Need a little extra help?
A guide to the services we can offer

bringing energy to life
Welcome

When it comes to managing your energy account and keeping yourself safe and warm, there are times when a little extra help can make all the difference.

This booklet gives you important information about the help we can provide. These additional services can:

• Make it easier for us to communicate with each other
• Keep your energy supply on when you need it
• Keep your home safe and warm
• Be useful if you’re worried about paying
• Signpost you to other agencies that can help

While we do everything we can to make our services as accessible as possible, we’re dedicated to providing extra help to our most vulnerable customers.

For example, anyone who is vulnerable because of age, chronic illness, disability or personal circumstances is eligible can apply to go onto our Priority Services Register.

For example, you could apply if you’re: a pensioner, living with children or young people under 18, disabled, chronically ill, blind or partially sighted, deaf or hearing impaired or bedridden. It doesn’t matter if these conditions are permanent or temporary. We can still support you. We can also provide extra help in other circumstances. Just get in touch.
Contents

Communicating with each other  3
Clear, easy to understand letters
Account Nominee Scheme
If you’re hard of hearing
If you’re blind or partially sighted

Your energy supply  6
Are you dependent on your energy supply?
Hard to get to your prepayment meter?
Reading your meters

Keeping your home safe and warm  8
Security at home
Arranging a password
Free Gas Safety checks
Carbon Monoxide
Keeping warm

Financial support and advice  12
Keeping your bills down
Different ways to pay for your energy
Worried about money?
Impartial financial support and advice

Other useful information  16
Interested?

Please give us a call on 0345 034 7474 or visit our website to fill out the form at sparkenergy.co.uk/extrahelp so that we can register you. It’s completely free and confidential, and means you’ll always get the help you need, especially in an emergency. Please be aware, your water supplier might also have this type of register. For more information, please contact them directly.
Communicating with each other

Clear, easy to understand letters

Let us know how you would like us to get in touch with you, we can communicate with you in the way that is best for you:

• We can send you bills and communications in adapted formats such as large print, Braille and audio
• We can arrange for your monthly bills to be read out to you if you prefer
• We can arrange for communications to be sent to an authorised friend or family member, who can act on your behalf to manage your accounts
• We can send you documents in other languages if English is not your primary language

We know it isn’t always possible for you to call us – especially if you’re deaf, have hearing loss, or find it difficult to talk on the phone so we have a range of ways you can get in touch – they are shown on the back page.

Account Nominee Scheme

If you would like to nominate another person, such as your carer or next of kin, to manage your account for you, we can arrange this with your permission.

You just need to ensure that you choose someone that you trust and who understands your needs. We can also arrange to re-direct any bills or statements to a different address if you would like somebody else to manage your account.
Communicating with each other

If you’re hard of hearing

If you have difficulty hearing it may be easier for you if we put all information in writing, either by letter or email. Just send any enquiries to support@sparkenergy.co.uk

Alternatively, you can nominate a trusted friend or family member to speak on your behalf. Just let us know how you would like to communicate with us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

If you’re blind or partially sighted

We can arrange for large print and Braille versions of letters and bills to be sent to you. If it is easier for us to explain your bill verbally, then we can arrange for our Customer Services team to call you once a month or quarter.

You can even nominate someone else such as a close relative or carer to receive your bill or any correspondence from us.
If you're hard of hearing
If you have difficulty hearing it may be easier for you if we put all information in writing, either by letter or email. Just send any enquiries to support@sparkenergy.co.uk
Alternatively, you can nominate a trusted friend or family member to speak on your behalf. Just let us know how you would like to communicate with us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

If you're blind or partially sighted
We can arrange for large print and Braille versions of letters and bills to be sent to you. If it is easier for us to explain your bill verbally, then we can arrange for our Customer Services team to call you once a month or quarter.
You can even nominate someone else such as a close relative or carer to receive your bill or any correspondence from us.
Your energy supply

Are you dependent on your energy supply?

If you have priority needs, it is even more important that you remain on supply.

If you’re using a prepayment meter however, we cannot prevent you from self-disconnecting, as the meters will shut themselves off when the Emergency Credit runs out.

If you’re dependent on a constant power supply for health or medical reasons, we would recommend a different type of meter gets installed in your home. Please contact us to discuss alternatives to ensure that you do not risk going off supply.

It’s best to let us know if you have any medical equipment that relies on a constant supply of electricity and gas, as we will advise your doctor or social worker and ask for other arrangements that could be used if the supply to your home is interrupted.

If your supply of gas is disconnected for safety reasons we will do our best to facilitate alternative heating and cooking facilities for you. It is rare for unplanned supply interruptions to occur and we will always give you as much warning as possible.

With your permission, we’ll also pass your details to your local Gas Transporter or Electricity Distribution Company. This means that they can support you if there’s a power cut and give you advance notice of any essential work that could disrupt your supply.
Hard to get to your prepayment meter?

Our new smart meters can be topped up remotely, which can be really useful if you have mobility issues and can’t get to the meters in order to plug in a key or a card and top up.

You can also get a free in-home display which can be positioned anywhere in the house, which is really handy.

