

## FAQ

# COVID-19

### Will my meter be read?

Please appreciate that Covid-19 has significantly impacted physical routine meter read collection. Enabling engineers to visit premises without a timed appointment requires the necessary safety protocols. We schedule meter readings on a month by month basis, factoring in businesses open for trading and government guidelines. We're prioritising our meter readers to visit sites where no read has been obtained for 12 months or more. We're accepting requests for meter read visits, but extended lead times are likely while service providers respond to the pandemic.

We're happy to accept readings from you. Please submit these:

- Online at [ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/submit-meter-reading](https://ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/submit-meter-reading) or our [Business Energy Centre](#)
- Via meterline on **0345 071 9894**
- By calling the meter reader directly, if they've left you a card or message
- Via email to [b2b.meter.readings@sse.com](mailto:b2b.meter.readings@sse.com) – you'll need to include the meter point number (MPAN/MPRN) and your account number otherwise we cannot record it

If you're unsure which figures to give us, you can take a photo and send it to us.

### Will site works and meter maintenance go ahead?

We continue to accept new requests for all job types, including meter reads and investigation visits. Please get in touch with your account manager or our service help desk on **0345 7252 526** to discuss your initial requirements. National and local lockdowns are likely to affect coverage and may prevent bookings being progressed, and the situation is likely to continue to change in the months ahead.

As cases of coronavirus have increased so too have government restrictions throughout the UK. Safety is our priority, and we are ensuring that all our metering work adheres to the latest government guidelines. This has meant we've not been able to complete work as quickly as we'd like, and we've had to reschedule work the latest restrictions have required us to. Please note that lead times may be extended while we work through the backlog of appointments and our service providers expand capabilities.

We'll be working at the same pace as our service providers regarding availability to restore regional coverage and service levels for all work types. Our service providers' engineer availability remains limited, and they will be subject to a staggered return to work following lockdown. Engineers can visit businesses closed due to lockdown if there's site access, but complying with Covid-19 safety protocols means we can complete fewer jobs per day. Some of our service providers also have limited geographic coverage.

We understand that you want metering work completed as soon as possible. We're working closely with service providers to maximise capacity, and we'll always attempt to book the first available slot for you. However, obtaining an appointment could take longer, and lead times are likely to be affected across the energy industry and the UK.

## Gas siteworks

Our gas siteworks service has reopened and we're accepting new requests. Covid-19 restrictions may affect lead times or ability to book outright. Please get in touch with our gas siteworks team at [bes.gassiteworks@sse.com](mailto:bes.gassiteworks@sse.com) or call **0345 0701 265**.

## SMETS2 smart meters

We're installing electric and gas SMETS2 smart meters with our metering partner, SMS. If you'd like to find out more, please visit [ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/smart-metering](https://ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/smart-metering). You can find out more about smart meters and how you can unlock energy and cost savings as well as easy, accurate billing, removing the need for manual readings.

## Electric new connections

We're accepting new requests for electricity supply connections. However, please note that lead times are extended. If you're an existing customer, please [get in touch](#) with your account manager or usual sales team to discuss your initial requirements. If you're a new customer, please contact our electric new connections team at [mbs.new.connections.south@sse.com](mailto:mbs.new.connections.south@sse.com) or call **0345 0709 385**. You'll need to complete [new supply application forms](#) and you can [find out more online](#).

## Half-hourly metered supplies

We're working through the backlog of appointments and any technical issues as a result of the lockdown, so we're not currently accepting new requests for half-hourly upgrades. As soon as we can accept new requests, we'll let you know.

## Site access – what happens when we visit your premises

You can find out about our representatives, checking the caller's identity and other information at [ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/help-and-advice/site-access](https://ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/help-and-advice/site-access).

## What should I do if there's a power cut or gas leak?

### Electric emergencies

In the first instance please call your local [Distribution Network Operator](#) on **105**. The DNO will advise if there is a local power cut and investigate if there is a supply issue.

