

Factsheet 3: Energy Advice and Support

If you need **general energy advice and information** during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic please contact the following:

Residents who are 65 and over:

Warm and Well in Merton (a partnership between Age UK Merton Wimbledon Guild, Merton Council and Thinking Works).

Telephone: 020 8648 5792

Residents who are under 65:

Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth:

Telephone: Merton Adviceline 0344 243 8430

Online: use our secure Advice Contact Form available on our website www.caml.org.uk

Email: appointments@caml.org.uk (please remember to provide your telephone number and postcode)

For further advice please also see the following:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/>

If you need **practical support with topping up your pre-payment meter** during the pandemic, please contact your energy supplier in the first instance. If following this you still need support, please contact: Merton Covid-19 Community Response Hub.

This volunteer taskforce is helping isolated households and those at risk from COVID-19. Volunteers may be able to assist you with topping up your meter.

Email help@mvsc.co.uk or call **020 8685 2272**.

The phone line operates Monday to Friday.

For further advice please also see the following:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/problems-with-your-energy-supply/problems-getting-to-or-topping-up-your-prepayment-meter/>

Advice for vulnerable energy customers

Emergency measures have been agreed with the energy industry to protect those most in need during the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Industry have agreed to prioritise those already in need, while identifying those whose circumstances may have changed. All UK domestic suppliers have signed up.

Measures include:

- Customers with pre-payment meters who may not be able to add credit can speak to their supplier about options to maintain supply, e.g. nominating a third party for credit top-ups, having a discretionary fund added to their credit, or being sent a pre-loaded top-up card.
- More broadly, any customer in financial distress will be supported by their supplier, which could include debt repayments and bill payments being reassessed, reduced or paused where necessary.
- The disconnection of credit meters will be completely suspended.

Customers who are unable to top up their pre-payment meter are advised to contact their supplier immediately for support. Energy regulator Ofgem recommends customers leave the meter box unlocked if they need someone else to top up the meter. Smart meter customers should be able to top-up remotely, such as by phone, mobile application or online.

Ofgem is introducing new rules from **15 December** to help vulnerable customers who struggle to pay their energy bills this winter. From this date, suppliers will be required to offer emergency credit or extra prepayment credit to households in vulnerable circumstances. This could be because people are temporarily unable to afford to top up their prepayment meters, or are unable to visit their local shop due to having to self-isolate or having a mobility issue. Customers who are struggling to pay their bills should contact their supplier as soon as possible.

Broken boiler repair / replace scheme in Merton

The not-for-profit company Thinking Works is currently able to access grant funding for Merton residents to repair or replace broken boilers. The programme is open to owner occupiers only, who are in receipt of guaranteed pension credit / income support or have a low income (thresholds depend on circumstances and an assessment will be undertaken). The grant is subject to survey and funding is limited. Other winter support may be available including free energy and water saving devices. Please contact Thinking Works for further details.

Email: enquiries@thinkingworks.co.uk

Phone: 0800 118 2327

Text: 07928 394 482

Alternative sources of advice and support

Crew Energy has set up a phone advice line offering energy advice to those who need it. Email energycafe@crewenergy.london or call Freephone on 0808 169 1779 for more information. Phone support also available in Spanish.

Local Welfare Support helps Merton residents with short term severe financial difficulties. Grants awarded do not have to be paid back.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-tax-benefits-and-housing/benefits/money-advice/local-welfare-support-scheme>

Energy Saving Trust provides advice on saving energy and cutting your bills
<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>