

## Thinking about changing your fuel supplier?

Switching supplier is a good idea:

- It could make your bills cheaper – most people can save up to 20% on their energy bills by changing supplier, which could put a few more pounds in your pocket.
- You may want to buy green electricity.
- You may also want to change if you have had problems with your current supplier.

**Be careful:** Suppliers may contact you directly and ask you to switch from your existing supplier and to sign contracts with them. Be cautious of claims made by sales people about the savings you could make. Do not rush into a new contract; you may get a better deal elsewhere. **Do not change supplier if you do not want to.**

### How to choose:

**1. Work out how much fuel you use:** To find cheaper gas and electricity, you need to know how much (how many kilowatts) gas and electricity you use. The cheapest supplier for you might not be the cheapest supplier for the next person – it depends on how much fuel you use. Use your old bills to add up how much electricity and gas you use in a year.

**If you don't have your old bills, phone your supplier and ask them how much you have used in the last year.**

**Write down how much gas and electricity you use in a year here:**

Electricity used in a year \_\_\_\_\_ kWh

Gas used in a year \_\_\_\_\_ kWh

**2. Decide how you want to pay for your fuel,** as this will impact on how much the supplier will charge you. You will usually be charged less if you pay by Direct Debit, or online. If you want to pay a quarterly bill as it arrives, by cash at a paypoint, or by a prepayment meter, you will usually pay more.

**3. Research your options:** there are websites and phone lines that can tell you about different suppliers and how much they charge. Try:

[www.which.co.uk/switch](http://www.which.co.uk/switch)

[www.energyhelpline.com](http://www.energyhelpline.com)

[www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com)

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

[www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com)

or call 01992 822 867

or freephone 0800 074 0745

or freephone 0808 1783 492

or phone 08454 04 05 06

**4. Check with the prospective supplier:**

- How much do they charge per kilowatt based on how you prefer to pay for your fuel?
- Is there a standing charge (some companies do not have a standing charge, but will charge you more for part of the fuel you use)?
- Do these prices include VAT?
- How long are these prices guaranteed?
- How long is the contract for, and is there a charge to end it?
- Where can payments be made?

**5. Compare the options** to find out which supplier is the cheapest for you:

Calculate the cost over a full year: multiply the kilowatts you use in a year with the charge per kilowatt. Remember to include standing charges, or the higher rate for a proportion of the fuel, and VAT.

**Making the switch:**

- Write down your supply number, or S-number (electricity) and meter point reference number (gas) from your bills: this is not the same as your account number.
- Take meter readings, and write them down.
- Phone your chosen new supplier/s and give them all your details. It can take up to 8 weeks for your supply to be switched.
- You will be asked for meter readings: provide them with the date they were taken.

<b>New Electricity Supplier:</b>		
<b>Electricity Supply Number:</b>		
Meter reading when you first phone the new supplier	Meter reading:	Date:
Meter reading when the new supplier takes over the supply	Meter reading:	Date:
<b>New Gas Supplier:</b>		
<b>Gas Meter Point Reference No:</b>		
Meter reading when you first phone the new supplier	Meter reading:	Date:
Meter reading when the supplier takes over the supply	Meter reading:	Date:

## Troubleshooting:

- If you live in a flat, the supplier may mistakenly take over someone else's supply in your building. **To avoid any confusion, make sure your new supplier has your electricity supply number (S-number) and/or gas meter point reference number,** and check that all your details are correct on all the correspondence.
- If you owe your supplier money you cannot change until you have paid your bill.
- If you are being billed by two suppliers at once, call both of them and give them the meter readings and the date you changed from one to the other.
- If you do not receive any bills from anyone, you need to find out why. Call the M number enquiry line for gas and MPAS for electricity to find out who supplies you (numbers at the end). Then call the company who supplies you to ask why you haven't received a bill.
- If you have two electricity supply numbers you may not be able to change supplier. This may be the case if you have electric storage heaters

If you have a complaint and the supplier is not being helpful, contact Citizens Advice consumer service on 08454 04 05 06 for advice on how to take your complaint further.

## Useful numbers:

**M number enquiry line (gas) 0870 608 1524**

**MPAS (electricity) 0845 270 9101**

**Citizens Advice consumer service 08454 04 05 06**