



# Disability Energy Support

## About us

We offer free energy and water advice to disabled people.

The service is open to:

Any disabled person or households in England and Wales where 1 or more disabled people live.

## Support with your energy needs

Our expert advisers can help with a wide range of topics related to your energy needs. They can talk you through:

- managing energy and water debt
- switching tariffs or supplier
- changing your meter
- becoming more energy and water efficient
- free pre-payment fuel vouchers
- accessing energy and water benefits, grants and trusts
- contacting or complaining to your supplier
- advice if you're worried about energy bills
- understanding your bills
- advice if your energy supplier has gone bust
- understanding how to use your heating systems
- free pre-payment fuel vouchers (conditions apply)

Find out more about our service online:  
[scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support](https://scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support)

## Contact our advisers

To book a telephone appointment with 1 of our advisers:

- **Complete our online application form**  
[scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support/eligibility-check](https://scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support/eligibility-check)
- Call **free** on **0808 801 0828** phone lines open 11am to 4pm Monday to Friday
- Email us at **Disability.EnergySupport@scope.org.uk**

Telephone appointments are available between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday. We can make adjustments for telephone calls. Tell us about any access needs when you apply.



# Existing utility support services

## Priority Services Register (PSR)

Energy and water suppliers have a Priority Services Register (PSR).  
Signing up to your supplier's PSR means you can get free support.

This includes things like:

- providing your bills in a different format, so they are easier to understand
- completing free gas safety checks and reading your meter for you

You will also be treated as a priority customer, before, during and after a power cut.

Each supplier has their own register. This includes your:

- energy supplier
- network distribution operator
- water supplier

You can register for free. Find out more about the eligibility criteria and how to sign up: [scope.org.uk/energy-priority-services-register](https://scope.org.uk/energy-priority-services-register)

You can use your postcode to check who supplies your household:

- **Network Distribution Operator**  
[energynetworks.org/operating-the-networks/whos-my-network-operator](https://energynetworks.org/operating-the-networks/whos-my-network-operator)
- **Water supplier**  
[water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier](https://water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier)
- **Gas supplier**  
[findmysupplier.energy/webapp/index.html](https://findmysupplier.energy/webapp/index.html)

You cannot find out online who supplies your electricity. If you are unsure, contact your Electricity Network Distribution Operator. They can tell you who your supplier is.

# Warm Home Discount (WHD)

Warm Home Discount (WHD) will take £140 off your electricity bill between September and March. This can help you afford payments through the winter months when we see our energy bills go up the most.

## There are 2 groups that can get the discount:

- 'Core group', those receiving the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- 'Broader group', those who have a lower income and meet the supplier's criteria

If you're eligible, you can apply directly through your supplier's website.

**Read more about the discount and how to apply:**

[scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/warm-home-discount](https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/warm-home-discount)

**Not all suppliers offer WHD to their customers.**

**It's important to check if your supplier does.**

You can do this on the government website:

[gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers)



# Ways to save money and track your energy use

## Switching your tariff or supplier

Comparing tariffs is a good way to check if you can save money.

You might find it's cheaper to:

- switch to a new supplier
- move to a different tariff with your current supplier

Start by contacting your current supplier. Ask if there is a cheaper tariff available to you. If there is, your supplier can usually complete the switch for you during the same call or email exchange.

We recommend using Ofgem's list of comparison websites to compare different suppliers. Ofgem regulates energy companies. Their accredited comparison sites will compare tariffs and suppliers in a fairer way.

If you find a cheaper tariff or supplier, the comparison site will give you instructions on how to switch if you can get a better deal.

## If you are in debt

If you are in debt with your current supplier, it may not be possible to switch to a new supplier until the debt is repaid. You can still change to a cheaper tariff with your current supplier if there is one available. So, it's always worth checking.

# Smart meters

Smart meters are a new type of gas and electricity meter.

