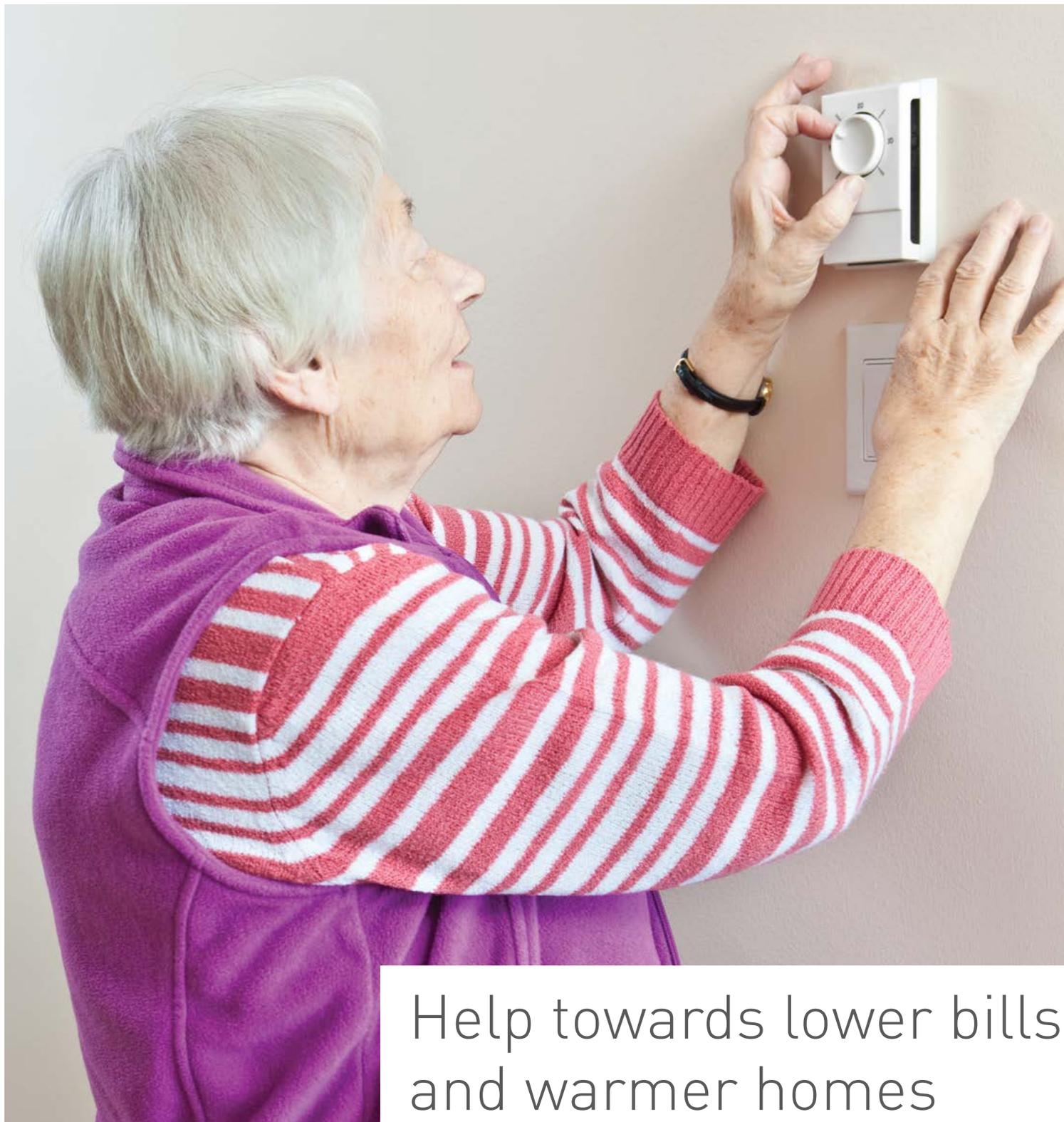


HELPING CONSUMERS WITH ENERGY



Help towards lower bills
and warmer homes

A simple guide to accessing help and information

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Government would like to thank all those individuals and organisations which have contributed to this brochure.



