



**Policy & Information Briefing Paper:
Energy Bills Support Scheme
and Alternative Fuels Payment
(includes FAQ responses from the
Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy)**

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Policy & Information Team
Information Briefing Paper

**Energy Bills Support Scheme
and Alternative Fuels Payment
(includes FAQ responses from the Department for
Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)**

(version 2, February 2023)

Please note: Advice NI is not involved in the development or delivery of either the Energy Bills Support Scheme or the Alternative Fuels Payment, which are administered by the UK government, principally the [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#), and electricity suppliers. The information below is based on documents in the public domain and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

On 30 December 2022 the UK government finally [announced](#) its plans for delivery of energy support payments to households in Northern Ireland, which commenced in Great Britain in October. Following on from an [earlier announcement](#), it was confirmed that the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme and the £200 Alternative Fuels Payment would be delivered together as **a single payment of £600 to all households in Northern Ireland**. Payments would start to be issued in January 2023 through electricity suppliers.

On the face of it, the process sounds very simple:

- all households with a domestic meter and a domestic electricity contract are eligible;
- there is no application process;
- payments will be made automatically;
- no-one will contact you out-of-the-blue and ask you for bank details.

However, there are a number of issues that could present problems for consumers, which we will try to address in more detail below. Not all of those issues have been resolved at the time of writing, and we will continue to engage with the government and organisations like the Utility Regulator to clarify any ongoing issues. We will share any updates through our website and social media platforms.

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Key

New content not included in previous version

Content updated from previous version

Basic Payment Issues

When will it be paid?

Payments started to be issued from Monday 16th January 2023. It will take 4-6 weeks to issue all payments.

Suppliers have been instructed to prioritise vulnerable customers on their [Care Registers](#), which means payments should be issued to those people first. To be included on your supplier's customer care register you will need to be either of pension age, disabled or have a long-term health condition. Supplier information about Care Registers is included in [Appendix 2](#) below.

Who will receive a payment?

Payments will be issued, either by bank transfer or voucher, to every account holder registered on the domestic electricity network at 08:00 on 2 January 2023.

Where occupants pay someone else for their energy usage, such as a landlord, the 'intermediary' is required to pass on the benefit. This is covered in the relevant FAQ at [Appendix 4](#).

If you do not have a domestic meter, for example, if you live in certain kinds of shared accommodation, a property with a commercial meter, or you are not connected to the grid, then support will be provided through an Alternative Funding process. The details of this scheme have not yet been provided by the government, although we understand this will involve an online application system managed by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

Support for non-domestic customers is also being provided through the [Energy Bill Relief Scheme](#) (EBRS), which came into force on 1 November 2022.

How will it be paid?

This depends on how you pay for your electricity.

If you pay your electricity bill by Direct Debit, the £600 will be paid directly into the bank account from which bill payments are taken.

If you don't have a Direct Debit arrangement, you will be sent a voucher by post to redeem at the Post Office – either by transferring it into a bank account or by withdrawing cash.

Can I ask for the payment to be made some other way?

Suppliers are authorised to make payments by bank transfer, secure voucher or non-transferable cheque where the specified method of payment cannot be used. However, this is 'by exception' only, so there will need to be a clear reason why the specified method of payment is not appropriate.

Suppliers are required to do what they can to get payments to those eligible, so if call centre staff refuse to help ask about escalation procedures, and contact your

independent advice provider or the Consumer Council if you need help making a complaint.

What if the account holder has died?

In this situation, next of kin should contact the supplier to let them know as soon as possible. If there are still family members living in the property, details can be amended and a replacement voucher issued.

If the person lived alone, suppliers are expected to get in touch with either a relative or an executor in order to provide the payment to the deceased person's estate.

What if I move house before the payment arrives?

The view of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy is that the payments should go to those households registered on the electricity network on the qualifying date. Therefore, your payment should relate to the property which you occupied at 08:00 on 2 January 2023.

For Direct Debit customers, this should be straightforward, as payments will go direct to the nominated bank account. In the case of voucher recipients this will be more complicated, as the voucher will be issued to the supply address, and in the case of prepayment customers addressed simply to 'The Occupier'. As proof of address for the period prior to 2 January 2023 will be required in order to redeem a voucher, it is essential that the right voucher is matched to the right account holder. Where possible, this will need to be resolved between householders.

