

How to Check an Energy Bill for Mistakes

A practical UK household guide to checking charges, meter readings, account credit and supplier errors

Step-by-step bill check

Common mistakes explained

Printable checking worksheet

Supplier complaint template included

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Produced by **PowerGuardian.co.uk** — Independent UK energy information for households

Do not assume that a higher Direct Debit means your bill is wrong

Before checking your bill, it helps to understand the difference between the key terms your supplier uses. Mixing these up is one of the most common causes of unnecessary concern.

Energy consumption

The amount of gas or electricity your household actually used, measured in kilowatt hours (kWh).

The cost of energy used

The charge for your consumption, calculated from your unit rates and standing charges for the billing period.

A bill or statement

A document showing what you have used, the charges applied, payments received, and the resulting account balance.

Monthly Direct Debit

A regular payment from your bank to your supplier towards your energy account. It is not necessarily the cost of the energy you used that month.

Account credit

Money your supplier holds on your account that exceeds the charges billed so far.

Account arrears or debt

The amount by which billed charges exceed payments made to date.

"Your Direct Debit is a payment towards your energy account. It is not necessarily the cost of the energy you used that month."

Bills often rise for entirely legitimate reasons. These include: higher consumption, colder weather, a changed unit rate or standing charge, a previous Direct Debit set too low, estimated readings being corrected by actual readings, the end of a fixed-tariff period, or repayment of an existing debit balance. However, each of these explanations should be verified rather than simply accepted.

Collect these before checking your bill

- 🔍 Latest bill or statement
- 🔍 Previous bill
- 🔍 Current meter reading
- 🔍 Photograph of the meter display
- 🔍 Tariff confirmation or contract summary
- 🔍 Recent supplier emails
- 🔍 Bank statements showing payments
- 🔍 Move-in, move-out or switching readings where relevant
- 🔍 Details of any meter replacement

Your Energy Bill at a Glance

Illustrative bill only — not based on a real supplier or current tariff. The example below is fictional and is provided purely to help you identify where information appears on a typical bill. Layouts and terminology differ between suppliers.

What you are looking for	Where it typically appears / what it means
Account number	Usually at the top of the bill. Needed for any query or complaint.
Billing period	The start and end dates of energy covered by this bill.
Tariff name	The name of the deal you are on. Check this matches your contract.
Electricity unit rate	Price per kWh of electricity, shown in pence. May be shown with or without VAT.
Gas unit rate	Price per kWh of gas, shown in pence. May differ by region.
Electricity standing charge	Daily charge for being connected to the electricity supply, in pence per day.
Gas standing charge	Daily charge for being connected to the gas supply, in pence per day.
Meter serial number	Unique identifier for the physical meter at your property. Check against the meter itself.
MPAN (electricity)	Meter Point Administration Number. Identifies your electricity supply point, not the meter.
MPRN (gas)	Meter Point Reference Number. Identifies your gas supply point.
Previous reading	The reading used at the start of this billing period.
Latest reading	The reading used at the end of this billing period.
Reading type	Whether the reading was actual, estimated, customer-submitted or smart. See page 5.
Energy consumption in kWh	The amount of energy billed. For electricity, this is usually the difference between readings. For gas, a conversion is applied — see page 7.
VAT	Domestic energy attracts a reduced VAT rate. See page 6 for current details.
Payments received	Direct Debit or other payments applied to your account during the period.
Opening account balance	Credit or debit on the account at the start of the period.
Closing account balance	Credit or debit remaining after charges and payments are applied.
Estimated annual consumption	A projection of usage across a full year. Do not confuse with bill period consumption.
Tariff end date and exit fees	When your current deal ends and whether leaving early incurs a charge.

Important distinction: "Bill period consumption" means energy used during the dates covered by this bill. **"Estimated annual consumption"** is a projection across a full year. Do not confuse the two — they serve different purposes and may look similar on the bill.

Step 1: Is this definitely your energy account?

Before checking the figures, confirm that the bill relates to the correct property, meter and account holder. Errors at this stage can mean paying for another household's energy entirely.

