

[News story: Price comparison site launched to help schools cut energy bills](#)

Schools paying too much for their energy will find it easier to ditch overpriced deals and switch to a cheaper supplier, using a new web-based service launched today by Education Secretary Damian Hinds.

The site allows schools to get instant quotes from a range of gas and electricity firms, similar to price comparison websites available for household energy.

It will help schools avoid fees charged by energy brokers and reduce the more than £10 billion a year that goes on non-staffing costs – leaving more money for heads to spend on frontline teaching.

The latest figures from 2016/17 show state-funded schools in England spent more than £584 million on gas and electricity. The average secondary school spends around £90,000 a year on energy. Using the Department for Education's existing energy deals, schools have already reported savings of up to 14% – the price comparison website will help build on this.

It follows the Department for Education's recent crackdown on excessive fees charged by supply agencies, with the launch of an online tool to help schools find temporary staff. A free-to-use teacher vacancy service is also being rolled out to cut recruitment costs for schools – currently up to £75 million per year.

Due to the complexity of schools' energy needs, many currently have to go through brokers, which can incur high fees. These can be as much as 5p per kilowatt hour – which can add up to thousands of pounds per year. The new website will allow schools to bypass brokers' fees and deal directly with suppliers, inputting information about their energy use to generate tailored, transparent quotes, which they can then compare.

It will also list providers offering renewable energy, giving schools a simple way to reduce their environmental impact.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Many households shop around for the best deal on their gas and electricity – and I want to help schools do the same.

By saving money on their energy bills and avoiding high broker fees, the more money schools will have to spend on what really matters – getting the best teachers into classrooms and giving their pupils a great education.

This website is the latest step in our efforts to help schools reduce unnecessary costs, building on the School Resource Management Strategy I launched last year to provide practical advice and support.

The website, developed with Crown Commercial Service, follows the Education Secretary's pledge at the National Association of Head Teachers' annual conference in May to work with schools to bear down on unnecessary costs so that more money can be spent in the classroom.

It is launching with a limited number of energy suppliers initially, but more will be added over time.

Schools can already use the Government's benchmarking site to see how their energy spend – among other costs – compares with similar schools across England.

Other support the Department for Education has made available includes:

- An online tool to help schools avoid excessive supply agency fees when employing temporary staff – one school in Merseyside saved £2,500 in three months;
- Rolling out a free-to-use teacher vacancy service – this will help schools recruit effectively and cut recruitment costs, which are currently up to £75 million per year;
- Recommended deals that are helping schools to save money on the things they buy regularly, such as printers and photocopiers – one school in the North West has saved an estimated £40,000 on its printing costs;
- A schools buying advice service, being piloted in the North West and South West, providing hands-on support and advice to schools on complex procurement. One school saved £75,000 across a three-year cleaning contract, while 82 schools in the South West have saved an estimated £137,000 on water;
- A network of advisers providing practical support on resource management, working with those schools that will benefit the most. During the pilot phase of 72 deployments, advisers identified £35 million of potential savings for schools.

[Press release: Innovative HIV prevention projects reached 170,000 people in 2018](#)

Projects working towards preventing HIV across England, which were funded by the Public Health England (PHE) HIV Innovation Fund, reached around 170,000

people at-risk of, or living with HIV – as well as the general public in 2017 to 2018.

The projects provided innovative, community-led interventions, through online campaigns, outreach, testing, support and media and art projects. The news comes as PHE announced the 14 local pioneering projects that have been awarded a share of the £600,000 fund available in 2018 to 2019.

The Fund supports volunteer organisations spearheading new approaches to HIV prevention and focuses on engaging at-risk or under-served communities, with the aim of funded initiatives ultimately being replicated and scaled up.

Previous success stories from the Fund include PROMOTE, a project run by Terrence Higgins Trust and the Bristol Drug Project, which focused on reducing the risk of HIV in male sex workers (MSW) and sex workers of other genders.

The project targeted between 50 to 150 MSW in Bristol, and found that building rapport with community members during online outreach was paramount as a first step, and peer-support groups are vital to MSWs' health and wellbeing.

Another successful project in 2018, run by National Prison Radio, was a radio and podcast series for prisoners that aimed to dispel myths about HIV and provided support to people living with the virus in prisons.

Sex Talk was presented by BBC Radio 1's Adele Roberts and talk show host Hilary Ineomo-Marcus. Over 24 episodes, Sex Talk featured over 70 people or organisations who are experts in this field, being medical professionals or those raising awareness, and, most importantly, people living with HIV. A series was available and broadcast to over 80,000 prisoners across England and Wales.

This year's initiatives will support the UK's ambition to achieve zero new HIV transmissions by 2030, which will be announced at the Global AIDS Forum today, Wednesday 30 January 2019. Projects that have been awarded funding from PHE this year include two charities collaborating to prevent HIV in women with female genital mutilation (FGM) in Berkshire; and The Grass is Always Grindr, a weekly drama series published on YouTube that focuses on how Londoners are affected by HIV.

Innovative, community-led interventions have a significant role to play in limiting the spread of HIV by targeting at-risk groups, including gay and bisexual men, black and minority ethnic groups (BAME), and prisoners. This is important when HIV remains a public health concern despite major advances in treatment and reductions in diagnosis. In 2017 an estimated 102,000 people were living with HIV and an estimated 7,800 people were undiagnosed.

Luis Guerra, National Programme Manager for HIV, Sexual Health, and Reproductive Health at Public Health England, said:

The HIV Innovation Fund continues to foster new approaches to HIV

prevention, with a range of projects offering new and exciting ways to address key issues in HIV prevention, working particularly with high-risk groups. Projects work alongside the great programmes already running, to prevent HIV transmission and support people living with HIV across England.

We have made fantastic headway lowering rates of HIV, and are excited to see how innovative projects around the country will help us eliminate all new cases by 2030.

Health Minister Steve Brine said:

Today we made the bold commitment to end HIV transmission in England by 2030.

With the huge advances in antiretroviral therapy, a person diagnosed with HIV in the UK today can expect a normal life expectancy, but no one needs to contract the virus in the first place.

We have the tools to eliminate HIV transmission – prevention, detection, and treatment. To help those most at risk, we need to support innovative community-led projects – they will target key communities and help end transmission in England.

HIV Innovation Fund projects complement existing work to tackle HIV and poor sexual health. Local authorities, NHS providers and community organisations all work together to improve sexual health and reduce rates of HIV and STIs. HIV Innovation Fund projects receive funding from the DHSC through PHE.

There were 14 HIV Innovation Fund projects in 2018 to 2019.

HIV documentary theatre in prisons:

A programme to develop a documentary theatre piece around HIV prevention and stigma particularly focused on and developed with those in secure settings in England (Prison Radio Association, National).

The Grass is Always Grindr (Season 2):

A weekly drama series published on YouTube that focuses on the lives of a few Londoners and how they are affected by HIV (CW+, National).

Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention for Chemsex:

Developing a mindfulness-based approach for reducing and stopping harmful drug use in gay and bisexual men (Spectra, London).

Preventing HIV in women with FGM:

Linking a longstanding HIV support organisation with a dedicated charity

working with survivors of FGM (Thames Valley Positive Support, Berkshire).

Raising Awareness of HIV in the over 50's:

Developing a local campaign and resources around HIV testing, prevention and stigma directed at adults aged over 50 (Age UK Wiltshire, Wiltshire).

Talking progress – challenging HIV and HIV stigma via spoken word:

Developing 20 spoken word pieces through workshops with black African's living in mixed HIV status relationships (Positive East, East, and South East London).

MobPrESH – mobilising for PrEP and sexual health:

Building capacity for community responses to HIV by creating between 50 to 70 skilled peer 'mobilisers' who can educate and talk about PrEP (The Love Tank CIC PrEPster, London, the South West and North of England).

Catwalks for Power:

Empowering marginalised women living with HIV to accept their HIV diagnosis, establish support networks within local areas and challenge HIV related stigma in local areas through fashion shows (Positively UK, Manchester, Brighton, London).

Increasing awareness of PrEP among black African communities and heterosexual women in Leeds (BHA for Equality, Leeds).

PrEPared:

Working to increase awareness of PrEP among black African communities and heterosexual women in Leeds – BHA for Equality, Leeds.

Online focus groups for young guys into guys (GiG):

Setting up online forums will be a space for young men to discuss their lives and sexuality (METRO, Kent and Medway).

E-PrEP Programme:

Using a community participatory approach to increase awareness of PrEP, increase testing and reduce late diagnosis in BAME communities and Latin American MSM (METRO, National).

Soul Sisters:

Providing training and support for 10 organisations that provide services for survivors of violence against women (NAZ, London).

PrEP & Prejudice:

Influencing how black African communities engage in HIV prevention through targeted outreach in locations such as barber shops and restaurants (Africa

Advocacy Foundation, Manchester, Bristol, Leicester, Birmingham, Bristol and St Albans).

There were 12 Innovation Fund projects in 2017 to 2018, with estimates of the amount of people reached.

Digital anti-stigma campaign:

Developing digital content, videos and social marketing targeting higher risk communities reached at least 22,743 ([Martin Fisher Foundation, Brighton and Hove.](#))

I Am Because We Are:

Challenging HIV issues and stigma within Black African communities a play touring the North West aiming to reach at least 600 people ([BHA For Equality, Greater Manchester](#)).

