



HM Government

# Keep Warm Keep Well

**Information for...**

**Over 65s**

**Low income families**

**People living with a disability**

**Keep Warm**  **Keep Well**

## About this booklet

This booklet aims to help you maintain good health during winter and take advantage of the financial help and benefits available.

For further information on public health and cold weather, please refer to the **Cold Weather Plan for England**.

For further information about winter wellness in Wales, please visit **Public Health Wales**.

For further information about winter wellness in Scotland, please visit **Ready Scotland**.

For further information about winter wellness in Northern Ireland, please visit **NI Direct**.

## Contents

Be prepared for the cold weather . . . . .	5
Staying healthy this winter . . . . .	6
Living a healthy lifestyle . . . . .	8
Heating your home effectively and safely . . . . .	10
Financial help to heat your home . . . . .	14
Winter Fuel Payment . . . . .	14
Cold Weather Payment . . . . .	16
Energy Company Obligation – ECO . . . . .	18
Warm Home Discount scheme . . . . .	19
Other sources of financial support . . . . .	23
Help and advice . . . . .	26

## Your top tips for keeping warm and well:

### 1 Keep warm

Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F). Keep your bedroom window closed on a winter's night. Breathing in cold air can increase the risk of chest infections.

### 2 Get financial support

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.

### 3 Look after yourself

- Get your free flu jab if you are aged 65 or over, have an underlying health condition, live in a residential or nursing home, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person. Some children are also eligible. The NHS website provides information about flu vaccination. Visit [www.nhs.uk/flu vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/flu vaccine) to learn more.
- Don't delay in getting treatment for minor winter ailments like colds or sore throats. Visit your local pharmacist for advice on treatment before it gets worse so you can recover quicker.
- Layer your clothing whether you are indoors or outside. Wrap a scarf around your mouth to protect your lungs from the cold air.
- Wear shoes with a good grip if you need to go outside.
- When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so. Get up, stretch your legs and make yourself a warm drink.

- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure they are operating safely.
- Contact your water and power suppliers to see if you can be on the Priority Services Register.
- For more winter wellness tips visit **the NHS website**

## 4 Check on others

- Parents of children over the age of 6 months with a long-term health condition, aged two or three years old or in primary school, speak to a GP or pharmacist about your child having a free flu jab.
- Check on older neighbours or relatives to make sure they're safe and well. Make sure they're warm enough, especially at night, and have stocks of food and medicines so they don't need to go out during very cold weather.
- If you're worried about an older person, contact a family member, the local council or ring the Age UK helpline on 0800 055 6112.



# Be prepared for the cold weather

Although winter weather and snow can be fun, it is also associated with an increase in illnesses and injuries. Cold and wintry conditions can cause severe illness and, in the worst cases, people can die. The cold weather, combined with low levels of sunlight after the clocks go back, means that many of us can feel in poor health. However, with some simple precautions, most people can be prepared and prevent much of the misery often associated with winter weather.

Severe cold snaps can have dramatic effects on everyday life, especially for those people who are already vulnerable because of their age, illness or disability.

The Met Office provides weather forecasts on radio and TV, and tuning in to these bulletins regularly can help you keep up to date. Severe weather warnings are also issued on the **Met Office** website, through the Met Office Twitter feed ([www.twitter.com/metoffice](https://www.twitter.com/metoffice)) or via the Met office app (<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/what/met-office-weather-app>).

## Staying healthy this winter

We're all likely to feel the chill in winter, but cold weather can lead to very serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes or pneumonia, and sometimes the cold weather can even kill – especially if you have a long-term health condition or are 65 or over. There are several things that you can do to help yourself stay healthy in winter.

### Get a free flu jab

Not only is flu unpleasant, but it can also cause serious illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis – in the worst cases it can result in a stay in hospital, or even death. You are more at risk if you have a long-term health condition, are older, or are pregnant.

Contact your GP or pharmacist if you think you, or someone you care for, might qualify for a free flu jab.

Free flu vaccinations are available in England for those who:

- are aged 65 or older
- are aged two or three years old (on 31 August of current flu season)
- are in primary school
- are pregnant
- are aged six months to 64 years old and
  - have a long-term health condition such as chronic heart, lung, neurological, liver or kidney disease or diabetes
  - have a weakened immune system due to disease or treatments that suppress the immune system such as chemotherapy
  - have had a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
  - are seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above)

- are living in a long-stay residential care home or nursing home
- are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill

If you live in Scotland you can visit the **Immunisation Scotland** website for more information. There are different arrangements in place for the child flu programme in Scotland, please check the website for more information.

