

# Sort your supply!

Your gas and  
electricity supply –  
advice for tenants



## **Your gas and electricity – advice for tenants**

There are lots of things to think about when you rent a property – such as signing the lease, paying the deposit, checking the inventory, and arranging to pay the rent and council tax. But one of the most important is setting up your electricity supply, and your gas supply if available, and arranging to pay your bills. By contacting your energy suppliers as soon as possible, you can help to avoid problems with debt, meters, and accounts.

This leaflet tells you what to do before or immediately after you move into a rented property. This will help you avoid getting into difficulties with your bills later. Read on for our 'Top Tips'...

## Top Tip 1

### Find out who the gas and electricity supplier are

Start by finding out who supplies your gas and electricity. It is essential to do this before or as soon as you move as it will help avoid problems later.

- Ask your landlord who the suppliers are before you move in
- Double-check with your landlord whether there are different suppliers for gas and electricity or whether the same company provides both
- Ask your landlord for the suppliers' contact details
- Call Consumer Direct on 08455 04 05 06 if your landlord cannot tell you who supplies your gas or electricity



## Top Tip 2

### Take meter readings

One of the first things you should do when you move in is to take readings from the gas and electricity meters. You need to do this to make sure you don't end up paying for the energy used by a previous tenant:

- Find out where the meters are
- Look at the meters and note down the readings from each
- Contact the gas and electricity suppliers to tell them you have moved in
- Get the account(s) set up in your name and tell the suppliers your meter readings
- Agree how and when you are going to pay your gas and electricity bills and make sure you don't build up unnecessary debts



## Top Tip 3

### **Check that the gas and electricity are connected and working normally**

You should check your gas and electricity supplies as soon as you have moved into your property:

- Turn your appliances on and off to make sure the supplies are working properly
- Check what sort of meter you have. Many rental properties have prepayment meters. If yours does, make sure you know how to use it
- If you think there is a problem with the gas or electricity supply, you should immediately tell your landlord
- If you have any gas safety concerns, contact the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999. You should also contact your supplier
- If you have any electrical safety concerns, you should immediately tell your electricity supplier

## Top Tip 4

### **Check whether the gas and electricity meters are damaged or look like they have been tampered with**

When you are checking your gas and electricity supplies, you should also make sure the meters in the property have not been damaged or tampered with:

- Look at the numbers or dials on the meters – these should change to record the gas and electricity you are using
- If you think the supply is not being recorded properly, you should immediately tell your supplier

## Top Tip 5

### Check you are on the correct tariff

You should check you are getting the best deal. With energy companies now offering a wide range of deals, the choice can be confusing. To help you decide which is best for you, use one of the internet price comparison services that are accredited to the Consumer Focus Confidence Code ([www.consumerfocus.org.uk/confidence-code](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/confidence-code)). Then you can compare the different offers from gas and electricity suppliers and find out how much you could save by switching.

Most energy suppliers offer special rates for people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable in some way. If you meet certain criteria, you may be able to get a cheaper rate for gas or electricity:

- When you contact the supplier to give them your meter readings, make sure you mention whether there are any children, pensioners, disabled people or people on benefits staying in the property
- Ask the supplier(s) whether you are eligible for any tariff they provide to vulnerable people. In particular, ask about their Social Tariff and Priority Services Register

You can find out what grants, discounts, free energy help and assistance you're entitled to by using our online Help Finder ([www.consumerfocus.org.uk/energy-help-and-advice/help-finder](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/energy-help-and-advice/help-finder))

## Top Tip 6

### Check whether the meter details are registered correctly on the account

- 1 Your gas and electricity bills will include meter serial numbers. Check that these serial numbers match the numbers displayed on your gas and electricity meters.
- 2 Your bills will also show special registration numbers called MPRN (for gas) or MPAN (for electricity) - often known as M numbers or S (supply) numbers. These are unique identifying numbers for the meters at your property, and you will need to give them if you switch suppliers. M and S numbers are different from the serial numbers shown on the meters, and also different from the account numbers shown on your bills
  - Your gas bill will show your MPRN (Meter Point Reference Number). If you can't find it on the bill or want to check it is correct, call the Meter Number Helpline on 0870 608 1524
  - Your electricity bill will show your MPAN (Meter Point Administration Number). If you can't find it or want to check it is correct, call your electricity supplier.

## Top Tip 7

### Check whether you are eligible for any heating or insulation grants

You can lower your gas and electricity costs by making your home more energy efficient. Grants and supports are available to help tenants and landlords with this:

- You should discuss this with your landlord first

For further information about offers and discounts you can contact the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Hotline on **0800 512 012**. Or complete an online Home Energy Check at [www.homeenergyscotland.org.uk](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org.uk)

## Top Tip 8

### **Make sure everyone is named on the bill**

Problems can sometimes arise for tenants if several individuals are living in a property and using the gas or electricity supply but they are not all named on the energy bills.

- To help avoid disputes or other problems, you should consider registering the details of all tenants with the gas and electricity suppliers, and having all the tenants, or as many as possible, named on the bill

## Top Tip 9

### **Order a card or key for your prepayment meter**

If your property has a prepayment meter to pay for your gas or electricity, you will need a payment device (card or key) to use the meter:

- You should order a new payment device (card or key) from the supplier as soon as you move in
- You should not use the prepayment device that the previous tenants had

## Top Tip 10

### Check prepayment meter settings

Your meters may be set up to claim back debt belonging to previous tenants. You will need to check the meters for this to make sure you don't end up paying a debt that isn't yours:

- When you top up, check that you are able to use all the credit you added to the meter. If you are not sure, ask your supplier
- If you think your prepayment meter is claiming back debt that belongs to a previous tenant, you should immediately tell your landlord and your supplier
- To prove you have taken over from the previous tenant in the property, you may need to send your tenancy agreement to the supplier

If you need further advice  
about your energy supply,  
you should first contact

Consumer Direct on

**08454 04 05 06**

or online at

**[www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/energy](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/energy)**

## About Consumer Focus Scotland

We promote the interests of consumers, particularly those who experience disadvantage in society. We work to ensure all consumers have access to affordable energy in their homes, to help people understand how they can reduce energy costs through switching, and to make energy efficiency services more relevant and easier to take up. We also seek to promote the interests of tenants in both the social and private rented sectors. We are part of Consumer Focus, and our structure reflects the devolved nature of the UK.

For more information on our work  
see our website

[www.consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk)

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