



## NEP Customer FAQ's

### Why switch your energy?

Since the energy supply market was de-regulated there has been intense competition between energy companies offering a variety of tariffs and deals. However millions of people have not taken advantage of these deals and are still paying more than they need for their energy. Switching energy suppliers is a simple action that takes only a few minutes and can save you a lot of money.

The Tariff Switching tool provides a quick and hassle free method for switching energy suppliers as all the hard work is done for you. The amount you save depends on a number of factors:

- The amount of competition in your area
- Pricing policy of your existing supplier
- How much energy you use
- How you pay your bill

### What details do I need to switch my gas and electricity?

Only a few details are required for switching energy suppliers if you don't have all this information to hand you can still switch (\* = required information).

#### Postcode\*

As energy prices vary by area, we need to know the postcode. This is to determine the best energy offer available to you.

#### Current Supplier\*

This information will help us identify the tariff that you are currently on. As prices vary by supplier, we need to do this so that we can calculate the savings that you make by moving to a new supplier or tariff.

Your supplier's name will be at the top of a recent bill. Otherwise, to find out who your current gas supplier is, you can contact the Meter Point Number Helpline on 0870 608 1524.

#### Current payment method\*

This information will help us identify the tariff that you are currently on. As prices vary depending upon how you pay your bill, we need to do this so that we can calculate the savings that you can make by moving to a new supplier or tariff. Typical forms of payment include direct debit, pre-payment meters, quarterly payments and payment on bill.



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### **Annual bill amount**

To identify the tariff best suited to your needs we need to know how your energy consumption. You can either provide this information directly or provide us with your annual bill. From the combined details of your annual bill, current supplier and current payment method, we can calculate your annual consumption.

### **Energy Usage**

To match you to the tariff best suited to your needs we need to know how much energy you consume. Your usage will roughly equate to the size of your property. Small flats are generally low users, larger flats and houses medium users and large houses high users. If you only use gas for cooking you should enter low user for gas.

### **What should I take into consideration when choosing a new supplier?**

There are multiple factors that you should consider in working out which product and supplier is right for you. These include prices, payment options, contract terms, and any other benefits and services on offer.

## **How does the transferring process work?**

Once you have entered your information into the appropriate fields a results table will display tariffs and potential savings. If you have signed up to a new supplier your details will be passed onto them and they will organize the switch. Confirmation details will be sent out to you containing contract information for your new supplier/tariff including price you will pay and the terms and conditions of supply.

After signing up to a new energy supplier or tariff, you are entitled to a 'cooling off' period of between 7 to 14 days. Within a month you will be given a supply transfer date by your new supplier. You should provide a meter reading and submit it your new supplier. They will then contact your old provider to arrange a final bill and close your account.

Your new supplier will use exactly the same wires, pipes and meters that you currently use. The only thing that you will notice is that your bill will come from your new supplier.

## **How do I find out who my current supplier is?**

Check any recent energy bills - your supplier's name will normally be at the top of the bill. Otherwise you can contact the Meter Point Number Helpline on 0870 608 1524. If you are a Private Tenant you should contact your landlord or letting agency.



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## What tariffs types are there?

### Environmental / Green Tariffs

The market for green energy is growing rapidly and we want to encourage more people to make the switch. These tariffs let you do your bit for the environment. There are a number of ways in which they work but there are two main options:

- Where a portion of your bill is paid into a fund, which invests either in renewable energy projects (such as solar power, hydro-electric generation or wind farms), or in reforestation projects.
- Where the supplier matches the amount of energy that you buy from them, with an equivalent amount of energy from renewable resources.

The specific details of individual schemes may be found on the relevant tariff results pages. In general, these tariffs will be more expensive than the cheapest deals around because Green energy normally costs more to produce. In most cases however, if you have not yet switched supplier, you should still be able to save money whilst helping support the environment. Worth a look!

