Disability Sheffield
The Centre for Independent Living

Disability Sheffield Information Service

Energy Efficiency Factsheet

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Energy Efficiency

The cost of living remains high. Some people are having to choose between heating and eating and everyone is trying to reduce the amount of fuel we use to keep warm, especially in very cold weather.

You may have a long-term health condition or disability which means it's important to keep warm. You may rely on equipment which has energy running costs. In those circumstances the cost of living will have an even bigger effect on your finances, your health and wellbeing and cause additional anxiety.

The good news is that there is still a lot of support available in Sheffield from statutory and voluntary organisations so please do reach out for the support that is available.

There's also a lot of national guidance on this topic which tends to be repeated on many websites. We have tried to present information as clearly as we can under the following headings. Some information is relevant to more than one heading.

Support for Low Income Households and Vulnerable People

Extra money and support such as Winter Fuel Payments, the Warm Home Discount Scheme and the Priority Service Register plus grants for energy saving measures like insulation and a scam warning!

Sheffield City Council

Find out about the help available from our local authority including the Household Support Fund plus Support Hubs and Welcoming Places.

Help with Energy Arrears

Your right to support and where to find guidance and support if you are struggling to pay your energy bills.

Energy Efficiency Tips and Health Guidance

Schemes and tips to make your home more energy efficient and staying well during cold weather.

Other Local and National Support

Information and support available locally and nationally including information in Easy Read

Support for Low-income Households and Vulnerable People

Existing Schemes

The government provides extra money and support to help pay for energy costs for people who may be on a low income, are in receipt of certain benefits or are of pension age

Scheme	How Much	Who Qualifies	Find out more
Warm Home Discount The scheme will reopen in **October 2025**	£150 one-off discount on electricity bill or £150 added to prepayment meter	People who get: ▪ Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit ▪ On a low income and have high energy costs ▪ Energy supplier is part of scheme	GOV.UK eligibility for the Warm Homes Discount GOV.UK energy suppliers part of Warm Homes Discount Scheme Tel: **0800 731 0214**
Winter Fuel Payments Winter Fuel Payments will be reinstated to all pensioners in the UK for the Winter of 2025 and will be paid automatically.	It depends on your age and if you live with anyone else - either £200 per household, or £300 where there is someone over 80 in the household. How Much You'll Get If you get Pension Credit, your Winter Fuel Payment will be paid in one lump sum, it won't be split individually..	The Winter Fuel Payment will be paid to everyone in England and Wales born before 22 September 1959 If you individually earn over £35,000, the payment you get will be recovered through the tax system	GOV.UK Winter Fuel Payments Age UK Guide to Claiming Pension Credit
Cold Weather Payment The scheme will start on **1st of November 2025**. You'll be able to check if your area is due a payment then.	You'll get £25 for each 7 day period of very cold weather (zero degrees celsius or below) between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026.	People who get: ▪ Pension Credit ▪ Income Support ▪ Income-based Job Seekers Allowance ▪ Income-related Employment and Support Allowance ▪ Universal Credit ▪ Support for mortgage interest	GOV.UK 'Cold Weather Payment'

Extra Government Funding to Help with Energy Bills

The government has been providing extra financial support to help most people with the cost of gas and electricity but the energy bill support scheme is no longer available.

GOV.UK has the following guidance on Help with Your Energy Bills

The Government is providing money to local authorities so that people can apply for a non-repayable means tested grant to help with food and energy costs.

See Sheffield City Council : Household Support Fund

Energy Price Cap

The energy price cap applies to most people and was introduced in 2019 by the regulator Ofgem. The cap limits what you pay for each unit of gas and electricity you use and sets a maximum daily standing charge

Actual bills are based on usage and could be higher or lower depending on the size of your home, how well it's insulated, how many people live there, how much energy you use and what energy tariff you are on.

See Money Saving Expert Guidance

The Great British Insulation Scheme

The Great British Insulation Scheme is a government energy efficiency scheme (formerly known as ECO+) administered by Ofgem. It is designed to deliver improvements to the least energy-efficient homes in Great Britain to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce energy bills, for example loft and cavity insulation and boilers.

The easiest to read summary about this scheme is on Money Saving Expert

Also see Sheffield City Council: Warm Homes Sheffield

See Citizens Advice 'Grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills' for more detailed information on all of the above schemes.

Priority Services Register

If you are of pensionable age, disabled, visually/hearing impaired or chronically sick you can apply to join your energy supplier's Priority Service Register. Being on the Register entitles you to a range of free services including:-

- Safety check on gas appliances
- Meter reading
- Moving meters
- Password scheme to protect against bogus callers

- Advance notice if your supply is to be disrupted
- Bill nominee scheme if you need a friend or relative to help read and pay your bill

It is particularly important to register if you will need extra support due to an emergency, to either get supply back on quickly, or to deal with something afterwards.

