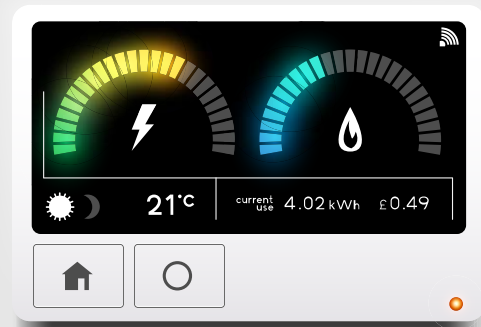


Smart meters replace existing gas and electricity meters with ones that can take automatic meter readings and send these to your energy supplier. All homes in the UK must be offered smart meters by the end of the year 2024.



Why is it smart to go smart?

There are many advantages to smart meters. Here are some of them:

✔ An end to estimated billing

If your energy supplier doesn't receive frequent meter readings they will estimate your future energy bills, based on your past use.

If they over-estimate your energy use, you may find your monthly payments are higher than they should be, which could be a struggle financially. If they under-estimate your energy use, you may be in for a shock when they finally receive a meter reading, and bill you for the difference. With smart meters, your energy supplier is constantly aware of your energy use, and you will only be billed for what you've actually used.

✔ More control over your bills

Numbers on existing meters aren't enough to show us how much we're spending daily.

82% of people with smart meters say they help them to better understand their energy use, and that they've taken action to stop wasting energy. Your smart meter display will show you exactly what you're using right now. Switch off your living room light, and you'll see your costs drop.

There are many actions we can take around the home to reduce our bills, such as only boiling the right amount of water when making tea.

✔ Help with your household budget

You can see how much you've spent today, this week, last week, and over the past month. If you're working to a tight budget, your smart meter display can help you ration your energy, so you don't spend more than you can afford.

✔ No more strangers calling at the door

For vulnerable customers, there can be a worry around letting strangers into the home.

With smart meters, your energy supplier will receive

updated, accurate meter readings automatically, so the meter readers won't need to call.

✔ Smart prepay adding convenience

Customers with prepay meters have historically paid more for their energy than customers who pay by direct debit.

Part of the reason for this has been the additional cost to energy suppliers for the production and maintenance of specialist meters.

Smart meters can operate in either prepay or credit mode, so there shouldn't be any additional costs for having your smart meter set to prepay. Also, thanks to the smart technology within the meter, you will no longer need to insert a card or key to top it up. You can still visit a shop to top-up your account if you wish. But you should also be able to phone your supplier, send an SMS, or even use an app on your smartphone to top-up.

✔ No upfront cost involved

Smart meters are being paid from small increases in all our energy bills over the next few years. There's no upfront cost and we're paying for them anyway, so why not accept one?

Do I need to do anything now?

No. Your energy supplier will be in touch when they're ready to offer you an upgrade to smart meters. If you want to know when their smart meter rollout might reach you, feel free to contact them now and ask.

Do I have to have one?

No. Your supplier is obliged to offer you smart meters, but you are not obliged to accept.

However, we believe it is smart to go smart.

73%

of people with smart meters say they'd recommend them to family and friends, agreeing with our belief that it's smart to go smart.

What happens on the day of install?

- Your electricity meter will be replaced with a smart electricity meter
- Your gas meter (if you have one) will be replaced with a smart gas meter
- You will receive a smart meter display
- You will be shown how the smart meter display operates
- You will be offered some energy saving tips

The visit will take approximately 2 hours, and then your meters will take over the responsibility of sending your meter readings to your supplier.

The meter readings will also be sent to your smart meter display, so you can start to track your use.

What is the smart meter display for?

The only way to cut our electricity and gas use is to switch things off. The smart meter display shows you exactly how much energy you're using (either as pounds & pence, or as kilowatt hours).

Your display should have green, amber and red usage bands. The challenge is to try to not see red. Once your display starts to show you what you're using, you can make changes to your habits (such as switching lights off as you leave each room) and see the reduction straight away on your display.

If you're already very energy-efficient you're unlikely to see great savings, but your display can still warn you if you've accidentally left something on.

Estimated savings are low, at £11 per household per year. But many people could save much more than that. Simply turning your room thermostat down by 1°C can save £75 a year.

Can I switch once I've gone smart?

Absolutely, yes! Once we all have smart meters, switching will be far easier than it is now. Instead of your old and new suppliers having to ask you for a final/initial meter reading, this can all be done remotely. You'll still have your mandatory two week 'cooling-off' period within which you can change your mind about switching. But once that expires, we expect a switch should be able to take place within 24 hours.

However, it is true there are problems during this current period where not every supplier is fully operational on the national smart network.

There are approximately 11m first-generation smart meters in the UK, and these are awaiting an update to allow them to send your meter readings to any supplier you switch to. This update is due by the end of 2018, and will resolve this problem.

In the meantime, you can still switch supplier, but will probably lose the smart functions of your meters, so you'll have to revert to taking your own meter readings. If somebody in your household is of pensionable age, or otherwise vulnerable, you can apply to your supplier's Priority Service Register, which should mean your supplier will instruct meter readers to visit you to read the meters while you await the update to make them smart again.

The second generation of smart meters will definitely work fully, regardless of who you switch to. You may wish to consider waiting until your supplier offers you second generation meters in order to ensure they won't lose their smart functions when you choose to switch suppliers. Or you can go smart as soon as possible and take advantage of the smart functions sooner. It's entirely up to you.

What do our clients say?

"I thought my in-home display was broken. It said my electricity use was in the red. Just in case it was correct, I had a quick look around my home to see if I'd left something on. I was shocked to find somebody had left on the electric heater in the bathroom. That costs me about 50p an hour!"

"My energy supplier underestimated my readings for five years, then sent me a bill for £750. I was knocked sick! If I'd had a smart meter this couldn't have happened."

For further information call the
Save Energy Advice Line:

Freephone 0800 043 0151

Standard rate phone 0151 637 3670

Email advice@epplus.org