

Consumer awareness of net-zero and experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier in June, we [published a report](#) about research that we undertook with Social Market Research that asked NI consumers' their views on climate change, net-zero carbon, and their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research showed 64% of consumers were concerned about climate change, and that 59% of consumers were currently trying to reduce their own carbon emissions.

In terms of Covid-19, 31% of consumers said they were struggling to pay their energy bills because of the pandemic. We have published [further information](#) about Covid-19 support measures for energy consumers.

Launch of review on electricity network tariffs

On 28 June, we launched [a call for evidence](#) about electricity distribution tariffs and how they should be structured as we move towards a net-zero carbon future.

The consultation on our call for evidence closes on 16 August.



Welcome to our first newsletter.

This newsletter is designed to be a monthly update about our work and key developments in the electricity, gas, and water industries in Northern Ireland.

We would be delighted to hear any feedback you have in regards to our newsletter, and any issues you would like to see covered in future issues - Contact us on info@uregni.gov.uk

All the best,
John French
Chief Executive



Annual Report 2020/2021 published

We have now published our [Annual Report 2020/2021](#). The report provides an overview of our work and performance over the last year.



Business consumers urged to switch and save money

We recently carried out research with 500 business consumers on their experience of Northern Ireland's energy market. This showed that only 37% of those surveyed have switched electricity supplier in the last five years and only 31% have switched gas supplier.

We have therefore teamed up with the Consumer Council and their price comparison tool to show business the savings that can be made by switching supplier. [Our research has been published](#) on our website.

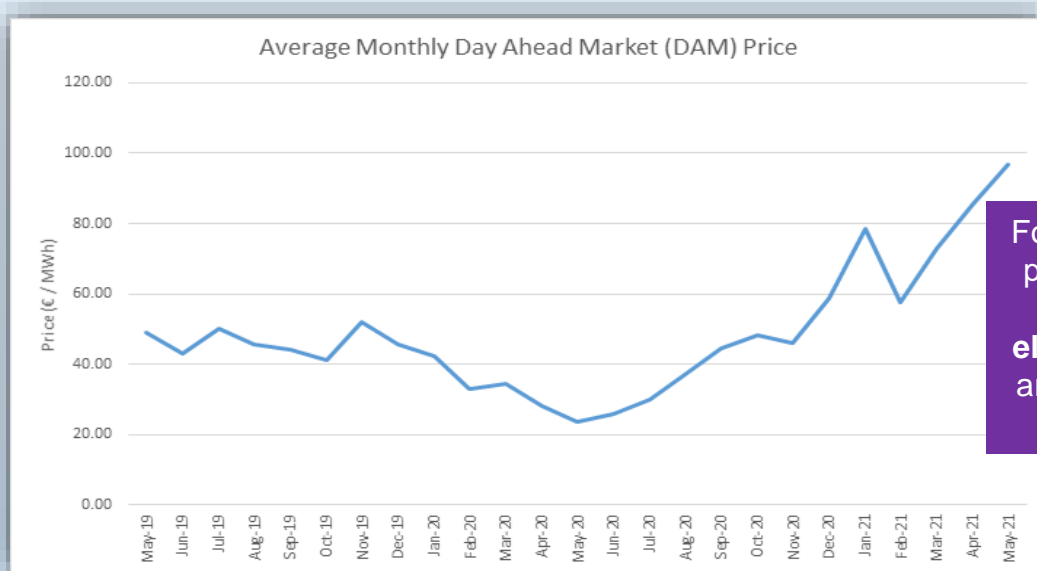
Wholesale electricity and gas price trends

Since the start of 2021, wholesale electricity and gas prices have remained high. Electricity wholesale prices in Quarter 1 (January to March) 2021 were 91.83% higher compared to the same period last year.