### Gas emergencies

In the first instance please call the gas emergency service on **0800 111 999**. The gas network will attend within an hour if a gas escape isn't made safe –for example gas is still leaking or cannot be made safe. The network will attend within four hours if a gas leak has been controlled and made safe. Depending on the meter at your site, the network engineer will either exchange the meter at the time, or advise you to contact us to arrange an exchange. If the engineer advises you to contact us, they'll make the meter safe and ensure any gas leak is stopped before leaving.

### Cut off due to a meter fault?

If you need assistance in restoring your electricity or gas supply due to a meter fault, please get in touch with our customer services team on **0345 725 2526**. Your call will be directed to the right team to help restore your supply.

## Does SSE Energy Solutions expect to maintain Service Levels?

Maintaining our operations and supporting our customers is very important for us, and we've taken a number of steps to ensure we continue to deliver for you. These include enabling homeworking for employees wherever possible. As a large operational business, safety is our number one priority –so for now most of our colleagues across England, Scotland and Wales will continue to work remotely. For the limited number of our colleagues who need to be present in our offices we have, in line with UK Government guidance, put in place social distancing measures as well as taken extra steps to make sites safe, clean and secure so we can continue to operate with minimal disruption.

We continue to answer customer queries, take payments and process meter readings over the phone. Please bear with us at busy periods when you may experience longer waiting times than usual. Where possible, you can use our online facilities (detailed below). Customers with a Billing Account Manager can continue to communicate by email where required.

Currently our turnaround times are in line with our normal service level. The situation is subject to change, so we have plans in place in case we need to prioritise certain services in future. We'll provide further updates on any developments.

We have in place rigorous safety measures across all sites. You can read more about the steps we are taking in our [Covid-19 Risk Assessment here](#).

## What services can I access online?

You can carry out everyday account management and access useful information via our online platforms.

In our Business Energy Centre [ssebusiness.co.uk](https://ssebusiness.co.uk) you can:

- View bills
- Submit meter readings
- Request e-billing (instead of paper invoices)
- Run billing reports (to obtain information such as unit rates, usage and breakdown of the bill)

If you need log-in details, please [register here](#) or contact your account manager.

On our website [ssebusinessenergy.co.uk](https://ssebusinessenergy.co.uk) you can:

- [Obtain energy quotes](#)
- [Sign a contract](#)
- [Obtain terms and conditions](#)
- [View rates](#)
- [Access direct debit forms](#)
- [Log a change of tenancy](#)
- [Find out how to pay a bill](#)
- [Get in touch using contact us forms](#)

For energy trading you can use our online platform Foresight [foresightssebusinessenergy.co.uk](https://foresightssebusinessenergy.co.uk).

## What support is available for businesses experiencing payment problems? Will customers still be subject to late payment charges?

We're currently offering a short-term payment option to all customers. This payment plan will enable you to spread the cost of any current arrears over 12 weekly repayments, with payment in full of all future invoices. If you'd like to benefit from this offer, please email us at [businesspayments@sse.com](mailto:businesspayments@sse.com) and one of the team will reply to acknowledge your request and clarify the payment amounts expected from you. Or call us on **0345 073 7999** to discuss payment issues.

As government guidance changes for different sectors and regions, it's likely that some businesses will be open fully, some will adapt their operations or business models and some will stay closed for a longer period – so please keep us informed about your situation.

We'd encourage you to turn off all non-essential electricity and gas appliances to minimise your demand – and to send us frequent meter readings so that we can provide you with accurate billing. Please use our [Business Energy Centre](#) or our dedicated [Meterline](#) to submit these readings. Please provide us with an accurate meter reading now which we'll hold on record, and use to help pro rata an estimate in the event that we don't use an actual reading for billing due to bill cycles. We advise you to submit meter readings now and every month until the government lifts restrictions fully.

We also offer direct debit as our standard payment option. Direct debit reduces the risk of getting into debt, as the amount owed is paid off automatically at the end of each billing period, removing any reason for late payment. If businesses cancel direct debits and build up overdue bills, that can affect their credit rating. There's more information on our website about [how to pay a bill](#).

