Charis

Let's Talk Energy Advice

Simple ways to help you reduce energy use, and household bills, and find additional support



Information available in other formats and community languages

This guide has been created to offer practical, realistic advice that can help you manage your energy use, reduce unnecessary costs, and stay comfortable at home.

Cyngor a chymorth

Mae costau byw cynyddol a phrisiau ynni uchel yn golygu bod llawer ohonom yn teimlo o dan bwysau. Ledled y DU, mae miliynau o bobl yn pryderu am dalu eu biliau ynni, ac mae gan nifer sylweddol ryw lefel o ddyled ynni neu'n gorfod gwneud dewisiadau anodd ynglŷn â gwresogi eu cartrefi.

Yn Charis, mae ein cenhadaeth yn syml ond yn hanfodol: i gynorthwyo pobl pan fydd ei angen arnynt fwyaf.

Gweler mwy am gyngor a chymorth ar gael i chi yn charisgrants.com/adviceandsupport

Comhairle agus taic

Tha an t-àrdachadh ann an cosgaisean bith-beò agus prìsean lùths a' fàgail mòran dhinn fo dhragh. Air feadh na RA, tha na milleanan de dhaoine nach eil cinnteach mar a phàigheas iad na bilichean lùths, agus tha fiachan lùths air choreigin aig àireamh nach beag de dhaoine, no feumaidh iad co-dhùnaidhean duilich a dhèanamh a thaobh teasachadh an dachaighean.

Aig Charis, tha misean sìmplidh ach ro-chudromach againn: taic a thoirt do dhaoine nuair a bhios dearg-fheum aca air.

Faigh barrachd fiosrachaidh mun chomhairle agus mun taic a bheir sinn dhut aig charisgrants.com/adviceandsupport

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Introduction

Rising living costs and high energy prices mean that many of us are feeling under pressure. Across the UK, millions of people are worried about paying their energy bills, and a significant number are carrying some level of energy debt or having to make difficult choices about heating their homes.

If this sounds familiar, you are not alone – experiencing financial strain can happen to anyone. But support is available and seeking help early can make a real difference.



This guide has been created to offer practical, realistic advice that can help you manage your energy use, reduce unnecessary costs, and stay comfortable at home.

The suggestions included here are designed to be flexible. You may already be doing some of them, which is great. Even small changes can add up over time, and choosing the right support can help ease pressure and provide reassurance.

Sign up for more support

Simply head to **signup.charis.group** or scan the QR code to give your details.

We'll send you updates about support schemes and help that are potentially available to you, and how you can apply.

A message from Jessica Taplin CEO, Charis



At Charis, our mission is simple but vital: to support people when they need it most. We know that rising energy costs, household pressures, and uncertainty about where to turn can cause real stress for people. That's why we created the Let's Talk approach — to make help more accessible, straightforward and human.

This guide brings together practical, everyday advice that can make a difference in your home today. It sits alongside the wider support delivered through Charis, including funded initiatives such as the Let's Talk Energy Fund, which helps eligible households access energy-efficient appliances and other assistance to reduce ongoing costs.

We are grateful to the energy suppliers who contribute to these funds and make this support possible. Their commitment plays a vital role in helping households reduce energy use, improve efficiency, and feel more secure at home. Our aim is to provide clear, useful guidance that you can trust — without judgement or complexity. Whether you are looking for small changes you can make now or exploring what additional support may be available, we hope this guide helps you feel more confident and informed.

About Let's Talk

Charis works in partnership with energy suppliers, housing providers, communities, and support organisations to help people who are struggling with the cost of living, particularly energy bills. Through Let's Talk, Charis delivers practical support, clear guidance, and access to funded schemes designed to reduce household costs and improve wellbeing.

Let's Talk includes initiatives such as the **Let's Talk Energy Fund**, an Ofgem-approved scheme that supports eligible households with energy-efficient appliances and other forms of assistance. By replacing old or broken appliances with more efficient alternatives, households can reduce energy use, lower ongoing bills, and improve their day-to-day living conditions.

Let's Talk is not just about financial help. It is about providing trusted information, helping people understand their options, and offering a supportive route into further assistance where it is needed.

