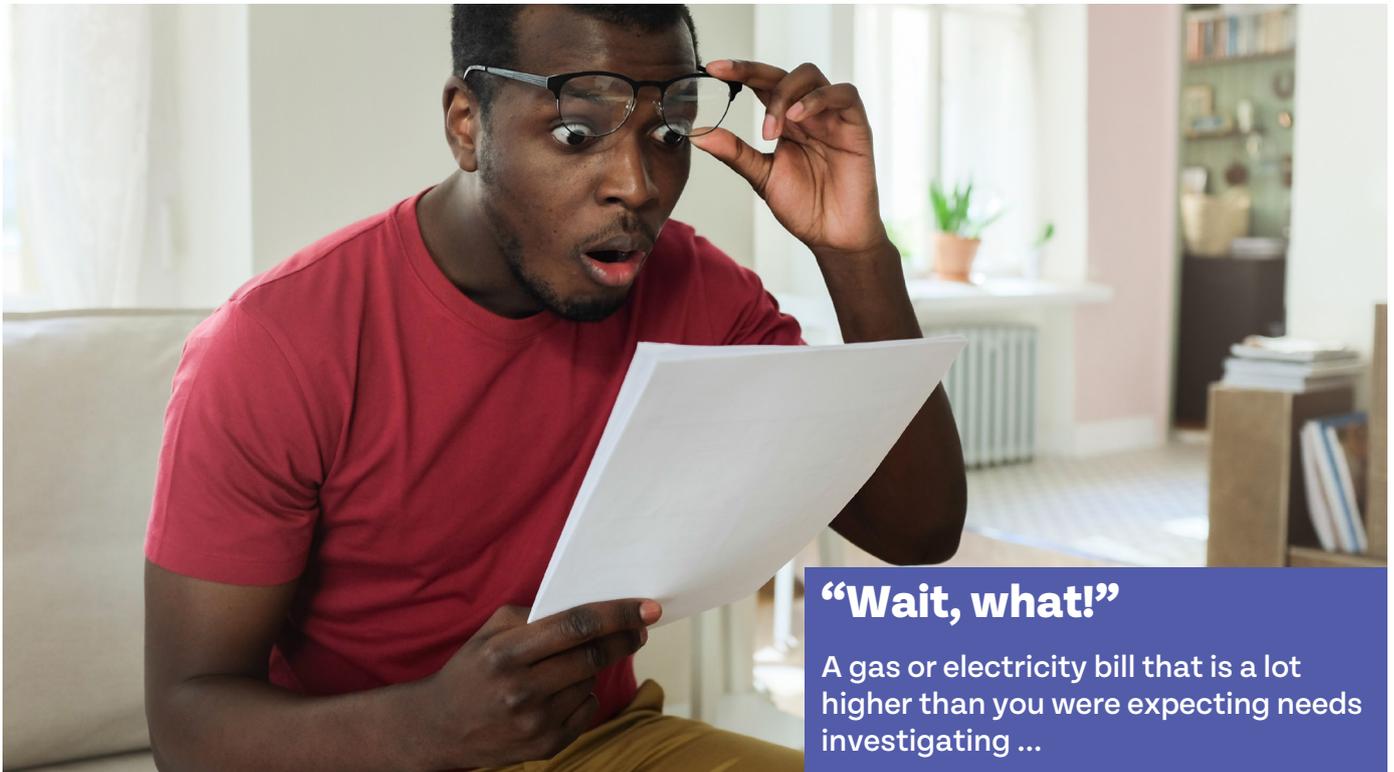


Why is my energy bill so high?



“Wait, what!”

A gas or electricity bill that is a lot higher than you were expecting needs investigating ...

Is your gas or electricity bill much higher than you would expect? This leaflet will help you to work out why ...

If you receive a bill that is much higher than you were expecting then it's worth doing some further investigating. Something may be wrong with your meter, your billing or an appliance.

Are your bills based on accurate up-to-date meter readings?

Bills are often based on *estimated* readings, so it's important to make sure your bill is accurate. You can usually submit meter readings online or over the phone (see our [website](#) for more about how to do this.) If you have a smart meter, submitting a reading you've taken yourself will

help to check if it's communicating properly with your supplier. If you find that it's not, inform them.

If you have changed suppliers it may be that they are using estimated readings. When your new supplier receives an accurate reading they'll bill you accordingly, and this may be higher than you are expecting – especially if you haven't submitted an actual meter reading for a while.

Is there something new or different at home?

Sometimes people buy or install a new electric appliance without realising that it is very energy-hungry, and they get a nasty shock when their new electricity bill arrives.

You may be able to look at your energy usage history for your gas and electricity. This can be



found on your bill, in your energy supplier's app or by calling your supplier. It may help you pinpoint when the increase started to happen as it may coincide with a new item, change in the home or change in how often you use an item.

