



## Customer Support Brochure

Helpful tips and advice to help you through this winter



## Getting winter ready...

Winter is coming. And with the colder weather we all need to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy, warm and well. At Budget Energy we want to ensure all our customers have access to practical tips and advice to help them through the winter period.

## Winter can be a worry

We have been living through uncertain times and as we approach winter, a time when energy use in the home ramps up, many customers may be anxious about their energy supply bills and keeping up with payments.

At Budget Energy we are here to help, that is why we have pulled together some information to help you get ready for winter, to deal with any concerns regarding your electricity supply and let you know how we, and other organisations, can provide further support.



## Difficulty keeping up with bills

If you are having difficulties paying for your electricity, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. Our trained staff are on hand to support all customers and will consider your individual circumstances to help manage your energy needs.

Take advantage of our payment plan options and “Talk to Us” about ways we can assist you with your bill payments. This may include a payment extension or temporary payment arrangement while you get back on your feet.

We are here to help so don't be afraid to give us a call and ask for help - we don't judge, we just want to help you stay connected.



To discuss your options call us on **0800 012 1177** or email us at [talktous@budgetenergy.co.uk](mailto:talktous@budgetenergy.co.uk)



## Keep warm and well - winter top tips

- ✓ Try to heat your main living room to around 21°C and the rest of the house to at least 18°C. Make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed. Turning your central heating down by one degree could cut your heating bills by up to 10%.
- ✓ Close curtains at night to keep the heat in.
- ✓ Do not block radiators with furniture.
- ✓ Never leave the hot water tap running.
- ✓ In very cold weather, set the heating to come on earlier, rather than turning the thermostat up. This means you won't be cold while you wait for your home to heat up.
- ✓ Ensure your boiler is serviced and any repairs are seen to before the winter - don't get caught out in a cold snap.
- ✓ Use energy efficient light bulbs - if every UK home installed three of them, it would save enough energy to power all the UK's street lights. We have a full range of bulbs in our online store. Visit <https://estore.budgetenergy.co.uk/> to find out more.
- ✓ Try to remember to switch the lights off every time you leave a room.
- ✓ Use 'task' lighting rather than whole room lighting when only a small amount of light is required.
- ✓ Don't leave mobile phones on charge overnight.
- ✓ Make sure computer equipment is switched off and unplugged when not in use.
- ✓ Electrical appliances on standby cost money - switch off on the appliance itself or turn it off at the plug if possible.



## Energy advice

If you want to find out ways to reduce your energy usage and actions you can take to improve the energy efficiency of your home, contact one of our trained Energy Advisors. Reducing energy usage in the home may help you save money while also benefiting the environment. Our trained energy advisors can talk to you about ways you can reduce how much energy you use, and they can also direct you to funding that may be available to help with the cost of making your home more energy-efficient.

You can contact our Customer Support team or Energy Advisors on:

**Freephone:** 0800 012 1177

**Email:** [talktous@budgetenergy.co.uk](mailto:talktous@budgetenergy.co.uk)

We have also introduced a 'live chat' function which can be accessed via our website [www.budgetenergy.co.uk](http://www.budgetenergy.co.uk)

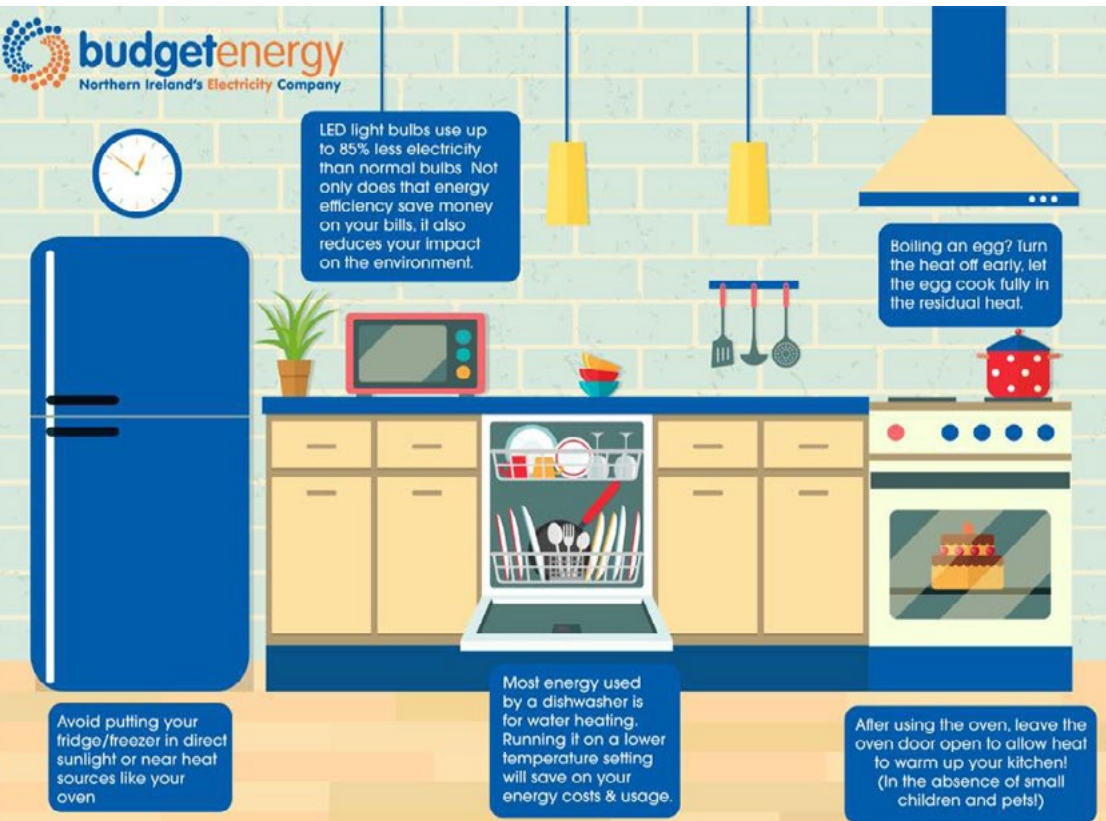
## UK Government Support

### Government Energy Price Guarantee

The UK Government has introduced an Energy Price Guarantee which significantly reduces the amount households will be charged per unit for their electricity from November 1st 2022. The scheme is in place until April 1st, 2023. As with all Government schemes, it will be constantly reviewed and is subject to change. Discounts of up to 19.9p (excluding VAT) have been applied to your unit rates. If you have a keypad meter you will receive a 60-digit code to be input to your Keypad meter when you top up next. Once this is completed your new discounted tariff will apply. We will be writing to you detailing the new rates being charged from 1st of November under this scheme.

### Energy Bills Support Scheme

In addition to the Government Energy Price Guarantee, all domestic electricity customers are due to get a £400 credit this Winter with the UK Government's Energy Bills Support Scheme. We will advise you directly once the specific details of this scheme are finalised. This payment will most likely be made in December or January, but this will be dictated by the UK Government.



## Loan me a Fiver?

Our Loan me £5 is available to all Keypad customers. You can download the Budget Energy App via Play Store (Android) or App Store (Apple) onto your phone or tablet. You can borrow £5 by simply selecting the 'Credit Meter £5' within our app.

We have also updated our website so our customers can avail of the loan me a fiver service online, all you need to do is log into your online portal at <https://budgetenergy.co.uk/customerlogin>

You will find this within the top up section.

You can view the terms and conditions of this service below.

<https://budgetenergy.co.uk/Documents/documentsni/TandC/Loan-Me-A-Fiver-TCs.pdf>

### Disclaimer

Please be aware when using this service that it is a borrow and must be repaid. Try to use this service in cases of emergency and not rely on it by means of budgeting your electricity.

## Look in on vulnerable neighbours & relatives

Check on older neighbours and relatives, and those with heart or breathing (respiratory) problems, to make sure they:

- ✓ Are safe and well
- ✓ Are warm enough, especially at night
- ✓ Have stocks of foods and medicines so they do not need to go out during very cold weather

If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact your local council or call the Age UK helpline on 0800 678 1602 (8am to 7pm every day).

If you're concerned the person may have hypothermia, contact NHS 111.

budgetenergy  
Northern Ireland's Electricity Company

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## Supporting all our Customers

### Customer Care Register

At Budget Energy, we aim to provide the best service possible to all of our customers. We understand that some of our customers may have additional support needs, and we're committed to providing extra help wherever possible. If you are of pensionable age, disabled, or chronically sick, you may benefit from joining our Customer Care Register. We have a range of services that could make your life easier, for instance, asking our meter readers to allow you more time to answer your door or offering assistance such as setting up a carer as an alternative bill payer.

For further information about how we can support you and for details of all the support we can provide see our Code of Practice for the Provision of Services for Persons who are of Pensionable Age or Disabled or Chronically Sick:

[www.budgetenergy.co.uk/about/codesofpractice](http://www.budgetenergy.co.uk/about/codesofpractice)



### Medical Care Register

NIE Networks operate a free Medical Care Register for consumers who rely on electricity or water for their day-to-day care. Adding your details will prioritise your contact details if your supply goes off.

Please give us a call on **0800 012 1177** to register or visit their website which is posted below.

<https://www.nienetworks.co.uk/help-advice/vulnerablecustomers/medical-customer-care-register>



## Using your keypad meter

### Emergency Credit

When your credit runs out, press any key to get £1 emergency credit. This will switch your supply on too. This credit will be repaid when you next top up. Friendly Credit Weekdays - if emergency credit runs out after 5pm, Monday to Thursday, the supply will stay on until 12pm the following day. Weekends - if your emergency credit runs out after 5pm on a Friday, the supply will stay on until 12pm the following Monday.

