

# British Gas social programmes

## Our view

At British Gas we are firmly committed to playing our part in supporting all our customers. Our top priority is on our vulnerable customers who are unable to safeguard their personal welfare or the personal welfare of other members of the household, for reasons of age, health, disability and severe financial insecurity.

Our social programmes are specifically designed to help our most vulnerable customers with appropriate and targeted support. We promote these through our charity partners and Citizen Advice Bureaux.

## Essentials Programme

British Gas has a dedicated helpline for customers who have specialist requirements and for customers on benefits and very low income. The programme offers benefits assessments and access to free impartial debt advice, energy efficiency products and a range of extra help from our charity partners. As part of this programme, British Gas has a special Essentials tariff, aimed at cutting gas and electricity bills for our most vulnerable low income customers.

We currently have over 300,000 customers on the Essentials tariff, saving up to £264 on average during 2009 compared to a standard tariff. The tariff represented a £77.4m spend by the company last year and is open to existing British Gas customers in receipt of at least one of a number of specific Government benefits.

**For further information on eligibility for the Essentials tariff tel: 0800 072 7100 or for Prepayment Customers 0800 294 8604**

**For further information on the Essentials Programme visit:**

<http://www.britishgas.co.uk/products-and-services/energy/our-products/essentials-programme.html>

## British Gas Energy Trust

British Gas has established the [British Gas Energy Trust](#) for customers to apply for grants and sustainable advice to manage their energy payments. The Trust also funds third party debt advice and in cases of extreme need, awards customers for other non-energy related debts and essential household costs.

British Gas has committed to the Trust for a further four years, taking the total committed by British Gas to the Trust to £21.3million since 2005. The Trust is run independently of British Gas and is a registered charity.

**For further information tel: 01733 421 021 (information) 01733 421 060 (applications)**

## Free Insulation to those Aged over 70

Insulating the home is one of the most effective ways to keep warm and cut energy bills. British Gas customers over 70 years old or on income related benefits may be able to get their [home insulated for free](#).

## 'here to HELP'

The largest social initiative of its kind in the UK, ['here to HELP'](#) is a unique coalition between the public, private and charity sectors, delivering real benefits to vulnerable and fuel poor households. The scheme aims to tackle the root causes of household poverty by improving the living conditions and quality of life in some of Britain's most deprived communities. The programme offers energy efficiency products, benefits assessments, essential appliances and adaptors, home security measures, and advice from our charity partners which include Help the Aged, Scope, the RNIB and National Debt Helpline.

To date, the scheme has covered more than 600,000 homes and has found unclaimed benefits totalling almost £18.9 million. On average, qualifying applicants are on average over £1,500 a year better off as a result of the benefit health check alone.

**For further information on 'here to HELP' tel: 0800 072 8339**

## British Gas ExtraCare

British Gas has given a voluntary public commitment not to disconnect anyone we know to be vulnerable. "[ExtraCare](#)" is the process we have adopted to help us proactively identify signs of vulnerability amongst our customers; how we keep this information on our systems and what we need to do once we have identified someone as being potentially vulnerable. As part of our day to day contact with our customers, we listen out for any signs the customer may give us that might indicate that they are vulnerable.

## British Gas Home Energy Care Register

[Home Energy Care Register](#) provides essential services for some of our most vulnerable customers and around 560,000 customers now benefit from the service. The Home Energy Care Register is a priority service register for all our gas and/or electricity customers who are elderly, disabled or chronically sick. It enables us to record any specific requirements these customers may have and helps us to provide them with services appropriate to their needs

**For further information tel: 0800 072 8625**

## Home Heat Helpline

The national [Home Heat Helpline](#) was launched in 2005, offering help to customers struggling to pay their energy bills. The service is run by the Energy Retail Association and is funded by British Gas and other major energy suppliers. It gives one point of contact, connecting customers to advice and help from their energy supplier. A specialist British Gas team takes the calls from British Gas customers and connects them to the most appropriate support.

**For further information tel: 0800 33 66 99 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm Sat 10am-3pm)**