

# The Consumer Council's Home Energy Index

## January 2023



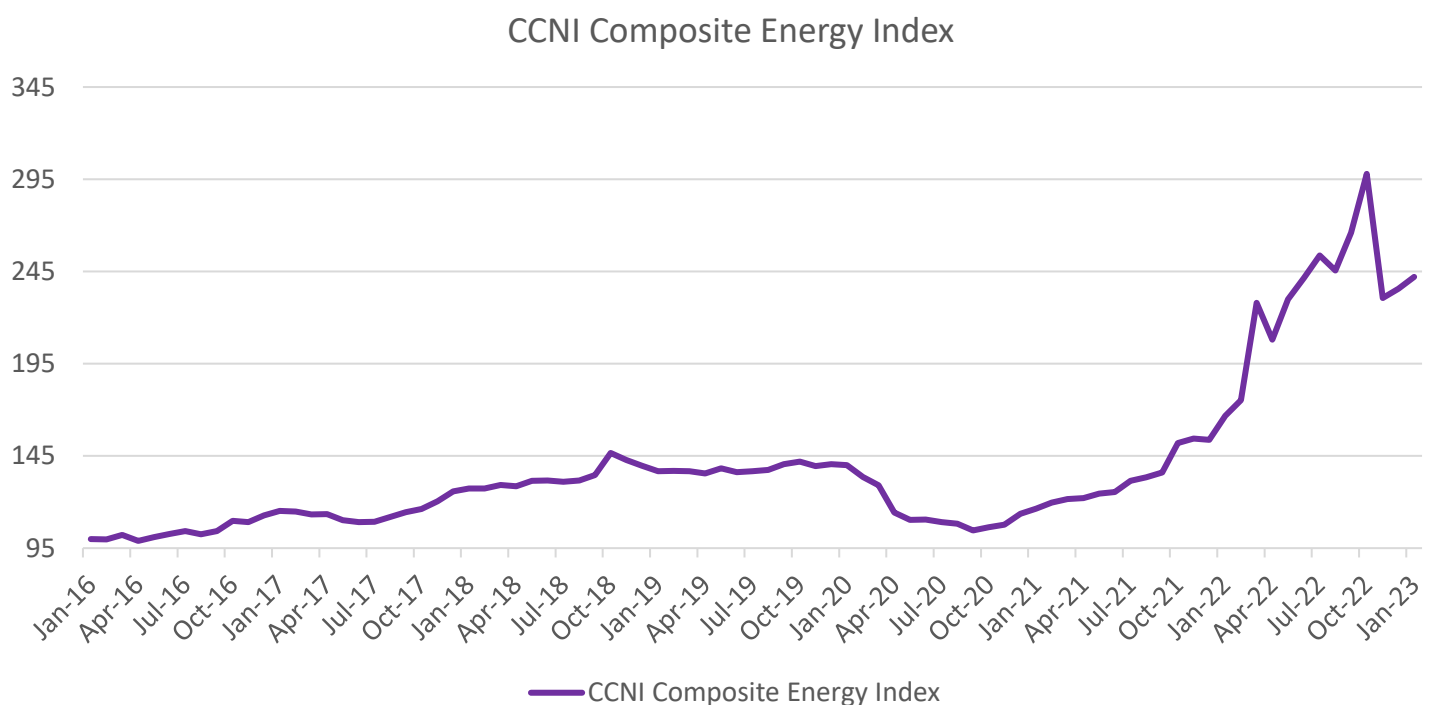
**Overview:** The Consumer Council's Home Energy Index tracks changes in household gas, electricity and home heating oil (HHO) prices in Northern Ireland. A composite index is calculated, meaning that all three energy prices are combined to create one overarching figure which uses appropriate weighting to reflect usage and market share.

**Trend:** Over almost 8 years (since January 2016), Northern Ireland's Home Energy Index (HEI) has increased by 142.02. In 2022 the HEI rose continuously and reached its highest ever point in October 2022 with an increase of 197.42. It dropped significantly in November due to a drop in HHO prices, and the introduction of the Government Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) which applied a unit rate reduction to the price of electricity and gas.

**January 2023 Findings:** At the end of January 2023 the composite HEI was 242.02 having increased by 6.33 points since December 2022. This increase was due to an increase to some electricity prices and a reduction to the EPG discount amounts.