Friendly Credit will not run out on any of the following holiday dates - 1st January, 17th March, 12th July and 25th December and your supply will stay on until 12pm the following day.

### How to top up your keypad

When you top up you will be given a vend code (usually 20 digits). One of the following messages will be displayed:

#### ACCEPTED

You will hear a 'happy' tone. The amount topped up will appear, followed by 'Account' and the total credit on the meter.

#### REJECTED

You will hear a 'sad' tone followed by one of the fault messages below:

#### DUPLICATE

Vend code has already been entered and accepted previously Incorrect - the vend code has been entered incorrectly or is for another property.

#### ERROR

You have missed a number or entered vend code too slowly.

#### KBLOCK

The vend code has been entered incorrectly five times in a row.

#### WRONG TAR

The price of electricity has changed and you must enter the 60 digit code CreditHi - you have too much credit on your meter. Wait a few days and try again.

#### TAMPER

Contact Budget Energy on **0800 012 11 77**.

## Making the most of your keypad

### Press '\*\*' before entering vend codes

- # Press this after entering the vend code.
- # Press this to see the amount of credit left.
- 0 Display test, time and date.
- 1 Credit time left in days.
- 2 Cost of previous day's, week's, month's use.
- 3 Unit rates and number of units used.
- 4 The last five vend codes used.
- 5 Total money entered on meter.
- 6 Electricity currently being used in kilowatts (pressing 6 shows you exactly how much electricity you are using right now. By switching appliances on and off, you can see how the amount of energy being used changes).
- 7 Standing charge repayment rates per day if applicable.
- 8 Highest consumption in any half hour in last 24 hours and when it occurred.
- 9 Total units used.

### For Economy 7 Keypads

- 3 Unit rates DL (domestic), CH (central heating) and HW (hot water).
- 7 Central heating indicator.
- 8 Hot water indicator.



## Can I get help with the cost of energy bills?

If you're finding things difficult at the moment, make sure you're not missing out on any benefits or discounts that will help keep you and your home warm.

### Discretionary Support

Discretionary Support provides financial assistance to people in an extreme, exceptional or crisis situation to address an immediate, short-term need. Applications can be made online or by phone. Although the scheme allows decision makers to use their judgement, taking account of the personal circumstances of the claimant, specific restrictions do still apply. An award from Discretionary Support can be made either as an interest free loan or non-repayable grant.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/claim-discretionary-support>

Contact Number: **0800 587 2750**

### Short-term Benefit Advance

People on certain benefits can request an advance if there is an urgent financial need. The person will need to demonstrate that there will be a serious impact on the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or their family if that need is not addressed. Advances must be repaid within 12 weeks.



## Other sources of support

For information on all energy grants, get in touch with NI Energy Advice. They provide independent and impartial energy advice - plus referrals to energy grants and other sources of help.

Freephone: **0800 1114455**

Email: **[nienergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:nienergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk)**

Website: **[www.nihe.gov.uk/Community/NI-Energy-Advice](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/Community/NI-Energy-Advice)**

Improving the energy efficiency of your home is one of the simplest ways of saving energy and combating rising energy prices. Getting such measures installed may not cost as much as you think, and the good news is that there are often grants and support available to help.



## Affordable Warmth Scheme

The Affordable Warmth Scheme provides grant aid to support improving the energy efficiency of your home and can also provide for a replacement of your old heating system. The Housing Executive works in partnership with local Councils to deliver the scheme throughout Northern Ireland.

## Boiler Replacement Scheme

The Boiler Replacement Scheme helps homeowners with the cost (up to £1,000) of replacing an old boiler which is at least 15 years old.

## Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme

The Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP for short) provides help to install energy saving measures in your home. This can include energy-efficient boilers, heating controls, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation. For further information visit:

[www.nihe.gov.uk/Housing-Help/AffordableWarmth-Boiler-Replacement/Affordable-Warmth-Scheme](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/Housing-Help/AffordableWarmth-Boiler-Replacement/Affordable-Warmth-Scheme)



## Free and confidential advice

If you are struggling, or worried about making ends meet, you should consider getting free, confidential, and independent debt advice. You can contact:

### Stepchange

Provide expert advice to help you deal with debt and get the support you need. They have an online debt advice tool, [www.stepchange.org/setting-expectations.aspx](http://www.stepchange.org/setting-expectations.aspx) or you can contact them for free on 0800 138 1111. At Budget Energy we have a referral relationship with Stepchange, so if you wish, and only with your permission, we can provide them with your details so they can contact you to provide additional support and advice.

