


# Blaenau Gwent Council

## Let's talk about EXTRA SUPPORT





Juggling finances and managing an energy account can be tricky, but your supplier can give you a helping hand should you need it if you are:

- Worried about paying your electricity or gas bills
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## HOW CAN YOUR SUPPLIER HELP YOU?

Knowing what to ask about, or what information you'll need when talking to your supplier, can make a big difference and makes it much easier for them to help you.

**Here are some ways your supplier can help you get the most out of your account:**

- Seeing if you're on the **right tariff for you**
- Seeing if you're on the **best payment method** for you
- **Helping you if you're behind** with your energy bills
- **Helping you understand** your bills and your meter
- **Helping you if you can't top up** your meter
- Seeing if you could be offered any **other helpful services**
- Seeing what support could be offered **if your circumstances** have changed recently
- Seeing if you're eligible for **Warm Home Discount** - a payment of £140 towards your energy costs



# DO YOU THINK YOU MAY NEED EXTRA HELP OR SUPPORT?

## Priority Services

**There may be extra support available to you, so do tell your supplier if:**

- Your circumstances have changed
- You need more time to pay your bill
- You or someone living with you is elderly, has a disability, has young children, or a long-term illness (including relying on an electricity supply for medicine or equipment).

Your supplier can help you find the right support or organisations who can help your situation.

Many suppliers have a Priority Services Register which may also be able to help you with any communication, access and safety needs. It's free of charge and may include:

- **Alternative format communications:** receive bills and correspondence in Braille, large print or audio CD
- **Password scheme:** when your supplier calls or visits, they can use a password of your choice to verify their identity
- **Nominate someone to act for you:** with your permission a friend, carer or relative can deal with all aspects of your account
- **Third party correspondence:** get copies of your bills and correspondence sent to a friend, carer or relative
- **Interpreter service:** if English isn't your preferred or first language, an interpreter can be available for phone calls

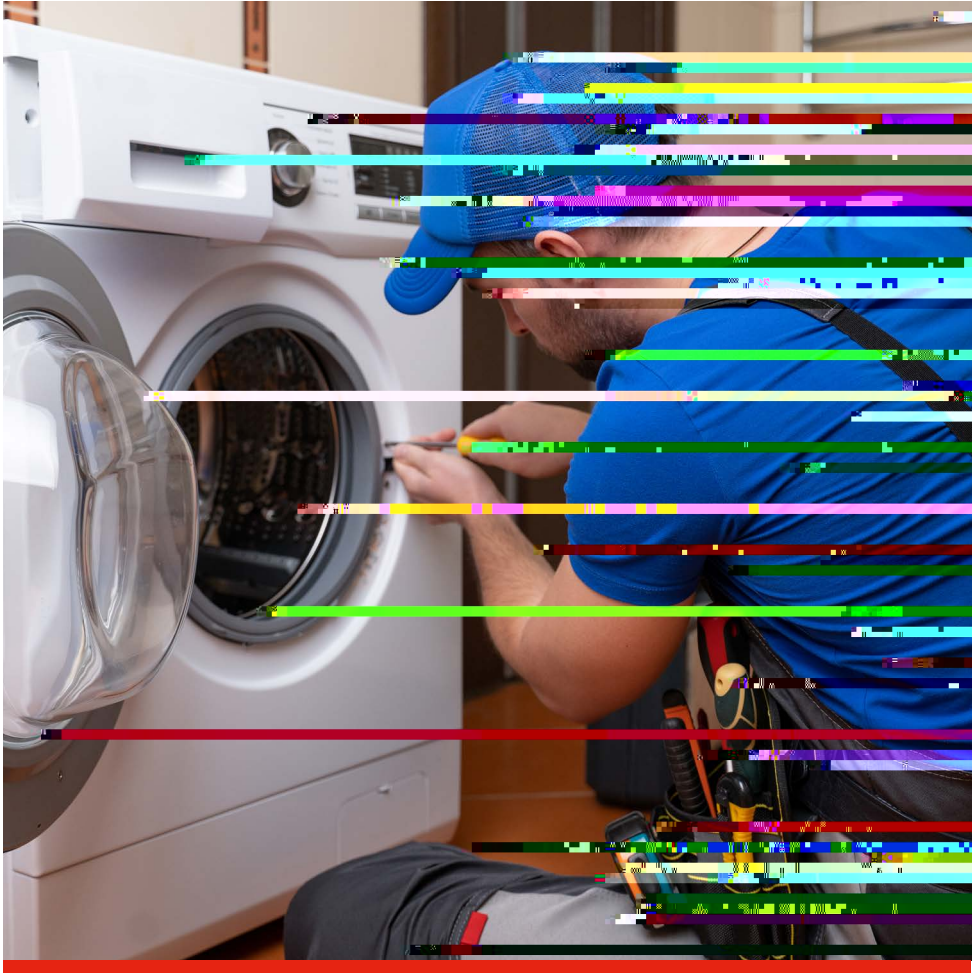
## DO YOU THINK YOU MAY NEED EXTRA HELP OR SUPPORT?

