

Energy bill help



Energy suppliers are offering some help to those who may struggle to pay bills as a result of the coronavirus pandemic – both prepay and credit meter customers.

Topping up prepaid energy may be difficult if self-isolating, but some firms will help

The Government and energy suppliers have [agreed to new emergency measures to help prepayment customers](#) unable to top up during the pandemic, including posting cards loaded with emergency credit to those who are self-isolating, adding discretionary credit to your meter, and allowing you to nominate someone to top up for you.

Regulator Ofgem has also written to all suppliers, saying it expects them to "take proactive measures to support prepayment meter customers, including customers in vulnerable circumstances".

If you can't leave home to top up at your usual shop, Ofgem suggests you arrange for a trusted person to take your card and do it for you (it may need disinfecting first), and leave your meter box unlocked if it's outside your home.

And if you can afford it, and you're not self-isolating already, energy firms are encouraging people to try and top up a little more than usual each time to try and build up some credit.

Ultimately, suppliers will deal with issues on a case-by-case basis, so the best thing you can do if you have to self-isolate or are struggling to pay your bill due to coronavirus is to contact your provider as soon as you can.

Here's what the prepay energy providers have committed to so far (we'll update this table as we hear more):

Help for prepaid energy customers

Supplier	What can it do?	How to get help (1)
British Gas	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>If you're in isolation and you think you'll use up your balance and emergency credit, contact British Gas and it has said it'll find a solution on a case-by-case basis. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0333 202 9802
EDF	<p><i>EDF says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>EDF has advised people who self-isolate to ask friends and family to help you top up. Where this is not possible, it says it can deliver 'preloaded' cards and keys if you need to self-isolate – this balance will then be collected back at a "suitable rate" later. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0333 200 5100
E.on	<p><i>E.on says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home or send an engineer to top up your meter.</i></p> <p>It says if your electricity meter falls below 50p of emergency credit, or you're off supply for gas, it can either send a card or key in the post, or it will send an engineer round to top up for you. However, it advises to top up a little extra or asking a trusted person to help in order to prepare for self-isolation. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0345 052 0000
Npower	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>Npower has said it is looking at increasing emergency credit to £45 to help those self-isolating. It also advises topping up more than usual in advance if you can or asking a trusted person to help. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0800 073 3000
Scottish Power	<p><i>We've yet to hear back from Scottish Power – however it has published guidance on its website.</i></p> <p>Scottish Power has advised people who need to self-isolate to ask a friend, neighbour or family member to top up for, and to add more credit to your meter than normal.</p>	Call 0800 027 0072

SSE	<p><i>SSE says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>It's encouraging customers to keep at least 14 days' worth of credit on their meter, and says it can help by reducing any debt repayments people are making through the meter. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0345 026 2658
Ovo (2)	<p><i>Hasn't committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>Ovo is advising people to ask friends, family or neighbours to top up for you – it urges you to disinfect your card before handing it to anyone else. It's also set up a dedicated team to help those in danger of losing supply. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0330 102 7517
Bulb	<p><i>Bulb says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>Bulb has advised people who self-isolate to ask friends and family to help you top up. Where this is not possible, it says you can pay online and a preloaded card will be delivered. See its FAQ.</p>	Call 0300 303 0635
Robin Hood Energy (3)	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>It's advising customers to top up meters more than usual, if you are able, and will always provide an "emergency support function" for prepaid users. It also told us it's working up a number of plans to help anyone struggling to pay or top up. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0800 030 4567
Co-op Energy	<p><i>Co-op is now run by Octopus Energy, which has told us it is working through its guidance and will update us.</i></p>	Call 0800 093 7547
E Energy	<p><i>We've yet to hear back from E Energy.</i></p>	Call 0333 103 9575
Green Network Energy	<p><i>Green Network Energy has told us it is currently working through its guidance to customers and will update us.</i></p>	Call 0800 520 0202
Green Star Energy	<p><i>Green Star Energy says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>It has advised people who self-isolate to ask friends and family to help you top up. Where this is not possible, it can arrange for a preloaded</p>	Call 0800 012 4510

