

Our commitment to customer service

Our code of practice information guide



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**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**



Our code of practice

Through our two electricity distribution companies – Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Ltd and Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) plc - we provide power to around 8 million customers across 3.9 million homes and businesses in the Northeast, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

We run the electricity distribution network that delivers electricity safely to your home on behalf of your supplier. It is the supplier who bills you for your electricity, is responsible for your meter and provides a range of services through

its Priority Services Register. If you have a question about your bill, your meter, or access to Priority Services, please contact your supplier. You can find their contact details on your latest electricity bill.

If you are disabled, have a critical medical condition, special communication needs, or require other forms of support in a power cut, the information in this guide should be helpful to you.

If you need details of our complaints procedure, please refer to the information contained in the 'Complaints and customer satisfaction' section on page 8.

This guide tells you about the following services:

- P4. How to register for our Priority Services Register
- P6. How you can prepare in case of a power cut
- P7. Visiting your home
- P8. Complaints and customer satisfaction
- P11. How to contact us



You can join our Priority Services Register if you:

- **Are fully electrical dependent**

You may rely on medical equipment, such as a Home Kidney Dialysis Machine or Oxygen Concentrator and even a short power cut could cause a significant impact to your health or well-being.

- **Have a critical medical condition**

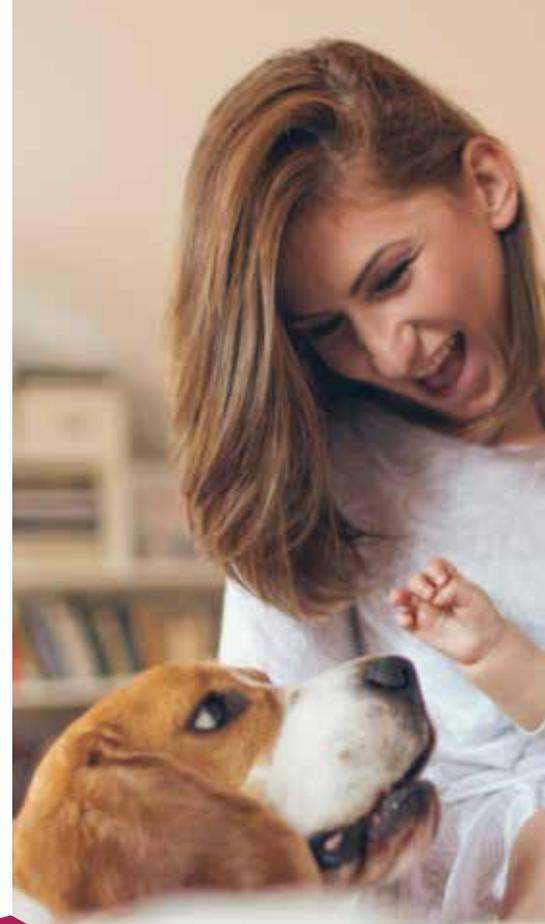
You may have a condition that restricts your ability to move, or perhaps are recovering from a serious operation or illness. An interruption to your power could hinder your recovery, or mean that you would be unable to care for yourself for a prolonged period of time.

- **Require alternative methods of communication**

You may require alternative methods of communication if you are hearing or sight impaired. There may also be other reasons that you need us to communicate with you in a different way; for example, English may not be your first language.

- **Have other long-term or temporary support requirements**

Our customers who are elderly, have young children or customers whose household is in fuel poverty, may find a power cut more difficult to deal with, and may benefit from additional advice and support.



You can join our Priority Services Register in the following ways...

- Register online or download a printable application form at www.northernpowergrid.com/priority
- Write to our **Priority Services Manager, Manor House, Station Road, Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring, DH4 7LA.**
- Call us on **0800 169 2996.**
- Text relay: Dial prefix **18001** then our number **0800 169 2996.**
- Textphone **0800 028 9507.**

You will be asked your name, address and phone number and to explain your needs (for example, the type of medical equipment you use, your kidney dialysis routine, if you have a stairlift etc).

- Ask an appropriate person to contact us on your behalf.
- Contact your supplier, who will pass your details on to us. Your supplier will also register you and be able to offer additional services through their own Priority Services Register. You can find your supplier's phone number on your latest electricity bill.



Once you have joined our Priority Services Register we will:

- Give you appropriate information and advice about what precautions to take and what to do if there is a power cut at your home.
- Tell you beforehand if we are going to turn your power off to carry out planned work on the network.
- Inform you, whenever possible, the time your electricity supply is likely to be back on and any help we can provide.

We cannot guarantee an absolutely constant supply of electricity and it is important that you have other arrangements to fall back on if you depend on electricity.

How we can help you...

Depending on your circumstances, we may be able to:

- Send our Customer Support Vehicle to a site close to your home, so that you can get hot drinks and snacks.
- Provide a 'winter warmer' pack, including a torch, blanket, hat and gloves, socks and an analogue phone.
- Lend you a small generator.
- Arrange for The British Red Cross charity to provide you with additional support.

Welfare organisations looking for advice and information on the services covered by this code of practice should contact our Priority Services Team on [0191 387 7284](tel:01913877284).



How you can prepare in case of a power cut

If we have informed you about a planned power cut, or you think severe weather could cause a power cut, please take the following steps:

- Have a battery-powered radio tuned into a local radio station.
- Keep a torch handy – they are much safer than candles.
- Make sure you and any vulnerable relatives, or neighbours, have a charged mobile phone with important numbers stored in it, in case you need help.
- Only use other forms of heating or lighting if you can do so safely.
- Make sure you have a good supply of warm clothing and a blanket close to hand.
- Fill a vacuum flask with a warm drink, and fill a hot water bottle.
- Make sure your cupboards are stocked with food and drink that does not need electricity to be heated or prepared.
- Try to avoid using your stairlift (if you have one).
- Regularly back up work on your computer.

If there is a power cut...

- If your trip switch has not cut off the power and you can find no other reason for your power being off, then there may be a problem with the electricity supply in your area.
- Tell us about your power cut online (using your smart phone or tablet) by visiting www.northernpowergrid.com, via Twitter [@Northpowergrid](https://twitter.com/Northpowergrid), or by calling us on **0800 66 88 77** (North East) or **0800 375 675** (Yorkshire).
- Switch off all electrical appliances for safety reasons.
- Leave a light switched on so you will know when the power comes back on.
- Check that vulnerable neighbours are safe and well.
- Wrap up warm and stay in one room.

Visiting your home

We follow a strict code of practice and any visit to your home will either be from a member of our own staff, or from a contractor working on our behalf.

- All our employees and contractors are fully trained and will show an identity card displaying the name of their company, their own name, their reference number and a colour photograph.*
- Where possible, all vehicles used for visits to customers' homes will carry our own (or our contractor's) logo.
- Where possible, all our employees will wear clothing with our company logo on it.
- All our employees and contractors will be able to tell you our emergency phone number as well as the number to call if you have a general enquiry.

- All our employees and contractors will be able to explain what they are there to do and be appropriately qualified/fully trained to do it.
- They will be calm and polite, will give clear and accurate explanations and will respect your home at all times.

We make sure that all our employees and contractors are familiar with this code of practice and keep to it at all times. If you have any doubts about whether a caller is genuine, do not let them into your home.

*We take all necessary steps to make sure that employees return their ID cards when the card runs out, or they leave the company.

Passwords

To help you feel safe and comfortable when we visit your home, you can ask us to use a password when we visit you. If you would like to do this, **please call us on 0800 169 2996.**

Appointments

You can make a morning or afternoon appointment for us to visit, or you can ask us to visit within a two-hour time slot during the normal working week.

Most appointments we make are ones you have asked for. However, from time to time we may need to visit your home to inspect or maintain our equipment.

Complaints and customer satisfaction

At Northern Powergrid, customer safety and satisfaction are our main priorities. We are only satisfied when you are...

All of our staff and contractors are committed to:

- Putting safety first
- Respecting you, your time and your property
- Doing a really good job
- Being there when you need us
- Caring for our local environment

We aim to provide the best possible customer experience at all times. If, however, you are not satisfied with our service, we hope that you will tell us about it so that we can try to put things right for you.

Step 1 - Let us know

You can make a complaint to us in a number of different ways – in person at our offices, over the phone, by email or by letter. Please let us know which of these methods you would prefer us to use when we respond to your complaint. When contacting us, please provide your full name, address, postcode, contact phone number and email address and as much detail about your complaint as possible.

In person at one of our offices – please call free on **0800 781 8848** or see the complaints section on our website **www.northernpowergrid.com**, to find the office nearest to you.

