

Get ready for winter

Heating and hot water account for over half of the average household's energy bills, so it's important to know what you can do to prepare your heating system for the colder winter months and save money on your energy bills.

You can take many low and no-cost actions to save energy and money over the winter period. Find out below what steps you can take to prepare your heating system and how you can get your household ready for winter.

Turn down radiators in rooms you aren't using to save up to £40 a year

When you're not using rooms, turn the radiator valves down to a lower setting.

Turning off radiators completely in rooms you are not using is less energy efficient as this means your boiler has to work harder to maintain the temperature of a room you are heating than if kept at a low setting. Turning off radiators can also cause issues with mould and damp.

People over 65, children under 5 and those with pre-existing health conditions are more vulnerable to cold temperatures. Make sure you are warm enough and have a minimum indoor temperature of 18°C (setting 2 or 3 on your radiator valves) to ensure you're healthy and comfortable.

Reduce your hot water tank temperature to 60°C to save up to £10 per year

Suppose you have a heating system with a separate hot water cylinder (instead of a combi boiler). In that case, you can turn down the temperature of the cylinder itself so that water is not heated unnecessarily.

You'll usually find the control for your hot water cylinder one-third of the way up the tank. The temperature should not be reduced below 60°C, as legionella bacteria that can cause Legionnaires' disease can survive and grow in warm water stored below 60°C.

Get your boiler serviced

An annual service helps keep your boiler running safely. Faulty boilers can be very dangerous.

During your boiler service, a Gas Safe registered engineer checks for leaks and issues and will ensure that your boiler is running properly, saving you money on future repairs.

Find out more about boiler services [here](<https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/boilers/article/boiler-maintenance/getting-the-best-boiler-service-a9h945b2brSV>)

Bleed your radiators

Bleeding radiators makes your home warmer and can help reduce the cost of your energy bills. It does this by removing air pockets which reduce the pressure in your radiator so you don't need to turn the heating up as much.

Find out how to bleed your radiators with a quick and easy, step-by-step guide [here](<https://heatable.co.uk/boiler-advice/how-to-bleed-a-radiator/>)

Find and fix draughts to save up to £40 a year

Draught-proofing is one of the cheapest and most effective actions you can take to prevent heat from escaping and reduce your energy bills. Block unwanted gaps around windows, doors and floors that let the cold air in and warm air out. Make sure you don't block or seal any intentional ventilation, such as extractor fans, underfloor grilles or airbricks, wall vents or trickle vents. Window film is a form of temporary secondary glazing, which helps stop heat from escaping through the glass. You can buy it at hardware shops and online and install it yourself or with the help of a professional.

Find out more about draught proofing [here](<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/draught-proofing/>)

Warm Home Discount

This autumn nearly three million low-income households are eligible for a £150 rebate on their winter electricity bills. If you're in England and Wales, you will receive a letter alerting you of your eligibility by

January 2024. Find out more about the Warm Home Discount [here](<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>)

Winter fuel payments

In the winter months, pensioners can get between £100 and £300 to help pay heating bills. This winter, they will also receive an extra one-off Pensioner Cost of Living Payment of between £150 and £300. This will be paid as an automatic top-up to the Winter Fuel Payment.

Check if you're eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment [here](<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>)

Cold weather payments

£25 extra a week, if you're getting certain benefits, is available during the winter when the temperature is zero or below for more than seven days.

Check if you're eligible for the Cold Weather Payment [here](<https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>)

Visit **[Ofgem]**(<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households>) for guidance with your energy bills and supplier

Help to Heat

You may be eligible for grants to improve the energy efficiency of your home, which could help to reduce your energy bills. The government is investing in energy efficiency schemes, which are being delivered by local authorities.

Find energy grants for your home [here](

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/find-energy-grants-for-your-home-help-to-heat>)

You can use the **[Money Helper Service]**(<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en>) for free, confidential and impartial help tailored to individual needs.

You could get help from a specialist energy advisor if you are finding it hard to pay energy bills or have debts with energy suppliers. They might be able to help you get a grant to improve your home's energy efficiency.

- **Get advice from [Warm Homes Essex]**(<https://www.warmhomesessex.org.uk/>)
- **Contact the Citizens Advice Warm Homes team on 0300 3033 789**

Cost of Living Payment

Millions of people on means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Tax Credits will receive cost of living payments of up to £900 this financial year 2023-24, paid automatically in three instalments.

The first 2023 payment of £301 was paid between 25 April and 17 May, the second payment of £300 was paid between 31 October and 19 November and the third payment of £299 will be paid between 6 and 22 February.

The Cost of Living Payment will be paid automatically and separately to benefit payments, meaning those eligible do not need to apply or contact DWP or HMRC.

Find out more about Cost of Living Payments

[here](<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>)

Get help with all or part of your rent

You may get help with all or part of your rent.