Check each of these items against your own records:

- ☐ Name and supply address — does the bill show your name and correct address?
- ☐ Billing dates — do the start and end dates match the period you occupied the property?
- ☐ Account number — does this match your previous bills and online account?
- ☐ Tariff name — does this match your agreement or tariff confirmation letter?
- ☐ Payment method — does the bill show the correct payment method (e.g. Direct Debit, prepayment, cash)?
- ☐ Meter serial number — does the number on the bill match the number on the physical meter?
- ☐ MPAN (electricity) — does this match your previous bills?
- ☐ MPRN (gas) — does this match your previous bills?
- ☐ Opening date — if you recently moved in, does the bill start from your move-in date?
- ☐ Closing date — if you have moved out, does the bill end on the correct date?
- ☐ Correct meter — if your property has more than one meter, is the bill for the right one?

 **Warning:** Meter mix-ups can occur in blocks of flats, converted properties, new developments and addresses with several meters. Do not assume a meter belongs to your property merely because it is physically nearby. Check the serial number and, where necessary, ask your supplier or network operator to confirm the supply details. An incorrect meter serial number, MPAN or MPRN could mean you are being billed for the wrong supply entirely.

How to check the meter serial number

Find the serial number printed on the front of your physical meter — it is usually a sequence of letters and numbers labelled "Serial No.", "Meter Serial" or similar. Compare this exactly with the number printed on your bill. If they do not match, contact your supplier immediately before paying anything.

Step 2: Were actual or estimated readings used?

The type of reading used to produce your bill has a direct effect on its accuracy. Understanding the difference is essential.

Reading type	What it means	What to check	Possible problem
Actual	Taken by the supplier or a meter operator visiting the property	Compare with your own reading taken on the same date	Incorrect reading recorded by the operative
Customer	Submitted by you, the householder	Check your submission was received and applied correctly	Reading rejected or overridden by an estimated reading
Smart	Sent automatically from a communicating smart meter	Check the meter is communicating — if not, bills may still be estimated	Smart meter not sending data; estimated bill issued regardless
Estimated	A figure calculated by the supplier based on past usage or assumptions	Compare estimate with your actual reading	Over- or under-billing; distorted account balance
Opening	The reading used to start a billing period, a new account or a switch	Check it matches a confirmed reading from that date	Wrong opening reading leads to incorrect consumption figure for the entire bill
Closing	The reading used to end a billing period, a final bill or a switch	Check it matches an actual reading taken on or near the closing date	Over- or under-charging for the period

 **Note on reading codes:** Bills may use letters such as A, C, E or S to indicate reading types, but suppliers do not all use the same abbreviations. Consult the key on your bill or ask your supplier what each marker means — do not assume.

How to check your meter readings — step by step

01

Locate the readings on the bill

Find the previous reading, the latest reading and the reading type for each fuel.

03

Confirm the correct register

Economy 7 and multi-rate meters have separate day and night registers. Ensure the correct register is being read for each rate.

05

Submit an up-to-date reading if the bill is estimated

Use your supplier's accepted channel (online account, app, telephone or post) and save the confirmation.

02

Read the physical meter

Take a reading now and photograph the display and the serial number plate.

04

Compare your reading with the billed reading

If the billed reading is significantly higher or lower than your current meter reading, investigate further.

06

Request a corrected bill

If an estimated bill is too high or too low, submit an accurate reading and ask the supplier to issue a corrected bill.

Notes on specific meter types

- **Single-rate electricity meters:** One register only. The difference between two readings gives electricity units consumed.
- **Economy 7 or multi-rate meters:** Two or more registers for different time periods. Ensure day and night readings are not reversed on your bill.
- **Digital gas meters:** Usually measure in cubic metres (m³). The supplier converts this to kWh — see page 7.
- **Imperial gas meters:** Measure in cubic feet (ft³). Check whether your bill uses the correct conversion factor.
- **Smart meters:** Should send readings automatically. However, if communications are poor or the meter is not enrolled correctly, estimated bills can still be issued. Check the bill's reading type.
- **Prepayment meters:** Billing works differently — your consumption is charged when you top up. Check that top-up amounts are correctly recorded and that standing charges are being applied at the right rate.



Do not confuse: day and night registers; electricity and gas readings; cubic metres and cubic feet; meter readings and kWh; or your in-home display with the actual meter itself.

Step 3: Are the tariff rates correct?

Your bill must apply the unit rates and standing charges that match your agreement for the dates covered. Even a small rate error can result in a significant overcharge over a full year.

Unit rate

The price charged for each kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity or gas you use. Electricity and gas have separate unit rates. Rates may vary by region, payment method and tariff type.

Standing charge

A daily charge for being connected to the supply, regardless of how much energy you use. Electricity and gas each carry their own standing charge, normally quoted in pence per day.

