



Our Code of Practice

on Services for Prepayment Meter Customers



Foreword

We would like to take this opportunity to present our Gas Code of Practice on Services for Prepayment Meter Customers.

At SSE Airtricity Gas NI we are committed to meeting the needs of our customers and our Codes of Practice inform our customers on the range of support services available.

I invite you to read on and find out more about the services we offer.

This Code is compliant with the minimum standards as set out by the Utility Regulator.

These Codes of Practice are here to make sure our products and services meet the needs of our customers.

Andrew Greer
General Manager

February 2017

Pay As You Go gives you flexibility and control over your natural gas bill



Code of Practice on the Services for Prepayment Meter Customers

What is a Pay As You Go meter?

A Pay As You Go (PAYG) meter lets you pay for your natural gas as and when you use it.

Who can have a PAYG meter installed?

A prepayment meter may be installed in the following circumstances:

- > At your request and in agreement with us that it is a suitable payment method for you;
- > If you do not satisfy our credit checking requirements;
- > To pay off an outstanding balance and we have agreed it is a suitable payment method for you; or
- > To avoid disconnection of your supply if no other suitable repayment arrangement can be agreed with you.

Advantages of a PAYG meter are

PAYG has two main benefits. You can use it to help you budget, as it lets you pay for your natural gas on a more regular basis and allows you to actively monitor your gas usage. PAYG also reduces the risk of

disconnection. Please remember that you use more natural gas in the winter than summer. Allow for this extra cost when you budget for your natural gas consumption.

Disadvantages of a PAYG meter

While there are advantages associated with having a PAYG meter you should consider the issues you may experience in the event that you choose to have one fitted:

- > The range of outlets to purchase top-ups or replacement cards may be limited depending on your location.
- > These meters may have limited suitability for customers with medical or other special needs e.g. sight problems, mobility difficulties, medical equipment installed at the home etc.
- > Some homes may not be suitably wired to allow the network operator to install a pay as you go meter.
- > You need to check your meter regularly to ensure you remain in credit.
- > You are unable to top-up online

Free installation

If you are a new customer, PAYG meters are currently installed free of charge. If you are an existing customer, we may be able to change your standard credit meter to a PAYG free of charge. Subsequent alterations are subject to charges. There are no additional charges for using a PAYG.

We provide you with instructions on how to use your PAYG when you get it installed. These instructions can be made available in alternative formats if requested at no extra charge.

PayPoint Outlets

You can buy credit for your PAYG meter at PayPoint outlets. You can also buy credit at the Post Office but not at Payzone outlets. Contact us on 0345 900 5253 for a list of PayPoint outlets, or alternatively you can use the Paypoint outlet locator at www.paypoint.co.uk/locator.

Tariff changes

If we change our tariff price, we adjust the price your meter charges by sending a message to your PAYG meter via your Payeasy Card. This will be applicable from your first top-up after the tariff change date. Please see our website for details on our PAYG tariffs.

Meter information

It is important to be familiar with the information on your PAYG meter. You can see how much credit you last put into the meter and the amount of credit you have remaining before emergency credit will be offered. Where requested, SSE Airtricity will provide the operating instructions in a language other than English or another format such as Braille at no additional cost.

We can give detailed information about your PAYG meter and how to access information. Contact our Customer Service team on 0345 900 5253 to find out more. Please also contact our Customer Service Team if you are experiencing difficulty using your meter or you believe there may be a fault with your meter. There are two types of PAYG meter - Libra and Quantum.

Libra PAYG meter

When you have a Libra PAYG meter installed, a 'Payeasy' card will also be supplied. Your 'Payeasy' card is unique to the meter it is registered to. It will not operate in any other meter. If you lose your 'Payeasy' card, you can purchase a new one at most PayPoint outlets (approximately £4.00). You will need to register a new card to the meter before you purchase gas credit. This can be done by simply inserting the card into the meter before you hear a beep.

Buying credit for Libra Meters

Take your 'Payeasy' natural gas card to any PayPoint outlet. You can purchase gas credit at any amount from the minimum of £5 to the maximum of £49. Every time you make a payment, you must ensure that you keep the receipt as this is your proof of purchase. PAYG allows you to check your natural gas usage and top up the card when you decide.

Credit Reserve

If your Libra meter is displaying between 15-30 units, you can access your emergency credit by releasing your 'credit reserve facility'. To do this insert your card, press and hold red button 'A' for 5 seconds until you hear a beep.

