

## Coronavirus - the impact on energy

Coronavirus (Covid-19) has impacted many people's finances and for those already on a low income a sudden drop can mean the difference between eating or heating. Working from home as many people are during the pandemic also heavily impacts on energy consumption, so many people may experience increased fuel consumption this winter. Our goal is to ensure that everybody in Derbyshire has access to energy advice to save money on their bills, maximise their income and ultimately keep warm this winter.



The Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts energy team have been agile in responding to helping our clients remotely. Embracing new technology in addition to our phone advice has enabled us to continue providing vital energy advice to our clients. We are open and ready to help the people of Derbyshire face these financial challenges.

Be reassured our friendly advisers are on hand to make sure they find the best solutions. Don't leave it too late to seek help, you will be surprised how much you may be able to save.

### What We Do

We have helped over 600 people with energy advice during the pandemic with total savings reaching £303,118.

The top five issues we helped with are:

1. **Energy Saving Tips**
2. **Tariff Switching**
3. **Warm Home Discount**
4. **Access to energy grants**
5. **Energy efficiency**



### The National Picture

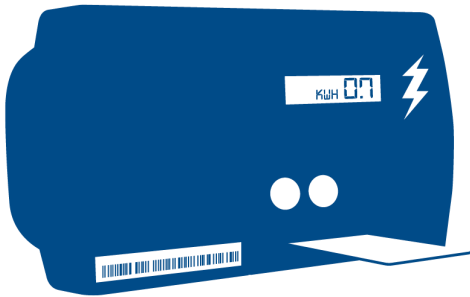
Ofgem have recently introduced new measures for low income households in relation to emergency pre-payment credit and easier debt repayment terms, though this is a welcome start we anticipate that this will not be enough to fully support those most affected by the pandemic. The latest Ofgem report also shows that Citizens Advice is the agency most consumers are likely to contact for help with their energy, so we are well prepared to help in every possible way.

### Prepayment Meters

Prepayment meters can be difficult for people to budget with at the best of times, but during the pandemic we've seen a rise in issues with them such as access to emergency credit and issues topping up due to shielding.

#### Case Study:

Client is vulnerable and shielding due to health issues so unable to leave the home, she had lost her PAYG electric meter key so she couldn't ask family to help her top up.



#### How We Helped:

We signed the client up for the priority services register. We contacted the supplier and arranged a new key to be sent in the post and would arrive in three days. We made sure the client had enough electricity on her meter to last her until her key arrived through additional emergency credit.

### Switching Tariff or Provider

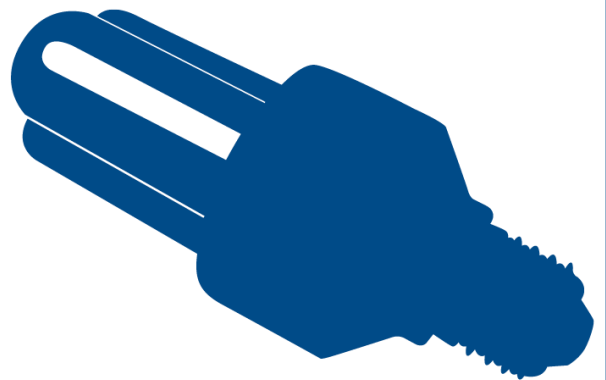
Many people don't bother or don't know how to switch tariff or provider and do not realise that they are paying over the odds for the same product they could get much cheaper.

#### Case Study:

Client was not confident on the internet and hadn't switched suppliers or tariffs in years. He'd had a sudden drop in income and wanted our help to reduce his bills.

#### How We Helped:

We ran comparisons on his energy bills and usage and helped him switch suppliers to £290 for the year. We also assisted him with a warm home discount application for a further £140 saving.



**For a free energy advice appointment call our  
Adviceline on 0300 456 8390**

Lines open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

(Calls charged as 01 & 02 numbers)



### Free Training Available

As part of our offer, we can provide free energy training (including covid related updates) to frontline workers and other agencies. This includes upskilling your staff on how to identify energy issues, up to date information on grants, schemes and support and how to make effective referrals to resolve the problems your clients may be facing.

For more information or to book on to a training session please contact our regional energy lead at: [ian.mckinley@ddcab.org.uk](mailto:ian.mckinley@ddcab.org.uk)