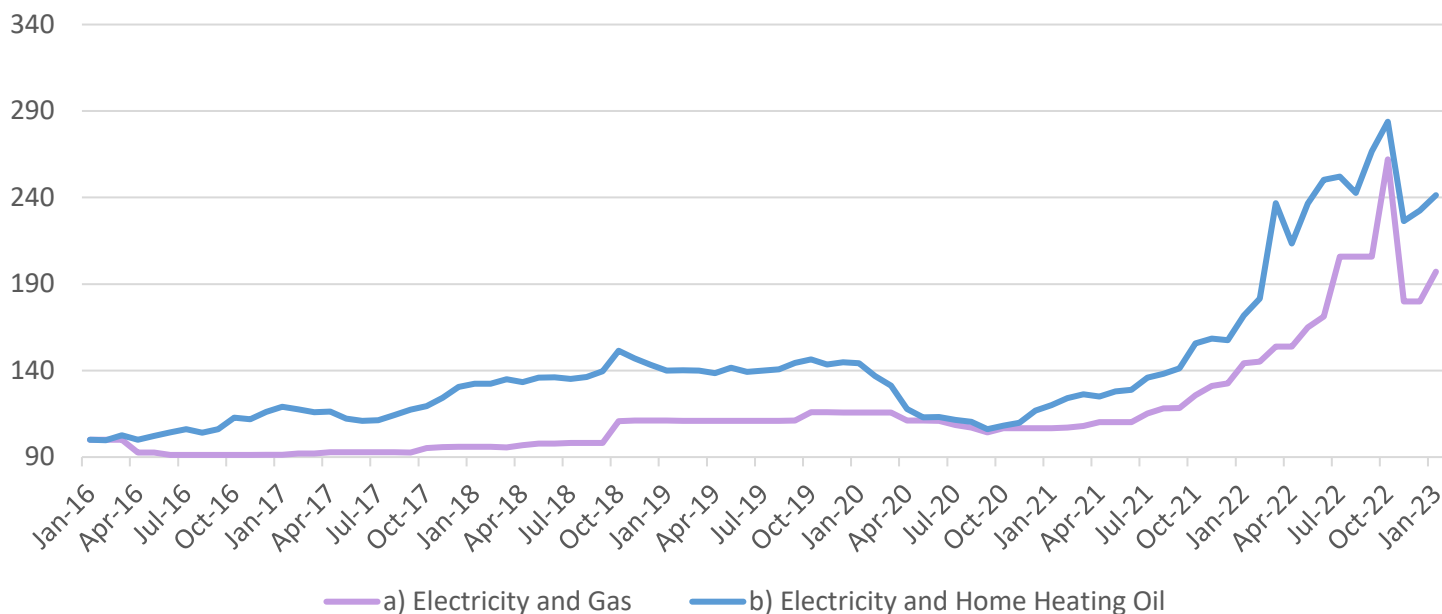
- **HHO:** Due to the reliance on HHO in Northern Ireland (approximately 68% of households), the index is particularly sensitive to changes in the price of HHO. Following a peak in March 2022, prices have fluctuated month to month. They fell slightly in January 2023.
- **Gas:** Gas prices came down slightly in January 2023.
- **Electricity:** Electricity prices rose in January 2023.

**Figure 1: Home Energy Index (composite of electricity, gas and HHO) for Northern Ireland (January 2016 – January 2023). \*Incorporating the EPG**

