

The Newsletter for the Warm Hubs Network

WarmHub
COMMUNITY ACTION NORTHUMBERLAND

COSY

CAN

Spring Edition 2022



Do you need energy advice?

Our Community Energy Advisers are helping people in rural Northumberland to keep warmer and spend less on energy.

They can offer advice ranging from installing FREE simple measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes, paying less for energy, accessing financial help, adopting more energy-efficient habits and applying for grants to make improvements to your house.

If you'd like a home visit and live in Northumberland please get in touch.

Contact our Energy Advisers on...

0772 4867010

or 0771 5408343

Funded by the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme.

STORM ARWEN

Powburn warm hub opened its doors to provide a two course Christmas lunch with mince pies and coffee. The event held in the Breamish hall Powburn was run purely from a generator as power was still not on at the hall as well as properties in the vicinity of the hall.

60 residents turned up for the event as part of the NGN Warm Hub Rural Food Kitchen Project and every one took a food hamper home with them. This would normally have been a different kind of food but due to the lack of electricity power in homes the

hampers also contained tinned food which could be eaten cold or warmed up by a camping stove or on the log burner. Each hamper also contained a Cosy CAN magazine and information about power-cut compensation claims.

Thanks to May Wilson's team of volunteers who were kept busy cooking, serving and washing up.

If you need help with any compensation issues associated with Storm Arwen contact our Energy Advisers.



Does the energy price cap affect you?

The energy price cap is backstop protection from the government, calculated by Ofgem.

It applies if you're on a default energy tariff, whether you pay by direct debit, standard credit or a prepayment meter.

It won't apply if you:

- are on a fixed-term energy tariff
- have chosen a standard variable green energy tariff Ofgem has exempted from the cap.

You can contact your supplier to check if you are on their default tariff. If you're not, you may already be paying a better rate for your energy. But it's still worth checking if you could save more by switching to another tariff or supplier.

The price cap limits the rates a supplier can charge for their default tariffs. These include the standing charge and price for each kWh of electricity and gas (the units your bill is calculated from).

Ofgem sets the cap level for summer and winter based on the underlying costs to supply energy. This keeps prices fair and makes sure suppliers reflect any drops in costs in your rates.

- The price cap won't limit your total bill if you are on a default tariff.

The cap level Ofgem sets depends on costs in the energy market. So your bills could go down or up.

Different factors also affect how much suppliers change their prices (the rate they charge you) to meet the cap:

- where you live
- how you pay (prepayment, direct debit or standard credit)
- your type of energy meter.

Your energy usage will affect your total bill too.

It's best to contact your supplier for personalised information on your tariff.

Any figures you may see in the media aren't guaranteed. They also usually show a customer with 'typical' energy usage who pays by direct debit. So what you pay could be more or less than what's reported.

What next?

Your supplier must automatically apply the price cap Ofgem sets if you are on a default tariff. That's right so you get a fair price, but it won't mean you're on the cheapest deal. You can shop around to see if you can get a better tariff.

If your supplier has gone bust

Take a meter reading, sit tight and don't switch

You will continue to move to your chosen supplier if you already have a switch in progress.

Wait for Ofgem to appoint a new supplier

You don't need to do anything. Your supply won't be disrupted and it should only take Ofgem a few days. Ofgem's safety net will protect your supply and any credit balance. If Ofgem finds you a new supplier, your new supplier will contact you directly.

In exceptional circumstances, Ofgem may ask the

Court to appoint an administrator to run your existing supplier rather than move you to a new one. If this happens, your existing supplier will contact you about this and explain what is happening – you will be free to switch to another supplier as you wish and your credit balance will be protected.

When the new supplier contacts you

Ask to be put on their cheapest tariff or shop around and switch if you want to. You won't be charged exit fees.

They'll also explain how they will manage your account balance, including any credit refunds.

Support during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Energy suppliers won't disconnect your gas or electric if you miss a payment right now. Ask for 'emergency credit' if you use a prepay meter if you can't top up. Our rules mean suppliers must offer payment plans you can afford.

Call your supplier if you are worried. They have agreed emergency measures with the government during the pandemic. Most have also signed up to fresh commitments drawn up with Ofgem and the industry trade body Energy UK to support you this winter.

Back-billing Rules

- What are the back-billing rules?
- You can't be charged for gas or electricity used more than 12 months ago if you have not been correctly billed for it before.
- Suppliers must make these terms clear in their contract terms and conditions.

The rules apply to household and small business energy customers.

They may not apply if you have behaved obstructively or unreasonably, preventing accurate billing.

This could include:

- blocking meter readings at your property on more than one occasion

- stealing gas or electricity
- If you get a back bill.

Contact your supplier if you get a bill for energy usage that's for more than a year ago.

