Energy Toolkit

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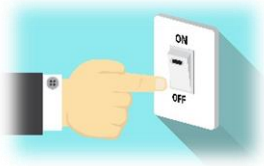
Energy efficiency in the home

It's important that we don't waste energy in our homes, as this can cost a lot. Wasting energy can also harm the environment.

There are many ways that we can save energy. Here are some top tips:

Make sure to turn lights off when you leave a room.



Switch to low energy LED bulbs. These use much less electricity and last much longer.

Unplug or switch devices off at the wall and only charge phones for as long as is necessary. Items plugged in (even on standby) still use electricity.

Boiling a full kettle uses a lot of energy, so just boil enough water for what you need.

Cooking in a microwave or air fryer is cheaper than an oven as it uses less power and takes less time to cook. Slow cookers are also more energy efficient than hob or oven cooking. They take several hours to cook food but use very little electricity to do so.

Open your oven door as little as possible. It loses heat every time it's opened. Once you've finished cooking, open the oven door and let the excess heat out to warm your kitchen.

The smaller food is cut up, the faster it will cook, which means you'll use less energy to cook the same amount of food.

Always make sure the fridge door is closed fully.

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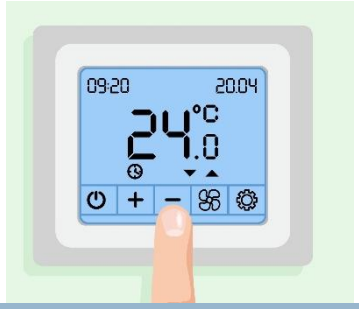
Washing your clothes at 30°C or the eco setting can save energy, with most detergents designed to work at lower temperatures.

If you can, dry clothes outside instead of using the tumble dryer.

Install a low-flow showerhead and try to reduce your shower time. You can save money by turning off the shower while shampooing your hair.

Set heating/hot water timers or programmers to match the times when you need heating/hot water.



Where to find extra help

Here are some organisations that may be able to help you with energy-related problems.

Citizens Advice	Offers free, confidential advice on various financial issues, including help with energy bills. They can provide guidance on accessing government grants, energy company support schemes, and ways to reduce energy costs.
Fuel supplier	Advice with managing energy usage. Ask about any available hardship funds. Many providers have special programmes or advice for customers with financial difficulties.
Local councils	Many local councils have support schemes, to help with housing and utility costs. It's worth contacting the local council to inquire about any available assistance.
Mind	Supports and offers resources and information beneficial for young people. Their services include mental health support, treatment advice, and rights and advocacy guidance.
National Energy Action (NEA)	A charity working to end fuel poverty by providing support and advice on energy efficiency and reducing energy bills.
Turn2us	A national charity providing practical help to people who are struggling financially. They offer a search for grants and support services, which may include help with energy costs.

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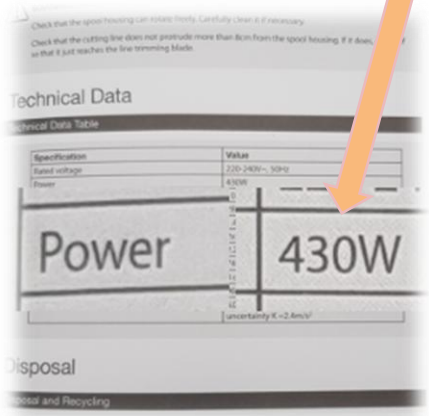
Energy Efficient Appliances

Electrical appliances in our home use a number of units. How many will depend on how powerful the appliance is and how long we use it.

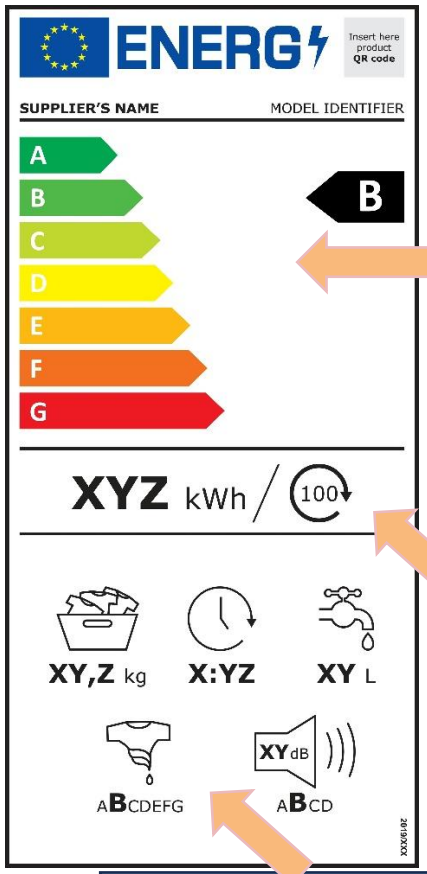
All electrical appliances have a power rating which tells us how much electricity it needs to work.

A power rating can be in watts (W) or kilowatts (kW) where 1000 watts = 1 kilowatt (kW). The power rating can often be found on the bottom of the appliance or in the instruction manual.



Your meter measures the number of units of energy that have been used. How much you are charged depends on the unit cost on the tariff (the amount you pay per unit of energy used), and the amount of units used.

Energy labels can be found on many electrical appliances and contain lots of useful information.



Energy Efficiency Rating: At the top of the label, you will see a colour-coded scale ranging from A (the most efficient) to G (the least efficient).

This scale helps you to quickly see the energy efficiency of an appliance. For example, 'A'-rated appliances use less energy, cost less to run and help you to lower your energy bills and CO2 emissions.

Annual Energy Consumption: This will give you a rough idea of how many kilowatt hours of electricity each appliance might use when used for one year.

Other Relevant Information: Depending on the type of appliance, the pictures provide information about water use, noise levels, storage capacity etc.

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What to do when you move into a new home

How to open an energy account

You will need to contact the energy supplier as soon as possible when moving into a new home and set up an account in your name.

It's important to let that supplier know you're responsible to pay the energy bills at your address.

Here's why:

- The previous occupant might not have told the supplier that they were moving out
- The previous occupant might owe money to the supplier, and you don't want to pay that debt off for them

If there is a prepayment meter in the house, make sure to register as the new account holder. Tell the supplier the date you moved in. This should mean that you avoid paying for any debt the previous resident might have had.

When contacting the supplier make sure you have the following information:

- Address including postcode
- Move-in date
- Meter readings for both electricity and gas from the date that you moved into the property

Energy tariffs

You will then need to decide what sort of tariff will best suit your circumstances. This determines the amount you pay for every unit of energy and how much you will pay for your standing charge.

Here are some of the most common tariffs:

Tariff	What this means	Advantages
Variable rate	The cost per unit and standing charge will change every three months in line with the Ofgem price cap.	Potential to switch products without paying early exit fees.
Fixed rate	These tariffs lock in a set price per unit of energy and standing charge typically for 12 to 24 months.	You will pay a consistent rate for the length of the contract.
Time-of-use	You get cheaper electricity at certain parts of the day (often during the night).	Ideal if you have storage heaters or an immersion water heater.
Prepayment	You pay for your energy upfront and top up your meters as needed.	Less likely to have unexpected large bills.

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Payment methods

You will need to arrange a payment method to make sure your bills are kept up to date.

Here are some of the most common payment methods:

Payment method	Advantages	Drawbacks
Direct debit	Amount is requested by supplier from your bank. This can be a fixed amount (agreed with supplier) or a flexible payment where the amount taken relates to the amount of energy you use.	You need a bank account.
Standing Order	You instruct your bank to send a set amount to your supplier on a day of your choice. You have control over the amount being sent.	You need to make sure the amount you send is enough to cover your usage.
Payment on receipt of bill	You only pay your energy bills every three months.	You need to save enough money to cover your bills and visit a payment outlet like the Post Office.
Prepayment	Can be good for budgeting or if you are in a rented property.	You may have to visit a top-up outlet to add credit onto your key/card. Daily standing charge is still applied and will be taken even if you don't use any energy.

It is important that you discuss payment methods with your supplier and select the method that best suits your circumstances from the available options.

Discounts

You may get a discounted rate if you:

pay by direct debit

have an online-only account or paperless bills

have electricity and gas provided by the same supplier (dual fuel)

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Meters and taking readings

When you move into your new home, there will already be a company that supplies gas and electricity to the house. If you don't know this, you can search using your postcode on: www.findmysupplier.energy.

You will need to locate the electricity and gas meters, take readings and send them to the supplier.

Meters could be inside a cupboard, in a garage, or in a white box outside the house.

They might look something like these:

Electricity meter

Read the numbers left to right and ignore any numbers in red. The reading for this meter would be: 17397

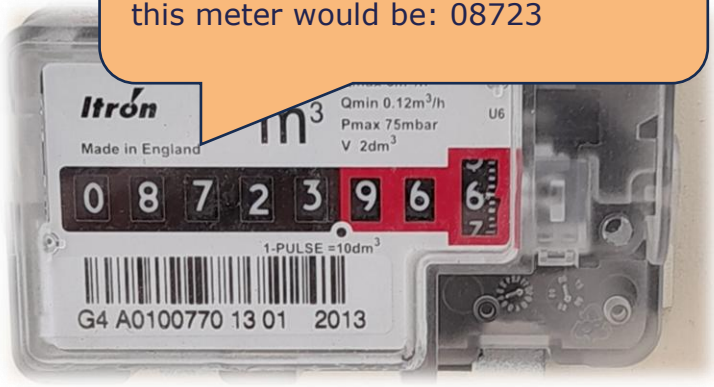
They sometimes have the word electricity on them to help you identify the meter type

Gas meter

Gas pipes go into the meter

They usually have a yellow 'can you smell gas sticker?' attached to the front

Read the numbers left to right, ignore any numbers in red, and include any zeros. The reading for this meter would be: 08723



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Prepayment meters

To use a prepayment meter, you need to pay for your fuel before using it. To do this, you will need to visit your local payment centre such as a Pay Point/Pay Zone and add some credit to your key/card.

Electricity key prepayment meter

Press the buttons to scroll through more information

Gas card prepayment meter

Some useful information that can be found on a prepayment meter:

- Meter reading
- Value of amount last inserted
- Total amount of credit available
- Amount of emergency credit available
- Standing charge
- Cost per unit/tariff band
- Number of units used
- Total amount of debt owing (if there is a debt to be repaid)
- Last amount taken towards debt

Useful things to know about prepayment meters:

The key/card is unique to your meter so if you lose it, this cannot be used on another prepayment meter.

Even if you do not use gas or electricity, the daily standing charge will still be taken from your available credit.

When the unit costs for energy changes, the updates will be applied to your key/card when you top it up.

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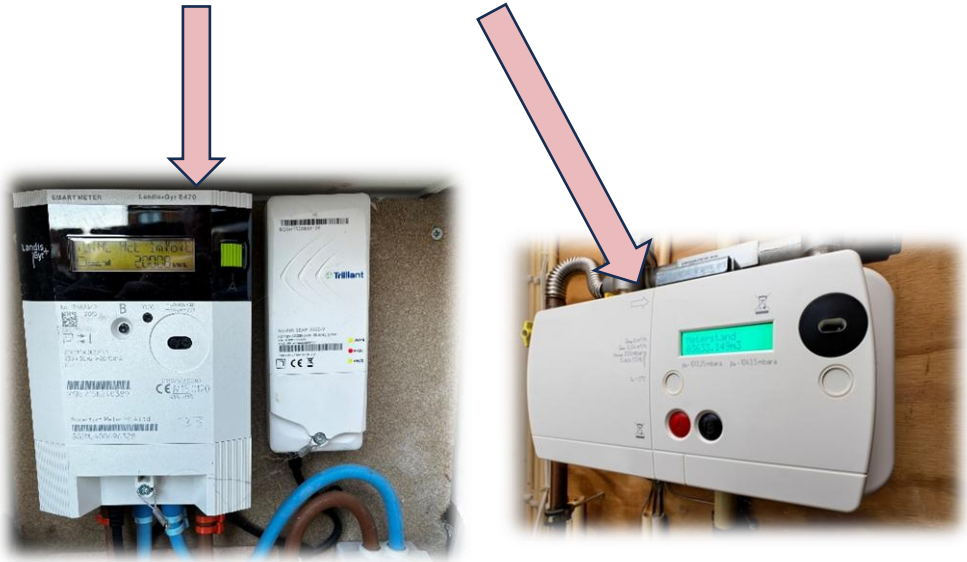
Smart Meters

A smart meter is a new kind of meter. You will have separate meters for electricity and for gas.