### Internet Only Tariffs

These tariffs are available only over the Internet. You will typically be able to handle your whole account with the supplier online.

### No Standing Charges

Most energy bills have two components: a standing charge which you pay irrespective of the amount of energy you use, and price for each unit of kilowatt hour (kWh) of energy that you consume. With No Standing Charge tariffs, you only pay for the energy that you use. Many suppliers now offer both options.

No Standing Charge tariffs usually have split unit rates where the price of each unit of energy consumed varies with your annual usage. In these cases, the Standing Charge is usually recovered through the higher priced units you consume first.





## What contract types are there?

There are two basic types of contract; rolling contracts or fixed term contracts:

### A rolling contract

(Sometimes also called an evergreen contract) - is one that carries on until you cancel it. During the period of the contract, the price of electricity can go up or down in accordance with the terms of the contract, unless the price was noted as being capped or fixed and in which case this will relate to the specified period. You can end this type of contract at any time on 28 days notice if you are moving to another supplier, or 2 days notice if you are moving house. Since mid 2008 more and more rolling contracts have an early termination fee that is payable should you leave the particular tariff within a specified period. You will see this clearly marked with any information related to the tariff.

### A fixed term contract

This is given over a period of perhaps one or two years. If you terminate a fixed term contract early, you may be liable to pay an early termination fee. In most instances a supplier will only charge an early termination fee if you leave the tariff and move to another supplier or tariff. If you are moving home you will not have to pay an early termination fee.

## What happens if my new supplier increases its prices or changes contract terms?

The supplier must provide at least 10 days notice in writing to announce significant changes in the terms of contract. You will then have a further 14 days to decide and let your existing supplier know whether you intend to end your contract and switch to another supplier. If you do decide to move within this timeframe, you will continue to be billed for the energy you use at the old contract terms until such time as you transfer to your new supplier. You will not be liable for any cancellation fees.

## What services are available for elderly, disabled and chronically sick customers?

All energy suppliers are required, under the terms of their licenses, to produce and comply with a Code of Practice that sets out services for elderly, disabled and chronically ill customers. Suppliers must provide additional help to such disadvantaged customers on request. Ofgem is responsible for monitoring adherence to this code.

You can get special help if you are a domestic customer and either a pensioner, disabled or chronically ill. There are also special services for the blind and deaf. If you qualify for special assistance, we recommend you inform your supplier of your status.



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If you qualify, you may be able to obtain special arrangements with respect to the use and positioning of your meter, additional security measures associated with identifying anyone working for the supplier who enters your home, and with respect to where your bills are sent. Suppliers are also required not to disconnect vulnerable customers, with outstanding bills, during the winter months.

### Who is responsible for safety and supply interruptions?

Your supplier must provide you with a 24-hour emergency number which you should call if you think there is a safety problem with your meter, the electricity cables, gas lines or other equipment running into your home.

Your supply company is not actually responsible for the wires, cables and pipes that supply energy into your home; this is the responsibility of the local distribution company. If you have a power cut which is not restored within 24 hours, then you are entitled to claim compensation.

### What should I do if there is a gas leak?

The company responsible for all gas emergencies is Transco. Their national Freephone number for emergencies is 0800 111 999.

### Where can I go for further information?

**Consumer Focus** is a government body representing the interests of energy consumers in the UK, offering free help and advice to consumers. If you have a query or an unresolved complaint with an energy supplier contact them on

Call them on: **020 7799 7900**

Visit their website: [www.consumerfocus.org.uk](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk)

Or contact them in writing: Consumer Focus, 4th Floor, Artillery House, London, SW1P 1RT

**Ofgem** stands for the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. Ofgem was established as an independent regulator of the gas and electricity industries and was set up by the government to protect the interests of all gas and electricity customers.

Call them on: **020 7901 7000**

Visit their website: [www.ofgem.gov.uk](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk) or by post: Ofgem, 9 Millbank, London SW1P 3GE



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