

# Your prepayment meter

Everything you need to know

Traditional (non-smart) meters





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# Everything you need to know about your UW prepayment meter

Here's a handy guide to your UW prepayment meter (or Pay As You Go) meter.

Please take the time to read this guide as it contains important information about your meter, its screen, how to top up credit and what to do in emergencies.

You can also find advice on using less energy and what to do if you're struggling to afford your top ups.

## Need help?

For the most recent information visit [uw.link/support](https://uw.link/support)



# What are prepayment meters?

Prepayment meters allow you to take control of your payments. You won't receive bills for your energy – instead, you pay in advance and top up credit.

It's just like a Pay As You Go mobile phone... so Pay As You Go energy!

Your credit then reduces daily as the meter takes your daily standing charge, any debt repayments and the cost of the energy you use.

## How is it different from a credit meter?

- **You top up credit in advance** – no more bills for the energy you've used.
- **You'll get an annual statement** – instead of a monthly bill, you'll get a statement every year so you can keep track of how much energy you've used.
- **Emergency Credit** – If your credit is running low, or you run out and you can't get to the shops, you can use the £20 Emergency Credit that's available on your meter.

## What are the benefits?

- **No unexpected large bills** – You can manage how much energy you purchase.
- **Outstanding balances** – If you owe us money, they can help you pay it back bit by bit.

## What are the disadvantages?

- **Running out of credit** – You need to remember to top up. If you run out of credit, you risk your energy supply going off. This is because your standing charge and any debt repayments are deducted from the meter's credit each day, even if you don't use any gas or electricity.

# How about a free upgrade to a smart meter?

Your current meter is old technology. At UW, we offer customers a free upgrade to smart meters, which come with more benefits.

## What's the difference?

### Traditional meter

Top up at the shops only

Insert key/card to apply top-up

Limited visual display on meter

No energy usage information

An obstacle to environmental targets

**No average change in spending**

### Smart meter

Top up from home or anywhere

Top-ups are applied automatically

Free in-home smart meter display

See credit and real-time energy usage

Help reduce carbon emissions

**Take control and save money**

We'll let you know when engineers are available in your area. Then simply follow our booking instructions to arrange your free upgrade.

To find out more, visit [uw.link/smart](https://uw.link/smart)

# How to top up your meter

To keep your energy supply turned on, you need to top up your prepayment meter with credit. You'll need to check the display on your meter regularly to see how much credit is left so you know when to top up.

## Buying credit

Take your card or key to any Payzone, PayPoint, or most Post Office outlets.

You can add anything from **£1 to £49**, and have up to **£250** credit on your meter at any time.

When you're back home, put the key/card into your meter to add the credit. Remember to remove the key afterwards.

We suggest you keep all your receipts when you buy credit, in case there's an issue with topping up.

## Find your nearest store:

**PayPoint:**  
[paypoint.co.uk](https://paypoint.co.uk)

**Payzone:**  
[payzone.co.uk](https://payzone.co.uk)  
01606 566 566

**Post Office:**  
[postoffice.co.uk](https://postoffice.co.uk)  
0345 722 3344

## Be aware

Never buy energy from someone who comes to your door – energy companies never sell electricity in this way.

# Your top-up card or key

When you join UW as a customer, we'll send you a new gas card and electricity key.

Before you top up for the first time, you'll need to activate your card/key. Simply insert it into the meter for at least thirty seconds and you'll hear a beep when it's activated.

- ✔ Don't use any old cards or keys you find at the property. You may lose any credit if you do.
- ✔ Look after your card/key: there's a charge to replace them.
- ✔ Don't leave your gas card in the meter as this will shorten its battery life.



# Emergency Credit – for when you need it

If your credit is running low, you'll see a low credit alert on your meter. In case you're unable to top up, you use the **£20 Emergency Credit** that's available.

## To use Emergency Credit:

### Electricity

1. When your meter has less than £1 of credit it will beep to warn you and an 'E' will flash on the display, which lets you know that Emergency Credit is available.
2. Put your key in the meter – if it's already in, just take it out and put it back.
3. The meter will beep three times to confirm you're now using Emergency Credit.

### Gas

1. Check that all your gas appliances are switched off before putting your card in the meter.
2. A message saying 'PRESS BUTTON A to accept the Emergency Credit' will show on the display.
3. Press the rettd 'A' button and your Emergency Credit will be ready to use.