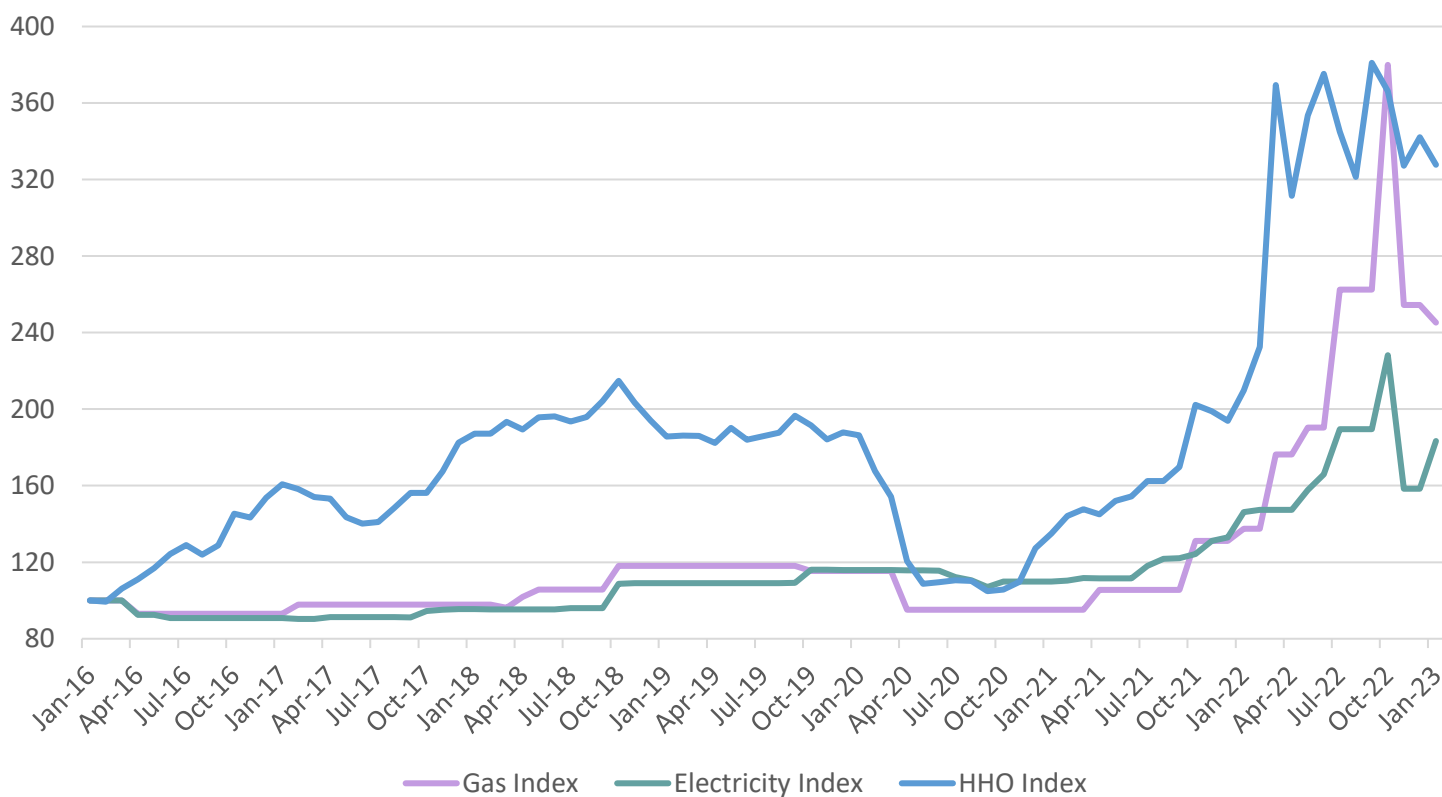


\*As this index is designed to demonstrate the price/tariff change experienced by domestic consumers in Northern Ireland over time, the Government EPG subsidy has been incorporated. For further information on energy prices without the EPG applied please contact the Consumer Council Energy Team.

**Figure 2: Home Energy Index for (a) Electricity and Gas and (b) Electricity and Home Heating Oil for Northern Ireland (January 2016 – January 2023).**



**Figure 3: Gas, electricity and home heating oil (HHO) indices for Northern Ireland (January 2016 – January 2023).**



### What is a price index?

A price index is a number that shows the extent to which a price has changed from a base over a given period. The base period is set at 100 and changes in price are shown relative to that number, i.e. above or below 100 for an increase or decrease respectively. The base period for the Home Energy Index is January 2016.

## How was the 'Home Energy Index' created?

The Consumer Council records gas and electricity tariffs monthly from different energy suppliers across Northern Ireland. Prices of home heating oil are recorded weekly from different suppliers. These are available on our website, please see below. Prices are weighted to take consideration of usage and market share of suppliers, so that changes in the index number better reflect the change impacting the consumer over time.

The data sources used were updated in October 2022 so that the index better reflects meter types in use, market share, and is based on tariffs on suppliers' standard tariffs only for greater consistency.

## Consumer Information:

The Consumer Council's annual *Consumer Insight Survey* (May 2021) revealed that one of consumers top 'household expenditure worries' was paying energy bills. It also showed that consumers shop around to try to get better energy deals – 32% do so for home heating oil and 26% for gas/electricity. Our *Review of the Impact of Covid-19 on Fuel Poverty in Northern Ireland* (April 2022) indicates that 34% of households in Northern Ireland are classed as being in fuel poverty – that is spending over 10% of their net annual household income on energy. Further information on the survey results is available on The Consumer Council website [www.consumerCouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk).

The Consumer Council has a variety of tools available to help consumers make better choices, shop around and save money. Please visit our website [www.consumerCouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk) to avail of the following:

- [Energy Price Comparison Tool](#)
- [Home Heating Oil Survey](#)
- [Energy Efficiency Information](#)
- [Shopping around to save money on transport costs](#)
- [Shopping around to save money on food, insurance, and postal services](#)
- [Household budgeting](#)

For further information please contact The Consumer Council:



0800 121 6022



[contact@consumerCouncil.org.uk](mailto:contact@consumerCouncil.org.uk)



[www.consumerCouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk)