

Communications toolkit

Essex Energy Switch

3 December 2019 – 24 March 2020

1. Background

What is the Essex Energy Switch (EES)?

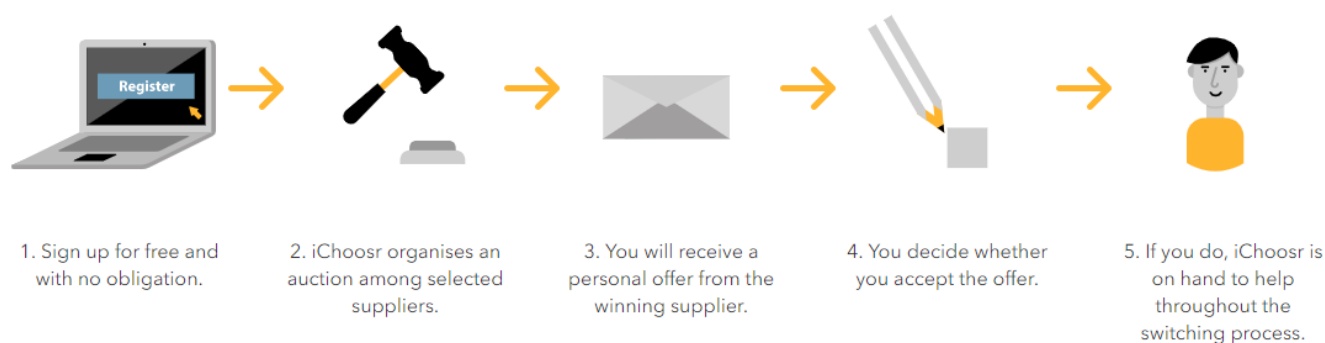
The EES is a county-wide collective energy switching campaign designed to help Essex residents cut their gas and electricity bills. The scheme is run in partnership with iChoosr, a national company, who manage the online registration, auction and offer. Essex County Council (ECC) is responsible for promoting the scheme each winter to Essex residents.

ECC recognises that some householders across Essex are struggling to pay for their energy supplies and this scheme is one way of addressing the issue. It demonstrates that local councils/authorities can make a positive difference to the lives of Essex residents and their communities. Essex as a county, including districts and boroughs, has had over 56,000 households register for the EES since the scheme launched in 2014.

In previous campaigns, partners have worked with ECC to help promote EES in their local area. It's important that this collaborative approach continues this year, to help more Essex residents benefit from cost effective energy.

How does the EES work?

The EES is a collective switching process. Collective switching occurs when a group of like-minded consumers band together to negotiate a better deal – the more people that register, the bigger the potential there is to save. The iChoosr approach to collective switching is less complex and less time consuming than 'going it alone' and it's all without any obligation.



2. Audience and insight

People who switched last year

Insight: The winter 2018/19 campaign showed 82% of registrants and 80% of switchers were 'previously engaged'.

People from lower-income households and/or in fuel poverty

Insight: Previous campaigns show that typically fuel poor areas tend to see higher numbers of registrations when part of a wider communications approach.

An analysis of national statistics from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has identified areas in Essex with the largest percentage of fuel poor households and this will help to inform targeting at a local level. District and borough specific data is available upon request.

Wider Essex residents – those who haven't registered/engaged

Insight: The winter 2017/18 switching campaign highlighted that 74% of switchers were aged between 50-79.

Council employees

Insight: The use of internal channels, platforms and EES employee ambassadors are an effective way to cascade information and share messaging amongst local council/authority employees, their friends and families.

3. Key messages

People who switched last year

- Don't forget to switch and keep your energy bills low
- Spread the word to friends and family and help more people see if they can save

People from lower-income households and/or in fuel poverty

- On average, people that choose to switch save £250 on their energy bills
- The more people that register, the bigger the potential saving
- Sign-up for free in five minutes – all you need is a recent gas and electricity bill

Wider Essex residents – those who haven't registered/engaged

- Do you want to see if you can save money on your energy bills?
- Sign-up today for a hassle-free way to lower your energy bill – all you need is a recent gas and electricity bill
- Our trusted supplier will manage the process and there is no obligation to switch
- The more people that register, the bigger the potential saving

Council employees

- See if you can save money on your energy bills by signing up today
- Spread the word to friends and family and help more people see if they can save
- The EES supports the council's commitment to being environmentally sustainable

4. Timings

The key dates for the winter campaign 2019/20 are:

3 December 2019 – Registration launch

11 February 2020 – Auction

25 February 2020 – Offers

24 March 2020 – Closure

5. What you can do to support the campaign

ECC will be launching an integrated campaign from Tuesday 3 December 2019, which will leverage targeted digital and above-the-line advertising. The channels will include:

- Paid advertising – social media, pay-per-click (PPC) and bus stop screens
- Earned media through press coverage and events
- Shared media through social media, print and e-newsletters and GP screens
- Owned channels through social media, e-newsletters, web content, internal communications and print media to libraries

As part of the campaign, ECC will be posting on Facebook and Twitter and directing residents to the iChoosr Essex landing page to register.

