

Your Welcome Guide

Making life warm and cosy
with District Heating



A WARM WELCOME FROM VEOLIA

Hello, we are Veolia, your heating and hot water supplier. We are experts in District Heating and currently keep thousands of residents in the UK warm and comfortable.

This guide will give you an overview of the service you can expect from us as our customer. It explains everything you need to know about our District Heating scheme and how your account will work. You can find all our contact details and some frequently asked questions in our Welcome Letter.

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1. WHAT IS DISTRICT HEATING?

Your property is connected to a District Heating Scheme. District Heating Schemes are a low carbon and environmentally-friendly way to heat buildings. Instead of homes having individual gas boilers heating the property, there is one central energy source providing heating and hot water to all. Heat is delivered into each property through a hot water system via a network of insulated pipes. Veolia has been appointed as the sole operator of this system, delivering heating and hot water to residents of the scheme such as yourself.

Your home is fitted with a Heating Interface Unit (HIU) which transfers the heat from our pipe network into your home, giving you full control of your heating and hot water usage. Further benefits include:

IT'S CLEAN AND GREEN

Low carbon

This system uses considerably less energy when compared to individual gas boilers, giving off fewer carbon emissions. Currently district heating and heat networks reduce the UK's CO₂ emissions by approximately one million tonnes per year.

Helps the environment

Buildings connected to a District Heating Scheme help to improve local air quality.

Flexifuel

District Heating Schemes can operate through a range of low-carbon fuel sources including natural gas, and renewable energies such as biomass and energy captured from waste.

IT'S SAFE AND RELIABLE

Round-the-clock supply

Our skilled engineers monitor the network 24-hours a day and are there to assist with any issues that may arise.

Controllable

The HIU is connected to your room thermostats and programmer to allow you full control of your usage.

Safer System

Because the system runs on hot water, meaning no gas is entering your property, annual gas boiler safety checks are no longer required. As a result, we only need to perform safety checks and service your HIU every 2 years.

IT'S EFFICIENT

Save stress

We will take care of all repairs and maintenance required throughout the network of the scheme up to your HIU. This is included within your standing charge meaning no additional costs.*

More efficient

Due to the higher efficiency of the system compared to stand-alone systems, more useful energy is produced, meaning less fuel is used. A typical property on a District Heating Scheme will on average consume 35% less energy than a conventional gas boiler system.

Our skilled engineers monitor the network

24-HOURS A DAY

and are there to assist with any issues that may arise.

* If included in your Energy Supply Agreement.



2. OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENTS

As your sole heating and hot water supplier we are committed to providing you with a high quality customer service. Here's what you can expect from us:

We're here to deliver

We strive to provide you with a high quality service ensuring your warmth and comfort. We do so by delivering our service level guarantees set out in your Energy Supply Agreement (ESA). We ensure these services remain in line with the industry's standards of customer care.

We welcome all and any feedback and continually evaluate our performance to improve our services.

We're here to help

We go out of our way to help make your life as easy as possible. We aim to respond promptly to all our customers, dealing with any issues in a polite, professional and efficient manner.

We're open and honest

Our tariffs are fair and we endeavour to communicate these to you in a clear and transparent way. We will inform you of any changes to these and keep all correspondences to you, including your bills, simple and easy to understand. You can rest assured all your details will be kept safe and secure.

We're here to work with you

We care about our customers and tailor our services to your specific needs. If you are a vulnerable customer we have services to meet your individual needs.

We put all our energy into providing
AN EXCELLENT SERVICE



A. OUR SERVICES

The services that we are providing to you are:

- The continual delivery of heating and hot water supply on demand
- Maintenance and operation of the Energy Centre, pipe network, and associated plant rooms
- Maintenance and repair up to your HIU*
- Delivery of metering and billing*
- Customer care helpdesk to answer your queries relating to the above services



C. OUT OF HOURS

If your heating system breaks down out of office hours (5pm-9am), we have an out-of-hours service team to respond to your call. You will be provided with the option to either leave a voicemail for the in-hours helpdesk team to respond to your issue the next working day, or if an emergency, you can be put through to our out-of-hours service team and arrangements made for the on-call engineer to attend.

An emergency is classed as a site-wide loss of supply or an issue which could result in injury to person or damage to property. All other faults will be attended at the earliest opportunity within the next working day.



B. SUPPLYING YOUR ENERGY

In the unlikely event that you experience an issue with or interruption to your heating and hot water supply, our customer care helpdesk will be available 9am-5pm Monday-Friday to arrange an engineer's appointment if required.



