**Energy Advice for Personal Advisors**

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Please note that there may be other support and resources available, this document pulls together information collected as part of the Care Leaver Covenant Meetings and taken from the Yorkshire Energy Doctor Workshop held during the Nov 22 Practice Week.

**Please also check the** [**Redcar & Cleveland Cost of Living**](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support) **page which is regularly updated.**

# 1 Cost of Living and Energy Bill Support

This is a quick run through of the nationwide financial support available to check that care leavers are receiving what they are entitled to, **for support available locally, including a map of warm spaces, please see the** **[Redcar & Cleveland Cost of Living](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support) page which is regularly updated.**

You can also check the government’s ‘Help for Households’ scheme <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

## 1.1 Energy Bills Support Scheme

The Energy Bills Support Scheme provides a £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households to help with their energy bills over winter 2022 to 2023. Households do not need to apply for the discount, and there’s no need to contact the energy supplier.

Discounts will be applied to monthly household electricity bills for 6 months starting in October 2022. Each household will get:

* £66 in October and November
* £67 in December, January, February and March

The way in which the money is paid depends on how households are billed, more information is available here:

[Getting the Energy Bills Support Scheme discount - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount?_ga=2.216474131.446092177.1669287420-18360493.1669287420)

**Some important points:**

Most households will receive money back through their direct debit, a reduction to their bill amount or credit to their smart prepayment meter. However, there are different arrangements in place for traditional pre-payment meters.

* **If you work with any care leavers that have a traditional pre payment meter** (i.e. top up at the shop) please check that they have received a redeemable voucher from the government, as there are many unclaimed vouchers. This will have been sent by email, SMS or post or as an automatic credit when topping up at the usual top up point.

If this hasn’t been received, please contact the care leaver’s energy provider and seek advice.

(Also note that vouchers can only be redeemed at the post office or PayPoint shops but not Payzone outlets).

* **If you work with care leavers who pay for electricity as part of their rent**, landlords have been encouraged to come to an agreement with tenants about how the discount will be applied (however, it might be that they have not raised their costs) it is worth speaking to the landlord about this.

## 1.2 Additional Financial Support

Some households are entitled to additional financial support dependent on their circumstances.

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| **Cost of Living Payment** for households on means tested benefits (Universal credit, JSA, ESA, tax credits) | **£650** | Paid in 2 lump sums of £326 (July) and £324 (Nov) as a separate benefit payment.  (Eligibility depends on when people were claiming benefits and some other factors, more info is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment)) |
| **Disability Cost of Living Payment** | **£150** | If in receipt of:   * Attendance Allowance * Disability Living Allowance for adults * Disability Living Allowance for children * Personal Independence Payment * Armed Forces Independence Payment   Paid automatically Sept/Oct 22  More info is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment) |

Missing cost of living payments can be reported here

[Report a missing Cost of Living Payment - GOV.UK (dwp.gov.uk)](https://secure.dwp.gov.uk/report-a-missing-cost-of-living-payment/welcome)

## 1.3 Support with Energy Debt

Households that are in debt with energy companies may be able to apply for a grant to pay this off, many energy suppliers have a grant fund that can be applied for.

Find out more here:

[Grants to help pay off your energy debts](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills/" \l "h--a-name-grants_to_help_pay_energy_debts-a-grants-to-help-pay-off-your-energy-debts)

## 1.4 Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund is a government fund delivered by local authorities, it is available to help support households that are most in need and require help due to the rising cost of living. Particularly those that are not entitled to any other assistance more information including how to apply is available on the council’s website. Grants are between £50 - £500.

[Household support fund | Redcar and Cleveland (redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/household-support-fund)

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## 1.5 Other Grants

There are various charitable and occupational funds that care leavers might be able to access, for example there is a retail trust offering grants for people in need who work or have worked in retail, and similar funds for staff in the drinks industry and delivery drivers. You can search by post code, occupation and specific health conditions on the below website.

[Search for charitable and educational grants - Turn2us](https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/)

## 1.6 Northumbrian Water

Northumbrian Water offer up to a 50% reduction on bills for those earning less than £17,005 per annum, where water bills account for more than 3% of household bills.

[Financial Support Eligibility Checker (nwl.co.uk)](https://www.nwl.co.uk/services/extra-support/financial-support/financial-support-eligibility-checker/)

It might also be worth talking to them about getting a water meter this is most beneficial for households where the number of occupants is less than the number of bedrooms.

## 1.7 Phone and Broadband

Some providers offer social tariffs for households claiming universal credit, ESA, JSA and income support. More information about this is available on the Ofcom website.

[Cheaper broadband and phone packages - Ofcom](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs)

# 2 Priority Services Register

Energy companies and water companies operate a Priority Services Register for vulnerable customers. This includes people with medical conditions, disabilities, older people, households with children under 5, young adult households and those experiencing temporary life changes. Registered households receive support which can include:

* Advance warning if power will be disrupted
* Alternative heating/cooking facilities
* Priority reconnection if supply interrupted
* Accessible information
* Meter readings / meter moves
* Annual gas safety checks

Most importantly, energy companies sometimes change customers to pre-payment meters if they have energy debt, which could leave vulnerable young people without electricity and gas. Energy companies will not move Priority Services Register customers to pre-payment meters so it’s worth getting all our care leavers registered.

To register (with consent of care leaver) click here:

* [Priority customers | Northern Gas Networks](https://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/priority-customers/) and scroll down to complete the form:
* If no other criteria applies tick the ‘Temporary life changes’ box
* enter ‘006’ in the partner code field to show we have been referred by the Yorkshire Energy Doctor.
* Tick the Privacy Agreement to share with the Northern PowerGrid.

There is also a priority services register for Northumbrian Water you can register for it here:

[Sign up for Priority Services (nwl.co.uk)](https://www.nwl.co.uk/services/extra-support/priority-services/register-for-priority-services/?psr-for=someone-else)

# 3 Energy Advice

There are several services operating locally to provide households with energy advice and support.

3.1 Middlesbrough Environment City – South Tees Affordable Warmth Partnership (MEC operate across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland).

**The Affordable Warmth Team provide free help and advice including:**

* One-2-One energy advice
* Fuel debt repayment advice
* Damp and condensation advice
* Understanding your energy bills
* Identifying any other energy efficiency help you may be entitled to
* We can provide energy support measures
  + Thermometer Cards
  + Radiator Reflectors
  + Energy saving light bulbs
  + Electric blankets (limited amount)

For further information, or to book an appointment, contact the Affordable Warmth Team:

**Freephone:**0800 304 7084  
**E-Mail:**[warmhomes@menvcity.org.uk](mailto:warmhomes@menvcity.org.uk)

Middlesbrough Environment City also offer information and awareness sessions to front line staff and community groups on affordable warmth. These sessions can be tailored to individual needs. They also offer remote sessions for staff and groups through Zoom.

## 3.2 Stay Safe and Warm Service (Cleveland Fire Brigade)

**Cleveland Fire Brigade operate a Stay Safe and Warm Service** It offers access to heaters and other equipment as required (following a free home assessment). They can help with a short-term issue such as a boiler breakdown or an ongoing heating issue.

For more information tel.  [**01429 874063**](tel:01429%20874063)

[Stay Safe and Warm – Cleveland Fire Brigade](https://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/community/ssaw/)

## 3.3 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Affordable Warmth Officer

Advice is available to people of all housing tenures and landlords, however much of the offer is in relation to grant funding and loans for owner occupiers when available e.g. insulation, improved heating systems etc. If care leavers live in properties with poor quality heating system or insulation there may be funding the landlord can access to make improvements.

The Affordable Warmth Officer works closely with Cleveland Fire Brigade’s ‘Stay Safe and Warm’ service, providing emergency advice and short-term support, including portable heaters, electric blankets, thermal blankets, torches, wind-up lanterns, thermometers and flasks

[Steve.cook@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.cook@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)

## 3.4 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Housing Standards Team

Tenants living in rented properties that are in disrepair can contact the Housing Standards Team for support. The Team will investigate reports of disrepair and poor housing conditions against the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HSSRS) which includes an identified hazard in relation to ‘Excess Cold’.

[House issues and standards | Redcar and Cleveland (redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/housing/housing-standards/house-issues-and-standards)

[HousingEHO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:HousingEHO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)).

Actions that Housing Standards can take include enforcing a landlord to repair a heating system if the system is no longer operative or if the property is suffering from dampness and is as a result of a disrepair in the fabric of the building i.e. rising dampness due to no or failure of a damp proof course, a leaking gutter or a hole in the roof.

# 4 Energy Saving Tips and Resources

There are lots of energy saving tips and advice available some resources from the Yorkshire Energy Doctor are below:

4.1 [Checklist on energy saving tips](file:///S:\ChildServ\C&F%20Resources\Energy%20Saving%20Resources\Checklist%20of%20energy%20saving%20tips.pdf) – Lots of ideas to make small changes and reduce energy usage.

[Checklist on energy saving tips](file:///S:\ChildServ\C&F%20Resources\Energy%20Saving%20Resources\Checklist%20of%20energy%20saving%20tips.pdf)

4.2 [Advice leaflet what uses watt (Oct 22)](../../../../../ChildServ/C&F%20Resources/Energy%20Saving%20Resources/advice_leaflet_what_uses_watt%20Oct22.pdf) – gives an indication of the cost of using different appliances.

[Advice leaflet what uses watt (Oct 22)](file:///\\Redclev.net\CorpDept\ChildServ\C&F%20Resources\Energy%20Saving%20Resources\advice_leaflet_what_uses_watt%20Oct22.pdf)

## 4.3 Energy Quiz

The Yorkshire Energy Doctor has shared a quiz to help engage young people and help them learn energy saving and safety tips.

[Energy Quiz](file:///S:\ChildServ\C&F%20Resources\Energy%20Saving%20Resources\Energy%20Quiz)

# 5 Moving Home

Important information to know when moving into a new home.

5.1 Energy Performance Certificates - By law landlords must provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) this rates the energy efficiency of the property on a scale of A – G and gives an indication of annual energy costs. It is not legal to let a property rated F or G. If this is the case please contact our housing standards team [HousingEHO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:HousingEHO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)).

5.2 Carbon Monoxide Detectors – All rented homes are required by law to have a working carbon monoxide detector in any property with a fixed combustion appliances such as gas boilers, warm air heaters, water heaters, fires (including log burners), stoves and other types of cookers.

The carbon monoxide detector must be electronic with an alarm not a card detector with a dark spot indicator.

5.3 Moving in Energy Checklist – This can be completed when a care leaver moves into a tenancy to make sure they have the necessary documentation and to help with setting up the gas and electricity supply. Click here to save the document [Moving In Energy Checklist](file:///S:\ChildServ\C&F%20Resources\Energy%20Saving%20Resources\Move%20In%20Energy%20Checklist%20Oct22.docx)