



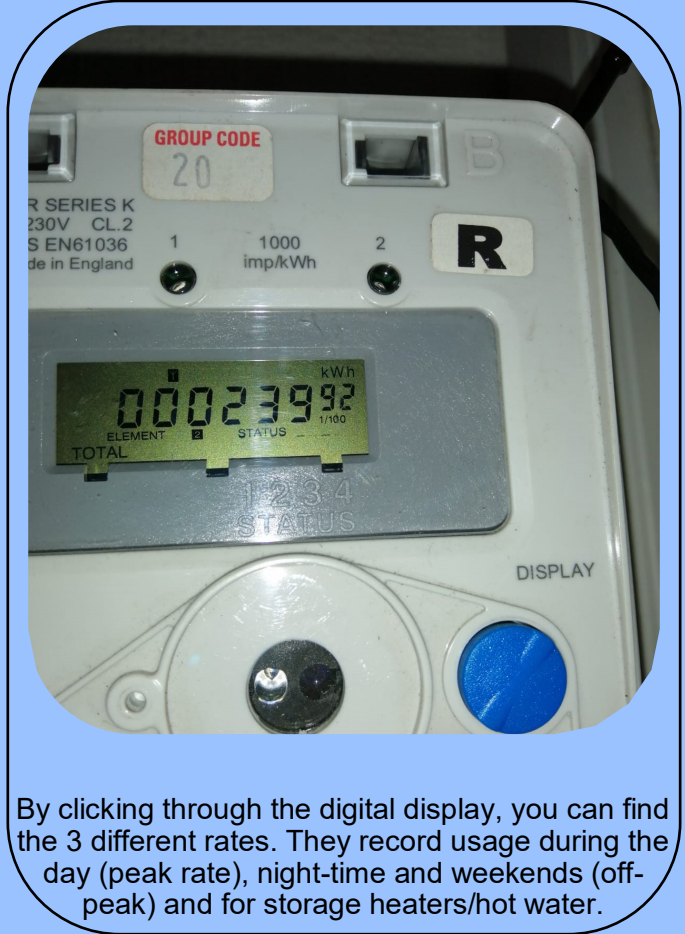
Save energy at home service case study one

Most people trust large organisations to get the basics right. Yet, all too often it is worth double checking. It took a while for a Khatri family to double check their energy bill and they were glad they did.

The Khatri family thought their housing association had made sure the electricity in their home was a reasonable deal. Akaash Khatri, 28, lives with his father Panav in a two bedroom, first floor tenement flat in Glasgow's southside, rented through a local housing association. When they found themselves struggling with their energy bills, Akaash remembered a leaflet they had received through the door and contacted South Seeds for assistance. When Akaash initially got in touch with South Seeds in July of this year, they were running low on credit on their prepayment gas meter and were struggling to top-up. South Seeds energy officer was able to apply for a fuel voucher which would be received in the form of a text message containing a unique code. As Panav suffers from a hearing impairment and a long term heart condition, Akaash is the one who deals with the utilities.

Akaash contacted South Seeds soon after about an electricity bill for their credit meter which they were struggling to afford. In fact, Akaash felt that their electricity consumption had been relatively low, yet they found it hard to keep up with the bills. South Seeds energy officer asked Akaash to contact his provider in order to confirm that they are happy for South Seeds to act on their behalf and have this noted on their records. Once done, we contacted the provider to explain that the client was struggling and the provider was able to put a 3 month hold on the account (which would mean no letters demanding payment), in the meantime, we asked Akaash to provide meter readings.

Akaash gave the energy officer 3 separate readings and further investigation showed that they had a 3-rate electrical meter (commonly used for white-meter, also known as storage heating systems). This was odd because the flat had mains gas, for both heating and cooking. It transpires that although the storage heaters had been taken out in May 2018,



By clicking through the digital display, you can find the 3 different rates. They record usage during the day (peak rate), night-time and weekends (off-peak) and for storage heaters/hot water.

when the property was connected to mains gas, the meter had been left behind.

3-rate meters have high day time rates for electricity because they are usually used for night time usage to power storage heating. We realised we needed to check if the Khatri's have been paying a higher daytime rate ever since.

South seeds contacted the electricity provider and they have begun to investigate, which has involved emailing photos of meter readings weekly for 3 weeks, meter readings at night and in the morning, as well as 'burn' readings where all electrical appliances are switched on simultaneously. They can't have the meter changed to a single-rate until this is resolved. Unfortunately, energy companies can only compensate for up to a year retrospectively, even if a wrong meter has been used.

An engineer has been to the property and conformed that they have the wrong electricity meter. The case is on-going and should be resolved within a few months.

Save energy at home service case study two

For many people dealing with energy providers is hard work. When the energy company's systems fail, it is more than a chore, it is both frustrating and exhausting. Having someone to support you through can make it a lot easier.

A while back when Margaret was relocating from her temporary accommodation back to her privately rented flat after a few years, she sought South Seeds support to close her energy accounts in the temporary accommodation and open new ones in her permanent old-new home. Her flat had been completely renovated, including the installation of a gas boiler and radiators, which had significantly improved the energy efficiency of the home. South Seeds energy officer contacted the energy supplier and closed the accounts at the temporary address and opened new ones (both electricity and gas) at the permanent address. South Seeds energy officer provided meter readings from the move in date and Margaret was supposed to receive details of her new accounts by post.

At both addresses there were credit meters. At her temporary address Margaret paid for her energy weekly with payment cards at the post office.

With out explanation, Margaret received several letters addressed to the owner occupier from the supplier with three different accounts numbers and outstanding balance on the accounts. Margaret didn't understand why there was an outstanding balance on electricity despite her paying £6.50 a week at the post office. The energy officer spoke to the supplier and identified that Margaret's weekly payments were made to her account at the temporary address and it was £308 in credit. A refund was requested and a cheque for the amount was sent to Margaret within 10 working days. The energy officer insisted that Margaret destroyed the old cards, so they didn't cause confusion in the future.

The energy provider at the permanent address confirmed that electricity and gas accounts were registered but for some reason the energy providers administration systems had generated too many letters. South Seeds provided up-to-date meter readings for



Cards are used for prepayment gas meters and keys are used for prepayment electricity meters.

accurate billing. The supplier said that the accounts will be merged and Margaret will receive new post office payment cards.

Sadly, Margaret still had not received her payment cards and continued to receive reminders to pay letters and phone calls from the supplier which were causing her anxiety. South Seeds energy officer raised a complaint. For a few months Margaret didn't receive payment cards, South Seeds continued to contact the supplied via email and phone and each time was told that the new cards would be issued. Finally, Margaret received a gas card, but not one for electricity. South Seeds staff was told that the electricity card will be issued seven days later due to the way that the company's system is set up. Margaret started paying £8 per week for her gas.

In a month, Margaret received an electricity payment card and started paying £7 per week. Plus, up-to-date meter readings were provided. Margaret continued to make her weekly payments. Finally, Margaret received a bill for both electricity and gas with an outstanding balance of £228. South Seeds energy officer requested a goodwill payment, as the supplier made a number of mistakes and failed to send the payments cards in good time causing Margaret to accumulate debt. And as Margaret is financially vulnerable and has multiply health issues, it put her in a very difficult situation. The supplier agreed to make a £70 goodwill payment which left Margaret with outstanding balance of £158 to pay in instalments through her weekly payments over next 12 months. South Seeds energy officer also applied for £140 Warm Home Discount which will help Margaret with costs of the energy during the winter.