

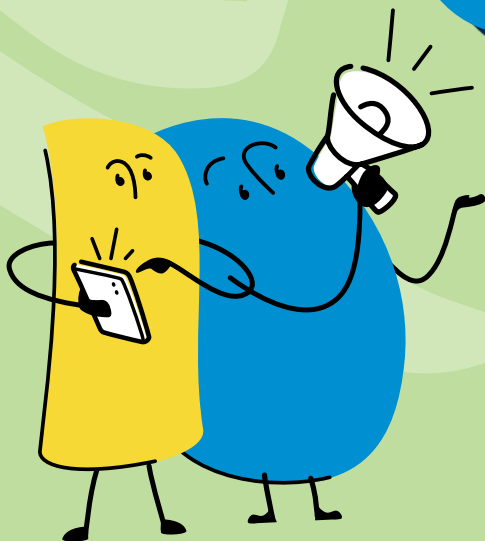
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# Have you struggled to get electricity or the power plan you wanted?

Tell us about your experiences of accessing electricity

**Most people can access a range of power companies and plans, but this isn't always easy for people with credit-related issues or old-style meters.**

**Take the survey**



### **The Electricity Authority**

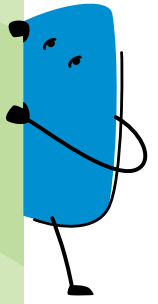
The Electricity Authority is the independent Crown entity responsible for regulating and overseeing New Zealand's electricity market and protecting consumers' interests.

**The Electricity Authority wants to hear from people who have:**

- been turned down by a power company
- found it hard to open an account
- used prepay because they could not get a post-pay plan
- not been able to get a plan or service they want
- needed help to get connected

**If this is you – or someone you know – please help by answering a few questions.**

# What we understand the main challenges are



**In 2025, power companies turned down around 46,900 applications for post-pay electricity for credit-related reasons.**

This doesn't always mean people can't get power. But the options may not work as well as they could.

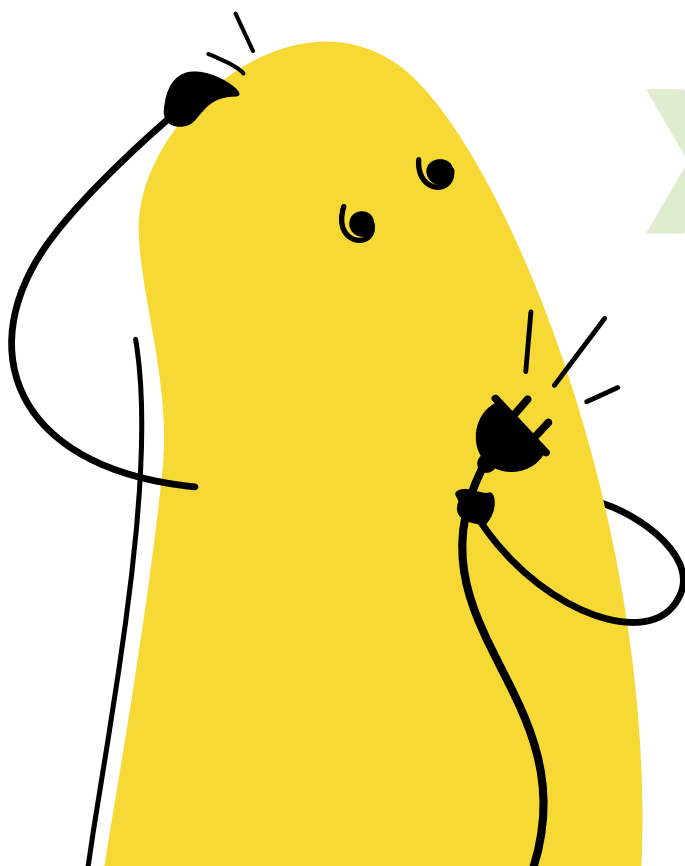
**Prepay electricity** can help people get connected, manage spending and avoid building up debt. But prepay needs a communicating smart meter.

If a home does not have the right type of meter, prepay may not be available. Prepay may not offer the same range of plans and as post-pay electricity.

This can limit people's ability to choose newer types of plans that could save their household save money, like time-of-use plans.