# Friendly Credit – for when you can't get to the shops

We understand it can be difficult to get a top-up sometimes, especially at night.

Some traditional electricity meters also offer Friendly Credit in case you can't get to the shops.

## When is Friendly Credit available?

If you have £1 or less left on your meter, Friendly Credit will automatically be applied during these times:

- Monday to Friday - 6pm to 9am
- Weekends - 6pm Friday to 9am Monday.

## Paying back Emergency Credit and Friendly Credit

You'll need to repay the Emergency Credit or Friendly Credit, as well as any standing charges and weekly debt repayments that have built up, before you can use energy again.

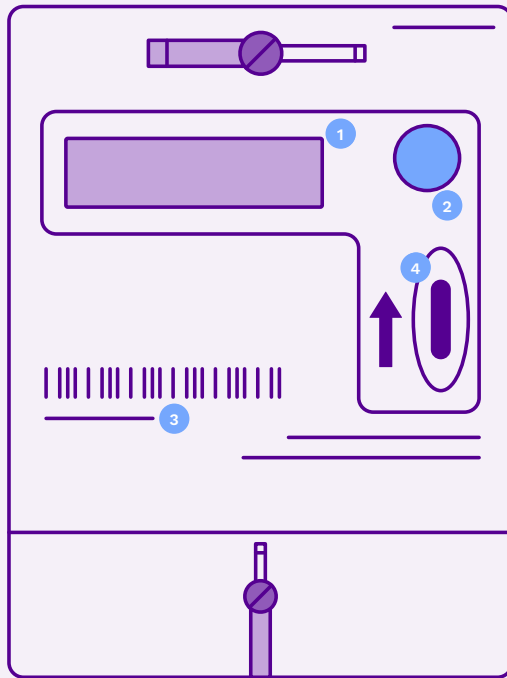
If you think you're going to struggle to pay this back in one go, please call our UK-based customer services team on **0333 777 3215**.

## What happens if I don't top up?

If you don't top up your meters or apply Emergency or Friendly Credit, your supply will go off when your normal credit runs out. This is called 'self-disconnection'.

We don't want this to happen to you. If you're having problems, call us so we can try and help.

# Your electricity meter



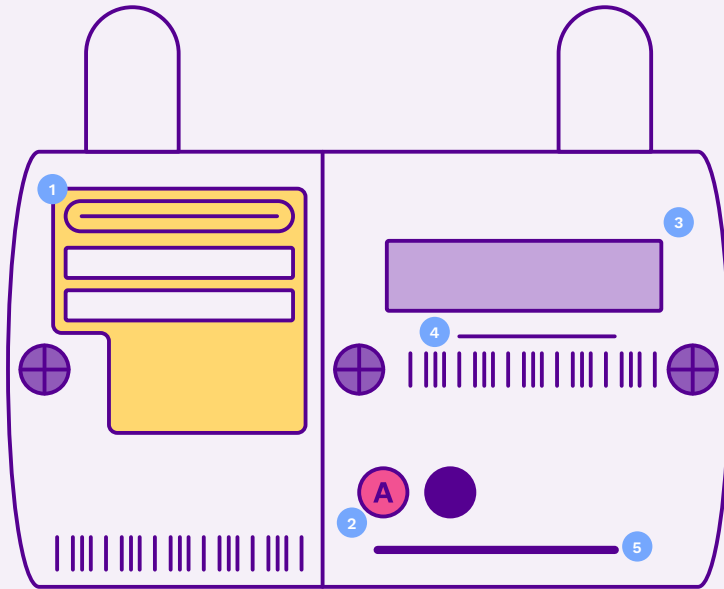
- 1 **LCD screen** – the screen allows you to scroll through different displays for useful information, like how much credit you have left. See the table on the next page.
- 2 **Blue display button** – press this button to get all your meter information.
- 3 **Meter Serial Number (MSN)** – your property's unique supply number. You'll need to quote it if there are any problems with your supply or meter.
- 4 **Key slot** – insert your prepayment key here to top up.

## Your electricity LCD screen displays

The screen on your meter has different displays you can scroll through using by using the blue button. Here's a useful guide.

