



# YORswitch **Barnsley**

CHEAPER ENERGY TOGETHER

15 February 2013

## Save yourself hundreds of pounds on Yor Energy bill

Barnsley residents could save hundreds of pounds on their gas and electricity bills by joining together in Barnsley's first government-funded collective energy switching scheme. The scheme is for all residents of the Borough regardless of whether you rent or own your home.

The YORswitch Cheaper Energy Together scheme aims to gather the interest of lots of Barnsley residents who want to pay less for their energy by switching energy tariffs and suppliers, without the usual hassle.

When many people group together, they can get energy companies to bid for the lowest price to win their custom. The scheme is being managed by Berneslai Homes on behalf of Barnsley Council. They are working with other Yorkshire areas to pool together as many residents as possible who want to find lower energy prices.

Residents simply need to register their interest on the website or telephone number provided below. The offer is open to anyone with a residential gas or electric supply, and the more people who register, the better chance of a great deal being secured for all.

Berneslai Homes Chief Executive, Helen Jaggar, says: "This is an amazing opportunity for local residents to cut their energy bills during these tough economic times."

On 9 April, energy companies, big and small, will offer their cheapest energy deal based on the number of households that have registered their interest. Residents will then receive a personal offer showing how much money they can save. Residents are then given about 30 days to decide whether to accept the offer or not. Registering an interest does not put residents under any obligation to switch suppliers. Those that do decide to switch will have their details passed to the winning energy company, at which stage an agreement would be completed with the supplier to switch to them.

Register your interest before 9 April 2013 by visiting [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk) or phone 01226 787891. You can also email queries to [YORswitch@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:YORswitch@barnsley.gov.uk)

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## **Editors notes:**

Energy bills are causing immense financial hardship, with one in four households struggling to heat their homes, which covers families who spend more than a tenth of their net income on keeping their homes warm. Many residents are experiencing large increases in their energy bills, which have risen by an average of 8 per cent this winter. Experts have warned a further 5 per cent tariff rise is likely, and that the number of households suffering fuel poverty will almost double to nine million by 2016.

Cold homes damage the health of our most vulnerable citizens, including older people, children and people with disabilities. This costs the NHS almost a billion pounds each year.

The Department for Energy and Climate Change figures, released in June 2012, show that there has been a gradual decline in the number of households switching supplier. With the reduction in the number of people switching supplier, and the large number of tariff choices – 98 across 14 regions – it is a fair assumption that many customers are not getting their energy for the best price possible.

Any resident has a right to switch supplier (gas and electricity) but there are a number of reasons why they do not, including being afraid to switch; not having the time to compare suppliers; not having the know-how to compare suppliers; not trusting other suppliers; and thinking it involves a lot of hassle.

The first major UK Collective Switch, organised by Which?, took place in June 2012. Of the 95,000 customers who registered to switch, 37,000 achieved an average saving of £223 per customer per year.

The Scheme is funded by the DECC (Dept of Energy and Climate Change). The aim of this funding is to develop a collective switching scheme with a clear focus on supporting vulnerable consumers to switch energy supplier. Under the scheme, which will be locally branded and communicated, energy consumers will be encouraged to join together such that a critical mass is achieved and then used to negotiate lower energy tariffs. Against the backdrop of increasing energy costs this scheme will have an important role to play in addressing fuel poverty.

The bid for funding from the Cheaper Energy Together Fund formed part of a larger bid which was coordinated by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The partner organisations in the bid are:

East Riding of Yorkshire Council (lead partner)  
Barnsley MBC/Berneslai Homes  
St. Leger Homes (Doncaster MBC's ALMO)  
Connect Housing (a housing association with approx. 3,000 properties operating across West Yorkshire).

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council, as lead authority for the project, will carry out the procurement of a specialist energy switch contractor facilitator.