

With winter on the way and many residents feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we're expecting to see more households struggling with their energy bills this year.

Now more than ever it is vital that vulnerable residents are able to access the help available, so this issue of TEA Time is packed full of information and advice to help those who need it most.

Warm Home Discount Schemes: now opening

Many suppliers have now opened their Warm Home Discount scheme, giving eligible households £140 off their bill between September 2020 and March 2021. The scheme is operated on a first-come, first-served basis so we recommend encouraging residents to apply as soon as possible.

Those in receipt of the Guaranteed Credit element of Pension Credit will qualify automatically, but residents who receive certain benefits, have children in the household, or are on a low income may also be eligible. Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payments are not affected and those on prepayment meters can also access the discount. Residents can apply direct with their supplier or through the TEA helpline.

Julie's story

Julie found herself struggling to keep the house warm for her family, including her 4-month-old baby and 3 other children. Julie was in arrears with her energy company and unable to pay her last two bills due to a loss of income during lockdown. Her partner suffers with asthma and COPD and their young child was born prematurely, making the cold house a threat to their health and wellbeing.

We worked with Julie's energy supplier to get her set up on their COVID-19 scheme, where customers can reduce their payments for 3 months while impacted by the pandemic. We then signposted Julie to the Warm Homes Discount which offers £140 off energy bills for qualifying households in the winter. We raised £100 from a trust fund to help Julie pay down some of her energy debt, and switched her tariff to a more appropriate option, saving £77 per year.

Since Julie has vulnerable people and young children at home, we were also able to sign her up to the Priority Service Register, so now the family will get early notice of any disruption and priority help in a power cut. Julie was also struggling with rent payments and other debts, so we were able to refer her to a partner agency for specialised help with this.





We're here to help with simple, energy-saving solutions

We may not be able to carry out home energy checks just yet, but we're continuing to support those who may struggle to stay warm this winter. We can post or deliver easy-to-use equipment (such as LED lightbulbs, draught proofing and reflective radiator panels) to help residents stay warmer, save energy and reduce their bills.

Get in touch on **0800 677 1952** to find out more or to refer a resident.

Energy in the news: Are bills on the rise?

In April, the cost of wholesale energy hit historic lows, and some of these savings were passed on to consumers. Now, with many countries coming out of lockdown, wholesale prices are on the rise and consumers are starting to see higher energy costs. Some energy suppliers have already announced increases in energy prices starting in October, introducing annual average increases of around £50 - £90 per year. Suppliers have blamed price increases on rising wholesale costs and shortfalls experienced as a result of the pandemic.

We're encouraging residents to take a look at alternative suppliers and tariffs to ensure they aren't overpaying as we head into winter. Switching is relatively easy and can save the average householder hundreds of pounds per year. TEA is here to support anyone who would like help switching.

BOILER REPLACEMENT SCHEME REOPENS IN TIME FOR WINTER

Qualifying householders can now apply for a fully-funded boiler repair or replacement if their gas boiler leaves them without heating or hot water.

NEW £2BN GRANT SCHEME LAUNCHED TO HOMES WARMER AND GREENER

The Green Homes Grant Scheme is now open to homeowners and landlords looking to install energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating. TEA advisors are on hand to help local residents benefit from the scheme.

Come along to our TEA Talk, 2-3 pm on Tuesday 10th November 2020

Do you help vulnerable people who may be impacted by the colder weather? Do you know someone who struggles to keep their home warm? On Tuesday 10th November, 2-3 pm, we'll be hosting a virtual TEA Talk: an opportunity to learn about the help available through the scheme this winter and ask any questions you may have.

The event is completely free and anyone is welcome to attend. Simply sign up [here](#) or get in touch to find out more.



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Telford Energy Advice

