

BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK 2019

Campaign briefing

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Introduction

Big Energy Saving Week 2019 (BESW) is back to help consumers understand their energy use, cut their bills and get the financial support they are entitled to.

BESW is a partnership campaign between Citizens Advice Scotland, Citizens Advice, the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and numerous other organisations. It is funded through a statutory levy on energy network companies.

BESW will be launching the week beginning **21 January 2019**.

Every year, BESW partners empower people across Scotland, England and Wales to save money on their energy bills through face to face events, social media, local partnerships and engaging with their local media.

Last year, campaigners helped **thousands of people save approximately one million pounds** through their events and campaign activity and almost 9 in 10 consumers contacted after attending a BESW event said they felt more confident they knew how to save money and energy in future.

This year, BESW focuses on saving consumers money and energy by:

- Educating consumers directly on how to **check** their energy costs and **switch** tariff or supplier if they are paying too much.
- Spreading awareness of the advice and support available for consumers from programmes like Energy Best Deal extra to the Priority Services Register to benefits and grants they may be entitled to.
- Ensuring that consumers are able to **save** money and energy by accessing discounts and implementing energy efficiency measures such as insulation.

Join us in supporting your local community to check – switch – save.

Why campaign?

The Citizens Advice Network in Scotland delivers free, confidential and independent advice to help millions of people to find a way forward. Citizens Advice Scotland is also the official consumer body for energy in Scotland.

We use research and evidence from the people who contact our advice service every day to understand the problems facing energy consumers in Scotland. We help solve these problems by engaging with industry, changing policy and supporting consumers to navigate the market.

We know that many of our clients are struggling to pay their energy bills

- In 2017/18, the Citizens Advice Network in Scotland (including citizens advice bureaux, the Consumer Advice helpline and the Extra Help Unit) dealt with 38,000 energy cases.

Too many people are living in fuel poverty

- 28% of private rented homes in Scotland are in fuel poverty.
- Around 12% of Scottish households rely on electricity for heating. 52% of this group are defined as being in fuel poverty – nearly twice as many as the population as a whole – and we are yet to see the impact of significant price rises since 2017¹.
- One in ten prepayment meter customers “self-disconnected” from their electricity or gas supply because they did not top up their meters².
- Mains gas is both the cheapest means to heat homes and the most common heating fuel in Scotland, England and Wales. However many people, particularly in certain areas and demographics, do not have access to, or do not make use of, mains gas for heating their home. Off-gas grid households are more likely to experience fuel poverty and poor energy efficiency³.
- Read our insight report which explores the characteristics of the fuel poor households that may be in the greatest need of support, and the types of support that would benefit them the most⁴.
- Big Energy Saving Week aims to tackle fuel poverty by raising awareness of ways that consumers can keep their energy bills down and helping them to find better deals, discounts, grants and help.

¹ [Hard-Wired Problems: Delivering effective support to households with electric heating](#)

² [State of the energy market 2018](#)

³ [Off-gas consumers](#)

⁴ [Speaking Up: understanding fuel poverty support needs](#)

Face to face help reaches households in vulnerable situations, who can find the energy market confusing

- Many customers in vulnerable circumstances continue to be most likely to be paying over the odds for their energy⁵.
- One important way to reach these households is to provide local, face-to-face advice on reducing bills. That is why a key component of BESW is holding public events to directly help consumers.

Many consumers aren't taking advantage of opportunities to maximise their income or get support

- Over £20bn in benefits and tax credits goes unclaimed in the UK - enough to pay the fuel bills of millions of homes!
- Specialist support for vulnerable consumers is available from suppliers. Yet not everyone who is eligible receives the Warm Home Discount or is signed up to the Priority Services Register. Big Energy Saving Week is an opportunity to promote this extra help. For more information on the schemes, including eligibility criteria, see <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills-s/>

Many consumers are unaware of how they could save money on their fuel bills by switching or changing their habits

- Many people stay on the same tariff or with the same supplier for years without realising they could be getting a better deal elsewhere. As of April 2018, more than half of households were still on a poor value default deal⁶. They could be saving hundreds of pounds a year, particularly if they have never switched before - 34% of people have never switched supplier⁷.
- Making simple changes to everyday behaviours could save households over £80 a year, by turning appliances off standby, turning off lights when they're not in use, using a washing up bowl, only filling the kettle up with the amount of water needed and cutting back on washing machine use by one cycle a week.
- Being smarter about heating homes could lead to savings of over £100, through draught proofing around doors and windows, installing a room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves and turning down the room thermostat by one degree.

