

**17 Finkle Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4AB
Helpline 030 300 300 03**

HELP WITH FUEL COSTS

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For further information or help in accessing any of the services listed, please call our Helpline: 030 300 30003

**Or you can drop into our Resource Centre at
17 Finkle Street, Kendal, between 9.30am- 4.30pm Mon-Fri.**

**Last reviewed June 2025
Next review due June 2026**

Grants for Insulation and Heating

For impartial and bespoke energy efficiency advice for your home, log on to the Energy Savings Trust website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk or call Simple Energy Advice on 0800 444 202.

ECO Affordable Warmth Scheme (Energy Company Obligation)

ECO 'Affordable Warmth' is a government scheme to obligate larger suppliers to deliver energy efficiency home improvements to low income households, areas and properties that are hard to treat. The scheme can provide heating and insulation measures. It includes replacing old or inefficient boilers free of charge or improving insulation for clients receiving particular means tested benefits (including Pension Credit).

To check eligibility or for more information please call Age UK South Cumbria Helpline on 030 300 30003, or visit the Affordable Warmth Scheme website <https://www.affordablewarmthscheme.co.uk/>

Government Help with Winter Fuel Costs

Winter Fuel Payments

What is it?

A Winter Fuel Payment is paid annually by the Department of Work and Pensions to help householders with fuel bills.

Who is eligible?

The qualifying age for Winter Fuel Payments for both men and women is rising in line with the increase in women's State Pension age. To reach the qualifying age for a Winter Fuel Payment you will need to have been born on or before 22nd September 1959 and to be living in the UK throughout the week of 21 to 27 September 2020 (the "qualifying week").

You do not need to be receiving other benefits and can be a homeowner or a tenant in private or local authority accommodation.

How much will I get?

The amount is set by the government each year and varies between £200 and £300 dependent upon individual circumstances. If your income is over £35,000, your Winter Fuel Payment will be recovered later through HMRC.

How do I apply?

Most payments are made automatically between November and December. If you get any other benefit, you'll get your Winter Fuel Payment at the same time as your regular payments.

If the money is not paid into your account in January, call the office that pays your benefits - their details are on any letters they sent you.

If you are not receiving a State Pension and you now qualify, or you have not received the payment by January, contact the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 0800 731 0160 Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm.

Cold Weather Payment

What is it?

A Cold Weather Payment helps towards your extra heating costs when there is a spell of cold weather in your area.

Who is eligible?

Cold Weather Payments are paid automatically if you are receiving certain means tested benefits. Among older people, those receiving the means-tested top up to state pension known as Guarantee Pension Credit are eligible. Cold Weather Payments do not affect your other benefits.

How much will I get?

A payment of £25 for each 7-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March will be made. Payment should be made within 14 working days and paid in the same way as your pension/benefit payments.

How do I apply?

There is no need to apply. The Department for Work and Pensions will automatically pay you when the average temperature is recorded as 0 degrees Centigrade or below for seven days in a row at a given weather station that includes your postcode.

Other Sources of Financial Help

Warm Home Discount

This is a rebate of £140 off the electricity bill paid by the main energy suppliers to their most vulnerable customers. This is a one-off discount credited to your utility bill between October and March. Their criteria vary but generally include their current customers who receive means-tested benefits. The discount will not affect your Winter Fuel Payment or any Cold Weather Payment. For further information, contact your energy provider or the Age UK South Cumbria Helpline on 030 300 300 03.

Changing Energy Suppliers

With the constantly changing prices for gas and electricity, many people feel they should look for a better offer from another energy provider. Various organisations provide price comparisons to help you decide whether to switch supplier.

The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) regulates the companies which run the gas and electricity networks. It takes decisions on price controls and enforcement, acting in the interests of consumers and helping the industries to achieve environmental improvements. It is advisable to use a comparison website that is accredited by OFGEM and complies with the new Confidence Code which came into effect on 1 April 2015.

For detailed comparisons, showing how much you would save with a range of products from each supplier, you will need an idea of how much you pay per year or how many kilowatt hours you use – available on your most recent bill or Annual Statement. You can then contact one of the price comparison services either online or by telephone. Alternatively, if you require support with arranging a comparison or switch, please contact Age UK South Cumbria on 030 300 30003.

