

Tariffs and Switching

Tariffs

There are an endless number and range of tariffs from different suppliers. Sometimes switching tariff with the existing supplier can save money, including by switching to online account management or paperless billing.

Consumer Focus Scotland provide regularly updated price comparison factsheets which display the **average** annual bills for Standard Tariffs, Economy 7 Tariffs and Online Tariffs for high, medium and low energy users with each of the Big Six energy suppliers.

These price comparisons are available online, and are split into North Scotland and South Scotland regions.

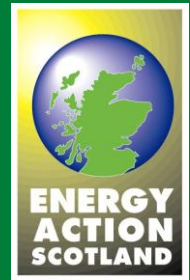
<http://energyapps.consumerfocus.org.uk/assets/pdf/price/scottish-hydro.pdf>

<http://energyapps.consumerfocus.org.uk/assets/pdf/price/scottish-power.pdf>

The second page of these price comparison factsheets also provides the phone numbers for each of the energy supplier's websites which offer energy price comparison tools and the phone number for Citizens Advice (formerly Consumer Direct) - **08454 04 05 06** or **08451 28 13 84** (Minicom users) - for independent advice and information on energy matters.

Price comparison websites allow more accurate comparison of the prices of different suppliers. It is best to use sites that have the Consumer Focus Confidence Code logo, which means they are reliable. The Consumer Focus list of approved sites that offer a free switching service for consumers is below. Many of these sites also offer a telephone service.

www.ukpower.co.uk
www.uswitch.com
www.simplyswitch.com
www.theenergyshop.com
www.beatthatquote.com
www.moneysupermarket.com
www.unravelit.com
www.confused.com
www.energylinx.co.uk
www.fuelswitch.com
www.which.co.uk/switch
www.energyhelpline.com
www.switchelectricandgas.com



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*"Working to
end fuel
poverty and
achieve
warm, dry
homes for
all."*

Switching

Most gas and electricity consumers can switch their supplier, unless they have more than £200 of fuel debt, have a term in their lease which prohibits them from switching supplier or they have a specific tariff from a supplier for their electric storage heating.

Switching supplier could save householders money, as tariffs change and suppliers compete with one another. It is important that consumers ensure they are on the cheapest tariff possible and this may be with another supplier. Switching supply can take a few weeks and during that time supply continues from the existing supplier and there is no break in the supply of gas or electricity.

The process of switching requires having information to hand on the current payment arrangements and tariffs of the householder. There are a number of price comparison websites which make the process of comparison straight-forward. The information that is used for these comparison tools should be as accurate as possible to ensure a correct picture of what is available and the likely savings, so the householder should have the following information to hand:

- name of current supplier
- tariff name
- details of previous energy use in kilowatt hours

The name of the tariff and energy consumption details are on the annual energy statement. If this is not available, ask the supplier for details of annual usage in kilowatt hours.

A householder can switch through these price comparison sites or by directly contacting the energy supplier they have chosen to switch to. The new supplier will take the details of the customer and contact their existing supplier to make all the arrangements. This process is normally very straight-forward and the householder will receive written confirmation of their new contract, the tariff and the date at which it will commence.

Citizens Advice currently runs Energy Best Deal Scotland which aims to promote switching as a way of ensuring that customers are paying the most competitive prices for their gas and electricity. As part of the campaign Consumer Focus Scotland published an Advisors Guide, which provides detailed step-by-step information on helping a householder through the switching process and working out what is best for their circumstances.

This guide can be downloaded from:

<http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/scotland/files/2010/10/ebdsadviser-bookletv71.pdf>

Note – the Guide refers to ‘Social Tariffs’. Please see Factsheets IV.B.3 and IV.B.4 for additional information



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