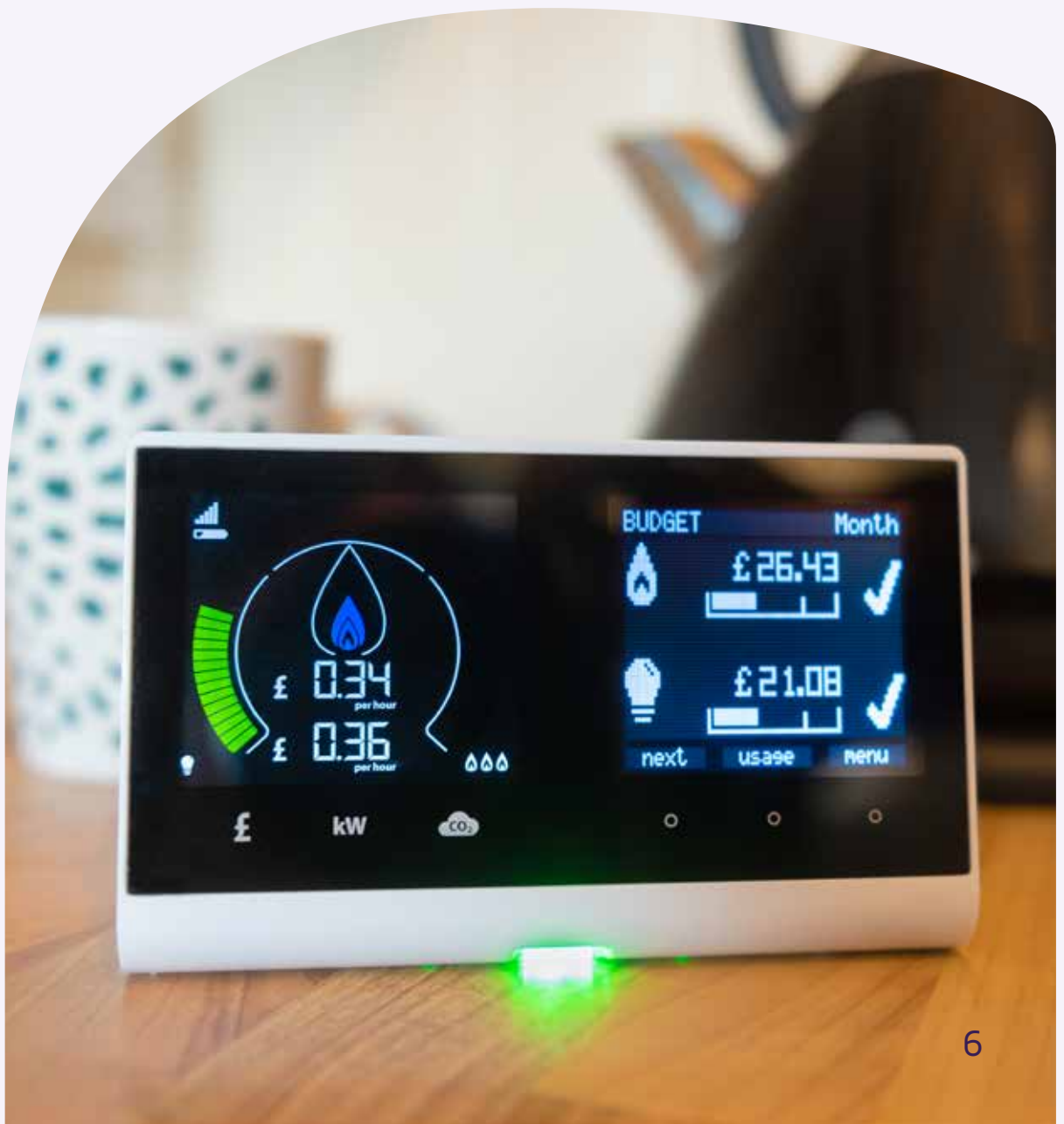
A smart meter can:

- give you a better understanding of how you use energy around your home
- help you keep track of your bills
- send meter readings directly to your supplier so you don't have to

The meter is completely free and installed by your supplier.

Find out more:

[scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/smart-meters](https://scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/smart-meters)





# How to deal with energy debt

Energy is a priority bill. This means any outstanding payment with your energy supplier is a priority debt.

It's important to communicate with your energy supplier to agree a way to repay the debt. There are a few things you can do to manage energy debt.

## Make sure you have provided your supplier with the correct meter reading

If your bill is being estimated this could mean the debt amount is incorrect. You want to confirm exactly how much is outstanding on your account.

If providing meter readings isn't easy, consider having a smart meter installed. The meter will send your readings directly to your supplier automatically.

## Look at switching your tariff

Often customers are not on the cheapest tariff with their supplier. You can switch tariff with your supplier to possibly reduce your monthly payments. You can do this regardless of your arrears and will free up more money towards repaying your debt!

## Make a payment arrangement with the supplier

Making a payment arrangement shows your supplier that you are:

- aware of the outstanding balance
- trying to resolve the problem

The payment arrangement should be realistic and affordable alongside your other household costs.

## Apply for an energy trust fund

Some suppliers offer trust funds to customers who are struggling to pay their bills. Successful applications can reduce or even clear the outstanding balance on the account.

### Supplier trust funds:

- British Gas Energy Trust
- Bulb Energy Fund
- Charis: Let's Talk Energy Fund
- EDF Energy Customer Support Fund
- EON Energy Fund
- Ovo Energy Fund
- Scottish Power Hardship Fund

Read more information about each trust fund and who can apply:  
[scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/energy-bills-help](https://scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/energy-bills-help)

## Get energy advice

An adviser will be able to support you with the above advice and any other options available to you. For example, a prepayment or credit meter fuel voucher to pay off or reduce the arrears balance.

An adviser will also be able to discuss with you how you use energy around your home. They can support you to make changes so you can manage, reduce or stop energy debt.





# Carbon monoxide awareness

## What is carbon monoxide (CO)?

CO is a highly poisonous gas that is produced by fossil fuels not burning completely. This includes:

- gas
- oil
- wood
- petrol
- coal

With no smell or taste, CO can go unnoticed. This means exposure can be fatal or cause permanent damage to your health.

## What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can be very similar to other common illnesses. For example flu, viral infections or food poisoning. Symptoms can include:

- nausea
- headaches or dizziness
- breathlessness
- pains in the stomach or chest
- tiredness
- loss of consciousness
- problems with vision
- erratic behaviour

# How to keep safe from CO poisoning

## Get an alarm

You can buy CO alarms from:

- most DIY stores
- online retailers
- some supermarkets

An alarm will cost around £10 to £15 but could save your life. Fit your alarm in the same room as any sources of gas. This could be your cooker, boiler or fire for example.

The alarm should not be above any heat or steam and at least 1 meter away from the source of gas. Fit the alarm on the wall, 15 centimetres below the ceiling.

## Keep an eye on the flame

When cooking, your gas hob flame should burn crisp and blue. An orange, lazy flame is worth checking.

## Ventilation

If your gas appliances don't have enough air supply, CO could be produced. Check if your appliances have enough ventilation to burn in the correct way. Ventilation means making sure fresh air can move around a closed space.

## Get checked

Make sure your gas appliances are checked annually. Some appliances need to be checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

These include your:

- cooker
- boiler
- fireplace

This helps make sure they are safe to use.

## Landlords and tenants

Legally, landlords must have the gas appliances in the property checked annually. Landlords should also make sure tenants are safe by fitting a CO alarm.

### What should I do if I suspect CO poisoning?

- Turn off all gas appliances in the home
- Open doors, windows and get outside as quickly as possible.
- Visit your doctor or hospital straight away.
- Call Gas Emergency Helpline on **0800 111 999**



## Energy saving tips

Here are some great tips you can do around your home to help you save energy and money.

