



Over 10 million households (37% of Brits) are worried about how they'll afford their energy bills this winter, according to new research from **Citizens Advice**.

If you're looking to cut your energy bills, start with heating and hot water, which account for around three-quarters of typical household energy use. Simple ways to save include:

- Wear a blanket hoodie or other warm layers, plus socks and slippers, before turning up the heating.
- Lower your thermostat by 1°C. The World Health Organisation recommends 18°C for healthy adults, with slightly warmer temperatures for older people and young children.
- Set heating timers to match your routine and avoid heating an empty home.
- Close curtains at dusk and block draughts around doors and windows. Thermal curtains can help keep heat in during winter and keep rooms cooler in summer. Self-adhesive insulation tape can be used for gaps in or under window frames.
- Keep radiators clear and avoid heating unused rooms where practical, provided this does not increase the risk of damp or mould.
- Take shorter showers to reduce hot water use. Avoid carrying hot water upstairs to fill a bath. The risk of spills, burns and falls outweighs any energy savings.

Other simple ways to cut energy use and costs include:

- Boil only the water you need (use a flask to store leftovers) and cook with lids on pans. After cooking, let residual oven heat warm the room if it's safe to do so, but never use the oven as a room heater.
- Wash clothes at 30°C or on the eco setting and run the machine only when full.
- Avoid using the tumble dryer where possible. Dry clothes outdoors or on an airer and ensure good ventilation indoors to help prevent damp and mould.

Further Support

- If you use a **prepayment meter**, check your credit regularly, especially before cold weather or holidays. Remember that standing charges still apply. Many suppliers offer emergency credit and Friendly Hours support, which must be repaid through your meter.
- If you're on a **low income**, you may qualify for energy grants, discounts or home insulation support through your supplier, local council or advice services. Consider the **Warm Home Discount** and

Winter Fuel Payments. Social housing tenants should also contact their landlord about available funding schemes.

- Anyone struggling with energy bills should contact their supplier as early as possible to discuss affordable repayment plans and access support.
- Hertsmere also has several **Warm Spaces** in community venues, libraries and places of worship, offering a warm environment, refreshments and activities.
- Finally, use comparison services such as **MoneySavingExpert's Energy Club** to check you're on the best available tariff.

Citizens Advice Hertsmere can check eligibility for **fuel vouchers** through our British Gas Energy Trust Project. We also have some energy saving items – for example **electric blankets** – to give out. Our energy advisers have helped clients write off significant debt from incorrect billing. For one client this amounted to more than £12k.

Find lots more advice on our website www.citizensadvice.org.uk

If you need support with energy or other issues, please contact us via:

- our website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/hertsmere/>
- Advice line: 0800 144 8848

or visit us:

- Wyllyotts Centre on Weds 10am – 3.30pm (until 12.30pm on the last Wednesday of the month)
- *****NEW***** Room 2, Elm Court Community Centre - 1st, 2nd and 3rd Thursdays of each month, 1:30pm to 3:30pm. *****NEW*****
- for other times and locations, please visit our website.



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If you're looking to cut costs, focus on heating and hot water, which account for around three-quarters of household energy use.

Simple ways to save include:

- Wear warm layers, socks and slippers before turning up the heating.
- Lower your thermostat by 1°C and set heating timers to match your routine.
- Close curtains at dusk, block draughts and keep radiators clear.
- Keep radiators clear and avoid heating unused rooms where practical, provided this does not increase the risk of damp or mould.
- Boil only the water you need, cook with lids on pans and wash clothes at 30°C or on the eco setting.
- Avoid using a tumble dryer where possible. Dry clothes outdoors or on an airer and ensure adequate ventilation to help prevent damp and mould.
- Avoid carrying hot water upstairs to fill a bath due to the risk of burns and falls.

Further support

- If you use a **prepayment meter**, check your credit regularly. Many suppliers offer emergency credit and Friendly Hours support.
- If you're on a **low income**, you may qualify for grants, discounts or insulation support, including the **Warm Home Discount**.

Citizens Advice Hertsmere can check eligibility for fuel vouchers, provide energy-saving items and help with billing and debt issues.

Find more advice at www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

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Editor: a fuller version of this article appears on our website