- **Minicom (textphone):** communicate by textphone to enable easier contact
- **Regular meter reads:** a free meter read service if you, and everyone in your household, can't read your meter
- **Free prepayment meter move:** if you or anyone in your household are unable to safely access your meter (eligibility criteria applies)
- **Knock and wait:** gives you more time to answer the door if your supplier visits
- **Free gas safety check:**

## OTHER TRUSTS AND GRANTS

Many suppliers have helpful schemes for their customers who are struggling to pay an energy debt, or who require a new household appliance to replace one that is broken or in poor working condition.

**It's best to contact your supplier to find out what support is available and for eligibility criteria.**



## GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS

These are payments made directly to you by the government if you meet certain eligibility criteria.

### Warm Home Discount

This is a payment towards your energy costs and it's managed by participating energy suppliers. There are two ways to qualify: if you're eligible for Core Group you will be notified by government or your supplier; if you're not eligible for Core Group you could contact your supplier to see if you're eligible for Broader Group.

### Cold Weather Payment

This is an extra payment if you're receiving certain benefits. If eligible, you'd receive it if the temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, 0oC or below for 7 consecutive days.


### Winter Fuel Payment

Provides tax-free support to help pay your heating bills if you were born on or before a given date. It's usually paid automatically if you get the State Pension or another social security benefit, with the exception of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit.

To find out more and check if you qualify visit:


**[gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/overview](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/overview)**





**You may want some support to work through which parts of this booklet are most relevant to you. Or you may just want to discuss getting help. Whatever it is, there are other organisations that can also help.**

Citizens Advice



Why is it important?

A lot of energy used in our homes for things like heating, lighting, and cooking is wasted through windows, floors, draughts and walls. Just making a few changes to reduce the amount of energy wasted could both reduce the amount of energy you use and lower your energy bills.

## 2. APPLY FOR A GRANT TO MAKE BIGGER CHANGES

### **ECO (Energy Company Obligation)**

ECO is a government initiative to help to pay for changes to your home that could help you save energy and money. Contact your energy supplier for more information and to see if you're eligible.

### **What help may be offered?**

Free or subsidised energy saving improvements, such as:

- Loft insulation to keep your home warmer
- Cavity wall insulation to help reduce heat loss from your home
- A replacement boiler; heating often makes up a large part of a household's energy bills, so a new boiler could make a big difference

## 3. TALK TO THE EXPERTS

### **Energy Saving Trust**

Offers independent, expert advice on saving energy in your home, as well as information about funding requests for making energy efficiency improvements. Visit: **[energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk)**

### **Nest**

The Nest scheme offers a range of free, impartial advice and, if you are eligible, a package of free home energy efficiency improvements such as a new boiler, central heating, insulation, or solar panels. This can lower your energy bills and benefit your health and wellbeing. Call **0808 808 2244** Monday to Friday, 9am - 6pm or visit **[nest.gov.uk](http://nest.gov.uk)**



Organisation	When to call	Contact

## Community Hub Opening Times:

### Abertillery Library

9am - 5pm (Tuesday, Thursday & Friday) **Closed:** 1pm - 2pm

10am - 5pm (Wednesday) **Closed:** 1pm - 2pm

### Brynmawr Library

9am - 5pm (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday)

**Closed:** 1pm - 2pm

### Ebbw Vale Library

## Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

The General Offices

Steelworks Road

Ebbw Vale

NP23 6DN

**Tel:** 01495 311556

**Website:** [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)