## How much notice does SSE Energy Solutions require of any site closures?

If your business is closed, either temporarily or permanently, please make sure that all non-essential electricity and gas equipment is turned off. Customers should [notify us of any site closures and/or anticipated variations in energy consumption](#) as soon as possible – in accordance with their applicable contract terms. If there's no usage (with nothing such as security lighting using power) we can apply VAT at the lower rate of 5%. Please [submit meter readings](#). SME customers also need to make us aware of absolute zero consumption so that bills reflect the lower VAT rate.

We provide an online analytical platform free of charge within all our energy supply contracts called Clarity. This will enable you to monitor consumption at your sites to ensure it's as low as possible over these quieter times. If you'd like help logging on to the platform please get in touch with [clarity.support@sse.com](mailto:clarity.support@sse.com).

## How can I receive correspondence from SSE Energy Solutions if I cannot access my normal place of work?

If your site is shut or you are working from home, please make sure your billing address is up to date so you receive important post from us. You can do this at [ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/contact-us](https://ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/contact-us) – under Category, please select SME billing query on the dropdown menu, then Billing address amendments – or via your account manager. Please tell us whether the change of billing address is temporary or permanent.

You can also register for e-billing via our Business Energy Centre: [ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/my-account](https://ssebusinessenergy.co.uk/my-account)

## What extra support is available for businesses, from the government for example?

The UK Government has issued guidance about extra support available to businesses including SMEs and those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors – please see [gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support).

Business Debtline provides free debt advice to small businesses and people who are self-employed. Their services are available over the phone, through their website and via webchat. To understand your options, go to [businessdebtline.org/EW/factsheets/Pages/coronavirus/advice-andhelp.aspx](https://businessdebtline.org/EW/factsheets/Pages/coronavirus/advice-andhelp.aspx).

HMRC announced that all UK businesses could defer VAT return payments that were due to be paid to HMRC between 20 March and 30 June 2020. This related only to payments due to be made to HMRC and did not affect VAT charged between suppliers and customers. You will not have seen any changes to our bills as a result of this announcement, and VAT was charged as normal during this period. More information is available on HMRC's website: [gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs)

## Do I still need to renew my energy contract?

Renewing your contract before it expires means that you'll avoid paying **out of contract rates** which are likely to be higher than our contract prices. If you don't receive a renewal notice – because your site is shut or you are working from home, for example – you can look for your contract end date on a previous bill.

## Will SSE Energy Solutions still be able to provide prices and accept new business?

Our sales team is ready to help you – please get in touch with your account manager or email [direct.sales.cardiff@sse.com](mailto:direct.sales.cardiff@sse.com), call **0800 389 4466** or visit [quote.ssebusinessenergy.co.uk](https://quote.ssebusinessenergy.co.uk) (online quoting is available for micro business and small and medium enterprise customers only).

To make sure we can continue to produce quotes for new business, register contracts and so on, we've set up our Contract Administrators and Quote Production teams for remote working. We're accepting new business and will continue to risk assess applications, including conducting credit checks.

As always, prices are subject to availability and we reserve the right to change them at any time. We'll let you know in the event that we need to limit how far out we offer prices, or if we need to prioritise certain contracts. Brokers, please check our price book matrices email – normally sent on Thursday – for updates.

Please note that our standard SLAs and turnaround times apply as follows:

- New quote: within 5 days, though we aim to provide prices sooner. This is for both Fixed and Flexible quotations.
- Lock-in: within 5 days for matrix prices or 24 hours for bespoke prices.
- Registration: within 21 days for electricity and gas.

## How will coronavirus disruption impact on volume tolerance levels in line with contract, flexible purchasing and so on?

SSE Energy Solutions considers there could be an impact on volume tolerances for some customers – however, at this point it is not possible to know the extent of this and implication for each customer. We request that customers review their contract terms and continue to comply with obligations around notification of any change in volume tolerance for which we will review and process accordingly.

Our reforecast service is available to all flexible contract customers. If you wish to reforecast your capacity, or have specific questions about your flexible contract, please email [flex.ops@sse.com](mailto:flex.ops@sse.com).

Our EPMI trading team has a resilience plan to maintain trading and customer purchasing. We'd ask you to place orders to trade via email.