

**citizens
advice**

**Rotherham
& District**

Your Energy Support Handbook

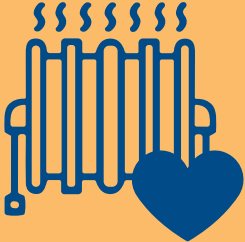




Contents Page



Here to help
you stay warm
and well



We know energy costs can feel overwhelming, especially when money is already tight.

This handbook has been created to give you simple advice, practical tips and information about support that may be available to help you manage your energy bills and stay warm.

- 03** Understanding energy costs
- 04** Tariffs explained
- 05** Direct debt vs Repayment
- 06** Smart Meters
- 07** Energy saving tips
- 08** Quick Household Savings
- 09** Help from your supplier
- 10** Priority Services Register
- 11** Support Schemes
- 12** Water Bills
- 13** Income Maximisation
- 14** Carbon Monoxide
- 15** Supplier Contact Numbers



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For telephone advice, please call
0808 278 7911
www.citizensadvicerotherham.org.uk

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Understanding Your Energy Bills



Did you know?
Heating and hot water make up over half of most household energy bills



What are kWh?

Energy is measured in units known as kilowatt hours (kWh). Your energy supplier uses these units to work out how much gas and electricity you've used and how much your bill will cost



What is the Energy Price Cap?

Every three months, Ofgem sets an energy price cap. This limits the amount suppliers can charge for each unit of gas and electricity on standard variable tariffs.



The price cap does **not** limit your total bill



It **only** limits the price per unit and standing charges



If you are on a fixed tariff, your prices may be different



Average Energy Use

Ofgem estimates that a typical household uses:



Electricity

2,700 kWh per year



Gas

11,500 kWh per year



Different Types of Heating

Not all homes use gas heating.

Some households:



rely fully on electricity



use storage heaters



use alternative fuels such as:



oil, LPG, coal, solid fuel heating

What makes up your bill?

- ✓ **Standing Charge**
A fixed daily cost for having an energy supply.
- ✓ **Unit Rate**
The amount you pay for the energy you actually use.
- ✓ **VAT**
Energy bills include 5% VAT.

Check out NEA's Home Energy Checklist:

www.nea.org.uk



Quick Tips



Switch off lights when not in use



Lower your thermostat by 1 degree



Use appliances efficiently



Take shorter showers



Small changes can still make a difference over time



Tariffs

Explained Simply



Did you know?

Most households are automatically moved onto Standard Variable when a fixed deal ends.



Your tariff is the way your energy supplier charges you for gas and electricity.



how much you pay



how often prices change



and how you pay your bill



Fixed Tariff

Your unit prices stay the same for a set period of time.

- ✓ Prices won't increase during your contract
- ✓ Easier to budget
- ✗ You may miss cheaper prices if rates fall
- ✗ Leaving early may involve fees



Standard Variable Tariff

Your prices can go up or down depending on the energy market.

- ✓ Flexible
- ✓ No long contract
- ✗ Prices can increase



Prepayment Meter

You pay for energy before you use it by topping up a card or key.

- ✓ Helps some people budget
- ✓ No unexpected bills
- ✗ Can sometimes be more expensive
- ✗ Risk of self-disconnection if credit runs out



Economy 7

You get cheaper electricity at night and higher prices during the day.

May suit:

- ✓ Storage heaters
- ✓ People using energy overnight

May not suit:

- ✗ Daytime energy use



Quick Tip

Compare your energy bills with the UK average to see if you could save money or benefit from extra support.

www.moneyhelper.org.uk



Direct Debit vs Prepayment



Direct Debit

You pay for your energy by monthly payments. This amount is usually taken from your bank account by direct debit

- Spreads the cost over the year
- Convenient automatic payments
- Helps you budget
- No need to top up in advance

- Payments continue even if you use less
- You may build up debt if payments are missed
- Estimated bills may be higher than actual use

People who prefer convenience and like to spread the cost of energy.



HOW IT WORKS



GOOD POINTS



THINGS TO CONSIDER



BEST FOR



Prepayment Meter

You pay for your energy in advance. You top up using a key, card, app or at a shop

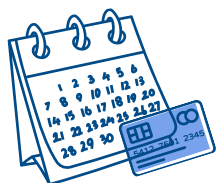
- You pay as you go
- Helps you keep in control
- No bills - you know what you're spending
- No credit checks

- Need to top up regularly
- Can be more expensive per unit
- If you run out, your energy will stop

People who want to keep in control and pay as they go.

Quick Tip

If you're struggling with energy costs, contact your supplier as early as possible. Support may be available.



Did you know?

Many suppliers now offer smart prepayment meters that can be topped up online or through an app.



Smart Meters



Did you know?

Smart meters can help spot unusual energy use, which may help identify appliances that are expensive to run.



What is a Smart Meter?

A smart meter is a digital gas or electricity meter that automatically sends meter readings to your energy supplier.

This means:

- no more estimated bills
- no need to manually submit meter readings
- you can better understand how much energy you are using



How Do They Work?

Smart meters come with an in-home display screen which shows:

- how much energy being used
- how much it is costing
- real-time energy use



Benefits of Smart Meters

- ✓ Accurate bills
- ✓ Easier budgeting
- ✓ Better understanding of energy use
- ✓ Some prepayment meters can be topped up online



Things to Know

- Smart meters do not automatically reduce your bills
- You do not have to use the in-home display
- If your signal is poor, some features may not work
- You can still switch suppliers with a smart meter

Common Concerns



"Will my supplier turn my energy off remotely?"

Energy suppliers cannot disconnect your energy supply without following strict rules and processes.



"Do smart meters cost money?"

Smart meters are installed at no upfront cost to households.



"Do I have to get one?"

In most cases, smart meters are optional and you can discuss this with your supplier.

Check out how to read your smart meter here **CLICK**

Before agreeing to a smart meter installation, ask your supplier:



whether your meter will work properly in your area



what happens if you switch supplier



whether your in-home display is included



how to use the display to monitor your energy use



Simple Energy Saving Tips



Did you know?
Turning appliances fully off instead of leaving them on standby could save money over time.

Small changes can make a big difference over time



Heating

- ✓ Learn how your heating controls work
- ✓ Use timers to match your routine
- ✓ Keep your home between 18°C–21°C
- ✓ Lower your boiler flow temperature if suitable
- ✓ Avoid using plug-in heaters where possible
- ✓ Install radiator reflector panels
- ✓ Turn heating off when you're out



Lighting

- ✓ Turn lights off when leaving a room
- ✓ Switch to LED bulbs
- ✓ Make the most of natural daylight
- ✓ Close curtains at night to keep heat in
- ✓ Consider motion-sensor lights

 LED bulbs use less energy and last longer.



Kitchen

- ✓ Use air fryers or microwaves where possible
- ✓ Slow cookers can be cheaper to run than ovens
- ✓ Only boil the water you need
- ✓ Keep oven doors closed while cooking
- ✓ Use lids on pans
- ✓ Cut food smaller to reduce cooking time



Appliances

- ✓ Switch appliances off at the wall
- ✓ Avoid leaving items on standby
- ✓ Wash clothes at 30°C or eco mode
- ✓ Choose energy efficient appliances where possible
- ✓ Dry clothes outside or on an airer if you can

 Standby appliances still use electricity.



Water

- ✓ Take shorter showers
- ✓ Use a low-flow shower head
- ✓ Don't leave immersion heaters on constantly
- ✓ Insulate your hot water tank

 Hot water can make up a large part of energy bills.



Insulation

- ✓ Use draught excluders around doors and windows
- ✓ Close gaps letting cold air in
- ✓ Use thick or thermal curtains
- ✓ Loft insulation can help reduce heat loss

 Around 25% of heat can be lost through the roof.

Quick Tip

Recommended temperatures for a healthy home are between 18°C and 21°C.

Your room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves allow you to set appropriate temperatures for every room in your home.

Check out NEA's Energy Saving Tips:

www.nea.org.uk





Quick Household Savings

Small changes can save pounds

<u>TIP</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>YOU COULD SAVE</u>
Switch off standby	Turn appliances off at the wall instead of leaving them on standby.	£45/yr
Turn off lights	Switch lights off when you leave a room.	£7/yr
Only boil what you need	Avoid overfilling the kettle and only boil the water you need.	£29/yr
Wash clothes at 30°C	Lower temperature washes use less energy.	£24/yr
Avoid the tumble dryer	Dry clothes outside when possible or in a well-ventilated room.	£50/yr
Fill your dishwasher	Only run your dishwasher when it's full to save water and energy.	£12/yr
Use your heating controls	Turning your heating down by just 1°C could help reduce costs.	£105/yr
Keep showers shorter	Reducing shower time to 4 minutes can cut water and energy use.	£55/yr
Draught-proof your home	Seal gaps around doors, windows and floors to keep heat in.	£80/yr
Insulate your hot water cylinder	A cylinder jacket helps keep water hotter for longer.	£40/yr

These small changes could save up to £447 a year

Check out more energy saving tips here:

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Savings are estimated averages and may vary depending on household usage and energy prices.



Help Available From Your Energy Supplier



Support available can vary between suppliers, but may include:



Affordable repayment plans



Emergency credit for prepayment meters



Hardship funds and grants



Help with meter problems



Accessible bills and communication support



Temporary payment support

Contact your energy supplier

If you are worried about paying your bills, contact your supplier as early as possible. The sooner you ask for help, the more support options may be available.

Quick Tip

Keep hold of letters, bills and meter readings. This can help if you need support or want to challenge a bill.





