



budgetenergy
Northern Ireland's **Electricity** Company

Code of Practice

on

**Provision of Services for
Persons Who Are of
Pensionable Age or
Disabled or
Chronically Sick**

Budget Energy recognises that our customers will have different lifestyles, budgets, needs and they will face different challenges. Budget Energy is committed to caring for our customers, which is why we have worked with the Utility Regulator and the NI Consumer Council to offer extra support to our customers who need extra help.

This Code of Practice covers our commitments to providing extra services to those customers who are of pensionable age or disabled, including in particular domestic customers who are disabled by virtue of being blind, partially sighted, deaf or hearing impaired.

This includes customers who are or have:

- Blind or visually impaired**
- Chronically sick**
- Deaf or hard of hearing**

- **Dexterity impaired**
- **Language difficulty**
- **Learning disability**
- **Mental health disorder**
- **Mobility or physically disabled**
- **Of state pensionable age**
- **Speech impaired (for example, following a stroke)**

REGISTERING AS A CUSTOMER WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If you are a customer of pensionable age or disabled or chronically sick you can register with us on our Customer Care Register. This allows us to make sure you are receiving any of the relevant special services we provide to customers who are of pensionable age or disabled or chronically sick.

Budget Energy will endeavour to ensure any of our customers with special needs get registered on our Customer Care Register and we have trained our staff to deal empathetically with our customers to encourage self-identification. Our staff are also trained to identify customers that may be eligible for the Customer Care Register and approach them about registering.

We shall also contact customers at least once every year to let them know of the

existence of the Customer Care register and provide them with details on how to register. Contact will be through multiple channels including by phone, in writing or email etc.

Registration can be done during the switching or sign-up process by filling out the Special Services/Needs section on the sign-up registration form or by contacting us at any time by the following methods:

- By freephone: **0800 012 11 77** - (Calls will be free however you may be charged if you use a mobile)
- Phone: **028 7126 4444** – (Calls will be charged at local call are, charges for calls made from mobiles may vary)

We are open Monday to Friday from 8am - 8pm and 11am – 4pm on Saturdays

- By email: You can send an email to: customerservice@budgetenergy.co.uk

- **By post: You can contact us by post at:**

**Customer Service
Budget Energy Ltd Energy House
30-32 Ballinska Road
Springtown Industrial Estate L'Derry
BT48 0LY**

- **By fax: You also have the option to contact us by fax 028 7127 5099**

You can also contact us through the above methods to request free advice and information on the services available from Budget Energy because of a customer's age, disability or chronic illness.

Please be assured that your details will be kept private and only relevant staff will have access to these details.

Budget Energy will also, where appropriate and in line with relevant data protection provisions, provide the information on the register to any relevant party licensed

under the Electricity Order to distribute electricity in an appropriate form and on a monthly basis.

HOW WE CAN HELP AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO CUSTOMERS WHO ARE OF PENSIONABLE AGE OR DISABLED OR CHRONICALLY SICK

Our trained staff will be available to provide you with help and assistance and to answer any questions you may have relating to your bill/s, payment/s or your account. You can contact our staff for this help through the contact details listed above.

SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

NOMINATION SERVICE

Every customer on our Customer Care Register can nominate a person such as a carer, relative or friend to deal with their account with us on their behalf. Budget Energy can send all correspondence and bills to the nominated person and they can contact us on your behalf and equally we can contact them if we need to make contact with you. We can also still send a copy of the bill to you if requested.

We need your permission for this and an agreement of the nominated person to do this. If you wish to use this service please send your permission and the nominated person's agreement to us through one of the methods listed above.

ADVICE

At your request our team can provide advice on the use of electricity appliances and fittings.

SPECIAL CONTROLS

If you have a disability at your request our team can provide, where reasonably practicable and appropriate, for no cost special controls and adaptors (such as Braille Knobs, Handi-plugs etc) for electrical appliances and meters.

If your meter is in a place that makes it difficult to read, please let us know and we can arrange for it to be moved, if possible. Also, if you have a dial meter that you find difficult to read, we will arrange to replace it with an easy to read digital meter, if safe and practical to do so. Budget Energy will

contact NIE Networks on your behalf to request these changes.

METER READING

At your request we can arrange to have your meter read at least once a quarter. We can then advise you of that reading where you or no one else in your household is able to read the meter.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS OF COMMUNICATION FOR CUSTOMERS WHO ARE BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED OR DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED

We provide alternative accessible versions of terms and conditions, billing

information, Codes of Practice, complaints procedures.

