

They're getting the extra support they need.

If you need extra support from your electricity or gas supplier, NIE Networks or NI Water, due to your personal circumstances, you could benefit from signing up to their **Customer Care Register**. It's free to join.

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What is a Customer Care Register?

Customer Care Registers provide additional services to consumers who need extra support from their utility company due to their personal circumstances or needs.



Is a Customer Care Register for me?

You might need additional support for one or more of the following reasons:

- ✓ You have a disability, chronic illness or terminal illness and need extra help.
- ✓ You are experiencing certain circumstances such as bereavement, redundancy, recovering from injury or you are a carer and extra support would help you.
- ✓ You are of pensionable age and might need some more help.

This is only a short list of some of the circumstances that might mean consumers need extra support. There are many personal circumstances that may result in an individual needing additional support that is offered by joining a Customer Care Register.

Take the first step and speak to your electricity supplier, gas supplier, NIE Networks or NI Water.

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Who provides a Customer Care Register?



Your electricity or gas supplier[1], NIE Networks and NI Water provide a range of free additional services for consumers who may need extra help.

All electricity and gas suppliers hold Customer Care Registers for consumers that need extra support. These are companies that you pay for the electricity or gas that you use.

NIE Networks holds a Customer Care Register for those who rely on electricity for medical needs and for those who need extra support due to their personal circumstances. This is sometimes called the Medical Care Register. NIE Networks owns and maintains the electricity poles and lines that safely get electricity to your home. They do not send electricity bills.

NI Water also holds a Customer Care Register for consumers that need extra support. NI Water supply you with clean water and manage the sewage network.

You can join these at any time to make sure you get the support you need.

[1] Household suppliers in Northern Ireland are:
Electricity – Budget Energy, Click Energy, Power NI, Share Energy, SSE Airtricity
Gas – Firmus Energy, SSE Airtricity

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What additional services and supports are available?

Here are some examples of the additional services and support available from the different companies. Remember these are free and you can register at any time.

Electricity and gas suppliers:

- ✓ **Nominate a trusted person to help with your account management.** If you find it hard to manage your emails or letters or need assistance with managing and/or understanding your bills, you can ask your electricity or gas supplier to send your energy bills to both yourself and another trusted person.

- ✓ **Tell your supplier if you need bills, statements and their other communications in a different format so you can review these.** If you have specific sight or hearing needs, register to receive alternative forms of communication. Your electricity or gas supplier provides this service free of charge. NIE Networks and NI Water also provide this service for their communications.

- ✓ **Get help with meter readings if you have trouble doing this yourself due to old age, disability or terminal or chronic illness.** If neither you nor anyone else in your home can read your electricity or gas meter (due to age, disability or terminal or chronic illness) then your supplier can arrange to read your meter on your behalf. This is free of charge and they will do this at least once every three months.

- ✓ **Get advice about electricity or gas appliances due to old age, disability or terminal or chronic illness.** If you need advice on the use of any electricity or gas appliances or fittings in your house (due to age, disability or terminal or chronic illness), you can ask your supplier.

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- **Eligible homeowners can get a free annual home gas safety inspection.** If your personal circumstances mean you need extra support and you live in your own home on your own, or if anyone who lives in your household needs extra support, your gas supplier can arrange a free gas safety inspection for your home. This is not available if you live in rented accommodation.

- **You can sign up to a password scheme to use when someone from the electricity, gas or water company calls to your home.** If you are worried about people calling to your home, you can ask your electricity or gas supplier, NIE Networks or NI Water to provide specific identification for their employees who will call to your home. This will allow you to identify if a caller is from that company before opening your door or letting them in.

NIE Networks:

- **Tell NIE Networks if you rely on electricity for healthcare needs and need priority contact if there is a power cut.** For example, you may rely on electricity for equipment including specialised mattresses, feeding systems, prescribed medications that need to be stored in your fridge or lifting equipment. If you have specialised medical equipment in your home you can register to receive up to date information by phone during a power cut or additional notice ahead of a planned interruption to your electricity supply. This does not mean that you will get your power restored any quicker.

NI Water:

- In the event of a loss of water supply, if you are on NI Water's Customer Care Register and you don't have water, they will prioritise you to get bottled water.

These are only some examples of the additional supports available. Contact your electricity or gas supplier, NIE Networks or NI Water and discuss your individual needs. They will be able to ensure you receive the right support.

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What's not available from joining a Customer Care Register?

There are some needs that your electricity, gas and water company will not be able to meet. For example, being on a Customer Care Register does not mean that you will receive financial support.

In cases where you have a need that the company cannot meet, they may offer to put you in touch with another organisation that may be able to help you.

How will I benefit from being on a Customer Care Register?

If you are on your electricity, gas or water company's Customer Care Register this means that they will be aware of your individual support needs and can help you.



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How can I sign up and who do I contact?

Simply contact your electricity supplier, gas supplier, NIE Networks or NI Water and discuss your individual needs. It's free to sign up.

When you contact your electricity or gas company or NI Water, you can be assured that you will be treated with empathy and respect. Staff have received training that includes, but not limited to, disability training (in relation to hidden disabilities, learning difficulties or communication barriers) and mental health awareness training.

You will need to sign up to each Customer Care Register separately. Telephone contacts for signing up can be found below.

Electricity suppliers

Budget Energy
0800 012 1177

Click Energy
0800 107 0732

Power NI
0800 028 5455

Share Energy
0808 304 9870

SSE Airtricity
0345 601 9093

Gas suppliers

Firmus Energy
0800 032 4567

SSE Airtricity Gas Supply
0800 032 4322

Network companies

NIE Networks
0345 764 3643

NI Water
0345 744 0088

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How is my personal information used?

Your personal data will be treated securely and confidentially. You can find more information on this on each company's website.

What if my situation changes?

If you are on a company's register, that company will contact you at least once every two years to ensure they are providing you with the support you need.

You can also contact them anytime to update your details or if you decide you no longer want to be on the Customer Care Register.

If you change electricity or gas supplier, you will need to sign up to your new supplier's Customer Care Register.

For consumer information and updates, visit our website or follow us on social media.

www.uregni.gov.uk

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