

TAKING CHARGE

Created by

Community
Integrated
Care

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NCF
THE NATIONAL CARE FORUM

Simple ways to save
big money on energy
bills, for you and the
people you support.

www.TakingChargeEnergy.co.uk



Introduction

Taking Charge is a campaign designed to help people who work in and access social care find ways to save money on their energy bills.

Created by Community Integrated Care, one of Britain's biggest social care charities, this guide contains simple tips to help you.

We'll cover:

- How we waste energy at home
- Top tips to save energy and costs in every room
- How to keep warm in the winter for less money
- Tools to help you save energy and where you can get them for free
- Where you can find further advice and support

Why It's Important

In social care, it is important that we enable the people we support to be financially independent and to enjoy a good quality of life. The key to doing this is by reducing the amount they spend on their energy bills.

Many people with disabilities use more energy at home. People who access social care often need more heating, use assistive technologies, and spend more time indoors.

In fact, more than 700,000 people with disabilities pay twice as much on their energy bills compared to the average household.

You also have your own bills to think about. Taking Charge helps social care workers to make their money go further.

If you save money on energy bills at work and at home, you and the people you support will have more money to spend on the things you need and want.

We will help you to knock hundreds of pounds off your bills by using the simple tips & tricks in this guide.

The Basics

To use your utilities, you must pay for your energy bills – this includes things like water, gas, and electricity.



Water is used when you take a shower or bath, use the toilet or switch on any taps.



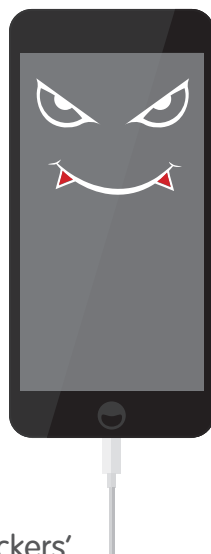
Gas is used to heat your house or when you turn on the oven.



Electricity is used when something is plugged in, like your television, microwave, or mobile phone chargers.

Slaying Vampire Devices

Do you leave your mobile phone charger plugged in when you're not charging your phone? Or, do you leave the kettle switched on at the plug when it's not in use?



These are examples of 'vampire devices' or energy 'suckers'.

A vampire device is anything that has been left switched on at the plug, but is not being used.

Lots of people think that this means it's not using energy, but that's often not the case.

For example, if you've left your phone charger plugged in at the wall, even if it's not attached to your device, it's still using energy AND costing money.

British Gas estimates that £147 a year is wasted on vampire devices. So, let's slay those 'suckers'!

WARNING

Whilst not all things that are plugged in can be turned off, you can use this guide to share your knowledge and help the people you support to form good habits - saving money along the way!

In The Kitchen

The kitchen is full of big 'suckers', so there's lots of ways to save money.

But first, time for a quick brew...

The Cost of a Cuppa

We love a chat over a cup of tea. We must drink swimming pools worth of tea each year, but how much does it actually cost?

With the rise in energy prices, a full kettle costs **9p to run for five minutes.**

So, if you use your kettle five times a day, it will cost you **£32.76 a year!**

These small amounts add up, so making little changes every day can save you lots of money in the long run.



TOP TIP

If you're making a round of tea for two people, just fill your kettle with two mugs worth of water.

Only boiling as much as you need could save you around **£16.88 a year.**



Cooking

Sucker vs Saver:

Which do you think costs more to run, a slow cooker or an oven?



Despite being in use for hours at a time and taking longer to cook a meal, it costs a lot LESS to run a slow cooker.

In fact, there are lots of cheaper alternative options for cooking that will cost you less than using the oven.

Cost Comparison

When you don't need to cook a big meal in the oven, why not try one of these instead?

Appliance	Saving per day	Saving per year
Slow Cooker	16p	£59
Electric Oven	87p	£316
Air Fryer	14p	£52
Microwave	8p	£30

Grill your bill!

If you have a George Foreman Grill lurking in your kitchen cupboards, dust it off, as these can use as much as 82% less energy than a traditional oven grill!

TOP TIP

If you're cooking something that needs boiling water, like pasta or rice, boil the water in the kettle rather than on the hob. It takes a saucepan a lot longer than a kettle to reach boiling point, meaning you use more energy as you wait.

