

# Smart Metering Implementation Programme



The roll-out of smart meters will play an important part in Britain's transition to a low-carbon economy and help us meet some of the long-term challenges we face in ensuring an affordable, secure and sustainable energy supply.

Consumers will have near real time information on their energy consumption to help them manage their energy use, save money and reduce emissions. Smart meters will also provide consumers with more accurate information and bring an end to estimated billing.

## What is a Smart Meter?

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters and they can offer a range of intelligent functions. Domestic customers will be offered an In-Home Display (IHD) linked to their smart meter, enabling them to see what energy they are using and how much it is costing.

## What will Smart Meters do?

Smart meters will communicate directly with energy suppliers, allowing suppliers to give consumers accurate bills; they will remove the need for manual meter readings and bring an end to estimated billing helping consumers to budget better.

The In-Home Display will put consumers in control and help them to avoid wasting energy and money.

## How will Smart Meters work?

Most of the smart meters that are being installed today use mobile phone-type signals to send meter readings to energy suppliers, and other wireless technologies to send information to the In-Home Display.

The interests of consumers lie at the heart of the Smart Metering Programme. Smart Meters enable the following benefits:

Near real time information on energy use - expressed in pounds and pence. Consumers will be able to manage their energy use, save money and reduce emissions.

More flexibility - more tailored tariffs to suit individual customers.

Easier switching - it will be smoother and faster to switch suppliers to get the best deals.

New products and services - to help better manage energy. In future suppliers will be able to offer different prices at different times of day. Smart appliances could be set to switch on when energy is cheaper.

## Who is in charge of the Smart Meter roll-out?

The Government is requiring energy companies to install 53 million gas and electricity meters at 30 million domestic and smaller non-domestic properties.

Rules are being set out to ensure that they do this in a way that is in the interests of consumers, including rules around data access, security, technical standards for the smart metering equipment, and meeting the needs of vulnerable consumers.

## Consumer protection

The Government is ensuring that appropriate consumer protection provisions are put in place as a part of the smart meter programme:

- There will be no sales during the installation visit
- Installers must provide energy efficiency advice as part of the visit and they will need the consumer's permission in advance of the visit if they are to talk to them about their own products
- Protecting the privacy of individuals and putting them in control of smart meter data
- A centralised programme of consumer engagement activities to build consumer confidence

## When will consumers get Smart Meters?

Most households will have smart meters installed between 2015 and 2020, although some energy companies are starting to install smart meters now.

## How much will it cost to get a Smart Meter installed?

Consumers will not be charged separately for a smart meter or for the In-Home Display. Under current arrangements consumers pay for the cost of their meter and its maintenance through their energy bills, and this will be the same for a smart meter.

## Who will be able to see energy consumption data?

Consumers will have a choice about how their energy consumption data is used, apart from where it is required for billing and other regulated purposes.

Consumers will be able to see their near real time energy consumption data on their In-Home Display and to download more detailed historic data from their home network. They will be able to share data with third parties (such as switching sites) should they choose to.



## Do consumers have to have a Smart Meter?

Smart meters will be rolled out as standard across the country by 2020, but there will not be a legal obligation on individuals to have one.

Energy companies will be required to install smart meters and take all reasonable steps to reach everyone. However, we do not expect energy companies to take legal action to fit a smart meter if they cannot get the householder's co-operation.

## Will Smart Meters support pre-payment?

A smart meter can work in pre-payment or credit mode. Pre-payment customers will see some particular benefits from having a smart meter. For example:

- Their energy supplier may offer new and more flexible ways of topping-up their meter including the ability to top-up over the phone or online
- The smart meter can be set so that consumers do not run out of credit at night and won't be left without power when the shops are shut

## Are Smart Meters safe?

Smart meters are covered by UK and EU product safety legislation, which requires manufacturers to ensure that any product placed on the market is safe.

Public Health England (PHE) provides advice and information on the health implications of smart meters, as it does for a range of technologies commonly found in homes and businesses across the UK.

Further information can be found on the PHE website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

## Where can I find more information on Smart Meters?

Further information can be found on the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-households-to-cut-their-energy-bills/supporting-pages/smart-meters>