

# A handy guide to making the switch to **Natural Gas**



**Reducing carbon emissions  
today and into the future.**

taking natural gas further  
**firinus**  
energy



# **This booklet contains everything you need to know about switching to natural gas.**

**If you would like to register your interest to switch to natural gas, call our local team on 0330 024 9000 or visit [www.firmusenergy.co.uk](http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk) and we will organise for one of our energy advisors to come and see you.**

**Reducing carbon emissions today and into the future.**



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# Enjoy the benefits of natural gas



## Constant Hot Water

Hot water never runs out with natural gas. Enjoy fantastic showers with a new high efficiency combination boiler and no more waiting around for the water to heat up.



## Instant Heat

"My house heats up so quickly and is lovely and cosy in minutes" - Anne Crawford, Ballyclare.



## Interest Free Credit

You can spread the initial cost of your conversion with monthly payments arranged by various installers with no deposit required.



## New High Efficiency Condensing Boiler

New 'A' rated natural gas condensing boilers are over 90% efficient and are fitted in all upgrades. This compares to an efficiency of around 70% for an old oil boiler over 15 years old.



## New Smart Controls

When you upgrade to natural gas you get new modern controls so you can adjust the house and room temperature to your own personal comfort level. Lots of people are now opting for smart controls which allows you to turn on/off your heating when you are out and about.



## Free Meter Connection

A free gas meter connection to the firmus energy network is currently available to all new customers within 30 meters of the pipeline.



## More space in your home and garden

Natural gas boilers can help save space in your home, removing the need for a hot water cylinder in your hot-press, a cold water storage tank in the attic, you can even get rid of the oil tank outside.



## Controllable Cooking

Cooking with natural gas provides quick and easy temperature control, which is why most chefs choose to cook with natural gas.



## No Re-ordering

Natural gas is delivered via an underground pipe straight to your home, which means you will never have to arrange deliveries.



## Quick Installation

Most firmus energy Gas Safe Registered Installers can carry out a conversion from oil to natural gas within 1-2 days. Sometimes they can even finish the job on the same day!



## Pay As You Go (PAYG)

A PAYG smart card and meter can be installed helping you spread the costs.



## Environmentally Friendly

Natural gas is 30% cleaner than oil so is kinder to the environment and also reduces boiler maintenance costs.



## Heating System Detox

Great News! Most existing radiators and pipework can be reused. Installers will flush out your system to remove any sludge which caused cold spots.



## Safety

All natural gas installations are carried out by Gas Safe Registered Installers. There are over 230,000 connections to the natural gas network in Northern Ireland including homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and public buildings so rest assured you are in safe hands.



## Natural Gas Prices

In Northern Ireland natural gas prices are among the lowest in Europe.



## Security

Natural gas is piped underground with brand new pipes so there is no risk of fuel theft.



**Instant Heat**



**Constant Hot Water**



**Smart Controls**



**Powerful Showers**



**High Efficiency Boiler**



**Controllable Cooking**





# What to expect from your natural gas central heating system

**With a new natural gas central heating system, you get a high efficiency boiler and new temperature controls. First your natural gas Installer will flush out your home's existing central heating system to further increase efficiency.**

## System Flush

As part of your oil conversion, your heating system will be flushed out. This helps to remove the build up of dirt and sludge from the old central heating system before the new natural gas boiler is fitted.



In addition to the flush out a magnetic filter will be fitted to your central heating system. The filter helps to remove sludge deposits which could impair the efficiency of your central heating system. It ensures that you can get the best value for money from your new natural gas heating system.





# New Natural Gas Condensing Boilers

New SEDBUK 'A' natural gas condensing boilers have rated efficiencies of 90% or more meaning that they use less fuel, resulting in lower carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and running costs.<sup>1</sup> By replacing an old G-rated oil boiler with a new 'A' rated natural gas condensing boiler, with a full set of heating controls, could save you around 25% in running costs and remove over one tonne of carbon dioxide a year from the atmosphere. Helping the environment.\*



There are two types of condensing boiler available:

## Combination boiler (combi)

- Doesn't require a hot water cylinder in hot press or cold water tank in the roof space.
- Allows you to have independent hot water and heating.
- Provides both your hot water and your radiator heat.
- Quick and easy installation.
- Wall-mounted (usually in the hot press), so saves space.
- Only heats the water you need.
- Will allow you to have a powerful shower.
- Must have sufficient mains water pressure.