You can support the campaign by:

- **Sharing** our Facebook posts
- **Retweeting** our Tweets
- **Posting/localising** the sample social media content included in this pack on your own channels.

Be sure to include the relevant **Bitly link** below as it will help us to evaluate the campaign more effectively.

Districts and boroughs	Bitly link
Tendring	http://bit.ly/2D7oZLR
Colchester	http://bit.ly/2rflhfh
Braintree	http://bit.ly/2XEAVyg
Harlow	http://bit.ly/2pFMV5N
Chelmsford	http://bit.ly/2D9edVu
Brentwood	http://bit.ly/2D5U7v5
Epping Forest	http://bit.ly/2D3IEMC
Maldon	http://bit.ly/37uL98T
Rochford	http://bit.ly/2pKRb4a
Uttlesford	http://bit.ly/35p4vKz
Basildon	http://bit.ly/2sa1ek7
Castlepoint	http://bit.ly/2KZFJJt

CCGs	Bitly link
West Essex	http://bit.ly/2s8i3vL
Mid Essex	http://bit.ly/2XAhTZN
North East Essex	http://bit.ly/2OGADCW
Castle Point and Rochford	http://bit.ly/2Oc1Eim
Basildon and Brentwood	http://bit.ly/2OE2eoh

Please tag/signpost the below accounts on the relevant platform:

- **Facebook:** @essexcountycouncil
- **Twitter:** @Essex_CC

Sample social media content

Facebook and Twitter assets have been supplied in the accompanying email.

Facebook:

1. Introducing Essex Energy Switch – a scheme which aims to help you get a better deal on your gas and electricity bills. It's quick and easy to register and you could potentially save hundreds of pounds. Want to find out more? Click here – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

2. Rather than switching energy providers as an individual customer, let's work together and save money. Essex Energy Switch aims to help as many residents as possible to switch providers and secure a better deal on their gas and electricity bills. Register your interest here – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

3. Let us shed some light on switching energy providers – register for the Essex Energy Switch today and join the thousands of people already saving on their gas and electricity bills. It's free, easy and there's no obligation to switch. The more people that register, the bigger the potential benefit! Find out more here – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

Twitter:

1. Here's a bright idea, register for Essex Energy Switch today and see how much money you can save on your energy bills. It's free, simple and there's no obligation to switch. What are you waiting for? Find out more here – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

2. 'Can I switch energy suppliers even if I switched last year?' Of course, you can! Let Essex Energy Switch do all the hard work for you – simply register your interest and we'll do the rest. It's free and there's no obligation to switch. So what are you waiting for? Register today – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

3. Don't waste energy hunting around for the best gas and electricity deals, register for the Essex Energy Switch now and join the thousands of people already saving money on their bills. It's quick, easy and we do all the hard work for you! Find out more here – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

4. Registering for the Essex Energy Switch is completely free and there is no obligation to switch; the more people that sign-up, the bigger the potential to save! Find out more here – **[insert relevant Bitly link]**

Print materials

We have produced an A4 poster and A5 leaflet, hard copies of which, can be sent upon request.

6. Media release

Below is a generic press release which the ECC communications team will adapt with local testimonials before distributing to relevant local media in each district/borough on 3 December 2019.

ECC will respond to any media enquiries or requests for interview and liaise with the relevant district/borough communication team as needed. If any partners receive a media enquiry, please email the ECC comms team – press.desk@essex.gov.uk.

Essex residents encouraged to sign-up and save with Essex Energy Switch

“The Essex Energy Switch is about local communities coming together and saving money on their gas and electricity bills – the more people that register, the bigger the potential saving per household.”

That's the message from Cllr Simon Walsh, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, who is encouraging residents to register for the initiative and potentially save hundreds of pounds on their energy bills.

The registration window opens on 3 December 2019 and is available to anyone living in Essex.

Cllr Walsh, added, “Registering for the Energy Switch is quick, easy and helps you avoid searching for the best deals as all the hard work is done for you.

“Since the scheme launched in 2014, more than 16,000 people across the county have saved an average of £250 per household on their energy bills - more than £3.7million across the county overall.

“This is fantastic news and I’m pleased we can once again support efforts to help residents save money.”

Registration for the Essex Energy Switch is free and only takes five minutes. Once the registration window closes, energy companies will bid at an auction to see who can offer the lowest energy tariff.

Once the winning bidder has been selected, anyone who has registered will be contacted by them directly with more details and information on how to switch.

Anyone that registered or switched their energy supplier through the Essex Energy Switch last year, will need to register again this year.

Once registered, there is no obligation to switch providers. Registering can be done online at www.essex.gov.uk/energyswitch.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The Essex Energy Switch is managed by iChoosr, a national organisation which specialises in maximising the power of group buying.
- iChoosr can negotiate bespoke and market leading tariffs not available direct or via price comparison services