



Department
of Energy &
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Smart Metering Data Access and Privacy

Public Attitudes Research

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Summary

Background, Objectives, Research Method and Sample

Smart meters combined with In-home displays, are being rolled out to help give consumers more control over energy use and spending, and to help meet environmental and security of supply objectives. The Government aims for smart meters to be installed in all British homes by the end of 2019. A potential risk to smart metering from a public acceptability point of view is arguably around privacy: what control will consumers have about the ways in which their energy consumption data is used, by whom, and for which purposes? The Government is therefore putting in place a data access and privacy framework for the roll-out of smart meters. Research was required to understand the extent to which the public feel data and privacy is an issue in relation to smart metering and whether the proposed framework satisfies concerns.

The research sample comprised 104 respondents, arranged as follows:

- 14 group discussions, 10 with non-‘owners’¹, 4 with ‘owners’ of Smart Meters
- 6 interviews with people who are particularly concerned about data and privacy

The sample was designed to embrace a spread of;

- Age / life-stage, Socio-Economic Grade (SEG), sex
- Private and social tenants, owner occupiers
- Regions; England; Scotland and Wales.

The fieldwork was conducted between 24th July and 16th August 2012.

Research Findings

- Context: Energy, Data and Privacy, Data Protection Act

Energy (electricity and gas) was a low interest subject for our sample, other than its cost. Beyond knowing who they paid their energy bills to, understanding and knowledge of how the industry operates was often limited, for example, there was uncertainty about the distinction between ‘suppliers’ and ‘networks’, and the role and powers of Ofgem. Attitudes towards energy suppliers as corporate entities were invariably negative based on perceptions that they make large profits, put prices up quickly but reduce them slowly in response to changing oil and gas prices, and pay their senior staff high salaries and bonuses. They were also seen to be guilty of using aggressive and intrusive direct sales tactics.

¹ ‘Owners’ refer to those consumers that already own a Smart Meter.

Respondents were concerned to protect their personal financial information as the consequences of its falling into the wrong hands were obvious to them. These concerns were greater for anyone who had direct experience of misuse of personal financial data, for example, credit card or bank account fraud. Parents were protective of any information to do with their children, for example, posts on social networking sites in case of misuse. ***Otherwise by far and away the dominant concern was that personal information would be used as a source of leads for marketing.*** Respondents were almost unanimous in complaining about aggressive, intrusive and frequent direct sales approaches (telephone, street marketing, doorstep calling) from energy and energy related companies and others. It was assumed that this was a consequence of some organisation or other passing on their personal details.

While all respondents were aware that there is a Data Protection Act, by no means all knew what it meant in practice, for example, that it might forbid personal details being passed on without consent. As a result references to the Data Protection Act supporting the framework in protecting their interests did not always provide reassurance. There was also limited faith in its ability to protect them as they reasoned that any organisation is vulnerable to dishonest employees, hackers and system failures, and that anyway, proving infringement and obtaining redress would almost certainly be difficult.

- Smart Meters

There was little awareness or understanding of Smart Meters among non-‘owners’, suggesting that in any communication it might be advisable to assume there is no existing background knowledge. ‘Owners’ had a generally good understanding although in some cases attention had been focussed on the in-home display rather than the meter itself.

Once they had a working knowledge of Smart Meters, either having been taken through the stimulus explaining Smart Meter functionality (see appendices) or from direct experience, the majority felt they were a positive development which could help them save energy (in conjunction with the display), while ending meter reading and estimated bills. Some, while not objecting to Smart Meters, were less enthusiastic as they felt they would be unlikely to be able to reduce their energy use, and were happy with their current payment and meter reading routines. In both cases respondents could be puzzled as to why the energy industry might be introducing Smart Meters given they could help customers use less energy, meaning the energy companies` income would be reduced. This seemed unlikely and made them suspicious, as they wondered what ‘the catch’ might be. An understanding that Smart Meters are backed by government as part of a drive to reduce the nation’s CO₂ emissions proved a satisfactory explanation and settled these concerns.

Respondents’ questions following exposure to the stimulus explaining Smart Meters and the examples of FAQs focussed on practical concerns; would they have to pay for a Smart Meter; would they be responsible for maintaining it, who would install it, and would it lock them into a supplier. A few respondents queried what might happen to the data the Smart Meter obtained, fuelled by a concern that more information might result in more exposure to sales calls. A smaller number with a background in IT or interest in computers queried the security of Smart Meters.

- Smart Meters and Data / Privacy

A few disliked the idea of any organisation having access to any of their personal information unless it was absolutely necessary, but along with the rest of the sample even they accepted that this was a reality of life today. Energy consumption data was not felt to be sensitive in the sense that there was no obvious risk to others having it, nor was it seen to be personal or private. The only perceived risk was that allowing access might somehow lead to more unwanted sales calls.

However, with increasing reading frequency, i.e. from monthly to daily, to half hourly, etc, energy consumption data *did* start to feel more sensitive as the level of detail started to seem intrusive, as though it was offering a window into the home and what went on it. Equally, it was not clear to some why anyone would want the higher level of detail, leaving a gap to be filled by speculation which resulted in some becoming more uneasy.

Respondents assumed that energy suppliers would see their consumption data, which they felt was perfectly reasonable as they would need the information for billing purposes. However, some could not imagine why suppliers would need to see their data more frequently than monthly which could lead them to wonder what such information would be used for. Once again, in discussing the issue of data and privacy, the overwhelming concern was the possibility that data collected via a Smart Meter might lead to more unwanted marketing communication. Some did associate a security risk with allowing more detailed data collection, e.g. daily, half hourly, as it could indicate when their home was empty. However, they felt that in reality this was *only* a theoretical risk as they could not conceive of anyone using this level of sophistication to burgle their homes.

- The Framework

Respondents tended to see the framework as a set of choices without a sense of an overall structure. Once these choices were understood, reactions were largely positive. The framework was seen to give householders choice and control. It was felt to recognise what was necessary and helpful to the individual and society and allow for that information to be provided, while also recognising that other information was not necessary and should only be accessible with consent. The 'scale' of consent met with approval. Crucially, it meant that energy consumption data would only be used for marketing purposes if householders specifically asked for this to be the case. The exception was daily consumption data for suppliers. While some were happy for suppliers to have access, others felt there was no good reason why they would need it, and so it should be 'opt in' rather than 'opt out'. This underlines the point that information given to consumers about the purposes for which data is used appeared to be key to their acceptance in allowing access to that data.

There were major reservations over how the framework would operate in practice. Principally, would the choices be presented prominently and clearly in a way that could be readily understood, and not buried in the Terms and Conditions or worded so as to lead householders to a choice they might not intend? Respondents felt that they often encountered such tactics, not necessarily just from the energy sector. Respondents saw Government involvement as a positive point, once those respondents thought that its involvement was to do with introducing a set of rules for the industry to follow, and not to do with accessing the data on its own behalf. Respondents felt the framework had to be an enforced mandatory code, and they had no confidence in a voluntary agreement or self policing.

In Conclusion

Subject to issues of presentation and consideration by suppliers of the need and justification of access to daily consumption data, respondents felt the framework addressed their main concerns over data / privacy in relation to Smart Meters, while allowing others the access they needed in keeping with their needs and roles.

Concerns over data / privacy were low other than the possibility of receiving any more unwanted marketing contact as a result of Smart Meter data. Respondent`s concerns were negated once they had a clear understanding that the framework dealt with this concern. However, this only means householders will not receive marketing contact as a result of Smart Meter data, it does not mean that they will not receive marketing contact from their energy companies or other energy related suppliers as a result of other data. If consumers do not understand this and are contacted, they may assume the framework has been ineffective.

Background and Research Design

Background

Smart meters combined with In-home displays, are being rolled out to help give consumers more control over energy use and spending, and to help meet environmental and security of supply objectives. The Government aims for smart meters to be installed in all British homes by the end of 2019. A potential risk to smart metering from a public acceptability point of view is arguably around privacy: what control will consumers have about the ways in which their energy consumption data is used, by whom, and for which purposes? The Government is therefore putting in place a data access and privacy framework for the roll-out of smart meters. Research was required to understand the extent to which the public feel data and privacy is an issue in relation to smart metering and whether the proposed framework satisfies concerns.

Smart Meters will be installed over two implementation phases: the Foundation Stage, which began in April 2011; and mass roll-out, which will start in 2014 and be completed by the end of 2019.

The Government is therefore putting in place a data access and privacy framework for the roll-out of Smart Meters. Overall this framework aims to:

- Protect consumers' interests, in particular by addressing concerns that consumers may have about privacy;
- Enable proportionate access to data by authorised parties to ensure that benefits can be delivered; and
- Promote competition and innovation in the developing energy services market.

The Government's proposals for Smart Metering data access and privacy were set out in a consultation document published in April 2012². A response to that consultation is being published alongside this report and is available at;

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/cons_smip/cons_smip.aspx#programme

² Smart Metering Implementation Programme: Data access and privacy – Consultation document (April 2012)
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/cons_smip/cons_smip.aspx#programme

Research aims and objectives

The overall objective of the research was to understand the extent to which the Government's proposals, as set out in the April consultation document, address potential consumer concerns about data access and privacy and whether the Government is pitching its data access and privacy proposals at the right level, from a consumer point of view.

Specifically issues for exploration were:

- Relative to other concerns, how worried are consumers about privacy and data access in relation to Smart Metering in Great Britain?
- To what extent do these concerns vary, depending on who the data is being accessed by (energy supplier, network operator, third party or Government?)
- How reassured are consumers by the Government's proposals on Smart Metering data access and privacy?
- Do consumers feel that the framework strikes a fair and sensible balance between protecting consumers' interests, enabling benefits to be delivered, and promoting innovation and competition?
- What are the key issues that consumers want to be addressed when looking at what data energy suppliers, network operators and third parties can access?
- Are the proposed choice mechanisms (opt out and opt in) for different levels of data appropriate and understood?
- How do consumers feel about the proposals to keep them informed about their rights and choices in relation to data access and privacy?
- In general, do consumers understand the proposed framework on data access and privacy, and what their choices are? Do consumers have any suggestions for how the framework could be more easily explained/presented?

