

acevo

Charity Leaders Network

ACEVO

Utilities

FAQ'S



Your utilities - in safe hands

1. Q What is the ACEVO Utilities Scheme?

A In broad terms, it is a product designed exclusively for ACEVO members, encompassing a selection of services tailored to the Third Sector, to reduce utility costs and usage going forward.

2. Q What are the benefits?

A You will be able to enjoy reduced price gas, electric & water contracts using the collective buying power of the group and enjoy a host of other benefits and services.

3. Q What are the services?

- A**
- Competitive group priced gas and/or electric contract
 - Group procurement strategy with wholesale energy prices
 - Fully fixed prices with no additional costs during the term of the contract
 - Renewable sourced electricity
 - Bespoke water prices and consumption reducing services
 - Cost Recovery service due to previous overpayments
 - Flexible payment terms
 - Bill validation
 - User-friendly portfolio management via online software
 - Sustainable metering and management advice

4. Q Why Energycentric?

A Energycentric has been working with ACEVO for over 10 years and in that time, has achieved considerable savings on their energy contracts, as well as recovering monies overpaid in a previous period. Since then, Energycentric has become a strategic partner of ACEVO, working with many of their member organisations to save money on their gas and electric contracts whilst providing a host of energy consultancy services. With the deregulation of water, Energycentric has also secured key relationships with three of the largest water retailers.



5. Q How do you select a utility supplier?

A In 2011, a working committee was formed to design a product based on the energy needs of ACEVO member organisations. Having established a framework, an ongoing due diligence programme was put in place. Suppliers are subsequently invited to tender and present, based on an agreed set of standards and values. Following a process of elimination, a supplier is selected based on their ability to provide competitive prices; a vast range of additional sustainable services; a comprehensive CSR policy and their experience in the sector. With regards to water, Energycentric selected three retailers that are nationally based, provide bespoke consumption reducing measures and competitive pricing.

6. Q What will the price be?

A Common question. By signing the framework agreement, you are entrusting Energycentric to negotiate the price going forward at the ultimate time. This is regardless of whether your contract starts in the middle or end of a year. Because the latest group energy contract has been agreed, a price will be provided regardless of the start date, using the group co-terminus end date (30/09/2019). For water, prices have been published for 2018 by all water retailers. Prices will be fixed for the year and Energycentric will negotiate a discount based on your location and usage on a bespoke basis.

7. Q Can you guarantee that the scheme price will be cheaper than my renewal price from my current supplier?

A Another frequently asked question. Of course, there is no guarantee that the scheme price will be lower than the one you receive at renewal from your incumbent supplier but we are confident that the commitment made by our suppliers and the volume of energy and water being bought will drive the price lower. Don't forget, it is also about using the services within the scheme to reduce usage that will ultimately reduce costs going forward.

Timing is key when negotiating utility prices. When the ACEVO group contract was secured in 2017, savings were achieved across all member organisations regardless of size. For example one hospice saved 62% on its utility costs whilst a large multi-site housing association saved over £30K per annum. The electricity price has increased by 62% since we secured the ACEVO Utilities scheme contract but those member organisations have benefited from fixed prices and budget certainty.



8. Q How do we join?

A Energycentric will guide you through the process and advise you how to join based on your specific requirements and needs. In essence, all that is needed to start the ball rolling is a "Letter of Authority" and copies of supplier invoices.

9. Q When can we join?

A The simple answer is any time. The management framework agreement allows flexibility regardless of when you join or wish to leave the scheme. Many ACEVO member organisations have committed to the scheme and have aligned their contracts accordingly. However, you can join at any time during the term of the agreement and even be part of the next one.

10. Q When should we join?

A The current management framework agreement started on the 1st October 2016 and is due to expire in three years. However the latest gas and energy (electric) contracts expire in September 2019 so in essence, you can join anytime because the framework agreement and supply contracts will continue to be renewed on a rolling basis. It is important that you understand that even if you have a variety of contracts with different energy suppliers due from now until 2019, now might be the right time to secure your contracts going forward.

11. We are already in contract; what can we do?

A This will be the situation in the majority of cases. Commercial contracts are normally secured over a fixed term and there is a process of termination that needs to be adhered to, in accordance with Ofgem regulations. By joining the scheme now, Energycentric will manage the process and ensure a smooth transition once your existing contracts expire. For water, the process is different and varies with each supplier. Once we have all the information, we can advise you on the type of contract you are in and what needs to be done going forwards.