If you live in Northern Ireland you can visit the **Flu Aware NI** website for more information.

If you live in Wales you can visit **NHS Direct Wales** for more information.

There are different arrangements in place for the child flu programme in Wales. Please visit **NHS Direct Wales** for further details.

## **Avoid catching colds or flu**

Colds and flu spread very easily. Young children in particular can be at risk of becoming unwell, as their immune systems are still developing. It's worth following these simple and obvious hygiene measures to reduce the risk of catching and spreading infections.

- Always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and encourage visitors and relatives to do the same.
- Throw away used tissues as soon as possible.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, and use a hand sanitiser gel when you're out and about.
- Stock up on over-the-counter cough and cold remedies.

## Living a healthy lifestyle

You probably know that keeping yourself as fit and healthy as you can is important all year round, but your lifestyle can make even more of a difference when it comes to keeping well in winter.

### Eat well

Eating regular meals will help keep your energy levels up during winter.

- Hot meals and drinks help keep you warm, so eat at least one hot meal a day and have plenty of hot drinks.
- Plan your meals and keep your diet as varied as possible. Aim to include your daily five portions of fruit and veg. Remember that tinned and frozen fruit and vegetables count towards your five a day.
- Stock up on tinned and frozen foods, so that you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy.

Parents of children under four and women who are at least 10 weeks pregnant and are on certain benefits may be eligible for free weekly Healthy Start vouchers. The vouchers can be swapped for milk, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, infant formula milk and vitamins. To find out if you qualify and for more tips and advice on healthy eating visit [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk) or call the Healthy Start Issuing Unit on **0345 607 6823**.

You also qualify if you are under 18 and pregnant, even if you don't receive benefits or tax credits.

## **Stay active**

We all know that exercise is good for your overall health – and it can keep you warm in winter. If you can stay active, even moderate exercise can bring health benefits.

- If possible, try to move around at least once an hour. Remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plan.
- Keeping active generates heat and helps keep you warm. When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour. Get up and walk around, make yourself a warm drink and spread any chores throughout the day.
- Chair-based exercises and simply moving your arms and legs and wiggling your toes are helpful if walking is difficult.

## **Dress for the weather**

- Wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and help to maintain body heat.
- Wear shoes with a good grip to prevent slips and falls when walking outside. Always take a mobile phone with you when outside.
- A hat is especially effective for keeping warm outdoors.

## Heating your home effectively and safely

Some of these heating tips may seem obvious, but they can make a big difference when it comes to protecting your health and reducing your fuel bills.

- Heating your home to at least 18°C (65°F) in winter is particularly important if you have reduced mobility, are 65 and over, or have a health condition, such as heart or lung disease.
- If you are under the age of 65, active and wearing appropriate clothing, you may wish to heat your home to a temperature at which you are comfortable, even if it is slightly lower than 18°C (65°F).
- To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, rooms in which infants sleep should be **heated to between 16 – 20°C**

Set your heating to come on just before you get up and switch off after you've gone to bed. If it is very cold, set your heating to come on earlier and turn off later rather than turning the thermostat up.

- Heat your home as best you can but if you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and your bedroom just before you go to sleep.
- Remember to close curtains at dusk and shut doors to keep heat in the rooms you use most.
- Heating your home safely is really important. Remember to get your heating system checked regularly by qualified professionals, and keep your home well ventilated. Please remember to keep the trickle vents open (the small opening in your window frame) to ensure that your home is adequately ventilated.

- If you have open fires, make sure they are properly ventilated. Use safety guards and don't hang your washing near the open flames. If you use a fire to heat your bedroom, avoid using it at night and use an alternative safe heating method.
- Use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every three years. Remember never to use an electric blanket and a hot water bottle together.
- Do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home – it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If you are not connected to gas or electricity mains, and use a heating oil, LPG or wood products as the main heating source, make sure that you have a sufficient supply to avoid running out in winter. You might be interested in joining an oil club to save money. These are groups of people, mainly in rural areas, who combine their orders for domestic heating oil.
- For information about oil buying clubs in your area, or call their Freephone on **0800 142 2865**.

## Keeping the heat in

Insulating your home not only helps to keep you warm and healthy, but it can also help to keep your heating costs down.

- Fit draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors.
- Make sure that your loft has at least 10–11 inches (270mm) of insulation. Any home with 4 inches (100mm) or less should have it topped up.
- If you have wall cavities, make sure that they are insulated too.

- Insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes.
- Draw your curtains at dusk to help keep the heat generated inside your rooms.
- Make sure that your radiators are not obstructed by curtains or furniture.

The **Simple Energy Advice** line is always available to help with energy efficiency advice: **0800 444202**.

For free and impartial advice in Scotland, including support on making your home warmer and cheaper to heat, contact **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282**.

If you live in Northern Ireland, free and impartial advice is available from **Bryson Energy** or you can call their Freephone number on **0800 142 2865**.

For heating advice in Wales people can contact Nest on **0808 808 2244** or visit the **Nest** website. Nest is a Welsh Government scheme which aims to make the least energy efficient homes in Wales warmer and cosier.

## **Carbon monoxide poisoning**

Incorrectly installed, poorly maintained or poorly ventilated cooking and heating appliances which burn carbon-containing fuels can give off carbon monoxide – a poisonous gas which you can't see, smell or taste, but which causes approximately 25 accidental deaths per year in England and Wales. Low levels of carbon monoxide can cause serious harm to your health, if breathed in over a long time.

- You should have cooking and heating appliances, that burn carbon-containing fuels (such as gas, coal, charcoal, oil and wood), as well as flues and chimneys, serviced at least once a year, only by a **Gas Safe registered engineer**.

- You may need to remind your landlord that they are legally obliged to have an annual gas safety check completed in the property – please remember to ask for a copy of the certificate.
- Don't block flues or chimneys, even if they are draughty, because these allow carbon monoxide to escape.
- Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm that meets European Standard EN50291 in any room that contains a gas fuel burning appliance, like a boiler or gas fire, or a solid fuel burning appliance. Test the alarm regularly to ensure that it is working, as effectively as possible.
- According to the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015, the landlord has the duty to install a smoke alarm on each storey of your home and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room that contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance.
- Follow all instructions for the appliance, keeping rooms well ventilated and stop using an appliance if you think it may be giving off carbon monoxide gas.
- The symptoms of exposure to low levels of carbon monoxide can be similar to those of food poisoning, viral infections and flu; for example repeated or severe headaches, dizziness, nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting, stomach pain or tiredness and confusion. But unlike flu, carbon monoxide poisoning doesn't cause a high temperature (fever). If you think you might have carbon monoxide poisoning, see your GP immediately.

To find out more about carbon monoxide safety, visit the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website ([www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic)) or call the Gas Safety Advice

Line on **0800 300 363** (9am–5.30pm Mon–Thurs and 9am–5pm Fri).

To find a Gas Safe registered engineer in your area or go to [www.gassaferegister.co.uk/find-an-engineer/](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/find-an-engineer/).

If you use solid fuel to heat your home, you can find a **HETAS (Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme)** registered engineer by calling **0845 6345626**

For oil and biofuel appliances, registered technicians can be found at **OFTEC (Oil Firing Technical Association)** at **01473 626 298**.

For general health advice and information about carbon monoxide poisoning visit **the NHS website**.

Advice and guidance on carbon monoxide (CO), and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of CO poisoning can be downloaded from the gov.uk CO collection:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbon-monoxide-co](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbon-monoxide-co)

## Financial help to heat your home

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming what you are entitled to.

The **Simple Energy Advice** line is always available to help with energy efficiency advice: **0800 444202**

### Winter Fuel Payment

This is a tax-free benefit to help pay for heating during winter. You could be eligible if you have reached the qualifying age and you normally live in Great Britain.

For winter 2019/20 people born on or before 5 April 1954 will have reached the qualifying age.

## How much could I get?

This year you could get a Winter Fuel Payment of up to £200 for households with someone who qualifies aged up to 79, or up to £300 for someone aged 80 or over. The exact amount you'll get depends on your circumstances during the qualifying week of 16-22 September 2019, such as your age, whether you live alone and whether you're getting Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

## You will get the payment automatically if:

- you qualify; and
- you got a Winter Fuel Payment last winter and you still meet the conditions for getting it, or you got State Pension or another benefit, except Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Universal Credit or Child Benefit, during the week of 16-22 September 2019.

Most Winter Fuel Payments are paid automatically between November and December. If you get any other benefit, you'll get your Winter Fuel Payment at the same time as your regular payments. If the money hasn't been paid into your account by 13 January 2020, call the office that pays your benefits – their details are on any letters they've sent you.

