

ENERGY MARKET INVESTIGATION

Invitation to comment on the proposed methodology and draft questionnaire for the CMA's research with tenants

1. In the context of the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) investigation into the supply and acquisition of energy in Great Britain, the CMA has received information suggesting that domestic energy customers living in rented accommodation may face a number of specific barriers which could prevent them from being fully engaged in the energy market.
2. In order to further understand the nature and extent of any contractual restrictions, or other barriers, that domestic customers living in private or social rented accommodation may face, the CMA has appointed a market research agency, Ipsos MORI, of 3 Thomas More St, London E1W 1YW, to conduct research among tenants on its behalf.
3. We would welcome comments on the proposed methodology set out below and on the draft CMA questionnaire. In accordance with the tight timetable which is necessary for this work, comments are required **by 5pm on Friday 9 October 2015**. To submit comments, please email Denis Kelly, Project Officer, at energymarket@cma.gsi.gov.uk or write to him at:

Energy Market Investigation
Competition and Markets Authority
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4AD

Research objectives

4. The research will inform our work on specific aspects of the domestic retail gas and electricity markets contributing to the feature that domestic customers face actual and/or perceived barriers to switching.¹ The customer survey

¹ This is one of the features that, in the CMA's provisional view, give rise to an adverse effect on competition in the domestic retail gas and electricity markets (CMA's provisional findings report published on 10 July 2015).

previously conducted by the CMA² found that approximately 30% of respondents who are responsible for energy decisions live in rented accommodation. The CMA customer survey also suggested that there are relatively low levels of awareness and of engagement in the energy market among survey respondents living in rented accommodation, particularly among social renters. In addition, the CMA has received information suggesting that domestic customers living in rented accommodation may be subject to restrictions which may limit their ability to switch energy supplier.

5. The research will be used to understand the perceived or actual barriers to switching supplier that may be experienced by tenants, including contractual restrictions associated with tenancy agreements and other barriers to switching which may limit tenants' ability to engage in the energy market.

Proposed methodology

6. Our intention is to carry out quantitative research using questions to be asked of tenants on a well-established omnibus survey. We favour using a face-to-face, in-home survey methodology as we consider that this will provide good quality responses from an inclusive respondent group in a cost-efficient way. We propose using the Ipsos MORI 'Capibus' omnibus survey, which is designed to be nationally and regionally representative, interviews 2,000 adults aged 15+ in Great Britain each week and uses a comprehensive weighting methodology. Their standard question on household tenure will be used as the main filter for inclusion of tenants onto the module containing the CMA's question set (which will be asked only of those aged 18+). In order to ensure sufficient numbers for robust analysis, we propose using two successive waves of the Capibus survey to provide a host sample of 4,000.
7. In addition to responses to the questions outlined in the draft questionnaire at the link below, the omnibus collects as standard a range of demographic variables which will be available for analysis.
8. More details of the Ipsos MORI Capibus survey are available on the [Ipsos MORI website](#).

² Customer survey: CMA commissioned research.

Draft questionnaire

9. A draft of the questions we propose will be asked of tenants is on the [CMA webpages](#). The questionnaire may be revised ahead of fieldwork, to reflect comments received and/or our own development of the questions.

7 October 2015