

Domestic Consumer Energy Charter

Utility
Regulator



This winter, electricity and gas suppliers in Northern Ireland have committed to providing extra support for people who are struggling to pay their bills.

If you are concerned that you cannot afford to make a payment, get in touch with your energy supplier as soon as possible. Your electricity and gas supplier will treat you with empathy and respect and will work with you to create a payment plan which suits you. 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, talk to your supplier and they will work with you.

Between 1 November 2026 and 31 March 2027, suppliers have voluntarily committed to supporting you in the following ways

- 1** We will make a financial contribution to a third-party hardship fund to support consumers struggling to pay their bills.
- 2** If you are struggling to pay your bills, or if you make us aware that you are struggling to top up your prepayment meter as a result of payment difficulties, we will offer to refer you to a consumer body who can provide you with additional support, such as debt advice or a benefits entitlement check.
- 3** When you contact us about difficulties paying your bills, we will talk to you about your tariff options, including which ones might suit your needs best.
- 4** If you are new to repaying debt through a prepayment meter, we will not put you on a repayment rate of more than 20%, unless you ask us to. If you are already on the maximum repayment rate of 40%, we will check in and see if you would like to move to a lower rate.
- 5** We will provide you with enhanced aftercare if you are moved onto a prepayment meter to recover debt. This will include checking in with you to make sure that your debt repayment plan is manageable.
- 6** If you are on an electricity or gas suppliers' customer care register, we will not move you onto a prepayment meter, unless you ask us to. We will take time to explain why this may or may not suit you.
- 7** If you are in debt, we will not move you onto a prepayment meter without your consent between 1 December 2026 and 31 January 2027.

All year round your supplier will support you in the following ways

- As long as you are willing to work with us and keeping in touch, we will not disconnect you for debt.
- If you are in debt, we will work with you to discuss your options, including putting in place a repayment plan tailored to you. This would be based on what you can afford to pay, taking into account your individual circumstances and using a repayment method that suits you.
- We understand that your circumstances might change after you have set up a repayment plan. We will continue to assess your ability to pay if you are in debt and, if appropriate, will look at options such as reducing your repayment rate and/or giving you more time to repay your debt.
- We will provide you with practical advice on energy efficiency measures, that could help you save money on your energy bills.
- We will make you aware of the additional support available through our customer care registers and how to be added to these registers if eligible.



For advice and information on how you can save money on your energy bills, please visit Consumer Council for Northern Ireland's electricity, oil and gas information page [Electricity, oil and gas | Consumer Council](#)



For free, independent and confidential advice on Benefits, Personal & Business Debt, HMRC products & services, freephone: 0800 915 4604 email: advice@adviceni.net webchat: www.adviceni.net

make the call

Contact the Make the Call service to check if you are getting all the benefits, services and supports you're entitled to.

To contact Make the Call: You can phone 0800 232 1271; or Text ADVICE to 079 8440 5248 or alternatively, you can email makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk