

Understanding your electricity bill



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

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

This leaflet tells you how to read an electricity bill. Use the key below and overleaf for an explanation of each item on the bill marked by a blue 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 gas bill, please see our other leaflet.

See overleaf for an explanation of the back of your electricity bill

KEY

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

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Best ELECTRICITY Ltd

Mr G Smith
123 Fore Street
Newtown
NT3 5ZZ

Customer reference number **2468 13579 0004**

Bill date **16 November 2013**

Your electricity bill

Please pay by **£137.30** by 30 November 2013

4 Billing summary

Bill period: 1 August 2013 to 31 October 2013

5 Your last bill	£90.56
Payment received on 5 October	£90.56
Balance before this bill	£00.00
6 Electricity you've used (estimate)	£130.76
VAT at 5%	£6.54
7 Please pay	£137.30

We must receive your payment by 30 November 2013

1 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

9 Electricity Supply Number

S	04	234	789
	04	1234	456 123

- 5 This is the amount of your **previous** bill, and, on the next line, the date you paid it. It was **lower** than the current bill because your home used less electricity – probably thanks to the longer hours of daylight.
- 6 This is the total cost of the electricity you've used in this period before VAT. In this case it is an **estimate**, not a meter reading. For more about estimates see point 12 overleaf.
- 7 The VAT charged on electricity 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.
- 8 This is the amount you owe for the electricity you have used. On the other side of the bill it will explain how this figure was reached. Some suppliers offer a cash incentive for prompt payment.
- 9 This is your 'MPAN' or 'meter point administration number'. You may need this if you switch your electricity supplier.



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

continued ...

KEY

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 are 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. However, the 'E' in brackets means that it 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 an electricity meter, see our other leaflet.

13 This is the 'last reading' minus the 'previous reading' and equals the amount of electricity you've used, or are estimated to have used in the bill period.

14 This shows that the first 222 kWh of electricity that you use costs more (per kWh) than the electricity you use after this. This is normal practice for electricity supply.

15 This is the total you need to pay before VAT (see **points 7 and 8**).

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

Your usage - in detail

Your current tariff is **Standard**

11 Previous reading	12 Last reading	13 kWh used	14 Pence per kWh	Charges for energy used
61320	62115	795	First 218 kWh at 20.070p	£43.75
1 August	31 October (E)		Next 577 kWh at 15.080p	£87.01

15 Total charges: **£130.76**

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.

Services for customers with specific needs

If you have any special needs, please contact us to let us know. We can send 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**.

18 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

17 Your energy supplier will be able to provide the information on this bill in another form. This explains how.

18 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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