How Government is helping to lower bills and warm homes



This guide explains how people can cut their energy bills, keep warm and where they can go for help

The Government wants to help people to:

- **GET THE CHEAPEST** electricity and gas tariffs that suit their needs
- **INSULATE** their homes so they leak less heat, to help cut their bills
- **UNDERSTAND** how much energy they use and how they can reduce it
- **REPLACE** inefficient heating systems with cheaper and renewable alternatives, or even generate their own electricity

Government is getting the best energy deal for consumers

We know that energy prices have risen in recent years. That is why we are legislating so people get the cheapest tariff. We want energy companies to treat their customers fairly and we want to make the energy market work more effectively, so there is consumer protection, competition and real choice for people to get the best deal. The Prime Minister has announced an annual review into the state of competition in the energy market.

✓ Tariffs

The Government is working with the energy regulator Ofgem on a range of measures to give householders **simpler choices**, **clearer information** and **fair treatment**.

- ✓ **Simpler choices**
- ✓ **Clearer information**
- ✓ **Fair treatment**

We are making the market simpler for householders. By **December 2013** suppliers will be set a limit on the number of tariffs each supplier can offer. By **March 2014**, suppliers must tell householders what the cheapest deal is for them, and by **June 2014**, suppliers will no longer be able to keep householders on a poor value 'dead tariff'. By **Summer 2014** all consumers will be on the **cheapest tariff that is in line with their current preferences**.

Householders don't have to wait for these changes to take place to seek out a better deal. There are several straightforward things that householders can benefit from **now**. Householders can **save**:

£90

a year on average by switching to direct debit payment or

£158

a year by switching supplier **and** switching to direct debit payment

People can protect themselves against future price rises with a fixed rate. Or they can switch suppliers easily. Householders won't get disconnected or be without energy if they switch supplier.

Ofgem accredited price comparison sites provide whole of market comparisons enabling people to get the best deal for them.

✓ Financial support

People in older properties and those on benefits or low incomes may **qualify for extra financial help** for energy saving improvements including more efficient heating systems. People can see if they are eligible by using this easy online calculator www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator or by calling the **Energy Saving Advice Service** on **0300 123 1234** or **Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282**.

Some people on benefits or low incomes may also qualify for help from the Warm Home Discount. This is a direct payment from their energy supplier to help with bills.

Winter Fuel Payments of between **£100** and **£300** are also available to pensioners as well as a cold weather payment of **£25** for each seven day period of very cold weather.

This winter over **1.2 million** of the most vulnerable pensioners will receive **£135 off their electricity bill** through the Warm Home Discount.

New boiler for Bristol family

A **couple with two young children** needed help with their faulty boiler. They called the **Energy Saving Advice Service** helpline to find out if they were eligible for any support.

Because they received Child Tax Credit, the helpline explained that they may be eligible for help through the **Energy Company Obligation**. With their permission, the helpline passed their details on to their energy supplier who participates in the scheme.

After a home assessment, their energy supplier provided and installed, for free, a new, more energy efficient boiler.

The family now enjoy hot water and a cosier home.



✔ Advice and information

The Government understands that **good quality advice and information** is key in developing people's trust. For impartial advice about energy saving home improvements, new heating systems or generating their own electricity, people can call the **Energy Saving Advice Service** on **0300 123 1234** or **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282**.

We are helping households cut energy waste, by providing new ways to help pay for and install energy saving measures like insulation. The Green Deal which starts with a home assessment to help households understand possible improvements and potential savings, lets homes and

businesses make energy efficiency improvements and pay for them over time through savings on their energy bills.

Helping people to understand the amount of energy they use at home and how much it costs is key. That's why we're also working with industry to introduce smart meters to 30 million UK homes.

✔ Standards

We know that standards matter. People want to be sure the products and installers they choose are reliable and high quality. Under the Green Deal, a **robust standards framework governs participants** including assessors, providers and installers. **Energy efficiency products must meet certain standards too.**

For people wanting to replace their heating systems with more efficient and renewable alternatives there are industry standards that need to be followed. The **Energy Saving Advice Service** can help with this.

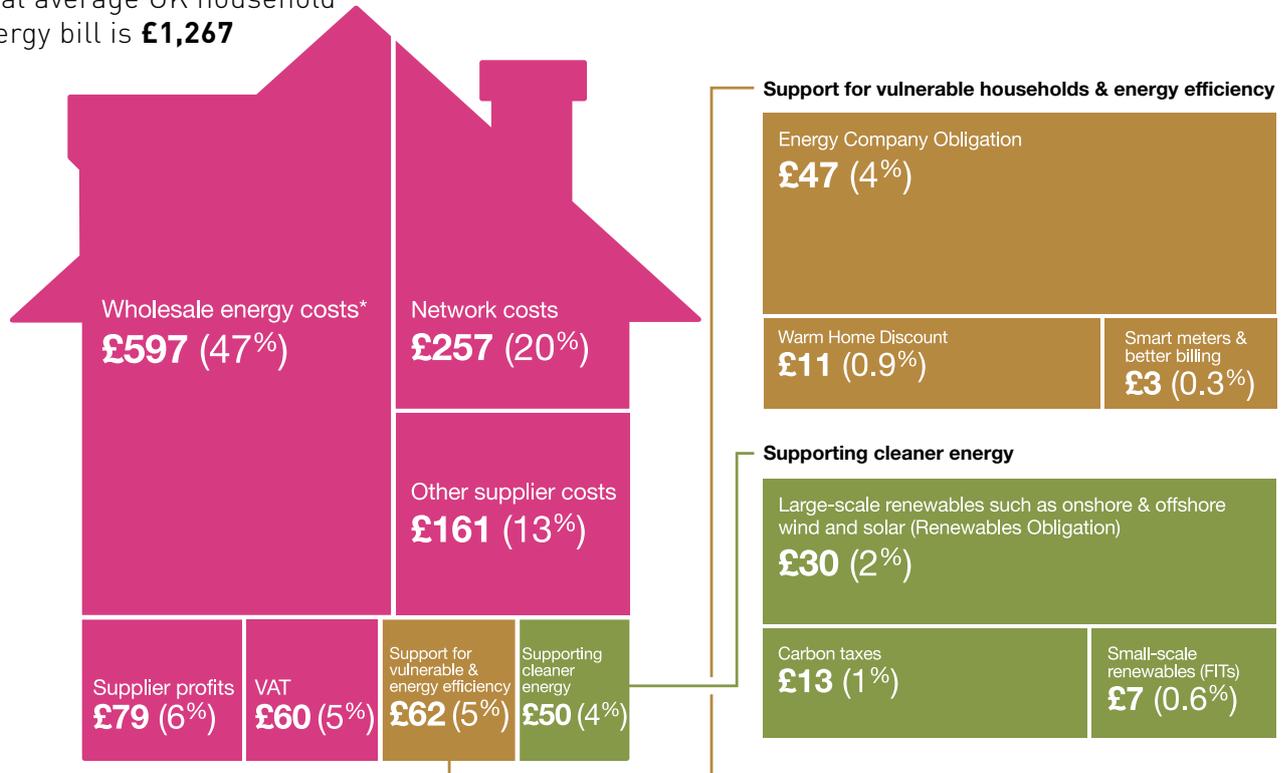
✔ New ways to pay

We know that finding the money upfront to pay for energy saving improvements can be difficult for people. That is why Government has introduced the Green Deal which lets householders pay for some of the cost of energy saving improvements, like insulation, over time through their electricity bill. Green Deal repayments will be no more than what a typical household should save in energy costs.

MANAGING BILLS

How is a household's energy bill made up?

Total average UK household energy bill is **£1,267**



All figures in real 2012 prices. Based on consumption of 14.8MWh gas & 3.8MWh electricity. Figures may not add due to rounding. Source: DECC March 2013 report "Estimated Impacts of energy and climate change policies on energy prices and bills". *Excluding carbon costs.

Save money, save energy

Here are six simple measures to reduce the amount of energy householders use, to help save money now. They could **make a real difference to householders this winter**.

1. Turn off and turn down

Turning off lights, appliances and chargers when householders aren't using them could save between **£50** and **£90** a year.

2. Careful in the kitchen

Householders could save **£40** a year. For example, setting the washing machine to wash at 30°C.

3. Be a bathroom saver

If a shower takes hot water straight from the boiler or hot water tank, householders could try a water efficient shower head, cutting hot water use.

