

Rising gas prices – protections for consumers

Households are understandably concerned about the rising cost of wholesale global gas this Autumn and Winter, which is why the government has been clear that protecting consumers is its top priority.

Rising gas prices is a global problem, reflecting an increased demand across the world for gas as economies around the world reopens from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether you notice the spike in gas prices will depend on when you negotiated your energy tariff and who your supplier is, as many energy suppliers purchase much of their wholesale supplies many months in advance, giving protection to them and their customers from short-term price rises.

The government is working closely with energy stakeholders to discuss the impact of the increased wholesale gas prices, but consumers should not worry about their energy supply.

No matter who your supplier is you can rest assured that even if they leave the market, there is an established process in place to ensure that your electricity and gas will stay on. It means the energy regulator Ofgem will find another supplier to provide you with energy and your credit balance will move with you.

If this happens, you are advised to not try and switch to a new supplier until you are contacted by whoever Ofgem appoints to take over your account. You will have a new arrangement with your new supplier but can speak to them about negotiating a new fixed rate tariff.

The [Energy Price Cap](#) is a safety net. It is in place to protect millions of customers in England, Wales and Scotland from the sudden increases in global gas prices this winter.

We are also supporting low income and fuel poor households with energy bills in a number of ways, including:

- the [Warm Home Discount](#), providing eligible households with a one-off £140 discount on their energy bill for winter 2021 to 2022. Customers should contact their supplier to ask for it. As long as you qualify, even if you are moved to a new supplier, they are expected to still provide you with this discount. This will rise to £150 from next year and help an extra 780,000 pensioners and low-income families, with the money being paid automatically
- [Winter Fuel Payments](#), worth between £100 and £300 are paid automatically to those in receipt of State Pension or other social security benefit (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit)

- [Cold Weather Payments](#), which is a £25 payment for vulnerable households on qualifying benefits when the weather has been, or is forecasted to be, unusually cold. It is paid to eligible households for each 7-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March

If you are in financial distress during this time you can also talk to your energy supplier, who will be able to discuss personal circumstances and consider options to help, including reassessing, reducing or pausing payments. [Emergency measures](#) have been agreed between government and energy suppliers to support those most in need during the disruption caused by COVID-19, and this agreement remains in place this winter.

For support with your rights on energy, more information is available from [Ofgem](#) here. For further advice, consumers can also contact [Citizens Advice](#).