

SMART METERS

They will be offered to all UK households by 2025. The cost of the roll-out of smart meters was estimated at £11 billion, paid for by increases in household's energy costs, but delays in the roll-out of the service has meant that this cost has increased.

The installation of a smart meter is FREE – they are provided by the energy companies.

You do NOT have to have one – currently energy companies are contacting people about installing one, saying that you have to have a Smart Meter, or that you have to upgrade to one. If you have to have your meter replaced, it will be with a Smart Meter as analogue meters are no longer available, but if there is nothing wrong with your current meter and you do not want a Smart Meter, then that is up to you. However, energy companies are only offering their cheapest tariffs if you do sign up for a Smart Meter, so by not having one, you may find that you are paying more on your bills.

Advantages of smart meters

- Smart meters will put an end to estimated bills - you will only pay for exactly what energy you use.
- It means nobody will have to come to your home to read the meter again
- You will be able to monitor your gas and electricity usage in “real time”
- If you use the information you get from a smart meter and energy monitor, you can start reducing your energy wastage and lower your bills.
- You can have a smart meter installed instead of a pre-payment meter and will be able to “top up” using the app on your phone, or on-line, rather than having to top up at a Pay Point.
- The government states the average household on a smart meter will save £13 a year by 2023.

Disadvantages of smart meters

- Currently not all smart meters are compatible – this means that you may not be able to change to a cheaper supplier, or if you do, your smart meter will only operate in “dumb mode”.
- The digital display can have the readings affected by such items such as a dimmer switch, and give out false readings.
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- As the readings are sent via wi-fi, some rural areas will be unable to have a smart meter because of poor internet connection.
- It is possible for a person to “self disconnect” and so energy suppliers are not currently supposed to be offering them to households on the Priority Services Register.
- There is also some concern that energy companies can remotely disconnect a person's supply if they have not paid their bill. Although, they are supposed to follow procedure with regard to energy debts, this could be a possibility.