

RYAN HENSON

Working to help you save money

ENERGY

GUIDE





How to keep your energy bills down this winter

When it comes to the cost of living, winter can be difficult.

The heating gets turned on, hot water bills go up – things just get a bit more expensive.

But there are some really simple things you can do to keep energy costs down. Meaning you'll be able to save a little more money.

In this guide, you'll find advice from both industry and government on how to be prepared for the colder months.

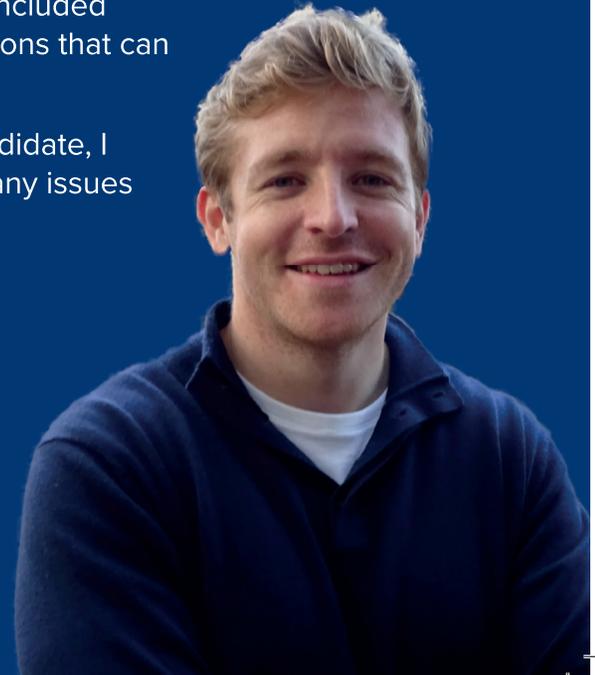
And if you've got any questions, we've included contact details at the back for organisations that can provide you with advice and support.

As your Conservative parliamentary candidate, I want to hear from you. So if you've got any issues you'd like to raise, please get in touch.

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Conservative Parliamentary
Candidate for Bedford & Kempston



How to
make
your
home
more
energy
efficient.

Smart Meters

The Government has launched a programme to have all homes and small businesses fitted with smart meters by 2020 with energy suppliers being responsible for their installation.

Smart meters show near real time energy usage which is displayed and in a clear format. Rather than kilowatt hours which often cause confusion, pounds and pence are shown so that you can keep a close eye on how much energy you are using.

This will bring an end to the use of 'estimated billing' by energy companies and you will only be charged for the actual energy that you use. **Your energy supplier will contact you about installing a new smart meter or you can contact them immediately and start saving straight away.**



Cavity Wall Insulation

Approximately one third of heat lost in an uninsulated home is through the walls. Insulating your walls is a very cost effective way of saving money and energy in your home. If your home was built between the 1920s and the 1990s then insulating your walls could save you £250 on your annual heating bills.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation/cavity-wall

Not all homes can be insulated in this way, so if your home is a solid wall construction or was built before the 1920s, you may wish to consider installing internal or external wall insulation which could save you £375 each year.

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Loft Insulation

An uninsulated loft can result in you losing 15% of the heating that you pay for. Insulating your loft with 270mm of insulation could save you up to £215 each year. Some energy companies offer free cavity wall and loft insulation so check with your provider.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation/roof-and-loft

Check your Boiler

If your boiler is over 15 years old then it could be time to replace it with a new energy efficient one. Replacing an old boiler with an A-rated condensing model with a full set of heating controls could save you a quarter of your annual heating bill immediately, which is £235 on average for a gas heated home.



Look for the Energy Saving Trust Logo

When buying new electrical products, look for the Energy Saving Trust logo which is a quick and simple way of finding the most energy efficient products. Electrical appliances such as televisions, computers and kettles, as well as heating and lighting products will have this logo prominently displayed.

Insulate your Hot Water Tank

An insulating jacket for a hot water tank does not cost very much and very soon pays for itself. Fitting a jacket that is 75mm or three inches thick will save about £35 each year.

