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## **BRITISH GAS HINTS THAT PRICE RISE COULD BE ON THE CARDS THIS WINTER**

In its Interim Management Statement out today, Centrica, the parent of Britain's largest energy company, British Gas, hinted that further price rises could be on the horizon with UK wholesale gas costs around 15% higher for next winter than last and non-commodity costs expected to add a further £50 to the cost of supplying the average household this year. This makes it the second big six supplier to mention concerns over gas wholesale costs for this coming winter.

**Tom Lyon, energy expert at [uSwitch.com](http://uSwitch.com), says:** "This is deeply worrying as consumers are still struggling to come to terms with the £224 or 21% increase in bills from the end of 2010 and only enjoyed a £41 or 3.2% reduction at the beginning of this year<sup>[1]</sup>. Any further increases will see even more people seriously struggling to afford their bills. We would urge all suppliers to hold fire for as long as possible and to ensure that if they do move it is only in response to a sustained upward trend. It's also important that they recognise the impact it will have on their customers.

"For consumers, it's clear that suppliers are warning of trouble ahead. I would urge them to prepare for the worst and to ensure that they are on a competitively priced energy plan and to make their homes as energy efficient as possible by taking up one of the many subsidised insulation offers available on the market. And of course, suppliers have a pot of money to spend on helping their customers with energy efficiency. More importantly, they are moving towards a deadline to have spent it which means that many households could be in line to benefit."

**For more information visit [www.uSwitch.com](http://www.uSwitch.com) or call 0800 093 06 07**

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**Notes to editors:**

1. Based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas, on a standard dual fuel plan, paying quarterly by cash or cheque with bill sizes averaged across all big six suppliers and all regions.

**About us**

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

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](mailto: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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