For blind, visually impaired and or partially sighted customers who need details of their charges and meter readings from their bills they can do so by calling a member of our Customer Service Team who will be happy to read out these details over the phone.

For Deaf/Partially Deaf Customers we can communicate with you via email or text (you can choose your preferred method when you sign up with us).

Budget Energy will make available all bills and information provided to assist customers by post and in addition to this all of our bills and publications will also be available online in Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF document format

allows blind, visually impaired and partially sighted customers the facility to increase the size of the document without reducing the quality of the print on bills and includes zoom features. Budget Energy documentation will also be provided upon request in Braille. If you wish to make an enquiry or complaint about any bill or statement please use any of the methods or:

- By text: This service can be set up when you sign up with us**

SPECIAL IDENTIFICATION AND PASSWORD SCHEME

We advise you never to open the door or allow a stranger into your house unless you're happy to do so and you're sure they are who they say they are.

All Budget Energy representatives carry photo identification and wear branded Budget Energy clothing.

Anybody who calls to your door from Budget Energy will always introduce themselves and present their identification.

The identification badge contains the Budget Energy representatives name and photograph, an issue and expiry date and a free phone number **0800 012 11 77 which you can call to verify their identity.**

All Budget Energy customers can avail of a password and nomination scheme. This will be set up when you first switch to Budget Energy. The customer service representative will ask you as part of the switch over to confirm a password to be used when making contact with Budget Energy.

In addition customers can nominate up to 2 people to have sufficient authority to discuss their account. These people will also receive bills in respect of the supply of electricity for your account by prior agreement.

DISCONNECTION

We will not knowingly disconnect the energy supply of a vulnerable customer (as described above) between 1 October and 31 March the following year.

If you are of pensionable age, disabled or living with a chronic illness and are having problems paying your bills, let us know so that your supply is not disconnected and we can find a suitable repayment arrangement for you.

CRITICAL CARE CUSTOMERS

These services apply if any of the following equipment is in use in your home:

- **OC – Oxygen Concentrator**
- **SP – Suction Pump**
- **HD – Home Dialysis**
- **NP – Peg Tube Feeding Pump**
- **EH – Electric Hoist**
- **CL – Electric Chair Lift**
- **PN – Total Parental Nutrition Machine**
- **VT – Ventilator**
- **NB – Nebuliser**

- **EM – Electric Mattress/Bed**
- **SL – Electric Pressure Stair Lift**
- **MS – Multiple Sclerosis**
- **FR – Vital Medicine Requiring Refrigeration**

If anybody in your home depends on electrical equipment that is vital for their health it is crucial that they contact NIE Networks on Tel. Number **03457 643 643 for inclusion on their Critical Care Register.**

NIE Networks are responsible for maintaining the electricity network and this information will enable them to identify customers who are particularly vulnerable during a power cut or a planned interruption.

We also encourage critical care customers to provide details of a carer, relative or friend. If NIE Networks are unable to contact you directly, they will contact them. If you wish to do so, please contact us using any of the methods listed above.

If your electricity goes off or you have problems with the quality of your electricity supply or would like to request a relocation/replacement of your meter you should contact NIE Networks on **03457 643 643.**

POWER CUTS

Registration as a critical care customer will ensure you are given priority during a power cut. NIE Networks will contact you with regular updates throughout the duration of the power cut. These updates will help you make an informed decision as to whether alternative arrangements will be required.

PLANNED INTERRUPTIONS

NIE Networks will contact you at least three days before a planned interruption to your supply. They will let you know the expected duration of the supply. This will help you make an informed decision as to whether alternative arrangements will be required.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks

By phone: 03457 643 643

By email: customercontact@nie.co.uk

**By post: Northern Ireland Electricity
Customer Care Register FREEPOST
NATN475**

PO Box 2 Danesfort

120 Malone Road BELFAST

BT9 5BR

The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

The Consumer Council is an independent consumer organisation, working to bring about change to benefit Northern Ireland's consumers. Their aim is to make the consumer voice heard and make it count. You can contact them using one of the following methods:

**Telephone: 0800 121 6022 Email:
contact@consumercouncil.org.uk**

Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

**Address: The Consumer Council for
Northern Ireland Floor 3, Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street Belfast, BT2 8EN By
fax: Fax your query or complaint to:
028 251663**

**Please also refer to our Code of Practice
on Energy Efficiency for ways in which**

**you can reduce your use of electricity
and in turn your bills.**