To see the full eligibility criteria and the benefits of being on the register you can find out more including how to contact your supplier at **Ofgem** 'Get help from your supplier – Priority Services Register' and Yorkshire Water Priority Services Register

There's a new website to make joining the register easier called the Priority Services Register . There are several ways you can register including an online form, by email or by calling **0800 169 9970**, as well as messaging via WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter.

If you think you should be on the Priority Services Register but your situation isn't listed, you should still contact your supplier and ask about being put on the Register.

Electricity Rebate

If you use an oxygen machine for a disability or health condition, you can get money back for the electricity it uses. This is called a 'rebate'. You should get the rebate every 3 months. Further details are available from Baywater Healthcare who reimburse electricity costs on behalf of the NHS.in the Yorkshire and Humber area.

Be Aware of Scams

Sadly, with the introduction of new financial schemes there has been an increase in energy scams targeting vulnerable people.

If you think something might be a scam or you want to check something out contact:-

Citizens Advice for their advice on checking if something is an energy scam. They also provide a consumer helpline who can advise about energy scams.

and the **Energy Saving Trust** on how to spot a scam.

Sometimes people choose not to report fraud because they are embarrassed that they fell for a scam. Fraud is a crime and anyone could be a victim. If you believe you have been a victim of a scam, you can report it to **ActionFraud** Have a look at their guide to reporting to protect yourself and others.

Sheffield City Council

Cost of Living Information Hub

Sheffield City Council has listed the advice, support and financial help available in the city on their **Cost of Living Information Hub.** It includes sections on ways to reduce your fuel bills and energy support.

The Hub shows the city wide response across the statutory and voluntary sector to the cost of living crisis. It includes a map of Support Hubs and Welcoming Places available **on Voluntary Action Sheffield's website** where people can go to find out about support and keep warm.

Our Cost of Living information page also links to their site.

Sheffield City Council Community Helpline

If you need urgent support coping with the cost of living crisis, you can contact Sheffield City Council's Community Helpline on:

0114 273 4567 (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6pm).

They will support you through a range of hardship grants and schemes, including the Household Support Fund

Household Support Fund

This is a non-repayable grant to help people living in Sheffield with food and energy costs, funded by the UK Government.

You can apply for the Household Support Fund to Sheffield City Council once every 3 months for help with paying for:

- food
- gas and electricity
- telephone and broadband (phone costs, top-ups, broadband charges etc)
- housekeeping (groceries, toiletries, etc)
- clothing, including school uniforms
- wider essential needs not linked to energy and water, should the local authority consider this appropriate in your circumstances

Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP)

Sheffield City Council is promoting this free service helping people to keep warm and save on energy. LEAP acts as a first point of contact to put you in touch with support from organisations such as Groundworks Yorkshire and their Green Doctor scheme to advise on energy efficiency and support from organisations to help with fuel arrears.

It is run by Agility Eco and you can get in touch either through their website or by telephoning **0800 060 7567** (for England and Wales)

Their eligibility criteria is very broad and includes disability benefits.

Installers will fit a number of energy saving measures for the home, such as new light bulbs, radiator foils, and draught excluders free of charge. See How LEAP Works

They also support fuel poor and vulnerable households through the replacement of old, inefficient fridges, freezers, fridge-freezers, washing machines, and electric cookers with modern, efficient alternatives.

The scheme is only available after you have had a LEAP Energy Advice Service appointment, during which eligibility and suitability for appliance replacements will be established.

See LEAP Appliances for more information and Contact Details.

Warm Homes Sheffield

This partnership between Sheffield City Council and energy experts AgilityEco provides a way to access a number of energy saving programmes. They can help Sheffield residents to reduce energy use and stay warm and well.

If you are not sure where to start and need urgent assistance with your heating or your bills contact the Warm Homes Sheffield team on freephone **0800 107 8882**

Sheffield City Council also has a Home Energy Efficiency Advice page which details the support available to keep your home warm and reduce your energy costs.

This includes information on the Home Energy Check, the Energy Grants Calculator, tips to reduce your fuel bills and. Energy Efficiency in council homes

Help with Energy Arrears

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills or get a bill you can't afford, you should take steps to sort out the problem as soon as possible. If you don't pay your gas and electricity debts, you risk being cut off (except if you rely on medical equipment at home) . A water company is not allowed to cut off your supply.

