

GREEN ENERGY TARIFFS



With a green energy tariff, your supplier will match all or some of the electricity you use with renewable energy, which it then feeds back into the National Grid. So, the more people who sign up to a green energy tariff, the bigger the percentage of green energy in the national supply.

- » Contributes to green investment
- » Lower carbon footprint

For more information and advice, please contact Sarah Gill on 07720 098980 or sarah.gill@groundwork.org.uk

In more detail:

The majority of energy suppliers now offer green tariffs and many promise 100% renewable electricity as standard. Choosing a green tariff shows the demand is there. It sends a message to your supplier and the wider industry that you wish to avoid electricity generated from fossil fuels and support renewable energy generation. The increasing numbers of green tariffs available shows the industry is listening. However, not all tariffs are the same and some are greener and provide a clearer benefit than others.

Whenever renewable energy (solar, wind, hydro) is produced, the generator is issued a Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificate. When there is a surplus, these certificates can be sold cheaply to non-renewable energy generators, who then use them to create a 'green tariff'. Critics refer to this practise as 'greenwash'; the end-customer believes they are supporting renewable energy generation, but in reality their supplier has merely bought up unwanted REGO certificates and is using a market mechanism to undercut genuinely green suppliers and hasn't invested in any new renewable capacity at all.

When your energy supplier buys renewable (green) electricity and its accompanying certificates directly from generators, such as UK wind or solar farms, this provides a clear benefit to the UK renewable industry. Most energy suppliers that work this way will be transparent about the source of their electricity and list it on their website.

We've identified the following suppliers who all clearly list the renewable sources of their energy on their websites.

Good Energy

GEUK

Ecotricity

Typically, larger electricity suppliers will own or have partnerships with a mixture of green (renewable) and brown (regular fossil fuel) generators. This means that rather than investing in more renewable energy, they can just divert a higher percentage of the green energy they source to the green tariff and make their standard tariffs dirtier. So increased demand for these tariffs doesn't necessarily lead to increased support for renewable generation.

What does it cost?

Switching to a green tariff won't cost you anything, however the price you pay for your energy may increase slightly, particularly if you choose one of better green tariffs.

What about green gas?

The green gas market is only in its infancy as it's difficult and expensive to generate gas from renewable sources, but some suppliers do offer some sort of green gas - this is often made through bio-methane, decaying food, plants and animal waste.

How green is my tariff?

Your supplier should let you know what sources are included in the mix, and also what proportion of your supply is renewable. The greenest energy suppliers will be transparent about the source of their electricity and list it on their website.

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