



BEIS / domestic energy supply companies: agreement

An agreement reached between the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and domestic energy supply companies setting out principles to support energy customers impacted by COVID-19.

Identifying and prioritising customers at risk.

We will seek to identify and prioritise customers who may need additional support and consider the needs of customers taking into account that:

- Any Customer can suddenly become vulnerable even if they are not classed as such already.
- Priority Service Register customers may need extra advice and support
- Prepayment meter customers, both smart and legacy will need specific support
- Customers with health conditions or who are or are vulnerable to a cold home, may need to maintain a constant supply of energy

We will support customers who are impacted financially as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19.

Based on individual circumstances, this could include:

- Considering reassessing, reducing or pausing debt repayment and bill payments for domestic customers in financial distress.
- Considering referring customers who are struggling to pay to third party debt advisers such as StepChange and Citizens Advice.
- Suspending credit meter disconnections¹

We will support prepayment meter customers directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 to stay on supply.

Based on individual circumstances, this could include:

- extending discretionary/ friendly credit or sending out a pre-loaded top up card.
- enabling customers to nominate a trusted third party to be able to pick up discretionary credit sent to a shop on their behalf.
- switching smart prepayment meters into credit mode or extending non-disconnection periods (consumers will be made aware any credit will need to be paid back).
- promoting online smart prepayment top-up channels.
- having particular regard to the regulatory requirements and the potential impact of COVID-19, when applying the 'safe and reasonably practicable' test when considering switching a customer from credit to prepay.
- take reasonable steps to contact prepayment customers with advice on what to do in the event of self-isolation

Providing information.

We will make available information, advice and guidance to customers on what help is available, including that the energy usage of self-isolating customers may go up as a result and sign posting to sources of support.

¹ Except in cases of safety, theft and vacant properties.