

Priority Services Register

Special services for customers, who are elderly, long-term sick or disabled



At Utility Warehouse, we recognise that the needs of our customers vary greatly. If you are of pensionable age, long-term sick or are registered disabled, we can place you on our Priority Services Register. This is a confidential register which contains details of any special needs you think we should know about. We can then ensure that our staff and representatives are aware of any special needs you may have when dealing with your energy supply or visiting your property. It also makes us aware of customers who can be severely affected by the loss of, or disruption to their gas or electricity supply.

How to contact us

If you would like more information about the services in this guide, you can contact us by:

- Phone: call our Customer Service team on 0333 777 0777;
- Textphone / Minicom - if you are hearing impaired or have a speech impairment and use a Textphone or Minicom system, you can contact us on 0333 003 5643;
- Email: energy@uwdc.co.uk; or
- Post: Utility Warehouse, Network HQ, 508 Edgware Road, The Hyde, London NW9 5AB.

Range of services

We have a range of services available that may assist you if you are:

- of pensionable age; or
- disabled or suffering from a chronic illness; or
- blind or partially sighted; or
- deaf or hearing impaired.

We offer the following services, free of charge -

Password scheme – you can join our password scheme. This allows you to choose a password which is then used by any of our staff or representatives who visit your property. If you want to change your password at any time, just let us know. We will arrange for all the necessary people to know the new password in complete confidence.

Bill re-direction – we can arrange for your bills to be sent to a neighbour, friend or relative or anyone else you choose to nominate if they agree to receive them on your behalf. This may be helpful if you think you may be away from home for a while.

Meter reading - if neither you nor anyone living with you is able to read the meter, you can request that we read your meter once every quarter, and that we inform you of the reading.

Meter repositioning – if you have a prepayment meter and find it difficult to make payments through the meter, we can arrange to move it to a more accessible position.

Alternative format bills – If you find it difficult to read your bills and statements, we can arrange to provide them to you in Braille, large print or by Audio CD.

Special controls and adaptors - if you find it difficult to use a particular appliance our Customer Service team can give you advice on specialist equipment that may assist you.

Gas Safety Check – an annual check of all gas appliances and other gas fittings is available free of charge to qualifying customers. These safety checks are carried out by Gas Safe registered engineers who can also give you advice on the condition of your appliances and their continued safe use. If you would like more information please have a look at the guide on our website “Gas Safety” or contact us by any of the methods listed at the start of this guide and we can discuss this with you.

If you are successfully added to the register, we will share these details with other energy companies, such as our meter readers and engineers, and your energy networks. This will mean they can also offer extra support when you may need it, for example if there's a power cut. We will always follow privacy laws and your details will never be used for marketing purposes.

If anything about your situation changes, let us know and we'll update your details. If at any point you don't want to be on the Priority Services Register anymore, just ask us and we'll do this for you.

Keeping you supplied

If you are on our Priority Services Register we will ensure that your details, including any password that you may choose to have, are passed to both your gas transporter (who is responsible for the pipeline that brings gas to your property) and the local electricity distribution company (who is responsible for the cables that bring electricity into your home) so that these organisations are aware of your circumstances in case of an emergency or supply disruption that may affect you.

If your gas transporter or your local electricity distribution company has to turn off your supply to carry out essential work, they will then let you know at least two working days before work starts. While we do our best to ensure a continuous supply, please note that this cannot be guaranteed.

If your gas transporter needs to disconnect the gas supply to your property for safety reasons and you or someone living with you is on our Priority Services Register, your gas transporter will provide alternative heating and cooking facilities so far as is reasonably practical to do so. If electricity is crucial to you, it's always a good idea to be able to have standby arrangements.

Advice on the efficient use of Energy

We have a team of Energy Efficiency advisors that can be contacted on 0333 003 5647. This fully trained team can give you specialist advice on the efficient use of gas and electricity, provide you with up to date information on energy efficiency measures and can provide you with the contact details of other organisations that deal with energy efficiency advice and measures.

Our advisors can carry out a "Home Energy Efficiency Check" by asking you a series of simple questions to gain an understanding of your property and how much energy you currently use. They will be able to give free advice on any aspect of efficiency measures and will then send you a detailed report of the measures you can take to save money on your energy bills.

Staying Warm

During the winter months in particular, it is very important to keep warm and be aware of the dangers of Hypothermia. Hypothermia occurs when the body gets cold and loses heat faster than the body can make it.

To reduce the risk of hypothermia, ensure that your home is warm enough because hypothermia can occur even at mild temperatures if you are exposed for long enough.

Symptoms of hypothermia include the following:

- Skin which is cold to the touch;
- Drowsiness or sleepiness;
- Slurred speech and slow breathing;
- Unsteady movement;
- A pale and puffy face; and
- Mental confusion.

How to treat hypothermia:

- Slowly re-warm the person and the room, but never apply direct heat such as a hot water bottle;
- Wrap them up well in a blanket and give them a nourishing drink or soup;
- Never rub the body, this can make the condition worse;
- Do not give them alcohol; and
- Seek medical advice immediately.

For additional information on hypothermia you can contact Age UK on 0800 169 6565, ask your local Doctor for advice or call NHS direct by dialing 111 from any landline or mobile phone free of charge.

Prevention is better than cure

There are many things you can do to keep warm.

- Wear several thin layers, rather than one thick layer. This is because they trap warm air close to the body.
- Go for clothes made from wool, cotton or fleecy fabrics, if possible.
- Wear shoes or boots that are warm and dry.
- Keep active in the daytime by walking or taking gentle exercise.
- Consider thermal underwear and socks.
- Draw your curtains, as soon as it gets dark to stop the heat escaping and the draughts coming in.
- Keep any windows and internal doors closed when it's cold – this will keep heat inside, where you most need it.
- A lot of heat is lost through the head and neck, so if you're chilly indoors, try wearing a hat and scarf.
- Your body keeps warm by burning food you've eaten, so make sure you have regular hot meals that contain carbohydrates, such as potatoes, pasta, bread and rice. Try porridge with hot milk for breakfast and soups and stews for lunch and dinner.
- Take regular hot drinks.
- If you are sitting down, a shawl or blanket will provide extra warmth. You should also try to keep your feet up, because air is cooler at ground level.
- Wear warm clothes in bed. When it's really cold, wear thermal underwear, bed socks and even a hat.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount is a Government led scheme that offers financial support to households that need it the most. There are two sections to the Scheme - the Core Group that helps customers of pensionable age; and the Broader Group that helps customers that are in receipt of certain benefits. Full details of the scheme are available on our website - www.uwdc.co.uk or by calling our customer service team on 0333 777 0777.

Independent advice

Citizens Advice consumer service

If you would like to receive free, independent, impartial and practical advice regarding your energy supply, you can contact the Citizens Advice consumer service by:

Phone: 03454 04 05 06;

Textphone: 18001 03454 04 05 06; or

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energy

The "Know your rights in a changing energy market" leaflet on their website may help you.

Details of other organisations that may be able to assist you are provided below.

Age UK

Address: Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA

Phone: 0800 169 2081

Website (with online enquiry form): www.ageuk.org.uk

Disabled Living Foundation

Address: 4th Floor, Jessica House, Red Lion Square, 191 Wandsworth High Street, London, SW18 4LS

Phone: 0300 999 0004

Email: helpline@dlf.org.uk

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Address: 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE

Phone: 0303 123 9999

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Website (with online enquiry form): www.rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss (new name for The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID))

Address: 19-23 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8SL

Phone: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk

Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk