



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

# MYSTERY SHOPPING OF SMART METER INSTALLATIONS

Research report

Research conducted by GfK Mystery Shopping (now part of Ipsos MORI) on behalf of BEIS

September 2019



**OGL**

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# Background & research objectives

The government is committed to ensuring that smart meters are offered to every home and small business in Great Britain by the end of 2020. In 2016, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) launched a new programme of consumer research as part of its ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the rollout. This research programme sought to update the Department's evidence base on consumer experiences following the [Early Learning Project](#) (ELP), which explored the experiences and impacts of smart meters on households who had installations between 2011 and 2013.

The first arm of this new programme of research was the 2017 [Smart Meter Customer Experience Study](#). The study included two large-scale quantitative consumer surveys, providing a wealth of new, statistically representative data on the experience of customers, as well as qualitative in-depth interviews with 50 customers to explore these experiences in more detail.

To gather more granular data on customer experiences of the installation process across a range of suppliers, BEIS commissioned GfK to undertake a programme of mystery shopping of smart meter installations throughout 2017 and 2018 alongside the Customer Experience Study. Although typical survey methods provide statistically representative experience data, the length, complexity and diversity of installation journeys mean that they are often unable to gather comprehensive data on all of the important elements of the journey, in particular those which may have taken place a significant time before the survey was carried out. The use of mystery shopping allowed for the collection of data that is often beyond the reach of typical consumer surveys, and complements the generalisable but less detailed data provided by the Customer Experience Study.

The objectives of the research were to:

- provide a detailed assessment of the customer experience in the run up to and during the smart meter installation
- provide a greater understanding of the elements of the smart meter customer journey that help drive consumer engagement
- enable a comparison of different supplier approaches to help BEIS understand which approaches appear to be more effective in driving consumer engagement in the installation process
- BEIS has given individual feedback to energy suppliers to help them in their consumer engagement activity. This report details the aggregated headline findings from the research.

## Method: recruiting mystery shoppers

The project aimed to conduct 200-300 complete mystery shops of the installation process, spread across each of the ten large energy suppliers who were installing smart meters at scale in 2017. Mystery shoppers were recruited in two phases with differing methods.

The first (Phase A) used trained mystery shoppers from GfK's mystery shopping panel and asked them to contact their electricity supplier to request a smart meter installation (for electricity only or both gas and electricity if their supplier provided both) and provide feedback throughout their installation journey, from attempting to book an installation up to two weeks following their installation. The use of trained and experienced mystery shoppers enabled a quality and depth of data collection that would not be possible via typical survey methods.

Between March and May 2017, 345 mystery shoppers across seven energy suppliers contacted their supplier to request an installation. 156 managed to book an installation (which partly reflects that some suppliers' rollouts were at an early stage at the time and more limited, for example, to particular regions or customer segments). 118 had a completed installation. 10 shoppers withdrew from the research before their installation took place and installations were attempted for the remaining 28 shoppers but a smart meter was not successfully installed during the fieldwork period. This is not to say they did not subsequently have successful installations; their progress was tracked only for a relatively short period for practical reasons.

In order to include the customers of the remaining three suppliers, a different approach (Phase B) was used. This was either because there was a limited number of mystery shoppers with those suppliers on the mystery shopper panel or because these suppliers were not booking installations in response to proactive customer requests at the time. Mystery shoppers for these suppliers were recruited directly from a list of customers who already had installations booked, provided by the three suppliers. Note that compared to Phase A, these shoppers may have been more susceptible to recall errors in relation to the booking process because they were recruited after this and will not necessarily have paid such close attention to or to have made notes about their booking experience in the same way Phase A shoppers did.

57 customers were recruited in Phase B with installations spread between November 2017 and November 2018, of which 56 had successful installations and one cancelled their installation.

In total, 402 mystery shops were initiated, 202 installations were attempted and 174 installations were fully completed before the end of the fieldwork periods. 173 shoppers fully completed the questionnaires (see slide 4).

Annex A outlines the socio-demographic profile of the shoppers.

# Method: data collection & reading this report

## Data collection

The mystery shoppers were asked to complete different online questionnaires at key junctures in their installation journey:

1. **Post-booking/request** - following their call to request a smart meter installation, covering their experience of doing so
2. **Pre-installation** – immediately before their installation, covering any engagement with or contact from their energy supplier in the run up to the installation
3. **Post-installation** – in two parts:
  - A. On the day of the installation, covering the installation itself
  - B. Two weeks after the installation, covering experiences in the two weeks post-installation

Some mystery shoppers did not complete all of these questionnaires. 3 shoppers had successful installations but did not answer all of the questions. Also, Phase B mystery shoppers had already booked their installation by the time they were recruited. They were therefore asked to provide less feedback on their booking experience and only completed two questionnaires: the pre-installation and post-installation questionnaires. As a result, the base sizes for the data presented in this report sometimes differ.

## Reading this report

Note that **the quantitative findings discussed in this report are not necessarily generalisable to the wider population.** This research examined the experiences of a small group of customers in detail but it did not aim to provide statistically representative data on experiences or assess compliance with the Smart Metering Installation Code of Practice (SMICoP). The project used a non-random, convenience sampling approach aiming for a sufficient number of customers from each of the ten suppliers, regardless of their market share. Also, in line with standard practice, the mystery shoppers were offered an incentive to take part, request and complete an installation.

## Key findings

- 82% of attempted installations were completed on the first attempt and a further 5% were completed at a later date. The remaining 13% were not completed before the end of the fieldwork period. A range of reasons were given for unsuccessful installations.
- Mystery shoppers of some suppliers had difficulty getting through to a call handler when requesting an installation, mostly relating to lengthy waiting times.
- Almost all (97%) said they were offered an In-Home Display (IHD). 93% of those who accepted the offer said they received a demonstration and 94% felt it was 'very easy' or 'quite easy' to understand. Two weeks after their install, 94% said they felt confident in using their IHD to understand how much energy they are using in real-time.
- Just under half (44%) said they were offered advice on how to save energy. Of those, three-quarters (76%) rated the guidance they received as 'excellent' or 'good' and the rest rated it as 'okay'. None rated it as 'quite poor' or 'very poor'.
- 84% of shoppers felt the length of time the installer spent demonstrating the smart metering system, providing advice and answering questions was 'about right'. The remaining 16% felt it was 'too short'.
- When asked two weeks after the installation, 40% said they had received follow-up communication from their supplier. Most said it was either to complete a customer experience survey or to provide them with some guidance related to using the smart meter and IHD.
- Around nine in ten agreed that the information they received throughout their installation journey was clear and concise (87%) and provided in a suitable format for them (92%), and that they fully understood what they received (90%). However, only two-thirds (64%) agreed they were satisfied with the information they received on how to reduce their energy consumption.
- Around nine in ten said they were satisfied with the overall installation experience (86%) and with their smart meter and IHD (89%).

# Report structure

This report is split into 3 sections, loosely following the customer journey.

**Part 1** examines booking an installation and communications from the supplier in advance of the installation

**Part 2** examines installation experiences

**Part 3** examines post-installation experiences, including any post-install communications



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**1**

**Booking an installation and pre-installation communications**

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**2**

**Installations**

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**3**

**Post-installation experiences and communications**

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# Booking an installation and pre-installation communications

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**1**

**Booking an installation and pre-installation communications**

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2

The installation

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3

Post-installation experiences and communications

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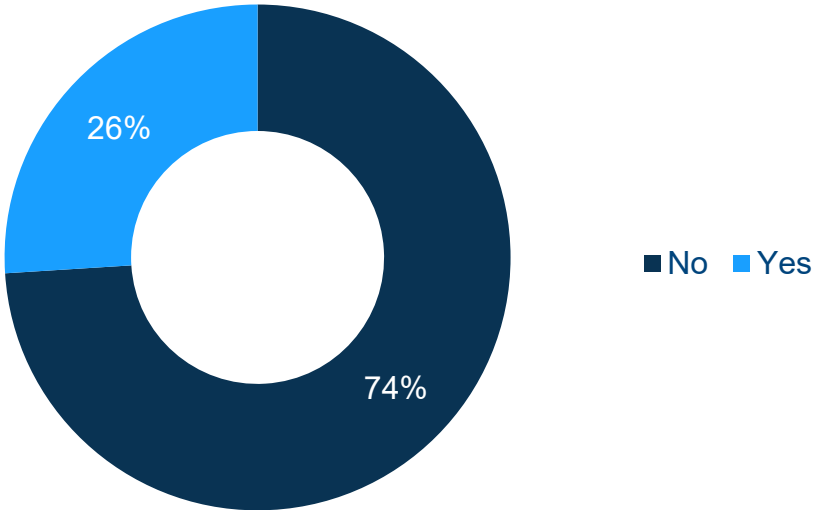


- Booking success
- Booking call experiences
- Supplier communications and consumer engagement in advance of the installation



# Contacting their energy supplier to request an installation

Did you have any problems getting through to a live call handler?

