

Code of Practice on Payment of Bills

Are you having payment difficulties?

www.powerni.co.uk



power ni
part of en**erg**ia group

Help with payment difficulties

- ✓ Are you having difficulty paying your electricity bill now?
- ✓ Or do you think you may have difficulty in the future?

In either case, we are here to help you. Talk to us as soon as possible by contacting our Customer Helpline 03457 455 455. Our team has lots of experience in supporting customers in similar situations. We'll try to find a payment solution that suits your circumstances, and we'll treat you with fairness and consideration at all times.

Our commitment to you

We recognise that from time to time, some customers may have difficulty paying for their electricity. We try to help our customers avoid this situation by offering appropriate advice, but where it arises, we are committed to helping customers overcome temporary or longer-term financial difficulties.

You may be able to reduce your bills by using electricity more efficiently.

For more information, please refer to our "Efficient Use of Electricity" Code of Practice.

We will take the following steps to help you:

- ✓ Our staff are trained to adopt a positive, caring, and helpful attitude. They can offer advice and are trained to identify customers who may be finding it difficult to pay their bill.
- ✓ We will listen carefully to understand the problem and establish all the facts.
- ✓ Discuss the payment options available and try to find a solution that suits your circumstances, and we'll treat you with fairness and consideration.
- ✓ We will monitor your agreed payment plan and would encourage you to contact us if you experience difficulties or default with the payment arrangement.
- ✓ If necessary, we may refer you to your local advice centre, to help reach a solution.
- ✓ We offer a scheme that is designed to help vulnerable customers maximise their incomes and may recommend a referral. These advisors can provide:
 - ✓ Energy Efficiency advice
 - ✓ Benefit entitlement check
 - ✓ Budget planning
 - ✓ Referrals to appropriate schemes such as free insulation
- ✓ We can assure you that we will take all reasonable steps to agree a suitable payment arrangement to prevent us having to disconnect the supply.

What you can do to help us:

Contact us immediately on our **Customer Helpline 03457 455 455**, to make us aware of any short or long-term difficulties you may have.

Be open and honest about your situation and your ability to pay for your electricity.

Payment Options

Power NI offers a wide range of payment options:



We can set up a Direct Debit on your account with either Monthly or Quarterly options. It's an easy way of paying bills and once set up, we'll collect your payments automatically.



You can also sign up for Energy Online and make bill payments online with a credit or debit card. You can keep track of how much energy you're using and submit your own meter readings.



You can fill in the payment slip included on your bill and take it to any Post Office or bank with a cash or cheque payment. Don't forget to write your account number on the back of your cheque.



Or, post your cheque and giro payment slip to Power NI Energy Ltd, FREEPOST, Bel 3391, PO Box 847, Belfast, BT9 5NG or in the Freepost envelope we've provided for bills over £10. You can also pay your bill using cash at any PayPoint outlet. Please bring your full bill with you.



For customer in debt, we can set up a payment plan that works for you and us, taking into consideration your individual circumstances and ability to pay. We'll arrange with you to pay a set amount over an agreed period. We'll monitor your agreed payment plan and would encourage you to get in touch as soon as possible if you experience difficulties with the plan so we can discuss your options.

If you fail to comply with the payment plan, or if you prefer, we will install a prepayment meter at your property if safe and practical to do so.

Once installed, the meter will be set to collect some of your debt with each top up made, this won't be more than 20% of each top up. When setting the meter, we'll agree a repayment plan that works for both you and us and take into consideration your individual circumstances and ability to pay. For example, if your agreed recovery rate is 20% and you buy a £10 top up, you will get £8 credit on your meter and £2 will be paid off your outstanding balance.

You will be sent an annual account statement and we will inform you when all the arrears have been cleared.

We would encourage you to contact us as soon as possible if you experience difficulties in keeping up with your top ups or if you would like to discuss the amount we collect from each top up.

**Remember - don't delay!
The sooner you get in touch, the sooner we can help.**

Commercial Properties

If we have been made aware your electricity is obtained from a non-domestic supply, for example a flat above a commercial premises, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure you are not disconnected inappropriately as a result of the commercial premises no longer receiving electricity.

This may require you requesting metering work to be completed by Northern Ireland Electricity Networks.

Take Independent Advice

If you have concerns about approaching Power NI about you payment difficulties, we suggest you contact your local independent Advice NI Agency. They may be able to help.

Contact details for these organisations are available on our website:
www.powerni.co.uk/codes-of-practice/useful-contact-information

Alternatively, call our **Customer Helpline 03457 455 455**.

You can also check your benefit entitlement using the **NI Direct Make the Call Service**:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/make-call-service

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm
(excluding public holidays)

Your responsibility

When you register as a customer of Power NI you agree to take and pay for electricity under our terms and conditions. Copies of these are available on our website:

www.powerni.co.uk or contact our **Customer Helpline 03457 455 455**.

The Consumer Council

If you are unhappy with the level of repayment we would ask you to contact us to see what can be done. If we are unable to come to satisfactory level of repayment, you can contact the Consumer Council. This is a free and independent body.

Floor 3, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN

Call: 0800 121 6022

Email: contact@consumercouncil.org.uk

Web: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Customer Helpline on 03457 455 455

Lines open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. Calls recorded for quality assurance.

www.powerni.co.uk

The Codes of Practice are available free of charge.

Alternative formats and languages may be available on request.