

Social Tariffs (discontinued)

Since the introduction of the Warm Home Discount on 4 April 2011 social tariffs are being phased out over the course of three years. This information is included as background, and because some customers on these tariffs at the time of the change may remain on them until their contract ends or the tariff is phased out. On the Warm Home Discount see Factsheet IV. B. (4).

Social tariffs were introduced by energy suppliers as part of their voluntary social spending. These tariffs were at least equivalent to or cheaper than their lowest available direct debit tariff.

Not all energy suppliers applied the same eligibility criteria, nor did they all offer the same tariffs. Some social tariffs were only available to older people or families with young children; some were only available to people in receipt of certain benefits and others were only available to customers in fuel poverty.

Social Tariffs of the Big Six Suppliers – as at February 2011

British Gas (Scottish Gas) - Essentials Combined

British Gas 'Essentials' tariffs had three separate packages to assist specific customer groups. The Social Tariff version called Essentials Combined was aimed at vulnerable and low income consumers.

Key features of the package included:

- equivalent to lowest online tariff - Websaver (latest version)
- energy efficiency advice and benefits check

To be eligible consumers must have had a household income of less than £15,000 per year and be in receipt of means tested benefits, **plus:**

- be on Disability Living Allowance **or**
- Attendance Allowance **or**
- be over 70 (in receipt of Pension credit) **or**
- suffer from a chronic illness

EDF Energy - Energy Assist

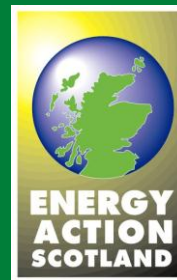
Energy Assist was a social product offered by EDF Energy.

Its key features were:

- eligible consumers regardless of payment method are charged on the same tariff as direct debit customers, plus there is an annual discount of £75 for dual fuel customers (pro-rata for single fuel customers)
- free energy efficiency advice
- free or discounted energy efficiency measures
- benefits entitlement check

To qualify it was necessary to be a customer of EDF Energy and either:

- spend more than 10% of income on household energy costs each year, **or**
- be in receipt of Income Support and/or receive Pension Credit benefits



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Electricity prepayment customers were able to pay the Energy Assist tariff price using their meter, rather than receiving a rebate, however prepayment gas consumers were sent rebates.

E.ON – Warm Assist social product

- up to 15% discount on standard electricity and gas prices
- personalised energy efficiency advice
- free energy efficiency measures
- benefits entitlement check

To qualify it was necessary to be aged 60 or above, be on a low income and meet one of the following criteria:

- be in receipt of Pension Credit, **or**
- be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, **or**
- be in receipt of Attendance Allowance, **or**
- have high energy consumption arising from a medical condition (at E.ON's discretion)

npower - Spreading Warmth Tariff

This tariff offered average annual savings of over 20% compared to standard prices (based on a consumer who had dual fuel and paid by cash, cheque or via a prepayment meter).

To be eligible a consumer must have had an annual income below £13,500 and someone in the household who was either:

- 60 or over, **or**
- disabled, **or**
- chronically sick, **or**
- a child under 16

ScottishPower - Fresh Start

Features offered as part of tariff:

- the tariff was equal to the cheapest ScottishPower tariff at any time regardless of payment method
- benefits check to ensure consumers are claiming all the benefits they are eligible for
- energy efficiency advice

The tariff was available to anyone over the age of 60 and in receipt of one of the following social welfare benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Council tax benefit (not including single occupancy discount)
- Disability Living Allowance
- Disabled persons tax allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where income is less than £15,460)
- Housing benefit
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit (where household income is less than £15,592)
- War Disablement Pension (which either includes a mobility supplement or constant attendance allowance)
- Industrial injuries disablement benefit (must also have a constant attendance allowance)



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Scottish and Southern Energy (Scottish Hydro) - Energyplus Care

Key features included:

- minimum 20% reduction on cheapest tariff in that geographical area
- free energy efficiency advice
- free energy efficiency measures (can range from low energy light bulbs to a free fridge or a discounted fridge/freezer)
- free benefits entitlement check

Customers may have qualified for Energyplus Care if they spent over 20% of income on energy bills. To qualify they also must have completed a questionnaire over the phone or in person.

The key categories were as follows:

- total household income including any benefits received
- home and how energy efficient it is
- annual fuel costs
- other additional support needs



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