Research method and sample

A summary of the research method and sample appears here. 104 respondents were interviewed in total. The rationale for the research design and corresponding recruitment questionnaires are contained in the appendices to the report.

10 x Group Discussions – Non ‘Owners’ of Smart Meters				
Single / Pre-family 18-30	1. Male	C1C2	Private tenants	Scotland
	2. Female	DE	Property owners	England (M)
Family, younger children, 25-40	3. Mixed	DE	Mainly social tenants	England (S)
	4. Mixed	C1C2	Property owners	Wales
Family, ‘independent’ older children 35-50	5. Mixed	DE	Mainly social tenants	England (N)
	6. Mixed	(A)B	Property owners	Scotland
Empty Nester, 50-65	7. Mixed	C1C2	Property owners	England (N)
	8. Mixed	DE	Mainly social tenants	England (M)
Retired 65+	9. Mixed	(A)B	Property owners	Wales
	10. Mixed	C1C2	Property owners	England (S)
4 x Group Discussions – ‘Owners’ of Smart Meters				
Single / Pre-family 18-30	11. Mixed	C2D	Mix Private tenants / Property owners	Wales
Family, younger, older, 25-50	12. Mixed	BC1	Property owners	England (M)
Empty Nester, 50-65	13. Mixed	BC1	Property owners	England (S)
Retired 65+	14. Mixed	C2D	Mainly social tenants	Scotland
6 x Individual Interviews – ‘Concerned’ over data / privacy				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single, Pre-family, Family under 45 Empty Nester, Retired over 45 	M F	BC1 C2D	Mix ownership and tenure	England S

* To qualify as an ‘owner’ respondents had to have a Smart Meter.

Fieldwork Period

Fieldwork was carried out between 24 July and 16 August 2012.

Procedure

Our approach was designed to allow the issue of data / privacy to emerge before raising the subject in order to be able to understand whether it was a spontaneous concern in relation to Smart Metering.

Stimulus material was used to convey an understanding of how Smart Meters work and what they offer, followed by exploration of any spontaneous concerns or reservations of any sort before focussing on data and privacy issues in particular. In summary, the order of topics discussed was as follows with flexibility to follow respondent led themes as they arose.

Discussion topics:

- Awareness and understanding of Smart Metering
- Introduction of stimulus and discussion
 - Smart Meters: Overview
 - Benefits of Smart Meters
 - FAQs (prompt list)
 - FAQs focusing on Data Access and Privacy
 - The Framework

Interviews among those generally concerned about data privacy followed a similar pattern, although the background to their concerns was also explored.

Copies of discussion guides and stimulus material are contained within the appendices of this document.

Research Findings

Context

The following sections are a summary of respondents' attitudes, knowledge and understanding of these topics revealed in the course of discussing Smart Metering from existing awareness and from exposure to stimulus material.

Energy (Gas and Electricity)

This was clearly a low interest category, which generally only became salient when a bill was received or when trying to reduce household costs. There was correspondingly little or patchy knowledge of how the industry operates, for example, the distinction between 'suppliers' and 'networks' was not always understood. This affected comprehension when it came to explaining the different levels of data access in the framework. While there was reasonable awareness that the energy industry is regulated by Ofgem, there was relatively little understanding of what this meant in practice, for example, what sanctions might be brought to bear if an energy company were found guilty of breaking industry 'rules'.

"We assume they're trying to make money but they're doing it within the law, they're regulated, they'll get a slap on the wrists if they don't"

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Attitudes towards energy suppliers as corporate entities (as opposed to for example service or technical personnel) were invariably negative. To a certain extent this was perhaps inevitable given they supply a product that we tend to take for granted which makes a sizeable impact on household budgets. However, there were criticisms of frequent price rises which energy suppliers attributed to fluctuating oil and gas price rises. While domestic gas and electricity prices rose quickly in response to rising oil / gas prices they were only felt to be reduced some time after the event when these prices fell.

"You hear that oil prices are going down, but your bill rarely goes down, it takes months if it happens at all."

Non 'Owners', 65, Mixed, B, Wales

Energy companies were believed to make huge profits, and their senior managers to enjoy huge salaries and bonuses. These negative attitudes acted as a filter through which Smart Meters and corresponding data / privacy issues were viewed.

Last, but by no means least, energy suppliers were seen to be guilty of overly aggressive and intrusive direct sales tactics primarily by telephone, and also on the doorstep and in the street. As a result there was an assumption that any fresh initiative might result in more such activity.

"They phone you up and hassle you, they do it all the time, and stop you outside Tesco in the High Street."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Data and Privacy

Respondents took care to protect any kind of financial information, for example, banking or credit card details, as it was obvious how this could easily be misused. This was heightened among those who had suffered financial fraud of any description, as was the case with three of the six respondents who were recruited as ‘concerned’ about data privacy issues. Parents often remarked that they were wary of passing on any information relating to their children and their (children’s) use of social networking sites was a related concern for many.

Otherwise by far and away the dominant concern across the sample was that personal information might be used as a source of leads for direct marketing by telephone, and to a lesser extent on the doorstep and through other channels. Many claimed to experience frequent and persistent sales calls from energy and energy related companies (eg, solar energy, insulation) and from others, for example, financial mis-selling claims companies. Some had even stopped answering landlines as a result, while others who had ‘caller display’ on their handsets only answered calls from known numbers.

“I get 20 phone calls a day, people ringing me up about different things.”

Non ‘Owners’, 50-65, Mixed, C1C2, North

“I don’t even answer the house phone anymore.”

Non ‘Owners’, 35-50, Mixed, DE, North

Telephone was felt to be the most irritating and intrusive form of direct contact, partly because of frequency, but also because it was hard to ignore, as it could be a call that you needed to take. Calls to mobiles were less frequent and judged less irritating as a mobile was more likely to be to hand, which meant the call could be cut off or ignored more easily. Doorstep contact was thought equally intrusive and perhaps more so among retired respondents, but was thought much less common nowadays. Street marketing (selling) was seen to be a nuisance, but one which at least took place out of the home, and most respondents felt they had learned how to avoid being ‘caught’ by street marketing personnel. Text, email, and post could be irritating depending on volume but were generally thought less so because you could choose when to ‘go to’ these sources, and they were easier to ignore as a result.

Some pointed out that supplying personal information could have benefits, citing loyalty programmes such as Tesco Clubcard as an example as this could mean that you would receive information about special offers on products or services of interest to you. In these examples there was a sense of a contract between consumer and marketer, as the former had knowingly entered into the relationship, and there had been a definite reward in doing so.

“What about the supermarket, they collect all my data and use it to give me offers, the things I get are the things I use all the time.”

‘Owners’, 50-65, Mixed, BC1, South

There was a strong tendency to assume that any unsolicited marketing contact resulted from the use of personal information, whether this had been obtained legitimately or not. In turn respondents often connected the nature of the call with an existing commercial relationship of

one form or another, so they were likely to assume, for example, that calls about insulation or solar panels had resulted from their energy supplier passing on information, or that calls about PPI resulted from one of their financial services providers passing on information.”

“I set up a savings account on-line and I got a whole load of emails which weren't random - they must have known..”

Concerned, Under 45, Male, BC1, South

The Data Protection Act

While all respondents were aware of the Data Protection Act, relatively few knew what it meant in practical terms, for example, that it might forbid the passing on or selling of personal details without consent, which was a key concern for many. As a result, references to the Data Protection Act supporting the Framework in protecting their interests did not always provide reassurance.

Even when the core principles of the Act were known respondents often had limited faith in its ability to protect them. They pointed out that any organisation could be vulnerable to dishonest or incompetent employees, or systems failures, and that the consumer would have to prove infringement and obtain redress if they suspected their rights had been compromised. So while the Data Protection Act might suggest a level of operating standards it does not offer complete reassurance.

“Same as that patient data in hospitals that went missing then?”

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

“It's not the company but the employees. It doesn't give you protection against that one employee.”

Concerned, Over 45, Female, C2D, South

Similar issues applied to reassurances on data security.

Smart meters and In-home displays

Awareness and Understanding

There was relatively high awareness of the term 'Smart Meter' among the non-'owner' sample. However, this often meant little more than a feeling they had heard the term before and understanding could be limited or inaccurate. Therefore it might be wise to assume there is no knowledge in any communication to the public about Smart Meters.

'Owners' generally had a good understanding of how their Smart Meter worked, although in some cases attention had been focussed on the in-home display rather than the meter itself.

Smart Meters: Attitudes and Reactions

This section is based on feedback from 'owners' based on their experience of Smart Meters, and from exploring the following stimulus outlining how Smart Meters work and what they offer with non-'owners'.



Smart Meters - Overview

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters which in conjunction with an in-home display allow you to see how much energy you're using.

Smart meters can send electronic meter readings to your energy supplier automatically so the company always has an accurate meter reading.

The energy monitor (or display), a small device about the size of a smart phone, is connected to your smart meter and shows you how much energy you are using at different times of the day, week, month, year etc.

The monitor can also show you what this is costing you as it happens, according to tariff information stored in your smart meter

It is possible to have an energy monitor for electricity without a smart meter although this bases any cost indications on estimated rates rather than your actual tariff. It is not currently possible to have an energy monitor for gas without a smart meter.

Smart meters will be rolled out across the country by 2019. But it will not be a legal obligation on individuals to have one. Existing meters have to be replaced at intervals anyway, roughly every 20 years.

Smart meters will also help the energy network to work more efficiently, reducing costs to consumers and the environment and there is a program of upgrading which aims for every household that wants one to have one by 2019

What Smart Meters Offer

- A smart meter and energy display used together will show you what you are spending on gas and electricity as it happens
- A smart meter and energy display can help you reduce your energy bills
- A smart meter means you'll never have to have your meter read or provide your own readings
- A smart meter means you'll have accurate bills – no more estimated bills
- A smart meter can make it much easier for consumers to compare costs with alternative energy suppliers, for example, you could upload your energy consumption information directly to a price comparison website
- A smart meter can make it much easier for consumers to switch suppliers
- If energy companies have a more accurate picture of how much energy the country uses and when they use it, they will be able to make sure they have the right amount of energy at the right time helping them to run more efficiently and in turn lowering bills and CO2 emissions

The dominant view was that Smart Meters seemed a positive step forward, for the following reasons.