### The Money Advice Service

(Part of the Money & Pensions Service) can help you find support - a range of options are available from its Debt advice locator: [www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/dealingwith-debt/use-our-debt-advice-locator](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/dealingwith-debt/use-our-debt-advice-locator) or contact them for free on 0800 138 7777.

### The Advice NI

Money Talks service [www.adviceni.net/money-debt](http://www.adviceni.net/money-debt) has information and support to help manage your money. You can also contact Advice NI for free on **08009154604** or email [advice@adviceni.net](mailto:advice@adviceni.net)

### Ability to Pay - Budget Energy

We at Budget Energy have introduced an ability to pay assessment in instances where a customer is struggling to keep up with their bills. One of our specialists will be able to provide greater assistance and support. In this instance, our specialists can offer a things such as:

- Debt advice
- Repayment plans
- A lower recoup % in cases of keypad debt
- Energy Efficiency advice

We at Budget Energy know it is difficult and will do our best to try combat the energy crisis where possible. If you feel you are struggling at the moment please reach out and talk to us.

## Free and confidential advice (continued)

### Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

[www.capuk.org](http://www.capuk.org) provides free and independent debt advice to anyone in NI. CAP can also provide budgeting help. Call free on 0800 328 0006 or visit [capuk.org](http://capuk.org) for more information.

CAP can provide you with a range of advice and support to assist with budgeting. They offer free courses available through <https://capuk.org/gethelp/cap-money-course>

### The Trussell Trust

Support a nationwide network of food banks and together they provide emergency food and support to people locked in poverty, and campaign for change to end the need for food banks in the UK. You can locate your nearest foodbank via <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-afoodbank/>

### National Energy Action (NEA)

The fuel poverty charity, campaigns so everyone can afford to live in a warm and safe home. This is something denied to millions because of poor housing, low incomes, and high bills. Working across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, everything they do aims to improve the lives of people in fuel poverty. They directly support people with energy and income maximisation advice and they advocate on issues including improving the energy efficiency of our homes. You can visit their website at <https://www.nea.org.uk/get-help/>

## JAM Card Friendly

We are a JAM Card friendly organisation. Our teams are trained to support customers with learning difficulties, autism or communication barriers, by giving them 'just a minute'.

### What is JAM Card?

Just. A. Minute. That is what JAM Card stands for and that is what it gives you - just as much time and patience as you need in public or social situations.

You can show your JAM Card while you are shopping, ordering food, visiting a bank, using public transport and much, much more. As long as the business in question is JAM Card Friendly, they will know what your cards means. It's a simple idea that makes a big difference.



## Energy Theft Awareness

**Energy theft is dangerous, illegal and paid for by you**

Energy theft is when a gas or electricity meter is tampered with so that it does not accurately record the amount of energy used. This is an illegal act and can be extremely dangerous.

Energy theft increases costs, resulting in higher bills which affects everyone.

The Consumer Council, with the support of the energy industry in Northern Ireland, is raising awareness about the consequences of energy theft. If you suspect energy theft is occurring, it can be reported by contacting the UK Revenue Protection Association (UKRPA) on **028 9575 7206**.

The Consumer Council Northern Ireland (CCNI) launched their Energy Theft Awareness Campaign. The campaign, which is supported by UKRPA (UK Revenue Protection Association), NIE Networks, the gas network operators and all suppliers in the gas and electricity industry, aims to raise public awareness on the impact of the theft of energy and to advise members of the public on how they can report energy theft.

To anonymously report energy theft call **028 9575 7206** or **034 5764 3643**.

## The Budget Energy Store

We are delighted to launch our brand new e-store that will allow visitors to shop a range of smart products that will help our customers to manage their energy usage along with products that all for the smarter usage of energy too!

We have an excellent range of items that will make your home more energy efficient like having energy saving lightbulbs and smart plugs that allows you monitory usage.



<https://estore.budgetenergy.co.uk>

# ENERGY THEFT



**Dangerous**



**Illegal**



**Paid for by you**

our new  
e-store  
is now  
live.

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## Emergency Contact Information

### If there is a power cut

Power cuts can occur due to severe weather, although they can happen anytime. It's best to always be prepared by:

- ✓ Knowing where your household fuses and trip switches are.
- ✓ Having a torch, oil or gas lamp (all preferable to candles) ready and easy to reach.
- ✓ Having a supply of formula baby milk and preparing a flask of hot water to heat bottles and baby food.

### If your electricity goes off

Check if your neighbours have lost supply. If you can, check on vulnerable neighbours to make sure they are ok.

If your power is off and you want more information, contact NIE Networks **03457 643 643** (minicom **03457147128**) or [www.nie.co.uk](http://www.nie.co.uk)

- ✓ Check appliances and machinery are switched off at the wall.
- ✓ Leave one light on so you know when power is restored.

### When your electricity comes back on

- ✓ Turn on and reset appliances (e.g timers, water heater, burglar alarm).





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