All new claims must be received on or before 31 March 2020. To find out more about Winter Fuel Payments, visit [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment) or call **0800 7310160** (8am-6pm Mon-Fri, textphone **0800 731 0464**).

## Cold Weather Payment

A Cold Weather Payment of £25 for each period of very cold weather is available to help people to pay for extra heating costs. To get a Cold Weather Payment, the average temperature where you live must be recorded as, or forecast to be, 0°C or below for seven days in a row. You may be able to get Cold Weather Payments if you are receiving:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loan

To find out more about Cold Weather Payments visit: [www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](http://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment).

### **Pension Credit**

You will usually get Cold Weather Payments if you get Pension Credit.

### **Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**

You will usually get Cold Weather Payments if you get Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and have any of the following:

- a disability or pensioner premium
- a child who is disabled
- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- a child under 5 years old living with you

## **Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**

You will usually get Cold Weather Payments if you get income-related ESA and are in a work-related activity group or support group. If you're not in either group, you might also get Cold Weather Payments if you have any of the following:

- a severe or enhanced disability premium
- a pensioner premium
- a child who is disabled
- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability element, or
- a child under 5 years old living with you

## **Universal Credit**

You will usually get Cold Weather Payments if you get Universal Credit and you're not employed or self-employed, and:

- you have a child under 5 years old living with you, or
- you have a health condition or disability and have limited capability for work (with or without work-related activity).

## **Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI)**

You will usually get Cold Weather Payments if you get Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI).

Cold Weather Payment is £25 for each period of very cold weather. To find out more about Cold Weather Payments visit [www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](http://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment).

## Energy Company Obligation – ECO

Under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) the largest domestic energy suppliers are obligated to fund energy efficiency improvements in the homes of certain consumers. To meet their obligation, participating energy companies promote and subsidise the cost of installing improvements to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.

You may be able to get help through the ECO scheme for energy saving improvements to your home if you are on certain benefits and live in private housing (for example, you own your home or rent from a private landlord). If you live in social housing, with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of E, F or G, you may also be eligible for help. You may need a survey of your home to see if you qualify.

Further information can be found on the Government's Simple Energy Advice website:

[www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](http://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk)

In addition to the above, your local authority may be participating in the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Scheme which encourages suppliers to work with local authorities to identify low income or vulnerable households in their areas for assistance. Eligibility for this scheme is set out by the local authorities so households do not necessarily need to be in receipt of means tested benefits to qualify under this route. You can find out if your local authority is participating in this scheme by checking their website or contacting them directly.

If you live in Scotland, you can contact **Home Energy Scotland** on **0808 808 2282** for advice, support and possible grants or loans to help you achieve a warmer home.

Please note that the Energy Company Obligation does not apply to Northern Ireland. If you live in Northern Ireland, visit **NI Direct** for information and advice on energy efficiency and grants. You can also contact **Bryson Energy** for free, independent energy advice on **0800 142 2865**.

## **Warm Home Discount scheme**

The Warm Home Discount scheme helps low income and vulnerable households with energy costs.

Participating energy companies will be providing a discount of £140 on the electricity bills of certain customers in winter 2019/20.

The following suppliers are part of the scheme:

- **Angelic Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Atlantic** (see SSE)
- **Avro**
- **Beam Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Boost**
- **Bristol Energy** – only if you're eligible for the 'core group'
- **British Gas**
- **Bulb Energy**
- **Citizen Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Co-operative Energy**
- **E** (Gas and Electricity)
- **Ebico** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Economy Energy** (see OVO)
- **EDF Energy**
- **E.ON**
- **First Utility** (see Shell Energy)
- **Flow Energy**

- **Fosse Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **GB Energy** (see Co-operative Energy)
- **Great North Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Green Network Energy**
- **Green Star/Hudson**
- **Liverpool Energy Community Company (LECCy)**  
(see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Lumo**
- **Manweb** (see Scottish Power)
- **M&S Energy** (see SSE)
- **npower**
- **Octopus Energy**
- **Our Power** (see utilita) – only if you're eligible for the 'core group'
- **OVO**
- **Powershop** (see npower)
- **Ram Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Robin Hood Energy** – only if you're eligible for the 'core group'
- **Sainsbury's Energy**
- **Scottish Gas** (see British Gas)
- **Scottish Hydro** (see SSE)
- **ScottishPower**
- **Southern Electric** (see SSE)
- **Spark Energy**
- **SSE**
- **SWALEC** (see SSE)
- **Utilita**
- **Utility Warehouse**
- **White Rose Energy** (see Robin Hood Energy)
- **Your Energy Sussex** (see Robin Hood Energy)

Not applicable to Northern Ireland. If you live in Northern Ireland, visit **NI Direct** for information and advice on energy efficiency and grants.