In the event that access to a voucher cannot be obtained, the [supplier guidance](#) does provide a means of redress:

Where a supplier identifies that a voucher has been incorrectly issued, for example in the case of a change of tenancy, they should cancel the voucher issued incorrectly and reissue to the correct recipient.

We understand from suppliers that these would most likely be treated as exception cases. Further information about exception cases is included in the supplier guidance, but it will be for the supplier to establish an appropriate course of action to ensure that any customer correctly registered on their network on the qualifying date receives a payment, by whichever payment method is deemed most appropriate.

Voucher Issues

What will the voucher look like?

Vouchers will be issued by post as a letter from the supplier. Letters should refer to the scheme as the 'Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland' (EBSS AFP NI).

Voucher letters for billed (also known as standard credit) customers will be addressed to the named account holder, whereas the letters for prepayment (keypad) customers will be addressed to 'The Occupier'.

The back of the voucher will have a template to allow those unable to redeem the voucher for themselves to authorise a third party to collect on their behalf.

We have asked the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and suppliers to share a copy of the voucher letter but do not expect they will be able to do so at this stage.

What if I have a separate correspondence address?

Suppliers are instructed to issue vouchers to the supply address as standard, although customers can request for it to be sent to the correspondence address and it will be up to the supplier to decide whether to do so.

How do I redeem the voucher?

This can only be done at a [Post Office branch](#). Present the letter with the voucher at the counter along with the following documentation:

- letter and voucher from your supplier
- proof of address (dated between 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2023)
- bank card / account details (if you want the money paid into your account)
- valid photo ID (if you want payment in cash)
- top-up card or smartphone app (keypad customers only)

See below, [Appendix 3](#), for a list of suggested documents you can use as proof of identification and address.

Can someone else redeem the voucher for me?

Third parties can collect on behalf of someone who cannot get out to the Post Office to redeem the voucher. The back of the voucher letter includes a template to provide written authorisation.

The third party will need to provide their own valid photo ID, along with valid photo ID for the voucher recipient, the recipient's proof of address and bank details, if depositing directly into an account.

Can I deposit the voucher into any bank account?

Voucher funds can be transferred directly to most bank accounts but not to building society or credit union accounts. Your local Post Office will be able to advise.

Consumers are strongly encouraged to deposit into their bank account where possible, for the obvious reason that this is much safer than withdrawing £600 in cash.

How long do I have to redeem the voucher?

Vouchers will be valid until 31 March 2023. However, suppliers can arrange to issue a voucher with a later expiry date in exceptional cases – for example, where there has been a delay in identifying a customer or a replacement is needed. The absolute limit in this case is the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023.

What if the details on my voucher are incorrect?

If credit customers receive a letter with the wrong name they need to [get in touch with their supplier](#), which can be done through online systems in some cases. The supplier will need to cancel the voucher and issue a replacement.

Keypad customers do not need to do this as their letter will be addressed to 'The Occupier' in all cases.

What if my voucher is missing?

If your voucher has been lost or stolen, [get in touch with the supplier](#) to ask them to cancel the original and issue a replacement. However, note that the supplier will need to complete certain checks to verify that the voucher has not been redeemed.

Suppliers and the Utility Regulator are asking us to be patient before trying to chase up a missing payment. This is because it will take approximately 4-6 weeks to issue all payments. If by 28 February 2023 your voucher has not arrived, get in touch with your supplier at that stage to enquire.

We are particularly concerned about the risk here for keypad customers, as these letters will simply be addressed to 'The Occupier' and recipients may not realise their importance. Make sure you check all post carefully.

With respect to fears about the security of vouchers, it should be noted that anyone seeking to redeem the voucher will need to present proof of address and banking or ID documents to the Post Office, which must match the account information. However, if you have reason to believe your voucher has been taken by someone else get in touch with the supplier immediately to ask them to cancel it and issue a replacement.

What if I don't have a top-up card?

For security reasons, the Post Office will only accept top-up cards or sight of the supplier app as verification for prepayment customers. A letter from the supplier or a previous receipt will not be sufficient.