- They would allow householders to see the impact of energy usage on consumption and on their bills. There was some cynicism as to whether this would result in savings as it was felt that energy companies would compensate for reductions in usage by increasing unit costs. However many found the idea of having the information appealing nonetheless.
- Accurate bills rather than estimates. This appealed for one or more of the following reasons:
 - it allowed the householder to know exactly how much they owed to their energy supplier
 - it would mean you would neither be in debt to your energy company, nor would you be in credit
 - it simply seemed more straightforward and in step with the way we pay for other goods and services.
- An end to meter readings, which partially links to the point about accuracy, but was also seen to be more convenient, and meant one less call at the door to answer for the elderly.

“It would be interesting, you spend a fortune on cavity wall insulation, double glazing, it’s interesting to see what you are using.”

Non ‘Owners’, Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

“Anything to start getting the bills down, which is cheaper, a bath or a shower, you could find out.”

Non ‘Owners’, 35-50, Mixed, DE, North

"I hate estimates. I'm constantly ringing them up with my readings. They always estimate £20 more and you never get your money back."

Non 'Owners', 35-50, Mixed, DE, North

"It's one less person knocking on your door, so that is a good thing, and one more person coming into your house, you won't have to answer the door to people any more, that's good. It would be really nice for people like mum, she's in her 80s, she won't have to open her door to someone, that is good."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Some, while not objecting to the introduction of Smart Meters and agreeing with all of the above felt relatively indifferent. They considered they were already careful with their energy consumption and could not see how they could save further, and were happy with their current payment and meter reading regime.

"It wouldn't make any difference - we're already careful."

Non 'Owners', 35-50, Mixed, B, Scotland

"It's no problem, I go on line once a month, put in what I've used, we don't need this we're on direct debit, so it doesn't make much difference."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Irrespective of the extent to which they saw personal benefits in Smart Meters, some respondents started to wonder why the energy industry would want to introduce them, as surely they would lead to lower energy usage, and in turn less revenue and profit. This led them to wonder what 'the catch' might be. Explaining the broader context helped to settle these concerns, that is, a nationwide initiative aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions.

"If people are more aware, things are going to add up, all the little things, if everyone does it, so if they do this they will make a loss, so will they then put the prices up."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

"How is this making them any money then, everybody is going to have one, they use less energy, they're not charging you to put them in, they're not saying you have to stick with them..."

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, C1C2, Wales

A less prevalent, but recurring view from participants was a more cynical reaction, in the belief that the introduction of Smart Meters would somehow sooner or later turn out to their

detriment, for example, that they would be a presage to the introduction of a carbon tax, or a scheme that would be aimed at heavier energy users.

“They’d be checking the right number of people were in the house, if you got one person in a 4 bed house they wouldn’t be using enough electricity.”

Non ‘Owners’, 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

Exploring these views suggested they were more symptomatic of the individuals’ world view than of anything to do with Smart Meters or the energy industry, and it is worth saying at this point that even these respondents felt the framework proposals reflected consumer interests. However, this group might well be influenced by any media debate on Smart Meters that reflected their world view, and in all probability would not have the inclination or enthusiasm to properly explore any argument to determine whether it was based on sound reasoning and evidence.

Smart Meters: Questions and Concerns

‘Owners’ were asked whether they had any questions or concerns regarding their Smart Meter, either at the time of installation or thereafter. Non users and those concerned about data privacy were asked the same question following exploration of stimulus, ‘Overview’ and ‘What Smart Meters Offer’. All respondents were then exposed to a list of typical ‘FAQs’ in relation to Smart Meters, including *‘what information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it’*, and asked whether these were questions or concerns they might also share. This procedure was followed to allow any concerns about data / privacy to emerge unprompted prior to focussing on the issue and exploring the framework.

Spontaneous questions, and those prompted by the FAQs centred on practical issues, as follows:

- will I have to pay for a Smart Meter, either at installation, or for running it?
- will I be responsible for maintaining it?
- what happens if it goes wrong?
- who will install it? will they be prepared to carry out the installation at a time that is convenient to me?
- will accepting a Smart Meter from an energy supplier lock me in to using that supplier?

A small minority of respondents mentioned data / privacy, either spontaneously or prompted by the corresponding FAQ, fuelled by a concern that accepting a Smart Meter might somehow lead to more unwanted sales calls of one form or another.

“A spy in your house, like a Google type thing, one more intrusion into the home.”

Non ‘Owners’, Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

“You’d get phone calls saying, we see you’re using 10KWH, we can do it cheaper, like when you get things from insurance companies just before it’s due. They know something from somewhere.”

'Owners', 50-65, Mixed, BC1, South

"Junk mail will go up, they'll all try and sell you low energy light-bulbs, double glazing, cavity wall..."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

A smaller minority, some with a background in IT, or a personal interest in computers picked up on 'are Smart Meters secure' for the same reason, as they assumed there would be a wireless connection from meter to display, and perhaps from meter to energy supplier which could be vulnerable.

"If you have a wireless laptop you can pick up information, could someone sit outside your house and pick up information?"

'Owners', 50-65, Mixed, BC1, South

To deal with this second point before moving on to data / privacy, those concerned accepted that it was virtually impossible to make any kind of data connection completely secure, but felt that a reputable organisation should be able to guarantee a connection that was impervious to casual or accidental infiltration.

Smart meter and data / privacy: Overview

The Data

A few, in particular those recruited as 'concerned' generally about data privacy issues, disliked the idea of anyone having access to any of their personal data. Even if they could not see any obvious threat or disadvantage at the current time, they were concerned as to how the data might be used in the future, or whether it could be used in conjunction with other information to build a picture of them and their lives. Having said that, in common with the rest of the sample, they pointed out that giving others access to personal information was a reality of modern life, and that you would be seriously inconvenienced if you did not accept some degree of transfer of personal information. In practical terms their solution was to only give the information they absolutely had to, for example, because an organisation would not or could not provide a service they needed without it.

Otherwise energy consumption data was not seen to be at all sensitive as respondents could see no obvious downside to others having access to it, nor, on initial consideration was it seen to be personal or private. It was thought to have little value to anyone other than the energy supplier who would need it to provide their service, although there was a concern that somehow the energy supplier might use the data as a basis for attempting to sell additional products and services.

"What could they pass over that would cause any harm to us? So what"

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

“There’s more things in your life you do that give people much more information than your gas, like your credit card, you buy something over the phone, someone’s got all that, I’m not going to worry about my gas bill.”

‘Owners’, 25-50, Mixed, BC1, Midlands

The fact that respondents did not spontaneously identify data privacy issues and risks associated with Smart Metering does not mean that they would automatically reject any concerns raised by others as the program unfolds.

Data / Frequency

While, as outlined above, energy consumption data was not seen to be personal on initial consideration, it did become so as the respondent learned in the course of exploring the framework that it could be collected at different intervals; monthly, daily, half hourly and so on. For some higher frequencies of collection from daily upwards started to feel intrusive, as this was felt to offer a window into the home and what went on within it. This led to a sharp change in attitude for some, who started to feel quite differently about the idea of the Smart Meter collecting information. Equally, it was not obvious to some why anyone would need or want the information at this level of detail, and this left some respondents with a sense of unease, as they wondered what the motivation and purpose behind collecting the data might be.

“It’s your home, where your children are. Everything you do, it’s all in your home. People would know if you were out for the day.”

Concerned, Under 45, Female, BC1, South

‘It’s too nosy. Why do they need to narrow it down so much? I don’t know why they want it half hourly, wonder why...’

Non ‘Owners’, 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

“Why do they really want to know what we’re using daily and half hour, bit strange, I don’t know I’d be bothered if they did know, but it does make you wonder...”

Non ‘Owners’, 25-40, Mixed, C1C2, Wales

Who Sees The Data?

Respondents’ immediate assumption was that their energy supplier would see their data. This seemed perfectly reasonable (assuming they did not pass it on to any third party), as they would need this information in order to bill their customers for the energy they used. However, this linked to frequency, as while everyone could see a case for monthly data in this respect, some were unclear on the immediate rationale for higher frequencies, eg, daily, half hourly.

Concerns

The **overwhelming area of concern is around the possibility that data collected from Smart Meters might result in unwanted marketing communication**, particularly direct sales via telephone, and to a lesser extent doorstep.

There was also seen to be a theoretical risk in more detailed data collection, as it could be used to find out when a home was empty in order to commit burglary. However, even those who pointed this out felt that this was only a theoretical risk, as it was unlikely that anyone would go to these lengths in order to burgle a 'typical' household.

"If they knew I was out they could burgle the house. It's going a bit far, most burglars are too thick to do that, if they're that switched on they'd be doing chip and pin (fraud) and they wouldn't be living round here!"

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

Smart Meters and data / privacy: Framework

Overview

Respondents were more likely to see the framework as a set of choices rather than as a framework, whereby householders had priority access and others, such as suppliers and networks, had rights and obligations which reflected their need for the data and the use of that data. Respondents typically did not see a structure to the various levels of access unless this was pointed out to them. This may have been partly because they did not include themselves in the framework because they felt the data 'belonged' to them anyway.

In either case once understood, the reaction to the framework was largely positive for the following reasons:

- it put control in the hands of the householder and gave them choices;
- it seemed to recognise what was necessary and helpful to the individual and wider society, and allow for that information to be provided;
- it seemed to recognise that other types of information were not necessary for the individual or society's benefit, and should only be accessible with the householders' consent; and
- crucially, it meant energy consumption data would only lead to them receiving more marketing communication if they opted in and gave their express consent.

The only exception was daily consumption data for suppliers. While some were happy for suppliers to have this information on an 'opt out' basis, others felt there was no convincing rationale for them needing it, and that it should only be available on an 'opt in' basis.

"I wouldn't like that. It feels like big brother to me. It's somebody watching you"

Non 'Owners', 50-65, Mixed, C1C2, North

However, there were major reservations over how the framework would operate in a practical sense. Respondents questioned whether choices would be presented clearly and prominently in a way that could be easily understood without a great deal of effort. They claimed that their experience (not necessarily just from the energy sector.) was that such choices were often buried in lengthy and detailed 'Terms and Conditions', or worded and presented in a confusing way which they felt was designed to achieve the outcome the supplier wanted rather than the one they wanted.

