



**Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy**

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
Minister of State for Energy and Climate

**Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy**
1 Victoria Street
London
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23 December 2022

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter dated 7 December on behalf of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, regarding the supply of electricity and gas to care providers and disabled people this winter.

The Protected Sites List (PSL) ensures that during an electricity supply emergency, critical sites remain supplied with electricity. Care providers do not meet the criteria in section 5.2 and 5.3 of the Electricity Supply Emergency Code (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electricity-supply-emergency-code>).

Many care providers will not have discrete feeders (an electrical high voltage circuit, used solely to connect an individual site to a point of supply on the Network Operator's system). This means that keeping the site connected would involve keeping all other properties in the area also connected. The restrictive criteria is essential to ensure effective electricity demand reduction in a supply emergency. There are strict limits on the amount of demand and therefore number of sites that can be protected, to ensure the integrity of the electricity system is protected and minimise the time it will take to balance the electricity network. All NHS and care providers are required to have business continuity plans in place to support the continued safe provision of services to patients and care recipients. The PSL only applies to certain scenarios and does not give sites complete coverage for all possible events.

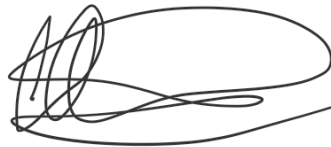
Customers who are vulnerable during a power cut should sign up for the Priority Services Register (<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register>). This enables network operators to tailor their services to support customers who may need extra help. However, this does not guarantee customers a power supply. Those who require continuous electricity supply for medical reasons should seek advice from their medical equipment provider and local health service provider.

My Department works closely with the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) to mitigate risks associated with the upcoming winter. The Government is delivering the Energy Bills Support Scheme, a £400 non-repayable grant to support all families with their energy bills. Also, the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) will save a typical household in Great Britain £900 this winter. Families with disabled children are also entitled to a one-off £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment.

The Government is currently reviewing the EPG and exploring the best ways to ensure that vulnerable high energy users, such as those with medical requirements, are not put at risk of having to pay more. The findings of the review will focus on identifying the most vulnerable non-domestic customers and how the government will continue to assist them with energy costs.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above the printed name.

THE RT HON GRAHAM STUART MP
Minister of State for Energy and Climate



Work and Pensions Committee

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Tom Pursglove MP
Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work
Department for Work and Pensions

Graham Stuart MP
Minister for Energy and Climate
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

From the Chair

7 December 2022

Dear Tom and Graham

I am writing on behalf of the Committee concerning the supply of electricity and gas to care providers and disabled people in the coming months, more specifically on the Electricity Supply Emergency Code (ESEC) which outlines the process of distribution of electricity if there were to be a shortage. The ESEC sets out protected sites, including hospitals which would have their electricity supply maintained in a shortage, but doesn't make any provision for care providers, or for disabled people who rely on electricity and gas for their own life-supporting equipment and to heat areas for people with health conditions who require additional warmth.

Given recent statements from the [Ofgem](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk) that 'there is a significant risk that gas shortages could occur during the winter 2022/23' and concerns around the electricity supply from the National Grid, would you please respond to the following questions:

1) Are there any plans to add care providers to the Electricity Supply Emergency Code, to guarantee protection in the event of power blackouts?

a) If not, what protection will be given to care providers, and the people they support, in the instance of energy blackouts this winter?

2) In what ways are Government departments working together to ensure consistent, and affordable energy supply to care providers and disabled people?

We would appreciate a response by Friday 6 January.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair