# Energy advice and support with payments

If you have sight loss, we’re here to help you manage energy bills. This factsheet has helpful information about financial support you may be entitled to, key dates for your diary and where to get advice.

This information covers three key areas – the support everyone might be entitled to; the support for people with sight loss; and RNIB’s specialist advice and services.

For help with any of the information and support covered in this factsheet, please contact our energy advisers, via the RNIB Helpline, on 0303 123 9999 (please select option 3) or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**. Our team can advise you on a wide range of energy issues, including information on benefits and financial support you may be entitled to.

## Support with energy bills

The government offers various support schemes to help with the cost of energy. These include:

**Cold Weather Payment**

If you live in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland a Cold Weather Payment may be available to help with energy bills during very cold weather. Very cold weather is when the local temperature is recorded as, or forecast to be, 0 degrees Celsius or below for seven days in a row.

Individuals may get a cold weather payment if they receive certain benefits, including Pension Credit, Income Support, Universal Credit, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Support for Mortgage Interest.

People who meet the criteria for a payment automatically receive a Cold Weather Payment of £25 for any period of very cold weather between 1 November 2023 and 31 March 2024. The payment is made after the period of cold weather, normally within 14 working days.

Find out more: [**gov.uk/cold-weather-payment**](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment)

### Winter Heating Payment

In Scotland, residents may be eligible for a Winter Heating Payment. It’s a yearly payment of £50 which is paid automatically and doesn’t depend on how cold it gets.

Find out more: [**mygov.scot/winter-heating-payment**](https://www.mygov.scot/winter-heating-payment)

### Winter Fuel Payment

Individuals born before 26 September 1956, could get a **Winter Fuel Payment** of £250 to £600. The amount received depends on when you were born, if you receive any other benefits and other factors (for example, if you live in a care home).

The amount you get includes a ‘Pensioner Cost of Living Payment’ of between £150 and £300. This is in addition to any other Cost of Living Payments. Recipients will get a letter in October or November to tell you if you’re eligible and how much your payment will be.

**If someone doesn’t get a letter** but might be eligible, they might need to make a claim. If you would like support doing this, the RNIB energy advice team can help.

Find out more: [**gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment**](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

## Help checking benefits for people with sight loss

If you're blind or partially sighted, there are a range of benefits and financial assistance available to make life easier. We can help you check what benefits, concessions and grants you could be entitled to.

Our easy-to-use calculator will help you find out what benefits you can claim and any you may be missing out on. It takes around 10 minutes to complete, and your information is anonymous.

Start your benefits calculation here: [**rnib.entitledto.co.uk/home/start**](https://rnib.entitledto.co.uk/home/start)

## Support from your energy provider

Many energy providers offer a range of practical and financial support, as well as grants to help with the cost of energy.

### Check for possible help from your energy provider

If you’re struggling to pay your energy bills, you might be eligible for assistance from your provider. It’s worth contacting your provider directly to ask what assistance they may be able to offer.

RNIB’s energy advice team can support you with this and has information to help you:

* Apply for a grant
* Arrange a payment plan
* Get money off your energy bill
* Switch to a different tariff.

### If you’re having trouble contacting your energy provider

If you can’t access your energy providers contact details or get in touch with them, our energy advice team can help you access this information. Call our Helpline on 0303 123 9999 (please select option 3) or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**to talk to an adviser.

### Check if your energy supplier is part of the Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount Scheme is a one-off payment of £150 applied to eligible people’s bills, to help with the cost of energy over winter. The scheme for winter 2023/24 opens on 16 October 2023.

There are different ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme depending on where you live. Eligible people may receive the discount automatically, or they may need to apply. Find out more and check if you are eligible on the GOV.uk website: [**gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme**](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)

Your energy supplier must be participating in the scheme for you to get the discount. You can check if your energy supplier is taking part on the GOV.uk website: [**gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers**](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers)

#### If you live in Scotland:

Individuals who receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit should automatically get a letter to tell them about the discount. Additionally, individuals who receive certain benefits may qualify and must apply directly to their energy supplier.

Contact your energy supplier to check if you’re eligible and to apply. It’s worth contacting them as soon as possible, even if you were eligible last year, as the number of discounts suppliers can give is limited. For more information, visit: [**gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/low-income-scotland**](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/low-income-scotland)

#### If you live in Northern Ireland:

The Warm Home Discount is replaced by the Affordable Warmth Scheme in Northern Ireland. For more information, visit: [**nihe.gov.uk/housing-help/affordable-warmth-boiler-replacement/affordable-warmth-scheme**](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing-help/affordable-warmth-boiler-replacement/affordable-warmth-scheme)

#### If you live in a Park Home:

You can apply for the Park Homes Warm Discount, which enables residents of Park Homes in England, Wales, and Scotland to apply for a £150 payment to help with the cost of energy bills. To find out more, visit: [**charisgrants.com/partners/park-homes/**](https://charisgrants.com/partners/park-homes/)

**Join the Priority Services Register**

The Priority Services Register is a free support service which blind and partially sighted people may benefit from. Joining means you’ll get extra help from your energy supplier, which could include the following services:

* Priority support in an emergency
* Heating and cooking facilities if your energy supply is cut off
* Advance notice of planned power cuts
* Sending someone to check your meter
* Issuing bills in large print, braille, or to another person (such as a carer or family member).

Each energy provider has their own Priority Services Register. You (or someone on your behalf) will need to contact your provider directly to join.

For more information, visit: [**rnib.org.uk/living-with-sight-loss/money-and-benefits/priority-services-register/**](http://www.rnib.org.uk/living-with-sight-loss/money-and-benefits/priority-services-register/)

## Useful links

* Check what benefits you are entitled to on the GOV.UK website: [**gov.uk/check-benefits-financial-support**](https://www.gov.uk/check-benefits-financial-support)
* Find out more about help from the Government with the Cost of Living: [**gov.uk/cost-of-living**](https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living)
* Check if you can get help with the Cost of Living from your local council: [**gov.uk/cost-living-help-local-council**](https://www.gov.uk/cost-living-help-local-council)
* Use the RNIB benefits calculator to check which benefits, grants and concessions you could be entitled to: [**rnib.entitledto.co.uk/home/start**](https://rnib.entitledto.co.uk/home/start)
* Advice from the Energy Saving Trust to help you save money on your energy bills: [**energysavingtrust.org.uk**](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/)
* Helpful information from The Centre for Sustainable Energy covering energy bills, keeping warm at home, using heating controls, meters, heaters and more: [**cse.org.uk/resource/home-energy-fact-sheets/**](https://www.cse.org.uk/resource/home-energy-fact-sheets/)
* Information about average electricity and gas usage, and the energy price cap, is available on Ofgem’s website: [**ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/average-gas-and-electricity-use-explained**](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ofgem.gov.uk%2Finformation-consumers%2Fenergy-advice-households%2Faverage-gas-and-electricity-use-explained&data=05%7C02%7CJessica.Wilkinson%40rnib.org.uk%7C37c2388352cd4e8597a408dc11c4c6c5%7C5d45337cd19243fcaa5805557c9171bc%7C0%7C0%7C638404784042694353%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=YoZDDDX5DHwL5WB2gJ7yJEFx4aDPSOZMwRAbGLmuFKo%3D&reserved=0)

**If you live in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales:**

* Use the Home Energy Scotland Funding Finder tool to check for support in your area: [**homeenergyscotland.org**](https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/)
* Find out about additional help available in Scotland: [**eas.org.uk**](https://eas.org.uk/)
* Find out about energy advice and how to apply for free home energy efficiency improvements if you live in Wales: [**nest.gov.wales**](https://nest.gov.wales/)
* Find out about energy grants and other sources of help in Northern Ireland: [**nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/ni-energy-advice**](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/ni-energy-advice)

## Support from The British Gas Energy Trust

The British Gas Energy Trust is an independent charity, separate to but solely funded by British Gas. Support is delivered through three programmes: debt relief grants which can help households with up to £2,000 in fuel debt; a small grants programme that provides emergency energy vouchers and payments; and a programme that funds over 40 money and energy advice projects throughout Britain.

For more information and further resources, please visit The British Gas Energy Trust’s website: [**britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/**](https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/)

## Energy advice from RNIB

RNIB provides free energy advice to help you manage your energy bills and energy usage. Our energy advisers can support you on a wide range of issues, including:

* Managing your energy use
* Getting the best energy tariff
* Signposting to energy debt agencies
* Accessible energy bills and understanding your energy bill
* Support with changing or reading your meter
* Help with Smart Meters and accessible in-home displays (AIHD)
* Advice on making your home warmer
* Advice on benefits and grants you may be entitled to, including Cost of Living payments
* Support registering with the Priority Services Register
* Accessing local support.

To talk to an energy adviser, call our Helpline on **0303 123 9999** between 8am-8pm weekdays and 9am-1pm on Saturday and select option 3. You can also email **helpline@rnib.org.uk** or say **“Alexa, call RNIB Helpline”** on Alexa-enabled devices.

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