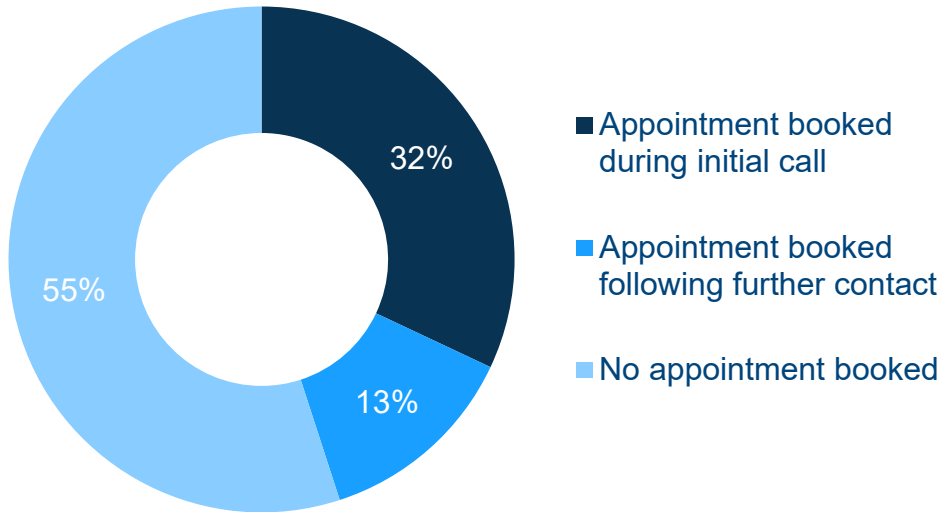


Base: Shoppers who contacted their supplier to book an installation (345)

- Of those who called their supplier to request an installation, a quarter (26%) said they had problems getting through to a live call handler.
- Most reported issues related to waiting times for connecting to a call handler. Wait times varied from relatively short (less than 5 minutes) to more substantial (more than 30 minutes). Some shoppers said they were able to register for a call-back rather than wait. Some also made repeated calls.
- There was variability in reported issues across energy suppliers. For some suppliers, no or very few customers reported an issue. For one supplier, half of the shoppers reported a problem. Also, almost all of the more substantial waits were reported by shoppers of this supplier.
- Some shoppers said they were transferred multiple times before speaking to someone who could book an installation.

# Booking an installation

Were you able to book an appointment for your smart meter installation?

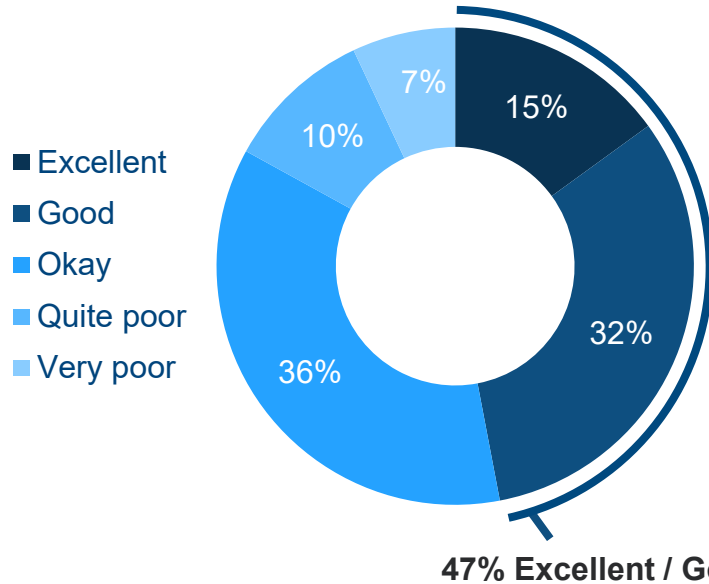


Base: Shoppers who contacted their supplier to book an installation (345)

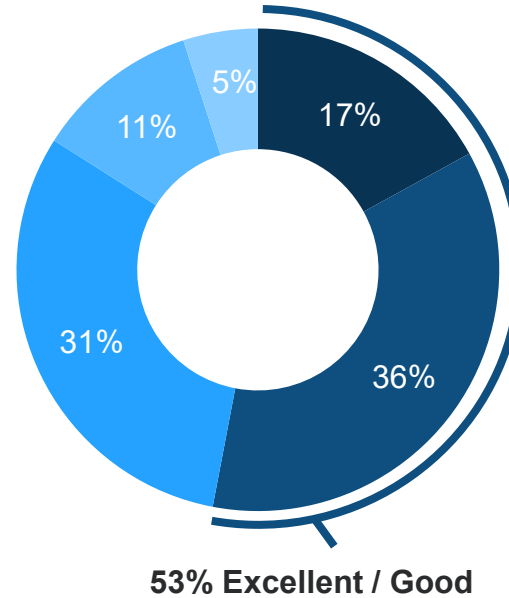
- 345 mystery shoppers contacted their electricity supplier to request a smart meter installation. Recognising that they may not be able to book one right away, their progress in getting an installation arranged was tracked for up to 3 months following their initial request.
- A third of shoppers (32%) were able to book an installation appointment during their initial call. A further one in ten (13%) were able to after their initial call, either following further contact from their supplier or a third party installer, or after contacting their supplier again.
- Overall, just under half (45%) had an installation booked. The number who were able to book an installation during the fieldwork period varied significantly depending on the supplier, from a high of 91% to a low of 13%. This partly reflects that some suppliers' rollouts were at an early stage at the time and more limited, for example, to particular regions or customer segments.
- Of those who were unable to book an installation, most said they were able to register their interest in having a smart meter installed in the future (88%). Of those who were unable to book:
  - 62% said their call handler did not know when their installation would happen
  - 25% were told it would be 'in the next few months'
  - 13% were told it would be within a longer time-frame (e.g. within the next year)
- The most common reasons given for not being able to arrange an installation were that no appointment slots were currently available or the supplier was not currently installing smart meters in that area.

# Mystery shopper ratings of call handlers

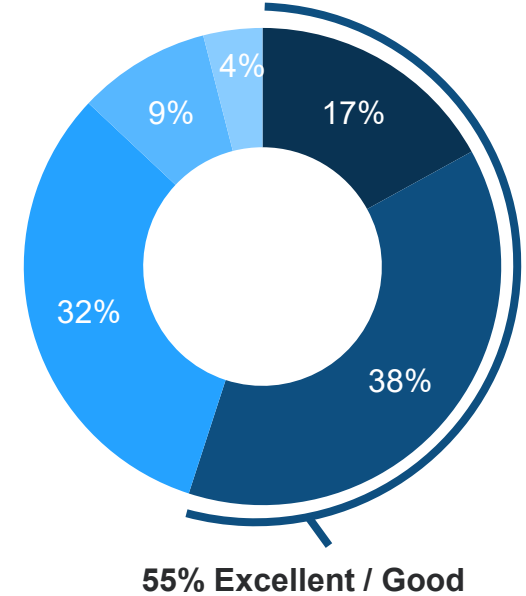
How would you rate the call handler's knowledge of smart meters?



How would you rate the call handler's knowledge of the smart meter installation process?



How would you rate the call handler overall based on the service you received today?



