

Open Electric

Background

- The Utility Regulator has revoked the electricity supply licence of Open Electric so the company can no longer supply electricity to customers in Northern Ireland.
- Customers of Open Electric will continue to receive a supply of electricity and will not experience any disruption to their electricity. These customers have been transferred to Power NI which is the price regulated supplier in Northern Ireland. Therefore, these customers will be put on a tariff approved by the Utility Regulator.
- This process, referred to as the 'supplier of last resort', has been tried and tested to ensure readiness by all parties involved. The process has been developed by the Utility Regulator, Power NI and NIE Networks to ensure that no customer is left without a supply of electricity due to a supply company ceasing to operate in Northern Ireland.
- Customers who pay when they receive a bill, or those that pay by direct debit, do not have to do anything further at present. However, they will need to contact Power NI to set-up their preferred payment option as bank details have not been passed on.
- Customers who use a pay as you go (Keypad) meter, will need to follow a few steps in order to transfer their meter to Power NI. To do this, please contact Power NI on the freephone number 0800 011 3435 or visit their website www.powerni.co.uk for further information on the steps involved.
- Power NI will shortly be in contact with all customers transferred.

Q&As

1. What has happened?

The electricity supply company known as Open Electric has ceased supplying customers in Northern Ireland as the Utility Regulator has revoked its electricity supply licence.

There is an established and tested system in place to transfer the customers of Open Electric to Power NI, the nominated replacement supplier for this process. Power NI is the price regulated electricity supplier in Northern Ireland, which means the Utility Regulator approves the maximum tariff they can charge their domestic customers.

A plan was developed some time ago, by the Utility Regulator, Power NI and NIE Networks to ensure that no customer would be left without a supply of electricity if a supplier ceased operating in Northern Ireland.

Electricity will continue to be supplied to customers of Open Electric.

2. Who is affected?

Only those customers who, up to Saturday 17 December 2016, received an electricity supply from Open Electric are affected by this event. This includes both domestic and commercial customers.

3. When will changes be operational?

Customers have been automatically switched from Open Electric to Power NI as of Sunday 18 December 2016. This ensures no disruption in electricity supply for customers.

4. Will customer's electricity supply be affected?

No, there will be no disruption to any customer's electricity supply. Customers who use pay as you go meters will need to follow a few steps to ensure that their meter transfers to Power NI. Following this, they will be able to top up with Power NI by various methods. For details on how to do this, please contact Power NI on 0800 0113435 or visit their website www.powerni.co.uk.

5. Will customer's bills be affected?

All of Open Electric's domestic customers will now pay Power NI's tariff. You will find specific information on their tariffs on their website www.powerni.co.uk or by calling 0800 011 3435. The business customers transferred will pay the same tariff that Power NI's existing business customers pay. We regulate the prices that Power NI charge to domestic and small business customers, therefore these customers can be assured that the price they pay reflects the actual costs of supplying electricity to their home or business.

Customers who pay when they receive a bill or pay by direct debit will receive their next bill from Power NI, rather than from Open Electric.

Customers who use a pay as you go meter, will now top-up with Power NI. Before a top-up can happen, these customers need to follow a few steps to change their meter to Power NI. For details on how to do this, please phone Power NI on 0800 011 3435 or visit their website www.powerni.co.uk.

6. What do affected customers need to do?

Regardless of how you pay for your electricity, Power NI will shortly send out a transfer pack to all transferred customers. NIE Networks, who read the meters for all electricity suppliers, will provide an estimated meter reading to Power NI for all transferred customers.

- **Customers who pay by direct debit or pay when they receive a bill**

For those domestic and business customers who pay for their electricity when they receive a bill or pay by direct debit, there will be no change required to your meter and you have automatically been transferred to Power NI. If you paid by direct debit to Open Electric, you will need to set-up a new direct debit with Power NI as your bank details have not been transferred. Within the transfer pack, you'll find details on setting up direct debit payments and the discount payment schemes that Power NI offer. You can also phone Power NI on 0800 011 3435 to set-up a direct debit.

- Customers who use a pay as you go meter

Any credit that you have on your meter will remain there. However, the top-up card you have for Open Electric will no longer work and you must follow a few steps to transfer your meter, and any credit, to Power NI. For details on how to do this, please phone Power NI on 0800 011 3435 or visit their website www.powerni.co.uk.

7. Can affected customers switch from Power NI?

Customers of Open Electric have been switched to Power NI to ensure there is no disruption to their electricity supply. 20 working days after transferring to Power NI, customers will be able to switch to a different electricity supplier if they choose to do so. If you would like further information on switching supplier, you can go to the Consumer Council's website where you will find their energy price comparison tool – <http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/energy/electricity-gas-price-comparison/>

8. What if I have credit on my pay as you go meter?

Any credit on your pay as you go meter will remain. Once you have completed the transfer process to Power NI, your existing credit will be displayed. The only difference is that you now pay Power NI's rates from the time you transferred over to Power NI.

9. What if I have credit on my account or paid a security deposit?

On this occasion, the Utility Regulator will endeavour to ensure that security deposits and credit that customers had with Open Electric, are returned to them, if logistically possible. We are working through the logistics of this, which may take some time to arrange.

10. What happens if I was in debt to Open Electric?

Your debt will not be transferred to Power NI and is a matter for Open Electric's Administrator.