

Smart meters: the misconceptions

We've created this leaflet to help you understand the facts about smart meters and answer some of the most common questions you or your tenants might have.

I don't see the point of smart meters. What are the benefits for me?

Smart meters have lots of benefits for both landlords and tenants. We know that people with smart meters have a better idea of how much energy they're using and what it costs.

Smart meters also provide accurate, automatic meter readings which mean that there are no surprise bills at the end of the month, or the tenancy. This can help tenants to manage their energy bills and less likely to fall in to debt.

When your tenant leaves, you can use the smart meter to monitor usage during void periods and help you reduce costs. If there is any unusual usage, this could indicate someone has been in the property or an appliance has been left on or is faulty.

Can smart meters help me or my tenants save money?

Yes. More than 80 per cent of people with a smart meter have taken at least one step to reduce their energy use. It is estimated that smart meters will take £300 million off consumer's bills in 2020, rising to more than £1.2 billion per year by 2030 – an average saving of £47 per household. These savings are just the start, with the potential for more from new products and services enabled by a smart energy system.¹

My tenants have never asked me about smart meters. Do tenants want them?

Yes. Our research shows that tenants in private rented accommodation are more likely to want smart meters when compared to other groups, but the same research shows that they are less likely than other groups to get them installed. There are a number of reasons why this could be, for example confusion about whose responsibility it is to have one installed.

If there is a clause in your tenancy agreement that might stop the tenant from changing the meter, this might make your tenants think you're against getting a smart meter. You may want to review this and have a conversation with your tenant about the benefits of having smart meters installed.



How can I get a smart meter installed in my rented property?

It's the responsibility of the person who pays the energy bills to request an installation from the energy supplier. If the tenant pays the bills, you should have a conversation with them about the benefits of smart meters and why you'd like to have them installed in the property. Having smart meters could help them keep a closer eye on their energy use, and make changes to help reduce their bills.

If you're the bill payer, we recommend letting the tenant know that you plan on changing the meters, and direct them to our website to learn more about the installation process and how to take advantage of the benefits.

Will a smart meter make switching energy suppliers difficult in future?

No. If you have a smart meter the process for switching suppliers is exactly the same as it is with a traditional meter, and you don't need to get new smart meters in the property if you or your tenant switch suppliers.

The second-generation smart meters, currently being installed, allow you to switch seamlessly between suppliers, and nearly 10 million have already been installed.¹

Do smart meters work with prepay?

Yes. All smart meters can work in credit or prepay mode, and because this mode can be changed 'over-the-air' you don't need to switch meters when changing the way that the bill is paid. There are lots of benefits for people using smart prepay, including topping up online or over the phone, as well as opportunities for additional, remote support from the energy supplier.

Is mine or my tenant's personal data at risk with a smart meter?

No. Smart meters are very secure. This is because they have a security system developed by leading experts in industry and government including GCHQ's National Cyber Security Centre.

The bill payer's name, address and bank account details are never stored on the meter, only how much energy you use.

Do smart meters need a broadband connection to work?

No. Smart meters use an entirely separate, bespoke wireless system. You don't need Wi-Fi in the property for it to work and it won't use Wi-Fi if your tenants have it. The smart meter and in-home display communicate via a secure national network which is solely for smart meters.

Is there a cost to getting a smart meter?

There is no additional cost for installing a smart meter and the offer of an in-home display. Just like traditional meters, the cost of running and maintaining the smart meter network is spread across everyone's bills.

What if there is damage to my property during installation?

Smart meters are installed by installers who have a formal qualification to meet specific national standards, as set out in the Smart Metering Installation Code of Practice. All energy suppliers have signed up to this code, which is regulated by Ofgem, who have powers to enforce it. In the unlikely instance damage occurs to the property during installation, the supplier will rectify this.

If you have any questions about the smart meters and how to get one, we're here to help!
Email us at: enquiries@smartenergyGB.org

¹ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (2019), [Smart meter rollout: cost benefit analysis](#)