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GOOD NEWS FOR CONSUMERS AS BRITISH GAS PLEDGES TO USE COLD WEATHER PROFIT TO KEEP PRICES STEADY

In its Interim Management Statement out today, Centrica, the parent of Britain's largest energy company, British Gas, has said that it will use any benefit from the recent unseasonal cold snap to maintain its price competitiveness. The news will come as a relief to cash-strapped consumers and gives them a welcome break from spiraling essential bills, says uSwitch.com.

British Gas last hiked its gas and electricity prices in November (2012) by 6% or £80^[1], taking its average household bill to £1,340 a year^[1]. However, it subsequently reported an 11% year-on-year increase in profits for its residential supply arm^[2], resulting in it facing calls to cut prices again to alleviate the pressure on customers. Any further increase would be its 4th since December 2010^[3].

Ann Robinson, Director of Consumer Policy at uSwitch.com, says: "This is welcome news when the majority of consumers are struggling to pay their household energy bills. British Gas has recognised the pressure facing customers and is using the financial gain from the extended cold weather to maintain its competitiveness, In plain English, this means that British Gas customers should expect no further increase in prices at least for the foreseeable future.

"However, customers should still not be complacent. There is currently over £320 difference between the cheapest and most expensive energy tariffs on the market^[4] and with significant differences creeping in on standing charges it's even more important that consumers shop around the whole market as even greater savings can be made."

Average household energy bills:

Supplier	Current bill size
British Gas	£1,340
EDF Energy	£1,332
E.ON	£1,370
npower	£1,352
ScottishPower	£1,368
SSE	£1,354
Average	£1,353

Source: uSwitch.com

Based on a medium user consuming 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas on a standard dual fuel tariff, paying quarterly by cash and cheque, with bill sizes averaged across all regions

For more information visit 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 British Gas standard Dual Fuel plan, paying quarterly by cash or cheque with bill sizes averaged across all regions.
2. Centrica announcement issued Wednesday 27th February, 2013.
3. Prior to this, British Gas increased its prices in December 2010, August 2011 and November 2012. It announced a price decrease of 5% on electricity in January, 2012.
4. Based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas – E.ON's standard cash and cheque price is £1,370 a year on average while Spark Energy Advance costs £1,041 a year on average – a saving of £329 a year.

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 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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