An eco shower head will cost around **£27** and a family of four could save around **£75** a year on water heating, and could save around **£90** on water bills too.

4. Don't lag behind

Householders could lag their tank and pipes for about **£25** and save **£60** a year on bills.

5. Be a draught excluder

Householders could invest in draught proofing for their doors and windows, seal skirting boards and fit chimney draught excluders. The materials could cost around **£160**, depending on property, but they could save **£75** a year.

6. Lighten the load

Households could replace all their remaining old fashioned light bulbs with regular energy savings bulbs and all their halogen bulbs with LED spotlights. They'd pay **£125** upfront and then save around **£60** a year for the life of the bulbs.

Getting the **best** energy tariff

Energy prices have risen in recent years, mainly because of the increased cost of wholesale energy. The Government can't control the wholesale cost of energy, though we can help households get the cheapest tariff for them.

That is why we are legislating to give statutory backing to Ofgem's retail market reforms. This will deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to ensure all householders will be on the cheapest tariff for them.

Ofgem's reforms will introduce fairer and simpler tariffs and give householders clearer information on their bills, so they can shop around more easily for the best deals.

Simpler choices

By **December 2013**, suppliers will have to implement measures designed to provide simpler choices. This will make the energy market **less confusing** and **easier to understand** and **compare tariffs**.

Suppliers will have to do this by:

- Setting a limit on the number of tariffs they can offer
- Requiring simple, standard choices across each tariff, e.g. on whether householders want to pay by direct debit
- Removing complex two-tier tariffs

Clearer information

By **March 2014**, suppliers will be required to implement further measures to deliver more transparent information for energy consumers. Suppliers must:

- Tell householders what the cheapest deal for them would be on bills and other communications
- Give regular information on householders' energy use and their estimated annual bill, so they can easily compare quotes with their current deal
- Provide "tariff information labels" to make it easy to compare the terms and conditions of tariffs in the market on a like for like basis

- Protect householders on a fixed term contract. Householders will receive the information they need, including details of their supplier's cheapest tariff **before** their current contract ends, so that they can start shopping around.

Fair treatment

Suppliers will no longer be allowed to keep householders on a poor value 'dead tariff', e.g. a standard variable rate tariff that is no longer open to new customers. New rules will mean that householders stay on a 'dead tariff' if it is cheaper than their supplier's cheapest standard variable rate tariff. But if the 'dead tariff' is not cheaper the supplier must **switch them to their cheapest** standard variable rate.

We also want householders to have more confidence in signing up to fixed term deals and so new rules are being introduced for terms and conditions, including a ban on automatically rolling people onto another fixed term deal without their consent. When a fixed term deal comes to an end and a householder takes no action **suppliers will have to move them on to their cheapest standard variable rate**.

Suppliers have to do this for all their customers by the end of **June 2014**.

To help rebuild customer confidence, Ofgem has already introduced new rules to require suppliers to treat customers fairly if they have a query or a complaint or when sending information to their customers. Suppliers must behave and carry out any actions in a **fair, honest, transparent, appropriate** and **professional manner**. If they don't they could face fines from Ofgem.



Warm Home Discount

This Winter households could get a **£135 discount on their electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme.**

The discount won't affect a household's Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

The money isn't paid to households, it's a one-off discount on a household's electricity bill, usually between October and March.

2 million households will get help under the Warm Home Discount. Of which, over 1.2 million low income pensioners will receive the discount this winter.

Suppliers also offer discounts to low income and vulnerable people of working age.

Each supplier has their own rules about who else can get this help.

Households should check with their supplier if they meet their rules for help and how to apply for it.



Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) works alongside the Green Deal (page 12) to support energy saving improvements in vulnerable and low income households and those living in harder to treat properties, such as solid walled properties.

Affordable Warmth is a part of the ECO. Under Affordable Warmth energy suppliers may help eligible

low income and vulnerable households with installing energy efficiency improvements and heating systems. This will generally be done **free of charge**.

Householders who live in properties with solid walls anywhere in Great Britain, may be eligible to receive help from their energy supplier to make their home more energy efficient. This help may also be

available to householders living in a property with certain types of cavity walls which are harder to insulate.

