



SSE Airtricity Gas Supply (NI) Limited
Code of Practice
on Payment of Bills

Smell Gas? Call **0800 002 001**

This Code of Practice outlines the services, advice and assistance we may be able to offer you if you're finding it difficult to pay your bill.

October 2020





We know it's stressful if you're struggling to pay, so we'd really like to help. If you're having difficulty paying your bill or your circumstances have changed, get in touch with us so we can talk with you and offer advice and options to help get you back on track with your energy bills.

Definition of Debt

For the purpose of this Code of Practice debt is:

"Any amount which remains unpaid outside the payment terms in the supplier's terms and conditions. For example, if a customer's payment for a bill is due within 14 days from the date of the bill, then this amount would be defined as debt if it remained unpaid from day 15."

Get in touch

If you're finding it difficult to pay your bill, or you think you may have difficulty in the future, get in touch with our Customer Service Team as soon as possible.



Phone: **0345 900 5253**

Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 7pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
(calls charged at local rate)



Email: **info@airtricitygasni.com**



Website: **www.airtricitygasni.com**



Post: SSE Airtricity Gas Supply (NI) Limited,
25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AQ.

Energy Efficiency

Our Code of Practice on the Efficient Use of Gas provides information on how you may be able to reduce your bill by using your energy more efficiently. A copy of our Code of Practice on the Efficient Use of Gas is available on our website at **airtricitygasni.com** or can be provided free of charge by getting in touch with our Customer Service Team.

How we'll help you

- 1 We train our staff to be helpful and supportive. We offer relevant advice and seek to identify customers who may be finding it difficult to pay their bill. Where appropriate, and in agreement with you, we'll offer contact details for organisations who we think may be able to help you.
- 2 We send your bill in the format agreed between us. Payment is due by the date displayed on your bill. We offer a range of ways to pay which can be found on our website at airtricitygasni.com.
- 3 If your bill remains unpaid, we'll write to you to remind you of the balance and ways to pay.
- 4 After writing to you, if your bill remains unpaid, we'll send you a reminder to pay and let you know what other options are available to help you, which may include a payment plan or the installation of a Prepayment Meter. If we don't hear from you, we'll try to get in touch with you by phone to discuss your payment options.
- 5 If you still haven't been in touch, and your bill remains unpaid, we'll write to you to remind you to pay and let you know what you need to do to ensure you maintain a gas supply. At all times, we're committed to avoiding any interruption to your gas supply by working with you to agree a solution that works for you and us. If your bill remains unpaid, we may install a Prepayment Meter without your express agreement to help you budget and stop your debt from increasing.

Payment Plan

We'll work with you to set up a payment plan that works for both you and us, taking into consideration your individual circumstances and ability to pay. Depending on your circumstances, we have a number of payment method options available and we will discuss these with you. Once we have agreed a payment plan with you that sets out the amount you will pay over a certain period of time, we'll monitor your agreed payment plan and would encourage you to get in touch as soon as possible, if you experience difficulties keeping up with the payment plan, so we can discuss your payment options.

Prepayment Meter

If you're unable to adhere to your agreed payment plan, we may install a Prepayment Meter if suitable. This will help you budget and stop your debt from increasing. If a Prepayment Meter is installed, the Meter will be set to collect some of your debt every time you top up. We'll collect no more than a maximum of 40% of each top up (e.g. for every £10 topped up, £4 will go towards debt and £6 towards your gas usage). We'll agree a repayment plan that works for both you and us and take into consideration your individual circumstances and ability to pay. We'll monitor your top ups and would encourage you to get in touch as soon as possible if you experience difficulties keeping up with your top ups or would like to discuss the amount which is collected with each top up.

Our Code of Practice on Services for Prepayment Meter Customers outlines the services we will make available for customers who pay for their gas using a Prepayment Meter. A copy of our Code of Practice on Services for Prepayment Meter Customers is available on our website at airtricitygasni.com or can be provided free of charge by getting in touch with our Customer Service Team.

Disconnection and Reconnection

If your bill remains unpaid, and we haven't been able to agree an alternative arrangement for payment with you, we'll give you written notice of our intention to disconnect your supply. If your supply is disconnected, before it can be reconnected you must pay all disconnection and reconnection charges and agree a repayment plan for the money you owe. If your supply is disconnected, we'll provide you with all the information you need to reconnect later, including all applicable charges and timescales.

We'll take responsible steps to:

- Never disconnect the supply of a registered SSE Airtricity Energy Care customer in any month from October to March where all occupants of the household are either of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or under the age of 18, where the customer hasn't paid their bill;
- Avoid disconnecting the supply to a household during this period where the occupants include a person who is of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick and the customer hasn't paid their bill;
- Ensure your supply isn't disconnected if you're connected through a non-domestic supply which is no longer receiving a supply (e.g. if you live in a flat above a shop);
- Not disconnect any customer who hasn't paid their bill where there is an open complaint in progress.
- Get in touch with you to recover any amount owed to us.

In the unlikely event you're disconnected in error, get in touch and we'll do our best to reconnect you within 24 hours without charge.

If your supply is disconnected, you don't get in touch with us and your balance remains unpaid, we may take legal action to recover the money you owe to us, including any disconnection and reconnection charges.

Your Responsibility

As an SSE Airtricity customer, you agree to take and pay for gas in accordance with our terms and conditions. A copy of our terms and conditions are available on our website at [airtricitygasni.com](https://www.airtricitygasni.com) or can be provided free of charge by getting in touch with our Customer Service Team.

Meter Reading

Please provide access to your meter to allow our meter readers to read and inspect your meter. This ensures both the safety of the meter and your gas consumption is based on an actual meter read.

Independent Advice

If you need independent help and advice, Advice NI may be able to help you. Where appropriate, and in agreement with you, we'll work with any organisation you choose to represent you.

Advice NI:

Advice NI provide a range of independent advice services including Welfare Reform, Money, Tax & Benefits and Business Debt.



Phone: **0800 915 4604**



Email: **info@adviceni.net**



Website: **adviceni.net**



Post: Advice NI, 1 Rushfield Avenue, Belfast, BT7 3FP.

Disputes

If you're unhappy with the action we take in relation to any billing issue or dispute, you can contact The Consumer Council free of charge. If requested during a Consumer Council investigation, we'll provide evidence on the procedures we used for assessing your ability to pay. The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland is an independent body and provides free, independent support and advice for all consumers and businesses in Northern Ireland. It also has powers to investigate complaints if a supplier has not handled a complaint correctly. If requested during a Consumer Council investigation, we'll provide evidence on the procedures we used for assessing your ability to pay.

The Consumer Council:



Phone: **0800 121 6022**



Email: **contact@consumercouncil.org.uk**



Website: **consumercouncil.org.uk**



Post: Freepost THE CONSUMER COUNCIL
In Person: Floor 3, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street.

Alternative Formats

A copy of this Code of Practice is available on our website at **airtricitygasni.com** or can be provided free of charge by getting in touch with our Customer Service Team. This Code of Practice is also available in alternative formats including Braille, Large Print or Audio Format.