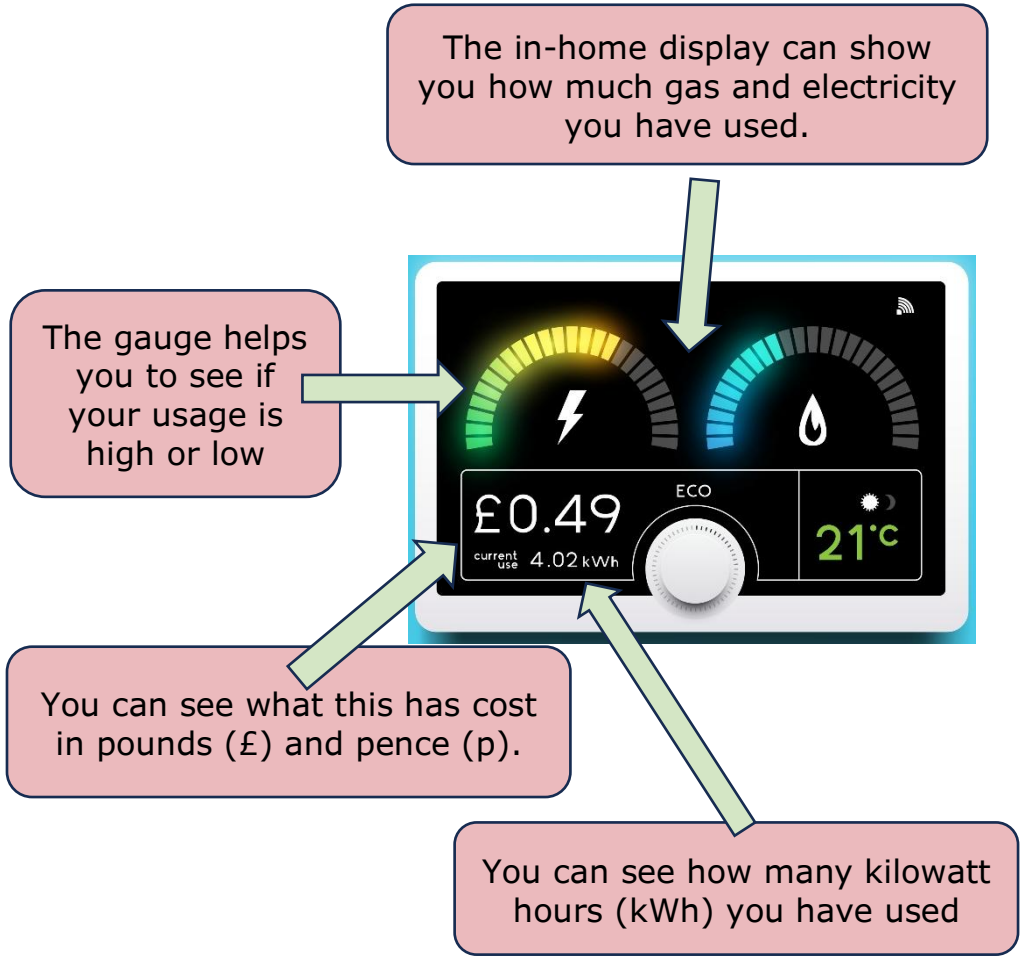
A smart meter automatically sends meter readings straight to your supplier – you don't have to do it!

This means that bills are based on actual usage rather than estimates and helps to prevent billing errors!

Anyone can ask their supplier for one.

Smart meters provide real-time information about your energy use directly to an **in-home display (IHD).**

This allows you to see how much energy you use, which can help you manage your energy costs more effectively.



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Understanding Energy Bills

Electricity Bills

	You Used		This Cost
Standard Single Rate Elec DD 1			
01445 2 Smart Read April 2025	**02204** 3 Smart Read September 2025	**759kWh at 22.36p** 4	5 **£169.71**
Standing Charge	**180 Days at 60.12p**		6 **£108.22**
Sub Total			7 **£277.93**
VAT @ 5%			8 **£13.90**
Electricity Charges			9 **£291.83**

1	The name of your tariff
2	The earliest meter reading
3	The most recent meter reading
4	The amount of electricity used
5	The cost of the electricity used
6	The cost of the standing charge
7	The sub total (cost of electricity used + cost of standing charge)
8	The cost of VAT
9	The total cost you need to pay

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How to work out the cost

Electricity

		You Used	This Cost
Standard Single Rate Elec DD			
01445	**02204**	**759kWh at 22.36p**	**£169.71**
Smart Read April 2025	Smart Read September 2025		
Standard Charge		**180 Days at 60.12p**	**£108.22**
Sub Total			**£277.93**
VAT @ 5%			**£13.90**
Electricity Charges			**£291.83**

You have used 759 kWh of electricity
Each kWh of electricity costs 22.36p

759 kWh x 22.36p = £169.71

We pay a standing charge every day
The standing charge is 60.12p a day

180 days x 60.12p = £108.22

Add the cost of the electricity and the standing charge to get the sub total
£169.71 + 108.22 = £277.93

Work out the cost of 5% Value Added Tax charged on £277.93

(£277.93 ÷ 100) x 5 = £13.90

Add the sub total and VAT together to work out how much you need to pay

£277.93 + £13.90 = £291.83

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Gas Bills

Gas

	You Used	This Cost
Standard Rate Gas DD 1		
00797 2 Smart Read April 2025	**01501** 3 Smart Read September 2025	**8019kWh at 5.48p** 704 Cubic Metres 4	**£439.44** 5
Standard Charge	**180 Days at 31.41p**	6 **£56.54**
Sub Total		7 **£495.98**
VAT @ 5%		8 **£24.80**
Gas Charges		9 **£520.78**

1	The name of your tariff
2	The earliest meter reading
3	The most recent meter reading
4	The amount of gas used
5	The cost of the gas used
6	The cost of the standing charge
7	The sub total (cost of gas used + cost of standing charge)
8	The cost of VAT
9	The total cost you need to pay

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Gas

		You Used	This Cost
Standard Rate Gas DD			
00797	**01501**	**8019kWh at 5.48p**	**£439.44**
Smart Read	Smart Read	704 Cubic Metres	
April 2025	September 2025		
Standing Charge		**180 Days at 31.41p**	**£56.54**
Sub Total			**£495.98**
VAT @ 5%			**£24.80**
Gas Charges			**£520.78**

Take the April 2025 reading (797) away from the September 2025 reading (1501) to check how many cubic metres have been used.