D. NETWORK MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Sometimes we may need to interrupt your energy supply. We will give you 48-hours notice in writing if a planned interruption is going to last more than four hours. If there's an unplanned interruption, for example, a damaged pipe, we will aim to get your supply back on within 24-hours of being informed of the problem.

*If included in your Energy Supply Agreement.

3. METERING AND BILLING

We think energy bills are confusing enough. That's why we're committed to sending you bills that are simple, clear and on time. Our bills are easy to understand and include all the information you need to know - namely your charges, payment methods and our contact details. You should receive a bill every month or quarter.



YOUR BILLS WILL BE MADE UP OF TWO ELEMENTS:



1. KWH USAGE CHARGE

This is the cost of the energy you have used over the billing period. We measure this in kilowatt hours (kWh). This information will be gathered through our remote automatic meter reading (AMR) system. This equipment is checked and monitored regularly to ensure the accuracy of your bills.

If for any reason we are unable to obtain an accurate meter read remotely, we may need to take a manual reading or provide you with an estimated bill based on your previous consumption. We will look to rectify this estimated bill when an accurate read is available.



2. STANDING CHARGE

The standing charge element of your bill covers the cost of operating and maintaining the system over the entire length of the contract, covering all repairs and replacement work required on all energy equipment. This is to ensure a continual and efficient supply of heat and hot water to all connected properties. It can be roughly broken down into the following proportions:

1. Energy Centre and network operations, maintenance, repairs and replacements (45%)
2. HIU visits and replacements (25%)
3. Customer care, billing & metering (20%)
4. Insurance (10%)

This annual amount will be shown on your bill broken down as a daily charge.

Each year on the anniversary of the contract start date, we will adjust these tariffs as set out in your ESA. The standing charge is calculated in line with the market rate and the kWh utility charge is produced using a 'uSwitch' comparison based on the supply of natural gas to a domestic property within your postcode.

We will always give you 31-days notification of any changes to our tariffs.

MOVING OUT?

If you're looking to move out of your property, please let us know. Please provide us with a forwarding address so we can issue your final bill.



MOVING INTO A RENTED PROPERTY

If you live in a rented property, it's not always clear who is legally responsible for your bill. Our energy charges have to be paid. This is usually by the person who lives in the property and uses the energy.

Check your tenancy agreement. If your landlord is responsible for the bill and has not paid, we will continue to take steps to recover the debt from the named account holder.

Get in touch with us as soon as possible and we will investigate the matter. While investigating, we can put the debt recovery process on hold.

If you receive a bill for the consumption of a previous tenant, please call us straight away. We can only help you if we know.

If you are a landlord and wish for the bills to be issued in your tenant's name(s), please contact us to register your tenant.

4. HOW TO PAY

We try to make paying your heating bills easy and stress free by offering different ways to pay. If you're finding it difficult to pay your bills on time, please let us know straight away. We'll help you find the right payment plan to settle your bills.



WAYS TO PAY

- Fixed Direct Debit
- Cash payments via AllPay Outlets
- Secure card payments via our helpdesk
- Cheques sent via post
- Faster Payments
- Standing Orders

*Our aim is to offer **all our customers** the most helpful and convenient service we can*

4A. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T PAY YOUR BILL?

If you are struggling to pay your bills, please contact us as soon as possible. We can always help by arranging a payment plan, but we can only help if we know you have a problem. However, if you don't pay your bill, we will begin our debt recovery process via the following steps.

1. Late Payment Reminder Letter

We'll send a reminder letter to you one day after the missed payment date. This reminder will give you a further **14 days** to make payment.

Please contact us within the stated period to avoid further steps.

2. Final Demand Letter

If we don't hear from you or receive full payment following these 14 days of sending the Late Payment Reminder, we'll send a Final Demand Letter.

You will be given a further **14 days** to pay or we may have to look at disconnecting your supply and/or legal action to recover the amount you owe.

Please contact us immediately to prevent your supply from being isolated.

3. Disconnection / Legal Action

If we haven't received a payment or contact from you, your supply will be isolated from the Heating Scheme and we may look to take legal action to recover the debt incurred. We want to avoid this process, however, if you fail to make timely payments, we will have to take these steps to recover the money we are owed.



4B. HELPING US TO HELP YOU: SETTING UP A PAYMENT PLAN

You have to pay for the heating services we provide. We know that finding the money can be very difficult for some. That's why we offer payment plans allowing you to pay off your debt in manageable chunks over an agreed period e.g. 3-12 months.

For example, if you owed £120, this amount could be paid back over 3 months in £40 monthly instalments, or in £10 monthly instalments over 12 months. The longer the period of repayment the smaller the instalment amount.

