

A smart meter could benefit you and the person you care for



 **carersUK**
making life better for carers

 **smart
meters**
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Smart Energy GB and Carers UK

Carers UK is working with Smart Energy GB to help carers learn more about smart meters, and how they could benefit them and those they care for.

What is a smart meter?

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters. They're being installed in homes across Great Britain, at no extra cost, to replace traditional meters. They measure how much gas and electricity is being used, as well as what it's costing, and show this on a handy in-home display (IHD).



How does it all work?



What does the in-home display show you?



Energy suppliers offer different IHDs, which means yours may look different to your friend's or neighbour's. But all IHDs will provide the following information and functionality:

1. Electricity and/or gas usage, meaning:

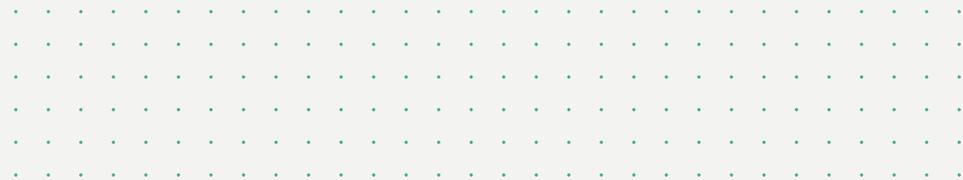
- you can change between pounds and pence and kilowatt hours
- you can see your usage per day, per week and per month
- you can see whether you are using a low, medium, or high amount of energy

2. Comparison of your usage in weeks or months, meaning:

- you can see your near-real time usage for different time periods

3. Ability to set budgets, meaning:

- on some IHDs, you can set targets in pounds and pence or kilowatt hours to help budget for your daily, weekly or monthly usage. Your IHD will help you to monitor how you are doing against your target, so you can make changes around the home to ensure you remain in budget



*We have included both gas and electricity usage IHD information.
If you only have smart electricity or gas meter installed, your IHD will show your electricity or gas usage only.

Are smart meters secure?

Yes. Both the IHD and the smart meter operate without the need to be connected to the internet. Rest assured, smart meters operate on a secure system, ensuring data is only visible to the energy supplier and authorised parties where consumer consent is given.



How can a smart meter benefit me and the person I care for?

Like many carers, helping the person you care for manage their energy is just one task out of a long list of jobs that you may perform. A smart meter could make this process easier.

Smart meters enable accurate billing, meaning the person you care for will only need to pay for the energy they actually use. Even better, smart meters send gas and electricity readings directly and securely to the energy supplier, so no more rummaging around in a cupboard. This can help to enable greater independence for the person you care for, whilst taking an item off your busy to-do list.

How can a smart meter help to save money?

Smart meters could help you to find ways to reduce energy waste around the home and save money. The IHD shows you in near-real time the amount of energy being used in pounds and pence, allowing households to keep a closer eye on their energy spending habits.

Can you switch suppliers with a smart meter?

Yes. A smart meter could help you switch to a better deal, as you'll have accurate energy usage information at hand which can help you choose the supplier and tariff that best suits the person you care for.

What if the person I care for has a prepay meter?

Smart meters are set up to work for both prepay and credit customers. A smart meter in prepay mode allows you or the person you support to top up whenever it suits: online, via mobile or at the shop — very helpful!



Carers and the installation process

When arranging for a smart meter to be installed, all reasonable endeavours will be used by the supplier to identify whether the customer has specific needs — for example, needing a carer to be present.

Carers are typically able to make smart meter appointments on behalf of the individuals they care for. Suppliers will ask a number of security questions when arranging the appointment, so it will be useful to liaise with the person that you care for to have this information to hand.

Carers looking to act as a named third party should contact the supplier to find out how they can be added to the account.



What is the standard installation process?

-  1. Agree to a time slot and date with the supplier. An installer will never turn up unexpectedly.
-  2. Make sure you know where the current meters are and take steps to ensure they're accessible for the installer.
-  3. The installer should present a valid identity card upon arrival, which you can ask to see if the installer does not present it upfront.
-  4. It takes around one hour for an electricity meter, and around one hour for a gas meter. The energy supply will be cut off for a short period, but you and/or the person you support will need to be present for the installation. If the person you care for has a health condition reliant on energy supply, rest assured this will be addressed during the appointment booking.
-  5. If a gas meter is being installed, the installer will perform a visual safety check on the gas appliances they are made aware of.
-  6. Once fitted, the installer should show you and the person you support how to use the in-home display and offer energy-saving advice.

All suppliers have different installation booking processes. You will need to follow the individual supplier's standard booking processes — this information can be found on the supplier's website, or by calling them directly.

Did you know?

Accessible in-home display (AIHD)

For anyone who is blind, partially sighted, or has difficulties with dexterity or memory loss, an AIHD could make tracking energy usage easier. The AIHD has been developed in partnership with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), and includes features such as large buttons and text-to-speech functionality.

Priority Services Register (PSR)

The PSR is a free and voluntary system that energy suppliers use to ensure the correct support is given to the most vulnerable customers. This support varies by supplier and by an individual's circumstances, but can include:

- large-format or braille bills
- advanced notice of service interruption
- priority in a power cut
- nominee scheme: customers can ask for communications (for example account statements or bills) to be sent to someone who has been nominated to receive them, for instance a carer

Consumers who may be in vulnerable circumstances can contact their energy supplier to determine if they are eligible to be put on the PSR.

For more information about smart meters, visit: [smartenergyGB.org](https://www.smartenergyGB.org).

Please note:

Eligibility of smart meters may vary
Consumer action is required to obtain cost savings and budgeting benefits of smart meters

Carers UK support

Carers UK's website has helpful guidance on managing someone's affairs, with downloadable resources offering carers' tips on using services or arranging a power of attorney:

[carersuk.org/tips-from-carers](https://www.carersuk.org/tips-from-carers)



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Helping the person you care for manage their energy may be just one task among many
A smart meter could make this process easier

