

Our Customer Service Charter



**YOUR GAS EMERGENCY
AND PIPELINE SERVICE**



**WALES&WEST
UTILITIES**

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Our Customer Service Charter

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A bit about us...

Every day our skilled and dedicated colleagues do their very best to keep our 7.5 million customers safe and warm, with a gas network they can rely on and a level of service they can trust.

We don't sell gas; instead we use our 35,000 kilometre network of pipes to transport gas to homes and businesses across Wales and the south west of England. It's a vital service, and one we are extremely proud to deliver.

The companies that do sell you gas are called gas suppliers, and you should contact your gas supplier if you have any questions about buying gas, your gas bill or meter reading. You can find your supplier's telephone number on your gas bill or statement.



Our commitment to you

At Wales & West Utilities, it's our ambition to deliver outstanding levels of gas safety, reliability and customer service so we are trusted and valued by the millions of people we serve every day.

We're a values driven company. How we do things is just as important as what we do. We always put our customers first. This means we do everything we can to get things right – first time. And if we don't, we'll sort things out quickly.

If service issues or complaints arise, we'll resolve them quickly and professionally. We have local managers on hand to oversee each process, and we'll visit customers when requested. If we're at fault and owe you any compensation, we'll pay you promptly every time. Our excellent customer service also means that we show courtesy and consideration at all times to everyone we deal with. We will be polite, understanding and respectful, while working to deliver what you need.

As some of our customers have disabilities or are vulnerable in other ways, we'll make sure that everyone's given the right support when they need it. To do that, we'll work in partnership with a range of other organisations - including local authorities, other utility companies, and various support agencies. We will also work with others in our industry to develop and implement best practice in serving vulnerable customers. By working closely together we'll provide a helping hand to those who need it, responding well to each person's specific needs.

We've earned accreditations – from The Institute of Customer Service for the quality of the service we deliver and from the British Standards Institution for the support we provide to those most in need. But we're not complacent – and are always reviewing our ways of working to see how we can improve.

We know that people can't choose their gas network, but if they could, we'd want them to choose us.

About our Customer Service Charter

This document explains when and how we might contact you, and how you can get in touch with us to ask or complain about any of our services. It also details the steps we take to make sure that only properly trained Wales & West Utilities colleagues or contractors make visits to your home. It also outlines the special services available for customers who are of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or living with children aged under five or otherwise in a vulnerable situation, who might need extra services related to their access, communication and safety needs.

Accessibility

We're happy to provide a copy of this document to you, free of charge, in the format which suits you best, including audio, large print, Braille or another language. Just let us know and we'll get one on its way to you.

Get in touch

If you have any general enquiries, please call us on freephone

0800 912 2999

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and have a Minicom or Text phone you can use it to call our Customer Services Team on

02920 278 707

You can also email our friendly Customer Services Team at **enquiries@wwutilities.co.uk**

If you have a compliment or complaint, please call freephone

0800 294 6645

(calls are monitored).

 **facebook.com/wwutilities**

 **[@WWUtilities](https://twitter.com/WWUtilities)**

Address

Wales & West Utilities
Wales & West House
Spooner Close
Celtic Springs
Coedkernew
Newport NP10 8FZ

We've also prepared this guide to explain how we'll handle your complaint:

wwwutilities.co.uk/media/1266/complaints_handling_procedure.pdf

Keeping you warm

Reliable and resilient

We do our very best to keep you safe and warm. The gas network is reliable and resilient, but sometimes, we will have to work in your area or enter your home to keep you safe and warm. Here you can see what you can expect from us when we do.

For safety reasons, we may have to disconnect the gas supply to your home.

If we do have to disconnect your gas supply, we'll aim to provide you with alternative temporary heating and cooking facilities if you or anyone you live with is of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or living with children aged under five or otherwise in a vulnerable situation, and in need of additional services related to your access, communication and safety needs.

We always do our best to be sympathetic to everyone's needs. That means we'll always try to make sure that in exceptional circumstances, your temporary heating and cooking needs are met, using local judgement on a case-by-case basis. When we call, please tell us if you have any special needs we should know about.

Working in your street

We're continually upgrading your gas network to keep you safe and warm. Sometimes, this essential work causes inconvenience - but we always work as efficiently as we can, using the most up to date techniques to help keep disruption to a minimum.