Base: Shoppers who contacted their supplier to book an installation (345)

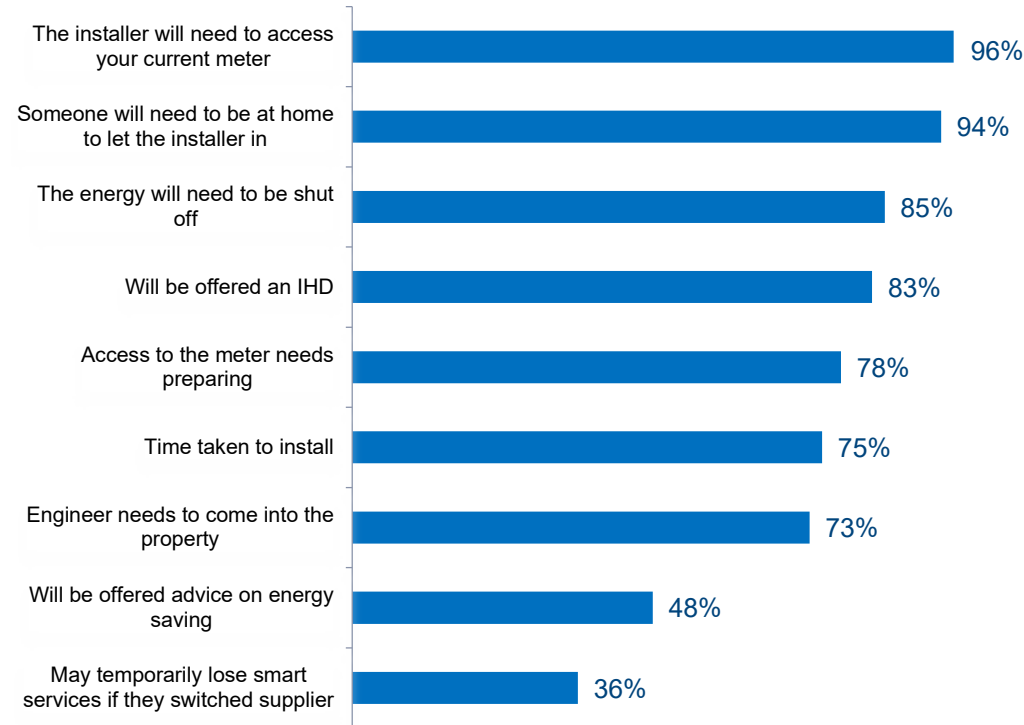
- Shoppers were asked to rate their call handler across a range of factors, including their knowledge of smart meters, the installation process and the overall service they received.
- Around half rated their call handler as 'excellent' or 'good' and most of the rest rated them as 'okay'.
- Those who were able to book an installation were more satisfied, with 68% rating their call handler as excellent or good on the overall service they received.

# Information provided by suppliers in advance of the installation

**Were you told (by the call handler or in any contact you received) any of the following details about your installation?**

**OR**

**During any communication received, were you told any of the following details?**

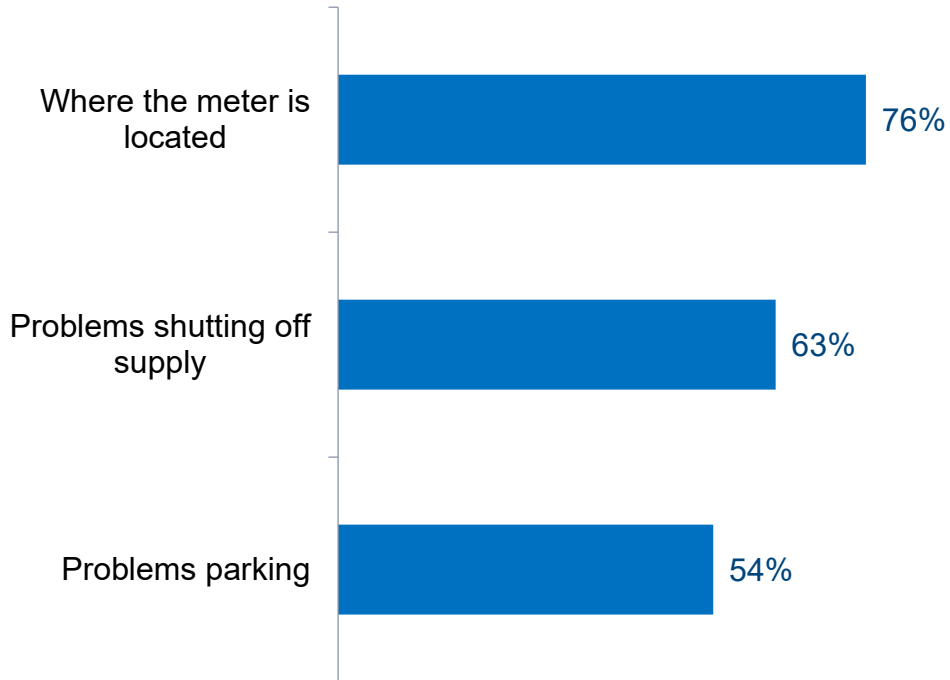


- Mystery shoppers were asked what information they received from their supplier ahead of their installation. Information was provided at various stages, including during installation booking calls and in pre-installation communications. Often it was provided multiple times.
- Ahead of the installation, the majority recalled receiving a range of information at some point to prepare them for the installation. The exceptions were that only half (48%) recalled being told they will be offered energy saving advice and just under four in ten (36%) recalled being told they may temporarily lose smart services if they switch energy supplier.
- Analysis of the written materials received by the mystery shoppers and shared with the research team found that some information that was not recalled had in fact been received in documentation (including on the potential for temporary loss of smart services if they switched). This suggests that whilst information may have been provided, it was not seen or comprehended by some shoppers.
- Between booking and the installation itself, 85% of shoppers received some form of communication from their supplier. This was usually to confirm the appointment and most commonly via e-mail, followed by post. This was often later followed by reminders about the appointment, most commonly by text. Some also received reminders via e-mail or post with information about how to prepare for the install.

Base: All shoppers who had an attempted installation (202)

# Questions asked by suppliers in advance of the installation

Were you asked about any of the following factors that might make for a difficult installation?

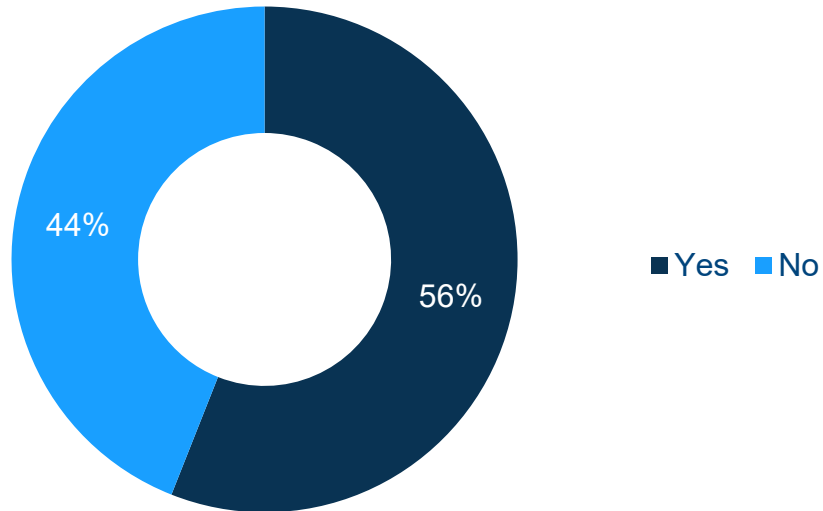


- Mystery shoppers were also asked whether their supplier asked them any questions relating to their installation. Energy suppliers often gather intelligence in this way to prepare their installers for the install.
- Three-quarters (76%) were asked where their meter was located (e.g. is it accessible and not buried, concealed or blocked in any way) and two-thirds (63%) were asked whether there would be any problems shutting off supply (e.g. is the cut-off shared with another property). Just over half were asked whether installers would have any problems parking nearby.

Base: All shoppers who had an attempted installation (202)

# Questions asked about vulnerability or special requirements

**Were you asked if you had any special needs to consider in relation to having a smart meter installed?**

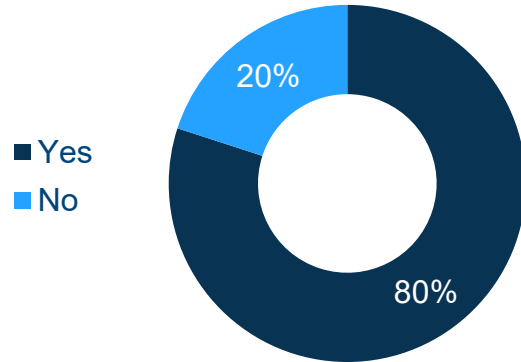


- Mystery shoppers reported whether their supplier asked them if there were any special needs to consider in relation to having a smart meter installed. This could include, for example, a need to maintain power for any medical equipment.
- 56% of shoppers said they were asked whether they had any special needs or requirements that the installer would need to consider in completing the installation.
- Of those who went on to have a completed installation, only 2 said they had such a requirement. Both said these were accounted for by their installer.

