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Buying Energy

Energy is purchased either on a rolling basis or a fixed price contract. A rolling contract allows the energy supplier to change the price of energy you buy as the energy market fluctuates. A fixed price contract will commit you to buying energy at an agreed price for an agreed number of years. If you are on a fixed price contract, you may have to wait until this expires before you can move to a green electricity supplier.

How often its worth you shopping around for a new energy deal will depend on how much you spend on energy and what proportion of your overall expenditure is made up by your fuel bills. Some suppliers quote for energy supply by the unit, whereas others include a daily fixed fee (a 'standing charge'). You need to take both of these elements into account when comparing costs. Talk to 3 or 4 suppliers to get a range of quotes for comparison. A supplier will generally hold a quote for about 5 days.

To compare prices of different green electricity suppliers, and to switch your supply, you can use the Green Electricity Marketplace website at <http://www.greenelectricity.org/business.html>

Buying energy via a service charge

If you are based in a shared building you probably pay for your electricity through your service charge. If this is the case, you will need to approach your landlord, or building manager to switch to a green electricity supply.

Changing to a green supply may have a cost impact, so you should discuss this with other tenants before proposing this to the landlord. A cost increase should not affect the landlord as they pass the costs onto their tenants via the service charge. Changing supplier is a hassle for a landlord or building manager though, so have your proposal well thought about before making your approach. Already having the support of other tenants will eliminate one likely objection. The property industry is becoming more aware of its reputation with regard to environmental issues, so, particularly if your building is owned or managed by a large property company, you can play this card.