



Debt blocking and the Debt Assignment Protocol

My supplier has told me I am ‘debt blocked’ – what is this?

If you have an outstanding debt to your energy supplier and you try and switch to a different supplier you may find yourself ‘debt blocked’. This means that your current gas or electricity supplier has the right to prevent you from leaving until you have paid off your debt to them. This may either mean making a payment in full or agreeing a regular repayment plan. If you have a debt and want to switch supplier, we recommend you speak to your energy supplier as soon as possible and arrange an affordable repayment plan to clear your debt.

If your supplier has blocked your request to switch because you are in debt, they must offer you energy efficiency, debt and tariff advice.

Where your supplier has raised prices, you have 30 working days in which to clear your debt and switch supplier, therefore, avoiding any retrospective application of price rises.

You cannot be debt blocked if it your supplier’s fault you are in debt (eg incorrect meter readings or billing problems).

I use a pre-payment meter, are the rules the same for me?

If you use a Prepayment meter (PPM) and are paying off a debt you may be eligible to benefit from the provisions under the Debt Assignment Protocol (DAP).

What is the Debt Assignment Protocol?

The DAP is designed to help you switch supplier, even if you have a debt. Under the rules of the DAP, consumers with PPM's are allowed to switch supplier and transfer their debt. The maximum level of debt which you are allowed to carry over to another supplier is £200.

Do I have to carry on using a pre payment meter with my new supplier?

Yes. Once you have switched supplier under the DAP you will have to remain on a PPM at least until your debt is paid off. However, you will be able to shop around for a cheaper tariff.

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Who to contact

If you have an enquiry or if you need advice about a problem or switching your energy supplier please contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or visit the website: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk