

Date: 30/01/23

Ref:



**Martin Cave,**  
Chair - Ofgem  
cc: **Jonathan Brearley,**  
Chief Executive - Ofgem

**Reply to:** Cllr Amanda Chadderton  
Oldham Council  
Room 347, Level 3,  
Civic Centre, West Street,  
Oldham OL1 1UL

Dear Martin,

**Kept in the dark – the urgent need for action on prepayment meters**

I write to urge Ofgem to take urgent action to reform the use of prepayment meters as recommended by the Citizens Advice (CA) report 'Kept in the Dark'.

I support the calls in the report for:

- a total ban on the forced installation of new prepayment meters until additional safeguards are put in place to end self-disconnection. This ban must include legacy prepayment meters and remote switches for smart meters.
- a review of all users of prepayment meters, with a commitment to replace them with credit meters where this is necessary to remove the risk of disconnection.

As I am sure you are aware, the CA's report found that:

- More than 2 million people are being disconnected from their energy supply at least once a month.
- 1 in 5 (19%) prepayment customers who had been disconnected from their energy supply in the past year said they had disconnected for more than 24 hours at least once.
- 1 in 3 (33%) people on prepayment meters said that they had disconnected at least once in the past year because they could not afford to top up. This equates to more than 3 million people, or 1 person every 10 seconds.

While the report did not break down the results of the survey by local authority area, given the relatively high levels of poverty in Oldham these issues must be affecting thousands of Oldham residents. As Leader of Oldham Council, I ask on their behalf that these issues are addressed urgently and that Ofgem works with the Citizens Advice, the industry and Government to identify what safeguards are needed.

Oldham Council runs a very successful 'Warm Homes Oldham Scheme' and we would also be happy to share our experiences with you.

I note that Ofgem's Chief Executive has announced a further review into the issues already identified by Citizens Advice. I urge immediate action instead.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Amanda Chadderton  
Leader of Oldham Council