## System boiler

- You still need a hot water cylinder and cold water storage tank.
- Your heating and hot water are independently

## Combination Boiler and System Boiler dimensions:

Height	Width	Depth
700mm	395mm	278mm

<sup>1</sup> A new gas boiler is over 90% efficient compared to 70% for an old oil boiler over 15 years old. An operational improvement in efficiency of up to 20% represents an actual fuel saving of more than 25%. Source: SEAI.



## New temperature controls

An appropriate set of heating controls makes it easy to keep your home at a comfortable temperature. They'll help you to use less fuel and heat too – keeping your heating bills and carbon dioxide emissions down. The installer will include the installation of heating controls in your quotation. These will include:

- **Central heating programmer**

This controls the times at which the central heating and/or the hot water turns on or off. It also features additional control options including boost and override heating controls.



- **Thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's)**

These are placed on the radiators in rooms making it possible to control the temperature in the room. For instance in rooms which are not used regularly you can turn the heating down low to conserve energy.



- **Room thermostat**

Every house should have one room thermostat which is normally placed in the hall. It responds to the air temperature around it and controls the boiler operations. For example if the temperature is warm enough the thermostat sends a signal to the boiler to stop.



- **Smart Central Heating (optional)**

Smart controls allow you adjust the times at which the central heating turns on or off from anywhere. It also features additional control options including boost and override heating controls.





# Jobs that will be completed by Installer<sup>1</sup>

**When you convert from oil heating to a natural gas boiler, typical work will include:**

## **Gas pipework**

- New gas pipework installed from meter to boiler.

## **Pipework system and radiators drained and system flushed**

- All dirt and debris removed from system.
- Fill system with corrosion inhibitor to prolong lifespan.
- Magnetic filter fitted to add protection to system.

## **All redundant items removed and disposed of**

- Old oil boiler and flue.
- Oil tank.
- Hot water cylinder / cold water in roofspace (if applicable).

## **Heating system upgraded to current building control specs**

- Copper pipework altered to suit independent hot water and heating.
- Motorised valves supplied and fitted along with pipework alterations.
- Thermostatic valves fitted to radiators (TRV's).
- Room thermostat supplied and fitted.
- Central heating programmer / time clock supplied and fitted.

## **New high efficiency condensing Sedbuk A rated boiler installed**

- New flue installed – vertical/horizontal.
- Boiler connected to domestic hot water and heating system.
- Test and commission boiler and heating system.
- Check controls and balance radiators.
- Remove all air from system – bleed radiators.

## **Electrical works**

- Electrical connection to boiler, timeclock and room stat.
- Electrical cross bonding of pipework at meter.

<sup>1</sup> You will find a full list of local Gas Safe registered Installers by visiting [firmusenergy.co.uk](http://firmusenergy.co.uk) or calling 0330 024 9000 and we will send you a relevant list to your home address. You should confirm jobs to be completed by your chosen Installer prior to works commencing in your home.



# Natural gas appliances

Natural gas is the perfect way to heat your home and provide constant hot water but it has lots of other uses too. Here are a few gas appliances and their benefits.

## Natural gas fires

Cosy, clean and instant; a gas fire looks great whether you choose the traditional style with imitation coals or a modern fire with pebbles or stones.

Even if you don't plan on buying your gas appliances right now, you can install a valve, so you can have the appliance installed at a later date. Ask your installer for details and costs.





## Natural gas cookers

Cooking with natural gas can provide quick and easy temperature control, which is why most chefs choose to cook with natural gas. The newer ranges of natural gas cookers are extremely efficient, economical and versatile. Why not install a natural gas cooker and bring out your inner chef.







## Hot Showers

Hot water never runs out with natural gas. Enjoy fantastic showers with a new high efficiency condensing combination boiler and no more waiting around for the water to heat up.



## Natural gas tumble dryers

By switching to a natural gas tumble dryer you can not only save money on your running costs but you can also do your bit for the environment by reducing your carbon emissions. Many natural gas tumble dryers have an automatic shut-off sensor that stops tumbling as soon as the load is dry. So they're kinder to your clothes and your pocket.



## Natural gas BBQ

A natural gas BBQ can make summer dining easy. When you are not using your BBQ you can easily disconnect it from your natural gas connection and store away.

## Smart Controls

New smart controls on your phone allow you to adjust the times at which your central heating turns on or off, saving you both time and money. It also makes sure that you always arrive back to a cosy home.