We understand that suppliers are working to reissue top-up cards in some cases, but if you don't have one and you do not use your supplier's app then you will need to contact the supplier to request a new card. Some suppliers allow you to do this online, to avoid problems getting through on the phone, and we have included links in [Appendix 2](#) below.

What if I don't redeem the voucher in time?

Suppliers can issue replacement vouchers up to the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023. As this deadline approaches the supplier should consider use of cheques or bank transfers as necessary to ensure effective delivery.

Official guidance to suppliers instructs them to contact customers to encourage them to redeem the voucher, as follows:

To demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to deliver the payment to voucher customers, suppliers should make a minimum of three attempts to contact customers who have not redeemed their payment to encourage the customer to take action.

One of the three attempts should include contacting the customer at least one-month before the expiry of the unredeemed EBSS AFP NI payment, highlighting the expiry date and encouraging redemption.

However, you should be cautious about cold calls and beware of scams. Remember that suppliers will not ask you to provide personal information, especially bank or account details, when calling you.

Intermediary Issues

What if I pay energy costs to someone else?

If you are not the account holder, but you still contribute towards energy costs for the property, the person who charges you is required by law to pass on an appropriate share of the benefit.

The person who charges you for energy usage, which may be a landlord or a fellow tenant, is known under [legislation](#) as an 'intermediary'. They are not allowed to charge you more than they pay the supplier, and they must take any discounts, like this payment or the Energy Price Guarantee, into account when working out what to charge.

The government have provided [detailed guidance](#) about this process, which is known as 'pass-through' and we have included some FAQs from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy at [Appendix 4](#).

How does the 'intermediary' work out how much to give me?

The intermediary must pass on the benefit in a way that is 'just and reasonable', reflecting the amount that the end user contributes towards overall energy costs. They must also inform the end user about how they have calculated the pass-through.

If you as the end user are the only person contributing to energy costs then this calculation is simple, and you should expect to receive the full benefit of the payment. However, if there are multiple separate occupants or the intermediary also contributes towards energy costs then the amount you receive will depend on the proportion of the energy costs you normally pay.

What if the intermediary is a commercial organisation?

Generally speaking, commercial intermediaries, such as housing associations, will have a commercial rather than a domestic supply and will therefore not be eligible to receive this payment. In some cases, you may be able to apply through the Alternative Funding scheme. We would advise speaking to the organisation and keeping an eye on our Energy Bills Support page for further updates about this as they are made available.

If the intermediary does have a domestic supply then they should adhere to the same rules as any other kind of intermediary to ensure that the benefit is passed on in a just and reasonable way.

What if the intermediary refuses to pass on the benefit?

In the first instance you should try to resolve this between you. You can contact Housing Rights' mediation service for assistance if this is proving difficult.

Ultimately, you have the right to bring a small claim against the intermediary if they continue to deny you a benefit to which you are entitled. Housing Rights will be able to advise if this is appropriate.

Usage Issues

How can I use the payment?

There are no restrictions on how recipients use the payment once it has been transferred into a bank account or withdrawn as cash. The main reason for delivering the support to households in Northern Ireland in this way is the prevalence of home heating oil use here, which requires larger up-front payments. At the same time, the delay in getting the support to people here compared to those in the rest of the UK was also a factor, as consumers in Northern Ireland have had to deal with increased energy costs for 3 months with comparatively less support from the government.

Will this push up the price of home heating oil?

This is always a possibility. We would always encourage consumers to check prices carefully before making a purchase to ensure they get the best deal. The Consumer Council conducts a weekly [Home Heating Oil survey](#) to benchmark prices both regionally and for each of the 11 local council areas, which should indicate how the price you are quoted by a specific supplier compares to others in your area.

You could also consider joining a local [Oil Buying Club](#), which can help to reduce costs, especially on more frequent deliveries of smaller amounts of oil. If you want to know more about the Oil Buying Network, contact the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) at oilbuyingclubs@nihe.gov.uk or 0800 111 4455.

Should I be worried about scams?

Everyone should beware of scams. As the payment will be made automatically, either by direct transfer or voucher, there should not be any need for suppliers to contact you, especially to ask for financial information. More advice about spotting and reporting scams is available from the [Consumer Council](#).

