



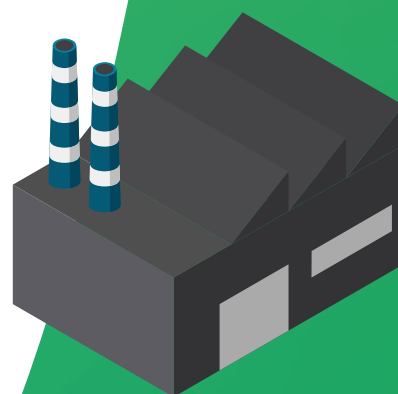
Home Energy Advice

gmhousing.co.uk

Stockport Homes Group
One team, transforming lives

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Introduction

This booklet provides advice and guidance to help Stockport Homes customers lower their energy bills and create energy savings around the home. Produced by our Energy Solutions Team, it contains handy hints & tips on how to reduce household energy usage and provides advice on managing energy costs. It also includes useful information about smart meters, energy efficient appliances and the different types of energy support available.

Our Energy Advice Service

If you are worried about high energy bills or are struggling to pay for your energy, we have two fully trained energy advisors who are dedicated to improving your energy efficiency and finding solutions to make energy costs easier to manage.

We can help with:

- Energy saving advice
- Billing issues
- Fuel Debt (including financial help for eligible households)
- Advice on energy tariffs
- Understanding your heating system and using controls

If you have any issues that you would like support with, please contact us on **0161 474 4062** or email us at **energy.advice@stockporthomes.org**

We can arrange for an energy advisor to visit you at home or, call you back if you prefer to talk over the phone.

More information can also be found by visiting
www.stockporthomes.org/advice-support/energy-advice

Top Ten Energy Saving Tips

Everyday we use appliances, lighting and heating around our homes which uses electricity. Here are some simple ways to reduce the amount of electricity you use, which will also help to minimise your fuel bills.



- Turn your thermostat down. Reducing your room temperature by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10 percent. 18-21°C is a comfortable temperature for most people.
- Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- Washing your clothes at a lower temperature uses less electricity. Washing at 30°C rather than 40°C could save you a third of the cost. Fill up the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher: one full load uses less energy than two half loads.
- Spend less time in the shower - an electric shower is a high energy user as it heats the water instantaneously. Spending one minute less in the shower each day will save a typical household an estimated £45 per year, as well as saving on water costs.
- Reduce the heat loss in your home. Keep internal doors closed, at night shut curtains or blinds and use draught excluders at the bottom of doors to prevent draughts.
- Use energy saving lightbulbs. They last up to 10 times longer than ordinary bulbs, and using one can save you around £55 over the lifetime of the bulb.
- Only boil as much water as you need. The more water in the kettle the more electricity used.
- On a sunny day, opening your curtains will let warmth into your house, but when it's colder or the sun goes down don't forget to close them to keep that heat in.
- Unplug electrical devices when not in use.
- Understand how your heating and hot water system works. Your home may have a thermostat and programmer controls. Make sure you know how to use them to run the system in the most energy efficient way.

Managing Your Energy Costs



Wholesale energy costs change frequently so it's important to remain aware of how much you are paying and make sure you are getting the best prices available from your supplier. Here are a few ways that you can do this:

- 1 Payment method** - are you on the best payment method for your budget? If you are on a pay as you go meter you can change to pay via bill or direct debit instead this can sometimes work out cheaper, contact your supplier to explore your payment options.
- 2 Debt payments** - are you paying of debt on your meters or struggling to pay your energy bill? If you are struggling to pay, talk to your supplier they can support you in different ways such as amending your debt payments, payment breaks and referring you for hardship funds.
- 3 Tariff Check** - Always make sure you are on the cheapest available tariff with your supplier. Standard, variable or flexible tariffs are usually the most expensive but energy providers often have a range of different tariffs available. If your existing supplier cannot offer you anything cheaper then switching to a less expensive supplier may be worth considering. Depending on energy market conditions this option might not always be available but keep checking as prices constantly change.
- 4 Smart Meters** - check with your supplier if they are offering smart meters. With a smart meter you will be able to track your day-to-day energy usage and find out where you can save energy and money.
- 5 Talk to Stockport Homes about financial assistance.** - We will be able to advise you on any help available such as financial support from your local authority, additional benefits to help towards fuel costs, and government discount schemes to reduce your fuel bills.