It is **very important to contact your Energy Provider** to let them know your difficulty as they have a duty to help you especially if you are a vulnerable customer. You can ask your energy supplier for:

- a review of your payments or debt repayments
- payment breaks or reductions
- more time to pay your bills
- access to hardship funds
- Priority Service registration.

Help with Water Bills

Water companies cannot disconnect domestic customers for non-payment of their bills but they can take action to recover debt through the County Courts. If you are having difficulty paying your charges it is important to contact your water company to arrange a payment plan or to discuss if any other assistance is available.

Yorkshire Water has a range of ongoing help schemes if you use lots of water because of a health condition, fall behind on paying your bill, have debt or are on low income.
See Help Paying Your Bills

Water Sure is the main scheme. It caps your water bill so you won't pay more than the average metered bill for the area your water company covers. To qualify you must

- Be on certain benefits
- Have a water meter (or be waiting for one to be installed)
- Have a high essential use of water because you have a medical condition or three or more children

.

You will need to supply evidence that you qualify, such as a copy of your awards notice for a benefit.

See Water Sure Application Form

Fuel Direct

You can have some of your bills (including rent, services charges, fuel or water bills) paid directly out of your benefits payments if you're having difficulties. This is called 'third party deductions' and sometimes Fuel Direct.

Information about Fuel Direct is available on the Citizens Advice page Get help if you're behind with your energy bills

Prepayment Meters

Prepaying for your energy lets you pay small amounts often, but it's usually a more expensive way to pay than getting a bill.

Citizens Advice warn that you should not move to prepayment meter if running out of credit and having no gas or electricity would cause you a serious problem. You may for example have a long-term health condition, a disability, medical equipment that wouldn't work or have young children. If you have impaired hearing or sight, you might find it hard to hear an alert or read the meter.

If you have a smart meter, your supplier can change its setting from credit to prepayment. If you have a choice about moving to prepayment Citizens Advice say to think about how it'll affect you.

See Decide if prepayment is right for you

Citizens Advice offer guidance on when you can refuse or challenge moving to a prepayment meter.

See Stop your energy provider moving you to pre-payment.

Making a Complaint about your Energy Provider

Ofgem is Britain's energy regulator which oversees the energy market, setting obligations about how energy suppliers act and promoting competition.

Ofgem also protects energy consumers, especially vulnerable people, by ensuring they are treated fairly by energy providers.

You can find information on their website about Making an Enquiry or Complaint about your energy company and general information for domestic consumers

Organisations Offering Help with Energy Arrears and Grants

Sheffield Money Support Guide

This website was built to help local people easily find accurate information about money support services in our city. It was developed as a result of work between food projects during the pandemic and an investigation into food poverty by the Sheffield City Council Scrutiny

Committee in March 2022. The Sheffield Money Support Guide also provides information about money saving projects in the city.

Citizens Advice Sheffield (CAS)
Citizens Advice Sheffield provide advice on the phone or call in at the community access points listed on their Get help page

Freephone **0808 278 7820** (10am -4pm Mon – Fri) or go to their website for self help information.

Citizens Advice has a lot of detailed information on their website summarising government assistance for paying bills, how to save money and advice on switching supplier

Useful Pages on their website include:

- What to Do if You're Struggling to Pay your Energy Bills
- Save money on your gas and electricity
- Grants and Benefits

See also the Sheffield City Council section of this factsheet for advice from Warm Homes and LEAP.

Other free money advice providers are :-

Step Change
Free and expert advice online or over the phone at a time that suits you looking at your budget and recommending a range of practical debt solutions based on your situation.
https://www.stepchange.org/how-we-help/debt-advice.aspx

Turn2Us
Turn2Us is a national charity providing practical help to people who are struggling financially. Their website includes a dedicated Energy Schemes section which includes useful information if you are struggling to pay your energy bills, and explains some of the schemes and grants that may be available to help towards the cost of energy.

National Energy Action
Provide advice on what to do if you are struggling with your energy bills

SCOPE provides information on help with energy bills and advice if you are in debt.

The government has an Energy Grants and ways to improve your energy efficiency page which includes an energy grants calculator.

Disability Grants have an Energy Saving Grants page for disabled people.

Charis works with a number of companies to help vulnerable customers with water and energy debts and other essential household bills and costs. See the Charis website for details of how to apply.

Energy Efficiency Tips and Health Guidance

National Energy Action

Take a look at National Energy Action's energy advice leaflets , for example 'Electricity Consumption in the Home' to see how much appliances might be costing you and how you might be able to cut costs in other ways

Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust has more useful tips such as Preparing you Home for Winter and Energy Saving Quick Wins .