People receiving vouchers are strongly encouraged to deposit the money into a bank account at the Post Office, as this is much safer than withdrawing a large sum in cash.

What if I am still struggling to pay my bills?

This payment will not solve the current financial difficulties everyone is facing, which involves much more than just energy costs, with the price of food and other essentials still rising.

If you are still unable to meet energy costs you should talk to your supplier, who should look to agree a repayment plan. Suppliers have recently agreed to a [new Consumer Energy Charter](#) which commits them to being more proactive in supporting vulnerable customers and those facing hardship.

Be mindful of developing financial difficulties, and communicate with your creditors. If you need advice and support dealing with debt or arrears our Debt Advice service can be reached through our Freephone helpline on 0800 915 4604 or by emailing advice@adviceni.net.

In addition, our website now includes a comprehensive [Cost of Living section](#), which provides information about other support schemes and practical advice about reducing costs. You can also [contact your local independent advice service](#) for information about support that may be available in your area.

Appendix 1 – Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy FAQs

An official issue log is being maintained by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to monitor queries from stakeholders, including Advice NI. The information below is an initial series of responses to questions raised with the Department and shared with stakeholders on 12 January 2023.

It is expected that the FAQs will be updated as other queries arise, so if you have an issue you would like to raise please contact a member of the Policy & Information Team.

The logo consists of a dark green rectangular background. In the center, there is a white-bordered box containing the text "Help for Households" in a green, sans-serif font.

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

- Households across Northern Ireland will receive £600 from the government to help with energy costs. This is intended to support whoever pays the household's energy bills.
- Keypad Meter and Standard Credit customers will receive a £600 voucher in the post from the Post Office. Vouchers need to be redeemed at a Post Office branch. The voucher and supporting paperwork will be needed.
- Direct Debit customers will receive a £600 payment direct to their bank account.
- No application is needed. Beware of scams.
- Customers should receive the single payment or voucher by 28th February.

What is this payment?

This is a payment of £600 from government to households in Northern Ireland to help with energy bills. It is going to households who have a domestic contract with an electricity supplier.

The payment is made up of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (£400) and the Alternative Fuel Payment (£200). It is being provided by the UK government, and facilitated by electricity suppliers and the Post Office.

Beware of scams

The payment is automatic. Communications from any source suggesting you need to provide personal information, phone a number, or follow a link are likely to be scams. If you pay by direct debit or if you use a keypad meter suppliers generally have all the information they need to get this payment to you. **If suppliers need to contact you they will do so directly.**

Exercise caution. Do not click on suspicious links. You can report messages you think are suspicious at report@phishing.gov.uk.

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. When will I get my payment?

- Vouchers will be delivered from 16th January onwards. Payments to customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will be prioritised.
- **Delivery will be phased.** Not everyone will receive it on the same date.
- We expect all customers to receive vouchers by 28th February.
- We will update the delivery dates as we receive information on how vouchers are being paid out. Customers are urged to redeem vouchers as soon as possible once received and strongly encouraged to deposit into bank accounts. Both of these actions will support the Post Office in a speedy and streamlined delivery.

➤ **Customers who pay by Direct Debit**

Starting from 16th January, Direct Debit customers will:

1. Receive the payment directly to their bank account.

OR

2. If suppliers have been unable to complete a direct payment for a Direct Debit customer into their bank account, then that customer will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.

➤ **Customers who pay by standard credit (bill pay)**

Starting from 16th January Credit Customers who pay for their electricity by standard credit (bill pay) will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder. Customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will receive their vouchers first.

➤ **Customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter**

Starting from 16th January customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter will receive a voucher in the mail from the Post Office addressed to the 'Occupier'. Customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will receive their vouchers first.

If you have not received your payment, **please wait until 28th February to contact your supplier** because payments will still be being made until then.

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

2. How will I get my payment?

Customers who pay by Direct Debit

- Direct Debit customers will:
 - Receive the payment directly to their bank account.
 - OR**
 - If suppliers have been unable to complete a direct payment for a Direct Debit customer into their bank account, then that customer will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.
- These payments will be made from 16 January onwards.
 - Direct Debit customers do not need to contact their supplier to receive this payment – it will be credited to your bank account automatically.