704 cubic metres have been used

But the statement also says we have used 8019 kWh of gas.
We measure the gas we use in cubic metres, but we pay for gas in kWh. So, the supplier converts the cubic metres to kilowatt hours. The next slide shows how to do this.

You have used 8019 kWh of gas each kWh of gas costs 5.48p

8019 kWh x 5.48p = £439.44

You pay a standing charge every day The standing charge is 31.41p a day

180 days x 31.41p = £56.54

Add the cost of the gas and the standing charge to get the sub total

£439.44 + 56.54 = £495.98

Work out the cost of 5% Value Added Tax charged on £495.98

(£495.98 ÷ 100) x 5 = £24.80

Add the sub total and VAT together to work out how much you need to pay
£495.98 + £24.80 = £520.78

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Budgeting

To make sure you have enough money to cover your energy bills and all other payments, it is useful to know how your income is being spent. It is also helpful to identify any extra money you may have left over.
Use a budget planner to help.

Income	Date	Amount Received	Total
Employment		£	£
Benefits		£	£
Savings		£	£
Other Income		£	£

Total	£

Household Cost	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Mortgage/Rent		£	£
Gas		£	£
Electric		£	£
Water		£	£
Council Tax		£	£
House Insurance		£	£
Internet		£	£
TV Services		£	£
Mobile Phone		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

Food and Drink Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Food Shopping		£	£
Takeaways		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

Transport Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Car payments		£	£
Car insurance		£	£
Car Road Tax		£	£
Petrol/Diesel/Electric		£	£
Breakdown Cover		£	£
Bus/Rail/Taxi		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

Loans & Insurance Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Credit Card		£	£
Store Card		£	£
Student Loans		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

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Clothing Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
New clothes		£	£
Work clothes		£	£
Holiday Clothes		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

Health & Beauty Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Hair		£	£
Beauty treatments		£	£
Dental		£	£
Eye Care		£	£
Sports/Gym Memberships		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

Entertainment Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Holiday		£	£
Days out		£	£
Hobbies		£	£
Books/Music/Film		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

Savings For Large Events/Items Costs	Date	Amount Paid	Total
Christmas		£	£
Holiday		£	£
Other		£	£

Total	£

	Income	Costs
Total Income	£	
Household Cost		
Food and Drink Costs		£
Transport Costs		£
Loans & Insurance Costs		£
Clothing Costs		£
Health & Beauty Costs		£
Entertainment Costs		£
Savings For Large Events/ Items Costs		£

Total Income	£	
Total Costs		£

Total Income (£) – Total Costs (£) =	**£**

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Why it's important to stay warm

It can be a challenge to meet the cost of heating our home. Fuel prices are high and when our income is limited, we worry about how much the bill will be and how we will afford to pay it.

However, it is important to try to keep homes warm. Living in colder indoor temperatures can affect our physical and also our mental health.

Did you know that:

- Living in a cold home can make it hard to concentrate on everyday things
- Being cold can mean that it is hard to sleep well at night
- Living in a cold home can mean you are more likely to get viruses and chest infections
- Feeling cold at home can make you anxious and worried

Temperature	Impacts
18°C to 21°C	Heating homes to at least 18°C (65°F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of an inactive person, wearing suitable clothing.
Below 18°C	Increased blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease.
Below 16°C	Reduced resistance to respiratory diseases like asthma.
Below 12°C	Fall in core body temperature; increasing blood pressure; increase in blood thickness.
Below 5°C	Poses a high risk of hypothermia.

Ways to stay warm at home

Warm clothing.

Daily hot meals and regular drinks.

Understand how to use heating controls.

Get heating appliances/ systems serviced by registered engineers. Make sure they are safe to use.

Use blankets and throws.

Close curtains and doors. Use draught excluders.

