

Natural gas

Vulnerable Customers



CODE OF PRACTICE

BGE/NG/SSCOP/0319

Caring for our customers

Bord Gáis Energy is committed to treating all of our customers both fairly and equally and to providing special services for our customers with special needs.

That is why we have developed a confidential special services register for residential customers who would prefer to have some of our services adapted to suit their needs.

This code of practice sets out the services we offer to customers on our special services register.

Definition of “Vulnerable Customer”

In law, a “vulnerable customer” is defined as a person who is

- a. critically dependent on electrically powered equipment, which shall include but is not limited to life protecting devices, assistive technologies to support independent living and medical equipment, or
- b. particularly vulnerable to disconnection during winter months for reasons of advanced age or physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health.

Based on this definition, Bord Gáis Energy maintains and regularly reviews a special services register and a priority support register (electricity customers only).

Special services register

We offer a special services register for customers who are particularly vulnerable to disconnection during the winter months for the following reasons

- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Customers aged 66 years or over who live alone and/or live with minors or others aged 66 or over
- Blind or partially sighted
- Mobility difficulties
- Language difficulties
- Speech impaired
- Learning difficulties
- Mental Health issues
- Dexterity difficulties

We will take account of your specific needs and try to consider your individual requirements. We will forward details of customers who register with us to Gas Networks Ireland for inclusion in the industry register.

Please note that we may ask for proof of eligibility for inclusion on the register and this may include requesting medical information.

Our promise

- We will promote this code of practice so you can easily get a copy.
- We will train our staff to deliver the promises we make in this

code and will keep our training up to date.

- We will deal with all customer enquiries courteously and fairly while in accordance with stated policy.
- We will keep all the information you give us in the strictest confidence.
- We will work with you in finding a suitable plan for settling your bills if you get into payment difficulties.
- We will ensure that all registered vulnerable customers are on the most economic tariff available for their chosen payment method.
- We will provide you with a choice of ways to communicate with us.
- We will ask your views about our services.
- We will ask you if you want to join our special services register when you become a customer.
- We will publicise this code of practice and our register at least once per year and on sign-up.
- We will make it easy for you to make a complaint.
- We will monitor the service we give to make sure we are keeping our promises.
- If you say you want to register with us but do not return the form/s, we will follow up with you to check if you still want to register.

Special services

Customers who register on the special services register can avail of the following services:

Nominate a carer

If you have a relative, carer or someone who would normally look after your bills, then you might want your Bord Gáis Energy bill to be sent to them. You just need to give us their name and address with your consent to redirect your bill. You can provide this information via the special services/priority services registration form or you can call us to do it.

With your permission, we can send them any correspondence on your behalf or contact them if we need to get in touch with you.

Help with reading and understanding your bill

We can help if you are blind or visually impaired. If you have difficulty reading your bill you can let us know and receive your bill in one of the following formats:

- **Braille bill**

We will organise for a braille bill to be sent to you. It may take a little longer to arrive, but we can arrange your braille bill on request

- **Talking bill**

We make life easier by having a

member of staff phone you with details of your latest bill. This gives you the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have. We will still send you your bill in the normal way.

Difficulty with paying your bill

Please tell us straight away if you have any difficulty in paying your bill. We will deal with each case individually and take your circumstances into account. We are committed to helping you keep your gas supply and will only discontinue the supply if we have no other choice.

Bord Gáis Energy works with the Department of Social and Family Affairs in operating the natural gas allowance and household budget schemes. We will engage with Community Welfare Officers, Money Advice and Budgeting Services, Society of St. Vincent de Paul or other recognised charities for help in paying your gas bill, if you give us permission.

We will not disconnect your supply for non-payment between 1 November and 31 March if you are registered with us.

We must, however, ultimately receive payment from you for the natural gas that we supply.

Special communications services

If you have hearing difficulties and you have minicom equipment you can get in touch with us using the following number:

Minicom service:
1850 630 630

General customer enquiries:
01 611 01 01

Alternatively you can email us on **info@bordgais.ie** or send us a fax message on **01 611 01 02**.

For customers who may be blind we can send you copies of our terms and conditions of gas supply, customer charter and codes of practice on CD or audio cassette by request.

Our communications in other formats

If you are on our register and have sight difficulties then we can provide our general communications in another format such as recorded onto a CD for you to listen to. Please let us know at any time if you require this.

The list of communications that we can provide in an appropriate format for customers with visual and hearing impairments includes:

- a. Household customer terms & conditions
- b. Customer charter

- c. Codes of practice
- d. Residential tariff information
- e. The energy bill and the energy statement
- f. Personalised residential customer communications (as approved by the CER)
- g. Outage notifications
- h. Any letter to customers informing them of a change in services or tariff
- i. Any insert to customers that has been required by the CRU

Visiting your home

Always make sure that any caller to your home, who says they are representing a company, is telling the truth. Don't let anyone into your home until you've seen proof of his or her identity. All our representatives who may visit your home will carry an identification card with their photograph on it.

If you still have doubts about the identity of the person at your door you can call us on **01 611 01 01** to make sure that the person is from Bord Gáis Energy.

Please don't feel embarrassed about asking for identification and always take the time to check the caller's identity thoroughly before you let them in. Our representatives won't mind at all.

Gas Networks Ireland will also call to your home to read the meter or to carry out other works on the gas connection. Their representatives will have identity cards but if you are unsure then please call Gas Networks Ireland on **1850 200 694**.

