



Engaging with High Energy Users in the Self-Funded Market

Final Report

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Report	Engaging with High Energy Users/ Self-Funded Market
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Changeworks Board endorsed dedicated research into subsets of the 'non-fuel poor' or 'able to pay/ self-funded' market to develop a better understanding the drivers, barriers and opportunities to reduce the energy consumption by high energy users. Changeworks sees this as a large potential market for intervention and, ultimately, a route to significant carbon reduction in Scotland. The research and publication of this report aims to better understanding for all those working cross sector, including the private, third and public sectors. The aligns with Scottish Government and local authority objectives to better engage with this demographic to achieve emission reduction targets in the coming years.

It is important to know how to engage with the section of the self-funded demographic whose impacts are large and behaviour visible, and who can afford to fund some measures that will result in reduced emissions linked directly to their choices, behaviours and activities. In order to do so an understanding of property, research was completed to look at the effect of property characteristics, occupancy, behaviour, interest, intention etc. would have on energy consumption. This research should inform the piloting of interventions and practical activity to support both behaviour change and the installation of energy efficiency measures.

1.2 Methodology

During Oct/Nov of 2017 Changeworks selected and held 17 in-depth interviews lasting approximately 1 hour, with 'High Energy' householders in Inverness that met our demographic specifications.

'High energy' users were determined based on gas usage (above 21,680 kWh per year), and on detached property types (since heating energy is correlated to floor area (Palmer & Cooper, 2013)).

The focus of the discussions was to understand the motivations and behaviours behind energy consuming activities and choices, and to better understand the associated levels of awareness. The results of this work were compiled in an Interim Report, which highlighted the complexity of the factors that contribute to domestic energy use, as clear-cut trends were not evident. Therefore, a review of the methodology and findings was completed, along with subsequent research, to produce this Final Report.

Phase 1a: Identify appropriate user types for analysis and engagement

- Identify those falling within higher energy user groups with which to engage
- Write interview questions to determine implications of operations, fabric and behaviour activities concerning energy use in the home

- Trial survey internally

Phase 1b: Engage with sample of High Energy Users to understand their drivers, barriers, interests and influencers

- Recruit homeowners and establish sample group
- Complete Detailed face-to-face surveys with householders (17 surveys, lasting approximately 1 hour each were completed in Oct/ Nov 2017)
- Conduct an EPC to record and assess physical qualities of their home

Outputs: *Interim report, for internal circulation, which details the research findings for each of the properties and comments on trends identified.*

Phase 2: Follow Up Qualitative Interviews

In May 2018, 10 telephone interviews lasting 15-20 minutes were completed with the householders who had agreed to be contacted for follow up research. The purpose of the follow up interviews was to develop a broader overview of householder's views, attitudes surrounding energy use, to bridge gaps in understanding and to explore in more detail the relationships householders have with their homes and their energy consumption. The aggregated responses from the interviews were analysed by theme to provide a broad overview of findings, rather than assessing each householder's responses individually.

These findings and conclusions drawn are discussed in Section 2 of this report.

Outputs: *This Final Report that builds on the key findings of the Interim report.*

1.3 Structure of Report

This report is intended as a stand-alone report which brings together the findings from both phases of the research, drawing out themes and conclusions. It represents the analysis of different findings rather than a summary of all questions that were asked within the Phase One survey.

The report is broadly split into two sections, one each for the two research phases. The first section synthesizes the findings from the householder survey, drawing together different points to provide a descriptive summary of the quantitative data gathered.

The following section is more narrative in style, reflecting the qualitative nature of the Phase 2 interviews and building on the earlier findings and data from the survey.

Conclusions are drawn, and recommendations for future engagement with the demographic who are the subject of this research are made, based on interpretation of the research.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 Key Findings from Phase 1

Summary of Households in Sample

Five properties were very large detached homes (over 200m²), each with four or five bedrooms, and three, four or five reception rooms. Of these five, three properties had correspondingly high annual energy consumption. However, the second largest property (248m²) had the lowest energy consumption of all properties in the study; the property is home to only two adult residents. There is a general trend between floor area and energy use but with substantial outliers.

All but one of the properties is detached (including two which are bungalows). Around two-thirds of the properties (13, or 76 per cent) have an EPC rating of C (between 69 and 78). Two properties have a higher EPC rating of B (82 and 86) and two have a lower EPC rating of D (66 and 67).

A range of different heating and lighting types were used in properties and there was no relationship between these and the amount of energy used to heat and light homes.

