

Important Information for People Self-isolating at Home or Worried about Pre-payment or Credit Payments for Electricity.

Regulator Ofgem has written to all suppliers, saying it expects them to "take proactive measures to support prepayment meter customers, including customers in vulnerable circumstances." <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-and-your-energy-supply>

You can email the LSHA Energy Advice team at energyadvice@lsha.co.uk if you have any questions, or want advice on energy use and energy switching.

If you can't leave home to top up at your usual shop, Ofgem suggests you arrange for a trusted person to take your card and do it for you, leaving your meter box unlocked if it's outside your home for easy access.

If you can afford it, and you're not self-isolating already, energy firms are encouraging people to try and top up a little more than usual each time to try and build up some credit.

The best thing you can do if you have to self-isolate or are struggling to pay your bill due to coronavirus is to contact your provider as soon as possible. On a case by case basis, the supplier may be able to extend a discretionary payment by sending you a key or card with preloaded credit or offer alternative support.

If you have a **credit meter**, your supply won't be cut off – disconnections of standard credit meters have been completely suspended. What's more, energy suppliers have agreed to provide support to anyone in financial distress, which may include debt repayments and bill payments being reassessed, reduced or paused.

Whether you're on a standard credit meter or a prepayment meter, energy suppliers are urging you to contact them via email or live chat first, with any non-urgent queries, in order to keep phone lines free for those with serious issues or in vulnerable situations.

Here's what the prepay energy providers have committed to so far (sourced from <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights/#energy>)

Help for prepaid energy customers

Supplier	What can it do?	How to get help (1)
British Gas	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>If you're in isolation and you think you'll use up your balance and emergency credit, contact British Gas and it has said it'll find a solution on a case-by-case basis. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0333 202 9802
EDF	<p><i>EDF says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>EDF has advised people who self-isolate to ask friends and family to help them top up. Where this is not possible, it says it can deliver 'preloaded' cards and keys if you need to self-isolate – this balance will be collected back at a "suitable rate" later. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0333 200 5100
E.on	<p><i>E.on says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home or send an engineer to top up your meter.</i></p> <p>It says if your electricity meter falls below 50p of emergency credit, or you're off supply for gas, it can send a card or key in the post, or send an engineer to top up for you. However, it advises to top up a little extra or asking a trusted person to help to prepare for self-isolation. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0345 052 0000
Npower	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>Npower has said it is looking at increasing emergency credit to £45 to help those self-isolating. It also advises topping up more than usual in advance if you can or asking a trusted person to help. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0800 073 3000

<p>Scottish Power</p>	<p><i>We've yet to hear back from Scottish Power – however, it has published guidance on its website.</i></p> <p>Scottish Power has advised people who need to self-isolate to ask a friend, neighbour or family member to top up for them, and to add more credit to their meter than normal.</p>	<p>Call 0800 027 0072</p>
<p>SSE</p>	<p><i>SSE says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>It's encouraging customers to keep at least 14 days' worth of credit on their meter, and says it can help by reducing any debt repayments people are making through the meter. See its FAQs.</p>	<p>Call 0345 026 2658</p>
<p>Ovo (2)</p>	<p><i>Hasn't committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>Ovo is advising people to ask friends, family or neighbours to top up for them – it urges them to disinfect their card before handing it to anyone else. It's also set up a dedicated team to help those in danger of losing supply. See its FAQs.</p>	<p>Call 0330 102 7517</p>
<p>Bulb</p>	<p><i>Bulb says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>Bulb has advised people who self-isolate to ask friends and family to help them top up. Where this is not possible, it says you can pay online and a preloaded card will be delivered. See its advice.</p>	<p>Call 0300 303 0635</p>
<p>Robin Hood Energy (3)</p>	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>It's advising customers to top up meters more than usual, if they are able to, and will always provide an "emergency support function" for prepay users. It also told us it's working up a number of plans to help anyone struggling to pay or top up. See its FAQs.</p>	<p>Call 0800 030 4567</p>

Co-op Energy	<i>Co-op is now run by Octopus Energy, which has told us it is working through its guidance and will update us.</i>	Call 0800 093 7547
E Energy	<i>We've yet to hear back from E Energy.</i>	Call 0333 103 9575
Green Network Energy	<i>Green Network Energy has told us it is currently working through its guidance to customers and will update us.</i>	Call 0800 520 0202
Green Star Energy	<p><i>Green Star Energy (which is now part of Shell Energy) says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>It has advised people who self-isolate to ask friends and family to help them top up. Where this is not possible, it can arrange for a preloaded card to be delivered to you. See its FAQs.</p>	Call 0800 012 4510
Omni Energy	<p><i>Omni Energy says it can post top-up cards or keys loaded with credit to your home.</i></p> <p>It advises those who can top up in advance and build up credit on the meter to do so, or to ask a family member or friend to take their key or card to the shop for them. It also says it has emergency credit to maintain supply.</p>	Call 0113 457 3219
Utility Warehouse	<p><i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i></p> <p>Utility Warehouse has advised its customers to top up a bit extra – it recommends having at least two weeks' energy on your meter. It also suggests identifying a trusted third-party who can pick up your top-up card or key and take it to a shop in case you're unable to leave your home.</p>	Call 0333 777 3247
Utilita	<i>Hasn't yet committed to sending out top-up cards or keys loaded with credit.</i>	Call 0345 207 2000

	<p>However, Utilita's main focus is smart prepayment, which allows people to top up remotely. If you've a non-smart meter, it advises to top up more than usual or ask a friend or family member to help. It also says it has called all its customers over the age of 80 and advised them of how to top up.</p>	
--	--	--

(1) Suppliers are urging you to contact them via email or live chat first, where possible, with any non-urgent queries. (2) Ovo prepayment customers are supplied under the brand 'Boost'. (3) Advice also covers anyone supplied by Angelic Energy, Beam Energy, Citizen Energy, Ebico, Fosse Energy, Great North Energy, The Leccy, Ram Energy, Southend Energy, White Rose Energy and Your Energy Sussex.