supply so the cooker cannot be used unless the key holder is present. **Read more on how to get a locking cooker valve fitted for free by Northern Gas Networks.**

Gas leak or emergency

Smell Gas? Report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency, or if a pipeline is struck (even if no gas leak has occurred) call the **National Gas Emergency Service 24 hours a day.**

Read more on **gas safety on InformationNOW**

Winter Fuel and Cold Weather payments

Help is available for older people to help pay their energy bills during the colder months.

- **Cold Weather Payment** runs between 1 November and 31 March each year. It's triggered when the temperature goes below 0 degrees Celsius for 7 days (or is forecast to do so)
- **Winter Fuel Payment** is a tax free payment to help older people during winter. It's provided by the government to people who are eligible. You could get between £100 to £300.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount Scheme provides a £150 discount on your electricity bill if on the qualifying date:

- your supplier was part of the scheme
- your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
- you were getting the Guarantee Credit element of **Pension Credit** (even if you get Savings Credit as well)
- you were getting another Means Tested Benefit and your property also meets the 'high energy costs' criteria

The discount won't affect your **Cold Weather Payment** or **Winter Fuel Payment**

Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) provide extra energy advice and support to people who have health, communication, access or safety needs. This includes help with your electricity, gas and water supply. You could get extra help such as:

- Information and communication for your needs such as large print, Braille, textphone, audio or a language other than English
- You can nominate someone such as a carer, family member or friend who can deal with things on your behalf
- Get priority updates in a power cut. If your electricity or gas needs to be temporarily switched off to carry out essential maintenance, you will get prior advance notice
- A free annual safety check on your gas appliances if you are of pension age, are disabled or are chronically ill
- Emergency power for medical equipment or aids used at home
- Your electricity and gas companies work with local authorities, emergency services and agencies, like the British Red Cross, to provide extra support
- Emergency gas, electricity, heating or cooking appliances, if your service is not available for a long time
- Password scheme. You can set up a safe password when electricity or gas company employees call you or knock at your door, so you know it isn't a scam.

Northern Powergrid is the main electricity distribution provider for the North East of England. You can register for their **Priority Service on their website.**

Northern Gas Networks is the main gas distribution provider for the North East of England. You can register for their **Priority Service on their website**

Northumbria Water is the main supplier for water in the North East of England.

Complaining about your Energy Supplier

If you wish to make a complaint about your gas or electricity supplier, your first point of contact should be the supplier's complaints department. You may also find it useful to read the **Citizens Advice article** on how to complain to your energy supplier. **Energy Services, Newcastle City Council** also provide a telephone helpline and will offer advice if you wish to complain to your supplier.

If you feel that your complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, you may then wish to take your complaint to the **Energy Ombudsman.**

For more information please visit the Information NOW article on **How to make a good complaint.**

Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN) provide an online service offering information and advice on consumer issues. They provide clear, practical, impartial advice to help you sort out problems and disagreements you may be having with suppliers of goods or services.

Power cuts

If you have a power cut, you should contact your local electricity network operator rather than your electricity supplier. For Newcastle, this is **Northern Powergrid**.

Powercut 105 is a free helpline where you can report to or get information about power cuts in your area. You can also call 105 if you spot damage to electricity power lines and substations that could put you, or someone else, in danger. If there's a serious immediate risk, you should call the emergency services too.

Fraud and Scams

Home Improvements

Please be wary of unexpected doorstep callers or telephone calls offering energy saving improvements to your home and charge fees for assessments. Contact the trusted organisations listed above for advice. See our article on **Fraud and Scams** if you are worried about bogus callers.

Energy pre-payment customers

Energy companies have uncovered a doorstep scam which seems to offer cheaper electricity meter top-ups but ends up with consumers paying twice. Criminals are using cloned keys to top up credit illegally. Some people are being offered £50 of electricity meter top-up for a cash payment of just £25. Energy companies can always detect when they have not received payment for electricity used and any customer buying top-up from a criminal will end up paying twice, first to the criminal and then to their energy supplier. Only the criminal will benefit. Companies never sell electricity top-up door-to-door. There is evidence of serious and organised criminal activity and they are urging customers not to get involved.

If you think you have been affected or would like more information, contact your electricity supplier directly or visit our article on **Fraud and Scams** for more information.

Other Useful Articles

You may also find these articles on Information Now useful

- **Help with heating problems and how to pay for them**
- **Cold Weather Payments**
- **Winter Fuel Payments**
- **Energy Saving Tips**

Last updated: August 9, 2024

Useful Organisations

Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)

Email: citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk

Website: http://citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 223 1133

Address: 4th Floor, City Library, NE1 8AX

Energy Services, Newcastle City Council

Email: energy@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk/energyadvice

Telephone: 0191 278 3427

Address: Operations and Regulatory Services, NE1 8QH

Energy Saving Trust

Website: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 098 7950

British Gas Energy Trust

Email: bget@charisgrants.com

Website: www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

Telephone: 01733 421 021

Address: PO Box 42, PE3 8XH

Newcastle Libraries

Email: information@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Newcastle City Library, NE1 8AX

Moneysupermarket

Website: www.moneysupermarket.com

Telephone: 0333 123 1983

Address: Moneysupermarket House,, CH5 3UZ

Warm Home Discount Scheme

Website: https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/overview

Newcastle City Council

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Civic Centre, NE1 8QH

EDF Energy Fund

Email: edfet@charisgrants.com

Website: https://www.edfenergy.com/help-support/PSR

Telephone: 01733 421060

Address: PO Box 42, PE3 8XH

Citizens Advice

Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 223 1133

Address: Citizens Advice, EC1A 4HD

GOV.UK

Website: www.gov.uk

Energy Ombudsman

Email: enquiry@energyombudsman.org

Website: http://www.ombudsman-services.org

Telephone: 0330 440 1624

Address: PO Box 966, WA4 9DF

Ofgem

Email: consumeraffairs@ofgem.gov.uk

Website: www.ofgem.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7901 7295

Northern Powergrid

Email: cust.serv@northernpowergrid.com

Website: http://www.northernpowergrid.com

Telephone: 0800 66 88 77

Address: RSXE-RCZX-XKBL, Manor House, DH4 7LA

Smart Energy GB

Website: https://www.smartenergygb.org/en

Lets Talk Charis

Email: EnergyFund@Lets-Talk.online

Website: https://www.lets-talk.online/

Gocompare.com

Email: help@gocompare.com

Website: http://www.gocompare.com

Address: Gocompare.com Limited, NP10 8UH

Compare the Market

Email: support@comparethemarket.com

Website: https://www.comparethemarket.com

Address: Pegasus House, PE2 6YS

Powercut 105

Website: http://www.powercut105.com/

Telephone: 105

Northern Gas Networks

Email: customercare@northerngas.co.uk

Website: https://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 040 7766

Address: Customer Care Team , SR3 3XR

Citizens Advice Northumberland

Website: https://www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk/

Telephone: 0800 144 8848

Address: Post Office Chambers, NE63 8RH

British Gas

Email: customerservice@britishgas.co.uk

Website: www.britishgas.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 0728 625

Address: PO Box 227, S98 1PD

National Gas Emergency Service

Website: https://www.nationalgrid.com/safety-and-emergencies

Priority Services Register

Website: https://www.thepsr.co.uk/

Address: 4 More, SE1 2AU

Related Articles

Winter Fuel Payment

Dealing with debt

Welfare benefits

Getting advice about your finances

Help with energy problems and how to pay for them

Cold Weather Payments

How to make a good complaint

Energy saving tips

Gas safety