Or call **Bryson Energy** for free, independent energy advice on **0800 142 2865**.

### **Am I eligible for the discount?**

You qualify for the discount if, on the qualifying day, 7 July 2019, your supplier was part of the scheme, your name (or your partner's or appointee's name) was on the bill and you were:

- getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well).

### **What do I need to do if I am eligible for the discount?**

You do not need to do anything now to claim the discount. Most people will receive their discount without having to do anything.

If you are eligible for a discount for winter 2019/20 you will receive a letter from Government before the end of 6 December 2019. The letter will either:

- tell you that a discount has been paid automatically and that you do not need to do anything; or
- ask you to call a helpline before 28 February 2020 so that you can provide some information from your electricity bill. The helpline will then check whether you can get a discount.

Further information on the **Warm Home Discount** scheme is available online at [www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/what-youll-get](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/what-youll-get) and at [www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](http://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk) or call on **0800 444202**.

## **I'm not eligible for the discount – can I get any other help through the Warm Home Discount scheme?**

Participating energy suppliers will also be providing discounts to a **Broader Group** of their vulnerable and low income customers. Please contact your supplier for details about their 2019/2020 scheme and apply as soon as you can as funding can run out very quickly.

There are standard eligibility criteria for the Broader Group, which include certain means tested benefits, that participating energy suppliers are required to adopt. Energy suppliers can also set their own eligibility criteria for the Broader Group discount, which have been approved by Ofgem (the energy regulator). You can contact your electricity supplier to find out whether you are eligible. A list of participating suppliers is available on the **Warm Home Discount Scheme** website.

### **Park Homes**

You can apply for the discount if you are a resident of a Park Home site and pay for your electricity through your park or as part of your pitch fees.

The funds are limited and the scheme is only open for a limited period. Once the allocated number of applications is reached the scheme will close. Please contact **Charis Grants** for more information.

### **Affordable Warmth Scheme (Northern Ireland)**

The best way to improve the temperature in your home is to consider ways to upgrade the energy efficiency of your home. If you need help to pay for energy efficiency improvements you may be eligible for the Government's **Affordable Warmth Scheme**. The

scheme provides a package of energy efficiency and heating measures, tailored to each household. Contact your local council to find out if you are entitled to support: **0300 200 7874**.

## **Other sources of financial support**

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, there are plenty of sources of help. Remember to contact your energy supplier in the first instance, as they may be able to offer you a special tariff or payment plan to help you stay on top of your bills.

## **Compare and switch energy suppliers**

There are different energy suppliers in the market. Comparing their prices and switching to a cheaper deal if possible could save you money. Switching to the cheapest dual-fuel, direct debit accounts at the start of the year could save you hundreds of pounds. Savings could be even higher for customers who switch from standard credit or pre-payment meters.

Britain's energy regulator, **Ofgem**, offers impartial information and advice on household and business energy. You can also visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/) for free, impartial advice and information.

You can switch if you rent your property and energy bills are not included in your rental payments. If you pay for your energy by Prepayment Meter you can switch even if you have debts of up to £500 for each fuel with your current supplier.

There are a number of price comparison websites that can help you to find a better deal for your gas and electricity. The Ofgem Confidence Code is a Code of

Practice that governs some independent energy price comparison sites. All the Ofgem-approved energy comparison sites are independent, and the options and prices you find on them will be calculated and displayed in a fair and accurate way – meaning you can be confident when shopping for energy. You can find an up to date list of approved sites here: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/)

You can get further independent advice about switching energy supplier from the Citizens Advice consumer service on **03454 04 05 06** (9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

If you live in Northern Ireland, you can get independent advice about switching energy supplier from the **Consumer Council** or you can call their Freephone number **0800 121 6022** for more information.

If you live in Scotland you can call Home Energy Scotland on **0808 808 2282** who can refer you to Citrus Energy for support through the switching journey.

## **Change your payment method**

The cheapest way to pay your energy bills is often by monthly direct debit. Many energy suppliers offer better deals for customers who pay this way and some have special deals online. You can also cut down on your energy costs by getting paperless billing. This is called e-billing. Many energy suppliers offer discounts on your bills for this.

