

SMART METERS ARE COMING



Summary

- All homes will be offered a Smart Meter by 2020
- The meter communicates direct with the supplier using a secure radio communication network
- End of estimated bills
- Opportunity for greater variety of different tariffs (there will probably be a new “time of use Tariff 16.00 – 20.00 hrs)
- Easier to change supplier
- Accurate billing – automatic meter reading
- Easier to change from credit to debit metering
- Easier to top up credit
- Opportunities to reduce consumption and save money using the information the monitor provides
- Easier for visually impaired / monitors designed with RNIB / large button remote key pad for monitor may also be available for physically impaired
- Easier to balance national grid demand (if national supplies low, some remote switching could occur e.g. temporary switching off of freezers etc.)
- Could mean need for fewer new power supplies
- Meter and monitor supplied free (funded by small increase in our energy bills)

Questions to ask your supplier

- Is the smart meter a mark 2 and is it compatible with other suppliers? If not can installation be deferred until it is?
- Will standing charges remain the same?
- Will an in house monitor be supplied and does it have full function for both gas and electricity?
- Is the meter compatible with P.V. if you have panels?
- Consider how much data you allow the supplier to use (your consumption patterns etc. could be extracted from the data to provide marketing opportunities.) You must be asked and can say NO
- Is supplier offering a variety of tariffs at different times? Watch out that these tariffs don't actually cost more
- When will the smart meter be fitted? – check it will be gas as well as electricity
- Could supplier remotely disconnect? Generally the industry has stated they will not do this. Will the monitor work in your location?

General information

- No nasty shock at end of year if mid-year bills were estimated. No longer will supplier possibly owe you money, especially if you have variable direct debit. BUT check your readings and bank statements – mistakes do occur
- No standard meter type – depends on supplier
- Make sure if offered, new meter has full functionality – one major supplier is offering new meters that don't have full smart functions
- Roll out will depend on supplier and age of present meter but all must be offered one by 2020. Probably offered on area basis to help reduce installation costs
- Suppliers keen to have interest expressed by customers in advance
- Does not depend on usual mobile phone coverage – different radio wave system. Not dependent on your home wi-fi signals. It is as safe as mobile phone signals
- Should make swapping suppliers easier – they will have real time readings and new supplier should be able to take on another's meters and readings the same day
- Installer must explain how they work – including monitor
- Smaller suppliers may be slower to offer new meters
- Remote switching to balance supply does not apply to gas
- They have long life internal battery. If battery fails can be read manually as now. Supplier responsible for replacing battery and ultimately meter. Thought they will last some 15 years
- Hidden cost – customer will pay for new meters by small increase in prices
- All monitors will have same basic functions, real time and historic cost / consumption analysis, alarm when set cost reached, will work for both gas and electricity. Monitor will help to identify how much energy individual equipment uses (like the energy monitors we have been lending out.) Some monitors will have more functions including Co2 emissions, P.V. generation
- Home battery storage could become available to boost grid supplies
- May be problems of communication if monitor too far from meters, house has very thick walls etc. or you live in a poor reception area
- Re prepayment meters – will be able to top up via mobile phone. Should be easier to change from credit to prepay meter and vice versa
- 84% of those already with S.M. recommend them
- Savings may not be as great as advertised – depends on consumption pattern and your use of the information the monitor provides
- Offers better control of energy costs
- When buying a new washing machine / dryer or dishwasher worth considering those with a delay timer so they can be set to run during cheap tariff times

- Stretton Climate Care is here to offer advice
- www.strettonclimatecare.org.uk Tel: 07528 493181

- Useful website for unbiased information www.smartme.co.uk

We hold an Energy Advice Drop In Service, every Thursday at the Wellbeing Centre,
Easthope Road, Church Stretton 10.00 – 12.00