

Our commitment to providing great customer service

Our code of practice information guide



Powering your life

We're the people who manage the electricity network that powers everyday life for more than 8 million people across 3.9 million homes and businesses in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

Put simply, we make sure the electricity you buy from your chosen energy supplier gets to you safely, whenever you need it. And, if your power ever gets interrupted, for whatever reason, be it severe weather or emergency maintenance, we'll be there to fix it 24/7, 365 days a year.

Delivering safe, reliable electricity is at the heart of what we do and we're proud to play an essential role in powering everyday life for the customers, homes, businesses and economies we serve.

In an evolving energy industry, we also have a key role in creating and managing future energy systems that increasingly interact with our customers and smart and low carbon technologies.



8 million customers



3.9 million homes and businesses powered



2,700 employees



64,000+ substations

That's why we're innovating and investing today so we're ready for the demands of tomorrow and supporting the creation of a greener energy future.

ALWAYS INFORMED



WE'LL KEEP OUR CUSTOMERS INFORMED

ALWAYS VALUED



WE'LL PROVIDE OUR CUSTOMERS WITH A PERSONAL SERVICE

ALWAYS TRUSTED



WE'LL KEEP OUR PROMISES TO OUR CUSTOMERS

ALWAYS CARING



WE'LL HELP OUR CUSTOMERS TO UNDERSTAND

We're committed to delivering great service for our customers and our code of practice outlines how we will do that.

In this guide you'll find details about:

- our Priority Services Membership and how to join, and
- how to be prepared for a power cut,
- what you can expect if we need to visit your home,
- how to get in touch with us or let us know how we can improve our services for you.





Your needs are
always at the heart of
what we do...

...our membership allows easier and quicker access to some great services.

Making you our priority

Whatever extra needs you have, Priority Services Membership provides support and advice on the energy in your home. Most importantly, if there's a power cut, we'll make sure you're prepared, and help you carry on with your daily life. We also offer useful information on saving money and making the most of your energy supply.

All our services are free and confidential. With us, you really are our priority.

Becoming a Priority Services Member means we're able to:

- give you a direct-dial number to use, so you always get straight through to the Priority Services team whenever you need us: **0800 169 2996**
- get in touch in the best way for you i.e. telephone, email or text
- talk to you about your individual needs, such as our 'knock and wait' service if you need a little more time to get to the door.

And if the power goes off, members may be able to access additional services and benefits, if required, such as:

- regular updates to keep you as informed as possible
- a home visit from our partner, the British Red Cross, to provide one to one support and assistance
- hot meals and/or drinks provision
- phone charging facilities
- alternative accommodation, if staying at home is unsafe.

What we need from you

To help us give you the best support, please make sure we have your latest up-to-date details. We can do much more for you when

we know what extra help you – or those you care for – might need. Also, it's important we have your phone number, so we can call and text to make sure you're safe and keep you updated.

You can join our Priority Services Membership if you:

- rely on electricity for medical reasons
- have a chronic or serious illness
- have a mental health condition
- have limited mobility
- are of pensionable age
- have children aged five or below
- need help to communicate with us
- need extra support for a short time.

Proactive communication during unplanned power cuts

We will contact you to let you know the time at which the power is likely to be back on and of any help we may be able to provide. We do this by text message, if we have a mobile phone number for you, or by calling you, if we only have a landline number for you, regardless of the time of day or night.

If you would like to receive text messages from us, so that we do not need to call you during the night, please let us know your mobile phone number either by calling our dedicated Priority Services Membership team on **0800 169 2996** or by e-mailing us at priorityservices@northernpowergrid.com.

As part of the membership, Northern Powergrid will contact you every two years to ensure we have all your correct details.

To find out more about how Northern Powergrid use your data, visit: [northernpowergrid.com/privacy-policy](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/privacy-policy)

How to join our Priority Services Membership


- Register online or download a printable application form at northernpowergrid.com/priority
- Writing to our Priority Services Membership Team
Manor House, Station Road, Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring, DH4 7LA.
- Call us on **0800 169 2996**.
- Text relay: dial prefix **18001** then our number **0800 169 2996**.
- Textphone **0800 028 9507**. You will be asked your name, address and phone number and to explain your needs (for example, the type of medical equipment you use, your kidney dialysis routine, if you have a stairlift etc).
- For our customers unable to communicate in English – if English isn't your first language, call our Priority Services line on **0800 169 2996** and we can arrange an interpreter to support you.
- Ask an appropriate person to contact us on your behalf.
- Contact your supplier, who will pass your details on to us. Your supplier will also register you and be able to offer additional services through their own Priority Services Register. You can find your supplier's phone number on your latest electricity bill or you can use our quick and easy online tool.





