

Utilities

As well as government-backed schemes, there are many simple ways to cut the cost of your utility bills.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The landlord should test the alarms on the first day of the tenancy. After that, you should take responsibility for your own safety and test all alarms regularly (monthly) to make sure they are in working order. If you find your alarm(s) are not in working order during the tenancy, you are advised to arrange the replacement of the batteries or the alarm itself with your landlord.

This government scheme will provide £140 toward your electricity bill for the winter months. This is not paid to you, it's a one-off discount paid to the supplier and applied to your electricity account.

There are two ways to qualify:

- You're on a low income
- You get certain means tested benefits

You can still qualify for the Warm Home Discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible.

Contact your supplier to find out if they're part of the scheme. Also, check the supplier's website for an online application form.

How to read a meter

The Citizen Advice Bureau have guidance on how to read a meter at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/your-energy-meter/how-to-read-your-energy-meter/

Prepayment meters in rented property

If you've moved to a rented property with a prepayment meter, tell your supplier about the new tenancy straightaway so you can be certain you are paying the right rates and not repaying a former tenant's debt.

Switching energy supplier if you're a tenant

If you are a renting a property and are directly responsible for paying the gas and/or electricity, you have the right to choose your energy supplier.

You can find comparison websites for energy suppliers online.

Some examples of comparisons websites are below however please be aware there are many others you can access.

<https://www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/>

<https://www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/>

Water- low income tariff

You can apply for a low-income tariff if you are named on the water account and your household income is less than £16,105 excluding benefits.

You can also apply if you are claiming any of the following benefits – income-related ESA, Income Support, Job Seekers' Allowance, Housing Benefit, Universal Credit or Pension Credit.

The name of the tariff may vary by supplier. You should contact your water supplier and check the websites to find out if you qualify for the tariff and how to apply.

If you qualify for the tariff and financial support for water and sewage costs it will be capped at a rate which is lower than normal rates.

TV Licence

You must have a TV licence if you:

- Watch or record programmes on a TV, computer or other device
- Download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer-live, catch up or On Demand

A TV licence costs £150.50 a year however you can break this down into quarterly, monthly or weekly installments.

You do not need a TV licence to watch:

- Non-BBC programmes on online catch-up services
- Videos or DVD's
- Clips on websites like YouTube

Find out if you need a TV licence at
www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you watch or record live TV without a licence.

Tips to keep energy costs down

- **Light bulbs** – replace old light bulbs with an energy saving ones.
- **Thermostat** – you can save around 3% on your heating bill for every degree you turn down your thermostat.
- **Taps** – a dripping hot tap can waste enough water in a week to fill half a bath so fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off.
- **Sink**- don't leave taps running unnecessarily, use the plug and keep the water in the basin.
- **Shower/Bath** – use the shower rather than the bath if possible.
- **Washing machine & dryer** – wash and dry full loads rather than just a few items. When possible use a setting of 40°C or even 30°C.
- **Kettle** – don't boil a full kettle every time, only the amount you need.
- **Oven** – try not to open the oven door while cooking. The heat lost by doing this causes the oven to use more energy.
- **Fridges & Freezers** – defrost these appliances regularly, it helps them run more efficiently. Some fridges and freezers self-defrost.
- **General appliances** – turn off power to appliances such as TVs, stereos, DVD players and other items that do not need to stay on. They consume considerable amounts of energy while on standby.



Prices and details may vary