

## ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs

- Households across Northern Ireland will receive £600 from the government to help with energy costs. This is intended to support whoever pays the household's energy bills.
- Keypad Meter and Standard Credit customers will receive a £600 voucher in the post from the Post Office. Vouchers need to be redeemed at a Post Office branch. The voucher and supporting paperwork will be needed.
- Direct Debit customers will receive a £600 payment direct to their bank account.
- No application is needed. Beware of scams.
- Customers should receive the single payment or voucher by 28<sup>th</sup> February.

### What is this payment?

This is a payment of £600 from government to households in Northern Ireland to help with energy bills. It is going to households who have a domestic contract with an electricity supplier.

The payment is made up of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (£400) and the Alternative Fuel Payment (£200). It is being provided by the UK government, and facilitated by electricity suppliers and the Post Office.

### Beware of scams

The payment is automatic. Communications from any source suggesting you need to provide personal information, phone a number, or follow a link are likely to be scams.

If you pay by direct debit or if you use a keypad meter suppliers generally have all the information they need to get this payment to you. **If suppliers need to contact you they will do so directly.**

Exercise caution. Do not click on suspicious links. You can report messages you think are suspicious at [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk).

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### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. When will I get my payment?

- Vouchers will be delivered from 16<sup>th</sup> January onwards. Payments to customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will be prioritised.
  - **Delivery will be phased.** Not everyone will receive it on the same date.
  - We expect all customers to receive vouchers by 28<sup>th</sup> February.
  - We will update the delivery dates as we receive information on how vouchers are being paid out. Customers are urged to redeem vouchers as soon as possible once received and strongly encouraged to deposit into bank accounts. Both of these actions will support the Post Office in a speedy and streamlined delivery.
- **Customers who pay by Direct Debit**  
Starting from 16<sup>th</sup> January, Direct Debit customers will:
1. Receive the payment directly to their bank account.
- OR**
2. If suppliers have been unable to complete a direct payment for a Direct Debit customer into their bank account, then that customer will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.
- **Customers who pay by standard credit (bill pay)**  
Starting from 16<sup>th</sup> January Credit Customers who pay for their electricity by standard credit (bill pay) will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder. Customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will receive their vouchers first.
- **Customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter**  
Starting from 16<sup>th</sup> January customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter will receive a voucher in the mail from the Post Office addressed to the 'Occupier'. Customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will receive their vouchers first.

If you have not received your payment, **please wait until 28<sup>th</sup> February to contact your supplier** because payments will still be being made until then.

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### 2. How will I get my payment?

#### Customers who pay by Direct Debit

- Direct Debit customers will:
  - Receive the payment directly to their bank account.
  - OR**
  - If suppliers have been unable to complete a direct payment for a Direct Debit customer into their bank account, then that customer will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.
- These payments will be made from 16 January onwards.
- Direct Debit customers do not need to contact their supplier to receive this payment – it will be credited to your bank account automatically.

#### Customers who pay by Standard Credit (Bill Pay)

- Customers who pay for their electricity by Standard Credit (Bill Pay) will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.
- Deliveries of vouchers will begin on 16<sup>th</sup> January and each household should have received their voucher by 28<sup>th</sup> February.
- Customers do not need to contact their supplier to receive this voucher – it will be sent to homes automatically.

\*The only exception to this is if someone is going to redeem the voucher on the account holder's behalf if they are elderly/disabled/housebound or otherwise unable to do it themselves

#### Customers who pay via a keypad meter

- Customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter will receive a voucher in the mail from the Post Office addressed to the 'Occupier'. It is not necessary for you to update the name on the account in order to receive the voucher.
- Deliveries of these vouchers will begin on 16<sup>th</sup> January and each household should have received their voucher by 28<sup>th</sup> February.
- Customers do not need to contact their supplier to receive this voucher – it will be sent to homes automatically.

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### 3. How can I redeem my voucher?

All vouchers must be redeemed at a Post Office.

You are strongly advised to deposit the £600 promptly at the first available opportunity into your bank account at the Post Office counter. This is the safest, easiest, and fastest option for you. Doing so will also allow others to receive their payment more quickly and avoid impacting on other Post Office services.

#### 3a. What do I need to take to the Post Office in order to redeem my voucher?

To redeem your voucher, you will need to take to the Post Office:

- Your voucher
- Your identification (this must match the account holder details on the voucher)
- Acceptable proof of Address (this must match the account holder details on the voucher)
- If you pay via a keypad meter – your top up card **or** the Keypad top-up app you use to make payments
- Your bank card or your bank account details - to deposit the payment directly into your bank account at the post office counter

#### 3b. What identification do I need?

##### Customers who pay for their electricity by Standard Credit (Bill Pay) :

	To pay the funds straight into your bank	To receive a cash payment
<b>ID 1</b>	Your bank debit card	Photographic ID from the options listed below
<b>ID 2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>One</b> of the following as proof of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility bill such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence</li> <li>• Bank or building society statement</li> <li>• Rental or mortgage agreement</li> <li>• Letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The date on the statement or letter must be between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.</i></p>	

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### Direct Debit customers that suppliers have been unable to complete a transfer payment :

	To pay the funds straight into your bank	To receive a cash payment
<b>ID 1</b>	Your bank debit card	Photographic ID from the options listed below
<b>ID 2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>One</b> of the following as proof of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility bill such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence</li> <li>• Bank or building society statement</li> <li>• Rental or mortgage agreement</li> <li>• Letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The date on the statement or letter must be between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.</i></p>	

