

# Saving your money this winter

**Keeping warm in winter is essential but can be very expensive. CABA's guide to saving your money this winter looks at ways you can reduce the amount you spend on heating during the cold winter months. If you are elderly, disabled or on a low income, you may be able to get some help to pay your bills.**

## THE HOMEHEAT HELPLINE

Home Heat Helpline is a free national service run by gas and electricity suppliers to help customers who are considered to be vulnerable. The helpline can help you to access the help you may be eligible for, particularly if you:

- are of pensionable age
- have young children and are on a low income, or
- are disabled or have a long-term health condition.



**HOME HEAT  
HELPLINE  
0800 33 66 99**

The helpline may be able to help you by:

- helping you to identify ways to **save energy**
- explaining how you may be able to get reduced tariffs (more **affordable prices** for gas and electricity)
- helping you to apply for grants for **free home insulation**
- putting you on the Priority Service Register for customers with **disabilities and special needs** - among the services on offer are bills in Braille, large print and audio formats, getting meters moved to a more convenient location, gas appliance safety checks and safety passwords so you know when a caller is from the gas or electricity company
- helping you to agree a **flexible payment option** if you have fallen behind on your bills
- carrying out a **benefits entitlement check** to see if you're getting everything you are entitled to
- providing a disconnection safety net which means that you will **not be cut off** even if you are unable to pay your bill.

If you are struggling to afford to keep your home warm, please talk to one of our support workers.

Contact CABA on Tel **+44(0)1788 556366** Email **[enquiries@caba.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@caba.org.uk)**

## MAKING THE MOST OF THE ENERGY YOU USE

- Install draught excluders and seal up any gaps (avoid sealing up any ventilation flues or air bricks)
- Line radiators on external walls with tin foil to reflect warmth into the room. Don't cover radiators with washing
- Set the central heating timer to switch on before you get up and off when you go to bed
- Only boil the water you need rather than filling the kettle completely
- Don't leave appliances on stand-by as they still use electricity
- If you rent your home, remember that your landlord is responsible for repairs to the heating system and ensuring that any appliances that they have supplied meet safety requirements.
- If you use a fire or heater in your bedroom during winter, open the window or door a little at night for ventilation. Make sure that portable heaters are not positioned too close to the bed or to flammable items .
- If you have an electric blanket, make sure it is safe to use by getting it tested every three years by a qualified electrician - your local Trading Standards Office may also check it for free.



## BENEFITS YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO

**Winter Fuel Payment** Helpline 0845 9 15 15 15 [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

If you are aged 60 or over, you are entitled to an annual winter fuel payment, to help with the costs of keeping warm during winter. This is tax-free and is normally paid from November every year. If you are getting the state retirement pension or some welfare benefits, you should be sent these payments automatically. If you are not getting any benefits, or you are only receiving housing benefit, council tax benefit or child benefit, you will have to claim your first winter fuel payment – after that, they should come automatically. The helpline gives advice on Winter Fuel Payments and making claims.

**Cold Weather Payment** [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

Some people who receive income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, employment support allowance or pension credit are entitled to a cold weather payment from the social fund. These payments are made if the weather becomes exceptionally cold (0° or below) for seven consecutive days or more. Payments should be made automatically with your benefits and will not affect other benefits you may be getting. You can find out if you qualify from Jobcentre Plus.

**British Gas Energy Trust** 01733 421060  
[www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

If you are a British Gas customer, you may be able to apply for a grant from the British Gas Energy Trust. Grants can be used to help with arrears of energy charges as well as other essential household bills and costs. Other utility companies may well provide hardship schemes to help people on low incomes who are struggling to pay their bills. Contact your supplier to find out more.



## USEFUL CONTACTS

**USwitchLtd**  
0845 601 2856  
[www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com)

Free, impartial online and telephone comparison and switching service that helps you to compare prices on a range of products and services including gas & electricity.

**Consumer Direct**  
08454 04 05 06  
[www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

Provides clear, practical consumer advice

**Energy Saving Trust**  
0800 512 012

Free, independent and local energy saving advice to householders.

**Warm Front**  
0800 316 2805

Warm Front is a Government-funded initiative. Warm Front grants can be used to install a wide range of insulation, draught proofing and/or heating improvements depending on your needs and the property you live in.

**Keep Warm Keep Well**  
[keepwarmkeepwell.direct.gov.uk](http://keepwarmkeepwell.direct.gov.uk)

National campaign to reduce cold-related illness and deaths during winter. On the website you'll find information and advice about how to stay well in winter by keeping warm and the financial support available.