Householders should contact the **Energy Saving Advice Service** or **Home Energy Scotland**, or they can check with their own electricity and gas supplier directly to see if they are eligible for the ECO.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

Households could get between **£100** and **£300** tax-free to help pay for heating bills. To be eligible for the payment for Winter 2013-2014, people had to have been born on or before 5 January 1952. Householders eligible for the payment should get the money between November and Christmas.

Householders usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if occupants get the State Pension or another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction or Child Benefit).

How can householders access it?

How much a person gets depends on their circumstances during the qualifying week. The qualifying week for Winter 2013 to 2014 was 16 to 22 September 2013.

Householders need to claim Winter Fuel Payment if they've not had it before and either of the following apply:

- Householders don't get benefits or the State Pension
- Householders only get Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, or Child Benefit

For more information call the Winter Fuel Payments helpline.

Telephone: **08459 15 15 15**
Textphone: **0845 601 5613**

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Charges to this number will vary from landline to mobile phones.

Find out about call charges www.gov.uk/call-charges



Cold Weather Payment

If people are getting certain benefits, they may be able to get a Cold Weather Payment of £25 for each seven day period of very cold weather. Certain qualifying conditions apply to be eligible.

Payments will be made when the local temperature is either recorded as, or forecast to be, an average of zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days.

The 2013 to 2014 Cold Weather Payment scheme starts on

1 November 2013. Householders will be able to check if their area is due a payment in November 2013. Householders may be able to get Cold Weather Payments if they're getting:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit

If householders are eligible to get a Cold Weather Payment, they'll be paid it automatically.

If householders don't receive a Cold Weather Payment and believe that they should, they can tell their pension centre or Jobcentre Plus office.

Switching



Switching suppliers can give householders significant bill savings. Ofgem has estimated that householders can save an average of £158 by switching to the cheapest deal on the market with their current payment method.

They could save even more if they move to paying by direct debit.

Around 98% of householders get their gas and electricity from the six largest suppliers, yet there are now 15 smaller independent suppliers operating in the market, some of which are offering **very competitive deals**.

When beginning to search for a better deal it is a good idea for householders to check their bill or annual statement for information about their existing tariff, how

much energy they use and how much they currently spend. This **information can be helpful when comparing tariffs**.

The vast majority of consumers are on standard variable rate tariffs with the six largest energy suppliers. Householders need to be aware that suppliers only need to give one month's notice before increasing the prices for these sorts of tariffs. Consumers can **protect themselves** from future price rises by opting for fixed term, fixed rate tariffs. Some companies offer tariffs that are fixed for one, two or even three years. Consumers can use price comparison sites, to help them to find a better deal and ensure they are not paying more for their energy than they need to. The price comparison service will ask for the householder's energy use, which is

on their bill and annual statement. Price comparison services are also available over the telephone. Price comparison services that are covered by the Confidence Code act independently of suppliers, so householders can be sure that when they are presented with options and prices, they have been calculated and are displayed in a **fair and independent way**. More details and a list of price comparison sites that are covered by this Code can be found at **www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/domestic-consumers/switching-your-energy-supplier/confidence-code**

And it's always worth householders checking with their current supplier whether they can get a cheaper deal with them.

Collective *switching*

Collective switching is another way of getting a better energy deal. Collective switching is when a group of people band together to negotiate a better deal with their gas and electricity suppliers. In 2013, the Ready to Switch scheme, organised by a group of Local Authorities, has saved people an average of £126 off their energy bills.

These schemes can offer people greater support and advice than if they switch supplier themselves.

The Government has funded a number of innovative projects through a **£5m Cheaper Energy Together Fund competition**.

Individual schemes are usually organised by local authorities, community and third sector organisations and are facilitated by a third party who will negotiate a tariff on their behalf.

For guidance on setting up or participating in a collective switch go to **www.gov.uk/collective-switching-and-purchasing**

The Government recognises that many householders may need additional help and advice when looking to switch suppliers. That is why we have launched the Big Energy Saving Network to identify those most in need and ensure that they are getting the best possible deal for their energy and are accessing all the help they are entitled to.

The Big Energy Saving Network is covered in more detail on page 14.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Getting a Green Deal

The Green Deal can help people to understand which **energy saving improvements** they can make to their home without having to pay all the costs up front.