Customers who pay by Standard Credit (Bill Pay)

- Customers who pay for their electricity by Standard Credit (Bill Pay) will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.
- Deliveries of vouchers will begin on 16th January and each household should have received their voucher by 28th February.
- Customers do not need to contact their supplier to receive this voucher – it will be sent to homes automatically.

*The only exception to this is if someone is going to redeem the voucher on the account holder's behalf if they are elderly/disabled/housebound or otherwise unable to do it themselves

Customers who pay via a keypad meter

- Customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter will receive a voucher in the mail from the Post Office addressed to the 'Occupier'. It is not necessary for you to update the name on the account in order to receive the voucher.
- Deliveries of these vouchers will begin on 16th January and each household should have received their voucher by 28th February.
- Customers do not need to contact their supplier to receive this voucher – it will be sent to homes automatically.

3. How can I redeem my voucher?

All vouchers must be redeemed at a Post Office.

You are strongly advised to deposit the £600 promptly at the first available opportunity into your bank account at the Post Office counter. This is the safest, easiest, and fastest option for you. Doing so will also allow others to receive their payment more quickly and avoid impacting on other Post Office services.

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

3a. What do I need to take to the Post Office in order to redeem my voucher?

To redeem your voucher, you will need to take to the Post Office:

- Your voucher
- Your identification (this must match the account holder details on the voucher)
- Acceptable proof of Address (this must match the account holder details on the voucher)
- If you pay via a keypad meter – your top up card **or** the Keypad top-up app you use to make payments
- Your bank card or your bank account details - to deposit the payment directly into your bank account at the post office counter

3b. What identification do I need?

Customers who pay for their electricity by Standard Credit (Bill Pay) :

	To pay the funds straight into your bank	To receive a cash payment
ID 1	Your bank debit card	Photographic ID from the options listed below
ID 2	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>One</u> of the following as proof of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility bill such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence • Bank or building society statement • Rental or mortgage agreement • Letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The date on the statement or letter must be between 1st January 2022 and 1st January 2023.</i></p>	

Direct Debit customers that suppliers have been unable to complete a transfer payment :

	To pay the funds straight into your bank	To receive a cash payment
ID 1	Your bank debit card	Photographic ID from the options listed below
ID 2	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>One</u> of the following as proof of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility bill such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence • Bank or building society statement • Rental or mortgage agreement • Letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The date on the statement or letter must be between 1st January 2022 and 1st January 2023.</i></p>	

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

Customers who pay for their electricity via keypad meter :

	To pay the funds straight into your bank	To receive a cash payment
ID 1	Your bank debit card	Photographic ID from the options listed below
ID 2	Your keypad top-up card OR The keypad app on your phone/smart device ²	
ID 3	<p>One of the following as proof of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility bill such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence • Bank or building society statement • Rental or mortgage agreement • Letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department <p><i>The date on the statement or letter must be between 1st January 2022 and 1st January 2023.</i></p>	

What photographic ID do I need?

You will need to provide one of the following types of photographic ID to claim your payment in cash:

- Valid Passport
- Valid UK or EU/EEA Driving Licence
- Asylum ID Card
- NI Electoral Identity Card
- Translink SmartPass (Senior/60+/War Disabled/Blind Persons)
- Armed Forces ID or Police Warrant Card

4. Can someone else redeem a voucher on someone's behalf if they are elderly/disabled/housebound or otherwise unable to do it themselves?

If customers require support with redeeming their vouchers, there will be an explanation on the voucher if they want someone else to redeem their voucher.

5. I need large print or braille

If your electricity supplier is aware of your needs, your voucher will arrive in the appropriate format.

If your electricity supplier is aware of your needs, there is no need to contact your supplier to receive your voucher in large print or braille.

6. I don't have a bank or credit union account. Can I take the £600 as cash?

There is an option to take the payment as cash, but this is dependent on available cash at the branch you attend. Taking such a large sum in cash is a serious risk. If you lose the cash it cannot be replaced. You are strongly advised to open an account to receive this payment. This is the safest option.

