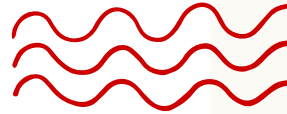
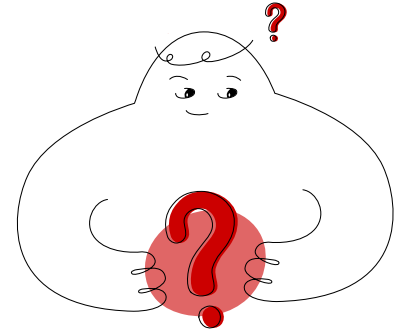


MANAGING UTILITY COSTS

The Irish Red Cross have compiled this guidance document to help you understand and manage the cost of utility bills in Ireland. These bills increase according to usage and can be very costly if not appropriately managed. In a shared placement, hosts may request a reasonable contribution towards these costs. In a vacant placement, you will likely be responsible for setting up utility bills in your own name. In both cases, we encourage you to take appropriate measures to keep these costs low both for financial and environmental reasons.

The main bills associated with Irish households consist of refuse collection, electricity, heating (usually gas or oil), internet and television.



Bins / Waste disposal

Refuse collection is usually provided by a private contractor. Common providers are Panda and Greyhound. These waste collectors can offer a range of pricing options such as; standing charges, charges per lift or per kilo, or a combination. If you are uncertain of which company services your area, it can be useful to check with your neighbours to see what company they use. If you are living in an apartment complex, waste is usually included in your rent, and they will provide bins for you to use.

In Ireland, most households have three bins: general waste (usually the black bin), recycling (usually the green bin) and compost (usually the brown bin). You can see what should go in each bin on www.mywaste.ie.

If you have large amounts of waste to dispose of, particularly if moving accommodation, you may look to hire a skip from such waste disposal companies as Panda.



What goes in what bin?

Green bin



- Paper & cardboard
- Food tins
- Drinks cans
- Tetra-Pak cartons (e.g. milk, soup and juice cartons)
- Hard plastics (e.g. mineral, water and detergent bottles PET1, HDPE2, PP)
- Soft plastics (e.g. crisp packets, plastics bag and wrapping, bubble wrap)

All must be clean and dry.



Brown bin



- Coffee grounds & filters
- Cooked & raw foods
- Dairy products
- Eggs & egg shells
- Fruit, vegetables & peelings
- Tea leaves & tea bags
- Meat, bones & fish
- Hedge clippings, twigs & branches (max. 2 inches in diameter)
- Leaves, plants, weeds & grass

Black bin



- Nappies
- Soiled food packaging
- Bathroom waste
- Animal waste
- Aerosols
- Cold ashes
- Takeaway coffee cups
- Used candles

Not allowed in any bin

Batteries & electrical items

Glass

Builders rubble

Bricks

Metal fabric, clothing & textiles

Oil & liquids

Paint

Hazardous waste (e.g. needles, unused medications, used wound dressings)

Glass bottles/jars are brought to a 'bottle bank' (see photograph) or recycling centre.

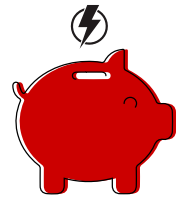


Plastic bottles and cans marked with the 'Re-turn' symbol (see photograph) should be returned to any participating supermarket where you can reclaim the small deposit added to the price of the product at purchase. This is a relatively new scheme in Ireland. More information can be found here - [Home - Re-Turn](#).



Household items and clothes in good condition that you no longer have use for can be donated to a local charity shop, such as [St. Vincent de Paul](#) or [Oxfam](#).





Electricity and Gas

You can set up a new account with any of the energy suppliers online or over the phone. Common providers are Electric Ireland, Energia and Bord Gáis Energy. You can shop around for the best and cheapest supplier to meet your individual needs.

Reducing Electricity Costs

- The biggest energy users are the shower, cooker, tumble dryer, washing machine and kettle – use them sensibly;
- Turn off lights when a room is not in use;
- Turn off the immersion (water heater) when it is not needed - consider using a timer for this;
- Unplug or switch off appliances at the wall – even in standby mode, they can use 20% of the energy they would consume if switched on;
- Avoid leaving TVs on standby;
- Set washing machine and dishwasher at a lower temperature where possible;
- Dry clothes on clothes lines or clotheshorses where possible – tumble dryers are expensive to run;
- Electricity is at its highest demand and most expensive between 7am and 9am in the morning and 5pm and 7pm at night - try to use electricity outside of these peak times,
- When replacing bulbs, opt for low energy LED lights;
- If purchasing appliances, buy the highest energy rated product you can afford. Higher rated appliances will be cheaper to run. For more information on understanding energy labelling, see Energy Labelling | Energy Ratings | SEAI.

Reducing Heating Costs

- Only heat rooms that are in use;
- Turn down the thermostat where possible – reducing the temperature by just 1-degree Celsius could save you 10%;
- Close windows while the heating is on;
- Keep curtains and doors closed to conserve heat,
- Use hot water bottles to heat yourself and your bed (electric blankets are also a relatively cost-efficient alternative to heat your bed),
- Limit the duration of showers to save hot water,
- Layer up – wear thermals and jumpers and use blankets while relaxing – heat the human, not the home,
- Avoid electric heaters (see photograph) – they are very expensive to run. If you must, consider using a timer or lowering the wattage.



electric heater*

Reducing Costs in the Kitchen

- Try to limit the amount of cooking per day - batch cooking will save on energy bills;
- When cooking on the hob, place a lid on pots as it will take less time to bring to the boil, saving energy (turn down the heat once contents have come to a boil);
- Use the microwave to heat food instead of the oven as it is quicker and more energy efficient;
- Fill the basin of the sink when washing dishes, which will save on hot water; When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much hot water as you need and avoid re-boiling;
- Only turn on the washing machine or dish washer for full loads;
- Avoid leaving the fridge door open for too long while getting food (it takes 45 minutes for the fridge to cool down to its original temperature afterwards).



For further information on energy usage in the home, see [Reduce Your Use at Home SEAI](#).

If you are finding it difficult to manage your utility costs, you may wish to utilise financial planning resources, such as your local Money Advise and Budgeting Service (MABS) - [Find a MABS office](#).