

# Saving energy and reducing your bills



**St Albans**  
City & District Council

## Step 1. Keep the heat in

Often the largest part of an energy bill is heating-related. Make sure your home has the right amount of loft and cavity wall insulation to help prevent heat escaping. Use draft excluders on doors and drought-proof tape on windows or doors that don't close properly. Rugs and carpets can be used to stop draughts from coming through old floorboards. Heavy curtains also help to keep heat in. Your house should be properly ventilated though, make sure you don't block up any ventilation routes.

Sustainable St Albans offers Thermal Imaging Cameras to local residents to help them identify where heat is leaking out.

Visit [www.transitionstalbens.org/thermal-imaging-camera](http://www.transitionstalbens.org/thermal-imaging-camera)

## Step 2. Set timers and thermostats correctly

Ensure you are using your timers and thermostats on your heating system properly to avoid wasting heat. Set your thermostatic radiator valves low in rooms you rarely use. Keep your radiators on, even if just a little, in rooms where condensation is a problem.



Your main living room should be around 18-21°C and the rest of the home at a minimum of 16 °C.

If you are unsure of how to use any of your existing heating controls, instructions can normally be downloaded from the manufacturer's website. Alternatively, contact **Energy Saving Trust** on **0300 123 1234** or visit [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk).

## Step 3. Ensure you are getting the best tariff

It pays to shop around as you may be able to find a cheaper energy tariff. Contact your supplier to find out if there is a better deal available. It is also worth checking other suppliers.

The following Ofgem accredited websites search the tariffs offered by different suppliers to help you find the best deal:

- [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com)
- [www.energyhelpline.com](http://www.energyhelpline.com)
- [www.theenergyshop.com](http://www.theenergyshop.com)

Some suppliers may be able to offer alternative tariffs for those less able to pay. You could also consider a dual rate if you use electricity at night. If you are of pensionable age, disabled, have young children or are vulnerable, ask your energy supplier about the Priority Services Register. This is available to make it easier for you to manage your energy services.

**Complaints** about your energy supplier can be made to the Energy Ombudsman. Find out more at [www.ombudsman-services.org/Energy](http://www.ombudsman-services.org/Energy)



## Step 4. Avoid standby

Avoid leaving electrical items on standby as they continue to use energy when they are not being used. In some cases this can amount to 80% of the energy consumed when they are in use. A typical digital set-top box for instance can cost up to £14 in electricity per year just being in standby mode.

## Step 5. Change your lighting

Lighting accounts for 10-15% of the typical electricity bill. Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) are the most efficient type of lighting available.

Although LEDs cost more than other light bulbs, they last up to twelve times longer and use less than a quarter of the electricity during their lifetime. Replacing an ordinary bulb with a LED will save you about £3-6 per year in energy costs.

If you can't afford to replace all of your light bulbs at once, start with the places where the lights are on for a long time, like the hallway, landing, living room, or outside security lights.

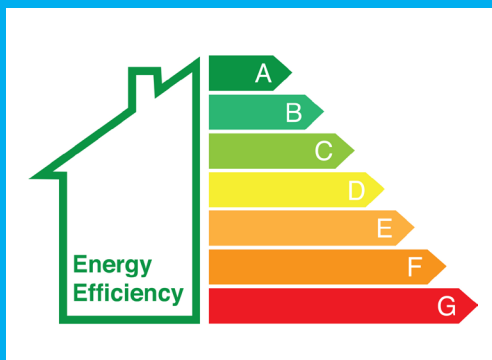
LED brightness is measured by lumens. You can also choose different colour tones. Not all LED bulbs are dimmable.



## Step 6. Choose appliances wisely

If you are buying a new appliance it is worth spending a little more on energy-efficient version as it will save you money in the long term. All appliances now have an energy efficiency rating from **A** (most efficient) to **G** (least efficient).

An A-rated appliance will use less than half the energy of a G-rated appliance of the same type. For example, by replacing an old G-rated fridge freezer with a new A-rated model you could expect to save around £40 per year in energy costs.



## Step 7. Ensure your bills are accurate

Your bills may not be accurate if the meter company hasn't been able to access your meter. Submit your own readings, either by phone or online, to ensure that you are receiving an accurate bill. Keep a record of your readings and if you are not sure how to read your meter, send a photo.

If you need help understanding your bill contact **Citizens Advice St Albans District** on **01727 811118** or visit **[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

## Step 8. Access all the benefits you are entitled to

Make sure you are accessing all the benefits you are entitled to.

Visit [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) to check your entitlement to the most common benefits. Alternatively, you can call:

- Benefit Entitlement Checks [0800 882200](tel:0800 882200)
- Citizens Advice St Albans District [01727 811118](tel:01727 811118)

### Winter fuel payment

You might be eligible for Winter Fuel Payments, a yearly tax-free payment to help people pay for their heating in the winter. Find out if you are eligible by calling [0345 915 1515](tel:0345 915 1515) or visit [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

### Cold weather payment

If you are entitled to a Cold Weather Payment, you should receive it automatically. If you think you should receive it but haven't, speak to your Pensions Service or local Jobcentre Plus.

Visit [www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](http://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment) for more details.

## Step 9. Monitor your energy usage

All St Albans District libraries offer electricity monitors for free on a three week loan. These allow you to monitor your energy use and can help you to identify which items in your home are using the most electricity. You can then find easy ways to reduce your energy usage.





## Step 10. Affinity Water Saving Programme

Around 15% of a typical home's gas bill is from heating water. By reducing your water use you also save energy. Affinity Water provides free **Home Water Efficiency Checks**, water-saving devices and advice as well as tips to help you reduce water consumption and save money.

Affinity Water is installing water meters in the District. This encourages people to use less water, because they pay for what they actually use. To find out more visit: [www.affinitywater.co.uk/savewater](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk/savewater)

Customers who have a water meter, are on qualifying benefits, and have three or more children living at home, or a medical condition which means they use a lot of water, may be eligible for **Affinity Water Sure Scheme**.

Affinity Water also offers a low income tariff to customers who have a household income of less than £16,105 excluding benefits.

To find out more, visit: [www.affinitywater.co.uk/lowincome](http://www.affinitywater.co.uk/lowincome) or call **0345 357 2406**.



To find out about grants, subsidies and offers that may improve the energy efficiency of your home, please visit [www.stalbans.gov.uk/energygrants](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/energygrants)

St Albans City & District Council  
Civic Centre  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL1 3JE

Website: [www.stalbans.gov.uk](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk)  
Telephone: [01727 866100](tel:01727866100)