Bear in mind that appliances that produce heat such as hot tubs, electric fires, immersion heaters, electric showers, fish or reptile tanks, and tumble dryers, will use significantly more energy than many other appliances. Older appliances can be inefficient, and if they're faulty they can use more energy than they should. (See our webpage on [how much energy different appliances use.](#))

Smart meters with in-home displays show you how much energy you're using and how much it is costing at any time. This makes it easier to identify high-use appliances and reduces the chance of there being an unidentified issue with your meter. If you would like a smart meter or a replacement in home display, ask your energy supplier. (See our webpage for more information on [smart meters.](#))

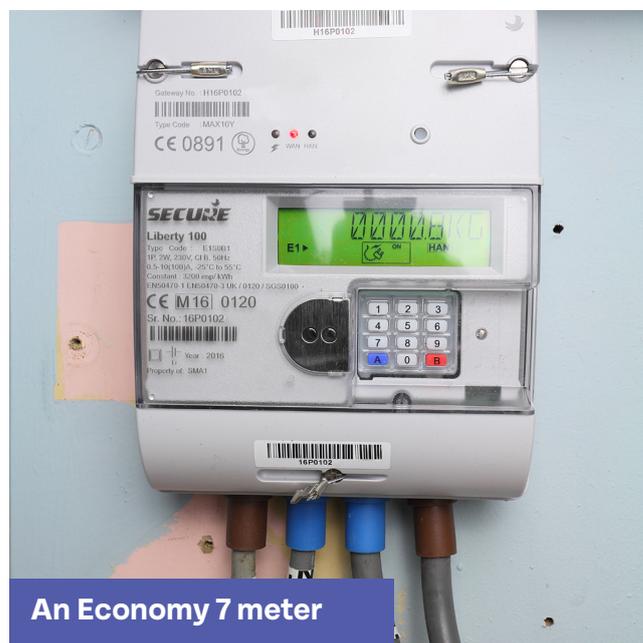
Is your home on an Economy 7 tariff?

Economy 7 is a special type of tariff that means your electricity is cheaper at night and more expensive in the day. This means it's only suitable for homes that aren't on the mains gas network and use cheap-rate electricity at night for night storage heaters and to heat the water in a tank.

If you have night storage heaters check you are on the Economy 7 tariff. It should say on your bill and your energy company will be able to tell you.

Check that the night storage heaters and your hot water tank are set correctly so that you're not wasting money. Our website has [information on how to do this.](#)

Check if your meters are set up the right way round. Sometimes your day-time usage is charged



at the night rate, and your night-time usage at the day rate. If this is happening and you're using night storage heaters, it will make your bills very high. You need to compare the two readings on your meter (day-rate and night-rate) against what your bill says. The day and night-rates are normally clearly labelled on the meter, but if not you can identify which is which by boiling a kettle to make one of the numbers move rapidly. Compare the readings to those on your bill or call your energy company to check their readings match yours.

Does your bill include repayment of debt?

Check if you owe your energy company money. They may be adding repayment instalments which are making your monthly or quarterly bills higher or mean the money you top up doesn't last very long.

Does your direct debit reflect your usage?

If the amount your energy supplier is asking for is above your usage you are within your rights to ask for it to be reviewed so that you're not overpaying and accruing large amounts of credit.



If you have solar panels, are they set up right?

Incredibly, it sometimes happens that people with solar panels are charged for the energy their panels generate due to their account being set up incorrectly. This can result in some very large bills! If you think this might be happening to you, speak to your energy supplier immediately.



Do you have a faulty meter or appliance?

There is a test you can perform to check if you have a faulty gas or electricity meter or a faulty appliance – either of which can cause your energy use to spike.

- 1) Switch off everything in your home, including the lights, heating and hot water (your fridge or freezer will stay cold as long as their doors are closed).
- 2) Wait 10-15 minutes and then take a reading of both your gas and electricity meter. Take the reading directly from the meter rather than from your in-home display.
- 3) Wait for a further hour and take another meter reading. If both readings are the same, the meter is working and you can continue to steps 4 and 5.
- 4) Now turn the appliances in your home back on one by one.
- 5) Each time you turn an appliance back on, check the meter and see if there's a large jump in energy use. If there is, that appliance is either high usage or it could be faulty.

If at step 3 the second reading is not the same as the first reading, you may have a faulty meter.

If it's the gas meter, there may be a gas leak. Report this immediately to the National Grid Gas Emergency line on 0800 111 999.

For either meter, you should contact your supplier and inform them of the results of your test.

They may want more information. And if the issue can't be resolved remotely, they may arrange for an engineer to visit your home to fix or change the meter.

If you ask for an engineer to visit and they find the meter is not faulty, they may ask you to pay a fee.

Keep in regular contact with your supplier until the problem is resolved and you have been rebilled correctly. The process may take some time.





If you're still not sure of the cause of your high bills, please call our advice line and we'll see if we can help to figure it out with you. **0800 082 2234**

A few ways to cut your electricity and gas use, and save money ...



Give your clothes a day in the sun; and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

When you're cooking, keep the oven door shut as much as possible; when you open it, a lot of the heat escapes.



Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely, **so don't put foil on the racks.**

Don't leave your phone on charge all night. It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on standby.



Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.

Cup of tea or coffee? Only fill the kettle with as much water as you'll actually use (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).



Draught-proof!

Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

Buying a new appliance? Check the energy label and buy A-rated goods for the most efficient.



Be a friend to your freezer. Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

Turn your heating down by just 1 degree. You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.



Wait until you have a full load before running the dishwasher or washing machine. One full load uses less energy (and water) than two half-loads.

Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.



New computer? Laptops typically use around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.



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We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to people in central southern and southwest England.

Contact us:

PHONE 0800 082 2234

EMAIL home.energy@cse.org.uk

See all our energy advice pages at www.cse.org.uk/advice