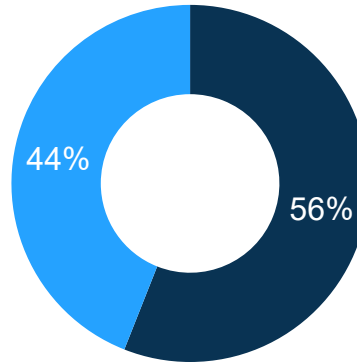
Base: All shoppers who had an attempted installation (202)

# Information on accessing smart meter data

**Were you told anything about the frequency of consumption data your energy supplier collects from your smart meter, e.g. monthly, daily or half-hourly?**

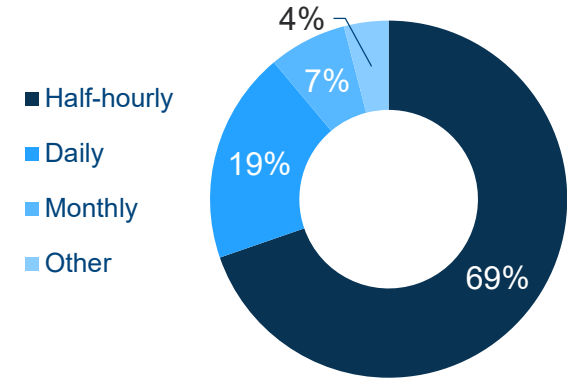


**Were you asked to make a choice about how frequently your energy supplier will collect data?**



**What option did you select?**

Base: All shoppers who had completed installations and were asked to make a choice about frequency of data collection (96)



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (174)

- Interestingly, almost eight in ten (79%) shoppers said they received a 'data guide' of some kind during their installation journey. Almost eight in ten (80%) also recalled receiving information on how frequently their data would be collected. Also - and similar to slide 11 - further analysis of the communications received by customers found that some had received this in documentation but did not recall it in the survey.
- Only 59% of Phase B shoppers recalled receiving information on this compared to 87% of Phase A shoppers. This difference may reflect a higher quality recall amongst Phase A shoppers because Phase B shoppers were recruited sometime after booking their installation (when this information is often provided). Other research using post-hoc consumer surveys, such as BEIS's 2017 Customer Experience Study, has similarly found lower recall of this information.
- The central principle of the Smart Metering Data Access and Privacy Framework (the set of regulations established by BEIS to govern the use of smart meter data) is that households can choose how often they share their detailed consumption with their supplier, except where this is required for regulated purposes (e.g. for energy suppliers to provide an accurate bill). More than half of shoppers (56%) recalled being asked to make a choice about how frequently their supplier collects data from the smart meter. Most said they were presented with the full range of options: half-hourly, daily and monthly reads (which are required as a minimum). The most popular choice was half-hourly reads.

# Booking an installation and pre-installation communications

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**1** Booking an installation and pre-installation communications

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**2** The installation

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**3** Post-installation experiences and communications

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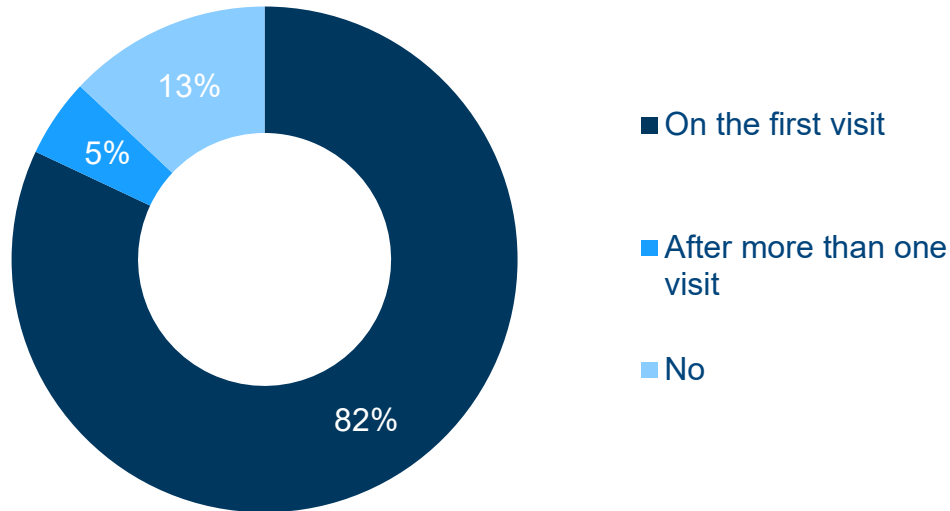


- Install success rates
- Installation barriers
- Provision of In-Home Displays
- Consumer engagement, advice and guidance



# Installing the smart meter

## Was the smart meter successfully installed at your property?



Base: All shoppers who had an attempted installation (202)

- In the majority of cases, the engineer arrived either on time (81%) or early (7%). In a small number of cases:
  - The installation was cancelled on the day by the shopper (one shoppers) or the engineer (seven shoppers)
  - The installation was re-arranged before the scheduled day (three shoppers)
  - The engineer was late but did arrive (six shoppers)
  - The engineer did not arrive and did not let the shopper know in advance (five shoppers)
- 82% of installations were successful on the first visit. 5% were completed after a second visit during the fieldwork period. A wide range of reasons were given for unsuccessful installations (aside from the engineer cancelling) including the following:
  - Re-wiring would need to be carried out to enable a safe installation
  - Asbestos would have to be removed from the meter cupboard
  - Meter and fuse box housings/boards needed repair
  - Pipes needed to be moved or removed
  - Existing meter box was not waterproof (outdoors only)
  - Meter space was too small to fit the smart meter
  - Installer was unable to connect get a signal to the smart meter
  - Did not have access to a communal fuse box to turn off the power supply

# Mystery shopper feedback on difficulties installing the smart meter

When installers had difficulties in installing their smart meter, shoppers were asked to provide feedback on what these were. Some examples are included here:

*'The engineer explained that they were in the area and they could not complete their morning appointment because it was raining hard and that appointment was an outside electric meter, which they could not complete in the rain. They asked if I would be prepared to swap to the morning appointment to give them a chance to reschedule their other appointment. I agreed that it would be ok.'*

*'The meter could not be installed due to the engineer needing access to a neighbour's property. I was not made aware that the engineers needed this in order to turn the power off. The engineers were in and out within 5 minutes.'*

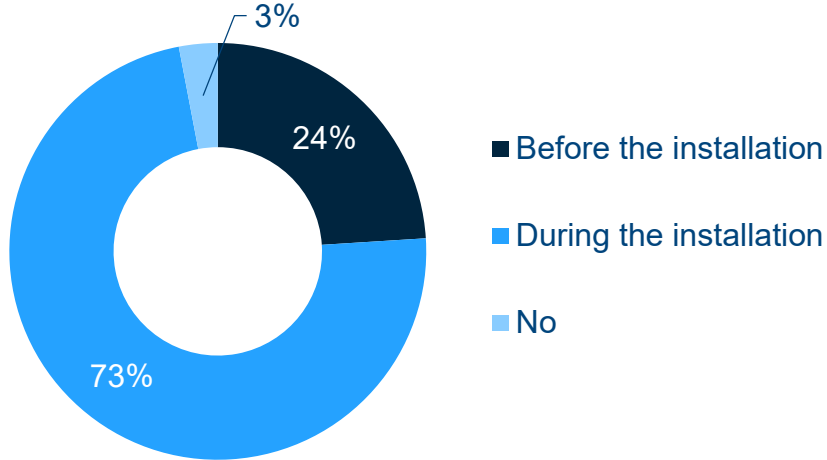
*"The engineer examined the current gas and electricity and informed me that the gas meter needed a bracket and additional pipe work and that the electricity meter needed to be mounted on MDF. The engineer did not have any of these with him and so could not undertake the installation."*

*'The engineer said the access (under the stairs) was too narrow for them. They said they would need to send around a smaller engineer. They tried to ring their boss but could not get through so they sent their boss a message requesting that a smaller engineer be sent to complete the gas smart meter. They said that [the installer's company] would contact me to arrange an appointment for a different engineer to fit the gas meter. They said this may take up to two weeks.'*

*'Company X called to say that the engineer could not come as he was still at previous appointment and it was taking him longer than expected, probably into overtime, so the appointment was now cancelled. In compensation Company X will pay £30.00 to our account and will send us a letter to confirm this'*

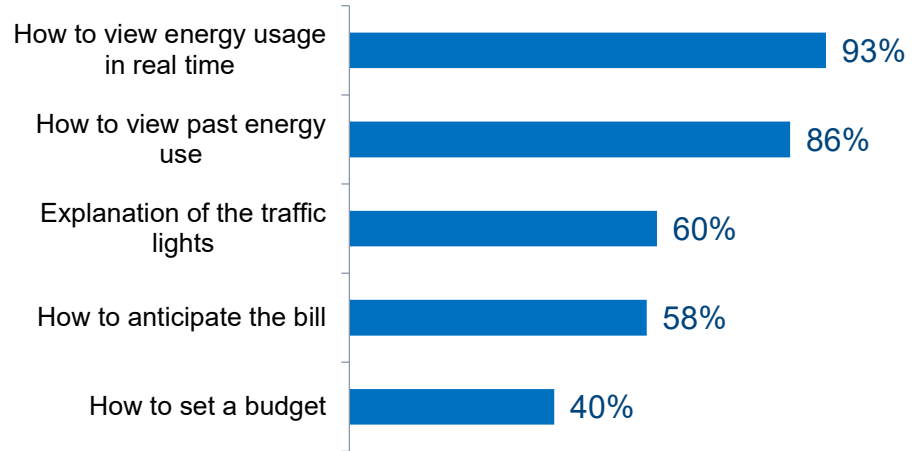
# In-Home Display (IHD) provision and guidance from the installer

Before the day, or during your installation, were you offered an IHD?



