

SSE ANNOUNCES OPENING OF CUSTOMER SUPPORT SCHEMES

Energy supplier SSE has announced that all its schemes to support customers are now open and taking referrals. These schemes are available to support low income customers in or at risk of fuel poverty and as the weather gets colder, these may offer support and peace of mind to many vulnerable customers.

The Priority Assistance Fund (PAF) - this is SSE's internal trust fund which provides debt relief and a holistic package of help for low income and vulnerable customers struggling to manage energy debt. This help can include:

- Help with the full debt on customer accounts
- Income Maximisation Checks – helping to ensure customers receive all due benefits
- Energy efficiency advice from City and Guilds trained advisers
- Warm Home Discount Scheme referrals
- HHRCO referrals for energy help with energy efficiency measures
- Priority Services registration
- Careline registration

The criteria remains unchanged from previous years, and customers should fulfil two of the following three criteria:

1. Total household income lower than £16,200 per annum (earned income and/or benefits)
2. 10% or more of total household income spent on fuel
3. Vulnerability in the household

Vulnerability is defined as:

- A person of pensionable age
- A chronically ill or disabled person living at the property
- A child aged 17 or under on 1 April of this financial year

It is important that up-to-date meter readings are provided with the application, and SSE is happy to arrange appointments for this if required. Along with the completed application form, customers should include full proof of income /benefits – copies, not original documents.

Benefit Entitlement Checks -SSE is now taking referrals for free Benefit Entitlement checks to help customers access all the benefits they may be entitled to. IncomeMAX carry out the assessments on SSE's behalf and offer claims support help should any customers need additional support through the process. Last year 84% of customers had additional income identified and the average increase was £1,446.

Warm Home Discount - SSE recently applied its first batch of Core payments to eligible accounts, making these payments available for customers increased winter usage. SSE's Broader scheme remains open and eligible customers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

An online version of the application form can be found at <https://sse.co.uk/help/accessibility/warm-home-discount>. Alternatively OHAL can supply a paper copy.

Any completed forms should be sent to **FREEPOST PO Box 224, Havant, PO9 9DG** or alternatively to the email FuelPovertyOnline@sse.com

For any queries relating to Warm Home Discount please contact the team directly on **0800 300 111** between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 2pm on Saturdays.

The **Electric Heating Team** are also on hand for any specialist queries around electric heating and they can be contacted on **0345 071 7972**.

OHAL Energy Officer Robert Leslie can help tenants who have questions over eligibility for any of the SSE schemes. Robert can be contacted on 875253 ext 404, or by email on robert.leslie@ohal.org.uk