Improving uptake and safe use of PrEP in underserved populations:

Creating online assessment tools for PrEP and facilitating safe usage aimed to reach 4,500 ([Terence Higgins Trust, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire](#)).

MAP Tyne and Wear:

Capturing local knowledge about male sex workers to inform and shape other sexual health services reached and supported around 15 men (Gateshead, Sunderland and North Tyneside).

“MIND” The Gap:

Developing an HIV and sexual health training programme for mental health service staff trained 855 health professionals in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire (Herts Aid).

PrEP:

Raising awareness of PrEP amongst MSM, BME and trans communities trained 54 PrEP champions and reached 1,124 people through engagement sessions and provided 12 training sessions for partner agencies (Spectra, South West London).

Prepping for PrEP:

Improving awareness of PrEP amongst at-risk African communities by engaging key community members reached over 63,000 people through social media ([Positive East, East London and Hertfordshire](#)).

PROMOTE:

Creating digital outreach and support services for male sex workers and their clients reached 1,120 people through their specialised outreach and support

approach ([Bristol Drugs Project](#), Bristol).

Reducing Barriers to Testing:

Facilitating self-testing within Black African communities provided self-test kits to nearly 3,300 people (Terence Higgins Trust, Wolverhampton).

Sex Talk on National Prison Radio:

Creating information for prisoners to address issues of stigma around HIV reaching more than 60,000 people in secure settings that listen to prison radio ([Prison Radio Association](#), England, Wales and Scotland).

Sholay Love:

Raising awareness of HIV and STIs and encouraging testing amongst south Asian gay men testing 275 men and reaching thousands more through outreach, workshops and online resources (NAZ, London, Bradford, Leeds).

The Morning After Project:

Providing education and harm reduction in chemsex via a dedicated project worker reached and supported 75 men participating in chemsex (Summit House Support, Dudley).

PHE HIV Innovation Fund

The National HIV Prevention Innovation Fund is funded by the allocation from the Department of Health to PHE for HIV prevention and sexual health promotion. This is the third year of the innovation fund in which PHE have awarded funding to a total of 32 projects (7 in 2015 to 2016, 13 in 2016 to 2017 and 12 in 2017 to 2018). Projects submitting HIV prevention proposals to the HIV Innovation Fund must have local authority endorsement to be eligible for the fund. The innovation fund is advertised at the [HIV Prevention England website](#) where application details are available.

HIV in the UK, 2017 PHE report

PHE's ['Progress towards ending the HIV epidemic in the UK: 2018 report'](#) showed that in 2017:

- 92% of people living with HIV in the UK have been diagnosed, 98% of those diagnosed were on treatment, and 97% of those on treatment were virally suppressed
- an estimated total of 102,000 people were living with HIV in the UK in 2017, with 8% (7,800) unaware of their infection
- as a result of treatment, 87% of all people living with HIV have an undetectable viral load and are unable to pass on their infection to other people (this is widely known as 'Undetectable equals Untransmissible' or 'U=U')
- new HIV diagnoses continued to decline in the UK, falling 17% from 5,280 in 2016 to 4,363 in 2017
- in 2017, 43% (1,879) of new HIV diagnoses were made at a late stage of

HIV infection

HIV: Surveillance, data and management:

The HIV in the UK Health Protection Report and annual [HIV data tables](#) comprise the number of HIV diagnoses, late HIV diagnoses and numbers accessing HIV care. Data can be interrogated and analysed at Local Authority level via [an online tool allowing a range of outputs to be generated.](#)

The December [2016 edition of Health Matters](#), PHE's resource for local authorities and health professionals focuses on increasing HIV testing.

HIV testing

It is easy to get tested for HIV. Testing is freely available through GP surgeries, local hospitals and sexual health clinics as well as on self-sampling and self-testing (see [NHS.UK](#) for further information). As well as getting tested, using a condom with new or casual partners protects against HIV and other STIs.

[News story: New video help for businesses to tackle product safety issues](#)

All businesses must ensure the products they put on the market are safe but if a safety issue is later identified a planned course of action is critical.

The new government-backed video, PAS7100 Supporting better product recalls, explains how the Code of Practice on Consumer Product Safety Related Recalls and other Corrective Actions can help.

See the video here: [PAS7100 Supporting better product recalls](#)

The Code sets out the responsibilities and role of Market Surveillance Authorities, and provides practical guidance to help ensure businesses can act promptly to protect public safety should a consumer product be found to be unsafe.

Part 1 of the Code sets out practical guidance on:

- monitoring product safety and traceability
- product safety incident plans

- managing a recall or corrective action situation

Part 2 of the Code provides guidance on the role of Market Surveillance Authorities in supporting businesses to meet the code requirements. It helps businesses monitor the safety of products and put a product safety incident plan in place, so they are prepared to deal with any product safety incident that arises.

