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## **ENERGY GIANTS BATTLE IT OUT TO OFFER CONSUMERS THE LONGEST FIXED PRICE PROTECTION**

Britain's big six energy suppliers are battling it out again to offer consumers the longest fixed price plan. The latest slugs are being exchanged by npower and ScottishPower, with npower today launching a brand new fixed price tariff that could give both its Scottish rival and EDF Energy a bloody nose.

The new tariff, npower Price Fix September 2016 not only offers the longest price protection on the market, with the fix not expiring until 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016, but it also doesn't carry any exit penalties, putting it in direct competition with EDF Energy's popular Blue + Price Promise.

npower's new fixed tariff costs £1,317 a year - £16 a year more than ScottishPower's Fixed Price Energy February 2016 and £125 a year more than EDF Energy's Blue + Price Promise February 2015<sup>[1]</sup>. However, in return for this premium consumers get to enjoy security against price hikes for a further 8 and 19 months respectively.

The move now means that consumers have a range of attractive fixed price tariffs to choose from, ranging from a year to over three years long. However, as the fixed price period gets longer so the price is creeping upwards. The cheapest variable priced tariff on the market is Spark Energy's Advance plan, which costs £1,041 a year<sup>[2]</sup>, but which requires customers to pay upfront for their energy use. It comes in at £276 a year cheaper than npower's new fixed price tariff, however, it doesn't come with any pricing guarantees.

However, although the new longer-term fixed price tariffs are now carrying a premium for the protection they offer, they are still cheaper than suppliers' standard tariffs for customers who are paying by cash or cheque. To benefit from the price protection and to cut their bills these customers would need to move to paying by direct debit, but the lure of these new fixed price tariffs could be enough to encourage them to do so.

**Tom Lyon, energy expert at [uSwitch.com](http://uSwitch.com), says:** “It looks like suppliers are on the verge of an all-out fixed price war and this spells very good news for consumers looking for shelter from potential price hikes. npower’s new plan is a double whammy as it not only offers the longest price protection on the market, but it also doesn’t carry any early exit penalties. This will definitely give rivals a bloody nose and lowers the risk to consumers of locking in for such a long time.

“As ever, consumers always have to weigh up their options and the fact is that there are some cheaper options available if you are prepared to take a chance with price hikes. However, the prospect of knowing what price you will be paying for almost three and a half years will prove too good to resist for many, so I would urge consumers 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 August 2014	£1,184	Fixed until the end of August 2014
Second cheapest fixed price	EDF Energy’s Blue + Price Promise February 2015	£1,192	Fixed until end of February 2015
Third longest fixed price	npower’s Price Fix December 2015	£1,305	Fixed until end of December 2015
Second longest fixed price	ScottishPower Fixed Price Energy February 2016	£1,301	Fixed until end of January 2016
Longest fixed price	npower Price Fix September 2016	£1,317	Fixed until end of September 2016

Source: [uSwitch.com](http://uSwitch.com)

**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. 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 in arrears with bill sizes averaged across all regions.

2. 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 in advance 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](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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