By phone – please call our free complaints line on **0800 781 8848**.

By email – please email us at **complaints@northernpowergrid.com**

By letter – please write to Customer Care Manager and send Freepost (no stamp required) to:

RSXE-RCZX-XKBL

Northern Powergrid, Manor House,
Station Road, Penshaw,
Houghton-le-Spring DH4 7LA

Step 2 – We try to find a solution with you

We will try at all times to resolve your problem as quickly and efficiently as possible. If we receive your complaint before 4pm on a normal working day, we will attempt to resolve it by the end of the next working day.

In order to resolve the issue, the following remedies considered may include: (i) an apology; (ii) an explanation; (iii) the taking by us of appropriate remedial action; and (iv) the award of compensation in appropriate circumstances.

If your complaint cannot be resolved within this timescale, we will aim to provide you with a more detailed response within 10 working days, with how we propose to resolve the issue.

Complaints and customer satisfaction (cont'd)

If you tell us that you are not happy with our response, your complaint will be referred to an appropriate senior manager. The senior manager will review your complaint and respond within 10 working days.

If you tell us that you are not satisfied with the senior manager's response, a member of the executive team will examine your complaint and the way in which it was handled. The Customer Care Operations Manager will then write to you within 10 working days with the member of the executive team's findings, and our final response.

Step 3 – Independent review by the Ombudsman Services: Energy

If we are unable to resolve your complaint, and you are unhappy with the response of a member of the executive team, you may be able to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman Services Energy if:

You are a domestic customer, which means you are supplied or are requiring to be supplied with electricity at domestic premises, and you are making a complaint in that capacity in respect of services we have provided; or

You are a micro business customer, which means you meet the following criteria, and you are making a complaint in that capacity in respect of services we have provided:

- You are supplied, or are requiring to be supplied, with electricity at a non-domestic premises; and

- Your annual consumption is no more than 100,000kWh; or
- You have fewer than 10 employees (or their full-time equivalent); and
- Your annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed two million Euros (around £1.7 million)

The Ombudsman Services: Energy is a free and completely independent dispute resolution service.

If the Ombudsman supports your complaint one or more of the following remedies may be appropriate: (i) an apology; (ii) an explanation; (iii) the taking by us of appropriate remedial action; and (iv) the award of compensation in appropriate circumstances.

Any outcome proposed by the Ombudsman is binding upon us (if you accept it) but not upon you. If you accept the Ombudsman's decision, we will carry out the specified remedy within 28 days.

Call us on our
free complaints line
0800 781 8848

Contact details for the Ombudsman Services: Energy are listed below:

Contact details for the Ombudsman:

Ombudsman Services: Energy

PO Box 966

Warrington

WA4 9DF

Telephone: 0330 440 1624

Textphone: 0330 440 1600

Email: enquiries@os-energy.org

Website: www.ombudsman-services.org/sectors/energy

The logo for Ombudsman Services features the word "Ombudsman" in a grey sans-serif font above the word "Services" in a larger, bold, grey sans-serif font. To the left of the text is a circular icon composed of several overlapping colored segments in shades of blue, green, yellow, and red.

Good for consumers – Good for business

You can get help, advice and information from the following organisations:

Age UK (previously known as Age Concern and Help the Aged)

Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square,
London, WC1H 9NA

Free Helpline: 0800 169 8787

www.ageuk.org.uk

Email: info@ageuk.org.uk

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

www.rnib.org.uk

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss (previously known as Royal Institute for Deaf People (RNID))

19-23 Featherstone Street,
London, EC1Y 8SL

Free Helpline: 0808 808 0123

Free Textphone: 0808 808 9000

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk

Find out more about our additional services below:



Connections

0800 011 3433



**Priority
Services**

0800 169 2996



Power Cuts

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**General
Enquiries**

0800 011 3332

Need additional support during a power cut?

You might be able to benefit from our Priority Services Register.

**Text Phone
0800 028 9507**

Text Relay
Dial prefix **18001** then our number **0800 169 2996**

Other services we provide:

Quality of supply
Safedig
Substation maintenance
Vegetation management

Click northernpowergrid.com **Call**  **Connect**   

All of this information is available in audio description and different languages on our website using the 'browsealoud' service. If you require this booklet in alternative formats, such as Braille or large print, please contact the General Enquiries number above.