The difference the right support makes

Charlotte is a single mother to her five-year-old and a four-month-old baby. She works part-time, so manages the demands of parenting on limited income.

When her fridge broke, it created added pressure. Replacing a vital appliance wasn't something she could afford, making life even more difficult. And winter brought further challenges. Trying to manage the mountain of laundry without a tumble dryer was a 'nightmare'. "It's just added stress, and I couldn't afford to buy a dryer."

A friend signposted Charlotte to Charis's Let's Talk Energy Fund. The application process was straightforward and within days a new fridge and energy-efficient tumble dryer were on the way.

The support eased pressure at a critical moment, restored a sense of stability and fixed practical challenges.

Around the home

Switch off and unplug

Lights, TVs, chargers and household electronics use electricity even when on standby:

- Make a habit of switching devices off at the plug when they're not in use.
- Use extension leads with on/off switches to make switching off easier, especially for entertainment systems or home offices.

Window and door seals

Prevent draughts and heat loss:

- Fit simple draught-proofing strips around windows and door frames.
- Use draught excluders, brush strips or sealant to help block gaps under doors, at keyholes and around letterboxes.

Radiator foil

Radiator reflector foil is really easy to fit and inexpensive. It reflects heat back into rooms, making them warmer:

- Cut to size and stick the foil behind your radiators.
- Prioritise radiators fixed to outside-facing walls.

Energy-efficient light bulbs

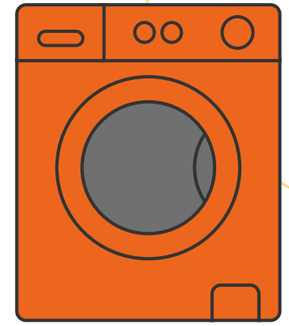
LED bulbs use much less energy than traditional bulbs and last significantly longer, meaning fewer replacements and lower running costs.

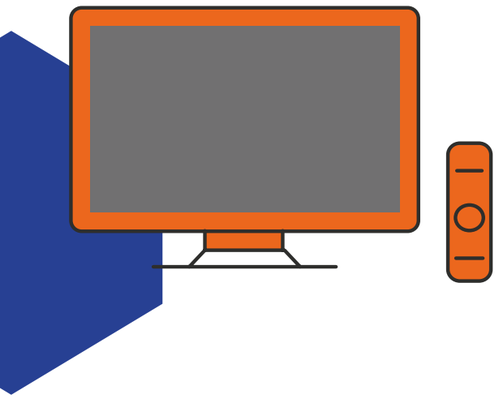
- Replace the bulbs you use most often first – such as those in kitchens, living rooms, and hallways.

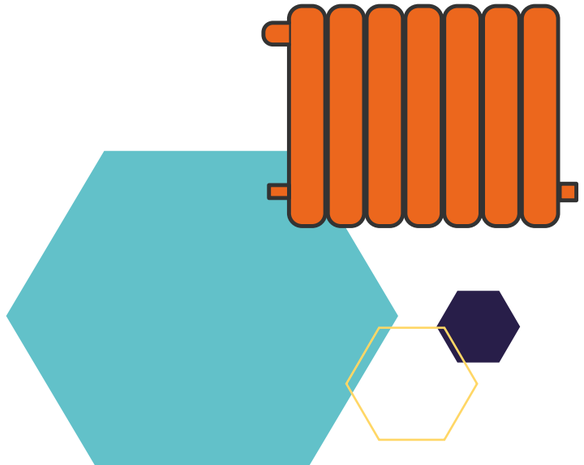
Choose efficient appliances

Buying an appliance with a higher energy-efficiency rating may initially cost more, but usually costs less to run over its lifetime.

- Check the appliance's energy label – A is the most efficient, and G is least efficient.









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In the kitchen

Use appliances efficiently

- Only boil the amount of water you need in the kettle.
- Run dishwashers when full and use eco programmes where available.
- Keep appliance filters and seals clean so they run efficiently.

Cook smart

- Use lids on pans and match pan size to the hob.
- Batch cook meals and freeze leftovers to save both time and energy.
- Microwaves, slow cookers, air fryers and fan ovens generally use less energy than conventional ovens for smaller meals.

Fridge and freezer tips

- Fridges work best between 0–4°C and freezers around –18°C.
- Avoid overfilling, but don't leave them nearly empty either – a moderately full appliance runs more efficiently.
- Leave space around the back and sides for air circulation.



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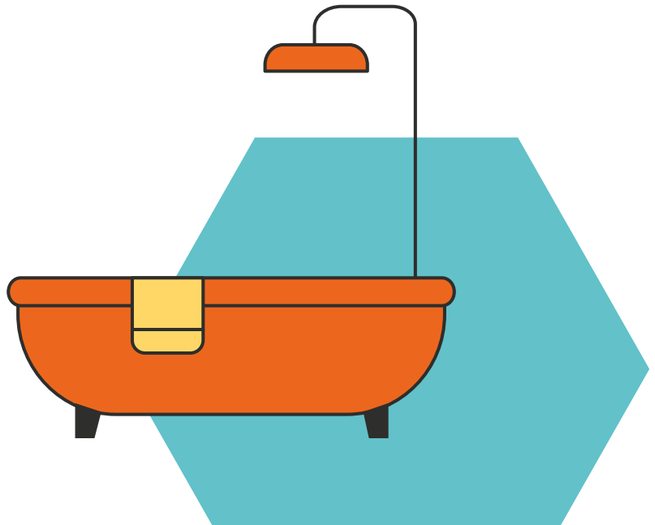
In the bathroom

Reduce hot water use

- Showers usually use less energy and water than baths.
- Shortening your shower by even one minute can cut energy costs over the year.
- Consider a water-efficient shower head for further savings.

Taps and toilets

- Turn off the tap while brushing teeth or washing hands.
- Fix dripping taps as soon as possible.
- Use the smaller flush on dual-flush toilets when appropriate.



Laundry

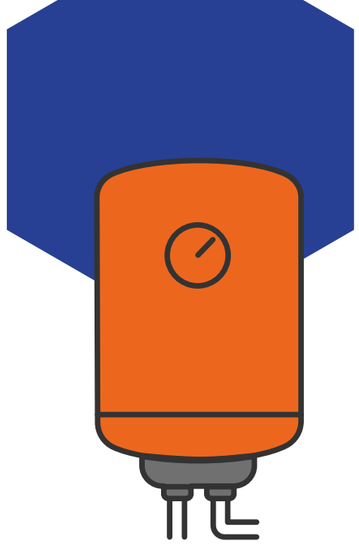
Wash efficiently

- Wash clothes at 30°C where possible – modern detergents work well at lower temperatures.
- Wait for full loads rather than running half-empty machines.

Drying and ironing

- Air-dry clothes when you can; tumble dryers are one of the most energy-hungry appliances.
- Clean the tumble dryer filter regularly.
- Iron in batches and start with lower-temperature items first.

Heating and hot water



Heating controls

- A comfortable thermostat setting is usually between 18–21°C.
- Lowering the temperature by just one degree can reduce heating costs.
- Use radiator valves to keep bedrooms slightly cooler than living areas.

Make the most of your heat

- Keep radiators clear of furniture and curtains.
- Bleed radiators if they are cold at the top.
- Close curtains at dusk and use draft excluders to reduce heat loss.

Hot water

- Set hot water cylinder thermostats to around 60°C.
- Use timers so water heats only when needed.
- Insulating a hot water cylinder helps retain heat for longer.

Keeping yourself warm

Using blankets, layered clothing, heated throws or hot water bottles can help you feel comfortable without increasing room temperatures.

Tariffs, meters and managing your energy costs

Checking your tariff

Being on the right energy tariff can make a significant difference to how much you pay. Prices, discounts, and terms vary between tariffs, and what suited you in the past may no longer be the best option.

- Review your tariff from time to time, especially if you are coming to the end of a fixed deal.
- Consider switching tariffs with your existing supplier or switching suppliers completely if it's cheaper.
- Take free independent advice from a trusted consumer or energy advice service if you are uncomfortable switching on your own.

Considering a smart meter

A smart meter can help you better understand and manage your energy use.

- Patterns in your energy use and possible cost-savings are more easily identifiable.
- Smart meters automatically send readings to your supplier, helping ensure bills are accurate and based on actual use rather than estimates.
- Smart prepayment meters make topping up easier and allow balances to be checked from home.

Installing a smart meter is usually free and having one does not stop you from switching suppliers.

Debt and money management

Tackling worries about energy debt

Falling behind on energy bills can be stressful, but support is available. If you are struggling to keep up with payments:

- Contact your energy supplier as early as possible – they have a responsibility to offer support which may include affordable repayment plans, payment breaks, and debt relief.
- Don't ignore bills or letters from your energy supplier – this can delay you getting support and may limit the options available to you later.

Budgeting and payment options

Simple budgeting can help you feel more in control of household finances.

- Set aside small amounts of money for your energy costs.
- Keep track of bills to help reduce pressure.
- Consider whether it is easier for you to manage energy costs with regular direct debit payments or a prepayment meter.

Getting independent advice

Free, confidential money and debt advice is available from independent organisations.

- Speak to a trained adviser to understand your situation and explore your options.
- Contact Charis – we can also signpost you to appropriate support, including a number of schemes that we manage.



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Timely support for essential household needs



By December, Tracey and her partner Michael were already under significant strain.

Both live with long-term health challenges, and for more than a month they had been without a cooker, making it difficult to prepare hot meals or maintain a regular eating routine. When their fridge then broke, their situation deteriorated further, affecting their ability to store food safely and avoid additional grocery costs.

The loss of two essential appliances placed the couple in an impossible position. Replacing them outright was not financially viable, and the absence of support left them having to make difficult decisions. With limited options available, they chose to make a down payment on a cooker and attempt to manage repayments, while postponing replacing the fridge.

The practical consequences of living without these appliances quickly compounded existing pressures, contributing to rising stress levels and a decline in wellbeing.

After learning about the Let's Talk Energy Fund, Tracey decided to apply. The application process was straightforward and non-judgmental, allowing the couple to explain their circumstances and outline what was needed.

Their application was approved quickly, and the essential appliances were delivered shortly afterwards. The support eased pressure at a critical point, and restored a level of stability within the household.

Their story demonstrates how timely support with essential household items can prevent avoidable harm and help people with health vulnerabilities to maintain dignity, wellbeing, and independence.

"We were under a huge amount of stress and didn't know how we were going to manage. Being able to explain what was happening and get the right support made an immediate difference — it felt like a weight had been lifted."*

*Quote amalgamated from Tracey's feedback to reflect her overall experience

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Have you had support from Charis that you'd like to share?
Send us your comments, pictures or videos to **yourstory@charisgrants.com**

Finding additional support

You can access more help and support by contacting Charis directly.

By scanning the QR code or clicking the website link at the bottom of the page, you'll be able to share you details with us.

On an ongoing basis, we can then tell you about support schemes and help that are potentially available to you and how you can apply.

Some of these schemes are managed by Charis whilst others are delivered by our partners including energy companies, charities, housing associations and local government.

Free energy saving advice, money management and income maximisation help is also available directly from Charis and several organisations we work with.

Sign up for more support

Simply head to **signup.charis.group** or scan the QR code to give your details.

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Charis's support schemes

Charis currently manages schemes that support households struggling with their energy bills. These include:

EDF Customer Support Fund

The EDF Fund provides holistic support to customers with energy debt including payment plans, financial assistance, energy-efficient appliances and winter warmth products.

E.ON Next Energy Fund

E.ON Next's Energy Fund support includes debt relief and the provision of essential household items and appliances that can reduce energy usage and bills.

OVO Extra Support

Charis helps OVO deliver its Extra Support scheme which includes home energy efficiency appliances and product bundles to help homes lower their energy usage and bills.

Park Homes support

The Park Homes Warm Home Discount scheme provides £150 rebates to eligible off-grid residents that have limited access to mainstream energy support.

Let's Talk Energy Fund

The Let's Talk Energy Fund provides appliances and advice to households who need to replace old or broken models that are expensive to run.

Don't worry if your energy provider isn't listed above. We can direct you to the schemes of other energy companies and a wide range of other support that's available.

Please scan the QR code or use the link on the page opposite to share your details with us and receive updates on available help.

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Let us and others know what you think about Charis.

You can leave a Trustpilot review at uk.trustpilot.com/evaluate/charisgrants.com