Close your Curtains

As the days grow shorter as winter approaches, closing your curtains at dusk helps to stop heat escaping through windows. This is a simple and free way of reducing wasted energy and your energy bills.

Energy Efficient Light Bulbs

Energy saving bulbs last up to 10 times as long as regular bulbs and if you replace all your light bulbs with energy efficient ones, you could save up to £45 each year and £670 over the lifetime of all the bulbs.

Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)

The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive encourages residents to lower their carbon emissions and make use of renewable energy.

The Government provides a financial incentive for up to 7 years for homes which use:

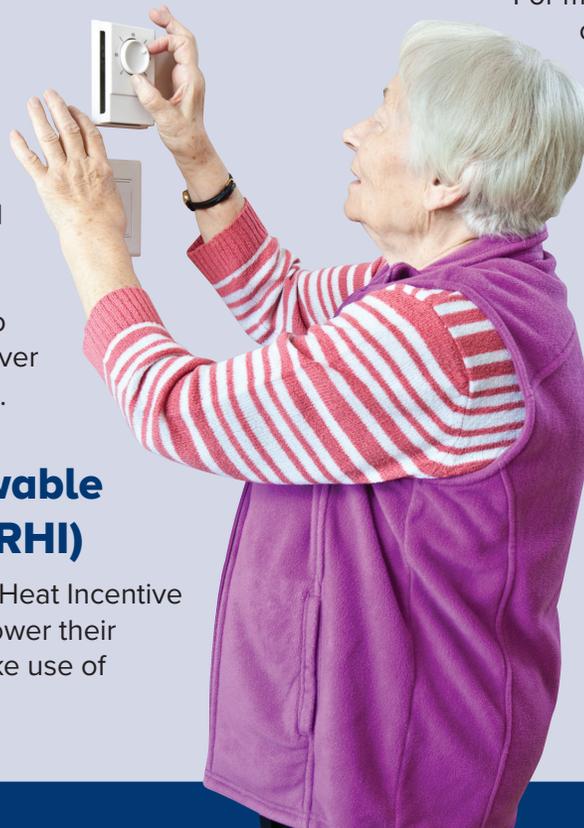
- Biomass boilers
- Solar Water Heaters
- Certain Heat Pumps

For more information on this scheme or to check if your home is eligible to take part, telephone **0300 003 0744**.

Your Energy Supplier

You could save money by switching to another energy supplier that is best suited to your needs.

In order to get advice on which supplier and price plan would be best for you, you can visit **www.ofgem.gov.uk** or contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau who will provide free and impartial advice as well as information on how to choose and change energy suppliers.





Switching made easy.

The Government has carried out a range of measures to make it easier to switch suppliers. The average time that it takes to change energy supplier has fallen to 17 days so as to speed up the process for consumers and so that they can start to benefit from reduced bills a lot sooner.

We have simplified the entire process, encouraging energy companies to make information on tariffs and price plans more accessible and easy to understand. Energy suppliers are also obliged to place customers on the cheapest tariff and thus save money on their bills.

In addition, if you are disabled, have a long-term illness or are over the pension age, you can ask your energy supplier about registering for the Priority Service Register. This would enable you to get help with annual gas safety checks, meter readings, priority treatment in an emergency and most importantly means that you cannot have your utilities disconnected during the winter.

Energy companies also offer other forms of assistance to their customers.

If you are having trouble paying your bills or are worried about the cost of energy this winter, you should get in touch with your energy supplier as soon as possible to see what is on offer. Many energy companies offer trust funds and grant schemes which can help with:

- White Goods
- Unpaid utility bills
- Energy efficiency upgrades for your home



What help is there?

Cold Weather Payments

This is a payment that is made to help you with the cost of heating during the winter months depending on if you are already in receipt of other benefits.

You may be entitled to Cold Weather Payments if you receive:

- Pension Credit.
- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit.

You do not need to apply for Cold Weather Payments as they will be automatically paid into the same bank account as your other benefit payments.

A payment of £25 is made for each seven day period of cold weather between the 1st November and the 31st March. Payments will be made when the local temperature is either:

- Recorded as an average of zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days.
- Forecast to be an average of zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days.

