



Community Energy Customer Charter



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Customer services

 **0345 078 3215**

 **community.energy@sse.com**

 **sseandme.co.uk/heat-customers**

24/7 Emergency line: 0800 316 2194

Community Energy

Message from the Head of Customer Service

Our Customer Charter relates to heat, hot water, cooling and private wire networks.

We review it regularly to ensure you receive a simple, transparent service and good value. Your experience and satisfaction are central to everything we do, and this charter reflects the standards we hold ourselves to every day.

We also provide our own Customer Service Guarantee, giving clear commitments you can hold us to. If we fail to meet any of the five commitments listed, just let us know and we'll put things right. It really is that straightforward.

The charter sets out steps we take to support you, and I'd welcome your feedback on how we are doing - you can reach us at community.energy@sse.com.

Rochelle Dickson

Head of Customer Services

Our core focus is aimed at:

- Making life easier for you
- Finding ways to save you money
- Helping you when you need us most

Our promise to you

- We will call you back when we say we will
- We will never transfer you more than once when you call us, unless you agree
- We will give you the opportunity to speak to a manager if you ask
- When you call, we will offer to find you ways to save money
- If you want help with your energy bills, we will offer support

Making life easier for you

Getting in touch

You can contact us in a way that suits you best – by phone, by email, through our website via webchat, SMS, on social media, or by letter. Regardless of whether you prefer to manage your account online or pick up the phone, we'll deal with your query quickly and without fuss.



When you go online or use our digital services

- We'll respond to emails, webchat and SMS as quickly as possible.
- We'll make sure it's easy for you to manage your account online whether you need to make a payment, view your bills or let us know you are moving in.

When you contact us on social media

- We will respond to all reasonable requests as soon as possible.
- We will answer questions there and then if we can and ensure any query requiring specialist attention is given to the appropriate department.
- We will protect your personal information and will not request that personal details be posted publicly.

When you call us

- We will answer your call as quickly as possible – most calls are answered within two minutes.
- We will call you back at the time we've agreed.

When you write to us

- If we need to contact you about your letter, we'll call you.
- If this is not possible, we will write to you within 5 working days of receiving your letter.

Joining or Leaving Us

When you join us

If you move into a property we supply, your heating, hot water or cooling will continue as normal from day one. Until we send you your full supply agreement, you'll be covered by a deemed contract.

We'll send you a welcome pack with our terms and conditions, tariff details and useful information about SSE Heat Networks. Wherever possible, we'll open your account using actual meter readings, as most of our sites have Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) installed.

About your account

We will work with you to ensure that you can manage your account quickly and without fuss. Throughout your time with us we will ensure that our service to you will be personal and efficient.

Our account commitments

We will do most of the work for you, keeping you updated at all times.

If you leave us

Once you have told us you are leaving us, we will produce your final bill promptly – usually within 10 working days.

When you join us and you have received your new energy account number, you can register an account with us online via our website:

 sseandme.co.uk

Your SSE & Me Online Account

Your online account gives you access to a number of tools to help you manage your energy account.

- Register for paperless billing
- View your bills online
- Make a payment
- Submit Meter Readings

Payment Options

Pay monthly

Direct Debit - Our best value payment option and lets you spread your costs over a twelve-month period. There are two choices for Direct Debit – a monthly payment of a fixed amount with a payment date of your choice, or a variable Direct Debit which allows you to pay your quarterly bills in full.

Standing Order – A payment option controlled by you, you set the day of the month the payment is made and the value. We will however write to you every 9 months to advise if these payments cover your usage.

Swipe card - Allows you to make weekly, fortnightly or monthly payments on an agreed date without using Direct Debit or Standing Order. You simply go to a PayPoint outlet to make your payment. To find your nearest PayPoint, visit www.paypoint.co.uk.