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Heat Loss in the Home

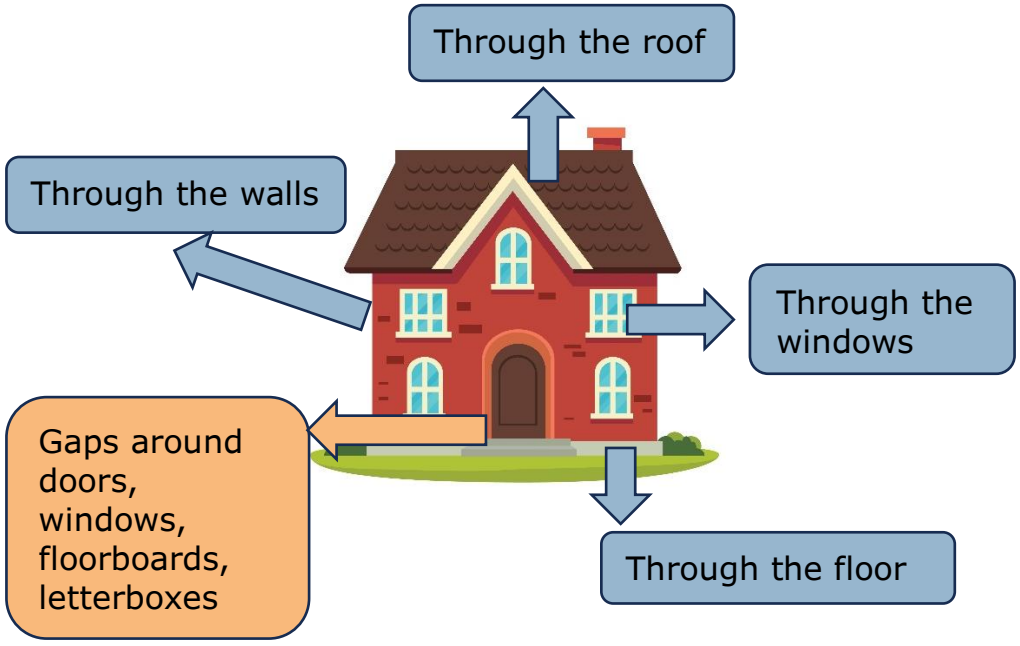
We heat our homes so that we feel comfortable and safe when we're indoors.

Heat or warm air will always move from a warm place to a colder place – from a warm room to a colder one, from a warm house to outside.

These are two different types of heat escape/loss from homes:

Heat lost through gaps and draughts

Heat lost through the materials used to build a house



We need to try and slow down how quickly the heat is escaping from our homes. This will keep us warmer for longer and lowers the cost to heat our homes.

This can be achieved by **insulating**. When we insulate something, like the roof space, walls and floor, we wrap it in a material that slows down the amount of heat escaping. These insulation measures can be very expensive to install. You may qualify for some financial support towards this if you meet the necessary eligibility criteria.

Low-cost ways to reduce heat loss from draughts and gaps can be achieved by:

Blocking up gaps to stop draughts under doors and through letter boxes.

Use well-fitting curtains over windows and doors

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Fill in gaps around pipes and skirting boards which could let warm air out

Fit a hot water cylinder jacket to stop heat escaping from the cylinder

Windows can also be draught-proofed using sealing strips for gaps, secondary glazing panels or insulating film

IMPORTANT!

Houses are built with ventilation points.

It is important not to block up or seal ANY of the places where air might get in or out of a house such as air bricks or vents.

Every home needs some ventilation and airflow: this helps to prevent condensation and can help to avoid any build-up of carbon monoxide.

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Condensation, mould and damp

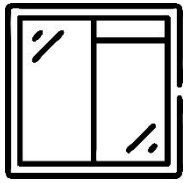
Condensation happens when warm, moist air hits a cold surface such as a window or outside wall and condenses, running down the surface as water droplets.

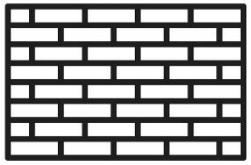
If the surface is cold and wet, it's likely condensation is the cause.

Areas likely to be affected by condensation:

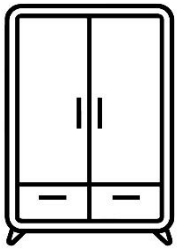
Rooms where a lot of steam is created, such as kitchens and bathrooms

Cold surfaces such as mirrors, windows and window frames





Walls in unheated rooms, corners of rooms, behind furniture



Inside wardrobes and cupboards

Reduce Condensation Through H.I.V.E

H: HEATING

Try to keep temperatures **in all rooms** to above 18°C when you are using them – this will reduce condensation forming.

I: INSULATION

- Hang thick, heavy lined curtains to insulate your windows
- Draught-proof around windows and use draught excluders under doors
- Consider insulating your loft if it has not been done. You may be able to get a grant for this.

V: VENTILATION

This will allow moisture-filled air to escape and be replaced with fresh air. Make sure vents and airbricks are not covered or blocked and open windows when possible.

