

# FREE Thermometer



citizens  
advice

Uttlesford



# KEEPING WARM in Uttlesford

Are you, a friend or neighbour, struggling with fuel bills, an old boiler, draughts or mould?

[www.uttlesfordcab.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordcab.org.uk)



# SWITCHING SUPPLIERS

60% of households are probably overpaying by around £300 a year. What's stopping you from switching?

**\* I don't know how to switch.**

First, check with your current energy supplier to see if they can offer you a better deal. The way you pay can also make a difference, most suppliers offer a discount for paying by direct debit.

## HELP AVAILABLE

[www.goenergysshopping.co.uk](http://www.goenergysshopping.co.uk)

A step by step guide to switching.

<https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk>

A non-profit comparison site.

**\* It's a hassle.**

Essex Energy Switch holds quarterly auctions where energy companies compete to offer the best tariffs. A personal offer is sent to those who have registered once the auction period is over. You decide whether or not you want to accept the offer and switch – if you do it will all be taken care of for you.

## HELP AVAILABLE

[www.uttlesford.gov.uk/](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/)

essexenergyswitch or call Braintree District Council on **01376 552525**.

**\* I don't like computers.**

Most services are internet based, but several will also advise you by phone.

## HELP AVAILABLE

Energy Helpline **0800 074 0745**

Uttlesford CAB **01799 618858**

**\* I rent a property so I won't be able to switch anyway.**

If your name is on the bill you should be free to switch.

**\* I use heating oil, so switching has nothing to do with me.**

If you use heating oil you can change supplier every time you order. Try to check prices online first, if you can, and then haggle with local delivery companies.

Try [www.boilerjuice.co.uk](http://www.boilerjuice.co.uk) or

[www.oil-club.co.uk](http://www.oil-club.co.uk). Don't leave

buying oil until the last minute

– emergency deliveries are more

expensive. Plan a few weeks

ahead to get the best prices.

## TOP TIPS

### SWITCHING

- \* Opt to buy your gas and electricity from the same supplier – you will get a saving.
- \* Manage your account online if you can.
- \* If you can get a Warm Home Discount – check that your new supplier will also offer this before switching.
- \* Pick a memorable date in the year and see if you can save.
- \* Always haggle when buying heating oil.

# WARM & WELL

## KEEP YOUR HOME WARM

Everyone feels better in a warm home, but if you have young children, are pregnant, have reduced mobility, or a health condition that gets worse in the cold (like a respiratory, mental health or cardiovascular problem), it's even more important.

Perhaps you need more loft insulation but you can't manage to clear the loft out first, or you are worried about turning the heating up because of the cost; maybe your boiler is old but you can't afford a replacement or your gutters are blocked, causing damp and mould growth in your home. If you are struggling to keep your home warm because of money worries or difficulty keeping on top of household repairs, or if you know someone else that is, help is available.

### Keeping Warm in Uttlesford delivered by Uttlesford Citizens Advice

- \* Benefits advice, including cold weather payments and disability benefits.
- \* Money and debt advice, including debts to utility providers.
- \* Advice on getting lower fuel bills.
- \* The priority services register. If you are of pensionable age, are registered disabled, have a hearing or visual impairment, or have a long-term ill-health you may qualify for free additional services such as annual safety checks for your gas or additional help if power is interrupted.
- \* Advice on home improvement grants and handyman services.
- \* Energy efficient signposting.
- \* Home safety, for example smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- \* Personal alarms worn as a necklace or a wristband.
- \* Flu jabs.
- \* Fall prevention services.
- \* Community services, including transport, food delivery and home library services.
- \* A homevisit is available if needed.

Visit [www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk) and search 'cold' or call Uttlesford Citizens Advice on **01799 618858**.



KEEPING WARM in Uttlesford

## TOP TIPS

### KEEPING WARM

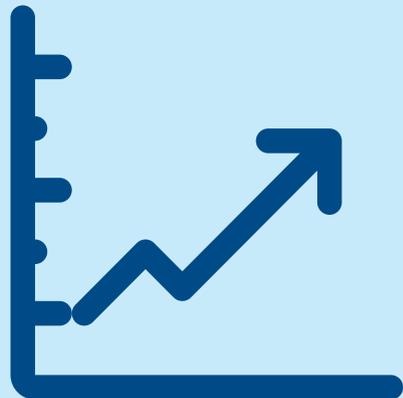
- \* Several thin layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer, as the layers trap warm air. Clothes made from wool or fleecy synthetic fibres such as polyester are a better choice than cotton.
- \* If you're sitting down, a shawl or blanket will provide a lot of warmth. Try to keep your feet up, as the air is cooler at ground level.
- \* Wear warm clothes in bed.
- \* Use a hot-water bottle, wheat bag or an electric blanket to warm the bed, but never use a hot-water bottle and an electric blanket together as this can be dangerous.
- \* Check whether your electric blanket can be kept on all night or whether it's only designed to warm the bed before you get in. Get it checked every three years by an electrician. If you have any continence difficulties, talk to your doctor before using one.
- \* Keep your feet, hands and face warm. When these are cold, they can trigger a potentially dangerous rise in blood pressure.