Explain that you understand you are protected by the back-billing rules. You should only be charged for up to your last 12 months' energy use if you haven't had an accurate bill in over a year.

Make a complaint if your supplier continues to ask for the full amount.

- If you haven't had an energy bill in over a year

To help your supplier send you accurate bills, try to:

- provide regular meter readings
- tell them when you are moving in or out of a property
- think about getting a smart meter or
- If you can't pay a back bill.

If you think you can't afford to pay, ask your supplier about repayment plan options. They must take into account how much you can afford. They will explain your options.

All information is from the Ofgem website.

Northumberland Communities Together

If you or someone you know needs extra support with; staying warm, finance, mental health and wellbeing or are feeling a bit lonely please get in touch

Phone: 01670 620015 between 9am to 6pm, seven days a week.

Email: NCT@northumberland.gov.uk

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can use Relay UK to contact us by dialling 018001 01670 620015

Watering CAN

Many people across the country have experienced unexpected changes in their circumstances due to the coronavirus pandemic, and Northumbrian Water understands that some of their customers may need extra help during these challenging times.

Northumbrian Water is encouraging their customers who received a letter from their GP to shield, have a health problem or disability or have/look after children under the age of 5, to sign up for their free Priority Services.

Here are some of ways Northumbrian Water can support you if you register:

- If you have children under five, a disability or an illness which means you might struggle with water, they will make sure you're given priority and have the water you need in case your water goes off for a continued period.
- Have your bills read to you or receive your bills and leaflets in Braille, large print, audio or Easyread.
- Nominate someone you trust to send your bill to and talk to us on your behalf.
- Text relay if you are deaf or hard of hearing - dial 18001 before any of our listed numbers.
- An interpreter if English is not your first language.
- Register a password so you know it's Northumbrian Water visiting your home and not bogus callers.

If you'd like to register for these free services, please go to www.nwl.co.uk/priorityservices to complete a short form. You can also sign up someone you know with their permission or if you don't need these services, you might know someone who does - family, friends, neighbours, please spread the word, so we can help as many people as we can!

Northumbrian Water is also doing everything they can to ensure that customers receive the financial help and support that they need.

Here are some of the ways the utility company can support customers with their bills:

- Check you are on the cheapest tariff for your current circumstances - the company may be able to offer a discount of up to 50% on your current charges. These tariffs are perfect if: your total household income is less than £16,105, or a member of your household receives Pension Credit or your income is not enough to cover your essential bills.
- Switching to a water meter may save you money. Check out the instant, online calculator at www.nwl.co.uk to see if a meter would reduce your charges. A meter is free to install and you can track your water usage with an online account.
- If you've been made redundant or had a sudden change to your income and can't afford to make your payments, Northumbrian Water can offer you a payment break. There's no need to worry about the bill during this difficult time. So far this year, the utility company has helped over 7,000 of its customers with a payment break.
- There are many flexible payment plans to suit your household. If your income has reduced and you can't afford your normal payment arrangements, please do not worry as the company can help you with a flexible payment arrangement.
- Please talk to Northumbrian Water as they are always happy to help and work with independent debt charity, StepChange, who provide free, expert debt advice and solutions for anyone looking to reduce arrears and re-schedule payments to ease debt problems.

If you think you would benefit from a payment break, tariff or free debt advice, or know of a family member, friend or neighbour whose life would be made that little bit easier with some support, visit www.nwl.co.uk/bill-help or call 0800 121 4608.

NORTHUMBRIAN
WATER *living water*

Your FREE water saving kit

If you think not having a meter means you can use as much as you like, think again.

We're lucky here in the north of England, but clean water is not unlimited. We all need to think about how we use water, and what we can do to cut down our usage.

At Northumbrian Water we're working with our partner Aqualogic who have enormous experience helping customers save water in their home.

Claim your
FREE
water saving kit from
Northumbrian Water at
www.nwl.watersavingkit.com

NORTHUMBRIAN
WATER *living water*



Video Presentations

www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hubs/advice-and-resources

Community Action Northumberland have put together some useful video presentations which include, chair yoga, standing yoga, relaxation, first aid, carbon monoxide awareness and fire safety in the home, these are all available on our You Tube channel as well as the CAN website. These videos can be used by individuals or for group sessions.

Visit the You Tube website and search for Community Action Northumberland, scroll down to watch our useful videos. You can also subscribe free of charge.

- Self Help First Aid for rural communities
- Carbon Monoxide awareness training
- Chair Yoga
- Relaxation Yoga
- Standing Yoga



Carbon Monoxide Awareness

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. Breathing it in can make you unwell, and it can kill if you are exposed to high levels. If you have oil, coal, logs, LPG, mains gas (anything that burns) appliances/boilers or heating make sure you have a working carbon monoxide monitor in your home and follow the instructions on how to use it and where to place it to keep you safe. If you suffer from any 'flu' like symptoms which improve when you go outdoors contact your GP as soon as possible.