Release the button and remove the card. You must then purchase more credit immediately in order to ensure you don't run out of gas.

Quantum PAYG meter

When you have a Quantum meter fitted, we will send you a new Quantum natural gas card. You should receive this within five working days. If you move into a new property, contact us and we will send you a new card. Your Quantum natural gas card is unique to the meter it is registered to and will not work in any other meter. To register a new card, insert into the meter and leave the card for at least 1 minute, this will ensure that the card is paired with the meter.

Buying credit for Quantum Meter

Make sure you look after your Quantum natural gas card, as you will be charged for a replacement (the cost of this is approximately £6.50). If you lose your card, or damage it, please contact us immediately on 0345 900 5253 to arrange for a replacement card. You can credit your card with the amount you choose. When you receive your new Quantum natural gas card, please insert it into the meter for at least 60 seconds. You should then buy credit for the first time from a PayPoint outlet. You can find information on PayPoint outlets in the pack we will provide you when you sign up to PAYG or on our website.

Quantum Emergency Credit

Sometimes you may run out of credit at an inconvenient time. Quantum offers 'Emergency Credit' if you have used all of the natural gas you have paid for. Quantum Emergency Credit allows you to borrow an amount of natural gas until you can buy some more credit.

Quantum has £2 emergency credit. If you choose to use this, make sure you buy more credit as soon as possible. You should not use emergency credit regularly. Remember, emergency credit is automatically repaid when you next top up natural gas credit. You must pay back the emergency credit owed before you can borrow emergency credit again. You can see how much emergency credit you have used and how much you still owe by checking your meter. Contact us if you are not sure how to do this.

Top Tip!

You must pay back the emergency credit owed before you can borrow emergency credit again.

Changing to PAYG Quantum because of payment difficulties

If you have a credit meter and are experiencing payment difficulties, we can arrange to have a PAYG Quantum meter installed. This meter would be set to collect an agreed repayment amount from your top ups and pay for the natural gas you continue to use. Contact us immediately if your circumstances change and we will try to make suitable arrangements with you.

SSE Airtricity Gas NI is committed to engaging and working with customers who are in debt. We will take reasonable steps in our dealings with customers to identify those who are experiencing financial difficulties.

We will work with any agency chosen by you and authorised to represent you. We will use any information and guidance provided to determine your ability to make payment arrangements and meet installment plans. If your circumstances change and you are experiencing difficulties adhering to an agreed repayment arrangement, please contact us with any additional information that could help us reassess your case.

We can install a Pay As You Go (PAYG) meter to assist you if you are unable to meet your payment arrangement in paying for your natural gas. This puts you in control by allowing you to purchase natural gas as and when you want to. The meter will also be set to recover some of your debt each time you top up. You will not receive any further bills. We will discuss repayment of outstanding arrears with you and will calibrate your PAYG meter to recover up to a maximum rate of 40% of your vend towards those arrears taking into account your ability to pay.

When you get a PAYG meter installed, we will issue you a letter with information on the amount of outstanding arrears and how this will be recouped by the meter. The letter will also outline instructions on how to use the top up card and meter. Instructions are also available on our website. If you have a PAYG meter installed for debt reasons, you can get up to date information on your debt remaining on the meter and you will receive an annual statement which includes information on vends and energy use. You can also contact us for further information.

You can contact us on 0345 900 5253 or write to: -
Credit Control Manager
SSE Airtricity Gas Supply NI Ltd
3rd Floor
Millennium House
17 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ

If you require further information or support your local Citizens Advice Bureau or the Consumer Council may be able to assist you. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.

Meter Removal / Resetting

From time to time your PAYG meter may need to be removed or reset. These changes are carried out by the Network Operator on behalf of all suppliers. In the event that your meter requires this service we will ensure that this request is forwarded to the Network Operator within 5 days of being identified. Any credit on your meter at the time of removal or resetting will be issued to you by cheque within 28 days of confirming the credit value with the Network Operator.

Difficulties Using Your Meter

If you are having difficulty using the meter, we are more than happy to assist you. Please contact us on 0345 900 5253 during office hours if you wish to discuss and we can provide you with the necessary assistance. during office hours. We also have some information on our website in relation to the suitability of a PAYG meter if you do not want to speak to our team.

We also provide a range of alternative payment options, including Direct Debit and post.

Further Information

- > Debt will be recovered on a per vend basis at an agreed percent rate. Times of a lower usage may be a good opportunity to reduce the debt.
- > For each tariff change, domestic pre-payment customers are notified at least 21 days in advance of the tariff effective date.
- > If you choose to change supplier, your options for vending may change.