Screen	Description	What it displays	
A	Display test	A default display that tests that the blue button is working.	
B	Emergency reset amount	This shows any amount that will be repaid to the emergency credit by the next top-up.	
C	Time	This shows the time (GMT).	
D	Date	This shows the date.	
E	Total credit accepted	This shows how much credit has been paid on the meter since it was installed and reset.	
F	Total weekly charges	This shows the weekly standing charge. If you're repaying a debt this will also include the weekly repayment rate.	
G	Total energy consumed	This is the total electricity used since the meter was first installed.	
H	Day unit reading	This shows the day register meter.	
I	Day time pence per unit	This shows the day rate tariff.	
J	Night unit rate	This shows the night register meter reading (if applicable).	
K	Night time pence per unit	This shows the night rate tariff (if applicable).	
R	Emergency credit	This shows how much emergency credit is available on the meter.	Your key needs to be inserted to see these screens
S	Total debt outstanding	This shows how much debt remains on the meter.	
T	Debt repayment rate	This is the fixed amount to be paid off in instalments.	

# Your gas meter



- 1 **LCD screen** – the screen allows you to scroll through different displays for useful information, like how much credit you have left. See the table on the next page.
- 2 **Gas safety advice** – This gives you information on what to do in the case of a gas leak.
- 3 **Red display button A** – press this to get all your meter information.
- 4 **Meter Serial Number (MSN)** – your property's unique supply number. You'll need to quote it if there are any problems with your supply or meter.
- 5 **Card slot** – insert your prepayment key here to top up.

# Your gas LCD screen displays

The screen on your prepayment meter has different displays you can scroll through by pressing the red **'A'** button on the meter. We've created a guide below with some displays you'll find useful (and some that might not be useful for you).

First, press and hold the red **'A'** button until you hear a beep. When you let go of the button **'00'** should show on screen. You can now press **'A'** to scroll through the displays.

Screen	Description	What it displays	
00	Last card credit	How much was applied to the meter with the last top-up.	
OWED	Outstanding	The current amount outstanding from any Emergency Credit and standing charges.	
01	Last debt repayment	How much of the last top-up went towards debt on the meter.	
02	Last emergency credit repayment	How much of the last top-up went towards the Emergency Credit.	
03	Last gas payment	How much of the last top-up went towards the gas usage.	
04	Tariff 4	The current tariff (in kWh).	
10	Tariff 5	The current tariff (in kWh).	
17	Standing charge	The daily standing charge (in pence).	
23	Gas allocation rate	This should show as zero (please let us know if it doesn't).	
24	Gas debt repayment rate	The percentage of credit to be used to clear the debt.	
25	Gas debt - weekly minimum	The minimum amount the customer needs to pay weekly.	Your card needs to be inserted to see these screens
26	Gas debt - weekly maximum	The maximum amount the meter can take weekly.	
27	Gas debt	How much debt remains to be paid.	
32	Card number	This will display the card number assigned to the prepayment meter.	

# Repaying a debt through your prepayment meter

If you're repaying a debt through your prepayment meter, we'll have agreed on a repayment rate with you. Your meter will automatically take the agreed amount from any money you top up.

When you insert your card/key after buying credit, your meter will check for any outstanding debt – which could be your agreed repayments, any standing charges that have built up, or any Emergency Credit you used that needs to be paid back. Everything else will show as a credit on your meter.

When you buy credit, remember to buy enough to cover your repayments, your daily standing charge and the energy you need.

## Struggling to pay for your energy?

**If you're having problems affording your top-ups, we're here to help.**

When you contact us, we may be able to offer you some support credit if you're in a vulnerable situation, and are either off-supply or at risk of going off-supply, depending on your circumstances.

Call our trained team and we'll talk you through all your available options. Or visit [uw.link/debt-advice](https://www.uw.link/debt-advice) for free, independent, impartial and practical advice on managing your debt.

## Call us on 0333 777 3215

It's important to speak to us as soon as possible.

# How to check your remaining debt amount

## Electricity meter

Your electricity meter breaks your weekly repayment into chunks that are taken from your credit each hour.

- Display S shows the amount of your debt remaining.
- Display T shows the weekly recovery rate to pay back your debt.

See page 11 for more information about the screens on your meter.

## Gas meter

Your gas meter will take your repayment once a week, providing you have credit available.

- Display 25 shows the minimum you need to pay back each week.
- Display 27 shows the amount of your debt remaining.

See page 13 for more information about the screens on your meter.

## Change your debt repayments

If you'd like to make additional one-off payments, or change your weekly repayment amount, please call us on **0333 777 3215**.

## Can I switch suppliers with a debt balance?

If you're a prepayment customer with a debt between £20 and £500 on the meter, you may be able to. The Debt Assignment Protocol allows you to transfer your debt to a new supplier, providing your chosen supplier is willing to take over the responsibility for collecting the debt.

