

Utilities' Priority Services Membership

Priority Services is a scheme which offers additional free services from utility providers to people who may:



- have a chronic or serious illness
- rely on electricity for medical reasons
- have a medical condition that means it's not safe to stay at home if there is a power cut or water outage
- have poor mobility
- are elderly (over 60 years) or have young children (under 5 years) at home
- have difficulties with their eyesight or hearing, or who may wish to speak in a language other than English
- have a mental health condition
- have a temporary need for support, including recovery after an operation or having suffered a life-changing event, such as a bereavement.

Services include*:

- **a service more tailored to your needs** for example, you can ask to have your bills and meter readings in Braille, large type or audio tape
- **moving your meter free of charge** to make it easier for you to access
- having **controls or adaptors** provided to make your meter or appliances easier to use
- **free quarterly meter readings** if you tell your supplier you can't read it yourself
- **priority reconnection if your supply is interrupted** and advance notice if they have to stop your supply
- **alternative facilities for cooking and heating** if your energy supply is interrupted
- **additional protection from bogus callers** with a password protection scheme
- **arranging for your bills to be sent or copied to someone else**, such as a carer, who can help you read and check them
- **free advice and information** about other services available because of your age, disability or chronic illness.

* The above advice has been adapted from the Citizens Advice website:

www.adviceguide.org.uk

❖ How can I sign up for Priority Services membership?

- You need to sign up with each utility supplier, i.e.:
 - Northern Powergrid (our region's Distribution Network Operator) for assistance with the electricity supply up to point of connection at your house, e.g. for issues such as power cuts.
 - Your electricity supplier that you pay your bills to for assistance with issues within your home.
 - Northumbrian Water for water supply issues at:
<https://www.nwl.co.uk/priority>
- There is no charge and you can sign up for all or some of the services.
- If you have a carer, they can sign up on your behalf.
- Your suppliers must take steps once a year to inform all customers about Priority Services membership and how you can join.

❖ Northern Powergrid's Priority Services membership

- Join to get additional free services in the event of a power cut
- Sign up on-line at <https://www.northernpowergrid.com/care>
- Or call the Northern Powergrid Care Team at **0800 169 2996**
- Your application will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Apply online...

As a Priority Service Customer, we'll make sure you receive extra help if there's a power cut. Registering online is easy. We just need to take a few details about you, or the person you care for. If you have any problems registering, we're just a free phone call away (**0800 169 2996**).

We will ask you...

- On whose behalf are you registering?
- Why you are registering?
- Who should we contact?



You will require approximately 5 minutes to complete this application



Powergrid Care

At Northern Powergrid we understand that all our customers are individuals with unique needs.

CONTACT OUR POWERGRID CARE TEAM

0800 169 2996

The following brief description of the services that Northern Powergrid offers to customers with specific needs has been adapted from their website:

<https://www.northernpowergrid.com/care>

➤ **If you have a medical condition that means it's not safe to stay at home, mental health issues or simply need temporary support**

Any interruption, even a short one, to your power supply may be extremely difficult.

Joining the Northern Powergrid Priority Services Membership means they will:

- ❖ give you a **special phone number** to use, so you always get straight through to a person when you need help.
- ❖ talk to you in way that's best for you, i.e. **telephone, email or text**.
- ❖ provide you with **alternative accommodation during a power cut**, if staying at home is unsafe.
- ❖ **keep you as informed** as possible during a power cut.
- ❖ talk to you about your **individual needs**.

➤ **If you have a chronic or serious illness, are medically dependent and rely on electricity for medical reasons, your mobility is limited or you have age-related issues**

Any interruption to your power supply can be especially difficult if you have certain medical conditions or if you need electricity for medical equipment or for keeping medicines cold in the fridge. Even a short power cut could cause a significant impact to your health or well-being.



The services also apply to you if you are elderly or have young children at home.

An interruption to your power could bring extra worries: you may rely on your central heating for warmth or need hot water for making bottles of milk.

Joining the Northern Powergrid Priority Services Membership means that, **in addition to those services listed above**, they will also:

- ❖ ask their partner, the **British Red Cross**, to visit your home and provide **one to one support and assistance** during a power cut.

➤ **If you require an alternative means of communication**

Priority Services Membership can also help if you have concerns about communicating with Northern Powergrid due to difficulties with your eyesight or hearing, or if you use a language other than English.

Joining the Northern Powergrid Priority Services Membership means they will:

- ❖ give you a **special phone number** to use, so you always get straight through to a person when you need help.
- ❖ talk to you in way that's best for you, i.e. **telephone, email or text.**
- ❖ **keep you as informed** as possible during a power cut.
- ❖ talk to you about your **individual needs.**

They can also keep you informed using alternative formats.

Blind or partially sighted: if you or someone you care for is visually impaired, Northern Powergrid can provide useful information in large print, Braille, or audio formats. They also offer a Browse Aloud feature on their website.

Deaf, hard of hearing or speech difficulties:

if you or someone you care for is deaf or hard of hearing, Northern Powergrid can make contact by text message, text-phone or via an NRCPD registered British Sign Language interpreter. For contact by British Sign Language, see weblinks for



InterpreterLive! Service and BSL translations on the Northern Powergrid website at:

<https://www.northernpowergrid.com/care/category/communication/>

Difficulty communicating in English: if you need to contact us, but don't speak English very well, call us on the number below, stating your preferred language: **0800 389 8204**

❖ **Similar services will be available from your electricity supplier and Northumbrian Water**

Register with them to ensure you receive additional help if you need it.

This information guide has been prepared on behalf of Barningham Net Zero by TEC Ltd, with funding from the Rural Community Energy Fund programme. The information contained has been taken from various sources and is intended as general guidance only. Further expert advice should be sought if required. Reproduction is not permitted without the prior permission of Barningham Net Zero CIC and TEC Ltd. Please contact teclimited@btinternet.com for any queries.

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