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

7. What if I don't have a domestic electricity contract?

Equivalent payments will be made at a later date to households who do not have a domestic electricity contract (e.g. residents of park homes, some care homes, tenants in certain types of private and social rented homes, homes supplied by private wires, residents of caravans and houseboats on registered sites, farmers living in domestic farmhouses without a domestic electricity connection, households off the electricity grid). Further details will be published.

8. I have not received a voucher. What should I do?

Only the following customers will receive a voucher:

- Customers who pay for their electricity by Standard Credit (Bill Pay)
- Customers who pay for their electricity with a Keypad meter
- Direct Debit customers where suppliers have been unable to complete a transfer payment into the customer's bank account

Direct debit customers will receive the payment direct to their bank account in the first instance.

If you are eligible for a voucher, you should receive this by 28th February. If you have not received your payment, **please wait until 28th February to contact your supplier** because payments will still be being made until then.

You should call your supplier if you have not received it after 28th February.

9. How does my voucher arrive?

You will receive your voucher in the post from the Post Office. For Keypad customers, vouchers will be addressed to 'the occupier'. Vouchers issued to customers paying by standard credit (bill pay) will be issued in the name of the electricity account holder. Redeem your vouchers at the Post Office **promptly**. This will help you as you will get the benefit as soon as you redeem the voucher, and will minimise the risk of the voucher being mislaid. Prompt redemption will also help reduce delays to others receiving their vouchers and reduce the impact on Post Office services.

10. Do I need to apply?

No one needs to apply for this payment. Payments and vouchers will be issued automatically, you will not need to provide your bank details to qualify for this payment

11. My keypad meter (only) is in my landlord's name but I pay the electricity costs directly

Keypad meter users will receive a voucher in the post, addressed to 'the occupier'. The voucher will be for the value of £600 to be redeemed at a Post Office as directed on the letter. The voucher provided is intended to provide support with energy costs for the household. If you top up your keypad meter yourself, you are the intended recipient.

12. Does my landlord need to pass on the EBSS AFP NI support?

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

To ensure EBSS AFP NI is provided to the people it is designed to help, the Government has introduced regulations to require third-party intermediaries, such as landlords, to pass the support through in a just and reasonable way to end users, such as tenants.

Guidance on pass-through requirements can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries/guidance-on-the-pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-in-great-britain-provided-to-intermediaries>

13. My electricity account is not in my name.

Customers who pay for their electricity via keypad: This is not a problem for customers who pay for their electricity via keypad, as vouchers will be issued to ‘the occupier’ and no name is therefore required. Please note that this is a change from some earlier communications which suggested keypad customers would need their name on the account. The change to vouchers for keypad customers being addressed only to ‘The Occupier’ will help all Keypad customers to be able to redeem their vouchers promptly.

14. What happens if vouchers are received with an incorrect name?

This is not a problem for customers who pay for their electricity via keypad, as they will be sent their vouchers in the name of “The Occupier” only, and so do not need to have their name on the voucher to redeem it at the Post Office. [Please note: This is the correct process for the payment. Any other communication suggesting that a named voucher is needed for customers who pay for their electricity via Keypad is incorrect.]

However, if a **customer who pays for their electricity by standard credit (bill pay)** receives a voucher with the incorrect name, they should contact their supplier who will cancel the incorrect voucher and re-issue a new voucher in the correct name.

For Further Information : <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/help-domestic-energy-costs>

Appendix 2 – Electricity supplier contact information

Customers are asked to avoid contacting suppliers to query payments in the early stages of the scheme and to use digital systems to check and update personal information wherever possible. As it will take approximately 4-6 weeks to issue payments, we are advised to wait until at least the end of February before getting in touch. As the ultimate deadline for payments to be made is not until 30 June 2023 there should still be plenty of time for suppliers to address any missed payments.

The main exceptions are credit customers who receive a voucher letter with an incorrect name, as they will need to advise and request a replacement, and keypad customers who do not have a top-up card or access to their supplier’s app to use as verification.

At Advice NI, we fully support the decision to prioritise vulnerable customers, especially those who struggle with navigating digital systems.