We'll do our best to make sure:

- ✓ **We give you at least five working days' notice** of any planned gas pipe upgrade replacement works in your road. If we need to cut off your gas supply while we're working, we'll let you know the expected date, explain why we need to do the work and make arrangements to turn it back on as soon as possible.
- ✓ **We'll park all our vehicles and equipment safely**, without blocking roads or driveways.
- ✓ Where we need to dig across access roads and driveways, **we will always speak to the property owners** concerned before we start work.
- ✓ **We'll leave the site in a safe and tidy condition** at the end of each working day.
- ✓ Our colleagues and contractors **will be polite and professional** at all times.

Entering your home

From time to time we may need to visit your home to inspect or maintain gas equipment, to deal with a reported gas emergency or to do other work related to your gas supply. The visit will either be made by one of our team or a contractor working for us. We have arrangements in place so that you can be sure that only properly trained Wales & West Utilities colleagues or contractors make visits to your home. If you'd like to confirm the identity of the person visiting you, call the number on the back of their identity card and we will confirm whether the person is working on our behalf.

We'll make sure that:

- ✓ **We've seen references and made all the necessary background** checks so that any colleagues or contractors who visit you on our behalf are reliable, trustworthy people.
- ✓ **Our colleagues and contractors have the right training and qualifications to do the work.** They'll be friendly and polite at all times, without being over-familiar. They will explain everything clearly and accurately, using suitable and sensitive language and will always respect your property and premises.
- ✓ **All authorised employees and contractors will show you an identity card** with a colour photo of them on it, as well as the company name, their own name and a reference number.
- ✓ Where possible, **all vehicles used** for visits to your premises will **show our or our contractor's logo.**
- ✓ Where possible, **all our employees and contractors will wear branded clothing** showing that they're working for us.
- ✓ All our employees and contractors are able to tell you the **National Gas Emergency Service telephone number.**
- ✓ All our employees and contractors have **read this document carefully** and will keep the promises we make in it at all times.



Extra help

The Priority Services Register (PSR)

Did you know that every gas supplier – the company you pay your bills to – has what's called a Priority Services Register (PSR). This register helps us and your gas supplier to make sure we really look after the people who need it most.

Here's what you need to know...

Why join the register?

- You will be offered alternative heating and cooking appliances if your gas supply is interrupted.
- You can choose your own password so you know our engineers are genuine.
- Your supplier may be able to move your gas meter if you're not able to access it.
- You can ask your supplier to send their bill to anybody who has agreed to receive it (for example a family member or carer).
- You may receive a free gas safety check for your appliances if everyone at the property is eligible to register (if you don't own your own home, your landlord must make sure that any gas appliances, fittings and flues are safe).
- We operate a 'Knock and Wait' service – our engineers will give you longer to come to your door.

Who can join the PSR?

Households who:

- Have someone aged over 60, or someone under five living with them.
- Have someone who is living with a chronic medical condition or registered disabled.
- Have a resident who has other specific needs which mean they need extra support, including being blind/partially sighted, deaf/hard of hearing, having speech difficulties (or non-English speaker).

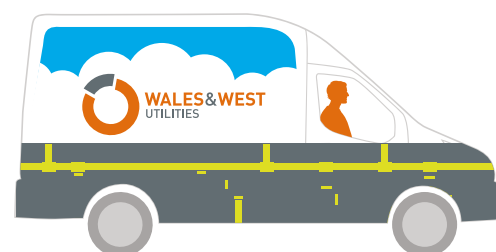
Good to know...

It's not just gas suppliers who have PSR's. Many utility companies – including water and electricity – have similar systems in place so it may be worth getting in touch.

Find out more at www.utilities.co.uk/services/safe-warm

Passwords – good to know...

Even if you are not on the PSR, and you would like to feel more secure, we can agree a password with you when we make an appointment. We'll use this password when we visit you, so you'll know the caller is genuine.



Keeping you happy

Our Complaints Handling Procedure

We are committed to delivering outstanding service to the communities we serve across Wales and the south west of England.

We know we don't get things right all the time, so we want to get things sorted and make you happy as soon as we possibly can.

Our Complaints Handling Procedure lets you know what you can expect if you are not satisfied with a service you have received from us.

Remember, we work on responding to and repairing gas leaks, our gas pipe upgrade programme, installing new gas connections to homes and businesses and maintaining the gas network.

For complaints or enquiries relating to your gas bill, please contact your gas supplier (that's the company you pay your bill to).

Could we do better?

If there is a problem with the service you have received from us, do let us know. You can visit us in person at our head office, or get in touch by phone, email or letter. We'll be able to help more quickly if you can provide any information relating to your case, such as reference numbers. We treat all complaints seriously and confidentially, and we promise that we'll handle every issue in a prompt, polite and straightforward manner.

How we'll put things right

Stage 1: Review by our Customer Services team

Within two days of receiving your complaint, we'll let you know that we've received it. We will then investigate your complaint thoroughly and give you a detailed response within 5 working days of receipt. If we're unable to give you a detailed response within this time, or we need to visit you to make things right, we will:

- Agree a convenient time for us to visit you
- Give you an initial written response within 5 working days of receipt. This initial response will give you details of who you can contact about your complaint and will also let you know when to expect a more detailed response
- Keep you informed of progress and if we need to take further action to put things right, we'll do our best to complete our work promptly
- Provide you with a detailed response within 10 working days of receipt.

To put things right we can:

- Apologise where we have failed to give you a satisfactory level of service
- Give you a full explanation addressing the issues that you have raised
- Take appropriate action to put things right
- Compensate you, where applicable, under our Guaranteed Standards of Service as set out and monitored by our regulator, Ofgem
- Offer you a goodwill payment, if appropriate to the circumstances.

Stage 2: Referral to a manager

If you're not happy with the way that our Customer Services Team has dealt with your complaint then you can request for the matter to be escalated to a manager.

They will review your situation and work with you to put things right.

Stage 3: final Review by our senior team

If you're still not fully satisfied after referring the matter to a manager, you can ask for your complaint to be raised for a formal review by at least one of our Senior Team.

Stage 4: Energy Ombudsman

We'll do everything we can to solve your problem by working with you. But if you're still not happy with our actions after following Stages 1-3, if we issue you with a deadlock letter, or if your complaint remains unresolved after 8 weeks, you have the right to contact the Energy Ombudsman. This is a free and independent dispute resolution service. The Ombudsman will ask you for a full account of your dealings with us and they will also contact us to gain a factual understanding of the case from our perspective. The Ombudsman will make a final decision and let you know the outcome.

The Ombudsman may require us to provide any or all of the following:

- A service or some practical action that will benefit you
- An apology or an explanation
- A financial award

How to get in touch

To make sure the most suitable person is handling your call, choose the most appropriate contact from the descriptions below.

If your call's about the installation, removal, exchange or maintenance of a National Grid Meter, please phone

0845 606 6766

If you're unhappy about any other element of our work please contact:

Customer Services

Wales & West Utilities
Wales & West House
Spooner Close, Celtic Springs
Coedkernew
Newport, NP10 8FZ

0800 912 2999

enquiries@wwutilities.co.uk

If you're a user of British Sign Language (BSL) the Convo service gives you access to an online interpreter enabling you to communicate with us using sign language.

We use the information gathered from complaints to highlight the things we could do better and then take action to make improvements.

 [facebook.com/wwutilities](https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities)

 [wwutilities.co.uk](https://www.wwutilities.co.uk)

 [@WWUtilities](https://twitter.com/WWUtilities)

Energy Supply Ombudsman

PO Box 966
Warrington
WA4 9DF
Telephone: 0330 440 1624
Email: enquiry@energyombudsman.org

Staying warm

Top tips

When the temperature dips, it can be difficult to keep yourself warm. Here are our five top tips for staying comfortable indoors:



Fit thermal linings to your curtains and close them at dusk to keep the heat in.



Reduce draughts in your home, especially around doors and windows, lag hot-water tanks and pipes and insulate your loft, but never block up air vents.



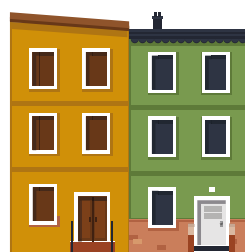
Wear several thin layers of clothes, which will keep you warmer than one thick layer.



Keep your **hands, feet and head warm**.



Use a thermometer to check the temperature of your rooms. Your living room should be around 21°C, while the rest of your home (including your bedroom) should be around 18°C.



Helping you stay warm



Warm Home Discount

This is a Government scheme for people struggling with heating costs. It can offer money off your electricity bill. You'll need to contact your energy supplier to find out if they can help you. Find out more at: gov.uk/thewarm-home-discount-scheme/what-youll-get



Cold Weather Payment

This is extra help if you're getting certain benefits. Payments are made when your local temperature is either recorded as, or forecast to be, an average of zero degrees celsius or below for seven days in a row. You do not need to apply as it will be given automatically. If you do not get your payment, tell your Pension Centre or Jobcentre Plus office. Find out more at: gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/overview



Winter Fuel Payment

This offers between £100 and £300 tax-free to help with your heating bills. Ask your energy supplier if they can help you. Find out more at www.gov.uk/winter-fuelpayment/Overview



Energy Company Obligations

Energy Company Obligations (ECO) mean that, by law, energy suppliers must help make homes more energy efficient. If you're on a low income or classed as a vulnerable household, you could benefit from help with new heating and home insulation. Ask your energy supplier for details.



Fuel Tariffs

It's always a good idea to do a price comparison on your gas and electricity suppliers and then choose the best deal for you. Check the Government's list of approved energy price-comparison sites here: goenergys shopping.co.uk/en-gb



Disabled Facilities Grant

You could qualify for a grant from your local council to make changes to your home. Find out more at: gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants/overview



Gas emergencies

Stay safe when you smell gas

We know that safety is your number one priority – it's ours as well. Here's what to do if you smell gas. First things first:

Call freephone **0800 111 999** immediately.

You can call the gas emergency number at any time, day or night, 365 days a year. You will be put through to a trained operator who will take all the details, including any special circumstances we need to know about when we call.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and have a Minicom or Textphone, you can call the gas emergency service on **02920 278707**. We'll be with you as soon as possible to make your property safe.

Good to know...

If you're renting, by law your landlord has to arrange yearly gas safety checks. You can sign up for a free reminder service at: staygassafe.co.uk.

If English is not your first language don't worry, you can still call the gas emergency service on **0800 111 999** and they will find an interpreter who can translate for you.

While you're waiting for one of our engineers, you can do the following:



Stay calm

Our engineers are experts at dealing with gas leaks quickly and with very little fuss.



Switch off

Turn off all your gas appliances and, if possible, switch off the gas at the meter (unless the meter is in the cellar or basement, in which case don't go in).



Ventilate

Open all your windows and doors.



Don't touch

Make sure you don't use any electrical appliances or switch lights on or off.



Put it out

Don't smoke or use naked flames.



Leave

If there's a smell of gas in the cellar or basement, please wait outside or with a neighbour.

Staying safe – carbon monoxide (CO)

In a medical emergency, don't delay, phone **999**.

You've probably heard about the dangers of CO poisoning. Although it can be very serious, having all the information means you'll know just what to look out for and can stay safe.

What's CO?

You can't see it. You can't smell it. You can't taste it.

CO is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas that is released when any fossil fuel – such as gas, oil, wood, petrol and coal – doesn't burn properly. This can happen when:

- An appliance hasn't been fitted correctly
- An appliance has been poorly maintained
- A flue, chimney or vent is blocked.

Breathing it in can make you unwell, and it can kill. If you suspect CO poisoning, your emergency numbers are: **0800 111 999** (gas) **0845 6014406** (coal) **08456 585080** (oil) In a medical emergency, don't delay, call **999** immediately.

What to look out for

- Gas appliances burning with a yellow or orange flame rather than a blue flame
- More condensation inside your windows
- Pilot lights frequently blowing out
- Soot or yellow and brown staining on or around your appliances.



Possible symptoms

- 'Flu-like' symptoms (without the fever)
- Chest or stomach pains
- Strange behaviour
- Feeling or being sick
- Breathlessness
- Feeling tired or drowsy
- Giddiness or headaches
- Problems with your vision.

Three ways to stay safe

1

Make sure all your fuel-burning appliances are **serviced once a year** by an engineer who is registered with Gas Safe.

2

Get your chimneys swept and make sure your flues are clear.

3

Install a certified CO alarm. These cost around £15 and you can buy them from your local DIY store, supermarket or even from your gas supplier.



Taking action

Here's what to do if you suspect CO poisoning:

Call us: Call freephone 0800 111 999 or freephone 0800 371 787 (Minicom) and we will be with you as soon as possible.

Switch off: Turn off any gas appliances.

Ventilate: Open your doors and windows.

Leave: Wait outside or at a neighbour's house

Repair: Unfortunately we are unable to carry out repairs on your appliances. However, you can easily find an engineer who is registered with Gas Safe gassaferegister.co.uk/find-an-engineer/ or telephone 0800 408 5500.

Our Service Standards

All our activities are covered by a range of standards of service. These standards cover things like restoring supplies and connections. You may be eligible to receive compensation payments if we fail to meet some of these standards. If this is the case, we'll make compensation payments to you directly or via your gas supplier.

You can find complete descriptions of each standard in the Notice of Rights on our website at: www.wuutilities.co.uk/about-us/our-company/publications

Standard	What the Standard requires	Compensation if we miss the standard
GS1	Restoring a gas supply after an unplanned interruption	If you are a domestic or a small non-domestic customer and your gas supply is interrupted, we will reconnect you within 24 hours.
GS2	Reinstatement of customers premises	Once we've completed any initiated work on your premises, the premises will be reinstated within 5 working days, or 3 working days if you are on the Priority Service Register.
GS3	Domestic customers on the Priority Services Register (PSR)	If your gas supply is interrupted we will provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 4 hours, or within 8 hours if 250 or more premises are affected. Where an unplanned interruption to gas supplies affects 250 or more customers and lasts longer than 48 hours we will offer a hot meal to priority service registered customers every 24 hours. We will also offer access to hot water to those customers who are medically dependent on water.
GS13	Prior notice of planned interruptions to gas supply	We'll give you at least 7 working days' notice before any planned interruption to your gas supply.
GS14	Responding to complaints	Once we have received your complaint, we'll issue a detailed response within 5 working days. Where a site visit or third party enquiries are required, we will give you a first response within 5 working days and a full response within 10 working days.

Standard	What the Standard requires	Compensation if we miss the standard
Connecting a new gas supply or isolating an old one. Or altering the position of a gas pipe.		
GS4	Provision of standard quotations up to 275kWh	If you request a standard quotation for a new connection or an alteration to an existing connection up to and including a flow rate of 275kwh per hour, or a disconnection up to 2 bar gauge, with no site visit, we will issue the quotation within 4 working days.
GS5	Provision of non-standard quotations up to 275kWh	If you request a non-standard quotation for a new connection or an alteration to an existing connection up to and including a flow rate of 275kwh per hour and other disconnections up to 2 bar gauge, we will issue the quotation within 11 working days.
GS6	Provision of non standard quotations over 275kWh	If you request a non-standard quotation for a new connection or an alteration to an existing connection up to and including a rate of flow of over 275kWh per hour or a diversion involving a single main not exceeding 75mbar of pressure and pipes less than 180mm in diameter, or other disconnections up to 2 bar gauge, we will issue the quotation within 21 working days.
GS7	Accuracy of quotations	If we fail to provide an accurate quotation.
GS8	Responses to Land Enquiries	We will respond to land enquiries for a new connection, the alteration of an existing connection, a disconnection or a diversion within 5 working days.
GS9	Provision of commencement and substantial completion dates up to 275kWh	Within 17 days of you accepting our quotation, we'll specify the dates for starting and completing the work for connections and service alterations up to and including 275kWh.
GS10	Provision of commencement and substantial completion dates over 275kWh	Within 20 days of you accepting our quotation, we'll specify the dates for starting and completing the installation and commission or your supply, for connections over 275kWh.
GS11	Substantial completion by agreed date	Where we have provided a date for installation and commission of a new connection or an alteration to an existing connection with contract sum of:- i) up to and including £1000 ii) over £1000 to £4000 iii) over £4000 to £20000 iv) over £20000 to £50000 v) over £50000 to £100000
GS12	Notification and Payments	Where we have failed any of the above Standards we will write to you and make the payment within 10 working days of the compensation becoming due.

More help and advice

When it comes to staying safe and warm, there's plenty of help available. Here's a list of useful agencies.

Gas Safe Register

Phone
0800 408 5500

Website
gassaferegister.co.uk

This is the official list of gas engineers who are registered to work safely and legally on boilers, cookers, fires and all other gas appliances.

Energy Saving Trust

Phone
0300 123 1234

Website
energysavingtrust.org.uk

They can give independent, expert advice on saving energy in your home.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Phone
Wales 03444 772 020
England 03444 111 444

Website
citizensadvice.org.uk/energy

CAB can give free, independent advice so that you know your rights as an energy consumer.

Age UK/Age Cymru

Age UK Phone
0800 169 6565
Website
ageuk.com

Age Cymru Phone
08000 223 444
Website
ageuk.org/cymru

They give advice to older people on money, care, health, housing and more.

Scope UK

Phone
0808 800 3333

Website
scope.org.uk

They work to make the world a better place for disabled people and their families.

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Phone
0303 123 9999

Website
rnib.org.uk

RNIB provide information, support and advice to people with sight loss.

National Energy Action

Phone
0191 261 5677

Website
nea.org.uk

They aim for everyone to be able to afford to heat their home, and they campaign for greater investment in energy efficiency to help those who are most in need.

Action on Hearing Loss

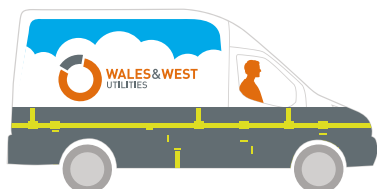
Textphone **0808 808 0123**

Text **07800 000360**

Website
actiononhearingloss.org.uk

They are experts in providing support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus.





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