Fixed tariff

A fixed tariff fixes the unit rates and standing charges for its term — it does not fix your total bill, which still depends on how much energy you use. Check that your supplier has not changed your rates mid-term without proper notice.

VAT on domestic energy

Domestic gas and electricity have historically attracted a reduced rate of VAT of 5%. From 1 October 2026, the government has announced that VAT on domestic *electricity* will be reduced to 0% for a temporary period until the end of March 2027, while gas remains at 5%. Always check the rate shown on your bill against the current official rate and the dates covered by your bill. Rates on bills may be shown with or without VAT included.

Where to verify your rates

- Your tariff confirmation letter or email
- Your supplier's contract summary or tariff information label
- Emails confirming a tariff change
- Your online account showing the rates applicable on the bill dates

Calculate the energy charge yourself

Calculation	Formula
Energy charge (before VAT)	$\text{kWh used} \times \text{unit rate in pence} \div 100 = \text{£}$
Standing-charge cost (before VAT)	$\text{Number of billed days} \times \text{standing charge in pence} \div 100 = \text{£}$
Estimated total (before VAT)	$\text{Energy charge} + \text{standing-charge cost} = \text{£}$
With VAT added (gas: 5%)	$\text{Total before VAT} \times 1.05 = \text{£}$
With VAT added (electricity, from 1 Oct 2026)	Check current rate — see note above

Check the official Ofgem and GOV.UK guidance for the current VAT rate applicable to the billing period you are checking. Where VAT is already included in the rates shown on your bill, do not add it again.

 Check the cost using your actual consumption and rates: <https://powerguardian.co.uk/energy-bill-calculator>

Step 4: Does the usage calculation make sense?

Once you have confirmed the readings and rates, you can verify whether the consumption figure on your bill is arithmetically correct.

Electricity – how consumption is calculated

For a standard single-rate electricity meter:

$$\text{Current meter reading} - \text{Previous meter reading} = \text{Electricity units consumed}$$

For a standard electricity meter, one recorded unit will usually correspond to one kWh. For Economy 7 or multi-rate meters, repeat this calculation separately for each register (day and night) and add the totals.

Worked example (illustrative only – not current prices)

Item	Example figure
Previous reading	12,450 kWh
Current reading	12,780 kWh
Units consumed	330 kWh
Unit rate (illustrative)	25p per kWh
Energy charge	$330 \times 25 \div 100 = \text{£}82.50$
Standing charge (illustrative)	$60\text{p/day} \times 30 \text{ days} \div 100 = \text{£}18.00$
Subtotal before VAT	£100.50

Gas – how consumption is calculated

Gas meters normally measure volume rather than energy. Suppliers must convert this volume into kWh before billing. The conversion typically involves:

- Metered gas volume (in cubic metres for metric meters, or cubic feet for older imperial meters)
- An imperial-to-metric conversion factor (if the meter is imperial)
- A volume correction factor (to account for temperature and pressure)
- The calorific value of gas (the energy content per cubic metre, which varies slightly)
- Division by a factor to convert megajoules to kWh

Do not assume that subtracting two gas meter readings gives the final billed kWh figure — the conversion steps mean the billed kWh will be higher than the raw volume difference.

Worked example (illustrative only – not current prices)

Item	Example figure
Previous reading (m ³)	3,210
Current reading (m ³)	3,342
Volume used (m ³)	132
Conversion to kWh (approx.)	$132 \times 11.186 \approx \text{1,477 kWh}$
Unit rate (illustrative)	6p per kWh
Energy charge	$1,477 \times 6 \div 100 = \text{£}88.62$

The conversion multiplier used by your supplier will be shown on the bill. Check it matches the figure applied to your reading.

Verify each of these items on your bill:

- ☐ Correct opening reading
- ☐ Correct closing reading
- ☐ Correct number of billed days
- ☐ Correct meter units (kWh for electricity; m³ or ft³ for gas before conversion)
- ☐ Correct day and night registers (if Economy 7)
- ☐ Correct gas conversion factor and calorific value shown
- ☐ No duplicated consumption from the previous bill period
- ☐ No unexplained adjustments to the consumption figure
- ☐ No overlap with a previous bill