Contact your supplier to ask about the best deal that they can offer you. They should tell you how to do this on the front of your bill.

## **Save money on your water bills**

All water companies in England and Wales provide ways to help customers who are struggling to pay their water bill and for those eligible offer special tariffs to reduce your water bills.

You can get free independent advice on how to save money on your water bill by contacting the Consumer Council for Water on **0300 034 2222** or visit website **[www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk)**

Water charges in Scotland are set by reference to Council Tax Band and are collected by Local Councils. Discounts (such as single person) also apply to water charges. To get advice on water charges contact Citizens Advice Scotland on 0808 800 9060 or visit website **[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/)**

Water charges currently only apply to non-domestic customers in Northern Ireland.

## Help and advice

### **Help Us, Help You – Stay Well This Winter**

Winter conditions can be seriously bad for our health, especially for people aged 65 or over, and people with long-term conditions. We want to help protect you and those you care for. Find out more at [www.nhs.uk/staywell/](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell/).

### **England**

The **NHS website** provides information on flu

The Government's **Simple Energy Advice** website and advice line: 0800 444 202.

### **Wales**

**NHS Direct Wales**

### **Scotland**

**NHS Inform**

You can also call **0800 224488** (8am to 10pm, 7 days per week)

**Ready Scotland**

### **Northern Ireland**

**NI Direct** provides information on taking care in winter

### **Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland**

Home Energy Scotland (HES) from the Scottish Government is your one-stop shop for energy saving advice and support. A warmer home this winter could be just a quick call away. Call to see what help is available on **0808 808 2282**.

If you live in Northern Ireland **Bryson Energy** provides advice on how to reduce bills and make homes more energy efficient. It also gives details on eligibility for local schemes and grants. Freephone **0800 142 2865**.

If you live in Wales you can contact Nest on **0808 808 2244** or visit **Nest** online. Nest is a Welsh Government scheme which aims to make the least energy efficient homes in Wales warmer and cosier.

### **Citizens Advice**

Your local bureau will be able to give you advice on benefits, heating, grants and debt.

Look under 'C' in the Yellow Pages or visit **www.citizensadvice.org.uk** for more information or to find your local bureau.

### **Age UK**

Age UK offers advice and information for people in later life on a range of issues including welfare and disability benefits, health and social care, housing and help with heating. Local Age UK branches are independent charities which offer a variety of services, including benefit checks, exercise and social activities, lunch clubs and day centres.

For free information or contact details for your local Age UK branch, call Age UK Advice on **0800 678 1602** (8am–7pm, seven days a week). Or you can visit **www.ageuk.org.uk**

If you live in Northern Ireland, visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/** online or call their Freephone number **0808 808 7575**.

## **Gingerbread**

Gingerbread provides advice and practical support for single parents. Call the helpline on **0808 802 0925** (10am–6pm Mon, 10am–4pm Tues, Thurs, Fri and 10am–1pm and 5pm–7pm Wed). Your call is confidential. Visit **[www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)** for more information.

If you live in Northern Ireland, visit **[www.gingerbreadni.org/](http://www.gingerbreadni.org/)** online or call their Freephone number **0808 808 8090**.

## **Scope and DIAL UK**

These organisations offer a combination of local knowledge and national disability expertise, providing free, impartial and expert information, advice and support to disabled people and their families.

To contact Scope, call the freephone helpline on **0808 800 3333** (9am–5pm Mon-Fri), email **[helpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:helpline@scope.org.uk)** or visit **[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)**

To contact DIAL UK or your local DIAL UK group call the Scope helpline free (9am–5pm Mon-Fri), or visit **[www.scope.org.uk/dial](http://www.scope.org.uk/dial)**

Please note, DIAL UK is not applicable to Northern Ireland.

## Call charges

If you call any of the information lines featured in this booklet make sure you know what call charges to expect.

From a BT landline:

- **0800** and **0808** numbers are free of charge, including from mobiles;
- **0845, 0870 and 0345** numbers may be free of charge or costs may vary, depending on your package, check with your service provider
- **0300** numbers are typically charged up to 10p a minute

Calls from mobiles and other networks may vary – check with your service provider.

For more information visit **Ofcom's** website

© Crown copyright 2019

PHE publications gateway number: 2015372

CCS0919096096

Produced by The APS Group for Public Health England