

What Happens Next?

EBS Process Guide



What Happens Next?

This guide will help you to understand what happens now you have accepted an offer, what happens when you switch supplier, what can you expect of the service and what you can do to ensure a smooth transition.

What we will do

- **Once we receive your offer acceptance** we will proceed to book your contract with your chosen supplier. Depending on supplier this can take anything from an hour to a week or two to finalise, so don't worry if you don't hear from us in the interim.
- **Once we have clarification** that your contract has been accepted we will write to you with confirmation and where possible include a copy of your contract and T's&C's.
- **We will check with your new supplier** about a week or two after the start date of the new contract to ensure it has been taken over successfully. We wait to do this so that if there are any delays it avoids the complaint process having to be started, which can cause further delays if it is only a minor hold up.
- **Once we have notification** that your contracts are live we will send you a confirmation for your records.
- **We will then finalise your accounts** on our system and set up the process for the next again year.

What you need to do

- **Before you agree to a new contract** please check that the estimated consumption we have provided and your estimated annual cost looks about right. Suppliers will use this information when setting up your contract and direct debit. We do ask your current supplier to confirm the usage. However, if they have based this on estimated reads and not actual it may be an inaccurate measure of your usage.
- **Before the end of your contract** (around the last week) take a meter reading and give this to your current (old) supplier. This will provide an accurate read for your final bill.
- **On or around the first day of your new contract** take a meter reading and pass this to your new supplier (if you have switched). Your old supplier may have already passed over a reading but incase they have used an estimate this gives the new supplier an accurate read to start your contract on.
- **You must inform us as soon as possible** about any problems, letters or objections regarding your supply. Suppliers sometimes letter the client direct about issues and don't inform us. The sooner we know the sooner we can act.
- **Keep an eye on your bills and give your supplier regular meter readings. We recommend doing this every few months, this helps to keep your billing up to date.**
- **If you make any changes** to your supply or add a smart meter you must let us know so that we are prepared for dealing with your account in the coming year.

Switching Supplier



Will I lose power or will my supply be interrupted during the switch?

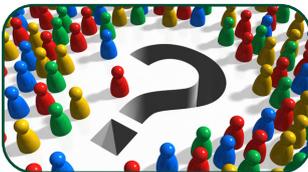
At no point in the switch will you be left without power. There won't be any interruption to your supply, the only thing that will change will be who supplies your electricity.



Will I hear from my new supplier?

Most suppliers we work with send a welcome pack with the exception of SSE. This will outline your supply contract, rates, start date and terms & conditions.

As SSE don't send welcome packs we will provide details of confirmation, a copy of your contract and the terms & conditions.



What if I change my mind?

With business contracts there are generally no cooling off periods. Once a contract has been arranged you will be locked in for the duration of the contract.



Do I need to read the meters?

The short answer here is Yes. Some suppliers will employ a meter reader to come and read your meter, other suppliers don't.

More and more, these suppliers are relying on customers to keep on top of their meter reads. With the advances in technology meter readings can be updated via online accounts, smart phone apps and even emailed in to the supplier.



I have a Smart Meter – does it not send readings automatically?

In theory they should. However, smart meters at present are not always compatible when switching supplier and you may have to revert back to manual reads until these issues have been resolved. For more information on this please see our Smart Meters & Switching section.

Potential Issues

Whilst the vast majority of switches go smoothly, some customers still encounter some issues when switching supply.

As part of the EBS service we will be able to deal with most of the issues relating to the transfer of your supply. There are also some steps you can take to ensure a smooth transfer.

We have listed the most common issues that can arise and how they are dealt with.

Objections

Objections to transfer generally happen for 3 reasons:



Debt

- Where there is an outstanding debt or balance on the account

Termination Issues

- Termination was not submitted
- Termination was not applied

Contract Date Errors

- Wrong contract end date
- New supplier applied too early

Where an objection to transfer has been raised, 90% of the time we find this is in error on the supplier side. Most of the time the supplier has failed to note the termination on the account or they have provided the wrong end date to the supply and the new supplier has applied too early to take it over.

Suppliers don't always notify us of an objection to transfer. However, they **should** notify you in writing with the reason for objection. As this is often not the case objections can go undetected until we go to check that the contract has transferred.

What
you
should
do

- **If you receive a letter** you must let us know as soon as possible so we can investigate the issues.
- **If you have an outstanding debt** or amount with your old supplier this must be settled before you can transfer.