	card to be delivered to you. See its FAQ .	
Omni Energy	<p><i>Omni Energy says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home..</i></p> <p>However, it says it's not needed. It advises those who can top in advance and build up credit on the meter, or ask a family member or friend to take their key or card to the shop for you. It also says it has emergency credit to maintain supply.</p>	Call 0113 457 3219
Utility Warehouse	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>Utility Warehouse has advised its customers to top up a bit extra – it recommends having at least two week's energy on your meter. It also suggests identifying a trusted third-party who can pick up your top up card or key and take it to a store in case you're unable to leave your home.</p>	Call 0333 777 3247
Utilita	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>However, Utilita's main focus is smart prepayment, which allows people to top up remotely. If you've a non-smart meter, it advises to top up more than usual or ask a friend or family member to help. It also says it has called all its customers over the age of 80 and advised them of how to top up.</p>	Call 0345 207 2000

On a standard credit meter? Help's also available

The Government has also moved to help those on standard credit meters that are struggling.

Most importantly, your supply won't be cut off – disconnections of standard credit meters have been completely suspended. What's more, all energy suppliers have agreed to provide support to anyone in financial distress, which can include debt repayments and bill payments being reassessed, reduced or paused.

Exactly what help suppliers will offer will depend on your individual circumstances, but here's what measures firms have told us they can offer some customers:

On a credit meter? What firms are offering some customers

Supplier	Delay bill due dates	Remove late payment charges	Allow repayment over longer periods	Reassess monthly payment	Offer alternative ways to pay	How to get help
British Gas	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	See FAQs or call 0333 202 9802
EDF	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	See FAQs or call 0333 200 5100
E.on	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	See FAQs or call 0345 052 0000
Npower	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	See FAQs or call 0800 073 3000
Scottish Power	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	See FAQs or call 0800 027 0072
SSE	Hasn't committed to any specific measures, but will offer help on case-by-case basis					See FAQs or call 0345 070 7373
Bulb	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	See FAQs or call 0300 303 0635
Co-op Energy (1)	Hasn't committed to any specific measures, but will offer help on a case-by-case basis					See its statement or call 0808 164 1088
Octopus Energy	Hasn't committed to any specific measures, but will offer help on a case-by-case basis					See its statement or call 0808

						164 1088
Ovo Energy	Hasn't committed to any specific measures, but will offer help on a case-by-case basis					See FAQs or call 0330 303 5063
Shell Energy	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	See FAQs or call 0330 094 5800
Small suppliers	Though some have committed to things such as not increasing direct debit payments or offering more flexible payments, most suppliers haven't committed to any specific measures, but will offer help on a case-by-case basis.					See supplier contact details
Whether you're on a standard credit meter or a prepayment meter, energy suppliers are urging you to contact them via email or live chat first, where possible, with any non-urgent queries, to keep phone lines free for those with serious issues or in vulnerable situations. (1) Co-op Energy's response is handled by Octopus Energy, which now runs the brand.						

Do a [whole of market comparison](#) via our Cheap Energy Club to see how much you could save by switching – many can save over £340/yr by switching from the average Big Six standard tariff.

Need extra support? Sign up to the Priority Service Register

Vulnerable customers (see who counts below) can also sign up to the Priority Services Register with their supplier or network operator. If you're on the register, you'll be eligible for certain free services, including:

- Advanced notice of planned power cuts
- Priority support in an emergency (such as alternative heating facilities if your supply is interrupted)
- Get communication sent by your supplier shared with someone you've nominated (such as family or carer)
- Arrangements to ensure it is safe for you to use a prepayment meter if you have one. If not, you may get a credit meter for free or get your meter moved for you
- Meter reading services at regular intervals, if you or a nominated person can't take a reading
- [Who can join the Priority Service Register?](#)

You sign up to the Priority Services Register if:

- You're of pensionable age
- You're disabled or chronically sick
- You have a long-term medical condition
- You have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs

- You're in a vulnerable situation (ie, you can't top up prepayment due to injury, or mental health conditions that may impact understanding of bills)
See the energy regulator Ofgem's website for [more info on the Priority Service Register](#).