Cleaning

Sucker vs Saver:

When you have a big pile of dishes to wash, which do you think is cheaper – the dishwasher

Believe it or not, the answer is the **dishwasher!**

According to the Energy Saving Trust, hand washing dishes makes up 4% of the average household's water use – whereas using a dishwasher makes up just 1% of our water bills.

So, if you can save up your dishes and stack the dishwasher well, you'll be saving on the water bill!



TOP TIP

Around 90% of the energy that a dishwasher uses goes to heating the water. Before the rise in energy prices, using the eco setting on your dishwasher could save you around £109 a year, so imagine how much you could save now with this simple swap!



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Laundry

Washing machines and tumble dryers can both be real suckers – but there are ways to save when using them.



Plan Your Washing

Some energy providers have peak times – when energy is at its most expensive – so simply doing your washing outside of these times can save you loads on your loads!

Generally, peak times during winter are **7am-9am** and **4pm-8pm** but check with your provider as it can vary, and remember to check your energy tariffs too.

Hot Wash or Not?

Lots of people worry that cold washes don't clean clothes properly, but modern detergents are designed to remove dirt and stains even on a cold wash. This has the double advantage of saving money AND keeping your clothes nicer for longer.

TOP TIP

Using a 30°C cycle when washing your clothes can save over £30 a year – that's enough to cover turning the heating on when you're a bit chilly!



Drying Clothes

It's estimated that it costs £1.26 to tumble dry for an hour, so air drying outside is always going to be the most cost-effective option. But space and poor weather mean air drying is not always an option, so why not try some of these drying hacks?

- **Throw a dry towel in with your wet wash** - this helps to absorb some of the excess moisture so your load will dry more quickly.
- **Use dryer balls** - throw little spiky balls into your dryer to lift water off your clothes, cutting drying time by a quarter. They cost £2.50 for a set of two from shops like The Range, so they'll pay for themselves after just eight cycles.
- **Buy a heated pod** - these pop-up pods use warm fans to dry your clothes. They cost between £60-£80 from places like Argos and only cost 36p per hour to use, so the savings soon add up!
- **Try a heated maiden** - these take a bit longer to dry clothes, but they offer great savings. They can be bought for around £40 from places like Argos, Aldi and Amazon and cost between 4p - 8p per hour to run.



Keeping Warm

We never want anyone to worry about putting the heating on. In the colder months, it's not just about keeping you warm, but it can stop the pipes in your home freezing.

Central heating is the biggest use of energy in most houses, now costing around £1.13 per hour to heat a home.

With the rising cost-of-living, we're all being more careful about when we turn on the thermostat. However, there are things you can do to help heat your home more efficiently:

Draughts

The Energy Savings Trust say that draught-proofing gaps in your house can save you around £125 per year on energy bills.

To find your draughts, hold a candle near windows, doors and any other gaps to see if the flame flickers. If it does, you've found your draught.

Now, it's time to block your draughts:

- Brush draught excluders are durable and will last a long time, but you can also create your own using rolled up towels, unused clothes, or even filling some old tights (and sticking a pair of googly eyes on for good measure).
- Old chimneys without a working fireplace can be a big source of heat loss and can easily be plugged with a chimney balloon that costs around £20. This will save about £65 a year on energy bills.

Effective Heating

There are lots of ways you can save money by heating your home more effectively:



- Only heat the room you're in, so you stay toasty and use less energy.
- Make sure radiators aren't blocked by things like sofas or beds, so heat can circulate and warm your house more quickly.
- Close the curtains to keep the heat in. Curtains are great insulators, and you can pick up a pair of thermal curtains for around £15 to really trap that warmth.
- Try an electric blanket if you want to warm yourself up without using the central heating. They cost around 3p an hour to use!
- Bleed your radiators to make sure they heat up quickly. You just need some old towels to soak up any water, a small bowl, and a radiator valve key which costs about £1. YouTube is full of simple videos on how to do this.

(Please note – This tip is for your personal life only. For the people you support, ensure that you are seeking the advice of a qualified professional and following the policies of your organisation).



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Better Boiler Use

Boilers keep your home and water hot – but they can be big energy guzzlers if you're not using them correctly.