Money Saving Expert

MoneySavers at consumer affairs organisation MoneySavingExpert have shared their tips in a new guide called Heat The Human Not The Home. It suggests ways to keep yourself warm without wasting money on energy usage and the cheapest way of doing that.

The guide comes with a health warning that it may be dangerous to turn off heating for older people, or people with asthma and other health conditions.

Go Compare

Go Compare have developed an interactive energy cost calculator tool to find out how much something costs to run and also provide general useful tips about saving energy

Groundwork

Tips for saving energy, keeping warm and reducing your household bills in their Energy Resource Hub

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue

Find advice on saving money safely and what to do/what not to do with appliances on their website

Cold Weather and Health Guidance

The Emergencies Partnership has put together a collection of alerts, guides, insight and advice to prepare people for the challenges of cold weather

To see a collection of resources from GOV.UK, including the cold weather plan for England, click here.

Sign up here to receive cold weather alerts from the Met Office, and use this guide to understand the alert thresholds.

There are 6 top tips for staying well this winter, a 'Keep Warm Keep Well' leaflet and a blog on Responding to the challenge of cold weather and winter.

This guidance on Health matters: cold weather and COVID-19 gives details on some vulnerable groups and the health impacts of exposure to cold weather.

Also see How to Stay Well this Winter plus documents in other formats

Other Local and National Support

Heeley Energy House

A visitor centre and project based at Heeley City Farm offering free energy advice on how to

- Find cheaper tariffs and switch supplier
- Access grants and discounts to make homes warmer
- Take control of heating systems and save money
- Make homes warmer through low and no cost useful tips

Alexandra Road, Heeley, S2 3EE See **Heeley Energy House**

Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care

Their free scheme to provide practical assistance to the over 65s gets rooms winter ready. Their team can help to:

• Move furniture into or out of a room.
• Move furniture away from radiators.
• Change summer curtains to winter ones
• Change summer duvets to winter duvets (if stored and difficult to retrieve).
• Retrieve stored blankets and warm clothes from hard-to-reach areas.
• Collect small white goods such as microwaves/heaters purchased by the service user, or purchase on the person's behalf if they have the funds.

Their advice is to heat a room not the whole house. If you need help from their scheme or know anyone over 65 looking for a helping hand to make these changes you can call them on **0114 2505290** or email karen@scccc.co.uk

A summary of other support available from SCCCC including their Winter Pressures Service , Good Neighbour Scheme and Hospital/A&E to Home service is available on their What We Do page.

SCOPE

Their Disability Energy Support Service provides free energy and water advice to disabled people in England and Wales. You will get a telephone appointment with an expert energy adviser that will last up to 45 minutes, supplying information and advice specific to individual needs. The adviser will arrange any follow up appointments, if needed.

Green Doctor

Their Green Doctor Energy Advice Service offers free, impartial advice and support across Yorkshire to help people save energy, reduce bills, and live in a warmer, more comfortable home. Their energy-efficiency experts will give your home a check-up and offer you energy-saving advice and practical support to see if you can save energy or access financial incentives.

Simple Energy Advice

Impartial and independent advice on how to make your home more energy efficient at the Each Home Counts website. You can also find out about any grants and schemes you're eligible for.

Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust has information on energy advice for the home to help you find out where you could make savings on your bills and an online home energy check to help you make savings on your bills.:

MoneySavingExpert , the consumer affairs organisation, has an energy page and answers to frequently asked questions

Age UK has produced a number of guides for Older People about the cost of living including

- A guide to Keeping Warm and Well
- Help with heating costs
- How to Get the Best Energy Deal for You

Which? , another independent consumer organisation, have some useful guides including:

- Heating and Air Treatment
- Smart Meters

Easy Read Information

The 'Prioritise Me' team at Speakup have developed training presentations and other resources in Easy Read to help everyone understand the energy market.

Here is a list of resources which can help you:

Easyread Guide to Tariffs
Easyread Guide to Switching Suppliers
Easyread Guide to Smart Meters
Easyread Guide to keeping your house warm
Energy Quiz

About The Priority Services Register
Presentation about how to get on the Priority Services Register

Speakup Self Advocacy has also produced information under the title **My home, my energy. I have the power!**. This lists tips to help take control of your bills, stay warm and healthy and keep safe, which can be downloaded **as a PDF**.

Learning Disability England have created a section on their website with a range of **cost of living resources** , including links to lots of easy read printables about energy

What do you think of this factsheet?

If you would like to comment on this factsheet or provide additional information from your own experience please let us know and we would be happy to consider adding to or amending the factsheet. We welcome any comments to help us improve our service. Our contact details are:

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