12. Q Our contracts end in January and March 2019, so why join now?

A The scheme has been designed specifically to accommodate this scenario. For gas and electric, you will be able to secure a contract from the end of your current arrangement to the co-terminus date of the new group agreement thus aligning all your contracts to a common end date. Using the dates above, two contracts can be put in place (secured at the most optimum time by Energycentric, regardless of the start date) from January and March 2019 to the 30th September 2019.

13. Q We are already with the chosen supplier and/or another energy consultant?

A You can still join the ACEVO Utilities scheme at any time regardless of whether you are in this situation. Energycentric will ensure that your current arrangements are honoured and any internal changes are managed efficiently. Completing a "Letter of Authority" is all that is needed to change energy consultants thus allowing Energycentric to take over the running of your existing contracts and arrange the transition into the scheme. This is commonplace and does not affect any existing utility contracts you have in place.

14. Q Our organisation is in a Buying Group and/or a Charity Energy Basket?

A Once again, this is not unusual and something that is come across on a regular basis. You may be part of a management framework agreement and need to check the terms and conditions (something Energycentric can assist you with). It will cost you nothing to compare the benefits and the procurement strategy of your existing arrangement with those within the ACEVO Utilities scheme. Once you have undertaken this exercise and a decision has been made, assistance will be provided in the process regardless of whether you decide to join the scheme or remain with your existing arrangement.



15. Q Can we save money?

A Absolutely! In these difficult economic times, this should be one of the most important questions and by combining a group procurement strategy with a comprehensive range of utility saving services, every scheme member will reduce costs both now and in the long term. Not only will your organisation benefit from the expertise of a national utility consultancy firm and the buying power of the UK's leading utility suppliers, you will be able to use all or part of the services on offer at no extra charge to reduce usage in a sustainable manner.

16. Q What does the online software provide?

A As part of the ACEVO Utilities scheme, you will have access to an online portal which will enable you to manage your portfolio more efficiently. You will be able to monitor your usage and costs at each site, raise queries through a ticketing system and obtain copy invoices for accounting purposes.

17. Q How can we make our organisation more sustainable?

A Energycentric is pleased to confirm that the electric contract has been purchased using renewable sources. Also available is free advice on AMR installation, energy management, solar panel & CHP installation, wind turbines, biomass boilers and ground source heat pump options. The scheme can also provide each organisation with an individual assessment of their sustainable options (you may already have solar panels and/or AMR's) and have a look at current invoices to see if costs can be reduced further. By joining the ACEVO Utilities scheme, your organisation can explore sustainable options without unnecessary financial outlay.

18. Q Do we really need Bill Validation?

A Having elected to join the scheme, a copy of your invoice will be sent electronically to Energycentric for validation. Not only will they ensure that the invoice includes the correct information, rates & VAT but their online software will apply up to 25 triggers as agreed on a bespoke basis. This is part of the scheme and a valuable service which will save money; on overpayment based on estimated bills, for example. For water, checking bills is the quickest way to find out if you have a leak somewhere and investigating at the earliest possible time.



19. Q What is an AMR (Automated Meter Reading) and what is the benefit?

A The installation of an AMR negates the need for anyone having to take a meter reading and any organisation having to pay for over-estimated invoices. As you may or may not be aware, the government is phasing in the mandatory introduction of AMR's in the coming years as part of its commitment to reduce carbon emissions. If you are an organisation with several sites, this could represent a substantial financial saving.

20. Q Is Cost Recovery worthwhile and how much does it cost?

A With over 30% of bills incorrect, how do you know that you have not overpaid for your energy? Energycentric can conduct an exercise using its customer management system to check invoices for anomalies, going back at least 3 years and recover any monies owed to you from the supplier. A reduced fee for ACEVO Utilities scheme members' is applied based on the amount of monies recovered and if no anomalies are found, no fee is due. Energycentric is pleased to announce its collaboration with one of the leading water forensic companies in the UK, meaning ACEVO member organisations now have access to find out if they have been overcharged going back several years.

21. Q Who can join?

A Any ACEVO member organisation can join the scheme at any time. From a small single-site charity to a large multi-site organisation, this scheme can benefit all and offers the chance for all ACEVO members to join their peers, whilst maintaining financial independence.

22. Q How do we find out more?

A Please contact Energycentric on

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