- Insulation for lofts, cavities or solid walls**
- Heating systems, such as boilers**
- Draught-proofing**
- Double glazing**
- Renewable energy technologies such as solar PV or solar thermal**

These improvements can lead to warmer homes and reduced energy bills over time. [Recent research](#) shows that energy saving improvements to households could increase property values by 14% on average.

01

ADVICE AND ASSESSMENTS

Have a chat with an Assessor or Provider, who can arrange an Assessment on your behalf.

02

RECOMMENDATIONS

Your advice report sets out the Green Deal improvements and expected savings you could make.

03

PAYMENT

There are lots of ways that you can cover the cost of making Green Deal improvements to your home. Shop around for the best deal for you.

04

INSTALLATION

A Green Deal Installer can make the improvements - even if you self finance.

05

ENJOY THE BENEFITS!

Enjoy the benefits and claim Cashback - remember to apply for this before you start the work!



LINK
PAYMENT OPTIONS
TO GET THE MOST
OUT OF THE
GREEN DEAL

START
ENJOYING A
COSIER, MORE COST
EFFICIENT
HOME

GET A GREEN DEAL PLAN

PAY FOR SOME OF THE WORK THROUGH THE EXPECTED SAVINGS ON YOUR ENERGY BILLS. YOU ALSO BENEFIT FROM ADDITIONAL WARRANTIES AND GUARANTEES.

SELF FINANCE

PAY FOR SOME OR ALL OF THE WORK UPFRONT. YOU CAN STILL USE GREEN DEAL INSTALLERS AND ENJOY THE FUTURE SAVINGS ON YOUR ENERGY BILL.

EXTRA HELP

FOR HARDER TO TREAT PROPERTIES YOU MAY BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM ECO.* YOU CAN ALSO APPLY FOR CASHBACK AND OTHER INCENTIVES.**



*Energy Company Obligation, **including Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed-In Tariffs

Smart meters

What is a smart meter?

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters and provide near real time information about the amount of energy a household uses. Smart meters will bring an end to estimated billing.

As well as the meter itself, householders will also be offered an In Home Display which shows how much energy is being used in pounds and pence, and **should help households to budget better.**

Together, the In Home Display linked to a smart meter will put households **in control** and help them to **avoid wasting money and energy.**

Consumer protection

The Government is ensuring that consumer benefits and protection are at the heart of the smart meter programme.

This means:

- No sales during the installation visit
- Installers must provide energy efficiency advice as part of the visit and they will need the consumer's permission before the visit if they want to talk to them about their own products
- Protecting the privacy of individuals and putting them in control of smart meter data

Suppliers and consumer groups are working together to ensure consumers get accurate and helpful information about their smart meter.

When will households get smart meters?

Most households will have smart meters installed between 2015 and 2020, although **some energy companies are starting to install smart meters now.**

How much will it cost to get a smart meter installed?

Households will **not be charged** separately for a smart meter or for the In Home Display.

By the end of June 2013 almost 90,000 smart meters have been installed in homes across Great Britain

Little things save a lot

Lynne is a busy stay-at-home mum with 2 young children; Daniel, aged 7 and Connor, aged 2. The family home is a 3 bedroom semi-detached property built in the 1970s.

Energy cost saving achieved

£76.49

Through a series of small daily changes, Lynne has managed to reduce her energy use by 14% in just 12 months.

*"My smart meter really helped me see what appliances used most energy in our home. Not only is the smart meter **saving us money**, it's also helped us **adopt some great energy saving habits** which we are passing on to our children"*



ADVICE

Energy Saving Advice Service

The Energy Saving Advice Service is a telephone advice service (call 0300 123 1234) offering impartial energy saving advice to householders and businesses in England, Wales and Northern

Ireland. Home Energy Scotland (call 0808 808 2282) operates a similar service in Scotland.

The advice services signpost callers to a wide range of organisations

that can help install energy saving measures in their homes and reduce their fuel bills. The helplines are also supporting the **Green Deal** and **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** schemes.

BIG Energy Saving Network



The Government understands that some people will need extra help and advice to understand the choices available in the energy market. This help and advice can give them the confidence to take decisions that will reduce their bills.