If you do not receive a Cold Weather Payment when you are entitled, you should contact either your pension centre or Jobcentre Plus.





What help is there?

Winter Fuel Payments

Winter Fuel Payments are yearly one-off payments that also help people to pay for their heating bills during winter. They are paid to men and women who have reached the minimum age at which they can receive their State Pension. The amount that is paid is dependent upon your circumstances when you apply, but it could be between £100 and £300.

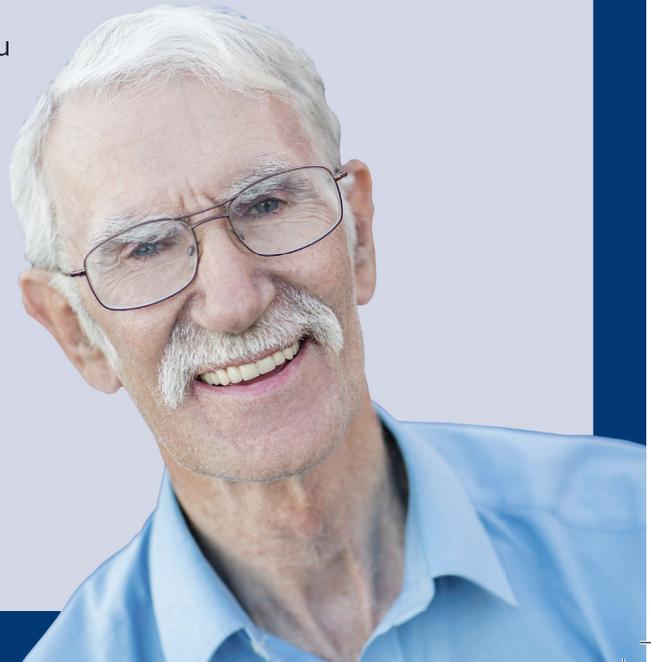
How to claim

Once you have reached the qualifying age (if you were born on or before the 5th July 1953) or if you are receiving certain benefits, you should automatically be sent a claim form in the post.

If you do not receive the claim form, you can request a copy of the form to be sent to you in the post by calling **0845 915 1515** or you can download the form by visiting www.gov.uk and searching for 'Winter Fuel Payment'.

The form then needs to be returned to the following address:

**Winter Fuel Payment Centre
Department for Work and Pensions
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1LR**





What help is there?

Energy Company Obligation

The Government requires larger energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency measures under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO).

The obligation is in place to help reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

The ECO scheme gives grants to help low income households boost energy efficiency.

All of the big six energy suppliers - British Gas, EDF, E-on, NPower, Scottish Power and SSE take part in the ECO. Many smaller energy companies also take part.

Though the scheme varies depending on the energy supplier, many offer loft and wall insulation, replacement boilers and smart meters for eligible households.

To see what is available for your

household simply contact your energy supplier and ask about the ECO support available.



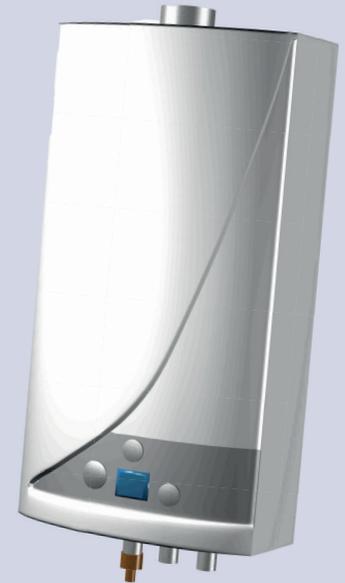


Top Tips



Your Top 5 Energy Saving Tips

1. Contact your energy provider about installing a Smart Meter
2. Where possible, insulate walls, loft and hot water tank
3. Look out for the Energy Saving Trust logo when buying new electrical products
4. Use energy saving light bulbs and close curtains to keep heat in
5. Check whether you are on the best energy tariff and with the right supplier to meet your needs



USEFUL CONTACTS

■ Age UK

An independent charity, Age UK provides information and advice for elderly people about a wide range of issues and can refer you to other organisations which can provide more practical help.

0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk

■ Citizens Advice Consumer

When you buy goods or services the law gives you consumer rights. These protect you from being treated unfairly by a trader.

0345 404 0506

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer

■ Energy Ombudsman

Contact the Energy Ombudsman if you have a problem or complaint that cannot be resolved by your energy supplier.

In the first instance, you should always contact your energy supplier. Only when they have exhausted their complaints procedures should you contact the Ombudsman.

0330 440 1624

www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk

■ Energy Saving Trust

A national, non-profit, organisation providing free and impartial information and advice on how to improve energy efficiency in your home. Linked to a network of local advice centres.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

0300 123 1234

energy-advice@est.org.uk

■ Gas Safe Register

Gas Safe Register is the official body for gas safety. They can provide you with advice on gas appliances as well as having a clear register of all reputable companies involved in the field of supplying gas.

0800 408 5500

www.gassaferegister.co.uk

■ Pensions Advisory Service

An advice helpline that can provide elderly people with advice on benefits to which they may be entitled.

0300 123 1047

www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

■ Home Heat Helpline

A free helpline which can provide practical advice for people worried about their fuel bills. This line can also give advice to low-income households in urgent need of help and advice.

0800 33 66 99

www.homeheathelpline.org.uk

■ Ofgem

Ofgem is the government regulator for the gas and electricity markets. Its purpose is to protect consumers and does offer consumer advice on its website.

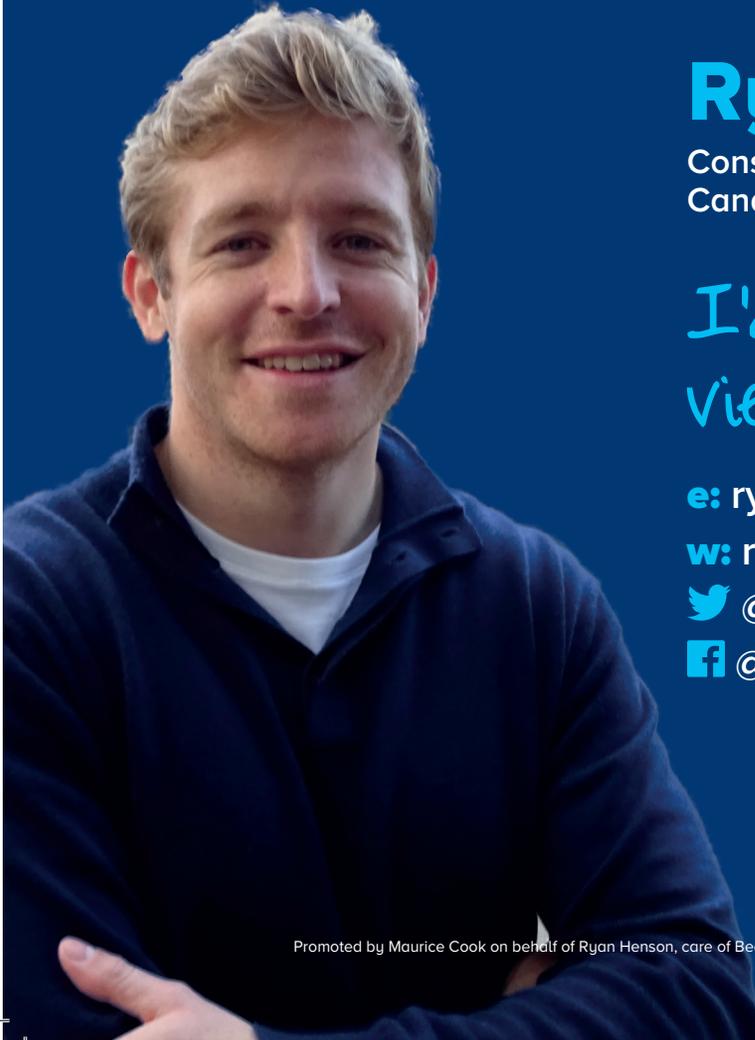
www.ofgem.gov.uk

■ Winter Fuel Payment

A form of financial help from the Government for elderly people.

08459 151 515

www.direct.gov.uk



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*I'd like to hear your
views, please contact me:*

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