

Tip #5 Check if you can get a smart meter

A smart meter records how much energy you use and sends it back to your supplier. The smart meter comes with a display monitor that shows you how much energy you are using in almost real-time as well as the cost.

Knowing how much electricity you use would help you to work out how much you could save if you switched supplier much more accurately than if you just relied on your estimated reading from your supplier (estimated readings can be quite unreliable).

Everyone in the UK will be offered a smart meter by 2020 but you might be able to get one before this depending on your supplier.

What are the main benefits of smart meters for electric vehicle owners?

If you are thinking of switching to an off-peak Economy 7 tariff, getting a smart meter would also help you to work out how much electricity you use overnight (between midnight and 7am) compared to during the day. That's because smart meters can show you your electricity use in half-hourly intervals. Most energy suppliers automatically record readings in daily intervals so if you want half-hourly level information on your energy use you'll need to contact your supplier to specifically ask them to record this.

Unlike Economy 7 meters (which offer 7 cheap hours overnight), smart meters mean you could get an off-peak tariff without having to get an additional 'night time' meter fitted to record your overnight electricity use (although, you would need to get a smart meter installed if you don't already have one). That's why they are called 'smart' off-peak tariffs.

How can I get a smart meter?

Suppliers are currently in the process of rolling out smart meters to every home in Great Britain. If you don't want to wait, you can contact your supplier to find out if you can get a smart meter now.