Priority Services Register



Did you know?

You can ask to join the PSR even if your situation is temporary, for example during illness or recovery after treatment.



What is the Priority Services Register?

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free service offered by energy suppliers to help people who may need extra support.

You may be eligible if you:

- ➔ Are over pension age
- ➔ Have a disability or long-term health condition
- ➔ Have young children
- ➔ Need medical equipment powered by electricity
- ➔ Need extra support during power cuts or emergencies



What support can the PSR provide?

Depending on your situation, support may include:

- ✓ Advance notice of planned power cuts
- ✓ Priority support during emergencies
- ✓ Meter readings if you struggle to access your meter
- ✓ Bills in large print or alternative formats
- ✓ Extra help communicating with your supplier
- ✓ Nominee support for bills and account management

Free to join
it won't cost
you anything

Doesn't affect
your bills
Being on PSR
won't change
what you pay

Added through
your supplier
You can join
through your
energy supplier

Different suppliers,
different support
The support
offered may vary
between suppliers.



Contact your
supplier
to register



Read more here
www.citizensadvice.org.uk





Support Schemes & Grants



Did you know?
There may be extra help available if you are older have a disability have children or are on a low income

There are a range of schemes and grants that can help with energy costs. Some are paid automatically, while others you may need to apply for. You do not need to be in debt to get support.



Winter Support

Help with heating costs during colder months.



Winter Fuel Payment

A payment from the government to help with heating costs in winter. Usually paid automatically to those who are eligible.



Cold Weather Payment

Extra payments when the temperature drops below zero for 7 days in a row in your area.



Warm Home Discount

A one-off discount on your electricity bill. You may get this automatically if you are eligible.



Emergency Support

Short-term help if you're in crisis.



Fuel Vouchers

Local organisations may be able to provide fuel vouchers or supermarket vouchers in an emergency.



Emergency Credit

If you are a prepayment customer, you may be able to get emergency credit from your supplier.



Local Crisis Schemes

Charities and local projects may offer one-off payments or support with energy costs.



Supplier Help

Support directly from your energy supplier.



Hardship Funds

Grants or payments if you're struggling to afford your energy bills.



Repayment Plans

Spread the cost of what you owe in smaller, affordable payments.



Supplier Grants

Some suppliers offer grants for specific needs such as heating, boilers or white goods.



Other Help

Additional ways to get the support you need.



Charitable Grants

Charities may be able to help with energy bills, appliances or home improvements.



Energy Advice

Free, independent advice can help you find the best support for your situation.



Benefits Check

You could be entitled to extra money that can help with your energy bills.

Quick Tip

Some support is automatic, while other support may require an application. It's always worth checking what you might be eligible for.



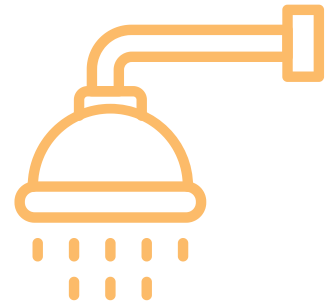
Check for local schemes here:

www.rotherham.gov.uk





Help With Water Bills



If you are on a low income or struggling financially, support may be available with your water bills.



WaterSupport

A bill cap scheme for low-income households.

You may be eligible if:

- ✓ your household income is below £21,000
- ✓ your household income is below £26,000 with dependents
- ★ Households with more than one dependent child, or larger occupancies, may be eligible for additional income allowances.
- ★ Depending on your individual circumstances, you could see your bill reduced to around £295 per year.

Apply online:
www.yorkshirewater.com



WaterSure

A bill cap scheme for customers who need to use extra water.

You may be eligible if:

- ✓ you have a water meter
- ✓ you receive an income-based benefit or Universal Credit
- ✓ and use extra water due to a medical condition have three or more children living at home
- ★ WaterSure helps cap water bills for households with higher essential water use.

Apply online:
www.yorkshirewater.com



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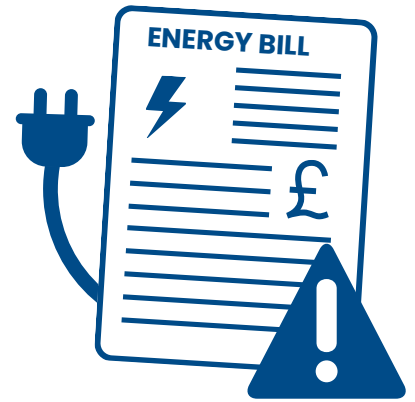
Considering a water meter?
Click here:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk





Help with Energy Debt



If you are struggling with energy bills, support may be available.
Energy suppliers must work with you to try and find a solution.



If you are falling behind with your energy bills, don't ignore the problem.

Support may include:



Repayment Plans

Spread the cost of what you owe in smaller, affordable payments.



