

Storm Arwen Update: 24 December 2021 From Northern Powergrid

Compensation

Storm Arwen caused power cuts that affected well over 200,000 customers. The vast majority of those customers were reconnected on the first day of the event and around 85% had their power restored within 48 hours. In storms of this magnitude, any customer who experiences a power cut that lasts longer than 48 hours is entitled to compensation. In this case, our information shows that this applies to around 30,000 customers.

We know that the storm, and the lengthy power cuts it caused, created some very difficult circumstances for many people. So, we wanted to make as many payments as possible before Christmas. Our dedicated team has worked flat out to make it possible for the majority of our customers receive their payment before Christmas.

Today (24 December) we are pleased to confirm that **we have now issued Storm Arwen compensation cheques to all those customers where we already had a full set of information** necessary to make a payment. That amounts to around 24,000 cheques. We have also issued over 5,000 letters to those remaining customers whom we need additional information from to progress their payment.

Given the Christmas post, we expect any cheques or letters that have not already arrived to be with our customers in between Christmas and New Year.

For customers who want to provide additional information as quickly as possible, we have online forms they can use to [provide their preferred contact name](#) and/or [give us more details about the duration of their power cut](#). Once completed, these forms will help us successfully complete their compensation.

If any customer **has not received a letter from us by 5 January** either containing a payment or asking for further information - and they believe that under guaranteed standards they should have - please see [our overview on Storm Arwen compensation payments](#) and then email Compensation-queries@northernpowergrid.com providing your details and the duration of your power cut.

What does this mean for our customers?

We have calculated the amount of compensation due and, where we have the information we need to make a payment, and issued around 24,000 automatic payments. **All payments are via cheque, mitigating the risk of fraud and we will not request any bank details at any time.**

In those cases where we are able to make an automatic payment, the cheques have been made out to the name we have on record.

If customers have received a cheque and the name is incorrect or they need it to be made payable to someone else, they can [tell us here](#).

Communicating with customers where we need more information

Where we do not hold all the information we need to process or determine a compensation payment, letters have been issued inviting people to provide the information that we need. These are expected to be with all customers in between Christmas and New Year.

To keep this information secure, each letter will include a unique code that will mean that only the recipient of the letter can provide information about the power cut at that address. As part of the letter, people may be asked to provide a name so we can issue a cheque or to provide more information about their power cut experience so we can make sure they receive the correct amount of compensation due.

To make it easier for our customers, especially over the festive period, to either query a payment or provide us with information, we have an online form to verify your name which can be accessed by [clicking here](#) and an online form to provide information about the duration of your power cut which can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

If we need more information, customers have a choice of options to provide it to us – online, by post, or by email (Compensation-queries@northernpowergrid.com). Our phone line (0800 028 9517) will also remain open until 4pm today (Christmas Eve). It will reopen at 9am on Tuesday 4 January 2022 and operate 9am to 5pm on weekdays (excluding Bank Holidays).

Going above and beyond

We understand how difficult the impact of Storm Arwen has been for our customers, which is why we took the decision to voluntarily pay over and above the regulated [Guaranteed Standards](#) cap of £700 to those people whose lives were significantly disrupted.

The amount of compensation people are entitled to is bespoke. It depends on the length of time without power compared with the length of time the regulations give us to restore supply.

For a typical customer, if they were without power for more than 48 hours, the compensation payment will be £70 after the first 48 hours and £70 for every 12 hours beyond that. As we are voluntarily topping-up payments to those off supply for the longest, if a customer was without power for several days, they will be compensated as if the cap did not apply.

This is particularly important for our domestic customers who were without power from the start of the storm and their property was one of the first to be restored. Through our enhanced compensation approach, they could receive a guaranteed standard payment of up to £1,820. This is more than double the usual industry standard and significantly more than the annual network-related charges which domestic customers pay as part of their bill from their chosen electricity supplier for our services.