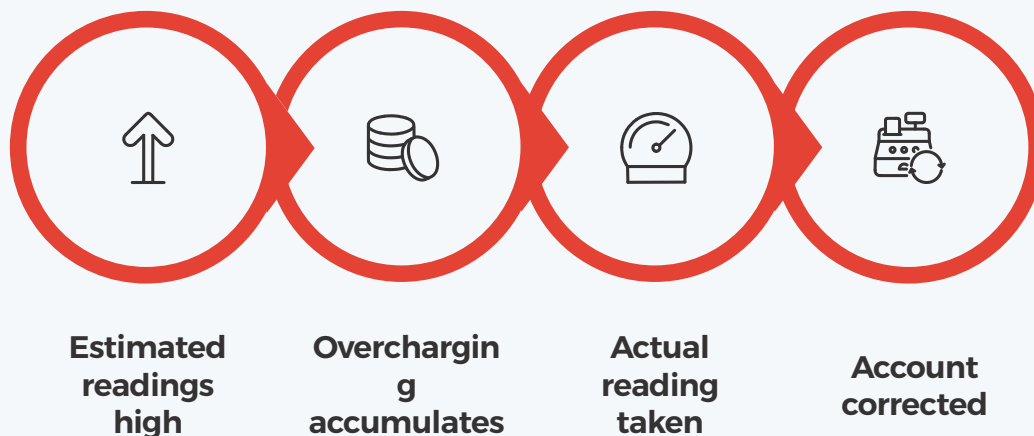
Step 5: Has estimation distorted the account?

A sequence of estimated bills can cause the account to drift significantly from reality — in either direction. The problems may not become obvious until an actual reading is finally taken.

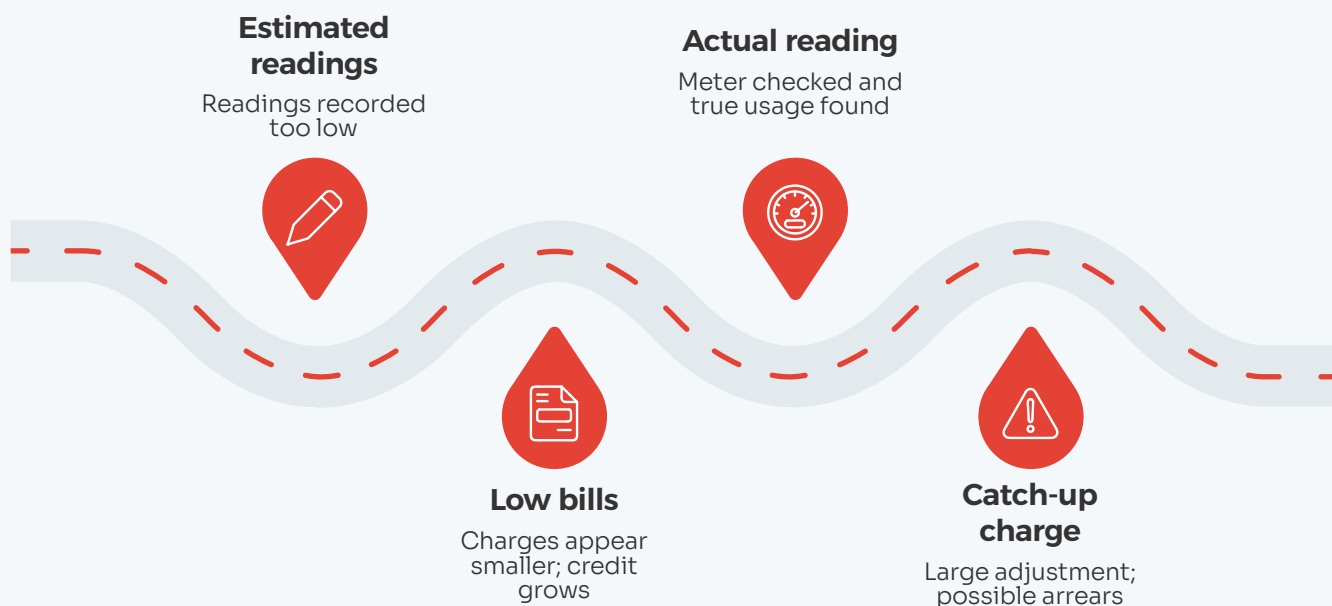
Estimated readings can create:

- Gradually increasing inaccuracy as estimates deviate from actual usage
- Apparent credit that does not truly reflect overpayment
- Unexpected catch-up bills when actual readings reveal under-billing
- Direct Debit increases based on inaccurate consumption data
- Incorrect estimated annual consumption figures, making tariff comparison unreliable
- Difficulty comparing tariffs or switching supplier accurately

