

Understanding your gas bill



If your electricity and gas bills leave you a little bemused, don't worry, you're not alone.

But it is worth taking the trouble to understand your bills, as this is the first step to taking control of your energy use and saving yourself money.

This leaflet tells you how to read a gas bill. Use the key below and overleaf for an explanation of each item on the bill marked by a grey numbered disc.

Note that electricity and gas bills can look very similar, especially if you have the same supplier. For an explanation of how to read your electricity bill, please see our other leaflet.

See overleaf for an explanation of the back of the gas bill

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Best GAS Ltd

Mrs G Smith
123 Fore Street
Newtown
NT3 5ZZ

Customer reference number **2468 13579 0004**

Bill date **17 November 2013**

Need help?
Call 0845 000 246

Mon - Fri: 07.00 - 20.00
Saturday: 08.00 - 18.00
Sunday: 08.00 - 12.00

Please have your customer reference number handy when you call us

Your gas bill

Please pay £185.81 by 30 November 2013

Billing summary

Bill period: 1 August 2013 to 31 October 2013

Your last bill	£100.23
Payment received on 12 October	£100.23
Balance before this bill	£00.00
Gas you've used (estimate)	£176.96
VAT at 5%	£8.85
Please pay	£185.81

Meter point reference
12345678

**We must receive your payment by
30 November 2013**

KEY

- These are the contact details of your gas supplier including phone number and office hours.
- Your 'customer reference number' (also called an 'account number') is unique to you, and you'll need it when you contact your supplier.
- This is the date your gas bill was issued.
- You are charged for the gas you have used (or are estimated to have used) during the 'bill period', usually 3 months.

- This is the amount of your previous bill, plus the date you paid. Note that this is **less than** the current bill because May-July is warmer than August-October, so less need for central heating.
- This is the total cost of the gas you've used in this period before VAT is added. In this case it is an **estimate**, not a meter reading. For more about estimates see overleaf, point 12.
- The VAT charged on gas supplied for **domestic** use is 5%. If the VAT rate on your bill is higher than this it means you are being charged a **commercial** rate and you should contact your supplier immediately.

- This is the amount you need to pay for the gas you have used. On the other side of the bill it will explain how this figure was reached. Some suppliers offer an incentive for prompt payment.
- This is your 'meter point reference number', sometimes referred to as an MPRN. Each UK property on the mains gas supply has one, and you will need it if you wish to switch your gas supplier.



Check your bills, or you may end up paying more than you should

continued ...

10 Your 'tariff' (also called a 'package' or 'plan') decides the rate you pay and other terms and conditions. It won't always be shown on your bill. You should make sure you're on a tariff that suits your personal and financial circumstances.

11 This is the meter reading at the **beginning** of the period for which you are being charged on this bill.

12 This is a 'reading' for the **end** of the period for which you are being charged on this bill. The 'E' in brackets signifies that this is an **estimate**, and not a real reading.

If this estimate is too low, you'll be charged for the difference on your next bill (and may have a nasty surprise), so you should check your meter to see that the estimate is at least close to what your meter says. For information on how to read a gas meter, see our other leaflet.

13 This is the 'last reading' minus the 'previous reading' - it's the amount of gas you've used, or are estimated to have used, in the bill period.

14 Oddly enough, gas is charged by kilowatt hour (kWh), a unit more often associated with electricity. See **point 18** below.

15 This shows how the first 1430 kWh of gas that you use costs more (per kWh) than the gas you use after this. This is normal practice for both gas and electricity supply.

16 This is the total you need to pay before VAT which will be added at a rate of 5% (see **point 7** above).

17 This explains about estimated meter readings (see **point 12** above).

10 Your usage - in detail

Your current tariff is **Standard**

11 Previous reading	12 Last reading	13 Units used	14 Units as kWh	15 Pence per kWh	Charges for energy used
12145 1 August	12373 31 October (E)	228	2532	First 2393 kWh at 7.182p Next 139 kWh at 3.660p	£171.87 £5.09

16 Total charges: **£176.96**

Estimated meter readings

Estimated readings are based on your previous usage to date. If we don't hold details of your previous usages, we base the readings on average consumption levels.

To make sure you receive accurate bills, please contact us directly to submit your meter readings.

How we calculate your gas charges

We convert gas units to kilowatt hours as follows:
 $\text{units used} \times 1.02264 \text{ (volume conversion factor)} \times 39.1 \text{ (calorific value)} \div 3.6 \text{ (kilowatt hour conversion factor)}$.

Services for customers with specific needs

If you have any special needs, please contact us to let us know. We can you your bills in large print or in braille, or on audio tape if required.

To find out what we can do to help you, contact us on **0845 000 246**.

19 Bank Giro Credit

Reference (customer account number)

Credit account number

Amount due £

By transfer from bank account number

Cashier's stamp and initials



123 4567 8978 5634 12456

18 This explains how the volume of gas that you've used has been converted into kilowatt hours.

19 A payment slip is provided if you wish to pay your bill at a bank or by post. You can also pay by monthly direct debit, and for some people there are advantages to this. Firstly, most suppliers will give you a discount; secondly, it spreads the cost over 12 months rather than four quarters; and thirdly the system is automated so the bill can't be lost or forgotten.

Your annual statement

Once a year, your energy supplier must send you a statement detailing the name of your tariff, how much energy you have used over the last year, how much you're likely to pay over the next year, and any discounts, premiums or terms and conditions on your tariff.

It's worth holding on to this statement - it contains all the information you need to switch suppliers. And when calculating whether another supplier could be cheaper, it's much more accurate to use an annual statement like this than a quarterly bill.

This leaflet was originally produced by the **Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)** and reprinted in this version on behalf of SEACS.

CSE's Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol and Somerset. Call free on 0800 082 2234, or email home.energy@cse.org.uk



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We are a national charity (298740) that helps people change the way they think and act on energy.



The aim of the **SEACS project** is to create opportunities to reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency and use clean, renewable energy. SEACS was selected under the European Cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) - England, co-funded by the ERDF

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