Helping you be prepared


If we have informed you about a planned power cut, or you think severe weather could impact your electricity supply, please take the following steps, outlined below.


Connect with us on social media for regular updates and advice. We're available 24/7 on Facebook and Twitter (@NorthPowergrid) to support you.


 Bookmark Northern Powergrid's online power cut map on your mobile.


 Keep a torch handy – they are much safer than candles.

 Make sure you and any vulnerable relatives, or neighbours, have a charged mobile phone with important numbers stored in it, in case you need help.


 Only use other forms of heating or lighting if you can do so safely.


 Make sure you have a good supply of warm clothing and a blanket close to hand.

 Fill a vacuum flask with a warm drink and fill a hot water bottle.

 Make sure your cupboards are stocked with food and drink that do not need electricity to be heated or prepared.

 Have a battery-powered radio tuned into a local radio station.

 Try to avoid using your stairlift (if you have one).

 Regularly back up work on your computer.

If there is a power cut

If your trip switch has not cut off the power and you can find no other reason for your power being off, then there may be a problem with the electricity supply in your area.

Here are some simple steps to take to help you.

- **Report your power cut.** If you have a mobile phone/devices visit our online power cut map (northernpowergrid.com) to report your power cut and see what we're doing to restore your power. You can also follow and direct message us on Facebook or **Twitter @Northpowergrid**, or call us on **105**
- Switch off all electrical appliances for safety reasons.
- Leave a light switched on so you will know when your power comes back on.
- Check that vulnerable neighbours are safe and well.
- If the weather is cold outside, keep warm by wrapping up with extra layers and staying in one room.



Visiting your home

We follow a strict code of practice and any visit to your home will either be from a member of our team, or from an appointed contractor working on our behalf.

- All our colleagues and contractors are fully trained and will show an identity card displaying the name of their company, their own name, their reference number and a colour photograph.*
- Where possible, all vehicles used for visits to customers' homes will carry our own (or our contractor's) logo.
- Where possible, all our colleagues will wear clothing with our company logo on it.
- All our colleagues and contractors will be able to tell you our emergency phone number as well as the number to call if you have a general enquiry.
- All our colleagues and contractors will be able to explain what they are there to do and be appropriately qualified and fully trained to do it.
- They will be calm and polite, will give clear and accurate explanations and will respect your home at all times.

*We take all necessary steps to make sure that our colleagues return their ID cards when they expire or they leave the company.

We make sure that all our colleagues and contractors are familiar with this code of practice and keep to it at all times. If you have any doubts about whether a caller is genuine, do not let them into your home and call us on 105 to speak with a member of our team for advice.

Appointments

- You can make a morning or afternoon appointment for us to visit, or you can ask us to visit within a two-hour time slot during the normal working week.
- Most appointments we make are ones you have asked for. However, from time to time we may need to visit your home to inspect or maintain our equipment.

Passwords

To help you feel safe and comfortable when we visit your home, you can ask us to use a password when we visit you.

If you would like to set up a password with us, please call us on **0800 169 2996**.



We'd love to hear from you

At Northern Powergrid, customer safety and satisfaction are our main priorities. We are only satisfied when you are.

All of our colleagues and contractors are committed to:

- putting safety first
- respecting you, your time and your property
- doing a really good job
- being there when you need us, and
- caring for our local environment.

If you feel you've received a high standard of service, we'd love to hear about it so we can share it with our colleagues who work every day to power your life. Equally, if you have suggestions on how we can further improve our services, we'd welcome your feedback. If you do wish to raise a complaint, here are some steps outlining what to do and how your complaint will be responded to.

Step 1 – Let us know

You can share feedback or raise a complaint in a number of different ways – in person at our offices, over the phone, by email or by letter.

Please let us know which of these methods you would prefer us to use when we respond.

When contacting us, please provide your full name, address, postcode, contact phone number, email address and as much detail about your complaint as possible.



In person at one of our offices

Call free on 0800 781 8848 or visit [northernpowergrid.com/contact-us](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/contact-us) to find our office nearest to you.