Example A – Estimates too high



Example B – Estimates too low



What to do if you believe estimation has distorted your account:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>01</p> <p>Take an up-to-date meter reading</p> <p>Read the meter carefully and note the date and time.</p> | <p>02</p> <p>Photograph the reading and serial number</p> <p>A dated photograph is strong evidence that cannot be disputed.</p> | <p>03</p> <p>Submit through the supplier's accepted channel</p> <p>Use the online account, app, telephone or post. Save or screenshot the confirmation.</p> |
| <p>04</p> <p>Ask for a corrected statement</p> <p>Request a revised bill based on your actual reading, not the previous estimate.</p> | <p>05</p> <p>Check the corrected bill replaces rather than duplicates charges</p> <p>The corrected bill should not repeat charges already applied in a previous estimated bill.</p> | |

 **Smart meters and estimated bills:** A smart meter can still result in an estimated bill if it is not communicating data correctly to the supplier. Check the reading type on your bill even if you have a smart meter installed.

Step 6: What does your account balance actually mean?

The account balance section of your bill can be confusing. It reflects the history of charges and payments over time — not just the current billing period.

Account credit

The supplier holds more money on the account than the billed charges currently require. This may be shown as a positive figure, or marked "CR" or "in credit" depending on the supplier.

- ❏ A credit balance does not automatically prove the Direct Debit is excessive. Many suppliers deliberately build credit during warmer months to help cover higher consumption and costs in winter.

Debit balance or arrears

Billed charges currently exceed payments made. This may be shown as a negative figure, or marked "DR" or "in debit". It does not necessarily mean the bill is wrong — it may reflect seasonal patterns or a recent tariff change.

Simple account reconciliation

Opening balance
 + Payments received
 – Energy charges and other valid charges
 ± Any adjustments, refunds or corrections
 = Expected closing balance

Adapt the signs depending on whether your supplier shows credit as positive or negative. The key is to follow the bill's own wording rather than relying solely on a plus or minus sign.

Check each of these items on your bill:

- ❓ Opening balance and whether it matches the previous bill's closing balance
- ❓ All payments received are shown and correctly dated
- ❓ All charges are clearly itemised and correspond to actual usage
- ❓ Any refunds, corrections or adjustments are explained
- ❓ Any manual adjustments have a written explanation
- ❓ The closing balance is mathematically consistent with the items above
- ❓ The proposed Direct Debit is explained and based on up-to-date readings
- ❓ Any debt-repayment element is clearly separated from the energy charge
- ❓ All payments have been allocated to the correct account

Further actions on account balances:

- **Direct Debit review:** Ask the supplier to explain how the proposed amount was calculated and to recalculate it using your up-to-date actual readings.
- **Refund of surplus credit:** If you hold genuine surplus credit, you may request a refund. Suppliers are generally expected to repay clear credit on request. Allow reasonable time for the request to be processed.
- **Genuine arrears:** If you owe money, agree an affordable payment plan with the supplier. Do not ignore arrears.
- **Struggling to pay:** Tell the supplier immediately. Suppliers are expected to offer support and payment arrangements to customers in financial difficulty.

Common Energy Billing Errors

A high bill alone does not prove an error. Use this table to identify specific problems, gather the right evidence and know what to ask your supplier to do.

