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Switch supplier or energy tariff

How to compare and switch energy tariff or supplier when shopping around for a new energy deal.

How to switch

Information you need

It's useful to have the following information:

- Your postcode.
- The name of your current supplier.
- The name of your current energy tariff.
- Your annual energy usage or costs.

You can find your tariff, supplier and annual information on a recent energy bill. Log into your online account if you don't get paper bills.

Find tariffs and suppliers

Use a comparison website or phone different energy suppliers to find out what you can save by switching.

You can ask your supplier if they will match an offer if you find one that's better elsewhere.

Weigh up your options

Think about things like:

- A supplier's customer service.
- If the offer is the cheapest, environmentally-friendly or flexible to leave without an exit fee.
- If you can get cashback or other free incentives as part of your switch offer.
- If there is a switching guarantee. Some suppliers offer this to help you switch with confidence.

Confirm your switch

The last step is to confirm your contract and payment method. Paying by Direct Debit usually saves money.

Your new supplier will contact you with a switching date. It can take up to 5 working days to complete a switch, though you can specify a later switch date if you wish.

Help with switching

If a switch goes wrong or is unexpected

You could have been wrongly switched if you get an unexpected welcome letter or final energy bill. It's rare this happens. When it does, contact your supplier to tell them. Citizens Advice can help with what you need to do too.

Most switches run smoothly. But if things go wrong, Ofgem's Guaranteed Standards make sure things are put right quickly and you are compensated.

Compensation

You won't need to do anything if suppliers breach a standard and spot the issue. Compensation is automatic. You can report a claim too.

Suppliers have 10 working days from a breach to pay you. They could owe a further £30 if they don't meet this timeline. Ofgem monitors supplier data to make sure they do this.

If you think an issue isn't fixed or you haven't been compensated, it's best to contact your supplier to tell them. If you aren't happy with their response, make a complaint.

Guaranteed standard	Compensation
Suppliers agree if a switch is valid or <u>Erroneous transfer</u> within 20 working days of you telling either supplier.	£60 (£30 from each supplier)
Suppliers confirm the outcome of their investigation into an <u>Erroneous transfer</u> within 20 working days of you contacting them.	£30 by contacted supplier
Supplier restores connection to previous supplier within 21 working days of agreeing a switch is erroneous.	£30 by former supplier
Supplier refunds money owed on a credit balance within 10 working days of sending a final bill.	£30 by former supplier
Property switched by mistake.	£30 by new supplier
Switch completes within 15 working days.	£30 by new supplier
Supplier sends a final bill within six weeks of a switch.	£30 by former supplier

Suppliers may contact you about making a compensation payment. Always ask for further information before giving your personal details.

You won't get switching compensation if you are a business energy customer or if your supplier has gone bust.

Switching if you are repaying a debt

You can still switch if you've been in debt to your supplier for less than 28 days. Your old supplier will add any owed amounts to your final bill.

You'll need to repay a debt first if you've owed money for over 28 days. This differs for prepayment meter customers (see below).

Your supplier can't stop you from switching if it's their fault you're in debt.

If you are having money difficulties, see our advice on help if you can't afford your bills.

Switching if you are repaying a debt with a prepayment meter

You can still switch with debts of up to £500 on gas and £500 on electricity.

The supplier you switch to will take on the debt and you will repay them instead. This happens under a 'Debt Assignment Protocol'. You will agree the terms of your repayment plan in your contract with them. Our rules mean repayment plans must be realistic and affordable for you.

Prepayment meter tariffs are usually more expensive. You may want to ask about the different options available to you, including changing to a standard meter. Most suppliers offer this for free.

If you are having money difficulties, see our advice on help if you can't afford your bills. Our guide on prepayment meter rules could also help.

Switching if you rent a property

Your rental agreement should say if you, your landlord or letting agent are responsible for energy bills.

Consumer protection law says you must be able to choose your energy supplier if it is your responsibility to pay energy bills.

Your landlord could be responsible for paying energy bills if they:

- pay the supplier directly and reclaim the money from you as a tenant
- include the cost of energy in your rent
- assume responsibility for energy supply between tenancies.

Even then, they should not unreasonably stop you from switching. If they pay, it's worth checking the Citizens Advice guide on what your landlord can charge for your energy too.

It's important to check your rental contract for:

- energy supplier clauses. Letting agents or landlords sometimes tie in preferred suppliers with a 'default supplier clause'. Ask if you can renegotiate it. If you can't, you can still switch if you are responsible for paying energy bills.
- notice and return clauses. These might mean you must first tell your landlord if you plan to switch supplier. You might also have to return supply back to a particular supplier or energy meter (if you changed meters) when your tenancy ends.

If you have a prepayment meter

If you have moved to a property with a prepayment meter, tell the supplier you are a new tenant quickly. This is to make sure you don't take on a former tenant's debt in your prepayment meter charges.

Prepayment meter tariffs usually cost more. You may want to ask about different options, including changing to a smart or standard meter. Most suppliers offer meter change services for free.

If you aren't sure about your current supply details, see [Finding your energy supplier or network operator](#).