

Is your home healthy?

The 'Healthy Homes' project targets home owners living in Welwyn and Hatfield and is funded by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, based at The Citizens' Advice Bureau. It is a telephone and home visit service and is free and totally confidential.

About the service: The service aims to target a wide profile of home owners offering advice and information to homeowners who are vulnerable either through age, disability or health. Advice can also be offered to help homeowners on low income/in receipt of certain benefits and those that have dependant children. Information is also available on a range of grants, covering adaptations for the disabled (DFG and small repair grants) through to grants to improve insulation and replace the gas boiler and fuel grants which help some consumers pay fuel bills, like the Warm Home Discount. You can also find out how to switch to a cheaper fuel supplier.

The range of advice offered:

- Home adaptations and repairs
- Information on improving the standard of insulation in the home
- Information on replacing the gas boiler
- Gas and electricity supply and bills
- If the client has fuel debts, help can be offered to talk to the supplier and advice given on other grants that are available

Healthy Homes Contact details:

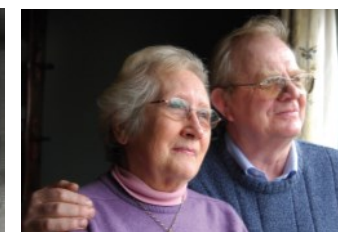
Landline 01707 280 416 (There is a voice mail message service and a message can be left anytime and will be picked up on a Wednesday or Friday. Leave a contact number and the best time to return call).

E-mail hh.hatfieldcab@cabnet.org.uk

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HELPING FAMILIES WITH ENERGY COSTS

A simple advice guide to help save you money



**Welwyn Hatfield
Conservatives**

An introduction from Grant Shapps MP & Welwyn Hatfield Conservatives



Energy prices are a key concern for many people and both your local MP Grant Shapps and the Conservative-led Borough Council are doing what we can to help. At this time of year it is even more important to think about how you might be able to save money heating your home.

Some energy saving measures can take time to put in place so whether you are thinking about having a cavity wall insulation installed or changing your energy supplier, it is always better to plan ahead.

This guide is designed to help you make your home more energy efficient which will save energy but also save you money on your bills.

In here, you'll find advice on how to get the best deal from your energy supplier and how to get financial assistance to which you may be entitled. One very local service is the 'Healthy Homes' project, funded by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and run by Citizens' Advice. Read all about the service on the back of this guide.



For further help, don't hesitate to get in touch with the team.

By Telephone: 01707 262632

By email: grant@shapps.com

By post: Maynard House, The Common, Hatfield, AL10 0NF

SWITCH!

Your
energy
supplier

Switching suppliers can give you significant bill savings. Ofgem has estimated that householders can save an average of £158 a year by switching to the cheapest deal on the market.

Consumers can use price comparison sites to help them find a better deal and ensure they are not paying more than they need to.

Around 98% of customers get their gas and electricity from the six largest suppliers - even though there are 15 smaller independent ones operating in the market, offering very competitive deals.

It is also worth contacting your current supplier to try and negotiate a lower deal. Many people get significantly better deals from doing so.

SMARTMETERS

What is a smart meter?

They are the next generation of gas and electricity meters and provide near real-time information about the amount of energy a household uses. They will bring an end to estimated billing.

When will I get one?

Energy suppliers are starting to install them now. Most homes will have one by 2015.

How much do they cost?

Absolutely free!

How do I find out more information

Contact your energy supplier.

Little things
save a lot

You can save on average

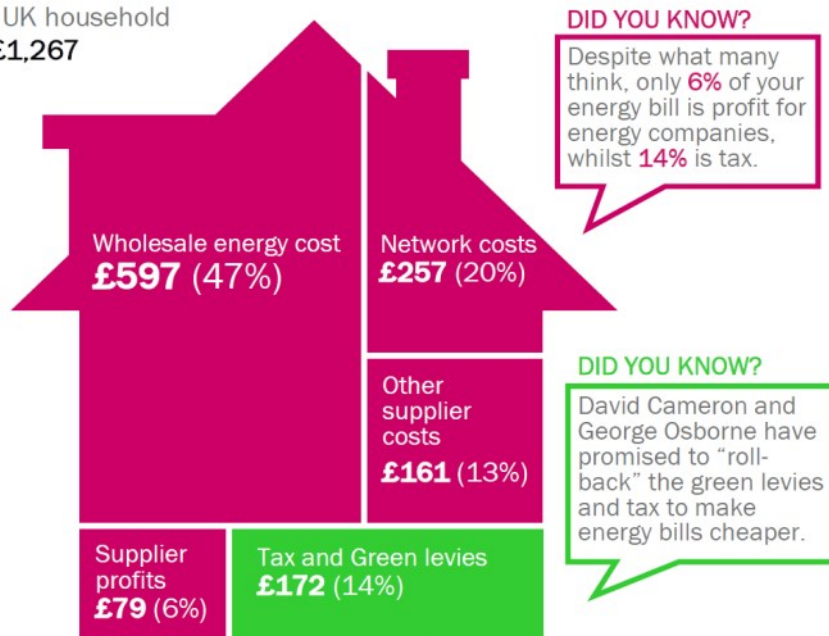
£76 a year

If you have a smart meter.