If you have any questions about any of the energy tips below, you can speak with our energy advisers. You can do this by:

- making a telephone appointment free on **0808 801 0828**
- emailing [disability.energysupport@scope.org.uk](mailto:disability.energysupport@scope.org.uk)

Energy Efficiency Tip	Annual Saving
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Replace lightbulbs with energy saving LED bulbs. Each bulb will save you money and last years.	£3 (per bulb)
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Avoid overfilling the kettle. Only top up with the amount you need.	£6
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Wash your clothes on a lower setting. 30 degrees is ideal.	£6
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Do 1 less load of washing per week.	£8
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Try showering for 1 minute less each day.	£8
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Turn your lights off when not in use.	£15
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Install a chimney draught excluder.	£19
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Draught proof your windows, doors, even letterboxes and keyholes. This stops heat from escaping.	£25
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Do your washing up with a bowl. Running hot water costs more money.	£25
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Turn any non-essential electricals off, not just on to standby.	£35
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Fit a water efficient shower head.	£38
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The ideal temperature for your home is between 18 to 21 degrees. Turning your heating down by just 1 degree will save you money.	£60
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Use your heating controls well. Only heat the rooms your use by turning radiators off in unused rooms.	£75
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Set your thermostat to heat rooms ready for you to use them at the temperature you want them to be.	
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How to use and set your heating controls (Scope).  
[scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/energy-saving-tips](https://scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/energy-saving-tips)

# Water help

You may not be able to switch water suppliers like you can with your gas and electricity. But you still may be able to switch the tariff you are on.

Most water companies have social tariffs available to customers with a lower income. This is usually earnings of around £16,385 annually or if you're in receipt of benefits.

Moving to a social tariff can mean your annual bill is capped at a much lower amount. Call your water supplier or visit their website to check if you are eligible for their social tariff.

## WaterSure scheme

**All water suppliers offer the WaterSure scheme. It's available to vulnerable customers who may benefit from a reduced annual bill.**

**You can apply for support under the WaterSure scheme if:**

- you have a water meter
- the person who pays the water bill or someone else in your household has specific benefits

**The benefits included are:**

- Housing Benefit
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only)
- Pension Credit

**As well as receiving these benefits, there must be either:**

- 3 or more children under 19 living in the household that the person receiving the above benefit also claims Child Benefit.
- You or someone living in your household that needs to use a lot of extra water because of a medical condition. (Listed on the next page).

**These medical conditions include:**

- Desquamation (flaky skin disease)
- Weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
- Incontinence
- Abdominal stoma
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Renal failure requiring home dialysis (except where the health authority contributes to the cost of the dialysis)
- Another medical condition which requires the use of significant additional water

To apply for the scheme, contact your water supplier for an application form.





# Other support available to you

We have many services support both disabled adults, children and their families.

## Employment

We offer free online and offline employment support. Our support services are designed for working-age disabled people. Find out more about the different services.

Visit [scope.org.uk/employment-services](https://scope.org.uk/employment-services)

## Family

Our services can support parents and carers of disabled children. This includes a national mentoring service or support with your child's sleep.

Visit [scope.org.uk/family-services](https://scope.org.uk/family-services)

## Helpline

Our helpline offers free, independent, and impartial advice and support. Our advisers can support on topics such as:

- benefits
- social care
- housing
- assistive technology

Visit [scope.org.uk/helpline](https://scope.org.uk/helpline)

## Online community

Our community is a forum for disabled people, parents and carers to talk to people. You can also get advice and information.

Visit [forum.scope.org.uk](https://forum.scope.org.uk)

## Other organisations who can help:

### StepChange Debt Charity

Free and impartial debt advice and debt solutions.

Live chat with a debt adviser

For online debt advice visit [stepchange.org](https://stepchange.org)

Call **0800 138 1111**

### Citizens Advice

Support and advice on a wide range of topics including budgeting and benefits.

Visit [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)

Call **0808 223 1133**

### Age UK

Support and advice to both older people and carers.

Visit [ageuk.org.uk](https://ageuk.org.uk)

Call **0800 678 1602**

### Carers UK

Support and advice for carers.

Visit [carersuk.org](https://carersuk.org)

Call **0207 378 4999**

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