

Ease your worries about energy use and bills

How a smart meter could help you
and the person you care for



Smart Energy GB and Carers UK

Smart Energy GB and Carers UK are working together to help carers get the full benefits of smart meters, both for them and the people they care for.

A smart meter could help you and the person you care for

More and more of us are trying to be careful about how much energy we use. And when you're caring for someone, you may be thinking about their energy use and bills too. A smart meter could help.

Smart meters record how much electricity or gas you use, just like your existing meters. They come with an in-home display. The in-home display is sometimes called an IHD. It shows how much energy the person you care for is using, in near real-time, and how much they've spent. You can check how much they've used today, this week or this month.

When the bills come, they're based on the energy you've used, not an estimate. So, they're more accurate and you have a better idea of the bills you are likely to get.

Automatic meter readings

Smart meters can help in other ways too. With a smart meter, the readings are sent directly and securely to your energy supplier. So, there's no need for you — or the person you support — to climb a ladder or crawl into a cupboard to read the meter.

That means one less item on your busy to-do list.



More than half of GB households now have a smart meter. Many of them tell us that it helps them manage their energy use.

Joe is a carer for his mother-in-law. He already had a smart meter at home, and recommended that his mother-in-law should get one too. He's really pleased with the result.



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“My mother-in-law wasn't keen to get a smart meter at first, but after I told her about the benefits, she contacted her supplier and got one installed.

It helps me to have the peace of mind that we're tracking energy costs and hopefully they don't get out of control. The in-home display allows you to see what you're spending as you go about your day.”

– Joe

How smart meters work



1. The smart meter records your energy use, as you use it



2. The IHD shows how much energy you're using, and what you've spent

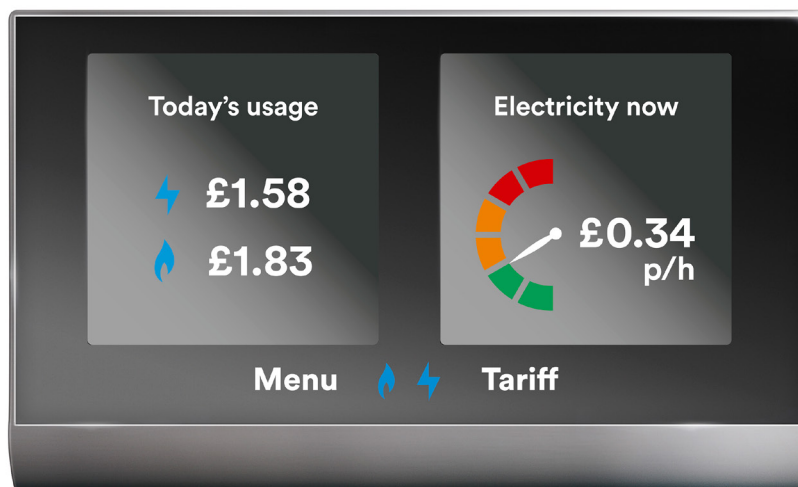


3. The smart meter automatically sends readings to your energy supplier



4. You get a bill based on the amount of gas and electricity you used

Smart meters aren't connected to the internet. The in-home display isn't connected to the internet, either. So, there's no need to have internet access to get one. This picture shows a typical in-home display. Some may look different to this, but they all work in the same way.



In-home display and figures are for illustrative purposes only

Make informed decisions about using energy

Smart meters can help households save energy, but it's not automatic. You can use the information on the IHD to get a better understanding of how much energy you're using and how much it costs. And you can use that information to make decisions about everyday energy use.

That information could also help reassure you and the person you care for that it's ok to turn the heating on to stay warm and comfortable.

You can also work out where they could save energy in other ways instead!

For example, the IHD could help you spot when something has been left on accidentally, so you can make sure the person you support isn't using energy by mistake.



The facts about smart meters

1. Smart meters are available to renters and prepay customers

Many households are eligible to get a smart meter already. Some can't get a smart meter yet but will be able to get one before the end of the rollout. The energy supplier can tell you if the person you care for can have one. They can also tell you how soon it can be installed.

If you rent a home, you can still get a smart meter, as long as it's your name on the energy bill.

And if you have a **prepay** meter — or the person you support does — you can get a prepay smart meter. They have extra benefits compared to analogue prepay meters. For example, you can check on the IHD when it's time to top up. Then you can top up online or via a mobile phone as well as in a shop. It also means that extra support, such as vouchers, can be automatically added to your meter.

2. Your information is safe and secure

Smart meters don't send suppliers information about whether individual appliances in your home are on or off —or when the kettle is on. And the only people who can see how much energy is being used are you, the person you care for and their energy supplier.

3. It's easier with a smart meter

Smart meters and the IHD are designed to be simple to use. You can see how much energy the person you care for uses and how much they're spending on gas and electricity just by looking at the IHD. The person installing the meter or meters will show you how to use it. They should also leave a simple guide.

4. You stay in control

It's up to you where you put the IHD and how much you use it. If the person you care for doesn't want to see it every day, you can put it in a cupboard.

Accessible in-home displays (AIHD)

Some energy suppliers also offer an accessible version of the in-home display, sometimes called an AIHD. They have features that may help you or the person you care for. For example, they have larger buttons and can read information out loud.

An AIHD could be helpful if you, or the person you support:

- are blind or partially sighted
- have difficulties using your hands or wrists, or
- have difficulties with memory loss

Ask your supplier to find out more about getting an accessible in-home display.



Accessible in-home display and figures are for illustrative purposes only

Getting a smart meter

Smart meters are installed by gas and electricity suppliers. They replace your old energy meters, and do it all safely and securely. There is no extra cost to the customer.

Here's how it works:

1. Contact your energy supplier to arrange a time and date for the smart meter to be installed. In most cases, you can make the appointment for the person you support, but the supplier may ask some security questions.

You can make sure it's a time when you can be there too. The supplier should check if the person you care for has any specific needs, like needing a carer to be there.

2. The person installing the meter will turn up at the arranged time. They should show you, or the person you care for, their ID. If they don't show you ID, you can ask to see it.
3. They will disconnect the existing meter and replace it with a smart meter.
4. The person installing the meter should show you and the person you care for how to use the in-home display.

IMPORTANT

- someone will need to be at home when the smart meters are installed. It can be you, the person you support, or both
- if you have told the supplier that you need to be there when the smart meter is installed, and for any reason you're not, the supplier must not install the smart meter
- if the gas and electricity meters are being replaced at the same time, it will take around two hours. If it's only one meter, it could be quicker
- the energy supply will be turned off for a short time while the smart meter is being installed. If the person you care for needs energy to help them with a health condition, tell the energy supplier when you book the appointment



Helping you help the person you care for

A smart meter helps you and the person you support to keep a closer eye on your energy use. But we know that many carers would like to be able to do more to make sure the person they care for gets the best support around energy use.

Become a named third party

If you need to make decisions for the person you care for and pay bills for them, it may help for you to be a named third party on their account. Contact their energy supplier to find out what you need to do.

Safe smart meter installation

To protect vulnerable customers, many energy suppliers use a password scheme. When you book an appointment to get a smart meter installed, you can agree a password with the supplier. The person installing the meter should then say that password before you or the person you support lets them into the house.



Sign up to the Priority Services Register (PSR)

It may also be a good idea to get the person you care for on the Priority Services Register (PSR).

The PSR helps the most vulnerable customers get the right support from energy suppliers. That might include being told early of any planned interruptions to the energy supply or being treated as a priority in a power cut.

It's free to sign up to the PSR. Once someone is on it, they may also be able to request large-format or braille bills. They can ask for account statements or bills to be sent to you, either instead of or at the same time as them.

If you think being on the PSR would help the person you support, contact their energy supplier to find out more.

More information

There's lots more information about help with bills and household costs on the Carers UK website: carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-bills-and-household-costs/

Here's what to do next

Search 'get a smart meter' today. Or get in touch with the energy supplier of the person you care for and ask if they can get one.

You can find contact details on their bill. Or to find some supplier's free-phone and textphone numbers visit: smartenergyGB.org/supplier-free-phone-numbers

Carers UK is a charity registered in England and Wales (246329) and in Scotland (SC039307) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (864097).



Helping you and the person you care for with energy use