We wanted to ensure our approach to compensation recognised and reflected the unprecedented situation Storm Arwen caused for our customers and our network.

Helping our customers understand how compensation payments are calculated

The amount of compensation each customer is entitled to depends on the duration of time they were without power.

To help everyone understand how compensation is calculated [please click here](#) to view our overview of Storm Arwen compensation payments.

Welfare support payments

We know that customers may also have incurred unexpected additional costs due to the power cut. Therefore, in addition to the compensation payments, we are providing financial assistance to any domestic customer who was still off supply on 29 November 2021 or later and who needed our help.

We will pay for the reasonable costs of alternative accommodation and food (up to £15 per person per meal). We will also contribute to other reasonably incurred costs; for example if people had to arrange their own back-up generator.

We are continuing to process claims for payments where our customers have incurred any reasonable costs and have set up online form to help our customers progress their claim.

If customers have costs which they wish to be reimbursed for [please click here to access our online form](#). Before completing the form, they may wish to check out our [FAQ](#) below for guidance on reimbursement of welfare support costs.

Our teams are working hard to process all of the claims received from our customers. All claims received up to 17 December have been successfully processed and customers are asked to allow for Christmas post. Any remaining claims will be processed as soon as possible over the coming weeks.

The team will continue to work until all claims are appropriately resolved in line with Northern Powergrid's guidance for reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred.

Returning our network to full strength

Storm Arwen caused unprecedented levels of damage to parts of our network. To get the lights back on our teams had to do an enormous amount of work, including delivering major rebuilds in some locations. In other cases, we deployed temporary generation.

The work didn't stop when the power was restored, and our dedicated teams have been doing everything possible to carry out some of the permanent repairs needed to put our network back to full strength for our customers as soon as possible. They continue to make significant progress and as a 24/7, 365 organisation our people will continue to be there for our customers over the coming festive period and beyond.

Over recent weeks we have seen herculean efforts to deliver rebuilds, restore power, and start to carry out some of the permanent repairs needed. Whilst recognising the challenges and unprecedented levels of damage and disruption Storm Arwen caused for our network and our customers, we are proud of the work by

our teams to do all they could whilst facing the consequences of the worst storm seen for decades in our operating area.

In Northumberland our teams continue to carry out the work needed to safely reconnect the remaining customers back to our network as soon as possible. They will not stop until this work is complete.

We have reduced the number of customers on supply via generation from more than 330 at the peak of the event to 14 generators, with 10 of these in Northumberland. Work to carry out the necessary repairs can only be completed once we can safely access our damaged overhead line equipment. This will be possible once the Forestry Commission completes a significant amount of tree clearance in the area north of Kielder. Once the Forestry Commission completes this work, we will ensure we get our teams into that area as soon as it is physically possible to carry out the necessary repairs.

As always, we have bespoke, robust arrangements in place to ensure those customers who remain on generators over the festive period have support arrangements in place to safely fuel and maintain their generator until such time as they are reconnected to our network.

We moved to our normal operational status from yesterday (23 December) as we have returned the vast majority of customers to the security of supply from our wider power network.

We understand how challenging this unprecedented weather event was for our customers, colleagues, contractors, and other industry teams who supported us.

We are sorry for the difficulties our customers' experienced and thank them for their patience and understanding. We are focused on reviewing in detail what happened during and after Storm Arwen and learning from this unprecedented event in our operating area. These learnings will help inform our future approach to supporting our customers and work with other partners who have a leading role to play if such an event of this scale was ever to impact our network and communities in the future.

In the meantime, as we head towards the festive period, we wish our customers a safe, happy and healthy Christmas. Our teams remain ready to support our customers if they need us over the coming festive period and into the New Year.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

[Read our FAQ](#) about reimbursement of welfare support costs

[Read our FAQ](#) about the weather impact in our region during Storm Arwen.

[Read our FAQ](#) about maintaining generators.

[Read our overview](#) of Storm Arwen compensation payments