

Energy suppliers

With increasing energy prices, being with a competitively priced energy supplier is becoming more and more important.

Simply Switch

SimplySwitch provides a unique service - the opportunity to compare prices and save money on everyday household bills and to switch supplier over the telephone or online at zero cost.

SimplySwitch provides you with information and impartial advice, allowing you to obtain the best deal, one that fits your individual needs and circumstances.

In an age where people are overwhelmed by choice, cynical of suppliers' claims, resilient to their sales advances and find comparing offers a virtual impossibility, SimplySwitch gives the clear, objective advice needed to help make the right choices.

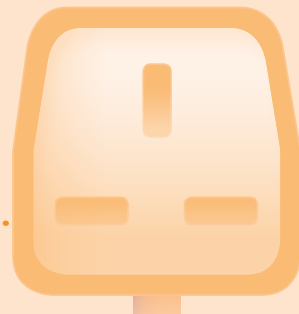
You can contact them on **08000 111 395** or via their website: www.simplyswitch.com/energy

Meter Readings

Whichever energy supplier you are with, it is better that your bills are based on meter readings, not estimates. Contact your supplier to find out how to read your meter and the different ways you can send them your meter readings.



For independent advice and information on energy matters consumers can contact Consumer Direct on **08454 04 05 06** (minicom users on **08451 281384**) or via their website: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk



Switching payment types

You will notice that the tariffs on prepayment meters are more expensive than the tariffs when paying by standard credit or direct debit.

Contact your energy supplier to see if they can transfer you from a prepayment meter to a normal one. Only do this if you feel you can manage your bills and pay on time.

Likewise if you are paying when you receive your bill (standard credit), consider the alternative of paying by monthly direct debit. It may save you money, take up less of your time and balance your payments throughout the year. Try and arrange with your supplier that the direct debit doesn't draw money out of your account at an inconvenient time.

The Switching Process

The switching process between suppliers is not immediate and usually takes around 4-6 weeks.

You will usually have to wait about a month before your new supplier sends you a letter to inform you when your account(s) will be switched. It is important that you take a meter reading of the fuel you are switching and send a copy of the reading to both the new supplier and the supplier you are leaving. If you need help reading your meter, contact either energy supplier.

If you change your mind about switching then you have 14 days to cancel your contract.

'Door Steppers' & Sales Calls

You should only switch suppliers when you are sure that you are getting a competitive deal.



Priority Service Register

If you...

- are of pensionable age or
- have a disability or
- have long term ill health or
- are hearing or visually impaired

...then you can choose from a selection of free services from your electricity or gas supplier.

This includes...

- a password protection scheme.
- quarterly meter readings (your bill will not be based on estimates)
- moving meters (if you cannot access your meter)
- advance notice of scheduled power interruptions and help to provide alternative cooking and heating facilities.
- special controls and adapters to help make appliances and meters easier to use.
- a bill nominee scheme—sending a copy of your bill to a relative, friend or carer so they can check it for you.
- services for visually impaired or hearing impaired customers including information and bills in braille, large print, on audio tape, via text phone or type talk.

To register for these free services

All you need to do is ask your gas or electricity supplier. You can find their telephone number on your latest bill. If you are unsure about doing this, you may wish to ask a friend to speak to the supplier on your behalf – either way your suppliers are obliged by law to help you.



Greening South West Workplaces

The South West Trades Union Congress, supported by the South West Regional Development Agency, is running a project using the reach of trade unions to change the way people work.

- Trade union members can champion environmental issues in the workplace
- The project is training and supporting a network of green reps across the South West
- The project is helping to find practical solutions that reps can bring to the workplace
- Green reps can be the link between staff and management to encourage change through the workforce
- Unions can reach out to new members who feel strongly about the impact on the environment
- Unions can work with employers to improve business performance and reputation



Greening the workplace makes good sense for everyone.

To get involved in greening your workplace speak to your union environmental or green representative – or contact your union or the TUC to find out more about becoming a rep yourself.

For further information contact the South West TUC.

Tel: 0117 947 0521

Email: southwest@tuc.org.uk

www.greenworkplacessouthwest.org.uk



For free, independent and local energy saving advice call the Energy Saving Trust.

Tel: 0800 512 012

Special thanks to Severn Wye Energy Agency for the use of their information in the production of this leaflet.

www.swea.co.uk

All TUC publications may be made available for dyslexic or visually impaired readers, on request, in an agreed electronic format or in accessible formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print, at no extra cost. Contact the South West TUC on 0117 947 0521.



Energy Suppliers and their services



TUC energy awareness