Occupation of properties is spread across a broad demographic range, to include young families, families with older children, couples on their own and older couples.

Factors Linked to High Energy Use

One of the headline findings from the research is that no one factor is likely to predict a household's energy use. Rather energy consumption (and associated costs) are the result of many factors which interact. These include those linked to fabric of the property, systems and appliances within it, family size, preferences, patterns of consumption etc. Some of these factors are summarised as follows:

Neither the number of occupants, the presence of children or pets are a consistent predictor of energy use. Likewise, household income did not seem to correlate with energy consumption.

Many, but not all, of the properties use a large amount of energy for heat. These patterns of heating and related energy costs are not predictable across the cohorts, i.e. there are properties with higher heating costs and smaller floor areas as well as the reverse.

A range of occupant behaviours contribute to high energy use and white good/home entertainment use represent main areas of consumption, other than heating.

Monitoring Energy Use

Respondents were asked how often they monitor their energy use and responses varied widely. Of the 16 who answered, the responses were weekly (1), monthly (4), seasonally/quarterly (5), every six months (1), annually (1), never (4), but one of

these also said, 'when the bills come in'. So roughly a third check at least monthly, while a similar number check seasonally/quarterly and 18 per cent never check at all. These low rates of monitoring suggest that total energy consumption (and therefore the factors contributing to it) are not a priority consideration for these householders. The level that respondents checked their energy did not seem linked to how much energy they used/ how much they spent on energy. If householders do not monitor their energy use, they cannot adapt their usage in response to it.

Energy behaviours

Most but not all households use their appliances in line with basic behavioural energy saving advice, suggesting that understanding and knowledge of energy consumption is moderate. E.g. for washing, most were running full loads rather than partial or half loads. Seven (42 per cent) wash at 40°C, seven (42 per cent) at 30°C, two wash at 60°C and one washes at 90°C once a month. All 17 households run full loads. Similarly, rooms not in use were generally not heated, and while mastery and engagement with heating controls varied from respondent to respondent, particularly alarming or wasteful patterns were not common. While households used high levels of energy these were not attributable to specific energy-intensive or 'bad' energy habits.

Respondents identified themselves as not wasting energy or using it unnecessarily. They were conscious about visible wasteful behaviours (leaving taps running, turning lights off) and tried to eliminate them. However, only a few householders appeared to actively engage in monitoring their habits linked to consumption and achieving reductions in use where possible. One householder discussed a new boiler which was set up by the engineer and appreciated that it is 'fit and forget' – as he doesn't want to read instructions or have to make manual changes.

Heating Controls

Householders in the sample had varied heating systems and controls including different combinations of timers, thermostats and TRVs. No particularly wasteful patterns of heating were identified, though some sub-optimal patterns were identified for individual households (e.g. turning thermostat down from 23°C). The majority of households actively adjust thermostats in response to temperature, work patterns and feelings of comfort. Two households do not vary the temperature within the home, but fourteen (84 per cent) adjust temperature using the TRVs and one uses the stove to warm the house and leaves the heat off in the bedrooms.

Willingness to Change Behaviours

Thirteen of the respondents said that they would consider changing their heating patterns if it would help them save energy. However, five followed this with a caveat to the effect of 'only if it does not impact on comfort' or 'it would need to work with my lifestyle'. Responses to further questions clouded this further, with some householders not believing they could save major amounts, as they were already taking steps to use energy efficiently.

There also seems to be a lack of awareness of impacts or reasons to change behaviour as respondents did not tend to link individual energy use with broader environmental concerns.

Acceptance of Energy Usage and Bills

Energy costs cause occasional concern amongst some respondents, but all feel their bills are affordable regardless of whether they were at the higher or lower end of the consumption scale of the cohort. Householders tend to accept their energy costs, even though many feel or recognise that these are high. They also felt that the reasons for their energy use/bills were within their control. I.e. they did not 'blame' high bills on external factors such as their property being cold, ineffective heating systems etc.

Money as a Motivator

The most common factor that motivates respondents is money. More specifically than saving money however, respondents' attitudes and actions seem more linked to not wasting money. The bottom line associated with an installation, upgrade or change to lifestyle is always considered and is generally the most important factor of influence.

Irrespective of the gross income range of householders in the project (<£40k to £80-120k) they tend to spend money on energy willingly to meet their chosen lifestyle and desired comfort levels. They save/ avoid wasting money where possible, but the threshold for this is higher to that of householders who are at risk of fuel poverty, essentially high energy users focus more on the pounds than the pence.

