

SSE Airtricity is proud to support the Small Business Energy Charter for Winter 2025/26, working alongside the Utility Regulator, the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, and fellow energy suppliers. This Charter reflects our shared commitment to supporting small business customers during the colder months, especially those facing financial hardship.

By signing this Charter, SSE Airtricity commits to:

- Engage with our small business customers in payment arrears, discussing individual circumstances and offering reasonable repayment plans.
- Before any disconnection notices, suppliers will try to find alternative solutions with customers in debt.
- Processes are in place to provide information and support to businesses struggling with energy bills, including signposting to advice organisations.
- Practical advice will be given to help businesses reduce their energy bills.
- Suppliers will maintain an updated FAQ section for small businesses and ensure staff are trained to understand their specific challenges.

Between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026, suppliers have voluntarily committed to supporting small business customers in these ways.

Energy Charter FAQs

1. Who are the commitments in the charter applicable to?

The commitments in the charter are applicable to all small business consumers. A small business consumer is defined as one whose gas consumption is less than 73.2 MWh per annum and whose electricity consumption is less than 50 MWh per annum.

2. What are the alternative options to disconnection?

It is important to engage with your supplier as early as possible when experiencing affordability or debt issues, to allow them to provide support and advice.

Suppliers may be able to offer repayment plans and can discuss alternative contracts and tariff types (where a change can be facilitated contractually). They can also signpost you to other third-party support services and provide practical advice on energy efficiency measures that could help you to reduce your energy bills.

3. Why are the commitments in the Small Business Energy Charter voluntary?

The aim of the charter is to provide enhanced protections to consumers during the winter (between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026).

Voluntary commitments allow us to review and be responsive to consumer needs each year and to implement these changes quickly. Mandatory commitments would have put this flexibility at risk. This is because mandatory measures are implemented via changes to the supplier licences and this can only take place after a lengthy consultation process.

4. What will be done to make sure suppliers honour their commitments?

Since suppliers have made a voluntary commitment to the charter, there is every reason to believe they will act in accordance with it. The Utility Regulator will nevertheless monitor supplier behaviour to ensure they honour the commitments they have made and will remain in touch with them during the charter period. We will also meet with suppliers at the end of this period to discuss the impact of the charter on consumers.

5. What should consumers do if they need any help or support?

You should contact your supplier directly if you need help or support. All the information that you need should be on your supplier's website and this might be the quickest way to get the information that you require.

We want to encourage consumers to talk to their supplier if they are concerned about paying their bills. If you are worried that you cannot afford to make a payment, get in touch as soon as possible. Your electricity and gas supplier will treat you with empathy and respect and will consider reasonable repayment plan options. All suppliers have trained staff who are happy to help. Whether you're worried about paying your bills, or you are in debt to your energy supplier already, if you engage with your supplier they will work with you.

Useful information is also available on the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland's website or Advice NI's website. If you are unable to access the information you need through your supplier's website, you should contact your supplier directly via telephone.