Vulnerable customers on Pay as You Go (PAYG) meters

Special services customers can avail of a PAYG meter as a way of budgeting for their energy. However, we will need to check that you can access the meter and an outlet to buy top-up.

If you are on our special services register and you find that the PAYG meter is no longer suitable for you (e.g. as you cannot access it or an outlet), then we will exchange it for a credit meter free of charge.

Interruptions to your gas supply

We realise that some customers may spend a lot of time at home and may depend on their gas for heating and cooking facilities more than other groups of customers.

If your gas supply goes off at any time, telephone Gas Networks Ireland on **1850 200 694**.

Complaints procedure

We aim to give you the best possible service. If however, you are unhappy with the service we have given you please call us on **01 611 01 01** and we will try to resolve the matter over the telephone.

Alternatively, you can write to:

Customer service
Residential gas
Bord Gáis Energy
PO Box 10943, Dublin 2

By email to **info@bordgais.ie**

It is our aim to settle any concerns as quickly and as fairly as possible.

If you write to us with a billing query or complaint, we will respond within 10 business days. If you are unhappy with the response you receive from the first point of contact you may have your complaint reviewed at a higher level.

Our commitment is that all complaints will be either resolved within eight weeks or an action plan will have been agreed with you. In all cases, we will keep you informed about the progress in resolving the matter. We have a code of practice on handling customers' complaints. To receive a copy please telephone us on **01 611 01 01** or you may view it online at **bordgaisenergy.ie**

If following a review and written response from one of our customer service managers you are still not satisfied, and have received written notification of the closure of the complaint from Bord Gáis Energy, you may contact the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

The complaint should only be passed to the Commission after it has gone through the Bord Gáis Energy internal complaints escalation process. The Commission operates as an independent review body and issues rulings on complaints on a case by case basis.

The office of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities can be contacted by the following means:

Address:

Customer Care Team
PO Box 11934, Dublin 24

Tel: 01 4000 800

Fax: 01 4000 850

Email: customer-care@cru.ie

Web: www.cru.ie/customer-care

Contact details

We would prefer you to phone rather than write because it is quicker, more direct and easier to answer your questions straight away. However, if you wish to write, our address is:

**Customer service
Residential natural gas
Bord Gáis Energy
PO Box 10943, Dublin 2**

In order to maintain the highest level of service we may record and monitor telephone calls.

Please ensure that you have your account number ready when you contact us as we can only discuss gas account information with the gas account holder.

Customer service:
01 611 01 01

Customer service fax:
01 611 01 02

Customer service email:
info@bordgais.ie

Minicom:
1850 630 630
(For hearing impaired customers with their own minicom equipment)

24 hour Dial-a-Read:
1850 427 732
Call this number to register your meter reading - have your GPRN number (top right hand side of your bill) and meter reading to hand. Gas Networks Ireland will ensure your reading is recorded for your next bill.

Visit our website at **bordgaisenergy.ie** to see more useful information on our services.

Emergency reporting:
Gas Networks Ireland

24 hour gas emergency line:
1850 20 50 50

Gas Networks Ireland provide the emergency response service for all gas users. In the interest of public safety, all emergency messages are recorded.

If you need any further help or advice please contact us.

Residential gas contact details

Tel: 01 611 01 01

Fax: 01 611 01 02

info@bordgais.ie

Minicom: 1850 630 630

(for hearing impaired customers with their own minicom equipment)

Customer service
Residential natural gas
Bord Gáis Energy
PO Box 10943, Dublin 2

bordgaisenergy.ie

Please note that to maintain the highest level of service we may monitor and record calls.

Registration form for special services

PART A - ACCOUNT HOLDER DETAILS

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

**You will find your account and GPRN numbers on the top right of your natural gas bill*

Phone number: _____

Minicom: _____

Your account number*: _____

Your GPRN number*: _____

Person with vulnerability at premises:

How would you describe yourself?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blind or partially sighted | <input type="checkbox"/> Language difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf or hard of hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech impaired | <input type="checkbox"/> Dexterity impaired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aged 66 or over and live alone, with minors or other elderly people | |

Nominate a carer

If you wish to nominate a carer or another third party to deal with your bill and your correspondence, please fill in their details below.

Name: _____

Fold and seal edges

Address: _____

Phone number (optional): _____

Please note we you may be asked for proof of status

In filling out this form you agree to share the information in Part A of the form with Gas Networks Ireland. This allows Gas Networks Ireland to provide you with additional services to suit your customer category.

PART B - REGISTERING FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

Services for customers who are blind or partially sighted

Blind or partially sighted customers can receive our terms & conditions and codes of practice on compact disc or audio cassette, please select which format you would prefer.

- | | | |
|--|-----------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compact disc (CD) | <u>or</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio cassette |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking bill | <u>or</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Braille bill |

Account holder's signature: _____

Date: _____

Please ensure you have signed and dated your form or we will be unable to process your request to be placed on the register.

- Please tick this box to give consent to display your inclusion on the special services register to other Suppliers and Gas Network Ireland.

**Important
Sign Here**

Send this completed form to Customer service, Residential natural gas, Bord Gáis Energy, PO Box 10943, Business reply, Dublin 2.

Tear along perforation, fold in half and seal the edges

No stamp necessary if posted in the Republic of Ireland.
Postage will be paid by licensee.



Licence No. DN 5453

Customer service

Residential electricity

Bord Gáis Energy

PO Box 10943

Business reply

Dublin 2

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE SIGNED
THE FORM BEFORE POSTING**