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY



## HEATING

- \* Heat the rooms where you spend the most time to 21 degrees, the rest of the home can be set at 18 degrees. Make sure you warm up your bedroom before going to bed or use a hot water bottle or electric blanket.
- \* Only heat your home and water when you need it! During your annual boiler check ask your engineer how to set the time or dig out the instructions.
- \* On a sunny day, open your curtains, but when it's colder or the sun goes down don't forget to close them to keep that heat in. Check for draughts around doors and windows.
- \* Turn down the thermostat on the hot water tank. There is little point producing scalding hot water in the tank if you then simply add cold water in your mixer shower or bath to get it to a nice comfortable temperature.
- \* Insulate your hot water cylinder with a jacket to help limit heat loss.
- \* Avoid blocking radiators with furniture.



## INSULATION & DRAFTS

- \* Ensure that you have enough loft insulation – 10 inches or 270 mm is now recommended to reduce heat loss from your roof.
- \* Draught-proofing is one of the cheapest and most efficient ways to save energy. Where it is practical you should seal windows, doors, loft hatches and pipework leading outside. Don't forget the letter box.

To get advice from UDC's Energy Advice Team about energy efficiency and available grants, visit [www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk) and search 'cold' or call **01376 552 525**.

## TOP TIPS CONDENSATION & DAMP



- \* Condensation can lead to mould growth. Mould spores can cause allergic reactions and asthma attacks.
- \* Weather permitting, try to ventilate your house, particularly the kitchen & bathroom. Dry off condensation on your windows and try to dry clothes outside or in a ventilated room.
- \* Put lids on pots and pans to reduce condensation and cooking times.

To get advice from UDC's Environmental Health Department about damp or mould, visit [www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk) and search 'cold' or call **01799 510482**.

# FUEL BILL WORRIES



- \* If you are having a problem paying your bill, contact your energy supplier as soon as possible. They may be able to help by changing your payment options, moving you to a cheaper deal or by installing a pay as you go meter.
- \* Get the right energy deal. See the section on 'Switching' to help to make an estimated £300 annual saving on your fuel bills. If you need help with this, please call Uttlesford Citizens Advice.
- \* If you use heating oil consider joining the Essex Community Oil buying scheme [www.essex.communitybuying.org.uk](http://www.essex.communitybuying.org.uk) call them on **01473 345400**. Alternatively speak to your Parish Council to see if a club is operating locally or perhaps look at [www.oil-club.co.uk](http://www.oil-club.co.uk) or [www.boilerjuice.co.uk](http://www.boilerjuice.co.uk).
- \* Get help if money is tight. You may be eligible for a WINTER FUEL PAYMENT OR A COLD WEATHER PAYMENT. If you're worrying about heating your home, give Uttlesford Citizens Advice a call on **01799 618858** – they have trained volunteers who can check your benefit entitlements and help with money worries if you have them.
- \* If you are in debt, please call Uttlesford Citizens Advice money doctor team on **01799 618840** for help and advice.

## TOP TIPS

### DID YOU KNOW?

You cannot be disconnected in the six months between October and March if you are of pensionable age and live alone, or if you live with people who are of pensionable age or under 18.

**Winter Fuel Payment** is an annual one-off payment of between £100 –£300 to help cover the increased cost of heating your home during the winter. You are eligible if you were born on or before 5 January 1953 or you are in receipt of the State Pension or some other social security benefits. For more information call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **0345 915 1515**.

## TOP TIPS POWER CUTS



- \* Look out for elderly neighbours and ensure they are warm and have something to eat.
- \* Have a torch, with spare batteries to hand.
- \* It's handy to have access to hot water during a power cut, so if you have any warning, boil water and store in flasks in advance.
- \* Keep an old fashioned corded phone which you can plug into the phone jack as cordless phones will not work in the event of a power cut.
- \* If fridges and freezers are kept closed they will stay cool for many hours.

You can now call **105** to report or get information about a power cut or to report damage to electricity power lines and substations that could put anyone in danger. **105** is free to call and available from most landlines and mobile phones.

# BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR



If you have an elderly or vulnerable neighbour, show them you care by popping in every now and again to check that they have everything that they need. Leave your telephone number so that they can call you in an emergency.

- \* **Share a meal.** Older, isolated people often need a hand cooking for themselves, so why not take round an extra plate of hot home-cooked food, or a frozen portion they can heat up or microwave? As well as being practical, it's a nice way to share your time with a neighbour.
- \* **Offer practical help.** Ask your neighbour if they need any help with tasks such as shopping, posting letters, picking up prescriptions and medicines or dog-walking. Offer to accompany them or give them a lift to activities or appointments. If they don't have access to the internet you could offer to help them switch energy supplier or order groceries.

## GET A FLU JAB!

Flu is not only unpleasant, it can also develop into pneumonia, which can be serious.

The flu jab is free to people who:

- \* are aged 65 years or over
- \* are pregnant
- \* have certain medical conditions
- \* are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility
- \* receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill.