The Government is working with a network of trusted partners including Citizens Advice, Age UK, the Energy Savings Trust, National Energy Action, Action for Communities in Rural England and the Community Energy Contact Group.

This Network will focus on helping consumers understand tariffs and the switching options as well as how they could benefit from energy efficiency programmes available to them.

Contact your local consumer advice organisations, for details of what is happening in your area.

Home Heat Helpline

Energy UK is the trade association for the energy industry. Energy UK's Home Heat Helpline is for people looking to get help with their energy bills, those worried about their bills or not aware of the help available to them. It also welcomes calls from carers, friends and relatives of people who may be struggling with energy bills. The service can advise on discounts and rebates, help getting insulation and help for customers

who have fallen behind with payments.

Call 0800 33 66 99 (charges to mobile phones apply) or chat to the advisers online at

www.homeheathelpline.org.uk

**H HOME HEAT
HELPLINE
0800 33 66 99**



Making a complaint to a householder's energy supplier

The **Government** is legislating to empower the energy regulator Ofgem to **require energy companies to compensate consumers** directly when things go wrong.

This is in addition to existing powers that Ofgem has to impose **hefty penalties** on energy companies for not complying with **strict licence conditions**.

To make a complaint to an energy supplier householders should follow these steps:

- ☑ **Step 1:** The householder should contact the energy supplier directly. The phone number and website will be on the energy bill.
- ☑ **Step 2:** The householder explains to the energy supplier what the problem is and what they want the company to do about it.
- ☑ **Step 3:** **Citizens Advice** consumer service can help householders through the process if they can't find the energy company's details or need support.

Householders can call **Citizens Advice** on **08454 04 05 06**

Or visit their website **www.citizensadvice.org.uk**

- ☑ **Step 4:** **Ombudsman Services Energy** can investigate if the complaint hasn't been resolved to the householder's satisfaction after 8 weeks. Or the energy company "deadlocks" the complaint (this means the energy supplier says they can do no more to resolve it) before 8 weeks are up.

Householders can call **Ombudsman Services Energy** on **0330 440 1624**

Or visit their website **www.ombudsman-services.org/energy.html**

MORE CHOICES

Renewable heat

Renewable Heat Incentive

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is an energy solution that can represent better value for money when replacing an oil or non-gas boiler.

As much as 96% of heating currently used in UK homes, businesses and industry is produced by burning fossil fuels. The Renewable Heat Incentive for householders drives people to install alternative renewable heat technologies in their homes.

The incentive pays home owners of solar thermal panels, biomass boilers and heat pumps for the renewable heat they generate themselves. The incentive is paid to the homeowner over seven years, at the following rates:

Paid over 7 years:

- ☑ **7.3p/kWh** for air source heat pumps
- ☑ **12.2p/kWh** for biomass boilers
- ☑ **18.8p/kWh** for ground source heat pumps and at least
- ☑ **19.2p/kWh** for solar thermal

People may also be able to get help with the upfront costs of the renewable heating kit under the Government's **Green Deal**.

The scheme will open in Spring 2014 and people can **act now** to install a renewable heat solution in their homes, by claiming a **Renewable Heat Premium Payment** voucher.

A detached house off-gas grid in a rural location with a heat demand of 18,000kWh/year could get:

- ☑ **£800/year** in RHI payments for generating heat with an air source heat pump
- ☑ **£2,200/year** for heat from a biomass boiler
- ☑ **£2,400/year** for heat from a ground source heat pump
- ☑ **£250/year** for heat from a typical solar thermal installation when twinned with any other heating system



Premium Payment

People can get a grant to help with the cost of installing renewable heating technologies in their homes. The grant is paid through the Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme.

RHPP grants are available for a limited time only so people are advised to **apply early**.

For example:

- ☑ **£600** for solar thermal hot water
- ☑ **Up to £2,300** for a heat pump
- ☑ **£2,000** for a biomass boiler

The RHPP grant does not have to be paid back. If the householder applies for RHI, the RHPP grant will be deducted from the RHI tariff.

Apply online to the [Energy Saving Trust](#). There is a different process for [Northern Ireland](#). Call the **Energy Saving Advisory Service** on **0300 123 1234** or **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282** to find out more.

