

THINK GREEN

A guide for Tenants

Setting up utility bills,
understanding energy
supplements, saving
money and steps to
sustainability



unipol[®]

the home of student housing

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Paying your own Bills

Most Unipol shared or self contained properties do not include the cost of electricity, gas or water. You will have been made aware of this at the time of signing the agreement, but if you are unsure, check your tenancy agreement or contact Unipol.

This section gives clear instructions on how to set up new accounts for utilities in your property. You need to set up a new account with the suppliers and pay for your energy consumption directly to the company that supplies the property. If you fail to do this, your supply may be cut off.

Moving in

You are liable for the utility bills from the start date of the contract until the end date, even if you are not living in the property. Therefore, if you fail to set up your accounts, you could end up paying previous occupants bills or risk the energy supply being cut off.

How to avoid problems

- Try to put as many names on the bill as possible or insist that they record all the names of the household, even if just for reference.
- Talk to each other when you first move in to agree how you will make the payments
- Be careful about paying estimate bills as these are not an accurate reflection of what you have used. Give your supplier regular meter readings so that you only pay actual meter read bills.
- Each tenant should put money aside each week in preparation for the bills. Paying bills and rent should be amongst your highest financial priorities.
- Disputes can be incredibly upsetting and stressful for all involved. Prevent this from happening by setting up your account correctly as Unipol cannot get involved with tenant disagreements over paying bills

Setting up Water

To open an account in the names of the people on the contract in your property call:

- Yorkshire Water (Leeds) **0845 1 24 24 24**
- Severn Trent (Nottingham) **0845 7 500 500**

Most properties have a standard charge for water and the cost can be spread monthly. If you do have a metered supply your supplier will be able to tell you where to locate it and you will need to provide them with a reading.

Paying your own Bills

Setting up Electricity & Gas

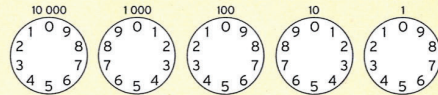
1. Locate the meter for gas and for electricity to get a numbered reading from it. Sometimes they are in the cellar, cupboard or under the kitchen sink or sometimes outside in a box.
 2. Each meter has a reference number which identifies that particular meter supply which usually starts with a few letters and then mainly numbers. Make a note of this as you may be asked for it.
 3. Record the results of your meter reading and the date
 4. Which company supplies the gas and electricity?
- Gas Meter Number Helpline **0870 608 15 24**
 For electricity - CE Electric helpline **0845 601 32 68**
5. Any letters addressed 'to the occupiers' can be opened as it may be from the suppliers and will make it easier to set up the new accounts.
 6. Shop around for the best deals and don't be swayed by representatives 'door knocking'. If you decide to change suppliers, make sure you settle your bill with the current supplier first as it will take around 25 days to change supplier.

Gas meter reading

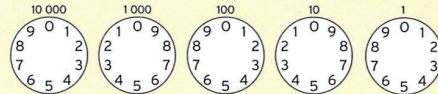
Your meter will have four or five white figures before the red one. Please enter the white figures in the box above from left to right.

Electricity meter reading

If the 9 is to the right of the 0, use this set of dials →



If the 9 is to the left of the 0, use this set of dials →



If your meter does not have dials, please enter your readings below.

Single rate meter

Single rate

Two rate meter

Low

Norm

Payment options to consider

- Decide upon monthly or quarterly bills - direct debit or paper bills
- Waiting until the bills comes and each writing a cheque to pay a share to the utility company
- One tenants pays the full amount and other tenants reimburse them for a share
- Set up a household bank account and direct debit an equal amount each month to spread the cost. Direct debit can be cheaper, but you will need to be organised and trust your housemates to pay in to shared account

How much will it cost me?

It is hard to know how much bills will cost as it depends on the two following things - the type of property and tenant behaviour. We recommend that you put aside £10.00 extra a week for bills as a very rough guide

Council Tax

If you are registered as a full time student you are not liable for Council Tax. If someone in your household is a non-student, you need to find out if they are liable. You can contact:

- Leeds City Council on **0113 222 4404** or visit www.leeds.gov.uk
- Nottingham City Council on **0115 915 5555** or visit www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Internet & phone

There are plenty of companies provided internet and phone packages. One thing to be aware of is that if 'cable' is not installed, it is unlikely that Unipol will give permission for it to be installed. In this case, a service via the landline is the option available.

In many Unipol developments, the internet is included in the price of the rent.

Moving out

- You must advise the supply companies that you are leaving and take an accurate meter reading on the day you move out.
- You will need to provide forwarding addresses so they can send you the final bill and close the account.
- If you do not inform the supplier you could end up continuing to be liable for the new occupants and suppliers have the ability to chase outstanding accounts.

Energy Supplements

Unipol operates a system of 'energy supplements' throughout our developments and in a small selection of our properties, mainly bedsits. Tenants pay the energy supplement to Unipol as an addition to rent payments.

The supplement may cover all the utilities or it may only cover one (for example: gas) and liability for the other utility bills still falls on the tenant, so you need to check your tenancy agreement to confirm this, or ring Unipol.

How do they work?

The definition of an energy supplement means it is an additional payment to Unipol for gas, electricity or water and is paid to Unipol at the same time as your rent payments - it does not mean the energy is "included."

What you pay

Energy supplements make it easy for Unipol to let rooms on an individual basis and it also means that the tenants do not have to worry about setting up accounts. The weekly energy supplement charges are based on the previous year's overall average usage. To confirm what your energy supplement is for and how much it is, please refer to your tenancy agreement.

Is it monitored?

Unipol read the meters in your property on a monthly basis and record how much is being used within the property. The readings are provided to the energy company and accurate bills are received.

You will receive a regular statement (twice during the year and at the end of the final term) telling you if you are over using or under using to give you a chance to alter your usage if required. At the end of the tenancy you may have to make an additional payment to cover the cost of the supply you have used, or alternatively you may receive a refund.

Heating

The heating of your accommodation, either by electricity or gas, is one of the highest costs. If you are not sure how to use it efficiently, please contact your Housing Management Officer.

The majority of our properties receive energy refunds at the end of the year as the weekly cost is based on a number of years experience of energy use in the building.

Steps to Sustainability

By making adjustments to everyday activities, over time we can make a difference to our impact on the environment.

Waste & Recycling

Recycling containers for inside the house are available for Unipol properties upon request. On our larger sites Unipol have provided recycling bins for paper, glass, plastic and tin cans.

Visit the recycling pages on www.leeds.gov.uk or www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk for information about;

- Bins collection days
- Recycling facilities in Leeds
- Composting
- Household waste sorting sites

We also encourage and provide information to our tenants to take part in the in any University campaigns at the close of tenancies. The aim is to reduce the impact of student changeover on the local community where students live, while reducing the amount of useful items going to landfill.

Climate change

Where possible;

- Low energy light fittings and light bulbs are fitted
- Double glazing has been fitted
- A - rated appliances are used
- Efficient condensing boilers and a thermostat and controllable radiators are fitted to reduce energy consumption
- An EPC certificate for your property of the building is available upon request.

Sustainable supplies

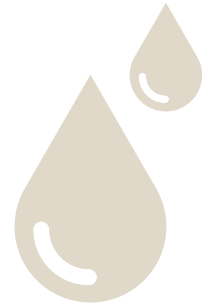
- When Unipol replaces furniture all wooden furniture is from sustainable sources where possible.
- We also fit good quality furniture that can be refurbished rather than requiring frequent replacement - for example; tired sofas are reupholstered to minimize landfill.
- Unipol recycles all energy saving light bulbs
- Old fridge freezer are given to local charities who refurbish them and give them a second life.

If you have any ideas about how Unipol and its tenants can work more sustainably, please contact the Tenancy Support Officer.

Being Responsible with Energy Usage

Saving Water

Saving water in your home is a very simple way for you to play your part in helping the environment. The less water used in the home, means the less water we need to abstract from our region's rivers, reservoirs and ground water sources. Whether it's doing just one thing differently in the bathroom or kitchen, your actions can really make a difference.



How to save water in the bathroom

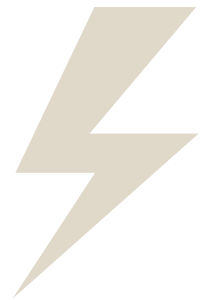
- Turning the tap off whilst brushing your teeth can save up to ten litres of water each time you brush.
- Save water and save energy by opting for a shower instead of a bath. 15,000 litres of water per year could be saved if you choose this quick refreshing way of bathing.
- A lot of toilets are fitted with a dual flush, so select the smaller flush whenever appropriate to reduce the amount of water used.

