

Difficulty paying your energy bill

We understand there may be times when you're worried about paying your energy bills. If you're concerned, please tell us as soon as possible on **0345 026 2658**, we're here to help Monday to Friday between 8am and 8pm, and Saturday 8am to 6pm.

We can only help if you let us know there's a problem. We'll work with you to find a solution and we'll always take into account your ability to pay. When looking at your options, we may take account of any relevant information provided by other parties. We could offer the option of:

- A payment plan with regular instalments which helps to spread the cost of your energy. If you have arrears we could also include them in your payment plan. An example of paying this way is a monthly Direct Debit.
- Installing a Pay As You Go meter free of charge as long as it's safe and practical to do so. The meter is a great way to control your costs because you pay for your energy in advance. If you have arrears you can pay them back in instalments through the meter. To find out more go to sse.co.uk/paygo.
- Paying for your energy arrears from your benefit payments with a scheme called Fuel Direct. You'll need to receive at least one of the following benefits to apply: income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit, or Universal Credit.

Disconnection of energy supply for non-payment

Disconnection or 'cutting off' of gas and electricity supplies for non-payment is a last resort. We'll never knowingly disconnect a customer who is having difficulty paying their bills because of ill health, age, disability, severe financial insecurity, or cannot look after their own welfare or others in the household. We'll never disconnect a customer between October and March if we have reason to think that the customer is, or lives with anyone who is of pensionable age or under the age of 16 years.

There are exceptions to the rules above for reasons of essential maintenance, safety, where there's been theft of energy, or damage to metering or energy supply equipment.

Reasons for disconnection

- For non-payment of energy costs, but only as a last resort when we've exhausted all our other options.
- If we can't fit a Pay As You Go meter which was being installed as a last resort payment option. We have to be sure that the meter is safe and practical to use.

Changes to your circumstances

If we use an estimated meter reading to bill you, we try to take into account how much energy you've used in the past. If you have a payment plan with us, like a Direct Debit, we'll calculate your payments in the same way so that you're paying the right amount and we'll review them regularly.

If you know that there'll be changes to your circumstances that will change how much energy you use, please let us know. For example, if there's a new baby in the house it's normal for your energy use to increase. This could mean that your Direct Debit payments would need to be increased so that you're not left with arrears to pay. In addition to checking your payments, we may also have cheaper similar or alternative tariffs to suit you.

You can tell us about any changes by calling us on **0345 026 2658**, we're here to help Monday to Friday between 8am and 8pm and Saturday 8am to 6pm.

Reducing your energy costs

If you're having difficulty with your energy costs, it's helpful to have a think about using your energy more efficiently. There's lots of ways to take action from the little things that don't cost anything to bigger changes like home insulation.

Our team are trained to offer practical advice on how to be energy efficient, we even have a dedicated telephone service called Energyline that can help. You can call us on **0800 072 7201**, we're open Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm. You can also find lots of helpful advice, including information on how you could qualify for any grants on our website at [sse.co.uk/beinggreen](https://www.sse.co.uk/beinggreen).

Here's some energy efficiency tips to get you started:

- Draw the curtains at dusk to keep the heat from the day in your home.
- Turn off any lights you don't need, but make sure you have enough lighting on stairs and hallways.
- By insulating any exposed hot water pipes you could save on your bills.
- Always try to put a full load of washing into your washing machine or tumble dryer. Washing at 30°C instead of a higher temperature uses a lot less energy. If the weather is fine, dry your washing outside.
- Showers are usually much cheaper than baths because they use a lot less water.

Getting help

You should always let us know if you're struggling with your energy bills, there's lots we can do to help. If you need some independent advice, there are other organisations you can contact.

- Energy Saving Trust have advice about reducing energy bills and energy efficiency measures. Visit [energysavingtrust.org.uk](https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) or call them on **0300 123 1234** (England and Wales).
- Home Energy Scotland can help with energy efficiency advice and ideas to trim your energy bills. Visit [energysavingtrust.org.uk](https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) or call them on **0808 808 2282**.
- National Debtline gives independent advice on any debts – visit [nationaldebtline.org](https://www.nationaldebtline.org) or call them on **0800 808 4000**.
- StepChange are a leading debt charity that can help those that are struggling to pay their bills, they can be contacted on their website at [stepchange.org](https://www.stepchange.org) or by calling them on **0800 138 1111**.

Green Deal

Your energy bills may include Green Deal charges and the amount collected is determined by the Green Deal Provider. If you have any queries about your Green Deal or for impartial advice then talk to Energy Savings Advice Service if you're in England or Wales on **0300 123 1234**, or Home Energy Scotland on **0808 808 2282** if you're in Scotland. You can also visit [gov.uk/greendeal](https://www.gov.uk/greendeal).