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (174)

Which of the following features were demonstrated or explained?

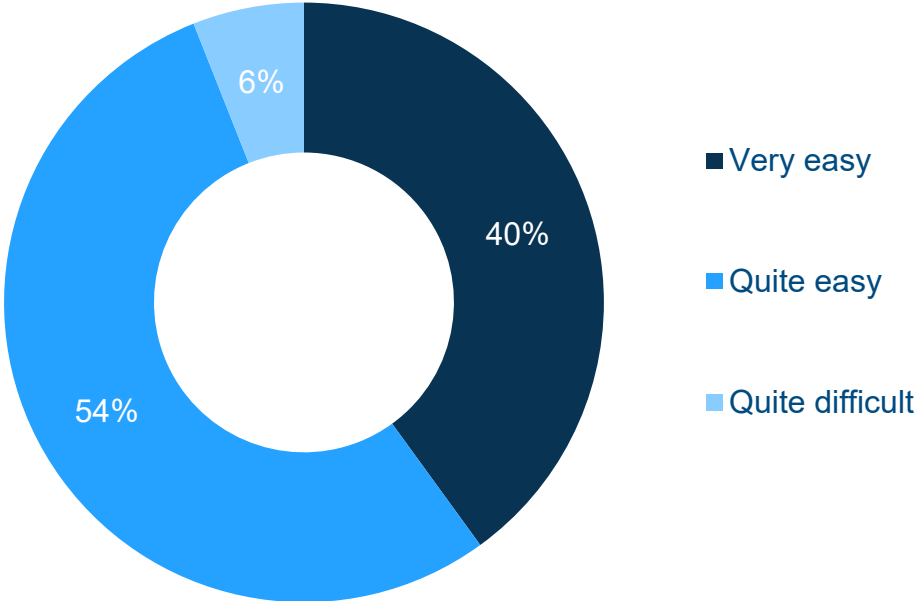


Base: All shoppers who accepted the IHD offer (167)

- Almost all (97%) shoppers said they were offered an In-Home Display (IHD) either before or during their installation. All but two accepted the offer, and for all but four the IHD was set-up by the installer during the installation. There was an issue with connecting the IHD to the smart meter for the other four.
- 93% said that the IHD was demonstrated to them in some way. Almost all of these were shown how to view real-time energy consumption and historical energy use, but other features less commonly demonstrated.
- 92% of those who had a completed installation also said that they received written documentation about using their IHD and smart metering system from their installer.

# Understanding the IHD guidance

How easy did you find the demonstration of the IHD to understand?

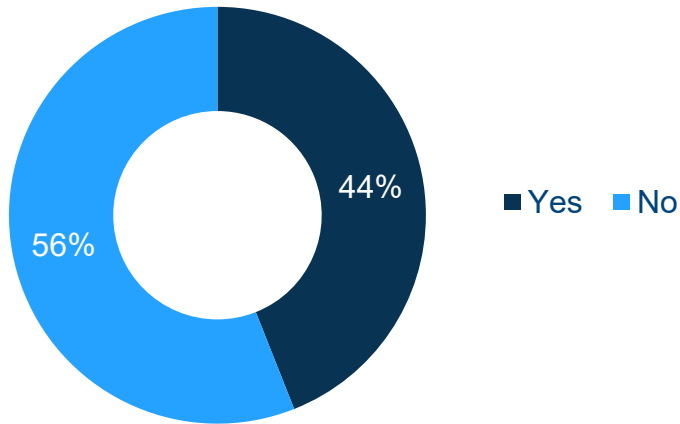


- Almost all shoppers (94%) said the demonstration of the IHD was either very or quite easy to understand.
- Those who said it was ‘quite difficult’ to understand felt the installer rushed the demonstration, did not fully explain all of the features or did not stop to check that they understood what was being demonstrated.

Base: All who received an IHD demonstration (156)

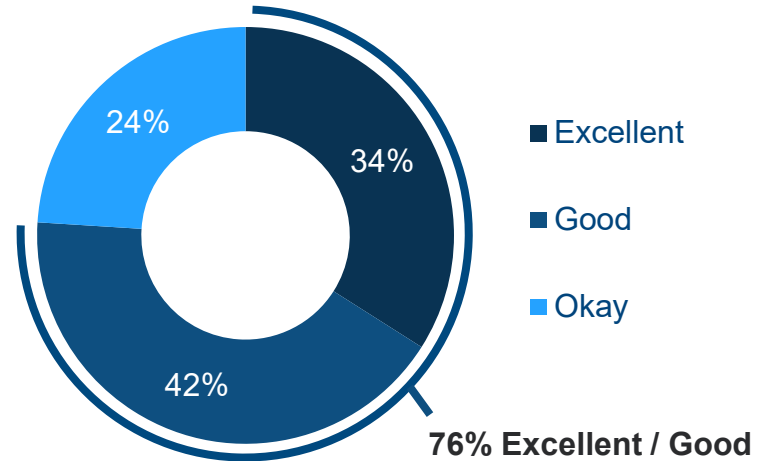
# Provision of energy saving advice

Were you offered advice on how to save energy?



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (174)

How would you rate the guidance provided at helping you to understand how you could use the smart meter and IHD to improve your energy efficiency?

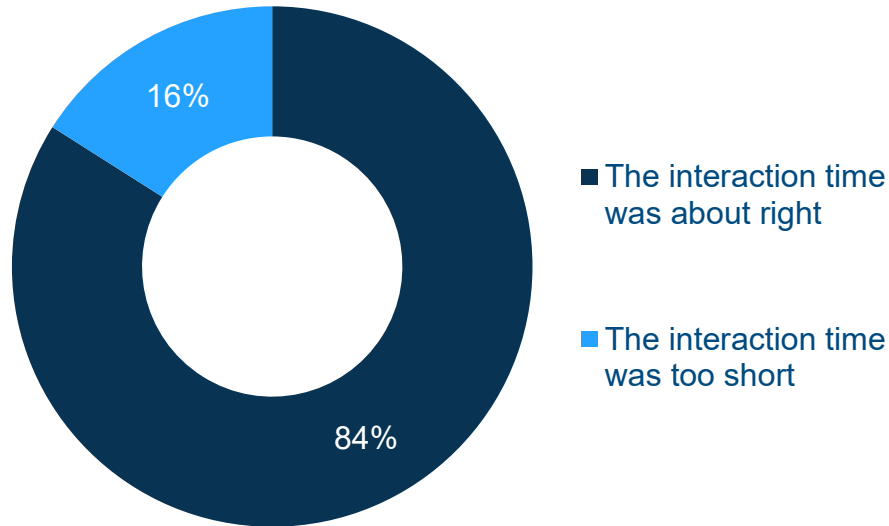


Base: All shoppers who were offered energy saving advice (77)

- Just under half (44%) said they were offered energy saving advice by their installer and this was consistent across energy suppliers.
- Qualitative feedback highlighted that the content of this advice varied widely across installers, even amongst those of the same energy supplier. This may have reflected tailoring of the advice by installers; 70% of shoppers felt the guidance they received was tailored/appropriate for their needs.
- Three-quarters (76%) of the shoppers who received energy saving advice rated the guidance they received on using their smart meter and IHD to improve their energy efficiency as 'excellent' or 'good'. The rest rated it as 'okay'.
- Reasons for less positive ratings included only receiving written guidance and installers rushing explanations.

# Shopper opinions of time spent on demonstration and guidance

Did you think the length of time you had with the engineer where they demonstrated the system, provided advice and answered your questions was appropriate?

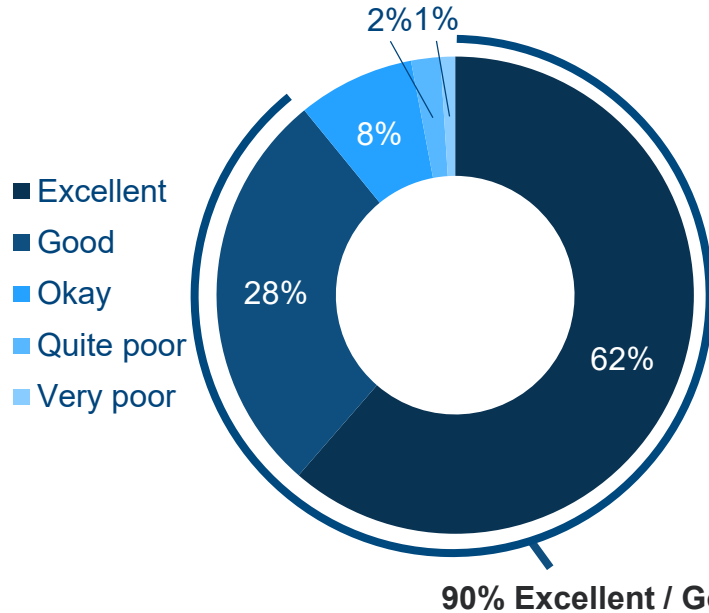


Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (174)

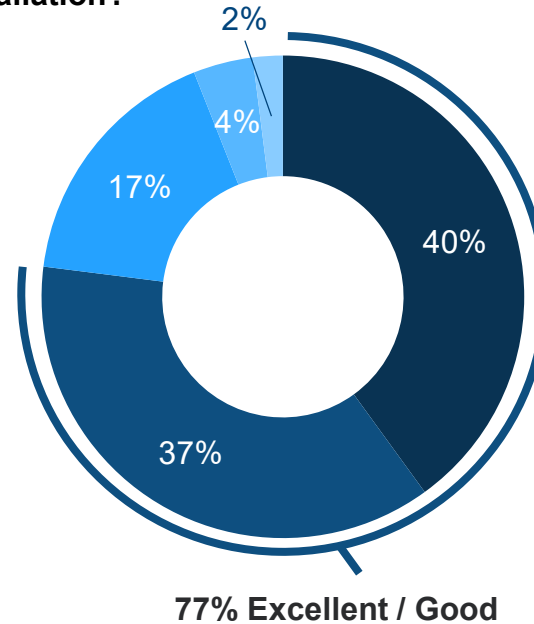
- 84% of shoppers felt that the time spent by the installer in demonstrating the system, providing advice and answering their questions was about right.
- The remainder (16%) felt that the interaction time was too short and these shoppers were less likely to rate the guidance they received positively.
- Interestingly, no shoppers felt that the time spent on this was too long, even when the installation of the meter(s) took more than two hours to complete.

# Mystery shopper rating of installers

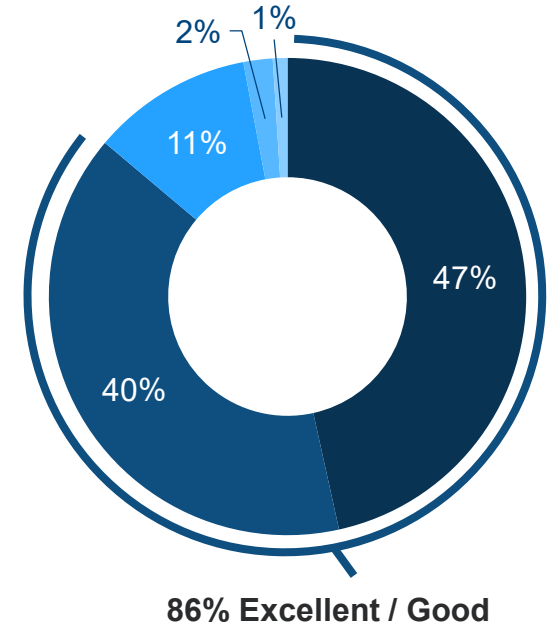
How would you rate the engineer in terms of being courteous and polite?



How would you rate the clarity of the information provided during the installation?



How would you rate the installer overall based on the service you received?



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (174)

- The vast majority of mystery shoppers were positive about the overall service they received from their installer. 86% rated the service provided as 'excellent' or 'good' and only 3% said it was 'quite poor' or 'very poor'. These high ratings were consistent across the energy suppliers.
- The shoppers gave slightly less enthusiastic ratings for the clarity of information provided during the installation. Only 6% rated it as 'quite poor' or 'very poor' but only 77% rated it as 'excellent' or 'good'.

# Post-installation experiences and communications

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Booking an installation and pre-installation communications

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2

The installation

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3

**Post-installation experiences and communications**

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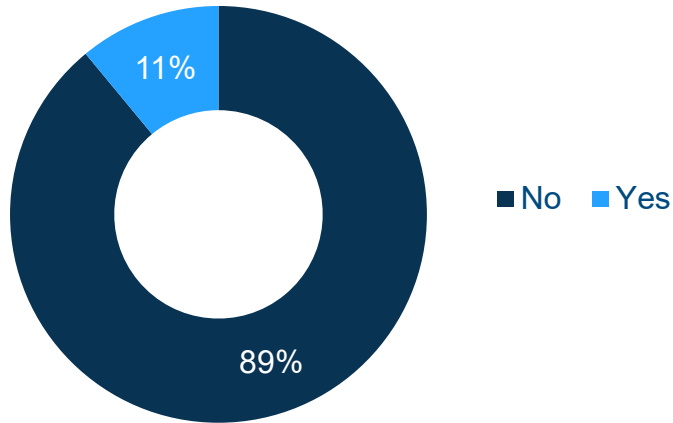


- Confidence in using the IHD and improving energy efficiency
- Post-installation communications from the supplier
- Customer satisfaction



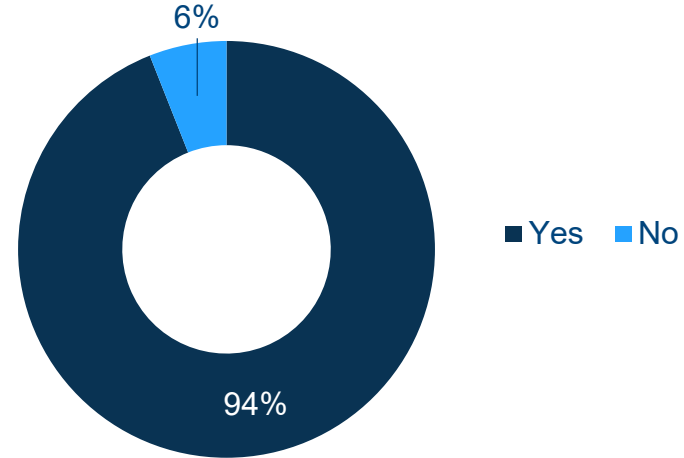
# Using the smart meter and IHD

Have you experienced any problems with your smart meter or IHD since the installation?



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

Is your IHD still plugged in and in-use by anyone in your household?

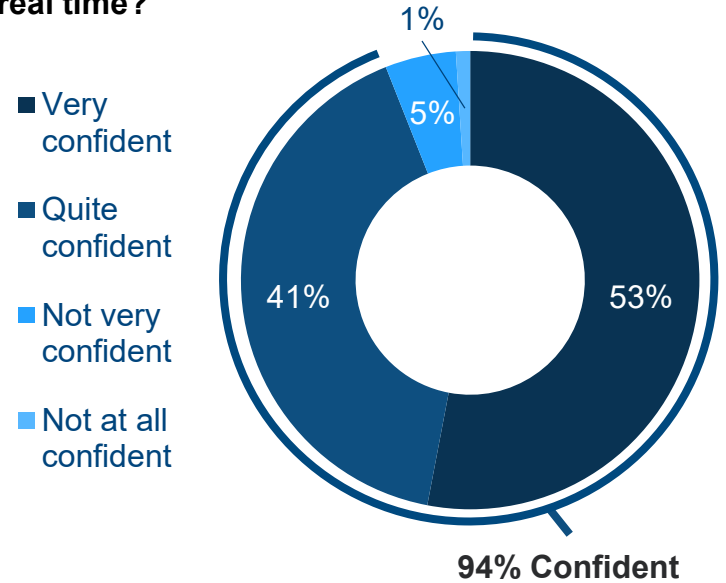


Base: All shoppers who accepted the IHD offer (167)

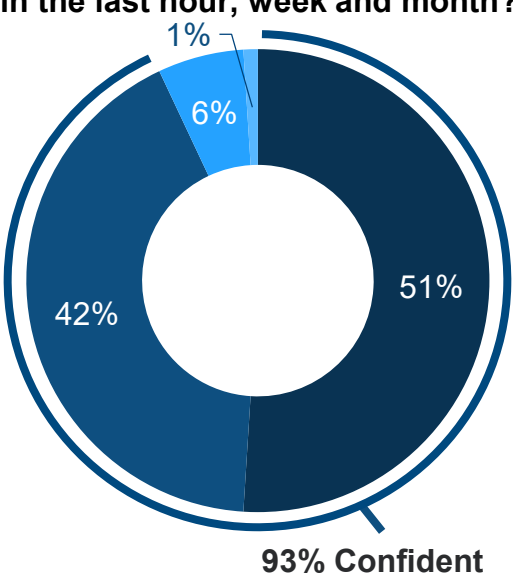
- Two weeks after their installation, 11% said they had experienced a problem with their smart meter or IHD and half of those had contacted their supplier to correct the problem. The problems all related to the IHD rather than the smart meter and were varied in nature, including not understanding how to use IHD features (such as turn off an alarm that sounds when a daily budget level is met), a loss of signal and in one case the IHD was mistakenly presenting information in a prepay credit format.
- Almost all (94%) who accepted the IHD offer still had their IHD plugged in and in-use two weeks after installation.