If you cannot reach your prepayment meter because of a disability, you need to ensure that you are on our Priority Services Register and we’ll arrange a smart meter installation for you.

Reading your meters

Sometimes meters are installed in the most awkward of places. Some meters were installed years ago and while the house has changed around them, the meters have become hard to access.

If there is nobody over the age of 18 at your home that is able to read the meter, let us know and we will arrange to send a meter reader to do this for you until your smart meters are installed to ensure accurate billing.
Keeping your home safe and warm

Security at home

All too often you’ll read news reports that there are people who take advantage of vulnerable customers. You should always take care and be even more aware when letting people into your home.

All representatives from Spark and our associated meter reading or operating partners will have a valid photographic ID badge.

They will immediately be able to tell you who they are and what the purpose of their visit is. If they cannot provide this information, do NOT let them in – if in doubt, don’t open the door.

If you’re worried at all about who’s at the door always give our Customer Services team a call on 0345 034 7474 and we’ll be able to confirm their identity.

Arranging a password

All of our customers are entitled to arrange a password. You can use this to verify the identity of our representatives when they visit your home.

This password can be arranged with any member of our Customer Services team and changed as often as you like.
Free Gas Safety checks

If any of the adults in your home are disabled, chronically sick or of pensionable age, you are entitled to a free safety check of your gas appliances every year.

If you are in private rented accommodation, it is your landlord’s responsibility to offer you a free gas safety check.

To be eligible for an free annual gas safety check, you must own your home and get a means tested benefit such as Pension Credit or Income Support. Also, one of the following must apply:

- you live alone
- you live with other adults who are aged over 60, disabled and / or chronically sick
- you live with at least one other child under five

Carbon Monoxide

If you smell gas, or suspect that there has been an escape of other fumes such as carbon monoxide, then you need to call the Gas Emergency Service free 24 hour national emergency number on 0800 111 999. Minicom users can call 0800 371 787.

Whilst you are waiting for an engineer, there are a number of safety measures you can take:

- Do not smoke
- Do not use naked flames
- Do not turn electrical switches on or off
- Turn off the gas mains supply at the meter
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the house
Keeping your home safe and warm

Keeping warm

It’s important to ensure that you maintain a normal room temperature in your home throughout the winter.

You need to maintain a room temperature of 21-24 degrees Celsius to ensure safety and comfort throughout the colder months.

Heating bills do creep up as the temperature drops, because it takes more energy to heat your house, but these should even up in summer. For help and advice on managing your bills, contact us.

Hypothermia is a real danger for the elderly or infirm; mild symptoms include shivering, tiredness and confusion. But as the temperature drops, shivering becomes more violent and a person is likely to become delirious, struggle to breathe and may end up unconscious.

If you are at home for long periods of the day, set your heating on a longer timer. Also, remember to wear layers of warm clothing, try to remain reasonably active and eat one hot meal a day. Keeping your fluids up with lots of hot drinks can also be useful.

If you think that somebody may be suffering from hypothermia, you need to:

- Call an ambulance immediately
- Ensure that they are wearing warm, dry clothes
- Wrap them in layers of thin blankets
- Do not be tempted to give them a hot water bottle, place them in front of the fire or feed them alcohol – they need to warm up gradually
Keeping warm

It's important to ensure that you maintain a normal room temperature in your home throughout the winter. You need to maintain a room temperature of 21-24 degrees Celsius to ensure safety and comfort throughout the colder months.

Heating bills do creep up as the temperature drops, because it takes more energy to heat your house, but these should even up in summer. For help and advice on managing your bills, contact us.

Hypothermia is a real danger for the elderly or infirm; mild symptoms include shivering, tiredness, and confusion. But as the temperature drops, shivering becomes more violent and a person is likely to become delirious, struggle to breathe, and may end up unconscious.

If you are at home for long periods of the day, set your heating on a longer timer. Also, remember to wear layers of warm clothing, try to remain reasonably active, and eat one hot meal a day. Keeping your fluids up with lots of hot drinks can also be useful.

If you think that somebody may be suffering from hypothermia, you need to:

• Call an ambulance immediately
• Ensure that they are wearing warm, dry clothes
• Wrap them in layers of thin blankets
• Do not be tempted to give them a hot water bottle, place them in front of the fire, or feed them alcohol – they need to warm up gradually
Financial support and advice

Keeping your bills down

One way to cope with bills is to make your home as energy efficient as possible. We have a range of energy saving advice on our website and our Customer Services team will also be able to provide free advice.

If you have priority needs, you may also be eligible for certain government grants for heating and insulation improvements. Details for all government grants can be found at www.direct.gov.uk

We’ll do everything we can to help you, but if you would like any independent advice then you may want to try the Citizens Advice consumer service. This provides free, confidential and impartial advice on consumer issues.

Visit www.adviceguide.org.uk or call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 040 506.
Different ways to pay for your energy

There are different ways to pay for your energy. The options open to you depend very much on the type of meter you have. However, we may be able to replace your meter depending on what you need.

