

Small Business Energy Charter – FAQs

1. Who are the commitments in the charter applicable to?

The commitments in the charter are applicable to all small business consumers. A small business consumer is defined as one whose gas consumption is less than 73.2 MWh per annum and whose electricity consumption is less than 50 MWh per annum.

Licence	Term	Definition
Northern Ireland Gas Supply	small business consumers	A business consumer who is supplied with gas and consumes less than 73.2 MWh per annum based on the Annual Quantity of the supply meter point as defined in the Network Code. This does not include a business consumer who is a single legal entity with more than one premises where the total gas consumption of those premises is more than 73.2 MWh per annum.
Northern Ireland Electricity Supply	small business customers	A non-domestic customer who is supplied with electricity and consumes less than 50 MWh per annum based on its most recent previous actual 12 months consumption or, where such data is not available, the estimated consumption used for customer billing or the Actual or Estimated Usage Factor. This does not include a non-domestic customer who is a single legal entity with more than one premises where the total electricity consumption of those premises is more than 50 MWh per annum.

2. Can I discuss contract renewal options in the middle of a contract?

Options available to you will depend on the terms and conditions of your contract, and your supplier can discuss these with you. If you are struggling within a contract, it's important to let your supplier know so that they can provide you with suitable advice.

3. What are the alternative options to disconnection?

It is important to engage with your supplier as early as possible when experiencing affordability or debt issues, to allow them to provide support and advice.

Suppliers may be able to offer repayment plans and can discuss alternative contracts and tariff types (where a change can be facilitated contractually). They can also signpost you to other third-party support services and provide practical advice on energy efficiency measures that could help you to reduce your energy bills.

4. Why are the commitments in the Small Business Energy Charter voluntary?

The aim of the charter is to provide enhanced protections to consumers during the winter (between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026).

Voluntary commitments allow us to review and be responsive to consumer needs each year and to implement these changes quickly. Mandatory commitments would have put this flexibility at risk. This is because mandatory measures are implemented via changes to the supplier licences and this can only take place after a lengthy consultation process.

5. What will be done to make sure suppliers honour their commitments?

Since suppliers have made a voluntary commitment to the charter, there is every reason to believe they will act in accordance with it. Utility Regulator will nevertheless monitor supplier behaviour to ensure they honour the commitments they have made and will remain in touch with them during the charter period. We will also meet with suppliers at the end of this period to discuss the impact of the charter on consumers.

6. What should consumers do if they need any help or support?

You should contact your supplier directly if you need help or support. All the information that you need should be on your supplier's website and this might be the quickest way to get the information that you require.

We want to encourage consumers to talk to their supplier if they are concerned about paying their bills. If you are worried that you cannot afford to make a payment, get in touch as soon as possible. Your electricity and gas supplier will treat you with empathy and respect and will consider reasonable repayment plan options. All suppliers have trained staff who are happy to help. Whether you're worried about paying your bills, or you are in debt to your energy supplier already, if you engage with your supplier they will work with you.

Useful information is also available on the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland's website or Advice NI's website. If you are unable to access the

information you need through your supplier's website, you should contact your supplier directly via telephone.