



HILLINGDON CITIZENS ADVICE PRESS RELEASE

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TIME TO TURN THE HEAT ON YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER?

With energy prices increasing and most people's income at a standstill as the recession continues the CAB service in Hillingdon will be running timely Energy Best Deal sessions for frontline workers and consumers alike.

Last year the CAB service in Hillingdon gave advice to 479 people with fuel debts and across the country Citizens Advice Bureaux dealt with over 100,000 enquiries from people seeking help with their fuel debts.

Recently the Citizens Advice website has seen a 78% increase in the number of people viewing its advice on this issue and four of the UK's six largest domestic energy suppliers have pledged funding to expand Energy Best Deal (EBD), the campaign launched in 2008 by Ofgem and Citizens Advice.

Between now and April the Hillingdon CAB service can offer groups of 10 or more frontline workers and/or consumers an Energy Best Deal session giving guidance on switching energy suppliers or tariffs and the range of help available from the Government and energy suppliers for people struggling to pay their energy bills.

Previous sessions delivered last year and the year before, at Children's Centres, Community Centres and the Sahan Society have been well received with more than 90% of participants saying they would make changes as a result to reduce their bills and pass on the information from the session to others.

To discuss an Energy Best Deal session for your group:

Contact Sue Carr (Financial Capability Trainer) by emailing susancarr@hillingdoncab.org.uk or phoning 01895 277307.

We can provide a one hour EBD session free of charge to organisations in both Hillingdon and Ealing – you just need to have a minimum of ten participants who are willing to give feedback on the session.

Further Information

Energy Best Deal key facts:

- Most people can switch energy supplier, for those paying by direct debit on a standard tariff could save on average between £33- £71 per year depending on where they live.
- Those who don't want to switch should make sure they are on their suppliers' cheapest available tariff.
- Most energy suppliers offer help to customers struggling to pay their energy bills.
- Those on low or fixed incomes may be entitled to a range of benefits including help with home insulation or a new boiler.
- Everyone aged over 60 is entitled to a winter fuel payment; the amount someone can get depends on their personal circumstances.
- **Impartial advice is vital for consumers as Ofgem's research shows only 1 in 5 consumers say they are active in the energy market.**
- Last year Citizens Advice Bureaux dealt with over 100,000 enquiries from people seeking help with fuel debts. This year also saw double the number of people than last year looked at the Citizens Advice website, www.adviceguide.org.uk, for information about how to get a cheaper energy deal.
- **Consumers who did not switch in 2010 paid around £170 more on average for their energy.** (This is for an offline Dual Fuel Direct Debit customer switching to the best deal available).

Citizens Advice Chief Executive Gillian Guy on 19 October 2011

"It's horrifying that people are dying each year because they can't afford to heat their home. Today's report by Professor Hills [author of the interim review of fuel poverty] is yet another reminder that fuel bills just have to come down."

Advice

- If you are in fuel debt or worried about how to pay your energy bill you can get advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau. We can help you make sure you're on the cheapest deal that your supplier provides, look at whether you would be better off switching suppliers, and advise on the help available for making your home more energy efficient.
- If you're on a low income, you may be able to get a cold weather payment to help with your fuel costs during periods of cold weather.
- If you're receiving the guarantee part of Pension Credit, you may get £120 off your bills this winter. Older people may also get Winter Fuel Payments (however, the qualifying age is rising in line with state pensions so you will have to be born on or before 5th January 1951 to qualify for 2011/12).
- You should make sure you're getting all the benefits and tax credits you're entitled to.
- Online advice about saving money on your fuel bills and benefits is available at www.adviceguide.org.uk

Energy Best Deal Information Videos on Youtube



- Six videos funded by Ofgem were also launched earlier this year on the Citizens Advice YouTube channel and the Ofgem website giving advice on shopping around, switching supplier, saving energy and what to do if you're struggling to pay.
- These have proven extremely popular and have so far been viewed over 10,200 times.

Notes

- **The 2011/12 EBD campaign is supported by EDF Energy, Scottish and Southern Energy, British Gas, E.ON, npower and Scottish Power.**
- **The Citizens Advice service** comprises a network of local bureaux, all of which are independent charities, and national charity Citizens Advice. Together we help people resolve their money, legal and other problems by providing information and advice and by influencing policymakers. For more information in England and Wales see www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- The advice provided by the Citizens Advice service is free, independent, confidential, and impartial, and available to everyone regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age or nationality. For online advice and information see www.adviceguide.org.uk
- Citizens Advice Bureaux in England and Wales advised 2.1 million clients on 7.1 million problems from April 2009 to March 2010, an 18% increase on the previous year. For full 2009/2010 service statistics see: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/press_20100517
- Out of 22 national charities, the Citizens Advice service is ranked by the general public as being the most helpful, approachable, professional, informative, effective / cost effective, reputable and accountable. (InfSynergy's Brand Attributes survey, May 2010).
- Most Citizens Advice service staff are trained volunteers, working at around 3,300 service outlets across England and Wales.
- You can get details for your nearest CAB by texting CAB followed by your postcode (making sure that there is a space between the two) to 64446. This will return the address and phone number of your local bureau along with a link to Adviceguide.
- This press release is issued by Hillingdon and Ealing Citizens Advice Ltd. Website: www.hillingdoncab.org.uk.