Supplier	Telephone contact	Electronic contact
<u>Budget Energy</u>	0800 012 11 77 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm Sat 11am-4pm	talkToUS@budgetenergy.co.uk Live chat and e-form via website Confirm your details Supporting vulnerable customers
<u>Click Energy</u>	0800 1 070732 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm Sat 9am-4pm	chat@clickenergyni.com Contact Us , including live chat
<u>Electric Ireland</u>	0345 600 5335 Mon-Fri 8.30am-7pm	customerservice@electricireland.com Information for vulnerable customers
<u>Power NI</u>	0330 122 0312 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm	home@powerni.co.uk Update the Name on a Power NI Account Customer care services
<u>SSE Airtricity</u>	0345 601 9093 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm	customerservice@airtricity.com Contact Us

Appendix 3 – Documents required to redeem vouchers

1. The **voucher letter** from the supplier.
2. **Proof of address** – this must show your address and be dated between 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2023. Acceptable proof of address includes (but is not limited to):
 - utility bill, such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence
 - bank statement
 - rental or mortgage agreement
 - letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department
3. If you are requesting payment into an account – your **bank card and/or account details**.
4. **Photo ID** – only required if you are redeeming your voucher as cash. Your ID must be valid at the time you redeem your voucher, and **must be one of the following**:
 - passport
 - UK or EU / EEA photo driving licence
 - Armed Forces ID card or Police Warrant card
 - Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card
 - Translink SmartPass (senior / 60+ / war disabled / blind person)
 - Asylum ID card

If you do not have photo ID, you will need to obtain it or contact your electricity supplier. See [how to apply for an Electoral Identity Card](#).
5. Keypad customers also need to bring their **keypad app or top-up card**, in addition to the voucher and proof of address. If you are not able to provide your top-up card or app, you will not be able to redeem the voucher for the keypad.
6. Nominated third parties need to provide **all** of the following documentation:
 - the voucher with completed authorisation
 - account holder/occupier's photo ID and proof of address
 - their own photo ID
 - account holder/occupier's bank account details if the payment is being made into an account
 - for keypad accounts, the keypad app or top-up card

Appendix 4 – Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Pass-Through FAQs

ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT NORTHERN IRELAND (EBSS AFP NI) – PASS-THROUGH REQUIREMENTS

EBSS AFP NI - Overview

- Households across Northern Ireland will receive £600 from the government to help with energy costs. This is intended to support whoever pays the household's energy bills.
- Customers who pay by Keypad Meter and Standard Credit (Bill Pay) will receive a £600 voucher in the post from the Post Office. Vouchers need to be redeemed at a Post Office branch. The voucher and supporting paperwork will be needed.
- Customers who pay by Direct Debit will receive a £600 payment direct to their bank account.
- No application is needed. Beware of scams.
- All households with a domestic meter (T01) and electricity contract are eligible for the payment.
- Customers should receive the single payment or voucher by 28th February.

EBSS AFP NI Pass-Through Requirement - Overview

- Third-party intermediaries, such as landlords, who receive EBSS AFP NI must pass that support through to end users, such as tenants, in a just and reasonable way.
- The Government has introduced regulations¹ to require that EBSS AFP NI support is provided to the people it is designed to help.
- Full guidance for intermediaries and end users on these pass-through requirements can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries>

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/10/contents/made>

Frequently Asked Questions

What does 'just and reasonable' mean and how should intermediaries calculate the amount they pass on?

- The intermediary should pass on the EBSS AFP NI support in a just and reasonable way.
- Intermediaries must pass on the support irrespective of how the end user pays for their energy, or heating, or hot water use. They can adjust the amount they pass on based on their charges to end users and must demonstrate to end users that this amount is just and reasonable.
- Intermediaries can take into account the extent to which they have increased their charges to end users as a result of the energy crisis. For example, if the intermediary has fully passed on the impact of increased energy prices to its end users, then it would be just and reasonable for it to pass on the full scheme benefit. Whereas, if the intermediary has shielded its end users from the impact of increased energy prices it may be just and reasonable for it to retain some or all of the scheme benefit.
- To help intermediaries understand their obligations, we have published guidance² which sets out a series of illustrative examples of how the pass-through requirements can be calculated.

