

R/25

Wednesday 26 March

MAKE YOURS THE FIRST SWITCH OF SPRING

- **Gas and electricity customers urged to mark advent of Spring by switching supplier**
- **Standard credit electricity customers who have never switched can choose from six cheaper suppliers, on average**
- **Standard credit gas customers who have never switched can choose from 10 cheaper suppliers**
- **More than 150,000 customers a week are changing their supplier**
- **customers can get up to £53 off their electricity bills and £63 off their gas bills**

With clocks going forward this weekend and thoughts turning to Spring, switching your gas and electricity supplier may not be the first thing on your mind.

But energy regulator Ofgem today (Wednesday) urges the country's gas and electricity customers to mark Spring's new beginnings by switching to a new, and cheaper, supplier.

Chief Executive, Callum McCarthy, said: "For customers on standard credit who have never switched electricity supplier, there are, on average, six other energy companies offering cheaper tariffs. For customers who have never switched gas supplier, there are 10 companies offering cheaper deals.

"More than 150,000 people a week are taking advantage of this fact by changing supplier – and we would urge anyone who has not made the switch so far to do so today!"

This week saw the second anniversary of reforms to the electricity market in England and Wales. Any customer who has not switched supplier has not taken advantage of the competitive prices these changes have allowed.

A customer switching electricity supplier today can save up to £53. A customer switching gas supplier today can save up to £63.

ends

Top Switching Facts:

1. Since the electricity market was opened to competition in May 1999, 11 million out of the regional electricity companies' 26 million domestic customers have switched away from their old monopoly supplier.
2. Since competition began in the gas market in May 1998, 8 million out of British Gas' 20 million domestic customers have switched away from their old supplier.
3. Switching rates among lower income customers are broadly the same rates for customers in other income brackets. The rate of switching among customers on prepayment meters (PPMs) is also broadly the same as for customers on standard credit tariffs.
4. Switching rates are higher than in telephones, home insurance, current accounts and mortgages and second only to car insurance.
5. More than 90 per cent of people find switching very easy, or easy.

Notes to editors:

- 1. The reforms to the wholesale market were brought in by the New Electricity Trading Arrangements project which went live on March 27 2001.**
- 2. Ofgem is the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets, regulating the gas and electricity industries in Great Britain. Ofgem's aim is to bring choice and value to all gas and electricity customers by promoting competition and regulating monopolies. Ofgem is governed by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority. Its powers are provided for under the Gas Act 1986, the Electricity Act 1989 and the Utilities Act 2000.**

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