E: (Reduce) EXCESS MOISTURE

Use extractor fans when showering or cooking, put lids on pots and pans when cooking, avoid drying washing indoors where possible. Consider using a dehumidifier in rooms which are prone to condensation or in rooms where you dry washing.

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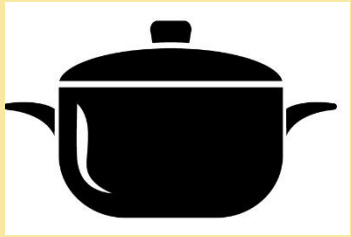
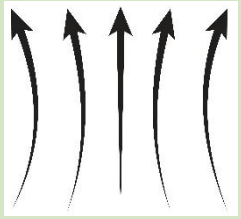
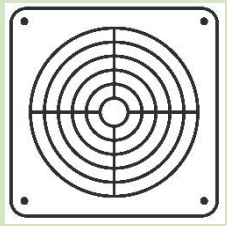
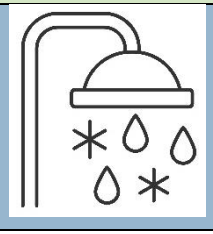
Top Tips to Reduce Condensation

Open window trickle vents during the day or when going out, or open windows for at least 10 minutes every day.	Wipe down windows, mirrors, tiles, shower doors with a cloth or squeegee to remove moisture.	When cooking, try to keep lids on pans (this reduces how much energy you use too). 	Only boil as much water as you need when boiling the kettle to reduce steam and save money.
Try to avoid putting furniture against any external walls and try to leave a gap between furniture and the wall to allow airflow. 	Don't dry wet clothes on radiators. The boiler works harder which could be expensive, while creating a lot of condensation.	When cooking, showering or bathing close internal doors, open the windows and use extractor fans if you have them. If possible, leave windows open and extractor fans to run for about 20 minutes after to clear any steam. 	If drying clothes inside, use a drying rack in a room where the window can be opened slightly and keep the door closed. Consider using a dehumidifier.
Take shorter and cooler showers. When running a bath put cold water in first. This will produce less steam and condensation. 	Avoid using LPG/bottled gas heaters as these release lots of moisture into the air.		

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Moisture left on your walls can lead to black mould. Mould looks and smells bad, can cause serious health problems and damage clothes, furniture and books.

Look for areas on your wall with clouds of little black spots – this is mould caused by condensation.

HOW TO DEAL WITH BLACK MOULD

If you have black mould in your home, the best way to deal with this is by wiping the affected areas with mould removal spray.

Always check the manufacturer's instructions.

There are some special anti-mould and insulating paints that may delay the return of the mould but the best way to prevent it coming back is to reduce the condensation in your home.

Switching supplier

You may be considering switching supplier.

This is where your energy is provided by a different company.

What should you consider before deciding?

- What is the cost for each unit of electricity/gas?
- How much is the daily standing charge?
- How long does the contract last?
- How often should meter readings be sent to the supplier?
- Will I be charged an exit fee if I want to leave before the end of the contract?
- What happens if I cannot pay my bill?
- What payment methods are available?
- Who do I talk to if I have a problem or a complaint?

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Awareness of Carbon Monoxide Dangers and Reducing the Risk

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas. Without proper detection it can make householders seriously ill, and, in extreme cases, carbon monoxide poisoning can be lethal.

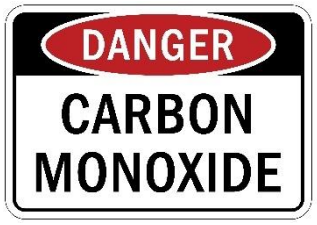
CAN'T BE SEEN

CAN'T BE SMELLED

CAN'T BE HEARD

Carbon monoxide can be released from several household appliances.

- Gas boilers, fires and cookers
- LPG
- Wood and coal burners and fires
- Smoking cigarettes/shisha pipes
- Heating oil
- Barbeques
- Fuelled generators
- Car engines in enclosed spaces

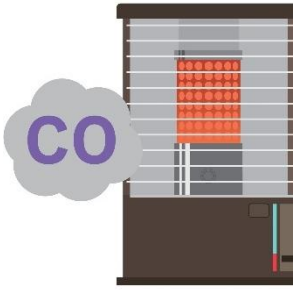


Be aware that carbon monoxide can move between buildings. This could be between terraced properties. But it could also move upwards, e.g. from a takeaway to a flat above.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels are burned incorrectly, e.g. when there isn't enough oxygen in the air.