How do pass-through requirements work where intermediaries have multiple end users (e.g. a landlord has multiple tenants in a household)?

- Where an intermediary receives energy support but has multiple end users, they should determine a just and proportionate method of dividing the benefit amongst these end users, and clearly communicate this to the end users.
- To help intermediaries understand their obligations, we have published guidance³ which sets out a series of illustrative examples of how the pass-through requirements can be calculated.

Do the pass-through requirements depend on how the end user (e.g. tenant) pays the intermediary (e.g. landlord) for energy?

- The pass-through requirement applies irrespective of how the end user pays the intermediary for energy.
- For example, a landlord may have an arrangement where rent and bills, including energy costs, are charged in an 'all inclusive' way or where rent and bills are charged in an itemised way – the pass-through requirements apply in each of these scenarios.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries/guidance-on-the-pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-in-great-britain-provided-to-intermediaries>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries/guidance-on-the-pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-in-great-britain-provided-to-intermediaries>

What can end users do if intermediaries do not comply with the pass-through requirements?

- The legislation is clear that intermediaries must pass the benefit through to the end users in a just and reasonable way.
- We have published guidance on the pass-through regulations to help those affected understand how to comply with these regulations.
- This government guidance⁴ includes advice for landlords on how to meet their pass-through obligations. There are also template letters for tenants should they wish to raise concerns with their landlords about their energy bills.
- However, if necessary, the regulations also enable end users to pursue recovery of the benefit as a debt through civil proceedings. Should a court rule in the end user's favour, they will be entitled to the payment, plus interest. Interest is set at 2 percent above the Bank of England's base rate and will begin to accrue from 60 days after the intermediary first receives the relevant scheme benefit.

When are landlords expected to pass on the benefit?

- The pass-through amount should be provided to the end user as soon as reasonably practicable.
- It is the responsibility of the intermediary to take reasonable steps to notify the end user in writing that they have been provided support and how much they are intending to pass on. This should be done within 30 days of the intermediary receiving the relevant scheme benefit.
- To help intermediaries understand their obligations, we have published guidance⁵ which sets out what information should be shared with end users regarding the benefit.

Do intermediaries, such as landlords, need to claim the benefit to pass on?

- Regulations require that relevant intermediaries, including landlords, claim the benefit and pass that benefit onto end users.
- Intermediaries must take all such reasonable steps necessary to ensure that they are provided with the EBSS AFP NI benefit to which they are entitled so that they may pass it through to their end users.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries/guidance-on-the-pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-in-great-britain-provided-to-intermediaries>

What can I expect if my landlord is on a commercial energy tariff?

- Households without a domestic meter or with a non-domestic electricity contract may also be eligible for a £600 payment this winter. This is made up of £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding and £200 Alternative Fuel Payment.
- As these households cannot be identified by their energy supply, this scheme cannot be delivered in the same way as the EBSS AFP NI. As such, this will be an application-based scheme. Those who are eligible will need to submit a short online form via the government's GOV.UK pages, with the application portal due to open in February. Once customers have provided their details, these will be shared with a private contractor (Arvato) who will deliver the discount to eligible households. A dedicated customer helpline will be available to assist customers who do not have online access, with further details to be released next month.
- Eligible groups are likely to include:
 - residents of park homes
 - some care home residents
 - tenants in certain types of private and social rented homes
 - homes supplied by private wires
 - residents of caravans and houseboats on registered sites
 - farmers living in domestic farmhouses without a domestic electricity connection
 - households off the electricity grid

Appendix 5 – Useful sources of information

Official information from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[Getting household energy bill support in Northern Ireland](#)

[Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuels Payment Northern Ireland: guidance for electricity suppliers](#)

[Guidance on the pass-through requirements for energy price support provided to intermediaries](#)

Press releases:

[Vital help with energy bills on the way for millions more homes across Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)

[Northern Ireland households to receive voucher support for energy bills starting in January](#)

Information from suppliers

[Budget Energy](#)

[Click Energy](#)

[Electric Ireland](#)

[Power NI](#)

[SSE Airtricity](#)

Information from Advice NI

[Cost of Living: Energy Bills Support](#)

[BBC On Your Behalf: How and when will you receive your £600 energy support payment?](#)



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