- Make sure your hot water tank has a jacket. These cost around £25, but can save you more than £85 a year by reducing standby heat losses by 25% – 45%.
- Add foam tube insulation to your hot water pipes - this only costs a couple of pounds!
- Turning your thermostat down by just one degree could save up to £80. Try this and see if you notice the difference in the room you're in – most people don't!



TOP TIP

Take Nesta's Money Saving Boiler Challenge. Many combi-boilers aren't put on their most efficient settings when they're installed, and if your boiler's flow temperature is too high, it will cost you £112 more each year. You can change this by pressing just a few buttons.

Google "Nesta's Money Saving Boiler Challenge" to find step-by-step instructions on how to set your boiler up correctly in minutes.

The Nesta logo, consisting of the word 'nesta' in white lowercase letters inside a blue circle.

nesta

In The Living Room

Living rooms are where we relax, entertain, and unwind, but they can be full of vampire devices.



A TV left on standby mode can cost £24.61 a year, so if you're not using it – turn it off!

Games consoles and laptops left on standby can also be a big drain, so remember to switch them off fully when you've finished using them.

Even your Sky TV box (or digital TV receiver) can be a sucker, so don't forget to switch to their eco settings to reduce energy when they're not in use.

TOP TIP

When buying new devices, pick the highest energy rating for your budget. You could even take some time to show the people you support the energy labels on products when they are buying things for their home. These items may be a little more expensive than the less efficient versions, but they won't cost as much to run..

This doesn't just apply in the living room. You can also pick washing machines, tumble dryers and fridge/freezers with higher energy ratings.

In The Bedroom

Like the living room, the bedroom can be full of vampire devices, like TVs and laptops on standby. But one of the worst suckers in the bedroom is the phone charger.

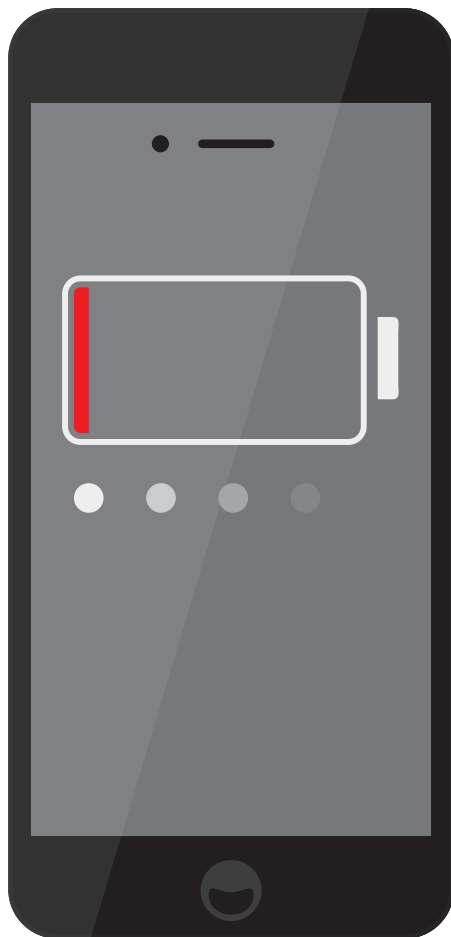
Do you pop your phone on charge overnight?

If you do, you're not alone.

But did you know that the average smartphone only takes around 90 minutes to fully charge?

This means that if we sleep for eight hours, the charger is draining around six and a half hours' worth of energy per night for nothing.

By charging your phone during the day, and only for the time needed, you could save a whopping **£124.00 a year**.



In The Bathroom

Sucker vs Saver:

Did you know that leaving your bathroom light on overnight costs around £281.05 a year?

Lots of households leave the bathroom light on, especially during the night. This may be accidental or because they are worried about finding their way through the house in the dark.

Either way, it's expensive, so why not try one of these ideas:

- Keep a torch by your bedside
- Use the light on your phone
- Buy a motion sensor night light. They cost £8 and only light up when someone enters the room – you can even get ones that go inside the bathroom toilet!



If you, your family, and the people you support get into the habit of turning the lights off when not in the room the cost you save could be enormous.

TOP TIP

When your old lightbulbs blow, replace them with LED ones. LED lightbulbs give more than 10,000 hours' worth of light – far more than older models – and are much cheaper to run.