"They word it really well, if you want to see more things about how we can save you money, you tick it, then you get the calls."

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

"You'd have to be on the ball to make sure you opted out – make sure you don't just tick all the boxes, you'd have to read all the boxes."

Non 'Owners', 35-50, Mixed, DE, North

Introducing the framework

'Government' involvement in the framework was seen in a positive light once it was clearly understood that the framework was about creating a set of rules for the energy industry to follow. Some did not understand this to begin with, which led them to suppose that 'Government' was orchestrating the framework because it wanted access to the data for its own purposes. This could lead to speculation as to how government might intend to use the data which was unsettling for consumers rather than reassuring. Once the nature of Government involvement was clear, it was welcomed, as it was supposed that the 'rules' would be in the consumer's direct and wider interests, rather than the industry's.

Respondents felt the framework had to be a set of rules which the industry were obliged to follow, and that these rules should be policed. There was no confidence in self-regulation or a voluntary code.

Data Access: Householders and Bill Payers

It was accepted without argument or surprise that householders should have access to their data at the greatest level of detail they wanted and which their devices could support. Respondents felt that as they 'owned' the data this was perfectly reasonable, and that this was more of a right than a privilege.

Data Access: Energy Suppliers

The following text was used to present suppliers' proposed data access under the framework.

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Energy suppliers:

- under the Government's proposals, would be able to read monthly usage information for individual households for billing and regulatory purposes (for example, preventing theft, settlement, and managing consumer debt)
- would be able to access *daily consumption information* for purposes *excluding* marketing providing *householders choose not to opt out* of supplying it
- would be able to access *half hourly information and information for marketing* uses providing *householders opt in* to supplying it

Other readings may be taken in particular circumstances, for example, to enable accurate billing, address queries, or to investigate suspected theft. Suppliers would be able to use *half hourly usage information for the purposes of approved trials* provided householders did not *opt out* of supplying it

Energy suppliers would have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example with rules on sharing information with third parties

Under the Government's proposals, suppliers would *have to remind their customers annually* about any information they were collecting and what choices they have

A right for suppliers to have access to monthly usage information seemed reasonable, as they would need this in order to bill their customers, and in turn this would allow customers access to the benefits of accurate billing and an end to meter reading.

"Monthly? that's straightforward that's fair enough."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Subject to issues of presentation, respondents welcomed the provision that suppliers would only be able to use data for marketing purpose if householders opted in to supplying it.

"That's great, when we get it we're opting not to receive marketing information, and if we want it we have to tick the box."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Some became confused between the term 'opt out' and 'opt in', and when this was explored replayed 'opt in' as 'if they ask your permission and you agree', and opt out as, 'they will unless you ask them not to'.

'Opt in' was also seen to be appropriate for half hourly information, as reading data at this level of detail seemed unnecessary and intrusive, especially as energy networks would have access to this data and so would be in a position to predict supply needs.

'Opt out' for daily consumption data was questioned. Because respondents thought there was no obvious need for this level of detail it seemed intrusive, leading respondents to wonder why suppliers might want it, and what they might do with it. Some respondents briefly explored in more detail other arguments to support the need for daily data, but these arguments were not found convincing. This underlines the point that information given to consumers about the

purposes for which data is used appeared key to their acceptance in allowing access to that data.

In responding to the main points of the framework relating to suppliers respondents could become distracted by some of the subsidiary points, as follows:

- *‘regulatory purposes’, ‘preventing theft, settlement and managing consumer debt’*
- *‘approved trials’*
- *‘address queries’.*

The form of presentation gave these elements equal prominence to the others discussed above suggesting they were equally commonplace. This, coupled with speculation as to the meaning and nature of the phrases (for example, how is energy stolen?) could take attention away from the main points of the framework and leave respondents confused.

Respondents could also become confused where two ‘conditions’ were dealt with in the same sentence or paragraph, for example, *‘would be able to access daily consumption information for purposes excluding marketing providing householders choose not to opt out of supplying it’*, and, *‘half hourly information and information for marketing uses providing customers opt in to supplying it’*. When asked to replay the thoughts in their own words once they understood them they tended to break them into two separate conditions, and to use different vocabulary to express ‘opt in’, ‘opt out’ and ‘marketing’, for example:

- *Your energy supplier would be able to read daily energy usage for your household, but you can choose not to let them see this*
- *Your energy supplier would be able to read half hourly energy usage for your household if they ask your permission and you agree*
- *Your energy supplier would be able to use your household’s energy usage information to tell you about their products, services and offers if they ask your permission and you agree.*

This suggests that if there is a need to convey the framework or the choices it offers, it would be best expressed as a number of ‘single conditions’.

The reference to the Data Protection Act suggested that suppliers` adherence to the code would be policed in some way, which was appreciated. The reference to ‘sharing information with third parties’ helped increase confidence in the framework, as while some knew this to be covered by the Act this was by no means always the case.

The proposal that suppliers would have to remind their customers annually about information they were collecting and associated choices was welcomed, as it would give householders the opportunity to review their choices in the light of experience.

“They have to ask you annually, which leaves you the option of saying no thank you.”

Non ‘Owners’, Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

The following thought was put verbally by the moderators and explored.

Your energy supplier would be able to use your household's energy usage information to tell you about free energy and money saving products and services but you can choose not to let them do so.

It divided opinions. While many were happy to be told of anything that was free, others suspected it would somehow open the door to unwanted sales calls. Some had experienced similar promises in relation to household insulation, only to find on more detailed examination that this had meant a product, in this case the insulating material was free, but the installation had to be paid for. This led them to doubt whether 'free' would really mean free. Clearly, this condition of access to data would only be acceptable if it did. Discussion of whether this should remain 'opt out' or become 'opt in' led to the conclusion that much depended on how choice was presented, in that if the choice was prominent, clear and easily understood 'opt out' might be acceptable, whereas if not, it should be 'opt in'.

"I had a free thing once, turned out to cost £95. The product was free, the installation wasn't."

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, C1C2, Wales

Data Access: Energy Networks

The following text was used to present energy networks' proposed data access under the framework.

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Energy networks:

- energy networks would be able to use the usage information to predict demand helping them to better manage resources
- under the Government's proposals, networks would have to gain approval to be able to access half-hourly information for regulated purposes (e.g. maintaining an efficient system) without customer consent
- a condition of the proposals is that the information would be combined together so that it is all anonymous - for example, all the households in a postcode district put together

Energy networks would have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example with rules on sharing information with third parties

Not everyone knew that there were such organisations as energy networks until prompted to think about it, nor did the words always have meaning for those who did. The concept was not always the easiest to explain. Some respondents played back the words 'National Grid' usually thinking of the infrastructure rather than the company in an attempt to explain what an energy network was. There was no similar 'shorthand' for the gas network. Drawing an analogy with the rail network, where 'Railtrack' operated the network on which other companies ran trains,

seemed to help respondents understand the role and nature of energy networks. This issue illustrates the need to avoid the use of even simple industry terms wherever possible.

Once understood the proposed level of access to data by network operators seemed appropriate and acceptable for the following reasons:

- respondents could see why energy networks might need this information, and why there might be a wider benefit to us all in them having it
- the information is anonymous or aggregated
- there is no opt in or opt out option, therefore its value to the network is credible as it would be based on complete information
- there was much less negativity attached to perceptions of 'networks' compared to suppliers. They were not associated with bills, huge profits or 'fat cat' salaries and the network was seen to be 'part of the (nation's) fabric' even if privately owned.

Note that, for some, the networks receiving half-hourly data to enable them to predict demand and manage resources undermined any argument that suppliers might need more detailed information than monthly for similar purposes.

"So you can read the street but not my individual house, that's ok."

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

"I've no problem with the national grid having energy data. I've never been stopped in the shopping centre by someone from the national grid trying to get me onto their plan. It doesn't bother me."

Non 'Owners', 35-50, Mixed, DE, North

"It sounds pretty reasonable to me. It sounds like it's being used to better service the network."

Non 'Owners', 35-50, Mixed, DE, North

Data Access: Third Parties

The following text was used to present third parties' proposed data access under the framework.

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Third parties:

- Under the Government's proposals, customers could choose to make their information available to third parties (other than their current energy supplier) **if they gave their specific consent**
- this would usually be for the purpose of comparing prices, for example, with a price comparison website, or to get a specific service (such as energy efficiency advice)
- in order to be allowed to access the information the third party would have to verify that they were talking to the right individual, and confirm that they had obtained consent properly – and this would be subject to audit

Third Parties would have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example with rules on sharing information with other third parties

If householders agree to give third parties on-going access to their information, the third party has to remind them annually that they are collecting this information

There was a positive response to this idea when it was understood to mean 'one off' consent to a specific third party at a point in time, in the sense that the householder would actively make the data available to that third party.

"I want to do it when I want to do it, don't want them phoning me."

Non 'Owners', Mixed, 65+, C1C2, South

Those who had tried to 'shop around' for competitive quotes in the past claimed to have found it a time consuming process complicated by the need to be able to abstract and use information from their past energy bills. The stimulus, 'Smart Meters Overview' and 'What Smart Meters Offer' led participants to assume that somehow the Smart Meter would automate this process, making it much easier. Some speculated that providing the process of switching was equally easy this might force suppliers to be much more competitive in their prices in order not to lose business, and hopefully have the effect of limiting price rises in the future.

However, there were questions as to how this would work in practice. As worded the stimulus suggested the householder might be giving on-going access to third parties in general rather than approaching specific third parties they had selected to provide a competitive quote. Not surprisingly this sparked concerns of a flood of approaches from different energy companies. Respondents wanted to feel in control of the process, initiating contact with one or more third parties of their choice when they chose to do so. They also queried the form the access would take. Ideally they would have liked it to have been only at the point of obtaining the

quote and not on-going access over a period of time, or if not they wanted to be able to specify the period of access.

Presentation of Data Access choices to Householders

As mentioned earlier the form of presentation was seen to be as big an issue as its content, as based on experience respondents felt those asking for these types of 'permissions' sometimes manipulated their presentation to work in their interests rather than the consumer's.

"These will always be as confusing as possible so you give the answer they want. It's not going to be 'do you want annoying phone calls at home'?"

