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What can consumers do to get the best rates on the market? by [Sean Burke](#)

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The recession years taught British consumers many valuable lessons, including the importance of carrying out research and shopping around before making large purchases or major financial decisions that will affect them and their households for the long term. When it comes to choosing suppliers for home utilities such as electricity and gas, it's particularly important to evaluate the various options available before making your decision, and to ensure you check all the relevant details.

Energy companies provide essential services to homes and businesses, which is why they are so strictly regulated in the UK by organisations such as Ofgem, which work in partnership with the government to keep prices as low as possible. The high level of competition within the UK's energy industry is also of benefit to consumers, who now have a number of options available. That's not to say that all energy companies offer similar deals however, as there can be significant differences that make certain providers well suited for some households and prohibitively expensive for others.

If you're thinking of switching your energy provider and want to make sure you're getting the best deal available, using internet resources such as price comparison websites can be a useful starting point, as you'll be able to compare different electricity and gas tariffs offered by major suppliers side by side. These websites do not always display details of special offers or discounts though, and are often limited in displaying only standard tariffs rather than more specialised options. For this, you will need to visit the energy provider's own website, where you'll find all the information you need to help you make your decision.

It's important to read the terms and conditions of energy tariffs when making your selection too, and to avoid being too swayed by promotions that may be misleading, or sound too good to be true. If an energy tariff offers a particularly low rate, you should take a sceptical approach and discover why this is the case - there may be a longer contractual period involved or limitations that would make the tariff unsuitable for some types of properties, for example.

If you're concerned about the changing energy markets making the cost of electricity and gas more expensive in the future, one popular option that offers a degree of financial security is fixed rate tariffs. Asking your provider about these fixed tariffs when you switch gas and electricity could help you save even more.

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Sean Burke writes for a digital marketing agency. This article has been commissioned by a client of said agency. This article is not designed to promote, but should be considered professional content.

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