

1. It should be your choice. No illegal break-ins!

Energy companies don't have any right to force entry into your home to recover money. They can only get in to disconnect supplies or put in a prepayment meter not to seize your possessions, and they **can only get in with your permission or a warrant from a magistrate's court**. (If your meter is outside, however, this won't help.)

They **should not be sending bailiffs** – if they do, don't let them in. Bailiffs are not allowed to force their way in. And they won't solve your problem. Don't negotiate with the bailiffs – negotiate with the supplier itself.

If the company do go to court and do get a warrant, or if they disconnect you from the mains in the road, this will cost you extra (usually around £75 if it's a warrant, much more if you're disconnected.)

Refusing to let them in is a way to buy time so you can negotiate some way to pay at a rate a bit nearer to what you can afford. Phone the supplier right away. Some codes of practice allow for disconnection to be delayed by a week or two if you tell them you are contacting the DWP or social services for help with the bill.

If they get in, even with a warrant, they have to leave your home as secure as they found it, and compensate you for any damage caused.

We are working towards building a network of people prepared to help each other prevent disconnections, or unwanted prepayment meters being imposed. If you need help on the doorstep, or are ready to help others in that situation, please get in touch with Fuel Poverty Action.