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UP TO £180 A YEAR DIFFERENCE IN ENERGY PRICES DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU LIVE

Households face a postcode lottery on energy prices that can cost them up to £180 a year^[1]. As a result, many cash strapped consumers are being forced to pay more for their gas and electricity purely because of where they live says uSwitch.com:

- **Postcode lottery: cheapest plans are online, but energy suppliers vary their prices according to where customers live by £76 on average^[2]**
- **Biggest difference: E.ON charges customers in one area up to £180 more than customers living elsewhere^[1]**
- **Most expensive for energy: Cardiff (Swalec region) where online customers pay on average £1,108 a year^[3]**
- **Cheapest for energy: Brighton (Seeboard region) where online customers pay £1,060 a year on average^[3].**

Households face a postcode lottery that sees the price they pay for their energy vary by £76 a year on average according to where they live^[2], says uSwitch.com, the independent price comparison and switching service. At its worst, it can see a supplier charging customers in one area up to £180 a year more than its customers living elsewhere^[1], even though they are on the same energy plan, paying by the same method and using the same amount of energy.

The impact of this postcode lottery can really be seen when looking at suppliers' most competitive tariffs – their cheap online energy plans. These consistently offer the most competitive prices in the market, but there is a stark difference in the amount people will pay based on where they live. This regional pricing policy sees an E.ON Save Online 10 customer living in Brighton (Seeboard region) paying just £984 a year on average. However, another

E.ON customer with the same plan but living in London will be paying £1,164 a year - £180 a year more^[1].

Regional pricing leads to winners and losers with households in Cardiff (the Swalec region) paying £1,108 a year on average making it the most expensive energy region in the country. Households in Liverpool (Manweb region) are also losing out paying £1,100 a year on average. Cheapest places for energy are Brighton in Seeboard region (£1,060 a year on average), Leeds in Yorkshire region (£1,067) and Edinburgh in ScottishPower region (£1,069)^[3].

But, even though householders can't help where they live – they can limit the impact of the postcode lottery by ensuring that they are with the cheapest supplier in their area. Even in Cardiff, the most expensive region, there is £106 difference between the cheapest and most expensive supplier. In Brighton there is £149 difference in prices between suppliers, while in Bristol this stretches to £180 a year giving households a real incentive to choose their supplier wisely^[3].

Most expensive areas in the UK for energy:

	Place and region	Average annual online price	Cheapest online price	Most expensive online price	Difference between cheapest and most expensive
1	Cardiff (Swalec)	£1,108	£1,065	£1,171	£106
2	Liverpool (Manweb)	£1,100	£1,056	£1,160	£104
3	London (London)	£1,092	£1,048	£1,164	£116
4	Bristol (Sweb)	£1,086	£994	£1,174	£180
5	Southampton (Southern)	£1,085	£1,047	£1,137	£90
-	Birmingham (Midlands)	£1,085	£1,034	£1,137	£103
7	Aberdeen (Scottish Hydro)	£1,083	£1,058	£1,139	£81
8	Manchester (Norweb)	£1,078	£1,036	£1,141	£105
9	Newcastle (Northern)	£1,075	£1,032	£1,128	£96
10	Nottingham (East Midlands)	£1,070	£1,028	£1,132	£104
-	Norwich (Eastern)	£1,070	£1,023	£1,132	£109
12	Edinburgh (ScottishPower)	£1,069	£1,032	£1,126	£94
13	Leeds (Yorkshire)	£1,067	£1,018	£1,127	£109
14	Brighton (Seeboard)	£1,060	£984	£1,133	£149

Source: uSwitch.com

Ann Robinson, Director of Consumer Policy at uSwitch.com, says: “When it comes to the most competitive energy prices in the market consumers face a postcode lottery – the price they get literally does depend on where they live. But while this can catch out the unwary, once people are aware of regional pricing they can very easily turn it to their advantage simply by making sure that they are with the supplier offering the best price in their area.

“Even though all suppliers offer their cheapest prices online, these can vary by as much as £180 in one area. And consumers cannot assume that their local supplier will automatically be cheaper – not one supplier currently offers their most competitive price in their incumbent or ‘local’ region. This is why it’s so important for households to shop around to make sure they are getting a fair deal.”

Energy prices - the postcode lottery:

City	Old PES region Old PES region	British Gas	EDF Energy	E.ON	npower	SSE	ScottishPower	Variation across suppliers within a region
		Websaver 13	Fix for 2012	SaveOnline 10	Sign Online 24	Atlantic Dual Fuel Domestic Standard Online Nil Service Charge	Online Energy Saver 16	
Nottingham	East Midlands	£1,081	£1,040	£1,104*	£1,035	£1,132	£1,028	£104
Norwich	Eastern	£1,087	£1,038	£1,106*	£1,023	£1,132	£1,031	£109
London	London	£1,098	£1,053*	£1,164	£1,048	£1,137	£1,051	£116
Liverpool	Manweb	£1,113	£1,056	£1,134	£1,057	£1,160	£1,077*	£104
Birmingham	Midlands	£1,109	£1,053	£1,125	£1,052*	£1,137	£1,034	£103
Newcastle	Northern	£1,089	£1,039	£1,121	£1,043*	£1,128	£1,032	£96
Manchester	Norweb	£1,097	£1,038	£1,116*	£1,039	£1,141	£1,036	£105
Aberdeen	Scottish Hydro	£1,095	£1,062	£1,076	£1,058	£1,139*	£1,066	£81
Edinburgh	Scottish Power	£1,083	£1,058	£1,078	£1,032	£1,126	£1,039*	£94
Brighton	Seeboard	£1,103	£1,048*	£984	£1,054	£1,133	£1,035	£149
Southampton	Southern	£1,106	£1,050	£1,110	£1,059	£1,137*	£1,047	£90
Cardiff	Swalec	£1,118	£1,065	£1,137	£1,091	£1,171*	£1,067	£106
Bristol	Sweb	£1,133	£1,074*	£994	£1,077	£1,174	£1,066	£180
Leeds	Yorkshire	£1,076	£1,033	£1,116	£1,033*	£1,127	£1,018	£109
Regional variation by supplier		£57	£41	£180	£68	£48	£59	

Source: uSwitch.com

Based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas, on an online dual fuel plan, paying by monthly direct debit. * signifies that this is the price in the supplier's incumbent region.

For more information visit www.uSwitch.com or call 0800 093 06 07

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Notes to editors:

1. Based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas, on E.ON's Save Online 10 dual fuel plan, paying by monthly direct debit.
2. Based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas, on an online dual fuel plan, paying by monthly direct debit. Average regional variation by supplier is £75.
3. See table 'Most expensive areas in the UK for energy'. Based on a medium user customer using 3,300 kWh of electricity and 16,500 kWh of gas, on an online dual fuel plan, paying by monthly direct debit with bill sizes averaged across the big six suppliers in that region.

About us

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost 'Send us your bill' service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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