Possible error	What it looks like	Evidence to collect	What to ask the supplier to do
Incorrect meter serial number	Serial number on bill differs from the number on the physical meter	Photograph of meter serial number; copy of bill	Correct the meter details and reissue the bill
Wrong MPAN or MPRN	Supply reference number does not match previous bills or network records	Previous bills; network confirmation letter	Confirm the correct MPAN/MPRN and reissue the bill from the correct supply point
Bill addressed to wrong person	Bill shows a previous occupier's name or a different account holder	Tenancy agreement; Land Registry; move-in correspondence	Update account details and clarify liability from the correct start date
Charges before moving in	Billing period starts before your tenancy or ownership began	Tenancy agreement; completion date; move-in meter reading	Adjust the opening date and remove charges before your occupation began
Charges after moving out	Bill continues beyond your tenancy end date or switching date	Tenancy end letter; move-out reading; switching confirmation	Adjust the closing date and issue a corrected final bill
Wrong opening or closing reading	Consumption appears far higher or lower than usual	Photographs of meter on relevant dates; previous bills	Apply the correct readings and recalculate the bill
Estimated reading despite actual reading supplied	Bill shows E or similar; you submitted a reading that was not used	Screenshot or confirmation of your reading submission	Apply your actual reading and reissue a corrected bill
Day and night registers reversed	Economy 7 day usage billed at night rate or vice versa; unusually high charge	Meter photographs showing both registers; previous bills for comparison	Swap the registers and recalculate the bill at the correct rates
Incorrect unit rate	Rate on bill differs from tariff confirmation for the dates in question	Tariff confirmation email or letter; contract summary	Apply the correct rate and reissue the bill
Incorrect standing charge	Daily standing charge does not match tariff documents	Tariff confirmation; online account rate history	Apply the correct standing charge and recalculate
Fixed-tariff rates changed incorrectly	Bill shows different rates part-way through a fixed-term deal	Fixed-tariff agreement; supplier communications	Reinstate the agreed fixed rates and recalculate from the date of the error
Duplicate billing period	The same dates appear on two bills	Both bills showing overlapping dates	Remove the duplicate charges and reconcile the account
Missing Direct Debit payment	Account shows a debit balance despite bank statement showing payment	Bank statement; Direct Debit confirmation; payment reference	Locate and apply the missing payment; update the account balance
Payment allocated to wrong account	Payment confirmed by bank but not reflected on your bill	Bank statement; payment reference; previous bills	Trace the payment, apply it to the correct account and issue a corrected balance
Incorrect gas conversion	kWh figure appears disproportionate to the volume reading difference	Bill showing conversion factor; meter photographs	Recalculate using the correct conversion factor and calorific value
Unexplained account adjustment	A charge or credit appears with no clear description	The bill itself; any supplier correspondence	Provide a written explanation of the adjustment and remove it if unjustified
Credit not transferred after switching	Old supplier held credit that was not passed on after the switch	Final bill from old supplier; switching confirmation date	Refund the outstanding credit balance
Final bill not reflecting agreed switching reading	Closing reading differs from the reading agreed at the point of switching	Switching confirmation showing agreed reading; meter photograph	Apply the agreed switching reading and reissue the final bill
Meter replacement not recorded correctly	Readings jump illogically around the date a new meter was fitted	Meter replacement confirmation; readings before and after replacement	Confirm opening and closing readings for the old and new meters and recalculate
Smart meter treated as two different meters	Duplicate supply records created; bills overlap or are issued twice	Both bill documents; meter serial number confirmation	Merge the records, remove duplicate charges and reconcile the account
Debt from a previous occupier	Bill includes charges or a debit balance relating to a period before you moved in	Tenancy agreement; move-in meter reading; correspondence confirming your start date	Remove the previous occupier's debt from your account entirely
Old charges possibly affected by back-billing protections	Bill includes charges for energy used more than 12 months ago	All bills covering the relevant period; any meter reading records	Apply back-billing protections where they apply — see page 11

Can your supplier charge for energy used more than 12 months ago?

Ofgem's back-billing rules protect domestic consumers from large catch-up bills caused by supplier errors. Understanding what these protections cover — and where their limits lie — is important before challenging older charges.

The basic protection

Under Ofgem's rules, an energy supplier cannot charge a domestic customer for energy used more than 12 months before the date of the corrected bill, where the failure to bill correctly was the supplier's fault. This protection applies to households and microbusinesses.

What "the supplier's fault" means

The protection applies where, for example, the supplier failed to bill you at all despite having access to readings, billed using estimated readings when actual readings were available, or failed to act on information that would have produced an accurate bill.

When the protection does not apply

You may remain liable for charges older than 12 months if you actively prevented the supplier from billing accurately — for example, by blocking access to the meter, ignoring repeated reasonable requests, tampering with the meter, or stealing energy. Failing to provide readings alone does not automatically defeat the protection.

Unpaid bills are not the same as back-billing

If you received a bill — whether estimated or actual — and simply did not pay it, that is a debt rather than a back-billing situation. The 12-month rule does not cancel unpaid invoices.

⚠ Important: Back-billing protections depend on the specific circumstances of each case. The rules above provide a general guide only. Check the latest Ofgem and Citizens Advice guidance before challenging older charges, and seek independent advice if you are unsure.

What to do if you receive a back-bill

01

Check whether the charges are for energy used more than 12 months before the bill date

If so, and the delay was the supplier's fault, the back-billing protection may apply.

03

Gather evidence

Collect all bills, meter photographs and any reading submissions covering the period in question.

02

Do not pay the disputed amount immediately

Write to the supplier citing Ofgem's back-billing rules and asking for a revised bill.