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

These criticisms did not single out the energy industry, but were felt to apply to almost any sector where a contract (in the broadest sense) included opt in / out clauses in relation to personal information. Typical tactics were felt to include:

- choices worded, sequenced, or combined in such a way as to confuse the consumer and deliver the outcome the supplier wants
- choices buried in dense pages of terms and conditions
- communication addressed to 'the householder' rather than personalised to make it less likely that it would be read.

Respondents accepted that they had a limited appetite for this kind of information, which was compounded by the fact that they invariably completed such 'forms' whether paper or electronic in a hurry when there were many competing distractions. These factors were felt to increase the chances of consumers making choices they might not have intended.

Taking the above into account respondents felt that the framework would only be meaningful if those who had to adhere to it presented choices in a prominent, clear and unambiguous way.

"It needs to be clear, on page 1, not in a little grey box on page 10 of the Terms and Conditions."

Non 'Owners', 25-40, Mixed, DE, South

"It needs to be written like it's for a child."

Non Owners', 50-65, Mixed, DE, Midlands

"Get the plain English society involved!"

Non 'Owners', 50-65, Mixed, C1C2, North

Equally, they felt strongly that it should be easy to exercise choice or the offer of choice would be no more than a cynical exercise in presentation. So for example, they should be able to opt out by ticking a box, and not have to make a phone call to do so.

Presentation of Data Access Choices as a Framework

Respondents tended to see the framework as a collection of choices without any overall structure or relationship between those different choices.

This was partly because they did not readily see themselves as part of a framework as they did not feel they were being given 'priority access' because it was after all, their data. This meant the principle of greatest access for the consumer, and more restricted access for other parties depending on their need for the data tended not to register. Respondents were also likely to focus on elements of primary or immediate concern to themselves and skip over others partly because of the 'breadth' of the framework and the number of different clauses it contained. This is likely to be compounded when the programme rolls out, because in all probability, very few will take any interest in this issue before it becomes 'concrete' for them, i.e. when they are contacted about their Smart Meter's installation, or when they take ownership of it.

Respondents felt that the key points to make were:

- they have choices
- they are in control and they need to exercise that control.

Conclusions and Implications

Subject to issues of presentation and consideration of the issue of access by suppliers to daily information respondents felt the framework offered them choices which reflected their concerns, while allowing others access to their data in keeping with their needs and roles.

Data / privacy concerns relating to Smart Metering seemed low other than the possibility of receiving more unwanted marketing contact as a result of Smart Meter data. Respondents concerns were negated once they had a clear understanding that the framework dealt with this concern. However, this will only mean householders will not receive marketing contact as a result of *Smart Meter data*, it does not mean that they will not receive marketing contact from their energy companies or other energy related suppliers as a result of *other* data. Assuming this is the case interested parties might wish to keep this in mind as the programme rolls out, as if consumers are not aware of this and are contacted by energy companies they may assume the framework is ineffective.

Implications: Presenting the framework

General principles can be extracted from our research as follows:

- References to, for example, ‘statutory obligations’, ‘participation in trials’, ‘combating theft’, etc, distracted attention from the aspects of the framework arguably of most relevance to consumers and led to confusion. Equally, the subject matter is not of high interest, and attention spans are likely to be short. This suggests that it might be advisable to give priority to the content of most relevance to consumers. For example, this could be achieved by presenting the information that is most widely relevant to ‘typical households’ and everyday circumstances separately from that which refers to exceptional situations.
- Some respondents struggled with any form of jargon or ‘technical’ expression. For example, even ‘opt in’ and ‘opt out’ were confusing for some, and not everyone understood what ‘data’ is, or what ‘aggregate’ means, and so on. This suggests use of plain English is desirable.
- Respondents could find it hard to feel they had clearly grasped the meaning of sections of the framework where two or more ‘conditions’ were coupled together. In order to be clear they tended to abstract the ‘single conditions’ So for example, if asked to convey *Energy suppliers would be able to access daily consumption data for purposes excluding marketing providing householders choose not to opt out of supplying it*, they would say something along the lines of...
 - *Your energy supplier would be able to use your household’s energy usage information to tell you about their products, services and offers **if they ask your permission and you agree***
 - and...***
 - *Your energy supplier would be able to read daily energy usage for your household, but **you can choose not to let them see this***

- Opt in for marketing information was seen to be by far and away the most important clause by the vast majority. It should be kept clear and distinct, and given priority.
- All respondents were aware of the Data Protection Act but relatively few knew what it meant in practical terms, for example, that it might forbid the passing on or selling of personal details without consent. It might therefore be advisable to keep this in mind in any communication where the Act supports the Framework in protecting consumers' interests, re-stating key conditions where appropriate.
- Similarly, there was little or patchy knowledge of how the energy industry operates, for example, the distinction between 'suppliers' and 'networks' and the role of Ofgem. This suggests that any communication to consumers it might be advisable to assume they have no background knowledge of the industry or how it is regulated.

The following expression of the framework was generated in the course of the project either directly by respondents or from their feedback to the original stimulus. While it was felt to be easy to grasp in the research situation, we feel that 'in real life' its length means that many would not read it to the end, and so key clauses, specifically the opt in to marketing information should be presented earlier in the sequence and in a prominent way.

The Government is proposing the following rules for who can see your household's energy usage and what they can do with that information.

- *Your energy supplier would be able to use your household's energy usage information to tell you about their products, services and offers **if they ask your permission and you agree***
- *You, the householder will have access to your own information in as much detail as your meter and display can provide*
- *Your energy supplier would have the right to read your household's energy usage monthly for billing purposes*
- *Your energy supplier would be able to read daily energy usage for your household, but **you can choose not to let them see this.***
- *Your energy supplier would be able to read half hourly energy usage for your household **if they ask your permission and you agree***
- *You would be able to show your household's energy usage information to a third party such as a competitive energy supplier or a price comparison website **if you chose to do so***
- *Energy networks (the companies who run the grid that bring the gas or electricity to your home) would have the right to read half hourly information, but only for groups of households put together **so the information is anonymous***
- *Anyone who uses householders' energy usage information will have to demonstrate their systems are secure and that consumers are protected against fraud*
- *Energy suppliers using individual householders' usage information have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example, rules about sharing that information with anyone else without the householder's express consent.*

Appendices

Research Method
Recruitment Questionnaires
Discussion Guides
Stimulus

RESEARCH METHOD

The research used a mixed methodology.

- **Group discussions** (6-7 participants with non-‘owners’, 4-5 with ‘owners’)
 - group discussions are a proven method for exploring understanding, attitudes, and opinions
 - they are ideal not only for obtaining reactions but also for ‘brainstorming’ potential evolutions; for example potential alternatives for expressing the framework
 - there is a possibility that the social dynamics of a group can artificially inflate the significance attached to issues, however, experience suggested that Smart Metering is not a particularly emotive subject and this possibility was further reduced by the discussion design, that is the order of covering topics and the stimulus we used
 - we convened smaller groups with users for practical reasons given the currently low penetration of Smart Meters
- **Individual interviews** (among those with a particular interest and / or background in data privacy issues)
 - we wanted to understand the specific circumstances behind this interest and this was easier to do in an individual interview, for example, did it stem from a point of principle, an emotional reaction to being ‘spied on’, or actual loss or inconvenience as a result of data misuse
 - group dynamics might have further intensified feelings about the subject which might have made it difficult to gauge the extent to which participants felt the issue was more or less ‘live’ in relation to Smart Metering, and the extent to which they felt reassured by the framework
 - these respondents were screened using an attitude statement to establish that they attached importance to data / privacy regulation, and a number of behavioural statements to help determine that they took practical steps to guard their privacy. A copy of the recruitment questionnaire appears subsequently

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: 'OWNERS' AND NON 'OWNERS'

IF APPROACHING RESPONDENTS FROM PREVIOUS SURVEYS THEY MUST HAVE OPTED IN TO 'HAPPY TO BE RECONTACTED FOR RESEARCH' (OR EQUIVALENT WORDING) AT THE TIME THEY WERE FIRST RECRUITED

Q1 I am conducting a market research survey. Can you tell me if you or any of your friends or relations work, or have ever worked, in any of these occupations? READ OUT:

ADVERTISING	1
MARKET RESEARCH	2
PUBLIC RELATIONS	3
MARKETING	4
PUBLISHING	5
JOURNALISM	6
BROADCASTING	7
ENERGY, ENERGY COMPANIES	8
ENERGY / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY	9

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED, CLOSE

Q2 a) Have you ever attended a market research group or interview?

Yes 1 – GO TO Q2b

No 2 – GO TO Q3

b) when did you last attend a group or interview?

In the last year 1 – CLOSE

Over a year ago 2 – GO TO Q2c

c) how many groups/interviews have you ever attended? _____

d) what was the subject of the groups/interviews you attended?

WRITE IN _____

RESPONDENTS SHOULD NOT HAVE ATTENDED MORE THAN 3 GROUPS EVER, AND NEVER ON THE SAME SUBJECT AS THE CURRENT ONE

Q3 Do you have permanent right of residence in the UK?

Yes 1 – GO TO Q4

No 2 - CLOSE

Q4 Can you tell me whether you own your property or rent?

Owner of a house 1

Owner of a flat 2

Tenant in privately owned house 3

Tenant in privately owned flat 4

Tenant in social housing (house) 5

Tenant in social housing (flat) 6

PRIVATE TENANTS GROUPS 1, 11*

SOCIAL TENANTS GROUPS 3, 5, 8, 14

'OWNERS' GROUPS 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11*, 12, 13

* Mix of Private tenants and 'owners'

Q5 a) Who in your household is responsible for your household energy bills?

- Self only 1 – GO TO Q5b
- Self and other jointly 2 – GO TO Q5b
- Other 3 – CLOSE

b) Who is responsible for related decisions such as switching energy suppliers?