Renewable Technologies

Only two properties had any generation technologies (both solar PV) and a majority (10/17) expressed an interest in having renewables in the future, particularly solar PV. However, none of these had actual plans to install renewables. Both those who were and those who were not interested in future installs expressed concern about install costs and incentive tariffs.

Smart meters

None of the seventeen households have smart meters, with three noting that they had not been offered them. Of the total seventeen, thirteen (78 per cent) would like to have them installed in their homes. However, this interest does not predict more efficient use of energy, as respondents are not currently good at monitoring their energy use.

Insulation

Only two of the seventeen respondents had upgraded their loft insulation in the recent years. Three others intended to/ would consider do so in the coming years. Insulation upgrades were/ will be all completed in their own right and not as part of a home upgrade such as an extension or renovation. None of the respondents had

upgraded or appeared to consider future upgrades to the wall insulation of their property.

Draughts and Draft Proofing

Draughts, while experienced by some householders, do not appear to be a priority to address. Five households were asked about draughts that they had mentioned as being an issue previously. One had fixed the issues and one of these households had not done anything to resolve the draught, despite acknowledging that it likely affects the temperature in the home.

Three households have taken temporary measures to resolve the draughts they were experiencing (draught excluders, using towels to block draught and using insulation tape); two of these have plans to take more permanent action (replacing doors which cause the draughts), while one said they would take more permanent steps to resolve if they knew what the options were, and how to implement them.

3. PHASE 2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the follow up interviews was to develop a broader overview of householder's views, attitudes surrounding energy use. This was with a view to bridge gaps in understanding and explore in more detail the relationships householders have with their homes and their energy consumption.

Semi-structured interviews which were tailored to each of the ten respondents were used. A list of generic questions was developed exploring physical measures and attitudes to energy use, and selected appropriate questions were put to householders (See Appendix A for these questions and the answers given). These were chosen based on that householder's responses to the survey in Phase 1 of the project. Tailored questions for each respondent were also asked, which explored anomalies, contradicting responses or responses of interest from their Phase 1 responses.

The findings from Phase 2 are discussed below in terms of the main themes that were identified.

3.2 Key Themes from Phase 2

Smart Technologies

Awareness, interest and perceptions of smart technology were explored with all 10 respondents in Phase 2. There was some confusion about what was meant by smart technology; three households initially spoke about smart meters or renewable technology.

Most were aware but not interested in Smart Technology. After it was explained to them, only one respondent expressed interest in getting it in the future.

Contrary to the expectation that some people are drawn to the 'tech-savvy' image of smart technology, one respondent reported being 'old-fashioned', so smart technology held no appeal.

Only one of the respondents already had Smart Technology installed (HIVE System) and found it useful to manage their usage. However, they were not certain that it was saving them money, suggesting that they were not fully engaging with the system (i.e. reading feedback). Another respondent had enquired about receiving one but reported British Gas were unable to install it.

The responses suggest that Smart technology is still not seen as necessary or even particularly attractive for householders. The difference between awareness and interest is also emphasised. I.e. knowing about and understanding Smart technology does not influence people's desire to have it.

The influence of stories and other people's experiences seemed to have particular impact on respondent views regarding smart meters (both positively and negatively) as is evident from the following points:

Only one other household was actually interested in smart technology, citing a need for more control over their energy use. Their neighbours recently had a system installed and they were impressed by it. Another household said their daughter had a smart technology system at home, but they weren't particularly interested in using one themselves – while they could see the advantages, they didn't think the cost would be worth it. The final household, once the concept of smart technology was explained to them, said they might consider it in the future, though they had concerns about the technology not being safe; they had just watched a Panorama programme about Alexa / Siri style devices being vulnerable to hacking.

Switching Suppliers

In the initial survey, eight had switched in the previous two years. The majority of households (15 of 17, 88 per cent) said they would consider switching energy suppliers in the next two years. Of the two remaining households, one said 'maybe' and the other said they didn't know.

In the follow up interviews, eight householders were asked about switching. Six had previously switched supplier, two said they would consider switching in the near future. All six cited financial reasons, with three also mentioning improved customer service as a reason. One household had gotten into the habit of switching to a new fixed deal each year.

One household said they switched to save paying more to one energy company, when they could pay slightly less to another. They also said however, that they weren't convinced that switching did always provide a better deal, saying it was a 'bit of a chance' as prices could go up once switched. Two households felt that they already have reduced their energy consumption as much as possible, therefore switching energy supplier was the only way to save more money.