**Social retailing** and community-based services can offer tailored support but are not available everywhere, or to everyone.

Some power companies may also connect people through **other arrangements**, like bonds or ways of managing payments. But these options may depend on the person's situation and may not always be easy to get.



## Why your experience matters

Your experiences will help us find out if more needs to be done to support people to access electricity and choose a plan that works for them.

We are not proposing any rule changes right now, but we might do in the future based on the information you share.

# Why it can be hard to get electricity or choose a plan that works

## 1. Credit checks can make it harder for some people to get standard post-pay electricity plans

With a **post-pay plan**, a person uses electricity first and pays for it later, usually after getting a bill.

Because the power company supplies electricity before it is paid for, it might need to check if there's a risk the customer will not pay their bill. This can include checking their credit history. Credit checks help power companies manage their commercial risks. But they may also leave some people with few practical options for getting power.

This may affect people who:

- are finding it hard to pay their bills - now or in the past
- have difficulty meeting credit criteria
- owe money or haven't paid bills in the past, or
- have little or no credit history.

## 2. Old-style meters or meters that do not communicate

Most homes in New Zealand now have smart meters which automatically send your electricity use to your power company.

Some homes still have an old-style meter. Some others have a smart meter, but it does not communicate data. This could be because there is poor mobile coverage or a technical problem.

These people cannot get services that rely on smart or communicating meters, including:

- prepay electricity
- some social retailing services
- time-varying pricing plans, which offer cheaper prices off-peak (when the country uses less power, like at nighttime).

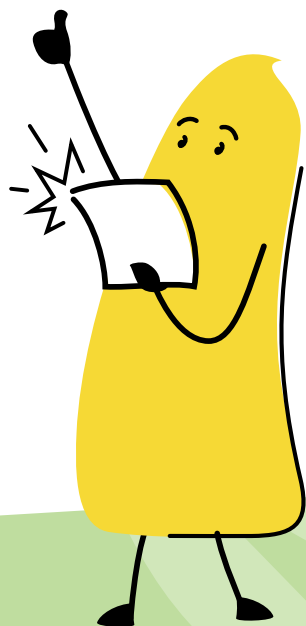
Some people do not want to have a smart meter. There can also be practical reasons why a meter is hard to upgrade or cannot communicate. This could be trouble getting on the property, worries about safety, the condition of the building, network coverage, or needing someone else's permission (such as apartment building owner).

*We want to understand how these issues affect people, what they are told and if it's clear who is responsible for helping sort out the problem. We also want to understand why someone does not want a smart meter.*

## **Some people have both credit history issues and an old-style or non-communicating meter**

Sometimes people face two barriers at once. For example, they might be turned down for a post-pay plan and also unable to use prepay or use a social retailer (see below) because their meter isn't suitable. Or, they may find that a power company who accepts their credit status turns them down because it's not taking customers with old meters anymore.

*We want to understand how often this happens, whether people are able to sort out the problem and how long it takes to sort out. We also want to know about the information and support people get, and whether people go without electricity or use an option that doesn't suit their needs in the meantime.*



# What outcomes should the electricity system provide for people?

**Before deciding if we need to make changes, we want to explore whether people agree with us about what people should expect from the electricity system.**

We think the electricity system should make sure:

1. Everyone has reasonable ways to get connected to electricity
2. Everyone can choose the best deals for them and access new electricity services
3. People don't miss out on options or savings because of credit-related issues or meter type
4. Power companies can manage commercial risks in a balanced and sustainable way
5. The electricity market supports choice, long-term competition, new ideas and efficient investment
6. Options like prepay, social retailing and special arrangements with the power company are available, suitable, transparent and sustainable.

These outcomes are our starting point, before we consider our next steps.

*We want to know if people agree that the electricity system should aim for these outcomes and what practical improvements could help improve access and choice now? And in the longer term, what should a well-functioning and inclusive electricity market look like in the next 5-10 years?*

[Take the survey](#)

You can also email your feedback to:  
[consumer.mobility@ea.govt.nz](mailto:consumer.mobility@ea.govt.nz)

or post it to:  
Electricity Authority  
PO Box 10041  
Wellington 6143