How to save water in the kitchen

- Only fill the kettle with the amount of water you need for a drink and this will also save you electricity and take a shorter time to boil.
- Make sure that every time you fill your washing machine it is fully loaded before you start it. Two half loads will use more water than one full load.
- If you are waiting for the tap to run hot, collect the water and use it on your plants.
- Instead of waiting for it to run freezing cold, collect drinking water in a jug and store it in the fridge for a cold drink.
- Cutting out one load of washing per week could save over 5,000 litres of water every year. Where we can, Unipol update washing machines over 5 years old to help with efficiency and energy usage.

Saving Electricity

- Don't leave electrical appliances on standby or chargers plugged in
- Many of us use the remote to switch off the TV or stereo, leaving the appliance running on standby. This actually means the appliance is still using up electricity and wastes a considerable amount of energy. By switching off at the main power button or unplugging chargers you could be saving both energy and money.
- Items left on standby use up to 85% of the energy they would use if fully switched on. An extra million tonnes of carbon will be released into the atmosphere through this power wastage.
- If you do need to use a tumble dryer, then ensure the clothes are as dry as possible after washing, eg, they have gone through a fast spin so that there is minimum excess water. This will reduce drying time considerably.



Lighting

- About 10-15% of the electricity bill is for lighting, so energy saving light bulbs can cut your costs considerably. Traditional bulbs waste a lot of energy by turning it into heat but energy saving bulbs work in the same way as fluorescent lights, the tubes coating glows brightly as an electric current passed through gas in the tube.
- Changing all the bulbs throughout your house could really cut your electricity costs.
- No matter what type of lighting you are using, always turn the lights off when you leave a room.



Saving Gas

Cooking

- Communal cooking - organize some flat meals together each week instead of all using the facilities separately
- Always use the right size of pan for your cooking ring and put a lid on it. This will help save energy as it will cook quicker.
- Use a microwave or a pressure cooker instead of the oven as they should cook food quicker. A steamer or segmented pan means you can cook several types of vegetables on one ring.
- Don't keep the oven door open for too long when it is in use. Switch off the oven sooner, as some dishes will cook while the oven is cooling.



Heating

- Use your central heating timer or thermostat to turn the heating on and off regularly
- Keep the property constantly warmed during cold months as it's cheaper to heat regularly rather than letting the property get very cold
- Keep your radiators clear. For example, do not put a large sofa in front of the radiator as it will absorb a lot of the heat.
- Close curtains at dusk during the winter as this will help stop heat escaping through the windows. Use letter box covers to help minimise draft.
- Keep your windows firmly closed to keep warmth in during the winter months

Useful Contacts

Yorkshire Water

0845 1 24 24 24 www.yorkshirewater.com

Severn Trent

0845 7 500 500 www.stwater.co.uk

National Grid

0800 111 999 (gas leaks) www.nationalgrid.com/UK

Gas Meter Number Helpline

0870 608 1524 (gas supplier)

CE Electric 0845 601 3268 (electricity supplier)

www.ce-electricuk.com

YEDL (Yorkshire)

0800 375 675 (loss of electricity)

Western Power Distribution (Nottingham)

0800 056 8090 www.westernpower.co.uk

Consumer Focus

020 7799 7900 (consumer rights) www.consumerfocus.org.uk

Leeds City Council

0113 222 4444 (council tax/waste/recycling) www.leeds.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council

0115 915 5555 www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Ecotricity

08000 302 302 www.ecotricity.co.uk

Good Energy

0845 601 1410 www.goodenergy.co.uk

Green Energy UK

0800 954 0675 www.greenenergy.uk.com

Record your Meter Readings

Moving in

Gas

Date of reading

Meter reading

Meter reference

Electricity

Date of reading

Meter reading

Meter reference

Yorkshire Water

(metered water only)

Date of reading

Meter reading

Meter reference

Moving out

Date of reading

Meter reading

Date of reading

Meter reading

Date of reading

Meter reading