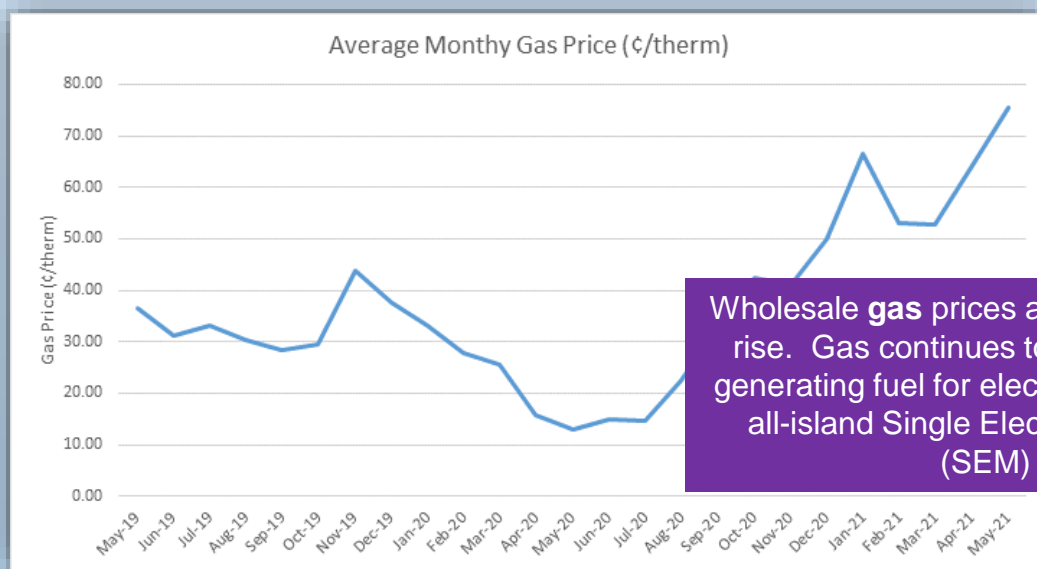
Higher electricity prices have been due to increased gas prices and carbon costs, coupled with lower forecasted wind on the system and several generating units being unavailable.

The average monthly day ahead price for May increased by 13% from April for wholesale electricity, and 18% for wholesale gas.

Roughly, wholesale electricity makes up 53% of a final domestic electricity bill, and wholesale gas makes up 50% of a final domestic gas bill.



Following a dip in prices last year, wholesale electricity prices are continuing to rise steeply



Wholesale gas prices are continuing to rise. Gas continues to be the major generating fuel for electricity within the all-island Single Electricity Market (SEM)

In light of the significant increases in the wholesale market, we would encourage domestic and business consumers to consider whether they are on the best tariff for their gas and electricity supply. The Consumer Council provides [an independent price comparison tool](#) on their website for both domestic and electricity customers.

[Further information](#) on the support available to energy customers is available from NI Direct and within the [consumer protection section](#) of our website.

£2.1 billion capital investment for water and sewerage services

In May 2021, we published our [final determination](#) in relation to Northern Ireland Water's price control (PC21). This covers a six-year period from 2021-2027. The determination allows NI Water to invest £2.1 billion in capital programmes which will begin to address the lack of capacity in wastewater systems and development constraints in nearly 50 areas across Northern Ireland.

In addition, we determined lower costs for financing investment which will save consumers £135 million, and operational efficiency improvements which should save consumers a further £62 million over the six years of the price control.



Help for consumers

Please click on the links for further details:

- [Electricity, gas and water companies contact information](#)
- [How to complain](#)
- [Getting the best price](#)
- [Customer Care Registers](#)
- [Covid-19/Debt advice](#)

- **Energy Efficiency Advice:**
The NI Energy Advice Line Service managed by the NI Housing Executive, offers free comprehensive advice and support on how to save energy in the home and on assistance available.

Consumers can call 0800 111 44 55 during office hours.

Consultations/News Update

During June we have released the following consultations and updates.

Please click on the links for further details:

- [Consumer research published on the energy transition](#)
- [Call for Evidence launched on electricity distribution tariff reform](#)
- [Revocation of licence to generate electricity granted to Belfast Power Limited](#)
- [Consultation on proposed electricity generation licence for Craiggore Energy Limited](#)
- [Consultation on proposed electricity generation licence for Evishagaran Wind Farm Limited](#)

Job opportunities

As an economic regulator, our role is to enable, incentivise, and hold electricity, gas, and water companies to account for providing the best levels of service to consumers in Northern Ireland.

Details about [job opportunities](#) within the Utility Regulator are on our website.

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