For more information regarding Carbon Monoxide or if you would like information and/or advice on any energy-related issue please contact:

Christine Nicholls
at CAN by emailing
christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk
or by mobile: 07827403837.

Join OilCAN and save money on your heating fuel

Join our syndicate, place your order and we will do the rest. You can sit back and relax while we negotiate the best rate for your heating oil.

And by supporting OilCAN you're supporting rural communities across Northumberland.

OilCAN is our bulk buying heating fuel service offering Northumberland residents, groups and businesses the opportunity to buy oil, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and coal at lower prices.

We combine the purchasing power of all our members to help them get the lowest possible prices for their heating fuels.

With OilCAN, you can:

- save money on your fuel order
- benefit from the lowest possible prices
- order quickly and easily through your local volunteer co-ordinator by phone or email
- receive your order within just ten days



- get peace of mind knowing that if, for any reason, you run out, we can provide you with emergency provisions.

We charge a small membership fee to join the scheme to cover costs. Any profit we make goes back into supporting rural communities across Northumberland.

Find out more about OilCAN



**Slow
Cooker**

Corned Beef Stew and Dumplings

A really straightforward recipe that uses tinned corned beef instead of fresh or frozen meat.

Serves: 4 people

Cooking time: 3 hours in a slow cooker

Ingredients

- **Potatoes** - can be from a tin or peeled or scrubbed, usually one medium potato per person but add as many as you think you need, the smaller you cut the potato the less time they need to cook.
- **Carrots** - can be tinned, fresh or frozen
- **Peas** - tinned fresh or frozen, *(if they are tinned add them 30 minutes before the end of cooking time)* You can add any of your favourite vegetables whether fresh, frozen or tinned including sweetcorn, turnip etc.
- **2 Beef stock cubes or similar**
- **1 340g tin of corned beef** *(the corned beef is added in cubes 15 minutes before the end cooking time) For the dumplings (add 30 minutes before end cooking time)*
- **Either a complete packet of dumpling mix
Or 150g self-raising flour**
- **70g of suet** Enough cold water to make a firm dough *(3-5 tablespoons)*



Method

1. Place all the vegetables (except tinned peas) into the slow cooker, mix the stock cubes with enough water to cover the vegetables.
2. Mix dumplings and divide into rounds and put into the fridge.
3. Turn the slow cooker onto high and put on the lid.
4. After 3 hours check the potatoes are soft. Add the dumplings 30 minutes before the end cooking time along with any tinned vegetable .
5. The corned beef should be cut into chunks and added 15 minutes before the end cooking time, try not to stir once you add the beef as it breaks up and disappears into the gravy.
6. Salt and pepper to taste.

**Slow
Cooker**

Tuna Pasta Bake

Tuna is high-quality protein, selenium and potassium, tinned tuna also possesses omega-3 fatty acids and B vitamins.

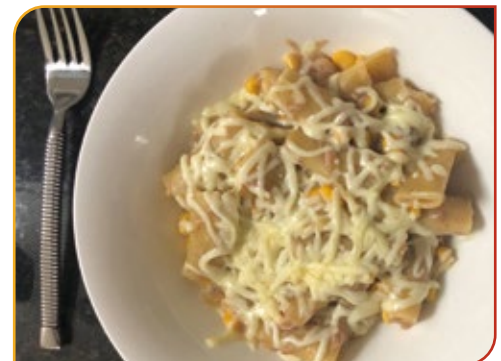
Prep time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2 people *(if you want to make this recipe for 4 just double the quantities)*

Cooking time: 1 hour

Ingredients

- **250g Pasta** (any type)
- **1 145g tin of Tuna**
- **2 packets of Mushroom cup a soup** made up with 400g or $\frac{3}{4}$ pint of boiling water/ or tinned soup 400g
- **1 small tin of sweetcorn**
- **Cheese** for topping (optional)



Method

Put all the ingredients into the slow cooker and cook on high for around 1 hour or when the pasta is cooked.

Keep checking just in case you need to add more water a small amount at a time.

If you would like any help or advice please contact CAN

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. Breathing it in can make you unwell, and it can kill if you are exposed to high levels. Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide monitor in your home and follow the instructions on how to use it and where to place it to keep you safe.



Saving money

Microwaves and slow cookers are cheaper to use than traditional ovens.

You can save up to 63p an hour by using a slow cooker.



Warm Homes Discount

You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.



PSR

The Priority Services Register is a free service provided by energy suppliers and network operators. To get on it, you need to contact your energy supplier.

CONTACT US

If you would like any help or advice please contact CAN

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