

# Demand Flexibility Service

Information for consumer organisations

V5.0

*Updated November 2023*

This document is intended for consumer organisations. Please contact us at [box.ESOConsumer@nationalgrideso.com](mailto:box.ESOConsumer@nationalgrideso.com) if you have any additional questions.

More information is available on the ESO website:

- **FAQs:** <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/electricity-explained/electricity-and-me/esos-demand-flexibility-service>
- **DFS homepage (aimed at Providers):** <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/industry-information/balancing-services/demand-flexibility>
- **Communication Principles (aimed at Providers)**  
<https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/286991/download>

## What is the Demand Flexibility Service?

Last year the ESO launched the Demand Flexibility Service (DFS). It was the first time national energy demand side flexibility supported balancing our grid and showed how consumers can be positively engaged and participate in the energy system. Over 1.6 million households and businesses took part and were rewarded for reducing or shifting their electricity use during a DFS event, with our consumer research showing that 83% would participate again.

With the help of smart meters, households and businesses are rewarded for choosing to reduce or shift appliances with high electricity use at peak times or charge devices like EV's when there is high renewable output on the system. This has the added benefit of helping to reduce constraint costs, which benefits all consumers.

Due to the success of DFS, the service has launched again this year. Unlocking flexibility to its fullest potential is vitally important to deliver a decarbonised, secure energy system at lowest cost whilst delivering improved outcomes for consumers. We've made a few changes and improvements to the service and look forward to working with many of the Registered Providers again as well as welcoming new ones.

## Who can take part?

Households with smart meters can take part with energy suppliers or online providers and apps. Households can only take part with one DFS Registered Provider at a time. All DFS Registered Providers can be found on the ESO website. Their customer communications should clearly state that they are '**Part of the ESO Demand Flexibility Service**'. Participation is entirely optional and there are no penalties linked to the service.

(Note: Businesses can also take part with ESO direct or via a third party aggregator – see website for more details or speak to us directly for information)

## What happens during an event?

Once a household has signed up to take part in DFS, the chosen Provider will notify the customer when a DFS event is taking place. If the household reduces or shifts their electricity use during those periods, the household will be eligible for the reward provided by the Provider (based on how much electricity is reduced during this period).

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DFS events usually run for one hour; however live events could run for a longer period. There are no penalties for not participating once you have signed up to DFS or notified your Provider that you will take part in an event. In order to be eligible to receive a reward from your provider you do however have to participate. Different Providers have different incentives and reduction targets. Please read the terms of the reward given by the chosen Provider.

If you sign up to participate in DFS, you will need to authorise your chosen Provider to access your smart meter so they can read your data every half-hour for the duration of the service.

Participating DFS Providers are being listed on the [Demand Flexibility page](#), and will be updated regularly as new Providers join the service.

## How will DFS work this year?

As per last year, all communications and rewards will be through the chosen DFS Registered Provider, and the majority of Providers are also participating again this year. We expect to see a range of rewards such as points, prize draws as well as financial rewards; all of which will be at the discretion of the individual Providers.

The ESO has made some changes to support a better service operationally, however for households that participated last year, the service will remain very similar.

There are a few changes listed below where consumers may see a difference. These highlighted changes are where direct consumer impact has been noted but is not an exhaustive list of changes to the service itself. For detailed term of the service please review the information held on the DFS website.

Change to the service	Impact to consumers
Removed the domestic in-day baseline adjustment	Consumers will have a more stable, realistic base of electricity use
Added within-day dispatch option	Consumers may receive notifications for events on the same day, as well as notifications for the next day
Daily checks for MPANS and ruling that states the latest consumer sign-up is valid	If a consumer signs up to another provider, this will mean they will automatically be excluded from the previous provider (and therefore no longer eligible for the previous provider's reward)
At least 6 tests at the standard GAP £3,000/MWh. Remaining 6 tests from 1 Jan 24 will either continue to be underpinned by the GAP or be competitive, subject to the total volumes participating.	Rewards and events may vary according to provider

## How to reduce energy use during DFS events

During a DFS event, households will be encouraged to reduce or shift their electricity usage and avoid running energy intensive appliances such as washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers, electric showers, and immersion heaters outside of the event times. Another option would be to reduce electricity usage (e.g., using a microwave instead of an electric oven) during the event. We also noted that some people just went out so didn't use any energy at all. Efficient lightbulbs and small appliances such as modern televisions consume very little electricity and so it is unlikely to be worth adapting usage of these during a DFS event.

Please take a look at Citizens Advice website which helps [compare how much electrical appliances cost to use](#).

Some Providers may reward householders for using alternative sources such as a battery, but please check with each provider Terms and Conditions.

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Using electrical goods overnight can create increased risk of an incident, we advise all consumers to follow the guidance offered by organisation such as [Electrical Safety First](#) and encourage good maintenance of appliances; or where possible, to avoid using electrical appliances overnight.

The rewards that householders could receive is dependent on both the reward offering from their chosen DFS Provider, and how much electricity use demand shifted away from the peak times.

Further FAQs can be found [on our website](#).

## Registered Providers

We've compiled a list of all the Registered Providers taking part in the Demand Flexibility Service on our website. There are two tables (one for domestic households and micro-businesses and one for all other businesses).

In support of consumer protection, the registered Providers list also outlines which Providers are aligned to the FlexAssure and HOMEflex codes of conduct which set out minimum standards for flexibility services such as DFS.

Be scam aware - **only use a DFS Registered Provider**. These Providers have confirmed participation and have launched their own campaigns for their customers. *While we have made every effort to ensure that this information is accurate at the time of publication, ESO is not liable for any errors or omissions in this information.*

*NOTE: Households can only participate with one DFS provider at any time.*

For a full list of DFS Registered Providers (including non domestic) please visit [Demand Flexibility Service \(DFS\) | ESO \(nationalgrideso.com\)](#)

## Where can I get help or support?

If households are experiencing issues with the service, you should first contact your provider.

Further support and advice can be found from consumer advice organisations below:

Organisation	Website	Telephone number
Advice Direct Scotland	<a href="https://www.energyadvice.scot">https://www.energyadvice.scot</a>	0808 196 8660
Citizens Advice	<a href="https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/">https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/</a>	0808 223 1133
Energy Saving Trust	<a href="https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/">https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/</a>	
Centre for Sustainable Energy	<a href="https://www.cse.org.uk/advice">https://www.cse.org.uk/advice</a>	0800 082 2234 (Bristol & Somerset area)