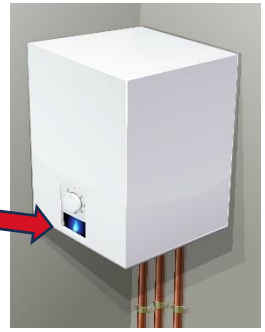
You may be able to see visual signs that has spilled out of appliances.

- There may be sooty or yellow/brown stains around or on the appliance, particularly on the grills/bars of gas fires or around boiler flues



- You may also see yellow or orange flames instead of blue flames on gas appliances (including cookers)

- You may find that the pilot lights of appliances frequently blow out, as there is not enough oxygen for the flame to continue burning



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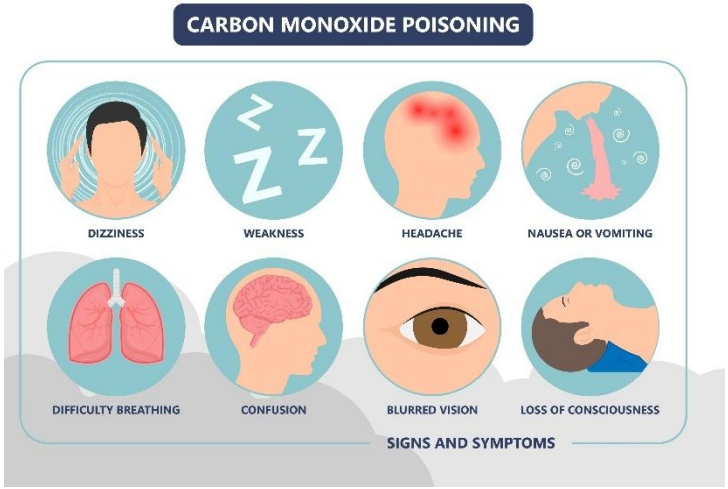
Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness



Symptoms may reduce or disappear when out of the home where carbon monoxide is present. They may begin again on returning to the house.

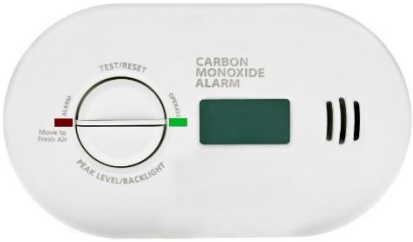
Visitors may report the same feelings, an indication that it's not just the householder feeling unwell.

Children, babies, foetuses and pets are particularly vulnerable as they are smaller.

If you have any sort of gas appliance in your home, it is important that you have a carbon monoxide alarm in your home. Since 2022, landlords must ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation containing a fixed combustion appliance.

Carbon monoxide alarms come in many different brands and styles, so it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Make sure you:



- Know where the alarm should be positioned
- Regularly test the alarm by pressing the test button
- Replace the batteries as soon as the low-battery signal beeps.

If the alarm sounds or you are experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms or you believe there to be a leak, you should act immediately.

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Gov.uk recommends the following:

- Stop using all appliances and evacuate the property immediately
- Call the National Gas Emergency Service number on 0800 111 999 to report the incident or the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300 363
- Do not go back into the property (wait for the emergency services)
- Get immediate medical help

If you believe that you or anyone in the house has been exposed to carbon monoxide, you feel unwell or are worried, you should call NHS 111, contact your GP or contact the emergency services on 999 in an emergency.

A trained medical professional will be able to find out for definite if a householder is suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, but by thinking C.O.M.A you may be able to spot the signs early.

Think C.O.M.A

C: Cohabitees/companions: is anyone else in the property affected (including pets)?

O: Outdoors: do your symptoms improve when out of the building ('better outdoors')?

M: Maintenance: are your fuel-burning appliances and vents properly maintained?

A: Alarm: do you have a carbon monoxide alarm?

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All fossil fuel burning cooking and heating appliances should be serviced/checked regularly.

All appliances should be serviced by a qualified and registered engineer.

- Solid fuel appliances should be serviced by **HETAS**
- Oil appliances by **OFTEC**
- Gas appliances by a **Gas Safe Registered** engineer

Checks will make sure that flues are not blocked and that pipes are not leaking, which could allow carbon monoxide to escape if not dealt with.

Gas boilers should have an annual service. Other gas appliances should have an annual gas safety check to ensure that they are safe to use.

The average cost of a gas safety certificate ranges between £60-£90.

Remember, landlords are required by law to have an annual gas safety check for all gas appliances, and an annual gas boiler service conducted by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Ventilation prevents carbon monoxide buildup in the home.

Carbon monoxide occurs when fossil fuels do not have enough access to oxygen and burn incorrectly. It is extremely important to have well-ventilated areas around the appliances to make sure they operate correctly.

Chimneys and flues	Enclosed spaces	Open windows/ doors

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www.nea.org.uk/training

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