

# Advice and support for energy consumers in Northern Ireland

**April 2022**



## If you are worried about paying for your electricity or gas, please contact your supplier as soon as possible.

- Suppliers will work with you to agree a repayment plan if you have fallen behind with your energy bills.
- If you already have a repayment plan, suppliers can review this for you if you are struggling to keep up with the payments.
- If you use a prepayment meter and have a repayment plan in place to clear your debt, suppliers can review the amount of debt that is taken off each top-up you make so this is affordable for you.

## How can I find out who my electricity or gas supplier is and how to contact them?

- For electricity, if you have your meter point number (known as an MPRN a 17 digit number) you can [contact NIE Networks](#) to check who your supplier is. You can find your MPRN number on your electricity bill.
- Gas is slightly different and your supplier will depend on the area you live in. If you live in the Greater Belfast area, your supplier will either be [SSE Airtricity Gas Supply](#) or [firmus energy](#). If you live in the Ten Towns area<sup>1</sup>, your gas supplier is [firmus energy](#) and in the West of Northern Ireland, your supplier will be [SSE Airtricity Gas Supply](#).
- You can find [a full list of all the electricity and gas suppliers on our website](#) including contact numbers and email addresses.

## What other support is available?

- You can check if you are eligible for support from the government
  1. **[Winter Fuel Payment](#)**: If you were born on or before 26 September 1955 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. You will usually get this automatically if you are eligible and get State Pension or another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Child Benefit or Universal Credit). If you are eligible but don't get paid automatically, you will need to make a claim.
  2. **[Cold weather payment](#)**: If you're receiving certain benefits, you could qualify for extra money for each week there is very cold weather in your area.
  3. **[Fuel Direct Scheme](#)**: You can have some of your bills (including rent, services charges, fuel or water bills) paid directly out of your benefits payments if you're having difficulties (this is also known as 'third party deductions'). You can find more information on the [NI direct website](#). If you receive Pension credit, contact the [pension centre](#) for more information.
- You can get free and independent debt advice from:
  1. [Advice NI](#).
  2. [Money Helper](#), which is run by Money and Pensions Service.
  3. [Christians Against Poverty](#).

<sup>1</sup> This covers Derry/Londonderry, Limavady, Coleraine, Portstewart, Bushmills, Ballymoney, Ballymena, Broughshane, Antrim, Ballyclare, Templepatrick, Craigavon, Portadown, Lurgan, Banbridge, Newry, Warrenpoint, Armagh, Tandragee and more than 25 other towns and villages in the surrounding area.

## Other tips

- Contact your supplier and check if you are on the cheapest tariff available to you.
- Paying by direct debit may also be cheaper if it is suitable for you – please contact your supplier for advice on this.
- You might also be able to save money by switching your supplier. The Consumer Council have a free [switching tool](#) that you can use.
- Contact your supplier to check if you are eligible for their Customer Care Register. If you are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick you are able to benefit from some additional services.
- Use the [NI Direct benefits checker](#) as a guide to the benefits available to you.

## Where can I get advice on how to save energy in my home

- Contact your energy supplier who will give you information and advice on how to use your electricity or gas more efficiently.
- Energy advice is also available on the [NI Direct government website](#).
- The Consumer Council's [Switch On leaflet](#) contains also has useful information on efficiency information.
- You can also contact [NI Energy Advice](#) who offer free independent and impartial energy advice, including advice about energy grants/

schemes and other sources of help. For example, [The Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme](#) (NISEP) provides help to install energy saving measures in your home. This can include energy-efficient boilers, heating controls, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation. The [Affordable Warmth Scheme](#) also provides support for energy efficiency measures and a [Boiler Replacement Scheme](#) is also available.

## Energy payment support scheme

- The energy payment support scheme was put in place to support those most affected by rising energy prices.
- A one-off payment of £200 was made to those who were eligible. If you did not receive payment by 28 March 2022 and think we were eligible, please contact the relevant benefits office found on [NI Direct](#).

## Useful links

- [Unclaimed benefits? Make the call](#)
- [Universal Credit Contingency Fund short-term living expenses grant](#)
- [Discretionary Support](#)
- [Contacting 08 and 03 numbers](#)

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