

Energy campaign launched by charity which delivered over £1m in savings last year

Published 20 January 2020

A campaign which aims to help people save money on their energy bills through free and impartial advice is being launched across the country today.



Big Energy Saving Week is a national campaign funded by the UK and Scottish governments and is led in Scotland by **Citizens Advice Scotland** (CAS) in partnership with **Home Energy Scotland**.

Last year, Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Extra Help Unit delivered £1.3 million in savings to people in Scotland who came to the network with energy-related issues and an average saving of £232 per case.

This year the campaign is targeting four key groups of people:

- Those who use electric heating
- Those in debt to their fuel suppliers
- Those who have homes which are hard to heat
- Those who are digitally excluded and, for example, cannot access online-only deals

As part of the campaign, events organised by Citizens Advice Bureaux are taking place up and down the country. These include stalls at local town halls, supermarkets and community hubs to reach people who are not aware of the support available and working with local charities to deliver outreach advice surgeries.

Citizens Advice Scotland's fair markets spokesperson, Dr Jamie Stewart, said: "The Scottish Citizens Advice network gave over 37,000 pieces of advice on energy-related issues in the last year alone, which is why Big Energy Saving Week is so important.

"We know that lots of people across Scotland are struggling with high bills, difficult suppliers and other barriers which stop them saving money on their energy. The four groups of people we are focusing on as part of this campaign are found all across the country with many finding themselves in more than one of these situations.

"People who are in debt to their fuel supplier are frequently blocked from switching to a cheaper tariff, a vicious circle which just makes their circumstances worse and worse. Similarly, those living in homes which are hard to heat and potentially difficult or costly to upgrade end up spending more to properly keep their homes at a comfortable temperature.

"Digital exclusion is yet another barrier to saving money on energy bills as it can be hard for people who are not digitally confident or have poor internet access to engage with energy suppliers who only communicate or take payment online.

"And we're very aware that those with some forms of electric heating can face huge challenges with their energy bills. Over half of electric heating users in Scotland are in fuel poverty but for many there is a limited number of energy suppliers who can provide a competitively-priced tariff.

"By visiting your local Citizens Advice Bureau you'll be able to get free, confidential and impartial advice to help you make changes to your energy use which could lead to significant savings."

Mike Thornton, is director of operations at the Energy Saving Trust, which delivers Home Energy Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

He said: "We're working in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureaux across Scotland to ensure as many people as possible can access free and impartial support throughout Big Energy Saving Week.

"Our outreach teams will be in communities delivering money and energy-saving advice and the Home Energy Scotland network of advice centres is just a free phone call away.

"They can tell people how to access Scottish Government funding, how to reduce energy bills and how to keep homes warmer for less."