The Code also provides practical guidance for businesses on managing an incident because it is vital businesses act promptly if a potential product safety issue arises. Advance planning makes it far easier to manage any product safety incident that might occur efficiently and effectively.

You can obtain a copy of the Code from the [British Standards Institution \(BSI\)](#), which also hosts the video.

Press release: Brokenshire unveils £500 million affordable homes funding boost

- Government backs pioneering project to build rooftop properties in London on the top of existing buildings.
- Further £497 million for housing associations to build more than 11,000 new affordable homes, including properties for social rent.

Nearly £500 million will be spent building more than 11,000 much-needed affordable properties across the country, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has announced today (30 January 2019).

The funding boost, which will help the government towards its target of building 300,000 properties a year by the mid 2020s, was announced at the London First Building Summit this morning.

The strategic partnerships, agreed by Homes England from Essex to Ecclestone, will give the successful housing associations the freedom to spend the money on the developments where it can have the biggest impact.

Alongside this, homes will be built on London rooftops by the summer after Homes England agreed a £9 million funding deal with Apex Airspace Developments.

The properties – which will be built on five sites across the capital – are largely constructed off site before being winched on top of buildings, minimising disruption to residents.

The first of the homes will be completed by the summer – and in total 78 rooftop homes will be built under the three year deal.

Our revised planning rulebook encourages authorities to promote the use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

By providing targeted investment in affordable homes, and funding innovative projects to build rooftop properties, we are making our housing market work for everyone.

Our £500 million funding boost for housing associations will help them build thousands of extra affordable homes – including properties for social rent.

These measures are all part of our plans to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s.

Homes England Chairman, Sir Edward Lister said:

I welcome the new strategic partners who share our ambition to build better homes faster.

Our new ways of working with the sector means that housing associations can use their funding flexibly across their development programmes and respond quickly to local housing demand and a changing market.

The infrastructure upgrades being funded by government include:

Rooftop properties:

The government's housing accelerator, Homes England, has struck a 3-year deal with SME developer, Apex.

Apex is a pioneer of 'airspace' development where unused airspace above residential, commercial and public buildings is used as a location for new homes.

The funding will enable the offsite construction of the homes prior to transportation to each of the 5 sites.

These will then be lifted on top of existing buildings with a crane – resulting in minimal disturbance to existing tenants and residents.

The rooftop properties will be built in Tooting, Wanstead, Walthamstow, Putney and Wallington.

The Housing Associations to benefit from the funding – in the third wave of

strategic partnerships – are: Bromford, Curo & Swan, Liverpool Mutual Homes & Torus, Longhurst & Nottingham Community Housing Association, Together, Walsall Housing Group, Yorkshire and Your Housing Group.

The previous wave of Strategic Partnerships were announced as part of the [2018 Budget](#)

The purpose of the Partnerships is to give Housing Associations greater flexibility and boost delivery, by ensuring money can be allocated where it is need across multiple projects – rather than a case by case basis.

The rooftop properties will be built across five sites in the capital in Tooting, Wanstead, Walthamstow, Putney and Wallington. Apex expects the first three sites, comprising 32 homes, to be ready by summer 2019. Homes delivered will be priced within the Help to Buy threshold to help support more people into home ownership. The project is being funded from the government's £4.5 billion Home Building Fund.

Homes England is the new housing delivery organisation that has been created to adopt a more commercial approach to respond to the long term housing challenges facing this country. The new, expanded agency will play a far bigger role in investing in supply and intervening in the market to help deliver 300,000 homes a year by the middle of the next decade. For more information visit [Homes England on Gov.uk](#)

[Press release: Croydon zombie knife attacker jailed](#)

A man who attacked a car using a large combat knife, terrorising the driver inside, has today been jailed after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, personally argued that his original sentence was too low at the Court of Appeal.

Joshua Gardner, 19, attacked a car with a large 'zombie knife' having spotted the victim, who he had previously argued with, sitting inside. The victim tried to drive away but clipped the wheel of Gardner's bike, causing him to fall. Gardner then began kicking the vehicle, before hitting the windows with his knife. He eventually managed to smash the passenger window, and attempted to stab the victim through the hole. The victim managed to exit the car and get away uninjured.

Gardner was originally sentenced to 2 years in prison, suspended for 2 years, at the Central Criminal Court in November 2018. Today, the Court of Appeal has jailed Gardner for 3 and a half years.

Speaking outside the Court of Appeal, the Solicitor General said:

Gardner took to the streets in broad daylight, terrorising his victim and those members of the public who witnessed this extreme act of violence with a dangerous weapon. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has today decided that a custodial sentence is more appropriate to help prevent Gardner from posing a threat to anyone else.