We live in energy-inefficient housing

- A quarter of heat is lost through the roof in an uninsulated home. Consumers can save hundreds of pounds and reduce carbon emissions by insulating their home. This could be a combination of loft insulation, insulating the hot water tank, using radiator reflective panels, installing cavity wall insulation and double glazing.

⁵ [Ofgem press release](#)

⁶ [State of the energy market 2018](#)

⁷ [Consumer engagement survey 2017](#)

- There are several supplier and Government schemes, including Energy Companies Obligation (ECO), Nest in Wales and HEEPS in Scotland, to help consumers make their homes more efficient and reduce the amount they spend on energy. Home Energy Scotland is the Scottish Government's free and impartial service providing advice on energy efficiency schemes. Call 0808 808 2282 to find out more or visit the website: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/home-energy-scotland>

People aren't aware of changes to the energy market which make it easier to switch

Understanding energy costs and **checking** that consumers aren't paying too much is simple. All energy suppliers should supply a personal projection on bills and other communications that estimates likely energy costs over the next 12 months, explaining price changes in pounds and pence and an annual summary to help consumers understand their tariff and compare it with others.

Switching is easier than ever before - all suppliers should now offer consumers clear and personalised information, including:

- regular updates on the cheapest available tariff
- providing tariff information labels (similar to food labels) to make comparisons easier
- advance warning of any price increases or contract changes that would disadvantage a consumer.
- consumers on a fixed-term deal will receive a notice 42-49 days before the end date to remind them the tariff is coming to an end. If they switch after this point, suppliers can't charge a termination fee.

The Energy Switch Guarantee ensures energy switching is completed in just 21 days. At the time we are printing this briefing, 24 suppliers are signed up to it. Check which ones at energyswitchguarantee.com. The guarantee ensures:

- consumers can continue using their existing energy supplier until they switch
- in the event of a problem occurring, the consumer's new supplier should make sure the issue is resolved swiftly and efficiently
- the consumer can change their mind within 14 days of the switch and return to their previous supplier
- and, any credit from their old energy account will be refunded within 14 days of their final bill.

Price comparison tool

Switching energy supplier can be a great way for households to save money, with research showing that the majority of customers on non-fixed deals could save a significant sum of money.

Please encourage staff and volunteers to use the Citizens Advice price comparison tool <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

- **Free** tool for clients to use and for suppliers to list their pricing information
- A **full market** comparison tool
- Totally **independent**
- Gives a **customer service rating** out of 5 stars for the largest energy suppliers
- Tells you if a provider offers the **Energy Switch Guarantee** and / or the Warm Home Discount
- Access to a downloadable fact sheet containing relevant information which will also contain supplier contact details and Ofgem accredited switching site details

Key messages

Are you ready to join us in campaigning and raising awareness of how to save money on energy bills?

Big Energy Saving Week is all about making sure consumers can save money and energy if they **check – switch – save.**

Check

- Make sure you aren't paying too much or missing out on any benefits, grants or support that could boost your income and lower costs. Call your supplier or visit your nearest citizens advice bureau for more information.

Switch

- You could save hundreds of pounds by switching energy tariff or supplier. Visit <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/> to compare prices or go to a Big Energy Saving Week event near you.

Save

- Make your home energy efficient and cut your bills by hundreds of pounds. Don't leave appliances on standby, always turn off the light when you leave a room, and ask your supplier about help to pay for insulation or a boiler upgrade.