Those who qualify for a premium payment will be sent a voucher confirming how much money they will get. The money is paid when the system is installed and certified.

Feed-In Tariffs

Feed-In Tariffs (FITs) encourage householders and others to install small-scale solar, wind, hydro, combined heat and power, or anaerobic digestion technologies. In return households receive the free electricity that is generated as well as a payment for each unit generated. Householders also receive a payment for any excess electricity that is exported to the grid.

The tariffs vary depending on:

- **The size of the system**
- **What technology is installed**
- **When the technology was installed**



Image of a solar photovoltaic (PV) installation

Customers combining Green Deal with a domestic solar PV installation

To reduce bills over the long term householders can combine both FIT income and savings from a Green Deal loan. For example, householders could benefit from **net savings of £5,835** if they were to take up both a Green Deal loan and FITs. The calculation for this example is detailed below.

Calculation:

- A householder would pay **£8,865** in upfront payment and Green Deal loan repayments over 20 years
- A householder would get **£14,700** in expected savings on electricity and Feed-In Tariff income* over 20 years
- **Over 20 years, installing a solar PV installation with a Green Deal loan could save a householder £5,835**

The above calculation is an illustrative example only. For further information householders can go to www.gov.uk/feed-in-tariffs or go to an accredited Green Deal assessor.

*FITs rates as at September 2013. Latest rates can be found on Ofgem's website www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/feed-tariff-fit-scheme/tariff-tables

Community benefits

If your community hosts large-scale energy generation, such as an onshore windfarm, people might be eligible to receive a range of benefits.

The eligibility and nature of the community benefits varies from one technology to another. Eligibility can be established by contacting the organisation that owns the infrastructure.

At a scheme run by Renewable Energy Systems at their Meikle Carewe windfarm near Aberdeen, local residents will receive **£122** off their annual electricity bills.



Community energy ownership

The Government wants local householders and businesses to come together to make their energy choices.

Community energy projects are already making a difference across the country, reconnecting communities to the energy they use. They can **unlock community investment** and help to **bring communities together** to understand and take control of their energy use.

Community energy projects include:

- Community-owned renewable electricity installations
- Members of the community jointly switching to a **renewable heat** source
- A community group supporting energy saving measures which can be funded wholly or partly by the **Green Deal**
- A community trialing **smart meters** to improve awareness of energy use

More information on how to set up a community energy project can be found on www.gov.uk/community-energy

The **Repowering London solar project in Brixton** has installed several hundred square metres of solar panels on six blocks in the Loughborough Estate providing work placement opportunities for local young and unemployed people from the estate.

Profit generated by the scheme is reinvested via a community energy efficiency fund for the direct benefit of the local community.

Independent report shows community owned energy could grow 89 times its current size

New research, *Community Renewables Economy: Starting up, scaling up and spinning out*, argues that community owned energy could generate **£30million** a year in tax revenue for local councils,

and drive down high energy bills by increasing competition in the energy market.

The report suggests how communities and local businesses

can navigate the planning system and form local partnerships to take a more active role in managing their own local energy ownership projects.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Top tips for staying warm this winter

- ✓ If you, a relative or neighbour are worried about staying warm this winter, you can get help and advice on how you could benefit for support for heating and insulation measures. **Call the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 or Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282.**
- ✓ If you are experiencing difficulties paying your gas and/or electricity bills or want more help and advice about paying energy bills, call the **Home Heat Helpline on 0800 336699.**
- ✓ You should be aware there are rules agreed by energy suppliers not to disconnect vulnerable customers for getting into debt over the winter.
- ✓ People aged 60 or over, disabled people or those who suffer from a chronic illness, are entitled to a range of services, by signing up for free to their energy supplier's Priority Service Register. Details of how to join can be found on the reverse side of your bills.
- ✓ Heat your home to the right temperature: your living room should be 21°C (70°F), and your bedroom and the rest of the house heated to 18°C (65°F). If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and your bedroom just before you go to bed.
- ✓ Check on older neighbours or relatives to make sure they're safe and well. Make sure they're warm enough, especially at night, and have stocks of food and medicines so they don't need to go out during very cold weather. If you're worried about a relative or an elderly neighbour, contact your local council or ring **Age UK Advice on 0800 169 6565.**

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