Payment Options Table

Payment Method	Description	Key Details	Contact/Links
Pay Monthly (Direct Debit)	Best value option; spreads costs over 12 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Direct Debit: Pay a fixed amount monthly on a chosen date. 	Call: 0345 078 3215
Standing Order	Customer-controlled; set payment date and amount.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We review payments every 9 months to ensure they cover usage. 	Contact your bank to set up.
Swipe Card (PayPoint)	Pay in cash at a PayPoint outlet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible: Weekly, fortnightly, or monthly payments. No need for Direct Debit or Standing Order. 	Find your nearest PayPoint: www.paypoint.co.uk
Pay on Receipt of Bill	One-time payment per bill cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By Phone: Pay with debit/credit card By Cheque: Follow instructions on your bill. Online: Log in and click "Pay Now". Bank Transfer: Set up a payment via online banking (requires account number). Variable Direct Debit: Pay the full bill amount quarterly. 	Call: 0345 078 3215 or visit your online account.
Pay-As-You-Go (Prepayment Meter)	Pay for energy as you use it to avoid unexpected bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top-up at PayPoint outlets or call customer service. 	Call: 0345 078 3215
Pay-As-You-Go Emergency Support	24/7 emergency service for Pay-As-You-Go customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for meter issues available anytime. 	Call: 0800 316 2194

Pay on receipt of your bill

To pay your bill by phone using a debit or credit card, call our payment line on 0345 078 3215. If you'd prefer to pay by cheque, follow the instructions on your bill. Remember; don't send us cash through the post.

If you've registered for an online account with us, you can pay your bill at any time of the day or night. Once you've logged in, just click the 'Pay Now' button and follow the instructions.

If you prefer to pay through your online bank account, check to see if your bank allows you to set up an arrangement – you'll need your energy account number as reference for the payment so we can allocate them to your account.

Pay-As-You-Go meter

Pay As You Go meters can help you manage the household budget and easily keep track of the energy you are using.

They ensure you pay for your energy as you use it and avoids unexpected bills.

You can top-up at any PayPoint outlet or by calling our customer service team on 0345 078 3215.

If you believe you are entitled to a refund
We will process valid refund requests within 10 working days



Difficulty paying your bills

About our assistance with payment problems

If you need help with your energy bills, just let us know and we can discuss the practical support that is available. We will offer you reassurance and work with you to agree an arrangement that allows you to manage your payments easily.

Please talk to us if you have any concerns about affording your energy bills, so that we can help you.

- We will always take your ability to pay into consideration.
- We will agree a way forward to help you manage your ongoing energy use and repay debt in a sustainable way.

Payment Options Available

We can set up a Payment Plan that is affordable to you; covering your ongoing energy usage and spreading the cost of any outstanding debt on the account.

This can be paid Weekly, Fortnightly or Monthly.

We can install a Prepayment Meter for you, but only after completing the required safety, suitability, and vulnerability checks, and with your clear consent. We'll talk you through how it works, make sure it's appropriate for your circumstances. This means you will pay for energy as you use it.

We will signpost you to third party agencies like **Energy Savings Trust, Citizens Advice, Stepchange, Money Advice Service** and **National Debt Helpline** for debt advice to help manage your money.

We will only suspend or disconnect your services as a last resort

If we need to disconnect your supply, we will contact you in advance to let you know what we intend to do. This can be stopped if you get in contact with us to arrange a suitable payment plan.

If your account falls behind, we'll always try to work with you first. We'll contact you to explain what's happening and give you the chance to set up a suitable payment plan before any action is taken.

If your supply is suspended because we couldn't agree a plan, we'll tell you what you need to do to get reconnected, including any applicable charges.

For more information on our charges please visit www.sseandme.co.uk/heat-customers/your-charges-and-payments.

Saving you money

Our Energy Prices & Commitments

Our prices are set fairly and reflect the actual costs of running and maintaining your heat network. We review them regularly to make sure they remain transparent, cost reflective, and in line with the regulatory requirements we must meet.

