



GO ENERGY SHOPPING GUIDE



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Now it's easier to be an energy shopper



Thanks to recent reforms in the energy market, things are now **SIMPLER**, **CLEARER** and **FAIRER** – making it easier to check your existing energy deal and work out if you could benefit from a change. Over the next few pages, we'll show you how to shop around and find a better deal – just like you would for insurance or a new phone package.

Simpler

Find a better deal faster

We've reduced the number of tariffs to choose from. Now there are just **4 core tariffs for gas and 4 core tariffs for electricity** on offer from any energy supplier. Plus, there's now just **one charging structure**, made up of a standing charge and a unit rate. Finally, there are **only 2 cash discounts** allowed – one for dual fuel and one for managing your account online. All this makes it easier to see which deal is right for you.

Clearer

Information that makes sense

Communications from your energy supplier will be much clearer. They will also have to keep you **better informed**. This includes:

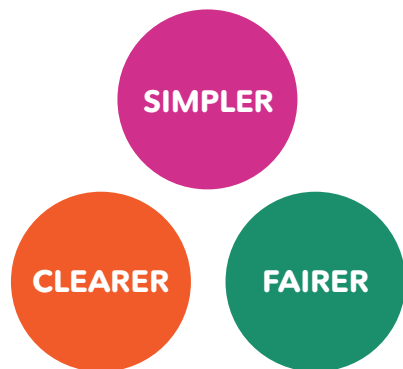
- Information from your energy supplier about which tariff is cheapest for you.
- Personalised savings messages on your gas and electricity bills, annual summaries and other communications.
- Personal projections of your likely energy costs over the next 12 months.
- Price changes explained in pounds and pence.
- Tariff Information Labels to make comparisons easier.
- Tariff Comparison Rates on bills and other communications from your supplier – so you'll be able to compare like-for-like when shopping around.

Fairer

Know where you stand

To help energy shoppers get a better deal, Ofgem is enforcing new rules to ensure fair treatment and better **customer service**. These include:

- Tough standards of conduct, meaning energy suppliers have to treat you in an honest, fair and transparent way.
- Advance notification of any price changes and when your fixed energy tariff finishes.
- No termination fee after your tariff end notice.
- Fixed means fixed – for everyone signed up to a fixed-term energy deal on or after 15 July 2013.
- No automatic rollover on to another fixed-term tariff, only on to the cheapest variable tariff with no end date. This can't have an exit fee, so you'll be free to switch if you want.
- Consumers on 'dead tariffs', which are more expensive than the cheapest similar live tariff, will be switched to the cheapest variable tariff with no end date, by 30 June 2014.



Start energy shopping

Here you'll find all you need to start energy shopping.



Step 1. Take stock

Taking a close look at how much energy you're using at the moment, and what you're paying, will help you compare like-for-like information when you're considering other deals.

You'll need to have to hand:

- Your annual consumption figures.
- Your current method of payment e.g. Direct Debit.
- Your current tariff information – including the name of the tariff, standing charge and unit rate.
- Any information on exit fees, if applicable.

You can find the above information on the following: your latest energy bill (from April 2014 onward); your annual summary; or any price increase notices you may have received. Alternatively, you can call your supplier.

Step 2. Shop around

Being a successful energy shopper is all about knowing what's out there – and deciding what's important to you. It may be cost, renewable energy or customer service. It's up to you to decide whether you want to stay on your current energy deal, switch to another tariff with your existing supplier or switch to a new energy supplier altogether.

To find out what's on offer:

- Call or go online to see if your current provider can give you a better offer.
- Call or check individual energy suppliers' websites for their latest deals.
- Visit an Ofgem-accredited energy price comparison site to see all the deals available to you (you'll find a list on page 6).

We've provided a handy Comparison Notepad on the next page to help you when you're shopping around.

Step 3. Take control

You've done your homework, checked out the competition and decided on a new tariff. Now you can switch to a new energy deal and start saving:

To get your new tariff:

- Contact the new supplier you've chosen and tell them you'd like to switch to them. Or use an Ofgem-accredited price comparison site and they'll do the rest.
- Remember to pay any money you owe to your existing supplier to avoid any delays.



Comparison Notepad

This Comparison Notepad has been designed to help you easily compare your current tariff to other tariffs on offer. **Simply jot down the relevant information in the columns provided – paying particular attention to your Personal Projection.** And don't forget to include any reference numbers you're given at the bottom of the page, you can find these on your bills. Once you've filled in all the info, you should be able to see, at a glance, which tariff is best for you.

Supplier Name	Your current tariff		1		2	
	GAS	ELECTRICITY	GAS	ELECTRICITY	GAS	ELECTRICITY
Tariff name						
Payment method						
Unit rate	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh
Standing charge (per day)	p	p	p	p	p	p
Online discount	£	£	£	£	£	£
Dual fuel discount	£	£	£	£	£	£
Annual consumption						
Personal projection	£	£	£	£	£	£
Exit fees (if you leave your tariff early)	£	£	£	£	£	£
Quote reference number						

Your gas and electricity reference numbers



M _____



S _____



Comparison Notepad

Supplier Name	3		4		5	
	GAS	ELECTRICITY	GAS	ELECTRICITY	GAS	ELECTRICITY
Tariff name						
Payment method						
Unit rate	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh	p/kWh
Standing charge (per day)	p	p	p	p	p	p
Online discount	£	£	£	£	£	£
Dual fuel discount	£	£	£	£	£	£
Annual consumption						
Personal projection	£	£	£	£	£	£
Exit fees (if you leave your tariff early)	£	£	£	£	£	£
Quote reference number						

Useful numbers and websites

We've put together a list of contacts and websites you might find helpful.