To explore this option, contact your chosen supplier. If they agree, they'll pay the debt to us on your behalf and you'll owe the debt to them instead. We'll need to provide them with the details of your debt – when you speak to them, they may ask for your consent for us to share those details.

# Frequently asked questions



## **What if prepayment meters aren't suitable for me?**

If you feel that you're in a situation that means prepayment meters aren't safe or practical for you please call us on **0333 777 0777** to discuss it with our team.



## **I'm moving home, what do I do?**

If you're moving home, call our Home Movers team on **0333 777 0777** or visit [uw.link/moving](https://www.uw.gov.uk/link/moving) to let them know your moving date.



## **How do I read my meter?**

If you need more help reading your meter, visit [uw.link/help-with-readings](https://www.uw.gov.uk/link/help-with-readings)



# Tips and support



## Going away? Remember to top up

If you'll be away for a period of time, remember to add enough credit to cover your daily standing charge, your repayments and any energy that will be used by appliances while you're away. For example, your fridge or boiler.



## Extra support for vulnerable customers

If you may need extra support – for example you're elderly, disabled, or have special medical needs – you can join our Priority Services Register for access to additional services.

Call **0333 777 0777** or visit [uw.link/extra-help](https://www.uw.link/extra-help) to find out more.



## Where do I find other energy help articles?

You'll find articles and support on a whole range of prepayment meter related topics at [uw.link/prepayment-meters](https://www.uw.link/prepayment-meters)

# Troubleshooting - Electricity

If there's a problem with your electricity meter, there are a few things you can do to try and fix it before you speak to us.

What's wrong?	Things to try	What happens next?
<b>You don't have any electricity</b> 1. Meter credit has run out. 2. There's a power cut. 3. The fuse or main switches have blown.	1. Check you have credit left (see the meter screens section of this guide) 2. Check if your neighbours still have power. 3. Check your fuses and trip switch.	1. Buy credit or use Emergency Credit to get electricity again. 2. If your neighbours are also without electricity call your local distributor. 3. You may need to call an electrician.
<b>Meter is switched off</b> The Emergency Credit has run out.	Top up the meter to pay back the Emergency Credit you've used and to have credit available for electricity usage.	If that doesn't resolve it, an engineer may need to visit your property. Just give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .
<b>You need a new payment key</b> 1. You've lost your key or it's been stolen. 2. Your key is no longer working.		We'll need to arrange a new key or an engineer visit. Just give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .
<b>The meter is not topping up or the meter display shows 'Error' or 'Key not accepted'</b> 1. The credit was not applied correctly to the key at the outlet. 2. The key needs cleaning. 3. The key has been damaged. 4. The key has been inserted into the meter incorrectly.	1. Look at your receipt and see if it shows 'Credit Failed'. 2. There may be dust or dirt on the key. Clean the key and try again. 3. Check the key for damage. 4. Make sure the key is in the slot the right way around.	Call us on <b>0333 003 5644</b> and we'll arrange a replacement key.
<b>An 'E' is showing on the display and the meter is beeping</b> The credit on the meter is almost running out.	Top up the meter to have credit available for electricity	If an 'Error' message is displayed on your meter, we may need to send an engineer to you. Call us on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .

# Troubleshooting - Gas

If there's a problem with your gas meter, there are a few things you can do to try and fix it before you speak to us.

What's wrong?	Things to try	What happens next?
<b>You need a new payment card</b> 1. You've lost your card or it's been stolen. 2. Your card is no longer working.		We'll need to arrange a new card or an engineer visit. Give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .
<b>'Card fail' message on your meter display</b> 1. There may be dust or dirt on the card. 2. The card has been inserted incorrectly.	1. Wipe the card so it's clean and try again. 2. Make sure the card is in the slot the right way around.	
<b>Dashes or 'Call help' on the meter screen</b> Your meter is faulty.		
<b>Blank screen</b> The screen saver may have switched on, which saves your meter's battery when you're not looking at the meter displays.	Press the red 'A' button or insert your card into the meter to reactivate it.	If the screen doesn't come back on the battery may be flat. Give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .
<b>Meter is switched off</b> The Emergency Credit has run out.	Top up the meter to pay back the Emergency Credit you've used and to have credit available for gas.	An engineer may need to visit your property. Give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .
<b>'Card not accepted' message on your meter display</b> 1. There may be dust or dirt on the card. 2. The meter doesn't recognise the card. 3. The meter is faulty.	1. Wipe the card so it's clean and try again. 2. Make sure the card is in the slot the right way around.	We may need to send you a replacement card or an engineer may need to visit you. Give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .
<b>Display screen doesn't change when card is inserted</b> The slot reader may be faulty.	1. Make sure the card is in the slot the right way around. 2. If the display doesn't change, the slot reader may be faulty.	An engineer may need to visit your property. Give us a call on <b>0333 003 5644</b> .