Further information can be found in the Quantum Pack we send you when you sign up to PAYG. This information can be provided in alternative formats if required. Please contact us if you require further information on PAYG and using the meter on 0345 900 5253 or if you require a copy of this Code in an alternative format (e.g. Braille).

Customer Service

For more information about anything in this booklet, call our Customer Service team on 0345 900 5253.

You can contact us in writing at:

SSE Airtricity Gas (NI) Ltd.

3rd Floor Millennium House
17-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ

Or by email

info@airtricitygasni.com

Or visit our website

www.airtricitygasni.com

Other Useful Contact Details

All Enquiries	0345 900 5253
Minicom Telephone	028 9023 0121
Minicom Emergency Line	0800 731 4710
To leave a Meter Reading	028 9033 9031
24 Hour Natural Gas Emergency	0800 002 001

Smell Natural Gas?

If you smell natural gas or are concerned about a safety matter, please telephone the 24 hour emergency service on 0800 002 001. Emergency staff are available to provide you with immediate advice.

Contact Details for Other Organisations

Age NI

3 Lower Crescent
Belfast
BT7 1NR

Advice Line 0808 808 7575

www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland

Age NI is the charity combining Age Concern NI and Help the Aged in Northern Ireland. Age NI provides advice and advocacy and delivers care services with the aim of improving the quality of later life for everyone.

The Carbon Trust Loan Scheme

Unit 3, The Innovation Centre
Northern Ireland Science Park
Queen's Road
Belfast
BT3 9DT
Northern Ireland

Telephone 028 9073 4394

www.carbontrust.co.uk

Carbon Trust is a not-for-profit company providing specialist support to help business and the public sector boost business returns by cutting carbon emissions, saving energy and commercialising low carbon technologies.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Regional Office
46 Donegall Pass
Belfast
BT7 1BS

Telephone 028 9023 1120

www.citizensadvice.co.uk

Citizens Advice is the largest advice charity in Northern Ireland, working against poverty and provides a free of charge information and advice service to the general public.

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

Floor 3, Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast
County Antrim
BT2 8EN

Telephone 0800 121 6022

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk

The Consumer Council is an independent consumer organisation which represents transport, water and energy consumers. The Consumer Council's aim is to give consumers a voice by running information and education campaigns, undertaking research and producing publications.

Disability Action

Portside Business Park
189 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Telephone 028 9029 7880
Textphone 028 9029 7882
www.disabilityaction.org

Disability Action works to ensure that people with disabilities attain their full rights as citizens, by supporting inclusion, influencing Government policy and changing attitudes in partnership with disabled people.

Bryson Energy

Freephone 0800 1422 865
Email advice@brysonenergy.org
www.brysonenergy.org

Bryson Energy offers free information and assistance on measures to improve the efficiency of your gas usage.

Gas Safe Register

PO Box 6804
Basingstoke
RG24 4NB

Telephone 0800 408 5500
www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI as the gas registration body in Northern Ireland from April 2010. Gas Safe Register is the only official list of gas engineers who are qualified to work safely and legally on gas appliances.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Housing Centre
2 Adelaide Street
Belfast

BT2 8PB
General Enquiries 0344 892 0900
www.nihe.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Housing Executive is Northern Ireland's strategic housing authority, offering a range of services to people living in socially rented, privately rented and owner occupied accommodation.

Phoenix Natural Gas Ltd

197 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone 03454 55 55 55
www.phoenixnaturalgas.com

Phoenix Natural Gas is the largest gas distribution business in Northern Ireland, being the owner and operator of the licence for the distribution network in the Greater Belfast Area and Larne. Phoenix Natural Gas is responsible for the development of the pipeline network and for providing a 24/7 operational and transportation service platform to gas suppliers.

Firmus Energy Networks

A4-A5 Fergusons Way
Kilbegs Rd
Antrim
BT41 4LZ
Telephone 0800 032 4567
www.firmusenergy.co.uk

SGN Natural Gas Ltd

83-85 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AF
Telephone 0800 975 7774
www.SGNNaturalGas.co.uk

Utility Regulator

Queens House
14 Queen Street
Belfast
BT1 6ED
Telephone 028 9031 1575
www.uregni.gov.uk

The Utility Regulator is an independent non-ministerial government department set up to ensure the effective regulation of the electricity, gas and water and sewerage industries in Northern Ireland.

