

Electricity suppliers with more than 50,000 customers must offer the Warm Home Discount to some of their vulnerable customers.

The Warm Home Discount is a one-off credit of £150 which is usually credited to your electricity account (but can sometimes be diverted to your gas account, or split between the two).

The scheme opens on the 14th of November 2022, with payments due before the 31st of March 2023.

There are two ways in which customers can be eligible, as follows:

Core Group 1

If you are the customer of an obligated electricity supplier, and either you or your partner is in receipt of the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit as of the “eligibility day” of 21 August 2022, then you are automatically awarded the Warm Home Discount each year, and you have never needed to apply.

Core Group 2

Before the 2022-23 scheme year, customers not in receipt of the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit have had to apply through the “broader group” of Warm Home Discount, and each electricity supplier has been able to use slightly different eligibility criteria to determine which of their customers will and won't receive the Warm Home Discount.

From 2022-23, there is no longer a “broader group” and this element has instead been picked up by the 2nd Core Group. This means nobody needs to apply for the Warm Home Discount.

Each electricity supplier is required to spend a certain amount of money on the Warm Home Discount project. This means it's possible some customers will be eligible but still miss out, as their supplier might have already exhausted the funds they're required to allocate to the scheme.

The eligibility for Core Group 2 is as follows:

- A) You are the customer of an obligated electricity supplier, and either you or your partner is in receipt of one of the following means-tested benefits:**

- Housing Benefit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- The 'Savings Credit' part of Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit (plus a low income)
- Working Tax Credit (plus a low income)

AND

- B) Your property has an assumed higher energy cost, based on its characteristics**

The government department that ensures our Council Tax bands are accurate, has details of our properties, including how many rooms we have to heat. This is how they will determine which properties require additional support via the Warm Home Discount.

How do I know if I'm included?

If you are due to receive the Warm Home Discount, your electricity supplier will write to you between November 2022 and January 2023, either to confirm an automatic payment will be made, or possibly to request further information.

If you're unsure about any of this, contact your electricity supplier after the 14th of November.

Obligated Electricity Suppliers

These suppliers have more than 50,000 customers and must deliver the Warm Home Discount, until they have exhausted their allocation of funding:

<i>Affect Energy</i>	<i>Atlantic</i>
<i>Boost</i>	<i>British Gas</i>
<i>British Gas Evolve</i>	<i>Bulb Energy</i>
<i>Co-op Energy</i>	<i>E (Gas and Electricity)</i>
<i>Ecotricity</i>	<i>E.ON</i>
<i>E.ON Next</i>	<i>EDF</i>
<i>GEUK (Green Energy UK)</i>	<i>Good Energy</i>
<i>London Power</i>	<i>M&S Energy</i>
<i>Nabuh Energy</i>	<i>Octopus Energy</i>
<i>Outfox the Market</i>	<i>OVO</i>
<i>Rebel Energy</i>	<i>Sainsbury's Energy</i>
<i>Scottish Gas</i>	<i>Scottish Hydro</i>
<i>ScottishPower</i>	<i>Shell Energy Retail</i>
<i>So Energy</i>	<i>Southern Electric</i>
<i>SSE</i>	<i>Swalec</i>
<i>Utilita</i>	<i>Utility Warehouse</i>

All Electricity Suppliers are obligated to maintain a Priority Services Register in order to provide an additional level of assistance to their vulnerable customers.

You should be able to receive priority services if you:

- Are of pensionable age
- Are disabled or chronically sick
- Have a long-term medical condition
- Have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs
- Live with a child aged under 5
- Are in a 'vulnerable situation', e.g.:
- Customers with certain mental health conditions which impact on their understanding their bill
- Customers who cannot top up their prepayment meter due to injury
- Temporary circumstances where a customer needs extra support for a limited amount of time.

Each supplier will decide what services to provide to their vulnerable customers, but examples include:

- Advance notice of planned power cuts. If you are medically reliant on your supply you can arrange for the company that runs your local network (the network operator) to give you advance notice of planned power cuts (for example, where they plan to carry out engineering work).
- Priority support in an emergency. This could involve your local network operator providing alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of supply interruption.
- Identification scheme. This is to reassure you that callers, for example meter readers, are genuine. Suppliers have to provide additional support to help you identify someone acting on behalf of their company, such as arranging a password or showing an agreed picture card upon visit.
- Password protection. Network operators must offer to agree a password with you (or your representative) that can be used by any representative of the company to enable you to identify them.
- Nominee scheme. Customers can ask their

supplier to send communications (such as account statements or bills) to someone you have nominated (for example a family member or carer) who has agreed to receive them.

- Arrangements to ensure that it's safe and practical for you to use your prepayment meter. For example moving a prepayment meter if you are unable to access it safely to top it up.
- Meter reading services at appropriate intervals. If no person occupying the premises is able to read the meter and there isn't anyone else that the customer can nominate to read the meter on your behalf, your supplier may be able to read it for you.
- Accessible information. Account and bill information in an accessible format, for example in larger print or braille.

How to apply for Priority Services

You can simply contact your electricity supplier, using the contact details on your bill. If you are unsure who your electricity supplier is, you can ask your District Network Operator. This is the company that maintains all the electrical cables beneath our properties.

For Merseyside and Western Cheshire, the District Network Operator is **SP Energy Networks**
www.spenergynetworks.co.uk 0330 10 10 167

For the most Easterly points of Cheshire, the District Network Operator is **Electricity North West**
www.enwl.co.uk 0800 195 4141

District Network Operators also maintain a Priority Services Register. It is often easier to register with them, as they also give you the option to let them share your details with your electricity supplier, so you only need to apply once to be on both Priority Services Registers.

**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**



Do you know who to contact if you have a power cut?

105 is the new number to call.

It's free of charge and will put you through to your local network operator who can give you help and advice.

For more information check out www.powercut105.com.