### Customers who pay for their electricity via keypad meter :

	To pay the funds straight into your bank	To receive a cash payment
<b>ID 1</b>	Your bank debit card	Photographic ID from the options listed below
<b>ID 2</b>	Your keypad top-up card <b>OR</b> The keypad app on your phone/smart device <sup>2</sup>	
<b>ID 3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>One</b> of the following as proof of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility bill such as phone, water, electricity, TV licence</li> <li>• Bank or building society statement</li> <li>• Rental or mortgage agreement</li> <li>• Letter from a UK government or Northern Ireland department</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The date on the statement or letter must be between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.</i></p>	

### **What photographic ID do I need?**

You will need to provide one of the following types of photographic ID to claim your payment in cash:

- Valid Passport
- Valid UK or EU/EEA Driving Licence
- Asylum ID Card
- NI Electoral Identity Card
- Translink SmartPass (Senior/60+/War Disabled/Blind Persons)
- Armed Forces ID or Police Warrant Card

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### **4. Can someone else redeem a voucher on someone's behalf if they are elderly/disabled/housebound or otherwise unable to do it themselves?**

If customers require support with redeeming their vouchers, there will be an explanation on the voucher if they want someone else to redeem their voucher.

### **5. I need large print or braille**

If your electricity supplier is aware of your needs, your voucher will arrive in the appropriate format.

If your electricity supplier is aware of your needs, there is no need to contact your supplier to receive your voucher in large print or braille.

### **6. I don't have a bank or credit union account. Can I take the £600 as cash?**

There is an option to take the payment as cash, but this is dependent on available cash at the branch you attend. Taking such a large sum in cash is a serious risk. If you lose the cash it cannot be replaced. You are strongly advised to open an account to receive this payment. This is the safest option.

### **7. What if I don't have a domestic electricity contract?**

Equivalent payments will be made at a later date to households who do not have a domestic electricity contract (e.g. residents of park homes, some care homes, tenants in certain types of private and social rented homes, homes supplied by private wires, residents of caravans and houseboats on registered sites, farmers living in domestic farmhouses without a domestic electricity connection, households off the electricity grid). Further details will be published.

### **8. I have not received a voucher. What should I do?**

Only the following customers will receive a voucher:

- Customers who pay for their electricity by Standard Credit (Bill Pay)
- Customers who pay for their electricity with a Keypad meter
- Direct Debit customers where suppliers have been unable to complete a transfer payment into the customer's bank account

Direct debit customers will receive the payment direct to their bank account in the first instance.

## **ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME AND THE ALTERNATIVE FUEL PAYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FAQs**

If you are eligible for a voucher, you should receive this by 28<sup>th</sup> February. If you have not received your payment, **please wait until 28<sup>th</sup> February to contact your supplier** because payments will still be being made until then.

You should call your supplier if you have not received it after 28<sup>th</sup> February.

### **9. How does my voucher arrive?**

You will receive your voucher in the post from the Post Office. For Keypad customers, vouchers will be addressed to 'the occupier'. Vouchers issued to customers paying by standard credit (bill pay) will be issued in the name of the electricity account holder.

Redeem your vouchers at the Post Office **promptly**. This will help you as you will get the benefit as soon as you redeem the voucher, and will minimise the risk of the voucher being mislaid. Prompt redemption will also help reduce delays to others receiving their vouchers and reduce the impact on Post Office services.

### **10. Do I need to apply?**

No one needs to apply for this payment. Payments and vouchers will be issued automatically, you will not need to provide your bank details to qualify for this payment

### **11. My keypad meter (only) is in my landlord's name but I pay the electricity costs directly**

Keypad meter users will receive a voucher in the post, addressed to 'the occupier'. The voucher will be for the value of £600 to be redeemed at a Post Office as directed on the letter. The voucher provided is intended to provide support with energy costs for the household. If you top up your keypad meter yourself, you are the intended recipient.

### **12. Does my landlord need to pass on the EBSS AFP NI support?**

To ensure EBSS AFP NI is provided to the people it is designed to help, the Government has introduced regulations to require third-party intermediaries, such as landlords, to pass the support through in a just and reasonable way to end users, such as tenants.

Guidance on pass-through requirements can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-provided-to-intermediaries/guidance-on-the-pass-through-requirements-for-energy-price-support-in-great-britain-provided-to-intermediaries>

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### 13. My electricity account is not in my name.

**Customers who pay for their electricity via keypad:** This is not a problem for customers who pay for their electricity via keypad, as vouchers will be issued to 'the occupier' and no name is therefore required. Please note that this is a change from some earlier communications which suggested keypad customers would need their name on the account. The change to vouchers for keypad customers being addressed only to 'The Occupier' will help all Keypad customers to be able to redeem their vouchers promptly.

### 14. What happens if vouchers are received with an incorrect name?

**This is not a problem for customers who pay for their electricity via keypad,** as they will be sent their vouchers in the name of "The Occupier" only, and so do not need to have their name on the voucher to redeem it at the Post Office. [Please note: This is the correct process for the payment. Any other communication suggesting that a named voucher is needed for customers who pay for their electricity via Keypad is incorrect.]

However, if a **customer who pays for their electricity by standard credit (bill pay)** receives a voucher with the incorrect name, they should contact their supplier who will cancel the incorrect voucher and re-issue a new voucher in the correct name.

**For further information:**

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/help-domestic-energy-costs>