- Self only 1 – GO TO Q6
- Self and other jointly 2 – GO TO Q6
- Other 3 – CLOSE

Q6 a) Can you tell me whether you have a Smart Meter, and an in Home Energy Display (Monitor) that allows you to see how much energy your home is using as it happens? (NB, there may be some confusion as to what the units are, what they are called and so on so show visuals and refer to briefing notes to clarify if necessary)

- Have Display/Monitor and Meter 1
- Have Meter but not display 2
- Have Display / Monitor but not Meter 3
- Don't have Display / Monitor or Meter 4

b) Smart Meter User Groups: Ask those coding 1 and 2 above. When you say you have a Smart Meter, do you mean

- A meter that replaces an old electric or gas meter that is in a cupboard or under the stairs or similar which is directly linked to my energy supplier (electric and / or gas) 1
- A monitor or display that I keep in a living area that shows me how much electricity or gas you are using 2

GROUPS 1-10: NONE TO HAVE A SMARTMETER AT HOME.

GROUPS 11-14: ALL TO HAVE A SMARTMETER, OR A SMART METER AND MONITOR AT HOME. MUST CODE 1 and / or 2 AT a) AND 1, or 1 and 2 AT b)

Q7 a) Have you switched your energy supplier in the last year or two?

- Yes 1
- No 2

RECRUIT AT LEAST 2 PER GROUP – NON USERS

CLASSIFICATION

NAME
 ADDRESS
 TELEPHONE NUMBER

OCCUPATION OF HOUSEHOLD'S MAIN INCOME EARNER

PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. GROUP 3 ALL RETIRED

SOCIAL GRADE:	A	1
	B	2
	C1	3
	C2	4
	D	5
	E	6

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

OWN OCCUPATION

AGE:	18-24	1
	25-30	2
	31-34	3
	35-40	4
	41-50	5
	51-60	6
	61-65	7
	65-75	8

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

SEX:	Male	1
	Female	2

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

MARITAL STATUS:	Married/cohabiting	1
	Divorced/separated	2
	Widowed	3
	Single	4

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

PRESENCE & AGES OF CHILDREN AT HOME:	None	1
	WRITE IN AGES _____	
	Independent older children only	2
	Empty nesters	3

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

ETHNIC STATUS:

White:	
British	1
Irish	2
Other	
WRITE IN _____	3
Mixed:	
White & black Caribbean	4
White & black Asian	5
White & Asian	6
Any other mix	
WRITE IN _____	7
Asian or Asian British:	
Indian	8
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	10
Other	
WRITE IN _____	11
Black or black British:	
Caribbean	12
African	13
Other black backgrounds	14
Chinese or other ethnic background:	
Chinese	15
Other	
WRITE IN _____	16

RECRUIT SOME ETHNIC REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE SAMPLE. REFER TO FIELD MANAGER FOR YOUR INSTRUCTIONS

DATE OF GROUP/INTERVIEW _____ TIME

I AM NOT A FRIEND OR RELATION OF THE RESPONDENT, AND TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE HE/SHE IS NOT KNOWN TO ANY OTHER RESPONDENT IN THE GROUP

RECRUITER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: 'CONCERNED' ABOUT DATA PRIVACY

IF APPROACHING RESPONDENTS FROM PREVIOUS SURVEYS THEY MUST HAVE OPTED IN TO 'HAPPY TO BE RECONTACTED FOR RESEARCH' (OR EQUIVALENT WORDING) AT THE TIME THEY WERE FIRST RECRUITED

Q1 I am conducting a market research survey. Can you tell me if you or any of your friends or relations work, or have ever worked in any of these occupations? **READ OUT:**

ADVERTISING	1
MARKET RESEARCH	2
PUBLIC RELATIONS	3
MARKETING	4
PUBLISHING	5
JOURNALISM	6
BROADCASTING	7
ENERGY, ENERGY COMPANIES	8
ENERGY / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY	9

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED, CLOSE

Q2 a) Have you ever attended a market research group or interview?

- Yes 1 – **GO TO Q2b**
No 2 – **GO TO Q3**

b) when did you last attend a group or interview?

- In the last year 1 – **CLOSE**
Over a year ago 2 – **GO TO Q2c**

c) how many groups/interviews have you ever attended? _____

d) what was the subject of the groups/interviews you attended?

WRITE IN _____

RESPONDENTS SHOULD NOT HAVE ATTENDED MORE THAN 3 GROUPS EVER, AND NEVER ON THE SAME SUBJECT AS THE CURRENT ONE

Q3 Do you have permanent right of residence in the UK?

- Yes 1 – **GO TO Q4**
No 2 – **CLOSE**

Q4 Can you tell me whether you own your property or rent?

- Owner of a house 1
Owner of a flat 2
Tenant in privately owned house 3
Tenant in privately owned flat 4
Tenant in social housing (house) 5
Tenant in social housing (flat) 6

FOR REFERENCE

- Q5 a) Who in your household is responsible for your household energy bills?
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Self only | 1 – GO TO Q5b |
| Self and other jointly | 2 – GO TO Q5b |
| Other | 3 – CLOSE |

- b) Who is responsible for related decisions such as switching energy suppliers?
- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Self only | 1 – GO TO Q6 |
| Self and other jointly | 2 – GO TO Q6 |
| Other | 3 – CLOSE |

Q6 a) Can you tell me whether you have a Smart Meter, and / or In Home Energy Display (Monitor) that allows you to see how much energy your home is using as it happens? (NB, there may be some confusion as to what the units are, what they are called and so on so **show visuals** and refer to briefing notes to clarify if necessary)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Have Display/Monitor and Meter | 1 |
| Have Meter but not display | 2 |
| Have Display / Monitor but not Meter | 3 |
| Don't have Display / Monitor or Meter | 2 |

b) **Smart Meter User Groups:** Ask those coding 1 and 2 above. When you say you have a Smart Meter, do you mean

- | | |
|--|---|
| A meter that replaces an old electric or gas meter that is in a cupboard or under the stairs or similar which is directly linked to my energy supplier (electric and / or gas) | 1 |
| A monitor or display that you keep in a living area that shows you how much electricity or gas you are using | 2 |

FOR REFERENCE

- Q7 a) Have you switched your energy supplier in the last year or two?
- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

FOR REFERENCE

Q8 Thinking of these statements, on a scale of 1-5 with **1 being disagree strongly**, 2 being agree, 3 being not sure, 4 being disagree and 5 being **agree strongly**, what is your opinion of these?

	Disagree Strongly			Agree Strongly	
I believe that data privacy is an important issue that requires further regulation and control	1	2	3	4	5
I actively look for the "opt out" box (digital and paper) in relation to personal data being passed on to third parties or re-used other than in direct connection with initial purpose	1	2	3	4	5
I disable cookies on browsers, other than for selected sites	1	2	3	4	5
I <i>actively</i> manage social media privacy settings (if applicable)	1	2	3	4	5
I have signed up to TPS (Telephone Preference Service)	1	2	3	4	5
I never provide any information to third parties other than what is absolutely necessary	1	2	3	4	5

ALL TO AGREE/AGREE STRONGLY WITH AT LEAST 4 OF THE ABOVE

CLASSIFICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

OCCUPATION OF HOUSEHOLD'S MAIN INCOME EARNER

PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS.

SOCIAL GRADE:	A	1
	B	2
	C1	3
	C2	4
	D	5
	E	6

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

OWN OCCUPATION _____

AGE:	18-24	1
	25-30	2
	31-34	3
	35-40	4
	41-50	5
	51-60	6
	61-65	7
	65-75	8

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

SEX:	Male	1
	Female	2

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

MARITAL STATUS:	Married/cohabiting	1
	Divorced/separated	2
	Widowed	3
	Single	4

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

PRESENCE & AGES OF CHILDREN AT HOME:	None	1
	WRITE IN AGES _____	
	Independent older children only	2
	Empty nesters	3

RECRUIT ACCORDING TO QUOTA

ETHNIC STATUS:	<i>White:</i>	
	British	1
	Irish	2
	Other	
	WRITE IN _____	3
	<i>Mixed:</i>	
	White & black Caribbean	4
	White & black Asian	5
	White & Asian	6
	Any other mix	
	WRITE IN _____	7
	<i>Asian or Asian British:</i>	
	Indian	8
	Pakistani	9
	Bangladeshi	10
	Other	
	WRITE IN _____	11
	<i>Black or black British:</i>	
	Caribbean	12
	African	13
	Other black backgrounds	14
	<i>Chinese or other ethnic background:</i>	
	Chinese	15
	Other	
	WRITE IN _____	16

**RECRUIT SOME ETHNIC REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE SAMPLE.
REFER TO FIELD MANAGER FOR YOUR INSTRUCTIONS**

DATE OF GROUP/INTERVIEW _____ TIME _____

I AM NOT A FRIEND OR RELATION OF THE RESPONDENT, AND TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE HE/SHE IS NOT KNOWN TO ANY OTHER RESPONDENT IN THE GROUP

RECRUITER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

DISCUSSION GUIDE: NON 'OWNERS'

- Moderator introduction
 - explanation of purpose and nature of discussion, reassurance of confidentiality, legitimisation of different points of view, we don't expect everyone to feel the same way about the various things we are going to talk about, that's why we run these sessions with a group of people
- We are here to talk about 'smart (energy – electric, gas) Meters' or 'Smart Metering', has anyone heard of these terms before?
 - explore existing knowledge and understanding should there be any, also any interest in having a Smart Meter, reasons behind this
- Introduce 'Smart Energy Meters Overview'
 - establish that stimulus has been correctly understood
 - also role of Meter and IHD and how the display utilises the meter's connectivity
- 'What Smart Meters Offer'
 - which aspects are of most, least, little interest and why?
 - overall, do they feel that Smart Meters are a good thing?
 - do they have any questions, reservations or concerns?
 - explore, bring forward relevant FAQ if appropriate
- 'FAQs' here are some questions that people might have, and others that have been raised in previous research. Would any be of interest to you?
 - note which FAQs participants go to first, explore reasons for focussing on the 'question'; does it reflect something that was in the back of their minds? does it raise a thought that had not occurred to them before? is it prompted by eg, attitudes towards energy companies or experience of them?
 - explore remaining FAQs, note hierarchy of concern
- Focus on 'What information will the meter collect and how can it be used?'
 - how big a concern was this in relation to others
 - does this capture a concern for anyone? if so what sort of concern is that? establish and explore any concerns and nature of those concerns
 - does the concern relate to who has access to the data? if so lead with relevant part of answer, otherwise introduce 'framework' sequentially
- Householders or Bill Payers
 - response to the level of data access and how they can use it

