

# How to cut your bills

A guide to getting a good deal on your bills



**KELLANDS**

CHARTERED FINANCIAL PLANNERS

It's a good idea to regularly review your household bills to make sure you're not paying over the odds. It may seem a hassle but you may be able to save yourself hundreds of pounds each year by doing this.

## Energy – gas and electricity

If you're on a standard tariff or about to go on one because you're coming to the end of a fixed-term contract, it's worth checking if you can get a better deal. Standard tariffs are usually more expensive than fixed-rate deals. Your current provider has to tell you if it has a cheaper tariff you can switch to but it's also a good idea to check out what deals other providers are offering. You can switch deals if you're on a prepayment meter too.

A price comparison website can help you do this. You'll need your current supplier's name and the name of the tariff. Have your latest bill to hand. This tells you how much you spend on energy and the amount you use in kilowatt hours. If you decide to switch to a new supplier it will notify your current supplier and handle the switch. There will be no interruption in your energy supply – the only change you'll notice will be a new bill from your new supplier. There is a 14 day cooling off period during which you can change your mind about the switch if you want to.

Ofgem, the energy industry regulator, has a list of recommended comparison sites at [ofgem.gov.uk/](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/). Citizens Advice also has an energy price comparison tool at [energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energycompare/citizensadvice.org.uk/)

If you owe your energy supplier money, you may still be able to switch. This applies even if you're on a prepayment meter and owe less than £500 for gas and £500 for electricity.

For more details see [citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-a-better-energy-deal/switching-energy-supplier-if-youre-in-debt/](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-a-better-energy-deal/switching-energy-supplier-if-youre-in-debt/)

For ideas on how to cut your energy usage see the government-endorsed website [simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk)

## Water

You can't switch water suppliers but there are steps you can take to keep your bills down.

1. Check if you'd save money by switching to a water meter. Use this calculator from the Consumer Council for Water [ccwater.org.uk/watermetercalculator/](https://www.ccwater.org.uk/watermetercalculator/)
2. If you're on certain benefits and have a large family or someone with a particular medical condition, you may qualify for the WaterSure scheme which caps water bills. Find out more at [ccwater.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Are-you-eligible-for-WaterSure.pdf](https://www.ccwater.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Are-you-eligible-for-WaterSure.pdf)
3. If you're on a low income or receiving benefits, check what additional assistance your water company offers at [ccwater.org.uk/households/help-with-my-bills/](https://www.ccwater.org.uk/households/help-with-my-bills/)
4. For ideas on how to save water and cut your bills see [waterwise.org.uk/save-water/](https://www.waterwise.org.uk/save-water/)

## Mobile phone

Once your contract has ended with your existing network provider you're free to switch to another one. As well as checking what deals your current provider can offer, use a comparison website to see what other deals are around.

For a list of price comparison websites approved by Ofcom, the telecoms regulator, see [ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/price-comparison](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/price-comparison)

In the past, if you wanted to change provider you had to call your current provider to request a Porting Authorisation Code (PAC). Now, all you have to do is text them for this information and pass it on to your new provider which will arrange the switch within one working day. There's more information on this service at [ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/switching/switching-mobile-phone-provider](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/switching/switching-mobile-phone-provider)

## Broadband, landline and Pay TV

If you're coming to the end of your broadband contract, it's worth using a price comparison website to see if you could save money by switching. Beware of switching during your contract as there are likely to be large penalties for doing so.

You can bundle your broadband, landline and Pay TV together by buying a package from a single supplier. This can work out cheaper than buying them separately but check carefully.

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## Annual insurance policies – car, building and contents

Whenever your annual insurance policies are coming up for renewal, see if you could save by switching to a different provider. If you don't want the bother of switching, try phoning your existing provider and letting it know you can get a better deal elsewhere – it will sometimes offer you a discount on your renewal price to keep you as a customer.

We can't recommend particular comparison websites but it's a good idea to try more than one site as they don't all show the same deals. For a useful guide on how to buy insurance using price comparison websites see [moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/how-to-buy-insurance-using-comparison-sites](https://moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/how-to-buy-insurance-using-comparison-sites)

## Mortgage

If you have a mortgage, switching deals could save you a substantial amount each month. If you have a fixed-rate mortgage, there may be a charge if you switch before the end of the term so check this first.

If you're on a fixed-rate, discount or tracker deal, you'll probably move back to your lender's standard variable rate (SVR) once the deal comes to an end. At this point your monthly repayments are likely to jump up. Your lender will almost certainly have some deals with a lower rate of interest than its SVR – and you may get an even better deal if you're willing and able to switch to another lender. For more information see this guide [moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/why-it-pays-to-review-your-mortgage-regularly](https://moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/why-it-pays-to-review-your-mortgage-regularly)



## Council Tax

Depending on your circumstances and who is living with you, you may qualify for a council tax discount. For example, you can get a 25% discount if you're the only person living in the property. Find out what discounts are offered by your local council at [gov.uk/apply-for-council-tax-discount](https://gov.uk/apply-for-council-tax-discount)

If you're on a low income or certain benefits you may be able to get Council Tax Reduction. Your bill could be reduced by up to 100%. For more on this see [gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction](https://gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction)



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Registered office: 55 Gracechurch Street, London, EC3V 0RL.