This level of switching is far above average rates in the population, or the Highlands in particular. An interesting norm is evident, where not switching is seen as an (in)action leading to an avoidable waste of money. This is emphasised with the high level of intention to switch in the future. Even if people don't quite get around to doing it, they believe, and want to show that they are 'switchers'. Even though householders tend to acknowledge that they could get extra savings from changing their consumption habits, switching represents a tangible, easy-to-do action that would be foolish not to do.

Evaluation of their Own/ Others' Energy use

Householders generally perceive themselves to be informed about energy, consumption and efficiency. They have a positive view of themselves being in control of their own homes and the heat, energy and water consumed within their homes.

Respondents were often unaware of their energy use levels, or if these were high compared to consumption across Scotland or even peers. While lower energy users within the group can generally recognise that their use is low, higher energy users are not good at judging how much energy they use compared to others. Interestingly, the two highest energy consuming households were also the only two to state that their energy costs were expensive but at the same time did not view themselves as high energy users.

Where they do consider that some of their consumption patterns/ appliances/ lifestyle factors may be energy intensive, they caveat and justify reasons for this (e.g. my son has health conditions, so we heat the home, I prefer using the tumble dryer to clothes horse, I like my home to be warm).

This suggests that people 'know' that we should conserve energy but may not be fully motivated to go out of their way to achieve this. While, respondents take actions to reduce consumption and increase the energy efficiency of their homes, there is a general sense that they could do more. So, the prevailing attitude held appears to be "Well I need to use the energy I do for my own reason, but other people should be encouraged to try harder to reduce consumption".

This point is reinforced with unanimously negative perceptions of people who willingly waste energy.

Prioritisation of Energy

Energy use (or more accurately, expenditure on energy) appears to be considered to an extent but is generally not prioritised amongst householders. This appears true for electricity, heat and water. While there is acknowledgement that we should reduce our energy use, this is not always realised. One respondent felt that he needs to become "more savvy" regarding how he uses his energy, though seemingly hadn't done anything to turn this realisation into action.

By and large, respondents had relatively good understanding of energy and consumption. This was matched by actions - many have made improvements to their homes, explored opportunities for installing solar PV, adjust heating controls with relative frequency and turn off heating in rooms not being used. Alarming patterns of energy use or wasteful behaviour were not common. Rather people took steps to minimise their bills but up to a point. The final steps that could be taken, such as installing further insulation were not completed, except by particularly energy-conscious householders who are the exception rather than the rule.

The following paragraph, which summarises the responses to questions about increasing the energy efficiency of their home through adding more insulation, illustrates this impression of 'good-enough' somewhat.

Two households would consider more insulation (though one would weigh up the cost and likely savings first). The other eight said they would not invest in insulation. They felt their homes were new (e.g. 2009 build), well-built enough, or efficient enough (e.g. Energy Rating C) not to warrant it. One household said their loft had

already been insulated and considering their age, didn't feel that any further improvements would be financially viable (in terms of payback).

Self/ Home Perception

The previous point flags an important finding that emerged from the research. Householders have a fixed image of their homes and of themselves, and their behaviours and attitudes tend to be consistent with this. If they view their house as being 'efficient enough' already, upgrades will not be in householders' awareness, let alone being on their agenda. This may suggest that campaigns offering installs may suffer from 'preaching to the unconverted' if householders see measures as having no value for them.

In terms of self-perceptions, householders consistently appear to assume full control of their home and their family's energy consumption. Even where there may be gaps in knowledge about using heating systems most effectively or what appliances use the most energy for example, householders seem to be confident in their understanding. Only occasionally during the research did householders acknowledge that they were uncertain about certain issues or needed more information.

People's attitudes to switching seemed to link to self-perceptions of not being 'wasters' of money.

Focus on Own Circumstances

Respondents are generally focused on what affects them. The costs/ pay back of measures are more important to them than wider community or environmental impacts. In general, any actions, changes or expectations related to energy consumption or efficiency seem to be viewed in terms of the direct impact they can have on one's own comfort/ bills. Respondents also seemed to view the actions and intentions of others as though they had acted purely in terms of how the actions served themselves. For example, nine were asked about their impression of householders who waste lots of energy. Most condoned the wastefulness in terms of the financial (narrow) impact it would have on such householders, with only one noting the (wider) environmental impact.