- Energy Suppliers
 - does 'monthly consumption data for the purposes of billing and regulated duties (such as prevention of theft, settlement and managing consumer debt) seem reasonable?
 - would anyone have any concerns, if so what are these?
 - do the benefits of sharing the data (eg, no estimated bills, no meter reading, IHD linked directly to tariff information) make it worthwhile?
 - how about 'daily consumption data providing householders choose not to opt out but not for marketing purposes', would they be happy with this, why? why not?
 - would anyone opt out? if so, why would they do this? eg, nothing in it for them, can't see why suppliers / network need the information, feel uncomfortable with it...
 - how about 'half hourly data and data for marketing purposes providing consumers opt in to supplying it'
 - as above, why do people feel the way they do about half hourly data
 - would anyone opt in? would it depend on whether you could select one or not the other? eg, agree to ½ hourly data to receive energy efficiency advice, but not 'for marketing purposes'
 - is the need to take other readings, (address queries, theft) etc, accepted, would they want to know more
 - is the annual reminder a sensible step, is it easy to forget who you've given data access to
- Energy Networks
 - is it easily understood that energy networks would benefit from accessing the data? is it reasonable that they should do so?
 - is there any concern about networks accessing data? if so what for do these take?
 - does the idea of aggregation put concerns to rest
- Third Parties
 - does this seem useful? would it make shopping around easier? are the safeguards reassuring?
 - explore any experiences of shopping around and having to manually input or relay data
 - is the annual reminder a good idea? would it easy to forget who you've given data access to
 - do participants have any concerns about third parties using their data, if they were to sign up with them?
- Is the answer alone enough? do they need to know more about who is providing it, how it would be policed in practice, and so on
 - if there are differences what are the reasons behind these? overall attitudes towards that party, or concern about how they might use the information
 - do they need to know more about who is setting the rules for industry to follow, and whether it is Government initiated or a voluntary code

- Framework overall
 - is there any sense of an overall structure of the framework?
 - explore any suggested rationale, are there any views on these suggestions
 - explain that consumers have the most rights of access / control, and that – apart from in limited circumstances (for example, monthly reads) – the consumer can choose whether their supplier or other parties can access their data
 - how do they react to this, does this seem right and proper
 - do they feel that the principles that underlie the framework are reasonable, and in their interests? Are there any gaps? eg, better understanding of how society will benefit from Smart Metering

 - do they feel the framework addresses any issues / concerns they might have over suppliers, networks, third parties having access to personal data
 - explore / recap any issues they identify and how the framework addresses these
 - are there any other issues / concerns the framework should consider
- How easily understood is the framework as it stands? Could it be done better? TYM TAM exercise (Tell Your Mum or Tell A Mate), how would they explain it to someone who'd not been at the discussion, and who had no existing understanding of the topic, why should they believe you?
 - where are the stumbling blocks if any, is it a lack of information? difficulty in articulating it? finding a trustworthy source to deliver the thought...
 - how would consumers like the framework and their choices to be presented to them? For example, conversation when the meter is installed, in a letter, with the bill etc. etc.
- Data and Privacy more widely
 - is this something they have concerns about? why is this?
 - if so are they greater for areas other than Smart Metering / energy? why is this, eg, nature of the data, who it relates to, more obvious potential for damage, who has access to the data...
 - have they ever had concerns and been reassured? if so, what led them to feel reassured?
- Round up, thank and close

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 'OWNERS'

- Moderator introduction
 - explanation of purpose and nature of discussion, reassurance of confidentiality, legitimisation of different points of view, we don't expect everyone to feel the same way about the various things we are going to talk about, that's why we run these sessions with a group of people
- We are here to talk about 'smart (energy – electric, gas) Meters' or 'Smart Metering', you all have one... we'd like you to think back when they first heard of Smart Meters / Energy displays and talk us through how you came to have one
 - did they instigate getting one, or did they respond to an offer
 - what made them feel they should have it
 - have they got the IHD as well as the meter?
 - did they have any doubts at all
 - who did they deal with, did they make them feel more or less convinced, did they have any concerns
 - if they were back at the start would they still have it, why, why not
 - has it worked or benefited them in the way they expected or have some benefits become apparent subsequently
- Depending on previous conversation, say that we're aware that some people were given more or less information about their Smart Meter when they got it, and that we want to explore this
- Introduce 'Smart Energy Meters Overview'
 - establish that stimulus has been correctly understood
 - also role of Meter and IHD and how the display utilises the meter's connectivity
 - does this reflect what they already know, or is anything 'news'
- 'What Smart Meters Offer'
 - which aspects would they say are most beneficial
 - which have they noticed / used most
 - overall, do they feel that Smart Meters are a good thing?
 - do they have any questions, reservations or concerns having 'lived with' a Smart Meter?
- 'FAQs' here are some questions that people might have, and others that have been raised in previous research. Did any of these occur to you at the time your meter was fitted or subsequently?
 - note which FAQs participants go to first, explore reasons for focussing on the 'question'; does it reflect something that was in the back of their minds? does it raise a thought that had not occurred to them before? is it prompted by eg, attitudes towards energy companies or experience of them?
 - if any occurred subsequently, what triggered this
 - explore remaining FAQs, note hierarchy of concern

- Focus on 'What information will the meter collect and how can it be used?'
 - how big a concern was this in relation to any others
 - had they thought about their Smart Meter collecting information and other people using it?
 - explore what was communicated to them by installer, or from other sources
 - are they aware what data their supplier currently has access to, and what they are using it for
 - are they aware how they can access their own data
 - are they aware if anyone else has access to their data

 - does this capture concerns anyone had pre or post installation? if so what sort of concern is that? establish and explore any concerns and nature of those concerns
 - did the concern relate to who has access to the data? if so lead with relevant part of answer, otherwise introduce 'framework' sequentially, explain that future data access arrangements that the Government is considering may well be different from arrangements that are currently in place for consumers with Smart Meters

- Householders or Bill Payers
 - response to the level of data access and how they can use it
 - have they found this to be helpful

- Energy Suppliers
 - does 'monthly consumption data for the purposes of billing and regulated duties (such as prevention of theft, settlement and managing consumer debt) seem reasonable?
 - would anyone have any concerns, if so what are these?
 - do the benefits of sharing the data (eg, no estimated bills, no meter reading, IHD linked directly to tariff information) make it worthwhile?
 - how about 'daily consumption data providing householders choose not to opt out but not for marketing purposes', would they be happy with this, why? why not?
 - would anyone opt out? if so, why would they do this? eg, nothing in it for them, can't see why suppliers / network need the information, feel uncomfortable with it...
 - how about 'half hourly data and data for marketing purposes providing consumers opt in to supplying it'
 - as above, why do people feel the way they do about half hourly data
 - would anyone opt in? would it depend on whether you could select one or not the other? eg, agree to ½ hourly data to receive energy efficiency advice, but not 'for marketing purposes'

 - is the need to take other readings, (address queries, theft) etc, accepted, would they want to know more
 - is the annual reminder a sensible step, is it easy to forget who you've given data access to

- Energy Networks
 - is it easily understood that energy networks would benefit from accessing the data? is it reasonable that they should do so?
 - is there any concern about networks accessing data? if so what for do these take?
 - does the idea of aggregation put any concerns to rest?

- Third Parties
 - does this seem useful? would it make shopping around easier? are the safeguards reassuring?
 - explore any experiences of shopping around and having to manually input or relay data
 - is the annual reminder a good idea? would it easy to forget who you've given data access to
 - do participants have any concerns about third parties using their data, if they were to sign up with them?

- Is the answer alone enough? do they need to know more about who is providing it, how it would be policed in practice, and so on
 - if there are differences what are the reasons behind these? overall attitudes towards that party, or concern about how they might use the information
 - do they need to know more about who is setting the rules for industry to follow, and whether it is Government initiated or a voluntary code

- Framework overall
 - is there any sense of an overall structure of the framework?
 - explore any suggested rationale, are there any views on these suggestions
 - explain that consumers have the most rights of access / control, and that – apart from in limited circumstances (for example, monthly reads) – the consumer can choose whether their supplier or other parties can access their data
 - how do they react to this, does this seem right and proper
 - do they feel that the principles that underlie the framework are reasonable, and in their interests? Are there any gaps? eg, better understanding of how society will benefit from Smart Metering
 - do they feel the new framework is a good thing?

 - do they feel the framework addresses any issues / concerns they might have over suppliers, networks, third parties having access to personal data
 - explore / recap any issues they identify and how the framework addresses these
 - are there any other issues / concerns the framework should consider

- How easily understood is the framework as it stands? Could it be done better? TYM TAM exercise (Tell Your Mum or Tell A Mate), how would they explain it to someone who'd not been at the discussion, and who had no existing understanding of the topic, why should they believe you?
 - where are the stumbling blocks if any, is it a lack of information? difficulty in articulating it? finding a trustworthy source to deliver the thought...
 - how would consumers like the framework and their choices to be presented to them? For example, conversation when the meter is installed, in a letter, with the bill etc. etc.

- Data and Privacy more widely
 - is this something they have concerns about? why is this?
 - if so are they greater for areas other than Smart Metering / energy? why is this, eg, nature of the data, who it relates to, more obvious potential for damage, who has access to the data...
 - have they ever had concerns and been reassured? if so, what led them to feel reassured?