There's no set amount of housing costs support and what you get will depend on whether you rent privately or from a council or housing association.

[Turn2us](<https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/>) benefits calculator

Turn2us also offers Grants search and PIP Helper tools [here](<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support>)

[Entitled

to](https://www.entitledto.co.uk/?utm_source=BAAdviser&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=GovUK) benefits calculator

Universal Credit if you're unemployed or on low income

If you and/or your partner are responsible for paying rent for the home you live in, or if you have a mortgage, Universal Credit may provide help towards the cost. Check if you are eligible [here](<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>)

Housing benefit

Housing Benefit can help you pay your rent if you are state pension age or you're in supported, sheltered or temporary accommodation. Check if you are eligible [here](<https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit>)

Cheaper phone and broadband

Want to pay less for reliable broadband? If you are in receipt of government benefits, you could be saving money right now on your monthly broadband and mobile bills by accessing cheaper deals called social tariffs.

Check the [Ofcom

website](<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/housing-support/>) to see if you can switch to a social tariff

Budgeting loans

You may be eligible for a Budgeting Loan if you've been on certain benefits for 6 months. This can be used for household items, rent in advance and travelling costs.

Check if you're eligible for a Budgeting Loan

[here](<https://www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits>)

Help paying your water bill

Many water companies run hardship schemes or fund independent charitable trusts which can help you pay your bills.

Get support paying your water bill [here](<https://www.ccw.org.uk/save-money-and-water/help-with-bills/>)

Local Help:

Citizens Advice Chelmsford

Burgess Well House
Coval Lane
Chelmsford, CM1 1FW **Tel:** 0800 144 88 48
Drop-in facility is open to all Monday to Friday
09:00-16:30
Help with
[benefits](<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/>)
Help with
[Debt](<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/>)
Find out more about Citizens Advice in
Chelmsford
[here](<https://streetsupport.net/find-help/organisation/?organisation=citizens-advice>)

You can contact the **Chelmsford City Council** customer service team for general advice and signposting on **01245 606606**, during opening hours(<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/your-council/contacting-us/opening-hours/>) You can also visit the **Civic Centre** in person. Offices are on Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE.

CAP Dept help centre in partnership with Danbury Mission Church – call via the national CAP number: **0800 328 0006** To take your first step out of debt, call the New Enquiries team who will arrange your first appointment with your local Debt Coach. Get more information [here](<https://capuk.org/get-help/results?find-debt-centre&serviceReference=CAP+Debt+Help&postcode=CM2+oHB>)

SVP Springfield Furniture bank provides furniture for those unable to afford to furnish properties and for when statutory provision (mainly the Essential Living fund) is not available. Find more information [here](<https://streetsupport.net/find-help/organisation/?organisation=vincent-st-paul-society>)
Call/WhatsApp: **0330 0436474** or
email: furniturespringfield@svp.org.uk

See **[Food Rota]**(<https://streetsupport.net/chelmsford/chelmsford-food-rotas.pdf>) for local help getting food/meal

Peabody

Tel: 0800 288 8883
Benefit & debt advice, housing & general support and more.
Regular drop-in locations held around Chelmsford to find one near you
[here](<https://streetsupport.net/find-help/organisation/?organisation=peabody>)

Central Law CIC

Tel: 01245 951300
Central Law Group CIC is Britain's first non-profit civil law firm. Providing great legal advice and representation to ordinary people at prices they can afford.
Get more information
[here](<https://streetsupport.net/find-help/organisation/?organisation=central-law-cic>)

Lighthouse Furniture Project supports anyone who requires second-hand furniture and appliances. We collect donated furniture and sell furniture to EVERYONE. (can deliver directly for a small fee). Find out more information [here](<https://streetsupport.net/find-help/organisation/?organisation=lighthouse-furniture-project>) Call **01277 222050** or email: admin@lighthousefurniture.org

See **[Advice for Families]**(<https://streetsupport.net/chelmsford/chelmsford-advice-for-families.pdf>) for further help if you have a family

Other help:

[Step Change](<https://www.stepchange.org/>) help thousands of people become debt-free every year. Their team of experts offer free, flexible debt advice to anyone who needs it.
Get help online or call **0800 138 1111** Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm

[National Debtline](<https://nationaldebtline.org/>) Offering free, impartial debt advice National Debtline is a charity run by the Money Advice Trust and have helped millions of people deal with their debts.
Get help online (includes chat) or call **0800 808 4000** Monday to Friday: 9am-8pm
Saturday: 9:30am-1pm

Age UK Growing older doesn't come with a manual. That's why Age UK provide free information and advice to help you on topics as diverse as claiming benefits to care homes. Find more information [here](<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/cost-of-living/>) or call **0800 678 1602** between 8am – 7pm every day of the year

