

# Keeping your energy bills low



Homes for Haringey

[www.homesforharingey.org/money](http://www.homesforharingey.org/money)

## Saving energy at home

Reducing your energy use is an easy way to reduce your energy bills. Here are our top tips:

1. Wash your clothes at 30°C and fill up your washing machine – one full load uses less energy than two half loads.
2. Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.
3. Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
4. Use energy-saving light bulbs. They may be a little more expensive but will last up to 10 times longer than ordinary bulbs. Using one can save you around £55 over the lifetime of the bulb.
5. Don't leave your appliances on standby.
6. Don't leave your laptop or mobile phone on charge unnecessarily.
7. If you turn your heating thermostat down by 1°C, you could cut your heating bill by up to 10 per cent – this could save you around £60 a year! The recommended day time temperature is between 18 to 21°C.
9. If you have a programmer, set your heating and hot water to come on only when required rather than all the time.



The Energy Saving Trust has lots of online tools and tips on saving energy. Call freephone 0800 512 012 or visit [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

10. Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows and check for draughts around windows and doors.

## Check your meter readings

If you pay your bills quarterly, check the meter reading on your bill to see if it is an **actual** meter reading or an **estimate**. If it's an estimate, call your energy supplier and give them the actual reading so you are paying what you have used. If you pay estimate bills for a long time you may end up paying less than the amount you've actually used. You will then have to pay the balance later which could be high.

## Change how you pay

Some energy suppliers offer a discount to customers who pay their bills by direct debit, standing order, a fixed payment budget or a flexible payment scheme. Ask your supplier if you could save money by changing the way you pay for your bills. Remember to check the terms and conditions of any payment scheme your supplier offers before changing the way you pay.

## Is it cheaper to switch supplier? Get extra help

If you're not happy with the amount you're paying your current gas and electricity supplier, you may be able to move to a different deal with the same supplier or switch to a different supplier.

Many fuel companies now operate dual fuel schemes which can save you money if you buy both gas and electricity from just one supplier. Use accredited price comparison websites to work out if you would save money such as [confused.com](http://confused.com) or [switchwithwhich.co.uk](http://switchwithwhich.co.uk).

1. Work out how much you currently pay for your gas and electricity.
2. Check the terms and conditions with your current supplier to see if there is a penalty for cancelling your current contract - this is likely to be the case if you have a fixed term or fixed price contract.
3. Work out what kind of tariff suits you best.
4. Compare the different tariffs from different suppliers.
5. Think about other service aspects such as how the supplier deals with complaints, if they offer any incentives or discounts, or fixed charges.
6. Find out about who to contact and what happens when you switch.

For more information on how to switch energy suppliers, check out our **Factsheet #4: Switching energy suppliers**

The Government, energy suppliers and local authorities all provide grants to help you implement energy saving measures in your home, such as grants for boilers, heating, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation. If you are vulnerable or on a low income, you may even qualify for free or discounted insulation. Contact the following organisations for further advice on this:

### The Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust has a searchable database of grants and schemes plus an online home energy check to find out where you could make savings on your bills.

**Tel: 0800 512 012**

**[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)**

### Home Heat Helpline

The Home Heat Helpline offers advice on energy efficiency and fuel debts to people on a low income. They can also make sure that if you're in one of the groups of people who should get extra protection from disconnection, you're not at risk of being cut off. **Helpline: 0800 33 66 99**

There are several government schemes which offer extra help with higher bills during the winter. Go to **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)** for further details info or call the relevant helpline below:

### Winter Fuel Payment

Call the government helpline: **0845 915 1515**

### Warm Home Discount Scheme Cold Weather Payments

Call the government helpline: **0845 603 9439**

We've published a range of factsheets to help you manage your money better:

Factsheet #1: Opening a bank account

Factsheet #2: Taking control of your finances

Factsheet #3: Keeping your energy bills low

Factsheet #4: Switching energy suppliers

Factsheet #5: Dealing with debt and low cost borrowing

**[www.homesforharingey.org/money](http://www.homesforharingey.org/money)**