## What if we're not open?

If it's outside our normal operating hours, call our out-of-hours team on **0333 220 0233**.

# Power cut?

If you experience a power cut, notice a disturbance to your electricity supply or have an electricity emergency, you should contact the energy network operator in your area on 105.

There's also a handy postcode finder at [energynetworks.org](https://energynetworks.org) to help you identify your local operator.

Energy network operators own and operate the wires and pipes that carry electricity and gas into your home. They are different from your energy supplier.

**Please  
call 105  
in case of  
electrical  
emergency**



# Gas safety

If you suspect a gas leak, can't turn off the supply or have no supply, call the National Grid Gas Emergency number immediately on **0800 111 999**. Calls are free and the line is always open.

## If you smell gas

- **DON'T** smoke or light matches.
- **DON'T** turn electrical switches on or off.
- **DO** open doors and windows.
- **DO** turn off the main gas supply tap at the control handle, unless it's in a cellar.
- **DO** call the National Grid Gas Emergency number right away on **0800 111 999** from outside your property. Calls to this number are free and the line is open 24/7. Visit [nationalgrid.com/uk](https://nationalgrid.com/uk) for more details.

Gas emergency?  
**call 0800 111 999**



# Simple ways to use less energy

Try these energy-saving tips to save more money each year.



## Don't leave things on standby

Switch appliances off when you're not using them. Appliances like your TV, stereo and computer continue to use electricity when they're in standby mode. Turning them completely off when they're not being used could save you as much as £65 a year.



## Be smart in the kitchen

Only fill your kettle with the amount of water you need – you don't need a full one for just one cuppa. This will save you around £13 in energy bills a year. Similarly, when cooking, use the correct size of pans to save energy.



## Shorten your shower time by one minute a day

Reduce your shower time by one minute, and add a water efficient showerhead. This could save you £8 a year off your energy bill for every person in your household.



## Turn your lights off when you're not using them

By switching off lights when you're not using them, you can save around £25 a year on your energy bills.



## Turn down your thermostat by 1°C

Heating controls help you stay on top of how much energy you're using. By turning down your room thermostat by just one degree, you could save £145 a year.

Source: Energy Saving Trust. For the latest information visit [energysavingtrust.org.uk](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk)

## More ways to use less energy



Visit our page about energy efficiency for more energy-saving ideas: [uw.link/energy-tips](https://www.uw.ac.uk/energy-tips) or call **0333 003 5647**

## Get free, impartial advice about energy efficiency

### Energy Saving Trust

#### England and Wales

Website: [energysavingtrust.org.uk](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk)

Email: [energy-advice@est.org.uk](mailto:energy-advice@est.org.uk)

#### Home Energy Scotland

Website: [homeenergyscotland.org](https://homeenergyscotland.org)

Phone: **0808 808 2282**

### Simple Energy Advice

Website: [simpleenergyadvice.org.uk](https://simpleenergyadvice.org.uk)

Phone: **0800 444 202**



# We're here to help

For answers to questions or to contact us visit our help centre at [uw.link/support](https://uw.link/support)

## Having problems paying for your energy?

If you're having problems affording your top ups, paying back an outstanding balance, or if you'd like to clear your debt quicker, call us on **0333 777 3215**.

## Extra support for vulnerable customers

If you may need extra support – for example you're elderly, disabled, or have special medical needs – you can join our Priority Services Register for access to additional services. Call **0333 777 0777** or visit [uw.link/extra-help](https://uw.link/extra-help) to find out more.

## Moving home?

If you're moving home, call our Home Movers team on **0333 777 0777** or visit [uw.link/moving](https://uw.link/moving) to let them know your moving date.

## Ready for your free smart meter upgrade?

If you're interested in a free upgrade, we'll let you know when engineers are available in your area. Then simply follow our booking instructions. To find out more, visit [uw.link/smart](https://uw.link/smart)

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