



For immediate release: Tuesday 26th April, 2011

ENERGY CUSTOMERS RISK £200 BILL HIKE AS CHEAP ENERGY DEALS COME TO AN END

- **Customers who flocked to cheap energy deals, including fixed price plans, could see energy costs rocket as deals expire**
- **Energy bills could rise by up to £227 as seven price guarantee plans come to an end^[1]**
- **Just under 7 million households are on price guarantee plans^[2]**
- **Households urged to look at all competitive deals currently available before signing up to their next energy plan.**

A host of cheap energy deals, including fixed priced plans safeguarding people from energy price rises, are coming to an end from 1st May. Seven low-cost energy plans, dating back to 2009, will end in May and June^[1]. As a result, if people aren't vigilant they could see their energy bills rocket, warns uSwitch.com, the independent price comparison and switching service.

Three of the seven plans coming to an end cost less than £900 a year, offering an average bill size of just £840 a year. In contrast, the same customer moving onto their supplier's standard plan today could expect to be paying £1,039 a year on average - £199 or 24% more^[1]. In the worst case scenario customers could see their bills go up by £227 as their fixed price ends^[1].

One of the plans coming to an end – E.ON's Track and Save Version 4 – costs £1,000 a year on average. This is still £33 a year cheaper than E.ON's standard plan. However, it is £94 more expensive than E.ON's online plan. Likewise with British Gas' Price Promise June 2011 whose price - £1,014 – is £119 more expensive than British Gas' current online plan. In fact these are the only plans coming to an end where customers could actually save money as a result^[1].

Online energy plans continue to offer the best value for money and the best way for customers to avoid a 'bill shock' as their competitively priced plans come to an end. The cheapest online

energy plan in the market costs £895 a year^[1]. This is £23 a year less than the average plan coming to an end, therefore offering a great alternative to seeing bills increase by almost £200.

Just under 7 million UK households are currently on price guarantee plans^[2] and suppliers are expected to be contacting householders on plans that are due to end to let them know what their options are. Many may be tempted to sign up to a new fixed price plan because of fears that the current instability in Libya and the crisis in Japan could push up household energy prices in the UK.

Fixed price plans do offer protection, but this can often come at a premium. The average fixed price plan currently available costs £1,040 a year – £102 a year more than the average online plan^[3]. This is why it is so important for consumers to consider all options before signing up to their next deal.

Thomas Lyon, energy expert at uSwitch.com, says: “The fact that so many people will be seeing their energy prices go up as their current cheap energy deal comes to an end means that these plans have been doing their job. Many of these households face an increase of around £200, which could come as a bit of a shock. With energy prices so high and so much uncertainty over future prices consumers face an important decision and we would urge them to take the time to shop around.

“Fixed plans are definitely right for some, but they do carry a premium. Online energy plans consistently offer the lowest prices, coming in at around £200 a year cheaper than standard tariffs^[4]. An online plan could be a good option for those who want to enjoy low prices today while having the flexibility to move onto a fixed price plan in the future if it looks like prices are going to go up.

“For those who prefer the security of a fixed price plan our advice is to see what your current supplier can offer, but then compare with other fixed price plans in the market to find the most competitive deal. It’s also important to be aware that most fixed or capped plans carry an early exit fee – consumers should always check the small print carefully and ensure that an energy plan meets their needs before signing on the dotted line.”

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

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Plans coming to an end	Price of plan ending	Current Standard DD price	Current online price
British Gas WebSaver 6 (ends 1 st May)	£862	£1,029	£895
E.ON FixOnline 7 (ends 1 st May)	£806	£1,033	£906
E.ON Track and Save Version 4 (ends 1 st June)	£1,000	£1,033	£906
npower Sign Online V18 (ends 30 th June)	£851	£1,054	£960
EDF Energy Online S@ver 6 (ends 30 th June)	£915	£1,051	£966
EDF Energy Annual Fix v3 (ends 30 th June 2011)	£978	£1,051	£966
British Gas Price Promise June 2011 (ends June 2011)	£1,014	£1,029	£895
Average	£918	£1,040	£928

Source: uSwitch.com. Prices correct as of 20/4/2011

Average bill size for a medium user consuming 3,300kWh of electricity and 16,500kWh of gas per annum. All bill sizes averaged across all regions.

Notes to editors:

1. See table above.
2. Source: Ofgem

http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/SDR/SDIndicators/Documents1/Ensuring_a_secure_and_reliable_gas_and_electricity_supply11.pdf;

3. Based on a medium user consuming 3,300kWh electricity and 16,500 kWh gas per annum paying by direct debit with bill sizes averaged across the 10 fixed/capped price plans currently available and with online plan prices average across the big six suppliers.
4. Based on a medium user consuming 3,300kWh electricity and 16,500 kWh gas per annum on an online plan paying by direct debit with prices averaged across the big six suppliers and all regions and a medium user consuming 3,300kWh electricity and 16,500 kWh gas per annum on a Standard plan paying on receipt of bill with prices averaged across the big six suppliers and all regions.

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 and post. Consumers should fax 020 7233 5933 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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