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AS FIRST UTILITY ANNOUNCES PRICE HIKE, NPOWER LAUNCHES CHEAPEST FIXED PRICE DEAL ON THE MARKET

- **First Utility bows to pressure and announces an 18.6% price hike to come into effect 1st June^[1]**
- **At the same time, npower has launched two new fixed price tariffs^[2] - it now has the cheapest and the longest fixed price plans on the market^[3]**
- **At £1,184 a year, npower's cheapest fixed price plan costs only £38 more than the cheapest overall plan on the market^[4], but protects against price hikes until the end of June 2014**
- **With a range of competitive fixed price plans on the market and every indication that the big six suppliers will be following smaller rivals in hiking prices, consumers are urged to shop around now.**

As another small supplier bows to market pressure and increases its prices, npower is helping consumers to take control of their energy costs for the next two and a half years with the launch of its new 'Fixed Family' tariffs^[2]. npower already has the longest fixed price tariff on the market, but it has now boosted its offering with the cheapest fixed price plan too^[3].

At £1,184 a year, npower's Online Price Fix June 2014 protects customers from price hikes until the end of June 2014. It costs £38 a year more than the cheapest overall plan on the market, SSE's Discount Energy Bonus October 2014 (with paperless billing), which is however a variable priced plan^[4]. It is also £8 cheaper than the popular EDF Energy plan, Blue + Price Promise February 2015, but the latter does not carry an exit penalty plus offers 8 months more price protection^[5].

Importantly, the new npower 'Fixed Family' tariffs are cheaper than any of the big six suppliers' standard cash and cheque plans. This makes the decision to switch to a fixed price energy tariff even easier for those who have never switched before. However, consumers do need to be aware that there are cash penalties should they choose to leave early.

The new plans mean that consumers now have an even wider range of competitively priced fixed price plans to choose from. This is particularly important given recent indications that the big six could be heading towards another round of price increases. While there are cheaper tariffs on the market these are variable and therefore do not offer any price guarantee.

Tom Lyon, energy expert at uSwitch.com, says: "With the possibility of price hikes later this year, these new tariffs from npower boost the current range of competitively priced fixed price plans and could help households take control of their energy bills for the next few years. They offer consumers decent savings against standard tariffs, but with the added peace of mind of knowing that they are protected from price hikes for up to three winters.

"There are some marginally cheaper options available for those who are prepared to take a chance with price hikes. However, fixed price tariffs will help those consumers who are sat on old-fashioned and expensive standard plans, to switch to a cheaper deal and enjoy price protection for a good length of time. With such competitive fixed price options around, it makes sense for households to plan ahead and start shopping around now."

Type of plan	Plan Name	Price	Fixed or Variable
Average standard (cash and cheque)	N/A	£1,353	Variable
Average standard (direct debit)	N/A	£1,265	Variable
Cheapest fixed price	npower's Online Price Fix June 2014	£1,184	Fixed until the end of June 2014
Second cheapest fixed price	EDF Energy's Blue + Price Promise February 2015	£1,192	Fixed until end of February 2015
Longest fixed price	npower's Price Fix December 2015	£1,305	Fixed until end of December 2015

Source: uSwitch.com

For more information visit www.uswitch.com or call 0800 093 06 07

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Notes to editors:

1. First Utility 24/4/2013
2. npower press release 24/4/2013: <http://www.npowermediacentre.com/Press-Releases/npower-launches-Fixed-Family-of-tariffs-1246.aspx>.
3. Online Price Fix June 2014 is £1,184 a year and Price Fix December 2015 is £1,305 a year. Bill sizes are based on a medium user npower customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas paying by direct debit with bill sizes averaged across all regions.
4. Calculation is the difference between SSE's Discount Energy Bonus October 2014 (with paperless billing) which is the cheapest plan on the market for a customer paying by monthly direct debit in arrears at £1,146 a year and npower's Online Price Fix June 2014 at £1,184 a year. Difference is £38.
5. Calculation is the difference between EDF's Energy's Blue + Price Promise Plan (February 2015) at £1,192 a year and npowers Online Price Fix June 2014 at £1,184 a year. Difference is £8. Bill sizes are based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas paying by direct debit with bill sizes averaged across all regions.

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uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost 'Send us your bill' service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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