



COMMUNITY
ENERGY PLUS

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PRESS RELEASE

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Cheaper energy for one and all

Householders across Cornwall are being encouraged to join forces to cut their energy bills through a new initiative called Community Energy Switch.

The collective switching service has been launched by the Cornwall-based charity Community Energy Plus, which provides services to help householders reduce their energy use and ensure that they can afford to heat their homes. The charity is working with the national switching organisation energyhelpline to co-ordinate their collective switch and link into the group buying power of several other collectives taking place across the country at the same time.

Householders have until 1st March to register, after which UK energy suppliers will compete to offer the cheapest exclusive tariffs. Community Energy Plus is confident that with average savings of £221 a year, based on energyhelpline's last collective switch, bill payers will snap up the opportunity to switch to a better deal.

Registration is free, quick and simple with no obligation to switch. **Register online at www.communityenergyswitch.org.uk or call Freephone 0800 804 7247.**

For many people living in Cornwall, household incomes have failed to keep up with rising energy and living costs. Community Energy Plus has seen a steady increase in the number of people contacting them because they are struggling to keep warm and pay their energy bills.

Dr Tim Jones, Chief Executive at Community Energy Plus, explained the need for Community Energy Switch: "While many people are aware that changing tariff or supplier could save them money, it's something that many of us keep putting off because we think it's too difficult. We've set up Community Energy Switch to overcome the barriers people meet when thinking about switching and to help householders in Cornwall take control of their energy bills. The more people that register, the more power we have to negotiate a special deal with energy suppliers and the more money we save."

The initiative is being endorsed and promoted by Cornwall Council, NHS Kernow and the Winter Wellbeing Programme for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Julian German, Cornwall Council Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture said: "A similar initiative was launched in 2012 which proved hugely successful. 'Cornwall Together' saved hundreds of people hundreds of pounds. By joining forces with our partners again, and launching a similar scheme, we hope we will achieve the same positive results. Many people struggle to pay their fuel

bills let's hope we can help the residents of Cornwall save money again this year. This is people power in action, by joining in a collective switch, individuals can make real savings."

Anthony Ball, Winter Wellbeing and Tackling Inequalities Lead at Public Health Cornwall Council said: "Cold homes and fuel poverty cause around 350 deaths a year locally, however there's a much larger number of people who experience poor health and wellbeing as a consequence of living in cold homes. Community Energy Switch provides the opportunity for everyone taking part to reduce their energy bills, but for some of the lowest income households in Cornwall it could mean the difference between living in a warm rather than cold home."

Community Energy Switch is open to everyone – whether they live in or outside Cornwall. This includes people who own their own homes, rent from a private landlord or social housing provider, as well as if they pay their energy bills by direct debit, cheque, cash or pre-payment meter.

Householders who register their details will be contacted with details of the winning energy deal from 2nd March. As well as being offered the exclusive winning tariff they will also see all other tariffs in the market, so if another tariff suits an individual's energy needs more, they can sign up for that instead; there will also be green tariffs on offer.

Once a householder has agreed to switch, the necessary arrangements will be made on their behalf with their old and new suppliers. Switching is a seamless process – there isn't a physical change to the energy supply but householders can feel the financial benefit of getting a better deal on your energy bills.

Community Energy Plus runs an oil buying club (communityenergyclub.org.uk) with over 2,000 members and was previously a lead partner in Cornwall Together alongside Cornwall Council, NHS Cornwall and The Eden Project which carried out two collective switches in 2012 and 2013. The charity's Community Energy Switch initiative seeks to build on the achievements of Community Energy Club and Cornwall Together and help many more householders to save money on their energy bills.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Community Energy Plus (www.cep.org.uk) is a charity and social enterprise providing services to help householders and communities in Cornwall to enjoy warmer, more energy efficient homes.

For over 15 years we have worked in partnership with a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations to support a variety of innovative projects relating to energy efficiency and renewable energy including community ownership models.

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