We will give you reasonable notice, which will be at least 30 days, if the price you pay for your energy is going to change.

We will provide a clear breakdown on your bills of how your energy costs are calculated.

We will help you if you are struggling to pay your bills.

Energy Saving Top Tips

Cut down on energy costs by scheduling your heating. Have it kick in before you rise and shut down before you sleep. Smart timing means savings!

Shorten your showers to save energy and cut your water bill. Small changes add up.

Close doors to unused rooms and lower radiator valves. Focus heat where you need it most.

Keep radiators clear! Don't block heat with furniture or laundry. Let warmth circulate efficiently.

Energy Efficiency

One of the most effective ways to reduce energy costs is to make your home more energy efficient. We're confident that we can help you to use energy wisely in your home – give us a call or visit our website www.sseandme.co.uk/energy-efficiency to find out more.

Are you looking for ways to reduce energy because you're struggling to pay for energy costs? Help is available. Remember, reducing your energy use is a personal choice, make sure any changes you make keep you comfortable and safe. If you need extra assistance and are worried about keeping warm, please call us straight away on **0345 078 3215** so that we can offer you support.

Support for Vulnerable Customers

We have responsibilities as an energy supplier to help protect our energy customers who may be in a vulnerable situation.

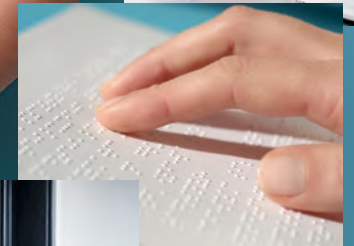
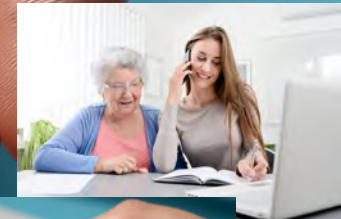
If there are any circumstances that may affect how you manage your heat supply, we encourage you, or someone who supports you, to let us know. This helps us identify customers who may need extra support, including registering you on our Priority Services Register. Any information you share is treated confidentially and used only to ensure we provide the right level of service and protection.

There is no charge for being added to our Priority Services Register.

Here are just some of the ways we might be able to help you

- When we visit, we can make sure to wait a little longer and give you more time to answer your door if you need it.
- You can have your bill in a different format, such as Braille, large print or audio.
- If you have someone helping you, you can let them manage your account. You can give your permission by writing to us, or you can call us when that person is with you.

If you want help with your energy bills, we will offer support



Please contact the team on **0345 078 3215** to discuss this further.

Keeping You Connected

24/7/365

Repair & Maintenance

We will undertake all maintenance, repairs and replacement to the network, up to and including your Heat Interface Unit (HIU) and meter located within each property.

We offer both reactive and preventative maintenance for the supplies and equipment we cover using specialist, fully qualified engineers to ensure work is done safely and to the highest standards.

There is no hidden extra costs or one-off charges. If there is a problem with your supply and the fault is not caused by you, there will be no additional charges for us to visit your property and fix the problem.

Planned Maintenance

We understand how important it is for you to know what is happening with your energy supply. When we need to carry out Planned Work on our network that means your heating, hot water or cooling may be temporarily interrupted, we are committed to keeping you clearly informed every step of the way.

We will give you 5 working days notice of any planned works, clearly explaining when the outage will happen, which services will be affected, and why the work is needed. If anything changes, we'll provide updates as soon as we can.

We will offer extra support for customers who need it, including those who rely on their supply for health and well-being reasons.

We always plan work carefully to minimise disruption and remain open, clear and supportive when interruptions are unavoidable.

If you have any questions or concerns, our customer service team is here to help.

Our Service Commitments

We work to the highest safety standards for the well-being of yourself, your home, and our staff.

We will contact you every 2 years to arrange your HIU Service for a date which is convenient for you.

We prioritise customers who may be in vulnerable circumstances for repairs and breakdowns.

At your request we will use a password scheme for your security when visiting your home.