04

Escalate if necessary

If the supplier continues to seek payment for a period covered by the rules, complain formally and, if unresolved, escalate to the Energy Ombudsman — see page 14.

Official guidance

 Ofgem — What to do if you get a back bill: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/what-do-if-you-get-back-bill>

 Citizens Advice — Energy guidance: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/>

 Energy Ombudsman — Back-billing explained: <https://www.energyombudsman.org/advice-for-consumers/what-is-back-billing>

Step 7: Raise a clear, evidenced complaint

If you have found an error, follow this structured process. A clear, well-evidenced complaint is far more likely to be resolved quickly than an unspecific telephone call.

01	02	03
Contact the supplier and state you are making a formal complaint Use those words exactly. Suppliers are required to handle formal complaints under a specific procedure with defined timescales.	Describe each disputed charge clearly State which line on which bill you are challenging, and explain specifically why you believe it is wrong.	Give the relevant dates and periods Include the billing period, the dates of meter readings, and any other relevant dates.
04	05	06
Provide meter photographs and readings Attach or send photographs of the meter display and serial number, with the date visible where possible.	Attach tariff documents and payment evidence Include your tariff confirmation, contract summary and bank statements showing payments made.	State what you believe is wrong and what correction you are seeking Be specific: "The unit rate applied was Xp per kWh; my tariff confirmation shows Yp per kWh for this period."
07	08	09
Ask for a complaint reference number The eight-week clock starts from the date you first raise the complaint. A reference number confirms the date and makes escalation easier.	Request a written response Written responses create a record and are required for Ombudsman referral if needed.	Keep copies of everything Note every telephone call: date, time, name or department, what was said and any commitments made.

⚠ Do not cancel a Direct Debit impulsively without considering the consequences. Cancelling a payment could affect your tariff, account status or any repayment arrangement in place. Challenge the disputed amount through the complaints process and seek independent advice before stopping any payment.

Complaint record – fill in as you go

Date	Contact method	Person / department	Reference number	What was discussed and promised

If you are struggling to pay your bills while the complaint is being investigated, tell the supplier immediately and ask about an affordable payment arrangement. Do not wait for the complaint to be resolved before raising the affordability issue.

Formal Complaint: Disputed Energy Bill

Complete this template and send it to your energy supplier by email or post. Keep a copy for your records.

Your name	
Supply address	
Account number	
Supplier name	
Complaint reference (if known)	
Date of this letter	
Bill date	
Billing period covered	
Amount disputed	

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am making a **formal complaint** about the accuracy of my energy bill dated [date], covering the period [dates].

I believe the bill may be incorrect because:

My evidence includes:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Current meter photograph | ☐ Meter serial-number photograph |
| ☐ Previous bills | ☐ Tariff confirmation |
| ☐ Meter readings | ☐ Bank payment records |
| ☐ Moving or switching documentation | ☐ Other: _____ |

The figures I am disputing are:

My own calculation is:

Please:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Explain the charges in writing | ☐ Correct the meter reading |
| ☐ Apply the correct tariff rates | ☐ Issue a revised bill |
| ☐ Correct my account balance | ☐ Review my Direct Debit |
| ☐ Apply the back-billing rules where relevant | ☐ Refund verified surplus credit |
| ☐ Other: _____ | |

Please confirm that this has been registered as a **formal complaint** and provide a complaint reference number. I would like your response in writing.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]

Date: _____

What if the supplier does not resolve it?

If your supplier has not resolved your complaint, you have the right to take it to an independent body free of charge. Do not give up — the escalation route is clearly defined.

When can you escalate to the Energy Ombudsman?

1

Eight weeks without resolution

If eight weeks have passed since you first formally complained to your supplier and the complaint remains unresolved, you may take your case directly to the Energy Ombudsman. The eight-week clock runs from the date you first raised the formal complaint, not from the date of the original billing error.

2

Deadlock letter

Your supplier may issue a deadlock letter before the eight weeks are up if it believes it has reached a final position on your complaint. A deadlock letter gives you immediate access to the Ombudsman without waiting for the full eight weeks to pass.

3

Submit to the Energy Ombudsman

The Energy Ombudsman is a free, independent, Ofgem-approved dispute resolution service. You must submit your complaint to the Ombudsman within 12 months of the deadlock letter or the point at which the eight-week period expired.