You won't have to pay any extra for a payment plan. We'll keep to our side of the agreement: you must keep to yours. If you fail to keep to our payment agreement, we will have to take the steps outlined to recover the money we are owed.

Changes of circumstance

Please tell us straight away if your circumstances change affecting your ability to keep to a payment plan e.g. a sudden reduction in earnings or a medical condition that affects your income.

Getting independent advice

If you prefer, you can get independent advice from a local advice agency, see below. Advice agencies have extensive experience of dealing with a range of debt problems and will be able to advise you on your rights and the benefits you're entitled to.

- **Citizens Advice Bureau**
Check your local directory for address & telephone number.
- **Community Legal Advice**
0845 345 4345
- **National Debtline**
FREEPHONE: 0808 808 4000
- **Stepchange Debt Charity**
FREEPHONE: 0800 138 1111

Your local council may also be able to tell you how to get advice.



5. HELPING OUR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS

Our aim is to offer all our customers the most helpful and convenient service we can. If you are elderly, disabled or generally need extra help, we have a range of additional services available to you at no extra cost.

OUR OBLIGATION

We are responsible for keeping a Priority Services Register (PSR) which outlines the specific needs of a vulnerable customer and the additional services we must provide. If you believe you are a vulnerable customer please contact us so that we can add you to our PSR.

The industry identified vulnerable persons as those:

- Over the age of 70 years old
- With long-term/chronic illness
- With mental and/or physical disabilities
- Visually or Hearing Impaired
- Non-English speaking

Other circumstances such as bereavement and financial instability may give rise to vulnerability and will be considered during our interactions with you.

HOW TO REGISTER

To be registered as vulnerable and receive our additional services, you must formally inform us of the nature of your vulnerability by completing our Confirmation of Details form. This can be found on our website or in your welcome letter. Please return this form to us by post or email.

Without your written authorisation we are unable to register you as vulnerable providing you access to our additional services.

Once registered, depending on the nature of your vulnerability, you will have access to the following additional services.

6. WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU



As our customer, we need you to:

- Provide us with full details before you open or close a heating account, and to update us of any changes to your personal or payment details
- Notify us if you need to set up a payment plan so we can help you with your bills
- Treat all of our team with the same level of respect you expect of us
- Contact us if you think your bills may be incorrect or have been missed so we can investigate the matter and put things right
- Allow us access to your property so we can resolve any reported issues. Let us know beforehand if you are no longer available for an arranged appointment to allow us time to reschedule our visit
- Keep the heat equipment in your property free from unlawful damage

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Keeping you Warm

Depending on the nature of your vulnerability, during an interruption of your heating and hot water supply, you may require quicker response times and even alternative heating arrangements.

Alternative Communication Formats

Basic services such as large print, Braille translations, and Third Party Assistance are available for our visually or hearing impaired customers. Correspondences in alternative languages can also be arranged.

Billing Nominees

You are entitled to authorise a Third Party 'Account Nominee' to manage your account and pay your bills. If needed, we'll happily take more time to explain bills and give you details on advice agencies.

Password Protected Appointments

If requested on booking the appointment, our helpdesk can agree a password with you. On arrival of the planned visit, the engineer will confirm this password. All our engineers wear photographic ID badges and recognised Veolia uniform.


If you're still nervous about letting our engineers in, we'll give you our 0300 number to call so you can verify the visit.



7. GETTING IN TOUCH


If you have a query or issue please contact us and we will do our best to resolve your query when you first get in touch.

You can get in touch with us in any of the following ways:

 **Phone:** Call our helpdesk between 9am - 5pm to talk to someone. Or leave your details out-of-hours and we'll call you back.*

 **Online:** Enquire via our website at: www.veolia.co.uk/ourheatingresidents

 **Email:** Send us an email.*

 **Letter:** You can also write to us at the below address:
Veolia Energy & Utility Services UK Plc
PO Box 3920
Swindon
SN5 1BW



We'll try our hardest to resolve any queries or issues you have in a professional and positive way. If you're unhappy with the quality of our services, you have the right to tell us.

If you wish to raise a formal complaint you can do so by informing us verbally, in an email or letter. Once received, our Customer Care Team will investigate your complaint and pass it on to the right staff member or team to deal with. We treat every complaint promptly, fairly and impartially.

Please see your Welcome Letter for a clear break-down of our complaints process.



*You will find all the dedicated contact details to your scheme in the accompanying Welcome Letter

Resourcing the world

Veolia

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www.veolia.co.uk/ourheatingresidents



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