

Advisors Toolkit Factsheet No 2.a

Understanding Fuel Bills and Statements

Suppliers are required to provide their customers with specific information on electricity and gas bills and annual statements.

Credit meter customers should receive a bill every quarter (also available online with paperless billing). The information that appears on a bill includes:

- specific tariff name
- whether the reading/bill is actual or estimated
- details of energy use
- details of how much the energy costs, including unit cost and standing charges applied
- an explanation of how the bill has been calculated
- usage comparison between the current period and the same period a year ago

Bills must also include information advising whether a supplier has a cheaper alternative tariff, a Personal Projection (PP), a Tariff Information Label (TIL) and the meter reference number (MPAN, MPRN, or Supply Number).

Understanding Fuel Bills

Fuel bills may be calculated using an estimated meter reading or a reading provided by a customer or a meter reader. The bill must state clearly whether an actual/customer or estimated reading has been used.

When a bill arrives it is important to check that the fuel supplier has used the correct meter reading when calculating gas or electricity usage. Reading and keeping a record of meter readings on a regular basis will help keep track of how much fuel is being used. It may also prevent a large debit or credit balance building up on a fuel account. It is also important to check that the details on the bill are correct/apply to the right person and address. The information on a bill will include:

- customer name and address
- account number

Personal Projection (PP):

The aim of a Personal Projection is to indicate what the energy bills will cost over the coming year and to show whether a customer is on a supplier's cheapest tariff. If this is not the case, the information will be printed on the bill along with the cheapest alternative. Personal Projections can also be used to see if there is a cheaper tariff with a new energy supplier, but it is worth noting that for a realistic and accurate comparison, actual use in kWh should be used. This information will be on the bill, the annual statement, or the supplier can provide this information.

MPAN/MPRN/Meter Numbers:

Every gas and electricity meter has a unique reference number that effectively links the meter to a specific address.

For electricity meters, this is known as the MPAN (Meter Point Administration Number). The format of a MPAN is standard and consists of 21 digits.

For gas meters it is known as the MPRN (Meter Point Reference Number). The format of a MPRN is also fairly standard and will consist of between six and ten digits. Occasionally, these are also referred to simply as 'meter numbers' or as 'M' or 'S' (supply) numbers. The reference number(s) must be shown on fuel bills and annual statements. It is useful to have the numbers to hand when switching. It may also be worthwhile checking with the appropriate supplier that the MPAN/MPRN number on a fuel bill/statement 'belongs' to the expected address.

If unable to locate/identify a MPAN or MPRN number for a particular address, contact the following:

Electricity:

- for Central & Southern Scotland **0330 101 0300**
- for Northern Scotland **0345 026 2554**

Gas:

- for Scotland **0870 608 1524**

QR Codes: Energy bills now contain a QR (quick response) code. This code carries all the information needed to switch energy supplier with one simple scan.

A QR code is a type of barcode that must be read by a smartphone via a code scanning app.

The QR code will contain all the information needed to compare and switch energy supplier. This includes:

- the plan name
- the plan's rates
- energy consumption (how much gas and/or electricity the household uses)
- annual bill period dates

Additional information will include:

- supplier contact details for bill queries (including Minicom service contact)
- emergency (gas leak, power cut, etc) contact details
- complaints service contact details
- details of additional services and support, for example information about Codes of Practice, Priority Service Register, payment options, etc

See also Factsheet 1.b – Meters and How to Read Them