Here’s the different types of meter and payment methods:

**Traditional prepayment meters:** You’ll top up your gas and electricity using a card or key. You’ll need to take your card or key to a local shop, supermarket or petrol stations displaying the PayPoint logo and then pop it in your meter to top up. Depending on your mobility, this might be a challenge.

**Smart meters:** You can pay in prepayment mode or in credit mode. If you’re in prepayment mode you can top up using smart cards at your local Paypoint outlet or you’ll be able to top up online, over the phone or by using an app.

If you’re in credit mode, the best way to pay us is by setting up a Direct Debit which will take a steady monthly amount from your bank each month.

**Credit meters:** If you have a normal credit meter (these are the most common across Britain) you can also set up a monthly Direct Debit which is a hassle-free way of paying for your energy. We can set this up for you on the phone, online or via our app.

Please contact us to discuss the various ways to pay and to ensure that you are happy with your energy service.
Financial support and advice

Worried about money?

Don’t worry about the balance, don’t stress about your latest bill. If you are worried about paying, it’s really important that you talk to us – we’re here to help.

When you contact us we’ll do our very best to offer you a solution that meets your needs and allows you to continue getting your energy supply from us whilst keeping your debt as low as possible. We’ll always take into account your ability to pay.

How we can help: We’ll always be able to work out a payment plan which means you’ll pay back any debt you owe over a longer period of time. If you’re unable to pay the full amount, this is often the best solution.

We can also install a pre-payment meter, which will help you budget effectively and help repay any outstanding debt at an rate that we agree, whilst giving you tools to help manage and reduce your ongoing energy usage.

Alternatively, if you receive means-tested benefits, you may be able to pay for your energy arrears using a scheme called Fuel Direct. You can find out more about this by contacting your Jobcentre Plus (or your pension centre). You’ll need to be receiving at least one of the following benefits: Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Income Support; Pension Credit; or Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance.
Impartial financial support and advice

You can also get free independent advice from other agencies:

**StepChange Debt Charity**
www.stepchange.org
0800 138 1111

**Citizens Advice**
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Telephone: 08454 04 05 06
Textphone: 18001 08454 04 05 05

**National Debtline**
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
Telephone: 0808 808 4000

**Energy Supply Ombudsman**
www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk
Telephone: 0330 440 1624
Textphone: 0330 440 1600
Other useful information

Not happy with our service?

If you’re unhappy with our service, please let us know immediately so we can sort things out. It’s really important that you’re happy and satisfied with the service you receive – just call us on **0345 130 8355** from your landline or mobile.

Our Account Managers will find solutions to most problems quickly for you, in most cases it’ll be the same day. We’ll also record your complaint to help us improve in the future.

Need some more advice?

At any stage of your complaint you can get clear, free and impartial advice on your energy account from Citizens Advice by calling **03454 040506 (03454 040505 Cymraeg)**.

**Ombudsman Services: Energy** is a free, independent arbiter, specialising in resolving energy customer complaints if no agreement can be made between the customer and supplier after eight weeks. Any decision they make is final and binding for the energy supplier.

Visit [www.ombudsman-services.org/energy](http://www.ombudsman-services.org/energy) for more information, or contact them on **0330 440 1624 (0330 440 1600 by text phone)**. You can also email them or write to them at: Energy Ombudsman, PO Box 966, Warrington, WA4 9DF.
Other independent advice

### General advice about being an energy customer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adviser</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice</td>
<td>Call 08454 04 05 06 or textphone: 18001 08454 04 05 05 you can also visit <a href="http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### For elderly customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adviser</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age UK</td>
<td>Call 0800 169 8787 or visit <a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk">www.ageuk.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Energy saving advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adviser</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy Saving Trust</td>
<td>Call 0800 512 012 or visit <a href="http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk">www.energysavingtrust.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm Front</td>
<td>0800 316 2805 or textphone 0800 072 0156 or visit <a href="http://www.warmfront.co.uk">www.warmfront.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Home Heat Helpline</td>
<td><a href="http://www.homeheathelpline.org.uk">www.homeheathelpline.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### If you’re hard of hearing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adviser</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal National Institute for the deaf</td>
<td>Call 0808 808 0123 or Textphone 0808 808 9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action on hearing loss</td>
<td><a href="http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk">www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### If you’re partially sighted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adviser</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RNIB</td>
<td>Call 0303 123 9999 or visit <a href="http://www.rnib.org.uk">www.rnib.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Save time, visit sparkenergy.co.uk

Manage your account  
Give meter readings
Get your statements  
Tell us if you’re moving
Make a payment  
And handy live chat too

If you’d like to talk, our call centre is UK-based and you can find us on Facebook and Twitter too.

Email us  
support@sparkenergy.co.uk

Call us  
0345 034 7474  
8am–8pm weekdays  
9am–2pm Saturdays

Live chat  
www.sparkenergy.co.uk

Say hello  
Facebook and Twitter –  
@SparkEnergyUK

For full terms & conditions please visit  
www.sparkenergy.co.uk

Ettrick Riverside, Dunsdale Road, Selkirk TD7 5EB