For advice about energy bills

Citizens Advice

It's easy to get free, independent advice about your energy supply. You might want to get a better deal, find out how to make a complaint, get advice about the quality of your electricity or gas supply, or ask for help if you're struggling to pay your bills. Visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energy or call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline (England, Wales and Scotland) on 08454 04 05 06. You can talk to a Welsh-speaking adviser on 08454 04 05 05. Lines open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Phone: 08454 04 05 06

Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk

For advice on being energy efficient

Energy Saving Trust (England and Wales)

To find out more about saving money and being energy efficient, contact the Energy Saving Trust.

Phone: 0300 123 1234

Website: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Energy Saving Trust (Scotland)

To find out more about saving money and being energy efficient, contact the Energy Saving Trust.

Phone: 0800 512 012

Website: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

For help with unresolved complaints

Energy Ombudsman

In the unlikely event that anything does go wrong in the switching process and the company is unable to resolve the problem to your satisfaction, you have the right to have your complaint considered by the Energy Ombudsman. The Energy Ombudsman gives independent and impartial decisions on energy complaints. We are free for consumers and our role is to put the consumer back to a position as if nothing had gone wrong in the first place.

Phone: 0330 440 1624

Website: www.ombudsman-services.org

Ofgem-accredited price comparison sites



Comparison sites are a great way to get started when you begin shopping around for energy. All the Ofgem approved sites are independent, and the options and prices you find on them will be calculated and displayed in a fair and unbiased way – meaning you can be a confident energy shopper.

Energy Helpline

 energyhelpline.com

Energy Linx

 energylinx.com

Money Supermarket

 MoneySupermarket.com

My Utility Genius

 myutilitygenius.co.uk

Simply Switch

 simplyswitch.com

Switch Gas and Electric

 switchgasandelectric.com

The Energy Shop

 TheEnergyShop.com

UK Power

 UKPower.co.uk

Unravel It

 Unravelit.com

uSwitch

 uSwitch.com

Which?

 which.co.uk/switch/

Glossary

You can cut through the jargon with this handy glossary.



Annual summary

A written document that a supplier will send you each year. Your annual summary will contain the key facts about your tariff, your energy use over the previous 12 months, and an estimate of your likely costs over the next 12 months. It will also tell you how much you could save by changing to another tariff with your current supplier.

Dead tariff

A variable tariff with no end date that you can no longer sign up to. By 30 June 2014, if you're on a dead tariff that is more expensive than the cheapest equivalent tariff that is still open with your supplier, you'll automatically be moved to that tariff. If your dead tariff isn't more expensive, you won't be moved to another tariff. Your supplier will have to check once a year to make sure that your dead tariff remains cheaper than or the same price as the cheapest equivalent tariff that's still open.

Dual fuel

Where you take both your gas and your electricity from the same supplier.

kWh

A kilowatt hour (kWh) is a unit used to measure the amount of electricity or gas you use. 1 kWh is roughly equivalent to the amount of electricity you'd use if you left a 40W lightbulb on for 25 hours.

Personal projection

An estimate of how much you'll pay for your electricity, gas or both over the next 12 months, assuming you don't switch supplier or tariff. The calculation is standardised across all suppliers, so it can help you compare tariffs. It's based on your personal energy use – either your actual use or, if meter readings aren't available, the best estimate of your energy use. It will include the unit rate, standing charge and discounts that apply to you. It may also include the cost of any extra products or services you take from your supplier (for instance, insurance for boiler maintenance). You'll receive a personal projection before you sign up to a tariff, and one will also be included on communications from your supplier, such as bills or annual summaries.

Standing charge

A fixed cost associated with providing you with energy. It includes things like meter reading, maintenance, and the cost of keeping you connected to the network. It will be displayed in pence per day (p/day).

Tariff

The package of charges and conditions that a supplier offers you for providing electricity, gas or both. This differs from a core tariff as it will include any discounts you receive (such as for managing your account online), and any extra products or services in the package (such as supermarket shopping points).

Tariff Comparison Rate (TCR)

This represents the cost of a tariff for a typical consumer. Suppliers use it when advertising their tariffs – much like mortgage and credit card providers do with APR. It assumes a medium level of energy use, and includes the unit rates, standing charges and discounts that apply to a given tariff. It also includes the value of some extra products and services. You can use it as a starting point when comparing tariffs, as it combines the costs of a tariff into one simple pence per kWh figure. It isn't personalised, so although it can be a quick way to check whether another tariff might be cheaper than your current one, you should follow up and get a personalised comparison through a supplier or price comparison website.

Tariff Information Label

A table that summarises the key features of a tariff. The labels of all tariffs will be available on suppliers' websites and on demand free of charge from 31 March 2014. The labels will contain the tariff name, payment method, standing charge, unit rate, tariff end date and date the price is guaranteed until, as well as exit fees, discounts and any other products or services that are part of the tariff. They'll also contain the Tariff Comparison Rate and an estimated annual cost for a medium energy user.

Unit rate

The amount you pay for each unit (kWh) of gas or electricity used.