

# 11. For the long term



This mini-guide is about how to deal with debts and meters, but your bills will stay high without longer term solutions.

Energy saving measures can be a lifesaver for everyone, **from people renting a small flat, to homeowners.**

Some solutions might be:

- **A new boiler**, and more efficient appliances. Many areas have schemes to help replace old inefficient gas boilers. This can sometimes be done for free for homeowners or private tenants, through your energy supplier as part of the ECO scheme (Energy Company Obligation) or through your local authority.
- **Insulation and draughtproofing.** A massive proportion of the energy we pay for is wasted through poor insulation, and draughty windows, doors, floorboards and chimneys.
- **Many websites**, including our own, have tips on how to save energy and money even without making big changes.
- Local “transition towns” or sustainability groups can often help with **draughtproofing and other simple measures, like reflective panels behind radiators.**

- Information on **grants for major energy saving measures**, or for using **renewable energy**, is available from the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 (for England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or from Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282.
- Many areas of the UK have their own **local schemes** for helping you access funds to improve your home's energy efficiency. Your local library should have information. And your local Home Improvement Agency (find them through 0300 1240 315) may be able to help with advice or practical support.
- **In London, the GLA Warmer Homes scheme** offers new boilers, insulation, double glazing and more, for homeowners on benefits and some other homeowners. This is first come first served. See [www.goo.gl/cfy7Y4](http://www.goo.gl/cfy7Y4).
- **The Health Through Warmth scheme**, for people in England or Wales with a long-term illness, offers financial help with repairs, insulation and heating. It is run by Npower but **is open to customers of any company**. Call 0800 022 220 or email: [healththroughwarmth@npower.com](mailto:healththroughwarmth@npower.com)
- Even using energy-efficient appliances, and making sure to **switch things off (not on standby)** can make a significant difference. So can getting to grips with your **heating controls** – timers can be tricky at first but if so try to find someone to help you practice – it's worth it! Similarly, if your thermostat or radiator valves are not working right, it is worth the effort to try to get them fixed.

These long-term solutions can make more difference to your bills than tariff-switching. **They will also help fight climate change**, with all its costs and dangers.

**Benefits** – get what's yours!

Make sure you are getting **all the welfare benefits that you are entitled to**. For help, see below for advice including on bedroom tax, council tax, debt advice and sickness and disability benefits ESA, DLA and PIP. Lots of people have been put off by government propaganda portraying people who claim benefits as scroungers. In fact, bringing up children, living with a disability, or just surviving when you're unemployed are really hard work. The real scroungers are the energy companies who are robbing all of us – and even causing deaths while they rake in massive profits. You and your family are entitled to a warm home.