While this sub-sample of nine is not intended to be representative of the wider population, this narrow focus on energy-related issues suggests that respondents are not greatly concerned or motivated by the wider effects of energy consumption and efficiency.

Family

Many households surveyed (10 of 17) said that others at home have 'bad habits' when it comes to using energy (particularly related to leaving lights or appliances on). In addition, seven households said that all occupants do not use energy to the same extent and five said that other members of their households would like the heating to be used differently.

The follow up interviews added to the available information from the surveys about the roles and actions of different family members in a home. Respondents who are responsible for paying bills report being more aware of household energy use (presumably because of the direct links to expenditure) compared with non-bill-paying adults or children. While it may be obvious that all householders will impact on consumption it is reassuring to find that bill payers act to encourage energy awareness/ efficiency by their family members. The challenges noted by respondents, in reminding children to switch off appliances or children turning on/ up the heating may interfere with efforts made to reduce their domestic consumption.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Energy Considered but not Prioritised

The total figures on energy bills seem to be considered to a limited extent, but the factors that led to that figure (particularly the behaviours linked to consumption) are not generally acknowledged or examined by householders. It does not seem that householders closely consider the relationship between behaviour and total consumption.

While householders accept that energy efficiency is a positive agenda which 'others' should be encouraged to engage in, it seems to be viewed as involving sacrifice for a householder them self. To most, reduction in consumption seems incompatible to an extent with comfort, luxury and total control over one's home and lifestyle. Thus, they will take some actions so that their property, and family's consumption habits are 'good enough' but will not engage in activities that warrant major expenditure or inconvenience.

Energy Behaviours

The survey and interview responses suggested that householders within this study had a sufficient grasp of concepts, behaviours and technologies linked to energy use and efficiency. Extreme over-use or waste of water, heat or energy was not widely observed, as had been suggested able-to-pay householders may have engaged in. While individual households could possibly reduce their consumption by making changes to their patterns of energy use and how they manage their heat and energy consumption, best practice is being followed in general. However, in terms of delivering advice and support provision, no tips/ groups of behaviours should be discontinued as the inefficiency patterns were spread across all topics (washing, heating controls, water use etc.).

Openness to Change

While an encouraging openness to adopting behavioural changes related to heating/energy efficiency was noted in the research, there is no major impetus for householders to make changes at present. Barriers which may be linked to this include the fact that respondents tend to view their own patterns and actions positively, so accepting that they should change brings an implicit admission of fault. Also, their financial security limits the attractiveness of relatively small savings which may be inconvenient to achieve or are perceived to negatively impact on comfort.

Householders consider the financial impact of most decisions they make related to their homes. The costs, savings available and length of pay-back are all reasonable and widely held considerations relating to any work which affects the fabric of their homes. Householders' continued awareness about the financial implications draws into question the appropriateness of the term 'able to pay' as in the eyes of the

householders themselves they do not have any money to spare on things which they do not fully prioritise, or they cannot afford to waste money.

Though financial implications are the primary influencer behind household decisions and actions, they are not the sole factor. Rather, householders tend to weigh up their options in terms of 'how does this affect me?'. If the personal benefits are not deemed to sufficiently outweigh the negatives, the householder will be unlikely to do something. From what we have seen in this research, other factors such as environmental benefits are considered secondarily to personal impact, if at all.

Householders seem influenced to some extent by other people's actions and experiences. Throughout both phases of the research, respondents referred to anecdotes involving other people to support their own attitudes and actions, such as the examples mentioned above about smart technology. A horror story was also referred to by one householder as to why they didn't want a smart meter. Further explicit reference to the influence of others was how householders referred to learning how to use their heating controls from friends, or their boiler controls from advice received from installers. Though people do not discuss energy with acquaintances and report not being influenced by others, social norms such as the switching example may also influence actions regarding energy.

Intention-Action Gap

A disparity between intention and action was repeatedly noted amongst householders over the course of this research. While respondents were generally not opposed to adopting energy saving behaviours and felt that they could make changes, they were not actively doing this. This is linked to numerous factors, including perceptions of their energy use, efficiency, their home and what others are doing. Other intention-action gaps were householder's vague notions of installing renewables in the future, or acknowledgement that draughts should be addressed but not exploring/ completing the necessary steps.