Contact our Energy Advice team on **0161 474 4062** or email **energy.advice@stockporthomes.org** if you would like help with reducing energy costs, tariff switching or financial assistance.

Help available

Warm Home Discount

The Warm Home Discount is available from most large electric suppliers and runs annually. If you receive certain means tested benefits you could receive an automatic £150 towards your winter electric bill. Check with your energy supplier if they are part of the Warm Home Discount Scheme or visit www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme.

Warm Home Discount



Cold weather payments

If you receive certain benefits you will receive a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded or forecast to be 0 degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days. Check if you are eligible with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) at www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment.

Winter fuel payment

If you are aged 65 or over or receive a state pension you could get extra help to pay for your heating bills during the winter months. If you are eligible payments are made automatically between November and December each year. For more information you can contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre 0800 731 0160 or visit www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment.

The Priorities Service register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free and voluntary system that your energy supplier uses to ensure the correct support is given to its most vulnerable customers.

It is a system designed and overseen by Ofgem to better ensure that individuals with special requirements have access to additional support from their energy supplier as and when they require it.

This support varies by supplier and by an individual's circumstances, but can include:

- Large-format or Braille bills
- Advanced notice of service interruption
- Priority in a power cut
- Quarterly meter readings



Top up assistance on your Pay as You Go meter

Are you in emergency credit and cannot top up until you next get paid? Don't just sit in the dark, contact your energy supplier. Energy suppliers can offer discretionary credit to keep you on supply until you can next top up, this will be paid back at a weekly rate, but this support may help you through a difficult time and prevent you from dropping off supply.



Smart Meters



Smart meters are the new generation of gas and electricity meters, which will replace the traditional meters in our homes. Every home in England, Scotland and Wales will be offered a smart meter by their energy supplier, at no extra cost, between now and 2025

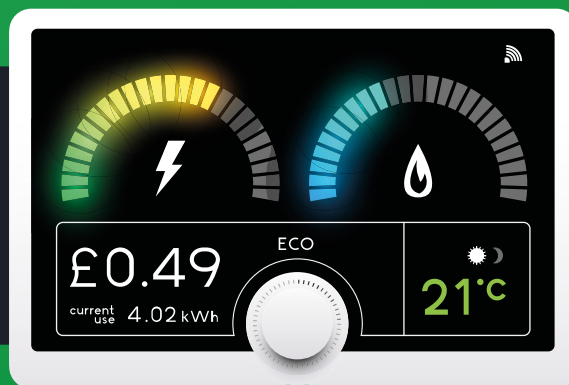
Smart meters let you to see exactly how much energy you're using, as you use it, and what it is costing in pounds and pence. This will help you to control your energy use.

Smart meters take regular readings and share these wirelessly, through a secure network, with your energy supplier. This means your bills will be accurate, not estimated, and you will no longer need to have manual meter readings.

With a smart Pay as You Go meter, you will be able to top up in the comfort of your own home via telephone, website or app.

Along with your smart meter, you will receive an in-home display, a handheld digital device that shows exactly how much energy you're using and what it is costing in real time as well as the credit you have on the meters for PAYG customers.

Contact your energy supplier to request a smart meter.



For more information visit:

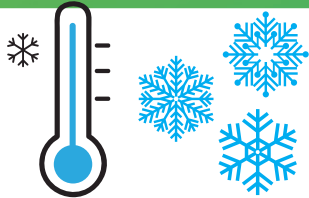
www.smartenergygb.org

A guide to Condensation & Mould

What is condensation?

Condensation is the process of air transforming into water droplets (moisture). It happens when air containing water, cools down when it comes into contact with colder surfaces (such as walls or glass). You may notice windows 'fogging up' and on some cold surfaces black mould spots appearing. Moisture is generated by everyday activities including breathing, so the more people who live in the property, the more moisture will be created.

Common causes of condensation



Allowing the property to
become too cold

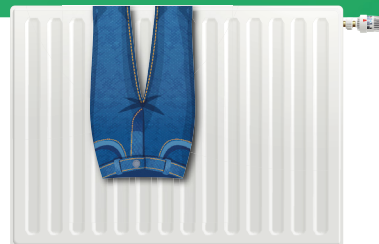
This generally happens between the months of
October and April when the temperature drops.