Fuel Vouchers

Local organisations may be able to provide fuel vouchers or supermarket vouchers in an emergency.



Emergency Credit

If you are a prepayment customer, you may be able to get emergency credit from your supplier.



Hardship Funds

Grants or payments if you're struggling to afford your energy bills.



Temporary Payment Arrangements

Short-term reduced payments agreed with your supplier to help manage bills.



Priority Debt

Gas and electricity debts are considered priority debts because your supply could eventually be affected if the issue is not dealt with.

Citizens Advice Debt Support

Here at Citizens Advice Rotherham, we have a team of debt specialists who can support you to:

- ✓ understand your options
- ✓ deal with priority debts
- ✓ speak with creditors
- ✓ create affordable repayment plans
- ✓ maximise your income
- ✓ improve your financial situation

People who live or work in Rotherham can call

 **01709 515 680**

You can email our Debt Team for support: debt.support@citizensadviceotherham.org.uk

**citizens
advice**

**Rotherham
& District**

You can join us at our

'Debt Drop In'

where you can speak to an adviser in person.
No appointment required.

Every Monday morning 9:30am to 12noon
2 Upper Millgate, Rotherham, S60 1PF





Maximising your Income



Did you know?

A change in health, income or household circumstances could affect what support you qualify for.

You could be missing out on extra income or support.



What is a Benefits Check?

A benefits check looks at:

- ✓ your income
- ✓ your household
- ✓ health conditions
- ✓ caring responsibilities
- ✓ housing costs



You may qualify for help with:

- ➔ energy bills
- ➔ rent or council tax
- ➔ disability costs
- ➔ caring responsibilities
- ➔ children or childcare
- ➔ daily living costs

Benefits Calculators:



Quick Overview

Turn2us can provide a quick idea of what support you may qualify for.

benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk



Detailed Benefits Check

Policy in Practice can provide a more detailed benefits check.

www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk

Quick Tip

Some calculators may not give accurate results if you are:

a student, living outside the UK, living permanently in residential care, in prison, under 18, affected by immigration restrictions

If any of these apply to you, speak to an adviser.



Carbon Monoxide



Stay safe at home – know the signs and protect your household



What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that you can't **see, smell or taste**.

It can be caused by faulty:

-  boilers
-  gas fires
-  cookers
-  heaters
-  chimneys

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

-  headaches
-  tiredness
-  dizziness
-  confusion
-  feeling sick
-  shortness of breath

Symptoms may improve when you leave the house.

How to Stay Safe

-  Have boilers and gas appliances checked every year
-  Use a Gas Safe registered engineer
-  Never block air vents
-  Make sure chimneys and flues are clear
-  Never use BBQs or outdoor heaters indoors
-  Fit a carbon monoxide alarm

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

A CO alarm helps warn you if dangerous gas is present.

Place alarms:

-  in rooms with fuel-burning appliances
-  at head height
-  following manufacturer guidance

Test alarms regularly.

If You Think There's Carbon Monoxide

- Open windows and doors
- Turn off appliances if safe to do so
- Leave the property
- Seek medical advice if unwell
- Call emergency services or the **National Gas Emergency line:**

 **0800 111 999**



**You can't see it, smell it or taste it -
but a carbon monoxide alarm could save your life.**

Information based on guidance from [Gas Safe Register](#) and [the NHS](#).



Energy Supplier Contact Numbers



100Green	01920 486 156	greenenergyuk.com
British Gas	0330 100 0056	britishgas.co.uk/help-and-support/contact-us
Co-op Energy	0808 164 1088	energy.yourcoop.coop
E (Gas and Electricity)	0333 103 9575	e.org
Ecotricity	0345 555 7100	https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/
EDF	0333 200 5100	edfenergy.com/help-support/contact-us
E.ON Next	0808 501 5200	eonnex.com/help/eon-and-eonnex
Good Energy	0345 034 2400	goodenergy.co.uk/get-in-touch/
Outfox The Market	0800 103 2702	outfoxthemarket.co.uk/hc/en-gb/requests/new
OVO	0330 303 5063	ovoenergy.com/help
Sainsbury's Energy	0808 501 5277	sainsburysenergy.com/contact-us
Scottish Power	0345 270 0700	scottishpower.co.uk/contact
So Energy	0330 111 5050	so.energy/myaccount/contact-us
Utilita	0330 3337 442	utilita.co.uk/help
Utility Warehouse	0333 777 0777	help.uw.co.uk/contact-us

Information source: [Moneysupermarket.com](https://moneysupermarket.com)



Emergencies:

Gas (Gas Leak or Fumes)

England, Scotland, and Wales: Call the National Gas Emergency Service at **0800 111 999**.

Electricity (Power Cuts)

Nationwide (England, Scotland, Wales): Call **105** to be automatically connected to your local network operator.

