



Gas and Electricity

From 15 December 2020, energy suppliers must issue credit to prepayment customers so that their meters don't run out if they are temporarily unable to afford to top up, have mobility problems, or are self-isolating due to coronavirus restrictions. Separately, suppliers will also have to offer extra prepayment credit to households in vulnerable circumstances to give them "breathing space" to arrange alternative payment plans with their provider. This will have to be paid back to the supplier at a later date in the form of payback per week on a prepay meter.

Electricity key or gas card top-up - you can pay your supplier directly by phone and they will then send a special code to a pay-point near to you. This code can then be picked up by family or friends. If you don't have anyone who can do this for you, your supplier may be able to send a key or card to your home that will allow you to top up. This will have to be paid back to the supplier at a later date in the form of payback per week on a prepay meter.

Struggling customers in debt with credit meters will also benefit from rule changes that will ensure providers offer them repayment plans that are more tailored to their financial circumstances.

If you're in a tough financial situation and having problems paying your bills, you should contact your supplier straight away.

- SCARF is a charity that will help with energy bill issues, call 01224 213 005 or email info@scarf.org.uk

General tips during Covid pandemic and winter

- It's a good idea to keep topping your meter up with extra money whenever you can to build up plenty of credit in case you have to self isolate at a later date or become ill.
- If you or anyone in your homes has any underlying health conditions, you should also contact your energy supplier to let them know. They will add you to the Priority Service Register, which will give you extra support should you need it.
- If you are self-isolating, you should contact your energy company as soon as you become aware of an issue to do with your prepay meter, as some of the solutions can take a few days.
- It is a good idea to leave your external meter box unlocked so family or friends can use your key to top up if you are self isolating. This would also help if your supplier needs access to the supply.

Advice for billing and Direct Debit customers

- If tenants are experiencing difficulty to pay bills or keep up with Direct Debit payments, they should call their supplier as soon as possible to see what assistance they can offer. This may be in the form of deferring Direct debit payments and putting accounts on hold but will vary with different suppliers.
- Recovery letters and notices that are auto-generated will still be sent out and if you receive one, then phone your supplier at the earliest opportunity.
- Suppliers are keen to identify households that have vulnerabilities so they can support them and add them to the Priority Service Register. This is particularly important for tenants who are at risk of going off supply.
- It is vitally important that if you are experiencing difficulties with your energy supply, then to get in touch with your energy supplier as soon as possible. This may prevent emergency measures needing to be carried out and is easier for your supplier to assist.
- The main energy suppliers and their contact details are listed below. Many of these suppliers have a live chat option on their website if you have no phone credit.

SSE

0345 026 2658 – Customer service
0345 071 9852 – Priority service
Website – <https://sse.co.uk>

EDF

0333 200 5100
Website – <https://www.edfenergy.com>

Utilita

0345 2068 333
Website – <https://utilita.co.uk>

Bulb

0300 3030635
Website – <https://bulb.co.uk>

Scottish Power

0800 0270072
Download the app or visit the online support centre
<https://community.scottishpower.co.uk/>

Scottish/ British Gas

0220 100 0303
Website – <https://www.britishgas.co.uk/>

OVO

0330 102 7517
<https://forum.ovoenergy.com/>

Npower

0330 100 3000
Website – <https://www.npower.com>
text phone 0800 413 016

EON

0345 303 3040
Website – <https://www.eonenergy.com>