How to get involved

There are a range of resources to help you campaign and raise awareness. Posters, leaflets and freebies (bags, meter keys and more) are FREE to order. There are Scottish branded materials available from Citizens Advice from the 10th December 2018. These can be accessed from www.citizensadvice.org.uk/besw19-partner after go live date.

You can access to downloadable materials from the CAS BESW campaign page too: www.cas.org.uk/besw

Resources this year include:

- Use the **tally counter** we have sent you to count how many people come to your events
- Use the **stickers** to signal people can speak to you about energy advice.
- Help clients moderate the temperature of their homes by giving them our **temperature gauges**.
- Use our **selfie board** to take photos of people you've helped save money.

Raise awareness within your office

- Put the posters, leaflets and Energy Best Deal booklets in public spaces (waiting rooms and reception areas).
- Hold a morning briefing for staff and volunteers to promote the messages of the campaign and ask them to share the ideas throughout their own networks.
- Follow up examples where staff/volunteers, or their contacts, or clients have made savings as a result of following the check, switch, save tips. These make good case studies for your evaluation, media work and future energy related campaigns.

Put on BESW events to engage with the public

- Set up a stall with BESW campaign materials at public venues such as the local library, college, shopping centre, sheltered housing/care home, lunch club or community centre.
- You can order extra materials and freebies at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/besw19-partner. Let us know the details of your event by filling in the form hosted by Citizens Advice: [insert link here]
- Use a laptop or tablet to help consumers save money by switching energy provider or tariff using our energy price comparison tool: energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk.
- Consider how you can target people who are most hard to reach by the campaign messages and prioritise events that attract these consumers.

Engage local media

- Send a press release to local media and/or local authority news channels using our template.
- Get a slot on local radio / community radio to highlight key education messages. Use case studies to show how consumers can save money and consider taking along an energy or debt expert to take questions from listeners.

Support local partners to get involved

- Contact local MPs, MSPs and councillors highlighting BESW using the template letter at www.cas.org.uk/besw.
- Send out advance notice of the week and opportunities to get involved to your networks.
- Source energy related information (e.g. consumer facing factsheets), giveaways and offers of support from voluntary and corporate sector partners.
- Distribute digital and hard-copy consumer education resources to community facilities and frontline workers across the region (i.e. JCP, local authority, libraries).
- Consider holding a workshop, seminar or public event for other agencies and stakeholders (including suppliers) to discuss how they can work better together to help consumers get access to the right support across the region.

Raise awareness online

- Run a sustained Twitter and Facebook campaign throughout the week, using the BESW social media pack and linking to BESW news coverage.
- Tweet or retweet at least one of the key campaign messages, using the hashtag *#BESW19*.
- Promote the Citizens Advice energy price comparison tool: energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk.
- Share success stories about how much money you have helped clients save during BESW - use our selfie board to take photos of people you've helped save money.
- Consider a Twitter and/or Facebook Q&A where your followers are invited to get energy help from an expert or expert panel. You can set up some template content in advance and ask friends or colleagues to ask questions to keep the debate moving over a timed period. Contact other local partners to see if you can share networks and resources.

Tell us about your involvement

Whatever you do for BESW, please let us know! This is so we can make sure you get the resources you need as well as recognising all the great work you do.

There is also a form hosted by Citizens Advice for you to register all the events you are holding. It's really important to fill this in so we can accurately evaluate our impact. A link to this form will be sent to you directly – please get in touch with Lucy or Emily if you have any questions.

We will send out an evaluation form link to everyone who has taken part following the week. You can use the monitoring form to help you do this. You can access this form on our campaigns pages once it goes live: www.cas.org.uk/besw

If you are in receipt of BESW funding, this will be conditional upon providing monitoring and evaluation information.

Silver partners will also need to fill in client surveys both during and after the week.

Otherwise, you can let us know what you're up to – or ask any questions – by emailing Lucy at lucy.manson@cas.org.uk or Emily at Emily.liddle@cas.org.uk