

# Frequently asked questions

Around 53 million smart meters are being fitted in over 30 million premises (households and small businesses) across Wales, Scotland and England. This is the biggest national infrastructure project of our lifetimes and it will enable a more efficient energy system for Great Britain. Over 12 million smart meters have been installed.



the in-home display

## Smart meters and in-home displays

### 1. What are smart meters and how do they benefit me?

Smart meters are the new generation of gas and electricity meters, which replace the traditional energy meters in our homes.

Smart meters help you stay more in control of your energy use and help you save money. This is because you can use your in-home display to see how much energy you're using as you use it, and what it is costing in pounds and pence. Smart meters bring an end to estimated billing so you will not find yourself with an unexpected catch-up bill at the end of the year.

### 2. Can I get a smart meter for free?

There is no additional cost for a smart meter, the installation or for the in-home display. You won't have an extra charge on your bill because you choose to accept a smart meter.

### 3. How do smart meters work?

Smart meters measure how much gas and electricity you use and securely share this directly with your energy supplier and your in-home display.

Information is sent via a secure smart data network set up for smart meters which is managed by the Data Communications Company. This works in a similar way to other wireless systems. Though it is a wireless system, you don't need the Internet in your home for it to work, and it won't use your Internet if you do have it.

### 4. How does the in-home display work?

During your smart meter installation, the installer will show you exactly how your in-home display works and set it up for you. Your smart meter communicates with the in-home display to show you information about your energy usage in near real time. Position it somewhere useful, such as your kitchen or living room, so you can see exactly how much you're using and what it's costing at a glance. If you have any problems understanding your in-home display, please contact your energy supplier for more information.

### 5. Will in-home displays work for people with disabilities or impairments?

All in-home displays are designed to show information in a way that's easy to understand. However, an 'accessible' in-home display with additional features has been developed in conjunction with the RNIB and includes features such as large buttons and text-to-speech functionality. Depending on the severity of the condition, some people may find that the accessible in-home display better meets their needs. Consumers wishing to use an accessible in-home display should contact their energy supplier to find out more.



## 6. How will a smart meter help me save money?

Eighty two per cent of smart meter owners say their smart meter gives them a better idea of what they're spending on energy, therefore, it is easier to identify areas where you can decrease costs.

If you use the information shown on your in-home display to help reduce your energy use, you should be able to reduce your energy costs. Smart meters also mean accurate bills, so you can be confident that you're only paying for what you've actually used.

## 7. How accurate are smart meters?

Smart meters are as accurate as traditional meters. Energy suppliers receive very few complaints about them.

By law, all smart meters have to be certified by the Office for Product Safety & Standards, but if you do think there's a fault, you can report it to your energy supplier in the same way you do now.

## 8. Could a smart meter impact my health?

No. Public Health England (PHE) sees no risk or danger to health from smart meters. The smart meters used in Britain have undergone one of the most rigorous safety testing regimes in the world and exceed every UK and EU safety standard.

## 9. How is my personal data kept safe when I have a smart meter?

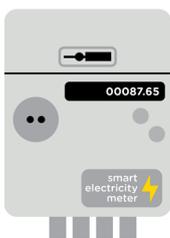
Only your supplier can access your smart meter readings, and they won't share any of it without your permission.

Your name, address and bank details are never stored on the meter itself. This data is transmitted safely, using a dedicated and secure wireless network.

Depending on how often you've agreed to share it with your supplier, your smart meter will send half-hourly, daily or monthly meter readings. You can change your preference for how often you share this information at any point by getting in contact with your supplier directly.

Your energy supplier may also use this information to provide tailored energy efficiency advice and improve the service they provide for you if you choose.

## Getting a smart meter



Smart electricity meter

## 10. How do I get my smart meter?

Contact your energy supplier to find out when you can get a smart meter.

We're all entitled to a smart meter as part of the rollout. Some of us will have to wait longer than others to get our new meter, but you can ask your energy supplier directly to see if yours can be fitted now. How soon you can get your smart meter depends on your energy supplier, where you live, your current meter type and what kind of home you live in.

## 11. I rent my home. Can I still get a smart meter?

Yes, if you pay your electricity and/or gas bills and they're addressed to you rather than your landlord you can get a smart meter. You don't need your landlord's permission to get a smart meter (although you should inform them). If you are not the bill payer then ask your



landlord if you can get a smart meter.

#### 12. I have a prepay meter. Can I still get a smart meter?

Yes. Smart meters will make prepay as easy as pay-as-you-go on your mobile or tablet, and you can continue to top up your meter at a shop or you can now top up online, by phone and by text via the app. Smart meters will be able to switch between payment modes (credit and prepay) and there will be no need for a physical meter change.

#### 13. I'm moving home. Can I take my in-home display with me?

No, it won't work. Your in-home display will only work with the smart meter that it is paired with. If you're moving home, please leave your in-home display at the property so the new householder can benefit from it.

If you move into a house that has a smart meter, but no in-home display, you should contact your energy supplier.

### Preparing for installation and what happens on the day



Installer Identification badge

#### 14. How do I prepare for installation?

Your energy supplier will:

- contact you and arrange a time and date that suits you
- tell you what to expect, how long it will take and if there's anything special you need to do

You'll need to:

- be at home to let the installer in and learn how to use your in-home display
- make sure the installer can get to your current meter/meters
- ensure any pets are kept out of the way

If it's going to be a struggle to clear in front your meters, let your energy supplier know when you book the appointment.

#### 15. What should I expect during my smart meter installation?

Smart meters can only be installed by your energy supplier, or by a contractor on behalf of your energy supplier. Your appointment will always be pre-booked so you will know when you can expect your installer to arrive. When your installer arrives, they should present you with a valid identity card including the company name and phone number, as well as their name and photograph.

The installation is very similar to a standard meter installation and is carried out by a fully trained installer. Installation takes about two hours if you have both your gas and electricity with the same supplier and they're fitting the smart meters at the same time.

While the meter is being replaced, your electricity and/or gas will need to be switched off for approximately 30 minutes each (i.e. 60 minutes if you're having both meters replaced) – this is normal practice.

Installers will remove the existing meter and replace it with the new smart meter usually in the same place as the old meter. If the new smart meter can't be installed in that location and needs to be installed elsewhere, the installer will discuss this with you.

Once your new meter is in place, the installer will show you how to use your in-home display, answer any questions you may have



and will offer energy efficiency advice. Written instructions on how to use the in-home display will also be left behind by the installer or sent by your energy supplier. The installer will also do a safety check of all your gas appliances if you have a gas smart meter installed. Once they're done, they'll take away all your old meters.

**16. Do I have to be at home during the installation?**

Yes. Either you (or another responsible adult if you can't be there) will have to be at home, even if your meters are located outside. This is so the installer can show you how the in-home display works and how to use it. It is also to make sure that when they disconnect and connect the energy supply as part of the installation, it is done safely.

**17. Do I need one smart meter for gas and another for electricity?**

Yes, both meters will be replaced.

If you're a dual fuel customer, your supplier will aim to install both meters on the same visit to make things as easy as possible. You will only need one in-home display to view both your gas and electricity usage. If your gas and electricity accounts are with different suppliers, you will have two separate smart meter installations (one from each of your suppliers).

**18. Do the installers have a code of practice?**

Yes. All the energy suppliers have signed up for the Smart Metering Installation Code of Practice (SMICoP). It is an industry-wide code of practice which governs their behaviour and responsibilities during the installation process and is a legal requirement in their licence conditions.

The code is regulated by Ofgem.

**19. Will the person who installs my smart meter be qualified?**

Yes. There are strict rules for the installers who come and fit your smart meters. All installers are formally qualified and have to meet specific national standards, set out in the Smart Metering Installation Code of Practice.

**Smart Energy GB**

**What is  
Smart Energy GB?**

Smart Energy GB is the voice of the smart meter rollout. It's their task to help everyone in Great Britain understand smart meters, the national rollout and how to use your new meters to get your gas and electricity under control.

To find out answers to other Frequently Asked Questions, visit [smartenergyGB.org/FAQs](https://smartenergyGB.org/FAQs)