Not opening windows
and vents, and turning
off extractor fans and
condensation units



Cooking and bathing -
excessive build-up
of steam



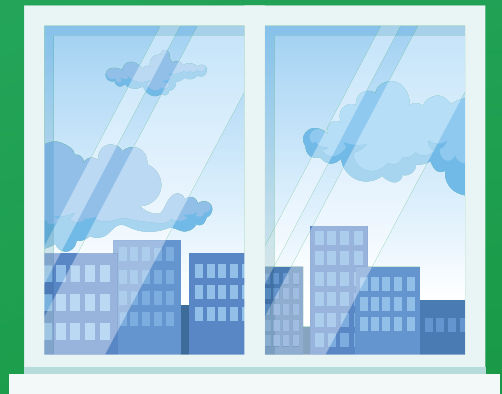
Drying clothing
on radiators

What you need to do

- 1 Try to maintain consistent internal temperatures**, especially in rooms which are regularly inhabited such as bedrooms and lounge. Recommended temperatures in these rooms should be between 18-21° - If high energy costs are preventing you from adequately heating your home, please contact the Energy Solutions Team on 0161 474 4062 or www.energy.advice@stockporthomes.org
- 2 Always ventilate when you are carrying out activities that are high moisture producers such as cooking and bathing.** Close the doors to these rooms to prevent moisture escaping into other rooms and open the window or turn on the extractor fan
- 3 Consider purchasing a condensing tumble dryer** (refer to this booklet for energy efficient appliance information) and remember to empty the water reservoir regularly
- 4 Important - Never use paraffin or bottled gas heaters.** Stockport Homes does not permit the use of these devices due to the high moisture emissions and fire safety risk

Advice on preventing mould

In cooler months condensation is likely to form in certain places such as on and around windows, around external door reveals and on external walls. Rooms such as bathrooms may be particularly affected. This is normal and you should:



Dry the windows daily to prevent mould from forming

Regularly clean the area with a suitable mould cleaner to prevent mould from developing

Use a suitable mould cleaner in the bathroom and replace the silicone seal around the bath or shower tray if it becomes excessively mouldy



Energy Ratings

Buying New Appliances

Technology is always finding new way to use energy more efficiently. So if you are replacing electrical appliances make energy efficiency a major consideration. By doing so, you could save energy and money every year for the life of the products.

Buy Energy Efficient Appliances

Update your appliances with new ones that carry the Energy Saving Trust or Energy Recommendation labels. The old A+++ to D rating system has now been replaced with a new, simpler A-G range. New products with an E or F rating are still energy efficient but the changes are encouraging manufacturers to create even better and more efficient appliances. When buying a new appliance, think about how the savings from reduced running costs will help to offset the cost of purchase over its lifetime.

Tip - When buying new appliances, choosing energy efficient ones will save you money in the long run.



Recommended temperatures

Living Room

21°C



Bedroom & Bathroom

18°C



Hallway & Stairs

16°C



Managing Fuel Debt

What can you do if you are having problems paying your bills?



- 1 First of all, check that your energy bills are correct.** You should take regular meter readings to make sure you are being charged for the correct amount of units used. If an energy supplier does not receive a meter reading, they will estimate your usage, and this may well lead to a higher bill.
- 2 Inform your energy supplier straight away, if you cannot pay them or cannot keep up with payments.** There are rules your energy supplier must follow. If you do not inform your supplier and you miss a payment, they may add late payments fees to your bill. Contact them as soon as possible to avoid extra fees.

Your energy supplier must:

- ☒ Give you information about how to avoid getting into debt
- ☒ Give you advice on how to pay back money that you owe
- ☒ Offer a payment plan that takes into consideration how much you can afford
- ☒ Only offer a prepayment meter as a last resort to disconnecting you

If you require support to help you deal with your energy debt please contact the Stockport Homes Energy Solutions Team on **0161 474 4062** or email us at **energy.advice@stockporthomes.org**.

Help may also be available from the following organisations:

Charis Grants

01733 421 021 | www.charisgrants.com/individuals

The Energyworks Team

0800 090 3638 | www.groundwork.org.uk/greendoctor/our-partners/energyworks-green-doctors-in-greater-manchester/

National Energy Action - Warm and Safe Homes Advice

0800 304 7159 | www.nea.org.uk/wash-advice/

Citizens Advice Consumer Service

0808 223 1133 | www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energy

If you want some free, independent and confidential advice around helping you manage your finances, you can contact any of the following:

StepChange Debt Charity

free phone 0800 138 1111 or visit www.stepchange.org

National Debtline

free phone 0808 808 4000 or visit www.nationaldebtline.org

0161 474 4062
energy.advice@stockporthomes.org

