

# New Tenancy Energy Guide



**COSY KINGDOM**

**Fife**   
COUNCIL

# Contents

---

Introduction .....	3
]Reading your meter .....	4
Using your heating: Gas .....	6
Using your heating: Electric .....	7
New home checklist .....	8
Energy action plan .....	9
Home appliances .....	10
Budgeting and billing .....	12
Carbon monoxide .....	13
Condensation .....	14
Additional support .....	15
Your notes .....	16



Cosy Kingdom is a free and impartial energy and debt advice service available to all homeowners and tenants across Fife. It's a partnership between Greener Kirkcaldy, St Andrews Environmental Network and Citizens Advice & Rights Fife which helps thousands of households each year to reduce their energy use, cut their carbon footprint and stay cosy.



# Introduction

Knowing how your home is heated and how much energy you use will help you keep your home cosy, lower your carbon emissions and reduce your energy costs.

## New home checklist

When you move into a new home, you should:

- Find your meters and take readings (check for smart meters)
- Find your boiler and heating controls
- Check the date of your next boiler service
- Find the fuse box
- Check your light bulbs – are they all LEDs?

## Getting to know your usage - what is a kWh?

The amount of energy used by appliances and lights is measured in watts (W). You need to know how much energy you use in an hour (kWh) as this is how energy is charged. You can do this by dividing the wattage of an appliance by 1,000. For example, a 750W microwave uses 0.75 kWh.

Electricity meters record the number of kWhs used. Gas meters record the volume of gas passing through the meter (in m<sup>3</sup> or ft<sup>3</sup>). Energy suppliers convert this into kWhs.

Suppliers charge you for any energy you have used plus a standing charge. The standing charge is a fixed daily fee that you have to pay even if you haven't used any energy. To work out your energy costs, your supplier will calculate:

- kWh used X unit rate = cost of energy used
- days since last bill X standing charge = total standing charges

The cost of energy used + total standing charge = Your total bill

# New home checklist

---

## My home

My home’s energy rating is .....

My electricity supplier is .....

The name of the tariff I am on is .....

My gas supplier is .....

The name of the tariff I am on is .....

## Meter readings

My first meter readings are:

Electric ..... (Date .....)

Gas ..... (Date .....)

## Housing Officer

My housing officer is .....

Call them on 0300 555 555, extension .....

# Reading your meter

---

If you have gas central heating, you will have two energy meters.

**Electricity meters** are usually located indoors, near the fusebox.

**Gas meters** are often located outside, either in a white box mounted on a wall or at ground level in a brown box. Sometimes they are located indoors, often in a kitchen cupboard.

As a general rule, you read the meter from left to right and ignore any numbers in red or after a decimal point. Remember to include any 0s at the start.

## Reading your electricity meter

For a single rate billing meter you will have one row of numbers.

A digital display of an electricity meter showing the number 0 1147 28. The digits are white on a grey background, with the last two digits '28' in red.

The reading for this meter is 011472.

If you have a **prepayment meter**, click the blue button until you get to screen H.

If you have a **smart meter with a keypad**, press 9. The screen will show 'IMP kWh' first, followed by the reading on the next screen. Not all smart meters have a keypad. If you're unsure how to read your smart meter contact your supplier.

Depending on your heating system, you could have more than one meter reading. **Economy 7 and Economy 10 meters** have on-peak and off-peak tariffs for different times of day, so have separate meter readings for each.

A digital display of an Economy 7 and Economy 10 meter. It shows two rows of numbers. The top row shows 0114728 with the last digit '8' in red, followed by the word 'high' in grey. The bottom row shows 0453827 with the last digit '7' in red, followed by the word 'low' in grey.

The readings for this meter are 011472 (on-peak) and 045382 (off-peak).

**Comfort Plus Meters** have three different rates, on-peak, off-peak and control read (for storage heaters and hot water). Click the blue button to cycle through the meter readings. You will be able to clearly see whether rate 1, 2 or 3 is shown.

Rate	Total
1	195234.015

The reading for Rate 1 is 195234

If you have a **prepayment meter**, click the blue button until you get to screen H. This will give you the meter readings for each rate.

If you have a **smart meter with a keypad**, press 6 to see Rate 1, press it again for Rate 2 and so on. You'll see 'IMP R01' first, then the next screen will show the reading.

Not all smart meters have a keypad. If you're unsure how to read your smart meter, contact your energy supplier.

## Reading your gas meter

Make sure you check the units your gas use is measured ( $\text{m}^3$  or  $\text{ft}^3$ ) as this makes a difference to how your usage is calculated. For a billing meter you will have one row of numbers.

03532.83

The reading for this meter is 03532

If you have a **prepayment meter**, click the red button until you see the meter index screen.

If you have a **smart meter with a keypad**, press 9 to see your reading. You'll see 'Volume' first, then the next screen will show the reading. Not all smart meters have a keypad. If you're unsure how to read your smart meter contact your energy supplier.

# Using your heating: Gas

---

Using your heating controls correctly is an easy way to save money and keep your home comfortable.

**1. Boiler temperature** - set the temperature of the water coming out of your taps and going into your radiators to around 60°C.

**2. Programmer** - set the times you want your heating to come on and go off. You should aim for your heating to come on half an hour before it is needed to give your home time to warm up and go off half an hour before you leave the house or go to bed.

**3. Room thermostat** - your thermostat measures the temperature in the room in which it is located and controls your boiler. Set the thermostat to your desired temperature (between 18°C and 21°C), and, once that temperature is reached, the boiler will switch off until the room cools down again. Turning your thermostat down by just 1°C could save around around 10% a year.

**4. Thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs)** - TRVs measure the air temperature in each room. Setting 3 (20°C) is comfortable for most people. Turn them off in rooms you don't use. If you have a TRV in the same room as your room thermostat, leave it fully open and use the room thermostat instead.

## TRVs control how warm your room is

Frost protection or *	5°C
I	10°C
II	15°C
III	20°C
IV	25°C
V	30°C

---

# Using your heating: Electric

---

There are two commonly fitted types of electric heating system:

**Storage heaters** - store heat using low-cost off-peak electricity at night, then gradually release heat through the day. Each storage heater is individually controlled by an input and output dial:

- Input dial - controls how much heat is drawn in. Check the weather forecast to decide how high to set this. The colder it is, the higher it needs to be set.
- Output dial - controls how much heat is released. The higher the setting, the more quickly heat is released. Leave this low through the day to preserve enough heat for the evening.

*\* Storage heaters are most efficient if you have an Economy 7 meter or a Comfort Plus white meter.*

**Electric radiators** - modern electric radiators function in a similar way to gas central heating. They are controlled individually by a small side panel so you can set the temperature in each room. You may also have a central programmer which tells the system when to turn on and off.

*\*Modern electric radiators use on-peak electricity. They do not charge at night like storage heaters. Make sure you are on the cheapest single rate tariff available.*





# Home appliances

---

You can reduce your energy costs by reducing the time spent using your appliances or swapping them for more energy efficient ones.

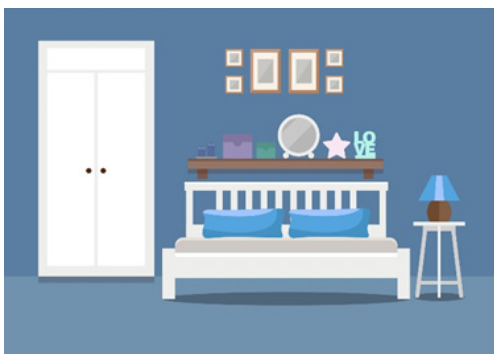
**How much energy do appliances use?** Here are some common electrical items and how long they will run for on 1 kWh.

- Laptop - 24 hours
- TV - 4 hours
- Tumble dryer - 30 minutes
- Oven - 20 minutes
- Electric shower - 6 minutes

**Top Tip!** In general, appliances that produce heat use more energy.

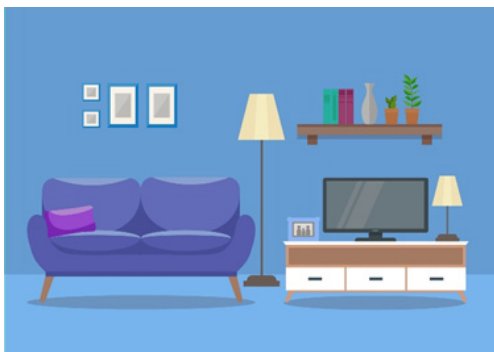
## Bedroom

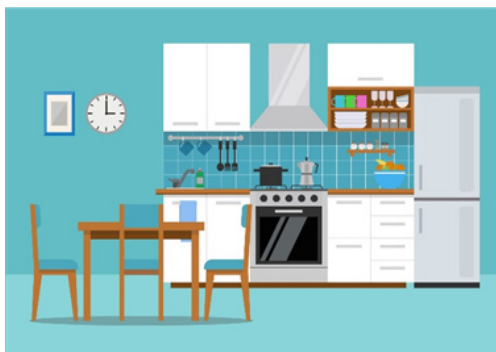
- Don't leave your phone charging all night - unplug when finished.
- Towel dry your hair first to cut down on hairdryer use
- Laptops use 85% less. energy than a PC, a tablet uses even less.



## Living Room

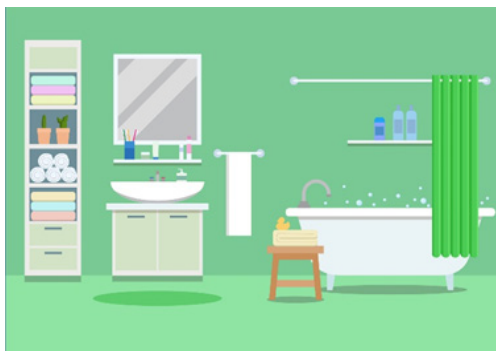
- Switch unused gadgets off standby = £55 a year
- Replace light bulbs with LEDs = £55 a year
- Turn lights off when not in use = £25 a year





## Kitchen

- Use a bowl for washing up instead of leaving the tap running = **£35 a year**
- Wash at 30°C and do one less wash per week = **£28 a year**
- Only fill the kettle as much as needed = **£11 a year**
- Use a slow cooker or microwave more often



## Bathroom

- Replace one bath a week with a short shower = **£12 a year**
- Limit showers to four minutes = **£70 per person a year**
- Don't leave electric tooth brushes on charge

## Preventing heat loss

- Move furniture away from radiators to allow the warm air to flow freely around the room
- Close room doors to ensure your thermostatic radiator valves work efficiently
- Close curtains at dusk and tuck the bottoms behind radiators to keep heat in the room
- Don't dry laundry on radiators as this prevents the warm air flowing around the room

# My energy action plan

Cosy Kingdom's Top 5 Tips	I will do this	I already do this
Make sure my home is well insulated		
Change my light bulbs to energy efficient ones		
Draught proof my windows, doors and other gaps		
Switch gadgets off, not just onto standby		
Learn how to set my heating and hot water timer and temperatures		

And my own energy saving actions:

.....

.....

.....

.....

# Budgeting and billing

---

Due to the ongoing energy crisis, there are unlikely to be any cheap fixed-price deals on the market. Default Standard Variable Tariffs (SVTs) are the often cheapest prices available. A fixed-price deal end could end up costing you more. When you compare prices always look at the unit rate and standing charges, not the monthly cost quoted.

**Never switch on the doorstep or from a cold call.**

Remember, Cosy Kingdom can offer impartial advice on billing, tariffs and switching suppliers.

## How should I pay?

How you pay for your energy can impact on costs and budgeting:

**1. Direct Debit** can be easier for budgeting. You will pay the same amount each month and not be affected by seasonal changes in energy use (using more energy in winter).

**2. Standard credit, also known as quarterly or monthly billing.** You will receive a regular bill for what you use. This means you will pay more in winter and less in summer. You should make sure to regularly submit accurate meter readings.

**3. Prepayment** is good for budgeting as you can't spend more than you have. However, you have to keep topped up to cover standing charges and it can be more expensive to pay in this way.

## Budgeting tips and tricks

- Be aware of your weekly, monthly and annual energy use.
- Consider when you get paid and make sure you have enough credit to last you until you can next top up or pay your next bill.
- You will use more energy when it's cold. Keep topping up or put money aside over the summer, so that the increase in costs isn't a shock in the winter.
- Keep on top of standing charges and debt recovery. Remember these are deducted automatically. Standing charges are usually around 60p a day on electric and around 30p a day on gas.

# Carbon monoxide

---

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels, including gas, oil, wood, petrol and coal. It is known as the silent killer.

This is because you cannot see, hear, smell or taste it. The most common source of carbon monoxide in a home is from a faulty or broken gas heating system. If your heating is working correctly, carbon monoxide will not be a risk.

Other sources include fireplaces or wood-burning stoves, gas ovens, camping stoves, barbeques and portable heaters.

## **How to stay safe at home**

- Ensure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm in every room with a gas or fossil fuel appliance. If the alarm is faulty, replace it.
- Ensure gas appliances have an annual safety check carried out by a registered Gas Safe engineer.
- Be aware of the symptoms of poisoning, which include headaches, nausea, dizziness, breathlessness and collapse.

## **If you believe carbon monoxide is present in your property:**

- Open all doors and windows and move everyone into fresh air
- Contact the gas emergency line on 0800 111 999



# Condensation

---

Condensation and dampness can be a health risk to everyone living in your home. It also affects the energy efficiency of your property.

Condensation happens when warm, moist air comes into contact with a cold surface. This leads to water droplets forming on windows, walls and ceilings.

Dampness can appear differently depending on the source. It can be caused by condensation, leaks, penetrating or rising damp.

## Dealing with condensation

**Heat your home:** Keep the indoor temperature between 18-21°C. Cold surfaces are more prone to condensation, keeping your home nice and cosy can help prevent it.

**Insulate:** Having a well-insulated home can help maintain the indoor temperature. It also is likely to help reduce the risk of condensation.

**Ventilate:** Make sure there is adequate ventilation in your home, especially when doing activities that can produce a lot of moisture.

Keep the trickle vents on your windows open and open your windows for a few minutes every day. If you are cooking or bathing, use extractor fans if you have them.

Cold spots and stagnant air are ideal locations for condensation. Make sure air can circulate around your furniture.

**Reduce moisture:** Condensation happens because of our lifestyles. Limiting activities that produce moisture in your home can make a big difference.

- Avoid drying laundry on radiators or indoors where possible
- Use lids on pots and pans
- Take shorter showers
- Avoid using bottled gas heaters

# Additional support

---

## **Cosy Kingdom**

[www.cosykingdom.org.uk](http://www.cosykingdom.org.uk) | Text COSY and YOUR NAME to 88440

01592 807930 | [info@cosykingdom.org.uk](mailto:info@cosykingdom.org.uk)

Phonelines open 10am - 3pm, Monday - Friday.

A free and impartial energy advice service available to anyone in Fife. We can help with issues around understanding your home's heating system, paying for your energy or dealing with your supplier.

## **Citizen's Advice & Rights Fife**

[www.cabfife.org.uk](http://www.cabfife.org.uk) | 03451 40 00 95

Information, advice and assistance on rights, benefits and debt.

## **Crisis support**

Electric power cut: [call 105](#) Gas emergency: [0800 111 999](#)

## **Fife Council maintenance and repairs**

[www.fifedirect.org.uk](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk)

Faults and repairs line (8am - 6pm): [03451 55 00 11](#)

Out of hours emergency repair line (6pm - 8am): [03451 55 00 99](#)

## **Frontline Fife**

[www.frontlinefife.co.uk](http://www.frontlinefife.co.uk) | 01592 800430

Support, advice or counselling to help people maintain their tenancy.

## **Priority Services Register**

[www.psrscotland.com](http://www.psrscotland.com) | 0800 027 0072

Extra support to help you manage your energy account.

## **Scottish Welfare Fund**

[www.mygov.scot/scottish-welfare-fund](http://www.mygov.scot/scottish-welfare-fund) | 0300 555 0265

Helps people in Scotland through Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants.

# My Notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....