**“I am a single parent with two kids, and I’m really worried about how I’ll afford to pay my energy bills when I have to start putting the heating and lights on more now winter is here.**

**At the moment I just about have just about enough money to cover my bills, but nothing left over. The thought of getting into debt keeps me awake at night but the idea of my children being cold and possibly unwell as a result is just unbearable. What can I do?”**

You are not alone - a record number of people came to Citizens Advice with energy debt in the first four months of 2023 (32,400) - a 112% increase on the same period in 2020 (15,200).

There are things you can do to feel in control when it comes to your energy bills.

There are some simple tips to help save money on your energy bills. They won’t cover all the extra costs, but they can make a difference:

* **Check your thermostat:** A room temperature between 18°C and 21°C is ideal for most people. Try turning your thermostat down by one degree within this range – it could save you around £115 a year. If a medical condition means you need a warmer home, ask your GP what room temperature you should aim for.
* **Keep the heat in:** Check your home for any gaps in the doors, windows and floors. Blocking any holes where you could get a draught could save you around £30 a year. It is important though to allow for some ventilation as without it mould and damp can form.
* **Turn off anything you’re not using:** Turning your appliances, like TVs and washing machines, off instead of leaving them on standby could save around £60 a year. Turning off lights when you’re not using them – even if it’s just off for a few seconds - could save around £25 a year.
* Consider using **LED** lightbulbs, which cost less to run.
* **Watch your water usage:** Cutting your shower time by one minute can make a difference. If everyone in a four-person household with a water meter did this, they could save around £75 a year.

If you’re struggling to afford your energy bills, you might be able to get support from the government or your energy supplier. The first step is to contact your supplier to find out what they can offer. You may be eligible for benefits including the **Warm Home Discount, Cold Weather Payments** or the **Household Support Fund,** find out more about these on the [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) website at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

If you would like to speak to Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre, you can call us on 0808 278 7896 (Freephone), where we help thousands of people each year. You may be coming to us for the first time, but we can help with issues such as housing, employment, debt, benefits, energy and more. See our website at [www.kcalc.org.uk](http://www.kcalc.org.uk/) for more information.