What the Energy Ombudsman can require

If the Ombudsman finds in your favour and you accept the decision, the supplier is legally required to comply. Remedies may include:

- Correcting your account or bill
- Providing a written explanation of what went wrong
- Issuing an apology
- Taking practical remedial action
- Making a financial award where appropriate

The Ombudsman's decision is binding on the supplier if you choose to accept it. You are never obliged to accept the decision — you retain the right to seek other remedies if you reject it.

- ☐ Verify current eligibility criteria and submission deadlines on the Energy Ombudsman's official website before escalating, as these may be updated from time to time.

Official escalation links

 How to complain about an energy supplier — Ofgem:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/complain-about-your-energy-supplier>

 Energy Ombudsman — submit a complaint:

<https://www.energyombudsman.org/>

 Citizens Advice — energy guidance:

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

 Ofgem — information for energy consumers:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers>

For current contact details for any of these organisations, visit their official websites. Contact details change and this guide does not reproduce telephone numbers.

My PowerGuardian Energy Bill Check

Print this worksheet and complete it beside your bill. Leave the spaces blank for handwritten notes and calculations.

Section 1 – The Bill

Supplier	
Account number	
Bill date	
Billing period	
Electricity, gas or dual fuel?	
Tariff name	
Payment method	

Section 2 – The Meter

Meter serial number on bill	
Meter serial number on meter	
Do they match?	Yes / No
Previous reading	
Previous reading type	
Latest reading on bill	
Latest reading type	
My current reading	
Date reading taken	
Photograph saved?	Yes / No

Section 3 – The Rates

Electricity unit rate	p per kWh
Electricity standing charge	p per day
Gas unit rate	p per kWh
Gas standing charge	p per day
Match my tariff confirmation?	Yes / No
Number of billed days	
VAT treatment checked?	Yes / No

Section 4 – The Calculation

Electricity kWh used	kWh
Electricity energy charge	£
Electricity standing-charge cost	£
Gas kWh used	kWh
Gas energy charge	£
Gas standing-charge cost	£
Other valid charges	£
Discounts or credits applied	£
My estimated total	£
Supplier's total on bill	£
Difference	£

Section 5 – The Account Balance

Opening credit or debit balance	£
Payments made this period	£
Charges added this period	£
Refunds	£
Adjustments	£
My expected closing balance	£
Supplier's closing balance on bill	£
Difference	£

Section 6 – Possible Problems

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Wrong meter | ☐ Incorrect reading |
| ☐ Estimated reading used | ☐ Wrong tariff rate |
| ☐ Wrong standing charge | ☐ Incorrect dates |
| ☐ Missing payment | ☐ Duplicate charge |
| ☐ Incorrect account balance | ☐ Unexplained adjustment |
| ☐ Back-billing concern | ☐ Moving / switching problem |
| ☐ Other: _____ | |

Section 7 – Action

Supplier contacted on:		Complaint reference:	
Evidence provided:		Correction requested:	
Response deadline:		Escalation date if unresolved:	
Outcome:			

Space below for handwritten calculations and notes:

Check the figures independently

These free PowerGuardian tools are designed for UK householders checking their own energy bills. Use them alongside this guide to verify your supplier's figures independently.

Read the full guide to understanding your bill

<https://powerguardian.co.uk/how-to-read-your-energy-bill>

Calculate the cost using your actual usage and tariff rates

<https://powerguardian.co.uk/energy-bill-calculator>

Read the PowerGuardian switching guide

<https://powerguardian.co.uk/switching-guide>

For more independent UK household energy tools, supplier information and consumer guidance, visit PowerGuardian.co.uk.

Sources and methodology

Organisation	Page / topic	URL	Accessed
Ofgem	Back-billing — what to do if you get a back bill	ofgem.gov.uk	Aug 2026
Energy Ombudsman	What is back billing?	energyombudsman.org	Aug 2026
Ofgem / DESNZ	Eight-week and deadlock complaint escalation rules	ofgem.gov.uk	Aug 2026
Citizens Advice	Energy supply — consumer guidance	citizensadvice.org.uk	Aug 2026
GOV.UK / HMRC	VAT on domestic fuel and power (Notice 701/19)	gov.uk	Aug 2026
IFS / HM Treasury	VAT on domestic electricity — announced 0% from 1 Oct 2026 to March 2027	ifs.org.uk	Aug 2026

 **Disclaimer:** This guide provides general consumer information rather than personalised legal, financial or debt advice. Supplier procedures, VAT rates and consumer protections can change. Check current Ofgem, Citizens Advice and Energy Ombudsman guidance before acting on any information in this guide. Information checked: 1 August 2026.