

This winter, electricity and gas suppliers in Northern Ireland have committed to providing extra support for Small Business Consumers.

We want Small Business Consumers to feel more confident and informed when making decisions about their energy. Whether you are comparing tariffs, renewing your contract, needing advice, or experiencing affordability difficulties, there is support available to help you make informed choices.

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

- 1 Electricity and gas suppliers will make a financial contribution to a third-party hardship fund to support customers struggling to pay their bills.
- 2 Electricity and gas suppliers will engage with consumers who are in payment arrears. As a minimum, they will remain open to discussions and engagement around the consumer's individual circumstances and consider reasonable repayment plan options. Suppliers will also be open to engaging with consumers to discuss contract renewal and tariff options that may be available (where such changes can be facilitated contractually).
- 3 Prior to issuing any letters referencing disconnection, electricity and gas suppliers will use best endeavours to engage with consumers in debt to discuss alternative options.
- 4 Electricity and gas suppliers will ensure that correspondence issued to consumers, particularly in relation to debt, is written in a manner that is encouraging, enabling engagement and demonstrating an openness to providing assistance and advice.
- 5 Electricity and gas suppliers will have a specialised individual or team lead acting as a key contact for third sector, advice bodies, consumer bodies and the Utility Regulator.
- 6 Electricity and gas suppliers will have processes in place to provide consumers who are experiencing affordability difficulties with their energy bills or are in need of additional support with relevant information and support including signposting to relevant advice-giving organisations.
- 7 During their interactions with consumers in payment difficulties, electricity and gas suppliers will provide practical advice to consumers on energy efficiency measures that could help reduce their energy bills.
- 8 Electricity and gas suppliers will develop and maintain an accessible, regularly updated FAQ section on their websites specifically aimed at Small Business Consumers. This section will address common concerns around billing, tariffs, debt support, and contract terms.
- 9 Electricity and gas suppliers will ensure that relevant key staff, including customer service and account management personnel, are kept up to date through training on the specific challenges faced by small businesses experiencing affordability difficulties.

In addition to these voluntary commitments, the following sources of advice and guidance are available to help businesses make informed decisions about their energy arrangements

- Gas and electricity suppliers now publish their tariff rates for small businesses on their websites, so you can compare what deals are available and make more informed choices about your energy contract.
- If you use, or are thinking about using, an energy broker or Third Party Intermediary (TPI), please visit our [website](#) for advice and guidance to help you work with TPIs confidently.
- If you are struggling to pay your energy bills or experiencing debt difficulties, you should contact your supplier directly for help or support. Advice NI can also provide free business debt advice and information. Visit Advice NI's [website](#).
- If you have an issue with your energy supplier, contact them first so they have the opportunity to resolve it. If your complaint remains unresolved, or you are not satisfied with their response, the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland may be able to help. Visit the Consumer Council's [website](#) or call 0800 121 6022.



For advice and information for small and micro-businesses in Northern Ireland, including energy advice, please visit Consumer Council for Northern Ireland's webpage below:

[How we can help businesses | Consumer Council](#)



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