



Frequently Asked Questions

Energy supply services to the small & medium sized business community has traditionally been poor, as identified by the regulator Ofgem. Firms are often overcharged or put on special higher rate tariffs when their supply contracts finish. This guide gives you a summary of how to extract better value from your energy.

Why should I review my energy supply arrangements?

Simply to save money. Energy is a significant business overhead which is often overlooked when trying to minimize the costs of trading. Often this process is called switching because normally the process ends up with you switching your supplier. In fact many switching services only make money by switching your supplier.

One main benefit of our partnership with British Utilities unlike most Utility Management companies is we can keep you with your current supplier on a contract arranged, negotiated and managed by British Utilities. You may be perfectly happy to stay with your existing supplier but just want to ensure you are getting the very best terms available from that supplier.

Different suppliers use different procurement strategies when buying energy and this can favour one supplier's prices over another's at any one time. In fact the deals available can change on a daily basis – particularly in the wholesale energy market where many businesses are eligible to source their energy from as opposed to normal 'retail' tariffs.

Why should I use us?

We have teamed up with 'British Utilities'. Most Utility management companies offer to handle commercial contracts, very few are completely independent and have the experience of British Utilities, and their relationships with all the energy suppliers is driven by their domestic supply needs.

British Utilities have had relationships with the power companies for many years. They get the best deals, because they know how to match your needs to the power companies' supply processes. They also know the 'tricks of the trade' that power companies use to maximise profits and so can help you maximise your own profits! One of the most common tricks is the 'Contract Rollover'.

What is a contract rollover trap?

The majority of business tariffs are on some sort of notice period. Many companies either do not realise this or simply forget when the renewal time is due. If you fail to give notice at the correct time to your energy supplier, they'll move you to their standard rates. These are always more expensive, sometimes they are considerably more expensive, and they'll often be rates you can't get out of for a substantial period of time, hence the 'trap'.

What makes it even harder is that you'll have different notice periods, falling due on different dates, for different electricity and gas meters. This can be even more complicated if you have more than one business location. With British Utilities' managing your contracts, you'll be reminded at the correct time, and offered new deals that are the best available. Even better – the service is FREE. Leaving you to focus on managing your business.

Who sends me my bills?

British Utilities do not supply your electricity or gas so we won't be sending you a bill. Your bills will come from the energy suppliers, at the contract rates arranged for you via British Utilities.

Can't I just make a deal of my own?

Since deregulation the energy companies have restructured their operations to enable them to compete on the supply of gas and electricity in its raw form. They simply don't have the resources to manage your contracts for you, nor to deal with thousands of enquiries from businesses with literally millions of electricity and gas meters.

You might be offered a deal, if you persist, but they have no obligation to tell you that another energy company is cheaper in your area. So you'd have to ring all the power companies to get all the prices, and then start comparing the contract terms. The chances are by the time you've done that, the deals you were offered will have changed and anyway, we are sure you have better things to do with your time and again, this negotiation facility is provided for free.

How does the process work?

Firstly, we need to confirm whether your energy consumption makes you eligible to source your energy supply from the wholesale markets. You will see that you can download a list of key information that will be needed to assess this. If you are a very small business, it may be that you may only be eligible for the best retail deals – we will advise.

Because the wholesale market is highly regulated there are a number of steps that have to be taken in order for us to secure you the best deal. These are as follows:

- If you are eligible for wholesale energy you will need to download, sign and send the Letter of Authority. This enables us to bid in the markets on your behalf.
- The energy market is a bit like the stock market – it moves up and down on a daily basis according to events in the wider energy market.
- We will advise the CURRENT best deals in the market and the savings to be had. We will advise you to put in a notice of termination with your supplier and log when this is. Shortly before this notice period ends, we will enter the market again and review the available tariffs. Once you have decided the deal you want, we will initiate the switching process.
- You may have a choice of deals – some will be cheaper than others; some will have shorter or longer locks ins – it's up to you. **We can even offer you energy from renewable sources that can count toward your businesses carbon reduction programme.**
- Very importantly, the deals we put in front of you are best in market on that day. The power companies will often only hold these deals for 24 hours, so it is vital you confirm with us the deal you want otherwise you may lose it to someone else!
- The switching process can take a few weeks as the old and new companies have to liaise over meter readings and final bills etc.

How often should I switch?

To stay on top of changes in the supply and demand; either annually or every time your contract is due for renewal. Use us each time to secure the best deal all over again. Your decision to fix for either a shorter or longer period will be often dependent on your need to aim for short term fixes (where energy prices are in decline) or longer term fixes (where prices are rising). You may also have business reasons to fix for longer or shorter periods.

Who pays British Utilities?

Because they are in effect "fronting" the sales drive for the energy companies, they don't need to run costly customer management and sales operations themselves. What they save in telesales and call centres costs they pay us a small percentage as a type of commission on the deals we arrange for them. It's like any other sales force in that respect.

What about my employees?

Having saved your business an amount of money, we can also save your employees and their families money too. Just send them the link to our website and they can access the unique British Utilities service for householders.