Price Comparison Services

To obtain a price comparison for all licensed suppliers in your area, you can use one of the OFGEM accredited internet price comparison services below (listed alphabetically). They provide comparative quotations by phone or through their websites.

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| www.energyhelpline.com | 0800 074 0745 |
| www.energylinx.co.uk | 0800 849 7077 |
| www.moneysupermarket.com | 0800 177 7087 |
| www.myutilitygenius.co.uk | 020 3468 0461 |
| www.simplyswitch.com | 0800 011 1395 |
| www.switchgasandelectric.com | 03333 700 600 |
| www.theenergyshop.com | 01259 220 270 |
| https://www.uswitch.com/ | 0800 6888 557 |

Making the Change

Once you are happy that you have selected the supplier and deal best suited to meet your needs, changing is a fairly simple process which may take up to 21 days:

- Use an online switching service or get in touch with the new supplier directly and agree a contract with them. You will need to give the new supplier your address including post code, current supplier and tariff. If you agree to payment by direct debit, you will also need bank account details.
- Your new supplier will then contact your existing supplier and advise them you are leaving. You may have a 14 day cooling off period before the switch can begin but not in all cases.
- Your new supplier will advise you of your “Switchover date” when your supplier will change.
- Give a meter reading on the day you change supplier to your new supplier, who will share this information with your previous supplier. Then your old supplier can work out your final bill, and your new supplier can use it as the starting point for your first bill.
- If you are in credit with your existing supplier, they will refund any balance after a final meter reading to calculate any remaining monies due to them. If you owe the existing supplier money, they will calculate the total balance due upon receipt of a final meter reading. Depending on your existing tariff, there may be an exit fee due.

If you are not confident making the change yourself...

If you do not have access to the internet or are not confident about using it, you can ask Age UK South Cumbria to do an energy comparison for you. We will need the information about your usage described earlier. Make an appointment to see if we can find you a better deal.

Age UK South Cumbria has no affiliation with any of the providers and can talk you through your bill, help you to see if you could be on a better energy deal and change your energy supplier over if it saves you money.

Age UK South Cumbria offers a free and impartial service which is designed to be supportive, and there is no obligation to switch if you just want information.

To make an appointment, call in to our Finkle Street reception or call our Helpline 030 300 30003.

The Priority Services Register

What Is a Priority Services Register?

The Priority Services Register is a scheme which offers extra help to people of pensionable age, and/or who are registered as disabled, have a long-term medical condition, have hearing or visual impairment or other communication needs. It is also available after a life-changing event such as bereavement or relationship breakdown. It is run by the energy suppliers.

Services that might be available include:

- Moving your meter to a more easily accessible position for you free of charge.
- A service which is tailored to meet your needs, e.g. you can ask for your bills and meter readings to be provided to you in large type, audio type or braille.
- Free meter readings, if you tell your supplier you are not able to read your meter.
- Priority re-connection if your supply is interrupted and advance notice if they have to stop your supply.
- Alternative facilities for heating and cooking if your supply is interrupted.
- Provision of controls and adapters to make your meter and appliances easier to use.
- Additional Protection from bogus callers with a password protection scheme.
- Arranging for your bills to be copied to someone else such as a family member or carer who can read them for you.
- Free advice about the services available because of your age, disability or chronic illness.

How to Sign Up to The Priority Services Register with your Energy Supplier

To make sure you receive additional help and services, you need to sign up to your energy supplier's priority services register. If you have different suppliers for gas and electricity you will need to sign up with both suppliers. If you have a carer they can register on your behalf. It is free of charge and you can either register for some or all of the services available.

Contact your supplier to sign up or for further information.

Priority Services Register with Electricity North West

Electricity North West own, operate and maintain the electricity distribution network in the North West.

Many customers have individual needs and there may be times when you need extra support, for example, when there is an unexpected power cut. ENW Priority Service Register helps them keep track of vulnerable customers, so that they can provide priority treatment during such times of uncertainty.

If you feel that you require extra assistance from ENW, particularly when you suffer a power cut, then you should join ENW Priority Service Register. When you join the register, you will have the comfort of knowing that additional support will be available to you and you won't be alone.

You are eligible to join ENW Priority Service Register if for example, you are medically dependent.

To join or to find out more about ENW Priority Service Register visit www.electricitynorthwest.co.uk/priority email at enquiries@enwl.co.uk or call on 0800 195 4141.