By phone

Call us on freephone **0800 781 8848**



By email – email us at

complaints@northernpowergrid.com



By letter

write to our Customer Care Operations Manager and send Freepost (no stamp required) to: **RSXE-RCZX-XKBL Northern Powergrid, Manor House, Station Road, Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring DH4 7LA**

Step 2 – Working with you to resolve your complaint

We will try at all times to resolve your complaint as quickly and efficiently as possible. If we receive your complaint before 4pm on a normal working day, we will attempt to resolve it by the end of the next working day.

In order to resolve the issue, the following remedies considered may include: (i) an apology; (ii) an explanation; (iii) the taking by us of appropriate remedial action; and (iv) the award of compensation in appropriate circumstances.

If your complaint cannot be resolved within this timescale, we will aim to provide you with a more detailed response within 10 working days explaining how we propose to resolve the issue.

If you tell us that you are not happy with our response, your complaint will be referred to an appropriate senior manager. The senior manager will review your complaint and respond within 10 working days.

If you tell us that you are not satisfied with the senior manager's response, a member of our executive team will examine your complaint and the way in which it was handled. They will then write to you within 10 working days with their findings, and our final response.

Step 3 – Independent review by the Energy Ombudsman

If we are unable to resolve your complaint, and you are unhappy with the response of a member of our executive team, you may be able to refer your complaint to the Energy Ombudsman if:

- you are a domestic customer, which means you are supplied or are requiring to be supplied with electricity at domestic premises, and you are making a complaint in that capacity in respect of services we have provided; or
- you are a micro business customer, which means you meet the following criteria, and you are making a complaint in that capacity in respect of services we have provided:
 - you are supplied, or are requiring to be supplied, with electricity at a non-domestic premises; and

- your annual consumption is no more than 100,000kWh; or
- you have fewer than 10 employees (or their full-time equivalent); and
- your annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed two million Euros (around £1.7 million).

The Energy Ombudsman is a free and completely independent dispute resolution service.

If the Ombudsman supports your complaint one or more of the following remedies may be appropriate: (i) an apology; (ii) an explanation; (iii) the taking by us of appropriate remedial action; and (iv) the award of compensation in appropriate circumstances.

Any outcome proposed by the Ombudsman is binding upon us (if you accept it) but not upon you. If you accept the Ombudsman's decision, we will carry out the specified remedy within 28 days.

Contact details for the Energy Ombudsman are listed below:

Ombudsman Services: Energy

PO Box 966
Warrington, WA4 9DF

Telephone: 0330 440 1624

Email: enquiry@ombudsman-services.org

Additional help and advice

You can get help, advice and information from the following organisations:

Age UK
(previously known as Age Concern and Help the Aged)

Tavis House
1-6 Tavistock Square
London, WC1H 9NA

Free Helpline: 0800 169 8787
ageuk.org.uk
Email: info@ageuk.org.uk

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
105 Judd Street
London, WC1H 9NE

Helpline: 0303 123 9999
www.rnib.org.uk
Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss
(previously known as Royal Institute for Deaf People (RNID))
19-23 Featherstone Street
London, EC1Y 8SL

Free Helpline: 0808 808 0123
Free Textphone: 0808 808 9000
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk
Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us/
Adviceline (England): 0800 144 8848

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.org
0800 808 4000

The National Debtline contact centre is open Monday – Friday from 9am until 8pm, and Saturday 9.30am – 1pm.

National Energy Action (NEA)

www.nea.org.uk

Details of our arrangements for visiting customers' premises
www.northernpowergrid.com/asset/0/document/6047.pdf

and of our priority services
www.northernpowergrid.com/asset/1/document/5388.pdf
can be found on our website.



Useful contacts

Customers with hearing or speech impairment

We provide linked up services for people who, due to a disability, find communicating via telephone difficult.

Minicom enables customers to communicate via a keyboard attached to their phone.

Minicom/Textphone

0800 028 9507

Lines open: 24/7

Text Relay is a service which uses an intermediary to relay text conversations.

Text Relay – Prefix 18001 then

0800 169 2996

Lines open: 24/7

Contact us using British Sign Language through our InterpretersLive! service on our website.

www.northernpowergrid.com/

BSL-interpreter

Lines open: 24/7

For our customers unable to communicate in English

If English isn't your first language, call our Priority Services line on **0800 169 2996** and we can arrange an interpreter to support you.

**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**