# Confidence in using In-Home Displays and reducing energy use

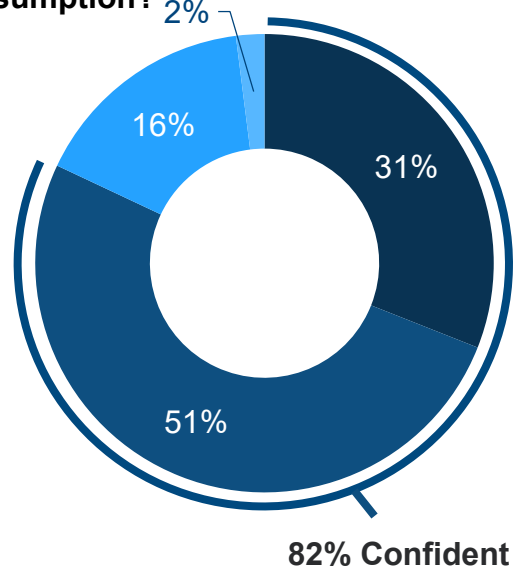
How confident are you in using your IHD to understand how much energy you are using in real time?



How confident are you in using your IHD to understand how much energy you have used in the last hour, week and month?



How confident are you in using your IHD to understand how to reduce your energy consumption?

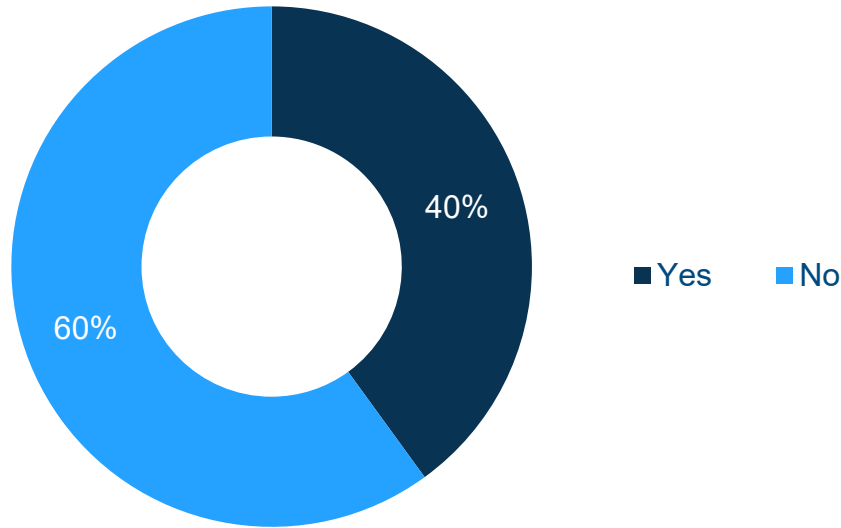


Base: All shoppers who accepted the IHD offer (167)

- The vast majority of shoppers said they were confident using their IHD to understand how much energy they are using in real-time (94%) and how much they have used in the past (93%). They were, however, less likely to report confidence in using features that were less commonly demonstrated. For example, only two-thirds (65%) said they were 'very confident' or 'quite confident' in setting a budget on their IHD.
- The vast majority (82%) were also confident in using their IHD to understand how to reduce their energy consumption. However, they were less likely to say they were 'very confident' in this (31% compared to 54% for energy use in real-time). Shoppers who said they were not offered energy saving advice were less likely to say they were confident in doing this (75% compared to 89% of those who had).

# Post-installation communication from energy suppliers

**Have you received any contact from the supplier since the installation of your smart meter?**

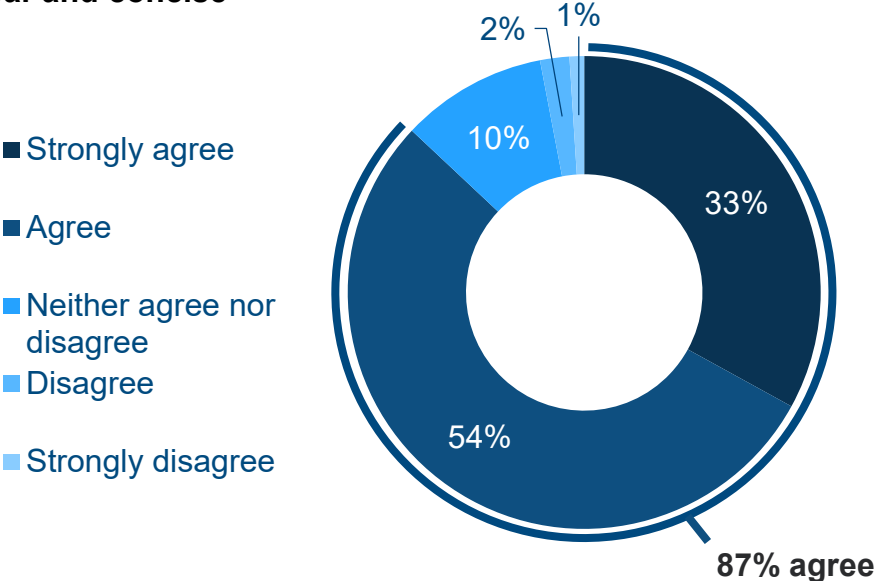


Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (174)

- Mystery shoppers were asked whether they had received any contact from their supplier in the two weeks following the installation.
- The majority (60%) said they had not. Of those who had:
  - 31% were asked to complete a customer satisfaction survey
  - 28% were sent some form of guidance on how to use their smart meter or IHD
  - 7% were sent information about the first bill they will receive after having a smart meter installed
  - 6% were sent information on additional ways to access energy consumption data
- The majority of post-installation communication was via e-mail. Six shoppers said they received a phone call.

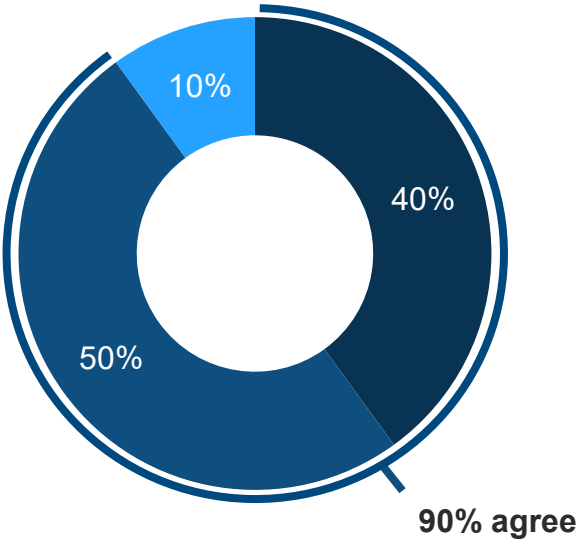
# Two weeks after installation: rating communications and guidance (1)

How well do you agree with the following – all communications that I received verbally and written, were clear and concise



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

How well do you agree with the following – I fully understand all the communication received

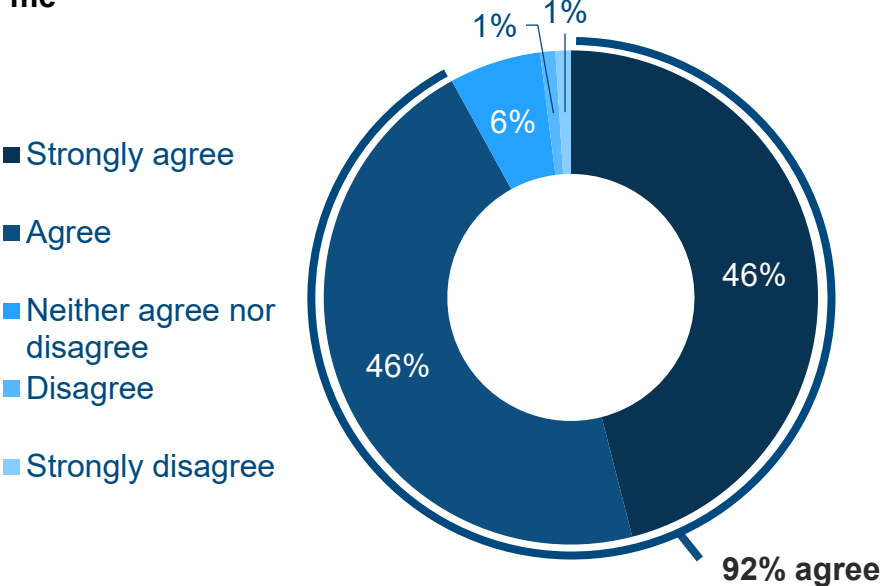


Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

- Two weeks after the installation, the mystery shoppers were asked to rate the communications they had received from their energy supplier and installer throughout the entire installation journey.
- 87% agreed that the communications they received were clear and concise and 90% agreed that they fully understood all the communication they received.