- Round up, thank and close

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 'CONCERNED' ABOUT DATA PRIVACY

- Moderator introduction
 - explanation of purpose and nature of discussion, reassurance of confidentiality
- Explain that we're interested in talking to people who are concerned about data privacy, hence the questions they were asked on recruitment
 - have they always felt and acted the way they do, if so what do they think lies behind this
 - or, was there a trigger of some description, eg, they might have seen some information, or had a conversation, or something might have happened to them
 - establish and explore reasons why they are concerned about data privacy
 - do they have the same views and take the same approach universally, ie, whatever the data, whoever is collecting it, or does it differ
 - in what circumstances are they most or least concerned
 - are there any things that in particular raise concern levels
- Explain that We are here to talk about data / privacy in relation to 'smart (energy – electric, gas) Meters' or 'Smart Metering', have you heard of these terms before?
 - explore existing knowledge and understanding should there be any, also any interest in having a Smart Meter, reasons behind this
 - if they have an idea of what Smart Metering is, have they thought about the data / privacy aspect at all, explore
 - explain that we'd like them through a bit of information about Smart Meters and discuss in general terms and specifically in relation to data / privacy
- Introduce 'Smart Energy Meters Overview'
 - establish that stimulus has been correctly understood
 - also role of Meter and IHD and how the display utilises the meter's connectivity
 - immediate reactions, does it sound like a good idea, are there any concerns
 - are these to do with data / privacy or with other areas
 - if data / privacy, of what nature, and does it depend on who is accessing the data, and why?
- 'What Smart Meters Offer'
 - which aspects would they say are most beneficial
 - overall, do they feel that Smart Meters are a good thing?
 - do benefits counterbalance concerns about data / privacy, or other issues
- At this point, if they don't feel comfortable with the idea, what safeguards do they feel need to be put in place

- Focus on 'What information will the meter collect and how can it be used?'
 - does the idea that different people have different access start to reassure?
 - do concerns relate to who has access to the data? if so lead with relevant part of answer, otherwise introduce 'framework' sequentially
- Householders or Bill Payers
 - response to the level of data access and how they can use it
 - idea of the householder having 'unrestricted' access to 'most detailed' data, does this address any concerns of principle, eg, that 'organisations' might have more access to our own data than we do ourselves
- Energy Suppliers
 - does 'monthly consumption for the purposes of billing and regulation' seem reasonable? ie, 'necessary for purpose'
 - would they have any concerns, if so what are these?
 - do the benefits of sharing the data (eg, no estimated bills, no meter reading, IHD linked directly to tariff information) make it worthwhile?
 - how about 'daily consumption data providing householders choose not to opt out but not for marketing purposes', would they be happy with this, why? why not?
 - would they opt out? if so, why would they do this? eg, nothing in it for them, can't see why suppliers / network need the information, feel uncomfortable with it... point of principle
 - how about 'half hourly data and data for marketing purposes providing consumers opt in to supplying it'
 - as above, why do they feel the way they do about half hourly data
 - would they opt in? would it depend on whether you could select one or not the other? eg, agree to ½ hourly data but not 'for marketing purposes'
 - is the need to take other readings, (address queries, theft) etc, accepted, would they want to know more
 - is the annual reminder a sensible step, is it easy to forget who you've given data access to
- Energy Networks
 - is it easily understood that energy networks would benefit from accessing the data? is it reasonable that they should do so?
 - is there any concern about networks accessing data? if so what for do these take?
 - does the idea of aggregation put any concerns to rest?

- Third Parties
 - does this seem useful? would it make shopping around easier? are the safeguards reassuring?
 - explore any experiences of shopping around and having to manually input or relay data
 - is the annual reminder a good idea? would it be easy to forget who you've given data access to
 - do participants have any concerns about third parties using their data, if they were to sign up with them?
- Is the answer alone enough? do they need to know more about who is providing it, how it would be policed in practice, and so on
 - if there are differences what are the reasons behind these? overall attitudes towards that party, or concern about how they might use the information
 - do they need to know more about who is setting the rules for industry to follow, and whether it is Government initiated or a voluntary code
- Framework overall
 - is there any sense of an overall structure of the framework?
 - explore any suggested rationale
 - for example, who has most rights of access to the data, who has less, least...
 - explain that consumers have the most rights of access / control, and others only have 'rights' to the access they need unless the consumer agrees otherwise
 - how do they react to this, does this seem right and proper
 - do they feel that the principles that underlie the framework are reasonable, and in their interests? Are there any gaps? eg, better understanding of how society will benefit from Smart Metering
 - do they feel the framework is a good model compared to others they might have experienced
 - do they feel the framework addresses any issues / concerns they might have over suppliers, networks, third parties having access to personal data
 - explore / recap any issues they identify and how the framework addresses these
 - are there any other issues / concerns the framework should consider
- How easily understood is the framework as it stands? Could it be done better? TYM TAM exercise (Tell Your Mum or Tell A Mate), how would they explain to someone why this is a reasonable set of guidelines (assuming they agree it is)
 - where are the stumbling blocks if any, is it a lack of information? difficulty in articulating it? finding a trustworthy source to deliver the thought...
- Smart Metering and data and privacy more widely
 - is data / privacy more or less an issue for Smart Metering than other areas
 - explore areas of most and least concern
 - is there anything that Smart Metering could learn from elsewhere, if so what?
- Round up, thank and close

STIMULUS



Smart Meters - Overview

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters which in conjunction with an in-home display allow you to see how much energy you're using.

Smart meters can send electronic meter readings to your energy supplier automatically so the company always has an accurate meter reading.

The energy monitor (or display), a small device about the size of a smart phone, is connected to your smart meter and shows you how much energy you are using at different times of the day, week, month, year etc.

The monitor can also show you what this is costing you as it happens, according to tariff information stored in your smart meter

It is possible to have an energy monitor for electricity without a smart meter although this bases any cost indications on estimated rates rather than your actual tariff. It is not currently possible to have an energy monitor for gas without a smart meter.

Smart meters will be rolled out across the country by 2019. But it will not be a legal obligation on individuals to have one. Existing meters have to be replaced at intervals anyway, roughly every 20 years.

Smart meters will also help the energy network to work more efficiently, reducing costs to consumers and the environment and there is a program of upgrading which aims for every household that wants one to have one by 2019

What Smart Meters Offer

- A smart meter and energy display used together will show you what you are spending on gas and electricity as it happens
- A smart meter and energy display can help you reduce your energy bills
- A smart meter means you'll never have to have your meter read or provide your own readings
- A smart meter means you'll have accurate bills – no more estimated bills
- A smart meter can make it much easier for consumers to compare costs with alternative energy suppliers, for example, you could upload your energy consumption information directly to a price comparison website
- A smart meter can make it much easier for consumers to switch suppliers
- If energy companies have a more accurate picture of how much energy the country uses and when they use it, they will be able to make sure they have the right amount of energy at the right time helping them to run more efficiently and in turn lowering bills and CO2 emissions

FAQs

- Do I have to pay for my smart meter?
- What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?
- Would it use energy, and if so how much?
- How would I know my smart meter was working properly?
- Are smart meters secure?
- How long does it take to install a smart meter?
- Who would carry out the installation?
- Would accepting a smart meter from an energy supplier 'lock me in' to that supplier?
- Who would be responsible for maintaining it?

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

The meter can collect details of each household's energy consumption, for example:

- type of energy, electricity or gas
- 'real time' consumption
- consumption over time, eg, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly

The Government is working on proposals for information access and privacy for smart meters. These proposals set out ways in which information from smart meters can be used by:

- the householder / bill payer
- energy suppliers (the people who you pay your bill to)
- energy networks (the people who bring the electricity or gas to your home)
- third parties, such as other energy companies or price comparison websites

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Householder or bill payers:

•coupled with a smart meter an energy display would allow them to see for their home:

- energy consumption as it happens
- consumption over the last day, week, month, year, etc
- month vs month, etc, comparisons
- consumption in Kw/h and £

•they will be able to access more detailed usage information (for example, showing consumption every ten seconds) by connecting additional devices to the system

•householders will also be able to send their energy consumption information onto other third parties such as switching sites or energy services companies, should they choose to

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Energy suppliers:

- under the Government's proposals, would be able to read monthly usage information for individual households for billing and regulatory purposes (for example, preventing theft, settlement, and managing consumer debt)
- would be able to access *daily consumption information* for purposes *excluding* marketing providing *householders choose not to opt out* of supplying it
- would be able to access *half hourly information and information for marketing* uses providing *householders opt in* to supplying it

Other readings may be taken in particular circumstances, for example, to enable accurate billing, address queries, or to investigate suspected theft. Suppliers would be able to use *half hourly usage information for the purposes of approved trials* provided householders did not *opt out* of supplying it

Energy suppliers would have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example with rules on sharing information with third parties

Under the Government's proposals, suppliers would *have to remind their customers annually* about any information they were collecting and what choices they have

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Energy networks:

- energy networks would be able to use the usage information to predict demand helping them to better manage resources
- under the Government's proposals, networks would have to gain approval to be able to access half-hourly information for regulated purposes (e.g. maintaining an efficient system) without customer consent
- a condition of the proposals is that the information would be combined together so that it is all anonymous - for example, all the households in a postcode district put together

Energy networks would have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example with rules on sharing information with third parties

What information will the meter collect and who will be able to see it?

Third parties:

- Under the Government's proposals, customers could choose to make their information available to third parties (other than their current energy supplier) **if they gave their specific consent**
- this would usually be for the purpose of comparing prices, for example, with a price comparison website, or to get a specific service (such as energy efficiency advice)
- in order to be allowed to access the information the third party would have to verify that they were talking to the right individual, and confirm that they had obtained consent properly – and this would be subject to audit

Third Parties would have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example with rules on sharing information with other third parties

If householders agree to give third parties on-going access to their information, the third party has to remind them annually that they are collecting this information

The government is proposing the following rules for who can see your household's energy usage and what they can do with that information.

- You, the householder will have access to your own information in as much detail as your meter and display can provide
- Your energy supplier would have the right to read your household's energy usage monthly for billing purposes
- Your energy supplier would be able to read daily energy usage for your household, but **you can choose not to let them see this**
- Your energy supplier would be able to read half hourly energy usage for your household **if they ask your permission and you agree**
- Your energy supplier would be able to use your household's energy usage information to tell you about their products, services and offers **if they ask your permission and you agree**
- Your energy supplier would be able to use your household's energy usage information to tell you about **free** energy and money saving products and services but **you can choose not to let them do so**
- You would be able to show your household's energy usage information to a third party such as a competitive energy supplier or a price comparison website **if you chose to do so**
- Energy networks (the companies who run the grid that bring the gas or electricity to your home) would have the right to read half hourly information, but only for groups of households put together **so the information is anonymous**
- Anyone who uses householders' energy usage information will have to demonstrate their systems are secure and that consumers are protected against fraud
- Energy suppliers using individual householders' usage information have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, for example, they are not allowed to share that information with anyone else without the householder's express consent.

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