# Steps to switching to natural gas

## 1. Energy Assessment by Energy Advisor

When you register your interest in upgrading to natural gas, your local firmus Energy Advisor will call out to your house to assess your energy requirements. To register your interest in upgrading to natural gas visit [www.firmusenergy.co.uk](http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk) or call 0330 024 9000.

## 2. Installation costs

Agree installation costs with your Gas Safe Registered Installer. You will find a full list of firmus energy registered installers for your local area by visiting [www.firmusenergy.co.uk](http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk) or call 0330 024 9000.

## 3. Sign the Gas Application Form (GAF)

You need to sign your gas application form. Contact your firmus energy advisor who will arrange a suitable date and time with you to get this form completed.

## 4. Choose your preferred supplier

Once you have made the decision that you would like to go ahead and install natural gas, you can then choose your preferred supplier. For further information contact firmus energy Customer Services on 0330 024 9000 or email [furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk](mailto:furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk).

## 5. Inform Building Control\*

Remember to notify Building Control, at your local council office, of your plans to switch to natural gas.

\*There is a small charge

## 6. Fitting your meter

Within three to four weeks of receipt of your gas application form, our contractor will contact you about fitting your meter, which will connect your home to the gas network. They will notify you three to four days in advance of the work commencing, although the work will take place outside your home, so you don't need to be there. Just leave the area clear for access.

If you've chosen a prepay meter, our contractor will leave a prepay card and information leaflet inside your meter box.

## 7. Contact your Gas Safe Registered Installer

Once your meter has been fitted contact your chosen Gas Safe Registered Installer to schedule a start date for the work inside your home. This work normally takes between one and two working days.

\*Certificate required on selling property.



# Choosing your meter box

## Surface mounted

This is the most commonly used meter box type. The back plate is screwed to the wall with the meter attached to it and the cover is then fitted over the top. An inspection door makes it easy for meter reading and provides access to the emergency control valve.

The overall dimensions are:  
Height: 495mm, Depth: 238mm,  
Width: 400mm.



## Multi Box

This meter box is normally mounted on the ground and then screwed to the external wall. The box is finished in brown to suit most traditional brick finishes. \*Not suitable for Prepay

The overall dimensions are:  
Height: 500mm, Depth: 270mm,  
Width: 370mm.



## Recessed

This box is designed to be built into the external leaf of conventional or timber framed houses with a similar wall thickness and cavity dimension. The box must not be punctured in any way and electrical bonding equipment must not enter or be attached to any pipes or components within the meter box.

The overall dimensions are:  
Height: 580mm, Overall depth: 210mm,  
Depth when installed: 70mm, Width: 410mm.



## Internal meter

All internal meters can only be used if the mains are low pressure.

All internal meters must be sited by a firmus energy engineer before these can be used.



\*Customers are required to have their own recessed meter box installed prior to meter installation.

**Please Note:** Meter boxes are subject to design changes to comply with gas industry standards. Once fitted the meter box forms part of the fabric of property. Repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of the property owner. Your firmus energy advisor will agree the gas meter location with you.



# Who installs your meter and where?

**Our construction contractor is responsible for installing the natural gas service and meter installation to your property.**