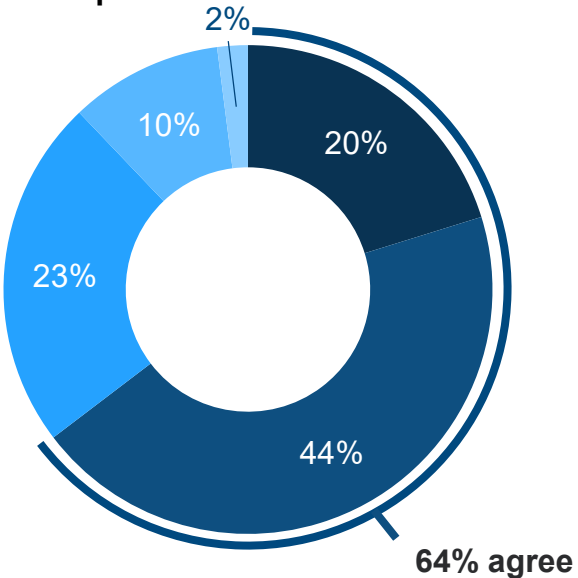
# Two weeks after installation: rating communications and guidance (2)

Please rate how well you agree with the following – I felt that all communication was provided in a suitable format for me



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

Please rate how well you agree with the following – I was satisfied with the information I received on how to reduce my energy consumption

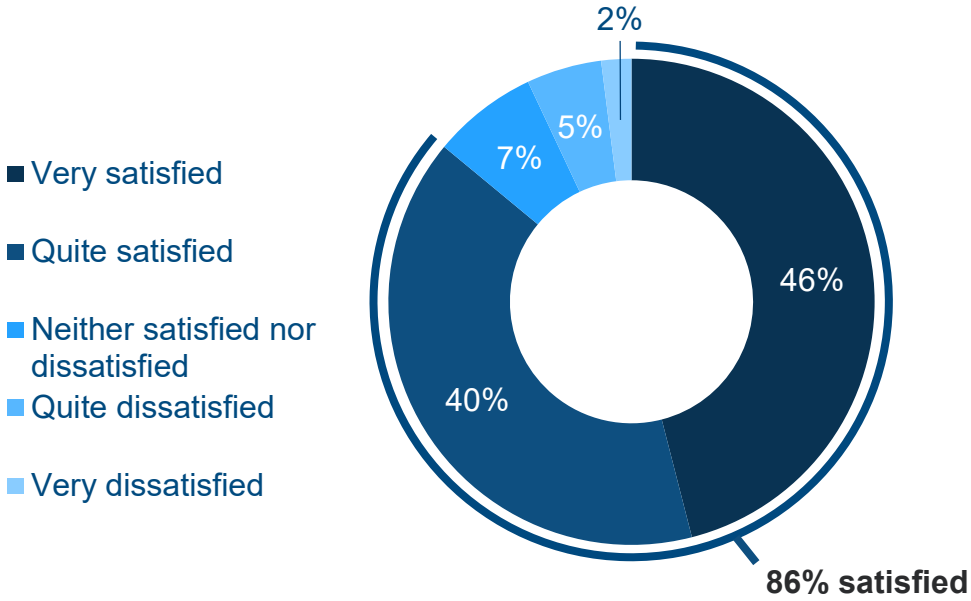


Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

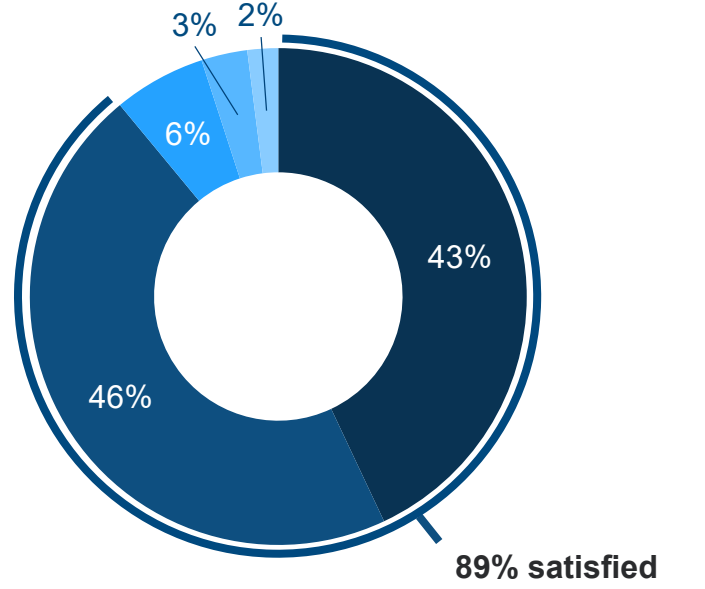
- 92% agreed that the communication they received throughout their installation journey was provided in a suitable format for them.
- However, only 64% agreed they were satisfied with the information they received on how to reduce their energy consumption. Those who said they were offered energy saving advice were more likely to say they agreed with this, 78% compared to 54% of those who said they were not offered it.

# Satisfaction with the installation and smart meter

How satisfied were you with the overall process of having a smart meter installed?



How satisfied are you overall with your smart meter and IHD?



Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

Base: All shoppers who had a completed smart meter installation (173)

- Two weeks after the installation, shoppers were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall installation process and their smart meter and IHD.
- 86% said they were satisfied with the installation and 89% said they were satisfied with their smart meter and IHD.

# **ANNEX A – MYSTERY SHOPPER SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

# Annex A – mystery shopper socio-demographic data

This annex details the socio-demographic characteristics of the shoppers. As outlined in the method section of the report, the shoppers were not selected to be representative of smart meter customers as a whole. It is useful though to understand the profile of the mystery shoppers.

For context, comparisons are made here with the [Official Labour Market Statistics](#) for Great Britain, largely drawn from the 2011 censuses. that a strict, like-for-like comparison is not possible in some cases. This is because the data sometimes represents the full population of Great Britain (e.g. age groups) whilst only one person in each household could be a mystery shopper.

Compared to the 2011 Official Labour Market Statistics data for Great Britain, mystery shoppers were:

- more likely to be female (63% vs. 51%);
- less likely to be in the youngest and eldest age groups (18-24 1% vs 12%, 75+ age group 0% vs. 10%);
- more likely to own their home (80% vs. 63%) and less likely to rent from the council or a social housing association (7% combined vs. 18% social renting);
- Similar in regard to the type of property they lived in;
- slightly less likely to live in single person households (21% vs. 31%);
- and less likely to live in a household where someone had a long-term illness, health problem or disability (10% vs. 33% in England and Wales).



# Annex A – mystery shopper socio-demographic data

## Age

18-24	1%
25-34	20%
35-44	28%
45-54	22%
55-64	19%
65-74	10%
75+	0%

Base: 345 Phase A Mystery Shoppers,  
data not collected for Phase B

## Gender

Male	37%
Female	63%

Base: 345 Phase A Mystery Shoppers,  
data not collected for Phase B

## Tenure

Owned (with or without mortgage)	80%
Rented from the council	3%
Rented from a housing association	4%
Rented from someone else	13%

Base: all 402 mystery shoppers

## Type of property lived in

Semi-detached house	31%
Detached house/bungalow	26%
Terraced house	22%
Flat	16%
Maisonette	3%
Other	1%

Base: all 402 mystery shoppers

# Annex A – mystery shopper socio-demographic data

## Number of people in household

1	21%
2	41%
3	18%
4	13%
5	7%

Base: all 402 mystery shoppers

## Person with long-term illness, health problem or disability in the household

Yes, and this is the bill payer	6%
Yes, and this is another person	4%
Prefer not to say	4%

Base: all 402 mystery shoppers

## Pre-tax household income

< £9,499	4%
£9,500 - £13,999	4%
£14,000 - £17,499	3%
£17,500 - £24,999	9%
£25,000 - £39,999	25%
£40,000 - £49,999	13%
£50,000 - £74,999	16%
£75,000 or more	8%
Prefer not to say	15%

Base: all 402 mystery shoppers

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