How Householders View Themselves

Householders view themselves as being in control of and unconcerned about their consumption and bills. They also see themselves as generally being knowledgeable, confident and socially responsible with regards energy consumption and efficiency. Any 'bad' habits, are justified or contextualised by their responses. These views and perceptions may differ to those held by a sample of lower energy users, with whom there is greater cross-sector experience of engaging with about energy use. As many of these identify as needing support or seek out advice, they may be open to receiving advice. As High Energy Users do not identify gaps in knowledge or need, approaches which recognise their competence and normalise advice to further improve 'what they are already doing well' may be more effective.

4.2 Recommendations

The findings from both phases of the research and subsequent analysis has provided some useful insights into the non-fuel poor demographic. While the small number of respondents in this research will limit the transferability of findings across the population to an extent, some patterns and themes identified and explored should provide a bedrock of understanding on which future s engagement and intervention can be built. A number of recommendations have been developed which should inform how we engage with High Energy Users around the topics of energy consumption and efficiency.

Refer to High Energy Users/ Self-funded Market

The language used to describe the consumers which this research focuses on will impact to an extent on the chosen approaches to reduce their energy use. Given householders' apparent occupation, albeit a reasonable one, with costs and finances the term 'able to pay' may not be the most useful term to describe them. 'High energy users' may be a more suitable term to be used, as this recognises the active role people have in consuming lots of energy. The term 'self-funded', favoured by the Scottish Government also seems appropriate.

Align Messages with Householders' Views of Themselves

Given that high energy users seem to highly rate their awareness, knowledge and skills at effectively managing their homes and their energy consumption, it is important that communications do not challenge this. Instead, correspondence or materials that can acknowledge the positives already being completed and offering scope for them to do more may be better received than something which is perceived as being preachy or irrelevant because they don't feel they need advice or support. Examples of this may be:

- "Even new homes can waste energy"
- "Many people are not aware of the savings that can come from"
- "The most efficient heating systems can still use lots of energy if the settings are not adjusted frequently"

Frame Arguments Around Avoiding Waste

This is linked to the above point – householders to not want to view themselves as wasting heat/ energy/ water/ money. If it is presented or highlighted that certain choices, habits result in wastefulness, householders may be pay more attention. This is particularly relevant to not doing something – such as the install of a measure or paying attention to their bills or usage. This framing of waste is something that is already being done to an extent by some communicators. This research has found that such an approach should be more effective for high energy users as well as for those actively seeking advice. Example phrases may include:

- "Continuing to wash clothes at 40°C will cost you an extra 15p per wash"
- "Closing the curtains at night will stop heat going straight outside"

Emphasise Personal Impacts

Though High Energy Users may not be aware, interested or active in reducing energy consumption, they are concerned with how they and their families will be affected by different choices, circumstances and changes. The personal impact to them is central to how they view any measure or recommendation presented to them. Communications should emphasise the positive personal impacts in the first instance and be directed from 'what does the energy user want/ think/ have issue with?' angle as opposed to 'what should the energy user do?'. As some of this group tend to view energy efficiency as a challenge to comfort or certain lifestyle choices, communications which emphasise that that efficiency does not need to be at the expense of other valued considerations may be advisable.

Use Examples

The impact of stories, word of mouth and concrete examples is well documented for making an impression on people and influencing them in a certain direction. Respondents to this research referred to these frequently, particularly negative messages. To counter such horror stories, it is important that case studies, real life anecdotes and tangible examples are used where possible to promote programmes and installs and engage householders. These link to the previous point of allowing householders to visualise and understand what the experience will be for them and their family.

Encourage Action

It is important to remain aware of the intention-action gap discussed throughout this report with regards to promoting energy efficiency. Householders may agree that they should do something (e.g. install renewables, switch, wash clothes at lower temperature) and believe that they will change/ act but never quite get around to it. Simply relying on their good intentions will not result in energy or financial savings. Well planned customer journeys that maximise the likelihood of action at each key stage are imperative. Other examples of activities that can help bridge this gap include consistent messaging, using language which inspires action, gaining commitments from householders, prompting action, follow up visits/ check ins, providing feedback.

The smart meter roll-out may provide a useful opportunity to test some of these issues, building on respondents' interest in receiving one and ensuring they actually engage with it and adapt their energy consumption habits accordingly.

Smart Technologies

From this research, high energy users do not seem 'switched on' to smart technologies in general. Smart technologies generally seem to invoke low interest and a lack of understanding and misperceptions as to what smart technology is are common. This research suggests that at present, there is limited appetite in the smart meter agenda and this might not be the most important avenue to pursue or push.

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