Where we have been informed of an objection we will contact both suppliers to ascertain the reason for the objection and if in error we will instruct the current supplier to release the site and the new supplier to re-apply for transfer.

What
we
will do

- **If an objection causes a delay to transfer** and it's your current supplier's issue that has prevented the transfer we will apply to have any out of contract (variable rates) removed & where necessary apply for compensation to be awarded. We will monitor this until it transfers.
- **If the issue lies with the new supplier**, we will ask that they compensate for any out of contract charges you may face with your old supplier whilst waiting to transfer. You will need to provide a copy of your bill for the period you paid the out of contract rates and your final bill.
- **If an objection is due to an outstanding balance** on your account or debt this must be cleared before a contract will be transferred. Three attempts to apply for the contract will be made by the new supplier and if unsuccessful the contract will be dropped. The tender process will have to be repeated as prices will normally not be honoured. No compensation nor removal of out of contract rates will be applicable for outstanding balance objections.

Contract Delays

Most contracts start on the agreed date. In some cases slight delays can occur when transferring suppliers. This can be due to a hold up of data and flows passing between the suppliers. Normally these delays don't take too long to sort out and you will be transferred to your new supplier in a matter of days.

What
you
should
do

- **Contact your new supplier** on the first day of your new contract to give meter reads. This way you will be alerted to any potential delays.

What
we
will do

- **If the delay has been for more than 21 days** after your contract was due to start we will be able to investigate and try to apply for compensation for any out of contract charges that have incurred.



Missed Contracts

We check contract transfers with suppliers normally two weeks after transfer to allow time for any delays to be sorted. In the event that the supplier has failed to apply your contract, has missed or lost it we will raise a complaint, apply for compensation for out of contract charges incurred and instruct the supplier to re-apply the contract honouring the rates previously agreed.

Multiple Supply Transfers – Some transferred, some haven't

This again will be treated the same as a missed contract. We will investigate, apply for compensation and instruct the supplier to re-apply for the sites missed at the original agreed rates.

Direct Debit Issues

Paying too much / too little – Direct debits are set up based on the usage figures provided to the supplier when your contract was booked. We provided you with these figures at quoting stage and asked you to check they were accurate. If the usage is not correct you may end up paying more or less than you should.

What
you
should
do

- **You should take a meter reading** and contact your supplier to have your direct debit amount re-set.

Missed Direct Debits and overdue bills – Some suppliers will allow us to set up direct debits on your behalf, where we have your details we will have provided them to the supplier to set up. For those suppliers who require you the customer to set up the direct debit, this will have been pointed out to you in your contract confirmation.

What
you
should
do

- **We do ask that the customer check their direct debits** have been set up with the new supplier also to avoid error and overdue billing. In the event that a direct debit has been missed you must contact your supplier to discuss payment option and to re-set the direct debit.



Smart Meters and Switching Suppliers

There is a current issue with some of the first generation smart meters when switching supplier. You can still switch from one company to another when you have a smart meter installed, but you will very likely lose a lot of those smart abilities if you do.

This is due to the first generation of smart meters, (SMETS 1), being incompatible with the new national communications network (DCC), which is how your usage data is transmitted to the energy providers.

Meters not connected to this system “go dumb” when you switch suppliers, meaning the smart meters no longer transmit the reading and you’ll have to revert back to giving manual meter readings.

The Government and Smart Energy GB, the company tasked with promoting the rollout of smart meters, insist the original meters will eventually connect with the network and that a solution is being developed to move SMETS1 meters remotely into the national smart metering system, so consumers with these meters retain their smart services on switching. However many suppliers think that the meters may in fact have to be replaced.

The Second generation of smart meters (SMETS2) are also being rolled out in an effort to rectify the issues of the earlier meters, and there is even talk of a Third generation meter being put out.

In the meantime don’t let this put you off or hold you back from switching. After all, if you switch to a better deal and lose full functionality, you’re back in the same position as before reading the meter, only having saved some cash.

Supplier Responsibility

SAC consulting provide the Electricity Buying Service to price and book your electricity contracts. Whilst we are able to offer advice and some assistance with minor complaints to your supplier there are ultimately certain things that we are not able to deal with for you. For issues relating to meter readings, higher bills than expected, direct debit issues, meter faults and billing you must contact your supplier.

Summary

Many customers are losing out on better rates due to fears over issues that can arise when switching a supplier. Don’t let the potential issues put you off switching supplier. By being part of the EBS service the hassle is taken on by us with very little intervention needed from you. You get to benefit from saving money and not paying over the odds for your electricity supply.