**They will undertake every stage of the service and meter installation process to exacting standards.**

## Minimum clearances

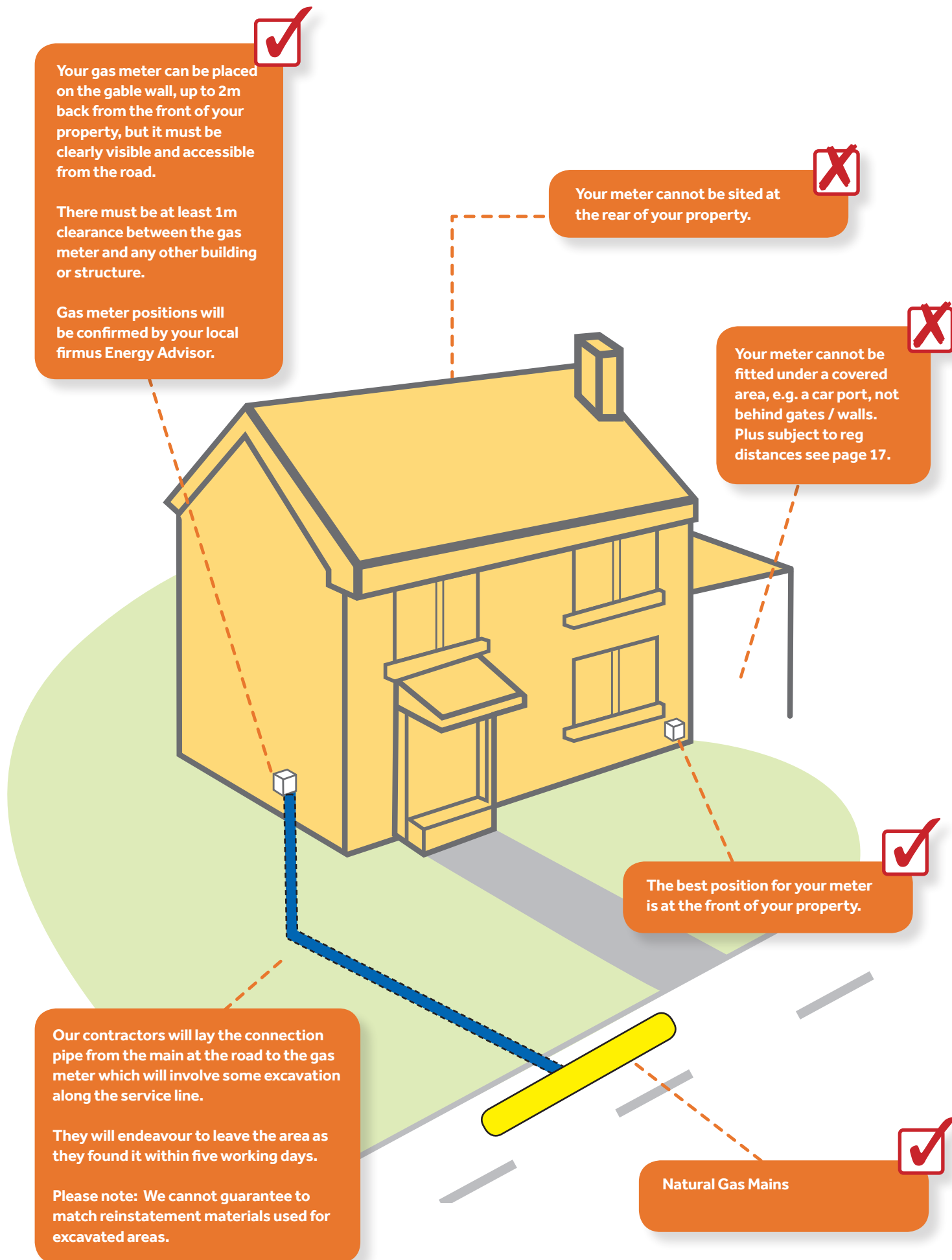
A gas meter needs to be placed in areas with minimum clearances from openings to a property, electrical appliances and cables as shown below.


	Minimum distance from openings to property (windows/doors/airbricks/vents)	Minimum distance from electrical cables	Minimum distance from electrical appliances (inc damaged cable/joints)
Medium Pressure Network	1m*	300mm	1550mm*
Low Pressure Network	300mm	300mm	300mm

\*As per British Standard 6400-2:2006

Areas throughout the firmus energy network are serviced by different pressures of natural gas. You can find out what pressure of gas is available to your property by contacting us on 0330 024 9000.






 Your gas meter can be placed on the gable wall, up to 2m back from the front of your property, but it must be clearly visible and accessible from the road.

There must be at least 1m clearance between the gas meter and any other building or structure.

Gas meter positions will be confirmed by your local firmus Energy Advisor.

 Your meter cannot be sited at the rear of your property.

 Your meter cannot be fitted under a covered area, e.g. a car port, not behind gates / walls. Plus subject to reg distances see page 17.

 The best position for your meter is at the front of your property.

Our contractors will lay the connection pipe from the main at the road to the gas meter which will involve some excavation along the service line.

They will endeavour to leave the area as they found it within five working days.

Please note: We cannot guarantee to match reinstatement materials used for excavated areas.

 Natural Gas Mains

# Reading your meter

Reading your meter is easy. Follow this simple guide to help you understand\*. Your meter lets you know how much natural gas you've used and helps your supplier provide accurate bills.

Your supplier will endeavour to read all meters at least once a year. We would ask that you ensure your meter can be accessed for this.

If they can't access your meter, you will receive an estimated bill. If you want to provide a read they may be able to reissue your bill.

## Meter reading

When reading your meter, read the digits from left to right ignoring the digits in the red box, or after the comma.



The meter reading in the example is: 00263.



# Why firmus energy?

## 1st class customer service

We pride ourselves on excellent customer service. Our customers come first in everything we do.

## We're local

We're a local company, with local staff based in Antrim. So we're always here when you need us.

## Our customers love us

97% of our customers would definitely recommend us to friends and family.<sup>1</sup>

*"Previously we had oil central heating which took a long time to heat water and always ran out at the worst times! Now, with natural gas through firmus energy we can have a hot shower instantly, and peace of mind that we have a constant supply of fuel."*  
**Julie Montgomery, domestic customer.**

*"firmus energy's customer services team were great to deal with and I liked the fact that they were based in Antrim. They were able to answer any questions I had and nothing seemed too much trouble. Even when they didn't have the answer to hand they called back when they said they would. firmus energy really do seem to have a great grasp on delivering great customer service. I was very impressed."*  
**Moirá Anderson, domestic customer.**



1. MPL Independent Survey Figures September 2018



# We like to help others!

**firmus energy is fully committed to giving back to local communities throughout Northern Ireland.**

- firmus energy has been awarded gold accreditation against the Investors in People Standard, demonstrating its commitment to high performance through good people management.
- firmus energy has been awarded the prestigious Silver CORE accreditation by Business in the Community. This award recognises the company's commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR), which we have built into the heart of our business.
- Each year firmus energy has a new Charity of the Year voted by our staff members. Over the last four years firmus energy has raised over £55,000 for these charities.



# Energy Efficiency Top Tips

Check out the energy saving tips below, courtesy of the Energy Saving Trust to see the simple things you can do today to help save energy around your home.

## 1. Draft-proof your home

## 2. Insulate your pipes

Insulating your hot water pipes is a quick and easy way to save energy. As well as reducing heat loss from your system, pipe lagging will also prevent pipes from getting too cold and bursting this winter.

## 3. Get a new boiler

Replace an old G-rated oil boiler with a new A-rated gas boiler with a full set of heating controls and you could save up to 25%. \*Source SEAI page 6.

## 4. Upgrading to smart controls

Smart controls can help manage your heating remotely, to help prevent wasting heat whilst your away from home.

## 5. Top-Up your hot water cylinder insulation

All new hot water cylinders have some insulation, however those with a hot water tank jacket under 25mm thick could benefit with top up insulation.

## 6. Top-up your loft insulation

The majority of homes have some loft insulation but many don't have the recommended 300mm depth.

## 6. Insulate your walls

Although wall insulation is a larger investment, and costs vary, it can result in a large saving.

## 7. Saving water at home

A dripping tap can waste more than 5,300 litres of water a year, so make sure your taps are properly turned off and change washers promptly when taps start to drip.

If you need to rinse utensils or wash vegetables, use cold water if possible and don't leave the tap running. Make sure that dishwashers and washing machines are full before you use them, and ensure you always use the most efficient water and energy settings.

## 8. Standby

Avoid having appliances on standby and turn off devices when not in use.

## 9. Lighting

Turning off your lights when you don't need them. LEDs are the most efficient lighting technology; they are available in most types of light fittings.

Source: [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)



# We are here to help you

## How to contact firmus energy



**By phone on -**  
**- 0330 024 9000 (Customer Services)**



**By letter to -**  
**- firmus energy,**  
**A4 & A5 Fergusons Way,**  
**Kilbegs Road, Antrim, BT41 4LZ**



**By e-mail on -**  
**- furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk**

To find out more about firmus energy visit:-

**[www.firmusenergy.co.uk](http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk)**

Follow us on     

## How to make a complaint

**We know that sometimes things can go wrong and we take complaints very seriously. If you are unhappy with any level of our service or wish to make a complaint, please contact us. firmus energy shall resolve any complaint as soon as possible.**

**If, for whatever reason, you remain unhappy, having given us a reasonable opportunity to resolve the complaint, then the matter can be referred to the Consumer Council NI (CCNI).**

**The Consumer Council can be contacted by the following means:**

- **Telephone – 0800 121 6022**
- **Textphone – 028 9025 1600**
- **E-mail – [complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk)**
- **Website – [www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)**
- **By audiotape or letter - Consumer Council NI, Floor 3 Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast BT2 8EN.**

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# Why our customers *Love* natural gas



*Anne from Ballyclare*

"Now I have instant heat, the house heats up so quickly, it's really nice to come back to a lovely warm home."



*Marion & Ken from Broughshane*

"We love the gas, it's instant heat and you can control it well. We now have hot water all the time."



*Denise from Antrim*

"Now I have rediscovered my inner chef, cooking with natural gas is so quick and controllable."

If you smell gas  
call emergency number

**0800 002 001**