

This glossary accompanies the home energy resource made in collaboration with the Environment Centre

#### Energy supplier

The companies that supply the gas and electricity to your home. Common energy suppliers are British Gas, Ovo and Utilita.

#### Energy meter

A device that measures the amount of electricity or gas used in your property. Your meters might be in a cupboard under the stairs, near the front door or on a wall outside your property. If you live in a flat, your meter might be in a communal area. If you're unsure how to read your meter, find out how online, or on your energy supplier's website.

#### Smart meter

A device that sends meter readings automatically to your supplier, so you won't need to read your meter yourself. You can see how much energy you're using on an In-Home Display, an online account, or your energy supplier's app.

#### Standing charge

A daily charge to be connected to the grid. You have to pay this whether or not you use any energy.

#### Unit rate

The price you pay per unit of gas or electricity you use.

### Tariffs

A tariff is your energy plan or deal. The main types of tariff are:

- **Fixed rate:** This means your standing charge and unit rate won't change while your contract lasts. There is sometimes an exit fee to pay if you leave the contract early.
- **Pre payment (pay as you go):** This is where you pay for your energy before you use it, using a key or card which you top up at a shop, or – if you have a smart meter – an app on your phone. If you don't top up, your meter will cut off your energy supply.
- **Standard variable:** This means the rate you pay for gas and electricity will change as energy prices do.
- **Time of use\*, like 'Economy 7':** This means you're charged two different rates for your electricity – cheaper at night, more expensive during the day. This is usually only cheaper overall if you have electric storage heaters and an electric immersion heater which charge up overnight.

\* Unless you have a Time of use tariff, your electricity will cost the same during the day and at nighttime.

## Heating your home

### Gas Central Heating

Where you have a boiler which supplies heat to radiators around the home.

### Hot water cylinder

A large tank that stores hot water before it gets to your taps and shower.

### Heating programmer

This allows you to set when your heating goes on and off, at different times on different days of the week. If you leave your home for work, you might want to set your heating so that your home is warm when you get up, cools down while you're at work, and warms up again for when you're back home.

### Room thermostat

This controls the temperature your home warms up to. The recommended temperature is 18°C in a hallway, or 21°C in a living room. You don't need to turn your thermostat up when it is colder outside, and turning your thermostat up higher won't make your home heat up faster.

### Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs)

These are the radiator controls that allow you to change the temperature in each room.

### Immersion heater

Homes with storage heaters usually have an immersion heater that uses electricity to heat water inside a hot water tank.

## Storage heaters

Storage heaters use electricity overnight to produce and store heat to be released the following day. Whereas gas central heating is controlled with one central programmer, storage heaters need to be controlled individually.

- **Input control:** This controls how much heat storage heaters store overnight. Set this so it's right for you and the room it's in. If you know it's going to be cold the next day, you might want to set it a bit higher so the heater stores more warmth overnight.
- **Output control:** This controls how quickly storage heaters release heat. You might want to keep the output low throughout the day when it's warmer, then turn it up in the evening to release more heat. Don't forget to turn it down again before bed!

If you'd like to find out more about making your home more energy efficient, contact the Environment Centre (tEC) by emailing [enquiries@environmentcentre.com](mailto:enquiries@environmentcentre.com) or giving them a call on 0800 804 8601.

For more tips and advice, see their website at [environmentcentre.com](http://environmentcentre.com)



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