Our breakdown and emergency lines are open 24 hours a day seven 7 days a week.

We will offer vulnerable customers an alternative form of heating if we cannot restore the heat and hot water within 12 hours.

We will aim to respond to heating and hot water emergencies within 4 hours.

We will aim to resolve heating and hot water emergencies within 12 hours (01 Oct - 31 Mar) and within 24 hours (01 Apr - 30 Sep).

We will call you prior to attending your home to give you an estimated time of arrival.

Our staff will wear identification badges at all times.

Metering Services

About our metering services

Our energy supplies have Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) equipment installed. This means that we are sent consumption data from your property every day. Up-to-date readings mean accurate bills. Where the AMR system is not collecting data, we will send our metering contractor to collect readings for us.

To help us, please allow these staff members to access your meters. They will be wearing ID Badges so you will know they are there on our behalf. If we haven't been able to gain access, please contact us to give us up-to-date readings, or you can update your meter readings via your online account.

Problem with your meter

If you think your meter may not be accurate, we'll arrange an inspection at your property. If a fault is found, testing is free and we'll refund any charges made in error.

If the meter is confirmed to be working correctly, you may be responsible for the cost of any further testing, and any additional energy you've used will be charged as normal.

Please contact us if you'd like to discuss this or need more information.

Our metering commitments

We will give you a variety of ways to give us up-to-date readings yourself – by phone, online, or via e-mail.

If we have to use estimated readings, we will base our estimate on the amount of energy you have used in the past, on average usage patterns and on the time of year.

If you provide an actual reading, we can send a revised bill the following day.

If you need extra assistance, we will take extra care to ensure you understand how your meter works.

We will continue to carry out safety inspections on your meter at least once every two years.

If things go wrong

About our complaints process

We are committed to delivering excellent customer service. But, if something does go wrong, our customer service advisors will do their best to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We aim to respond to written complaints within 5 working days, though complex issues may take longer. We will offer you an explanation and an apology and take actions to put things right.

Our complaint handling commitments

If you are logging a complaint, our adviser will give you their name so you can contact them again if you need to.

If the adviser cannot resolve your query, you can ask to speak to a manager at any point.

In the unlikely event that we have not solved your complaint you can write to our Head of Customer Service at Head of Customer Service, SSE Heat Networks, EU Customer Service, PO Box 261, Havant, PO9 9FE or via email to HeadOfCS@sse.com

If we can't resolve your complaint, we will refer you to the Energy Ombudsman.

Energy Ombudsman Services

If we've been unable to resolve your complaint, to your satisfaction, or 8 weeks have passed since you first contacted us, you can ask the **Energy Ombudsman** to independently review your case. This is a free independent service. They will look at what has happened and may ask us to explain, apologise, take action, or offer compensation. The Energy Ombudsman decision is final and binding on us.

You have up to **12 months** to contact them, and it's important you let them know your complaint relates to a **Heat Network**.

Energy Ombudsman Services Contact Details

Call: **0330 440 1624** Text: **0330 440 1600**

www.energyombudsman.org/
enquiry@energyombudsman.org



Treating customers fairly

We are committed to giving you excellent customer service and treating you fairly.

To help achieve this, we are committed to meeting the following Standards:

We will behave and carry out any actions in a fair, honest, transparent, appropriate, and professional way.

- Acting honestly and transparently
- Providing clear and accurate information
- Ensuring processes are fit for purpose and accessible
- Responding promptly and fairly to customers needs and concerns
- Pro-actively identifying and supporting vulnerable customers

How can we improve?

Your feedback really matters to us. It helps us understand what's working well and where we can make things better. We review all the feedback you share so we can keep improving our service because listening to our customers helps shape the way we work and ensures we continue to deliver the service you expect.

If you would like to give us feedback, please visit www.sseandme.co.uk/forms/send-positive-feedback

Alternatively, you can drop us an email at HeadofCS@sse.com.