By seeing how much energy you use in real-time, they can help households adopt energy savings habits and will put an end to estimated bills.

How is a household's energy bill made up?

Total average UK household energy bill is **£1,267**



All figures are in real 2012 prices. Based on consumption of 14.8MWh gas and 3.8MWh electricity. Figures may not add up due to rounding. Source: DECC March 2013 report "Estimated impacts of energy and climate change policies on energy prices and bills"

EXTRA HELP FOR FAMILIES

Making tax avoiders pay for help for the most vulnerable

The government - not the consumer - will provide over £600 million funding for a £12 rebate on every electricity bill for the next 2 years. This will be paid for through a crackdown on tax avoidance.

Cutting green taxes

Reforms to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and a 33% cut in the Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO) will result in a £30 to £35 cut in energy bills, on average, in 2014.

Greater competition

We are boosting competition in the energy market by scrutinising the profits, pricing and competitive behaviour of the 'Big 6' suppliers in our Annual Competition Test. Already there have been 7 new independent suppliers entering into the market since 2010.

Fuel duty freeze until 2015

As well as scrapping Labour's annual fuel duty escalator, we have frozen fuel duty since 2011 and will do so until 2015—the longest freeze in over 20 years.

Save money, save energy

Here are a few measures to reduce the amount of energy you use and to help you save money. **They could make a real difference at winter.**

Turn off and turn down

Turning off lights, appliances and chargers when you're not using them could save between **£50** and **£90** a year.

Careful in the kitchen

You could save up to **£40** a year by setting the washing machine to wash at 30 degrees and by turning your oven off at the wall.

Be a bathroom saver

If your shower takes hot water straight from the boiler, try an energy efficient shower head to cut hot water use. This could save you around **£75** on water heating and **£90** on water bills too.

Don't lag behind

You could save between **£25** and **£60** a year by lagging (insulating) your hot water pipes and hot water tank.

Be a draught excluder

If you draught-proof your windows and doors, seal skirting boards and fit a chimney draught excluder, you could save around **£75** a year on energy bills.

Lighten the load

If you replace all your old-fashioned light bulbs with energy saving bulbs, and all halogen bulbs with LED spotlights, you could save up to **£60** a year.

Close your curtains

Believe it or not, by simply closing your curtains you could save a whole heap on your heating bills. This is a free and effective way of cutting down your costs.

Cavity wall insulation

One third of all heat escapes through the walls. If your home was built between 1920 and 1990, then insulating your walls could save you **£110** on your annual heating bill.

Check your boiler

If your boiler is more than 15 years old, then it could be time to replace it. Swapping a G-rated boiler with an A-rated one could save you a whopping **£235** a year on your heating bills.

Warm Home Discount

This Winter, households could get a £135 discount on their electricity bill through the Government's Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Allowance either.

The money isn't paid directly to you, it is a one-off discount on an electricity bill, usually between October and March.

1.2 million low income pensioners will receive the discount this Winter.

Grant Shapps MP:

"Suppliers will also offer discounts to low income and vulnerable people of working age. **Check with your supplier** to see whether you are eligible. If you think you should be eligible for support, please get in touch and I will do what I can to help."

WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

You could get between £100 and £300 tax-free to help pay for heating bills this Winter. Those born on or before 5 January 1952 are eligible. You should have received the money before Christmas.

You will automatically get the payment if you are in receipt of the State Pension. How much a person gets depends on their circumstances during the qualifying week which was 16-22 September 2013.

Cold Weather Payment

If you are getting certain benefits, you may be able to get a Cold Weather Payment of £25 for each seven day period of very cold weather.

Payments will be made when the local recorded temperature is an average of zero degrees or lower.

You may be eligible for the payment if you are getting:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Universal Credit

You need not apply; this will be paid automatically.

Government is getting the best energy deal for consumers.

Energy bills have almost doubled since 1997. That is why government is legislating to force energy companies to put consumers on the lowest tariff. We want these companies to treat customers fairly and we want the energy market to work more effectively - the answer is not a temporary prize freeze gimmick.

✓ Tariffs

The Government is working with energy regulator Ofgem on a range of measures to give customers **simpler choices, clearer information** and **fair treatment**.

By December 2013

Suppliers will be set a limit on the number of tariffs they can offer.

By March 2014

Suppliers must tell customers what the cheapest deal is for them.

By Summer 2014

All consumers will be on the cheapest tariff.

£90

Is how much you can save on average per year by switching to a direct debit payment.

£158

Is how much you can save on average per year by switching supplier **and** switching to direct debit.

✓ Financial support

People in older properties and those on benefits or on low incomes may **qualify for extra financial help** for energy saving improvements to their home.

You can see if you are eligible for any support by using the government's easy online calculator here:

gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator

Or by calling the Energy Saving Advice Service on:

0300 123 1234

Or indeed by contacting your energy supplier directly. They can offer funding for energy saving improvements to your home.

For more information about local support available in Welwyn Hatfield see the back of this guide to read about the 'Healthy Homes' project, a free and confidential service available to help you.