**Flu viruses are always changing, so you need a jab every year, using the latest vaccine.**

Ask your GP about it if you're over 65 and haven't had one.

## TOP TIPS

### BIN COLLECTIONS



If you have problems moving your bins and there is no-one else who can do it for you, Uttlesford District Council may be able to provide you with an assisted collection whereby the crews will collect the bin from where you are able to use it, empty it and return it to you. For further information contact Uttlesford District Council Recycling and Waste on **01799 510510**.

## TOP TIPS

### CHILBLAINS



Chilblains are itchy red swellings that occur when your skin gets cold and you try to warm up too quickly, often by sitting close to a radiator or other source of heat. If you suffer from these, dab the swellings with calamine or witch hazel to reduce itching, but don't scratch them as this could cause an infection. Speak to your pharmacist for further advice on treating chilblains.

# GETTING OUT & ABOUT

**Daylight is good for boosting the immune system and preventing low mood.**

Try to get as much natural sunlight as possible. Sit near the window and move about in the house if the weather is too bad to get out.

**Keep active.**

We all know that exercise is good for your overall health and it can help keep you warm in winter; even moderate exercise can bring health benefits. If possible, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so.

- \* If you have to leave the house in bad weather, make sure you wear a pair of shoes with good grip to prevent slips and falls.
- \* Check which roads will be gritted and find advice on safe winter travel by visiting [www.essex.gov.uk/winter](http://www.essex.gov.uk/winter)

- \* If you find it hard to access normal public transport, Uttlesford Community Transport can help with shopping trips, medical appointments or days out. All their minibuses are wheelchair accessible. Call them on **01371 875787**. There is a charge for this service. Or visit [www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk) and search 'Transport' for a factsheet of local travel options including DART services.
- \* Only make essential journeys in bad weather. Allow extra time and stick to the main roads. Keep a blanket and boots in the car.
- \* If you're worried about walking your dog in the winter, contact the Cinnamon Trust, who may be able to match you with a volunteer dog walker in your area. Call them on **01736 757900**.

## TOP TIPS

### CLEARING PATHS



If you are fit and healthy it's really helpful for everyone if you clear paths of snow and ice.

- \* Do it early in the day – it's easier to move fresh, loose snow.
- \* Don't use water – it might refreeze and turn to black ice.
- \* Use salt if possible – it will melt the ice or snow and stop it from refreezing overnight (but don't use the salt from salting bins as this is used to keep roads clear).
- \* You can use ash and sand if you don't have enough salt – it will provide grip underfoot.
- \* Pay extra attention when clearing steps and steep pathways – using more salt may help.

## TOP TIPS

### FLOODING



- \* The Environmental Agency's Flood Warnings Direct service will give early warnings of expected floods in your area. <http://bit.ly/1Kf1xX>
- \* Sandbags can be obtained from your local builders' merchant, filled or empty, and you can store your own sand to fill when needed.
- \* You can make your own sandbags from old pillow cases or plastic sacks by filling them with earth and laying them like normal sandbags.
- \* The National Flood Forum suggests ways to protect your property from flood. [www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk)

# Find out about local services that can help

## USEFUL CONTACTS

<b>Age UK Essex</b> (advice for later life)	<b>01245 346 106</b>
<b>Adult Social Care Team</b> (worried about someone vulnerable)	<b>0345 603 7630</b>
<b>Community Agents</b> (advice on independent living)	<b>0800 977 5858</b>
<b>Energy Savings trust Advice Service</b> (energy saving advice)	<b>0300 123 1234</b>
<b>Essential Living Fund</b> (means tested emergency fund)	<b>0300 790 0124</b>
<b>Floodline</b> (flood advice)	<b>0345 988 1188</b>
<b>Home Safety Volunteer Action Epping Forest</b> (fall prevention service)	<b>01992 564 259</b>
For the loan of medical equipment	
<b>The Lions Club</b>	<b>07761 602 678</b>
<b>The Red Cross</b>	<b>03444 122 772</b>
<b>Medical help and advice</b> (free NHS service 24/7)	<b>111</b>
<b>Papworth Trust</b> (small jobs in the home fixed hourly charge)	<b>0300 333 6543</b>
<b>Essex Community Oil Buying Scheme</b>	<b>01473 345400</b>
<b>Salvation Army</b> (local charitable support)	<b>01799 510798</b>
<b>Samaritans</b> (emotional support if you are in despair or feeling suicidal) no charge	<b>116 123</b>
<b>Silver Line Confidential Helpline</b> (friendship and advice for older people)	<b>0800 470 8090</b>
<b>UK Power Networks</b> (for information on power cuts)	<b>105</b>
<b>Uttlesford Citizens Advice</b> (free advice).	<b>01799 618 840</b>
<b>Uttlesford Community Transport</b>	<b>01371 875 787</b>
<b>Uttlesford District Council</b>	<b>01799 510 510</b>
<b>Uttlesford District Council Energy advice</b> (Braintree)	<b>01376 552 525</b>
<b>Uttlesford District Council Environmental Health</b>	<b>01799 510 482</b>
<b>Winter Fuel Payments helpline</b>	<b>0345 915 1515</b>