A single LED lightbulb used for six hours a day costs less than 4p to run - just over £13 a year. An old-school lightbulb used the same amount of time costs 20p a day, or £74 a year per bulb - it really saves to swap!



Watching Water Waste

On average, showers use half as much water as a bath and take less time to heat up, so simply swapping from bath to shower will help you save big.

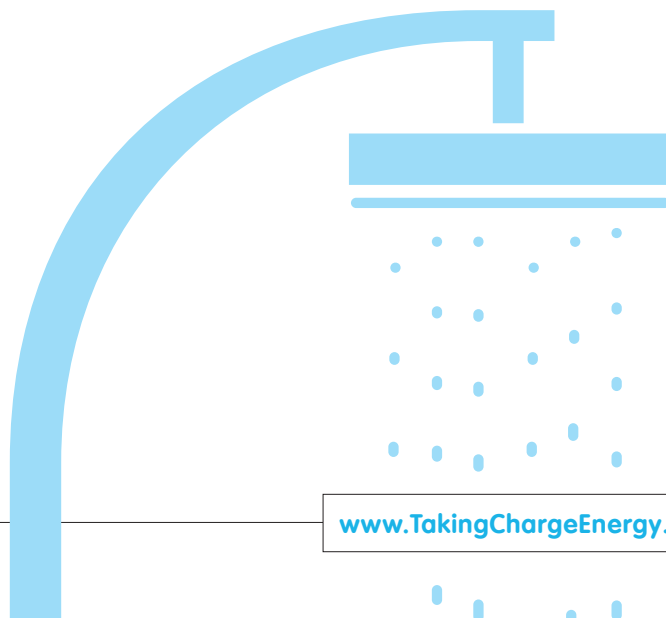


But there are ways to save even **more** money when showering!

Cutting down to a four-minute shower could save the average bill payer around £110 per person, per year in energy and water bills.

Why not pick your favourite four-minute song and sing along whilst showering? We love **Believe by Cher** - how about you?

Of course, a four-minute shower might not be possible for everyone, and that's okay. It's helpful just to be conscious of how much water we use when showering, so we can save money wherever possible.



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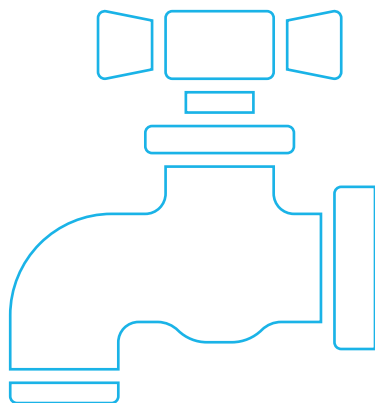
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Turn Off The Tap

Many of us leave the water running when we're brushing our teeth, shaving, or supporting people with these tasks, but do you know the cost of this?

Twelve litres of water go down the drain when we brush our teeth, if you leave the tap running.

So, if you have four people in a home, and they each turn off the tap every time they brush, they'll save that household 35,000 litres of water a year – a saving of £108!



TOP TIP

Check if your energy suppliers provide free energy-saving goodies. Most will share items that help ensure your shower and toilets only use the water they need. The toilet devices alone can save almost two litres of water every time you flush!



Further Support And Information

We've taken you through some simple changes that can make big savings for every home. However, we know that lots of people are struggling and may need additional support.

If you or someone you support is on Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit, you can ask your energy supplier if they offer free loft insulations under the Energy Company Obligation – this would help you keep your home warm, at no extra cost.

Many energy suppliers are also offering cost-of-living grants and energy-saving devices to people experiencing financial hardship too, so visit the website of your energy supplier for advice and support if you are struggling.

You can find even more advice, accessible activity sheets, videos, and toolkits to help you take charge of your energy usage and help the people you support, over on our website:



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Community Integrated Care is one of the UK's largest and most successful social care charities.

We support more than 3000 people across England and Scotland who have learning disabilities, autism, mental health concerns and dementia, reaching thousands more in our special community programmes.

Our mission is to support people to live the **Best Life Possible**. By helping people in social care to cut their energy bills, we hope to help many people to continue to lead full and happy lives.

Find out more about the services that we provide:

www.CommunityIntegratedCare.co.uk