

A blue speech bubble containing the text 'citizens advice' in white.

**citizens
advice**

Gateshead

A woman with blonde hair tied back is sitting on a grey sofa, smiling and looking down at a laptop. A brown dachshund dog is resting its head on her shoulder. The background is a bright, out-of-focus interior.

A guide to switching energy supplier in 2023



Types of Tariffs

As energy prices came down in July, we are expecting switching suppliers to become an option for consumers. This is a guide on what to expect when you switch energy supplier. There is also more information on our [website](#).

There are two main types of tariffs that suppliers offer, a Standard Variable Tariff or a Fixed Tariff.

Standard Variable Tariff

- The price of this tariff can change, based on the Price Cap. This means that if the Price Cap goes up, your energy costs will go up.
- Suppliers must give 30 days' notice when they are changing the costs of this tariff.
- There are no exit fees with a Standard Variable Tariff, which means it does not cost if you want to move to another tariff, or if you want to switch supplier.

Fixed tariff

- What they charge you per kWh, and for the standing charge, will be set for a fixed amount of time.
- These prices will not change until the tariff ends.
- There may be exit fees, which means you will have to pay if you want to leave the tariff early.
- Regardless of the type of tariff, you should always check the Terms and Conditions before agreeing to a tariff. Sometimes they can include things like agreeing to have a Smart Meter.

If you want some advice about tariffs you can contact:

Our local office



Gateshead

0808 278 7902

Our national service



Consumer Service

0808 223 11 33



Before switching

Before you switch to a supplier, it is worth checking the following things:

How much do they charge for the standing charge and per kWh of energy used?

- Usually when you agree to switch a supplier will give you a monthly cost, based on the gas and electricity you are expected to use each month.
- This is always estimated, so if you use more you will have to pay more.
- It is always worth checking how much they for the standing charge and per kWh of gas and electricity and comparing this to your current supplier.
- This will tell you whether the new deal is cheaper than what you are currently paying.

Does the new supplier offer the Warm Home Discount?

- If you are currently eligible for the Warm Home Discount, then you may need to see if the supplier you want to switch to offers this.
- Not every supplier does offer this, so it is worth checking.

Will your Smart Meter work?

- First generation (SMETS1) Smart Meters could lose their functionality when you switch supplier.
- This means they may no longer work as a Smart Meter, and you would be responsible for submitting monthly meter readings.
- Check with your new supplier to see if your Smart Meter will be affected by switching.

Does the new supplier take on other types of meters?

- If you have an Economy 7, Economy 10, or another type of uncommon meter check with the new supplier to see if they offer this before agreeing to switch.
- Some suppliers do not always offer tariffs for these types of meters.

Do you have the terms and conditions of the new tariff?

- Sometimes there can be terms and conditions, such as agreeing to have a Smart Meter installed. If this is in the terms and conditions of your tariff, you may be liable to have one.



Finding energy suppliers

Speak to suppliers directly

- You can speak to Energy Suppliers directly, to see if they are offering you any new fixed or variable tariffs.
- Suppliers would be able to tell you all the tariffs that are available to you.

Speak to price comparison companies

- Price Comparison Companies can help you find deals with other suppliers.
- They will compare the prices that are being offered by suppliers, and help you find the best one available to you.
- We would recommend using an Ofgem Accredited Price Comparison Company.
- These are companies that must follow a Confidence Code set out by Ofgem.

Ofgem Accredited Price Comparison Companies:

- [Energylinx](#) 0333 300 1620
- [The Energy Shop](#) 020 3951 8617
- [Money Supermarket](#) 0333 123 1983
- [My Utility Genius](#) 020 3468 0461
- [Simply Switch](#) 0800 011 1395
- [Switch Gas and Electric](#) 03333 700 600
- [Quotezone](#) They are online only.
- [Unravel It](#) They are online only.
- [Uswitch](#) They are online only.

However, it is always worth checking the list on the Ofgem [website](#), as they may change or update it.

Find out other information about the supplier

- It is always worth doing some research about a new supplier.
- Some suppliers may offer cheaper tariffs but may not be known for their customer service skills, or their ability to handle complaints.

Citizens Advice has a ranking system for energy suppliers on our [website](#). This is based on client feedback, and the rankings are based on:

- How many complaints a supplier has.
- How easy they are to contact.
- How clear their bills are.
- How easy it is to switch.
- Their customer guarantees.



Switching rights

How long should a switch take?

Switching energy supplier should take no more than 21 days, and sometimes it is quicker than this. If it takes longer, then you should speak to the new supplier and ask them why. If they cannot give you a clear reason, then you should be entitled to £30 compensation.

Switch blocked

One of the most common reasons for a switch not taking place is the previous supplier has blocked the switch. This means they have prevented your new supplier from taking over your gas and electricity supplies.

If this has happened you would not be entitled to the £30 compensation mentioned above, and you would need to speak to your old supplier. They should be able to explain:

- Whether they have blocked the switch.
- The reasons why they blocked the switch.
- What can be done to allow you to switch.

One of the most common reasons for a supplier blocking a switch is that you have a debt with them. If this is the case, you may need to raise a formal complaint and negotiate a repayment plan with them.

For more help with this, you can either speak to:

- Citizens Advice Gateshead on 0808 278 7902
- Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 11 33

We also have some information about switching in debt on our [website](#).

Cooling off period

From the day you tell a new supplier that you would like to switch to them, you have a 14-day cooling off period. If you change your mind during this time, you can contact the new supplier and let them know. This will prevent the switch from happening, and you will stay with your old supplier on the tariff you had with them.

If you tell the supplier, and they still take your supply, then this could be classed as an Erroneous Transfer. This means you can raise a complaint with the supplier and ask them to move you back to your old supplier.