

**Green Deal Women's Panel
Report**

December 2012

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Green Deal Women's Panel

Background

Aim & Objectives

The Green Deal Women's Panel was formed to provide Government with recommendations on effective communication and engagement routes to reach women and influence public opinion on the benefits of installing Green Deal measures.

The Panel's objectives were to consider:

- the most effective key messages to engage women in the Green Deal
- the best engagement routes (national and local networks and mechanisms) for promoting the Green Deal to women
- which barriers exist for women to take-up the Green Deal and how to overcome them
- what networks and resources exist within the Women's Panel and whether there is a possibility of enlisting "spokespeople"

The full Terms of Reference are attached at Annex A. The membership of the Panel is attached at Annex B.

Meetings

Chaired by Margot James MP, the Panel met four times to during the development of the Green Deal Framework:

- 15th December 2011
- 12th March 2012
- 17th May 2012
- 5th November 2012

The first three meetings were used to brainstorm ideas within the Panel, draw on the expertise of potential Green Deal players (including Kingfisher and Eon) and engage

with DECC policy officials (including Green Deal Communication Manager and Green Deal Consultation and Legislation team).

The fourth meeting was used to finalise the report and determine the shape of future interactions.

This report summarises the Panel's findings for raising awareness of the Green Deal among women.

Summary and Recommendations

The overwhelming message was the **value women placed on trust** and therefore the importance of driving demand through trusted networks and sources.

Clear and consistent messages were seen as central to driving demand for the Green Deal.

Related to clarity was the **need for simplicity and integration** – providing an integrated package for women, and households, including the Feed in Tariff scheme, Renewable Heat schemes and the Green Deal

The **value of tailored messages** for women as well as aligning communication (across local and national organisations for example) was also highlighted.

Linked to this was the value of using both **local and national networks and platforms** to reach women.

Key messages thought to have most resonance with women focused on creating a **safe and comfortable home**.

Linked to messages on trust was the need to communicate that the Green Deal is **'quality work, done safely'**.

In thinking through the most **effective mechanisms to reach women**, the Panel stressed the need to focus on both **supply** (e.g. engaging female installers) and **demand** (e.g. using local champions), and the need to **mirror the diversity** of the audience.

At the same time as ensuring the messages are effective, **barriers to uptake should be tackled** – this includes overcoming the 'hassle factor'.

The **Panel members have offered their own resources and networks** to help drive awareness of the Green Deal.

Detailed Findings

Key messages

The Panel were of the view that clear and consistent messages and communications will be key in helping to generate demand and interest in the Green Deal amongst women. The use of plain English is essential and in particular, messages on the finance mechanism should be clear and consistent. The Panel raised a question on the role of Government in helping achieve this.

Messages to consumers need to be integrated, demonstrating clearly and simply how the range of DECC policies and products work together. Panel members thought this was particularly true of the Feed in Tariff scheme, Renewable Heat schemes and the Green Deal.

The Panel agreed that the finance mechanism in particular requires careful explanation. There should be absolute clarity and transparency about any charges, the interest rates and precisely how the mechanism works. For example, education is needed on why the charge is on the electricity bill but the savings will come from the gas bill. Careful consideration should also be given to communicate debt at a time of financial austerity. Key messages on the finance mechanism should be clear on the ability to pay *above* the Golden Rule given pilots show there is a market for this.

Information on the finance needs to be clear not only for the first person entering into the Green Deal Plan but also for subsequent owners and occupants of the property. This ties into the broader theme of trust – the scheme will only be trusted if consumers understand the costs as well as the benefits.

The Panel thought that the key messages most likely to have resonance and meaning with women include

- Warmer homes
- Better homes
- Health benefits
- Cosy homes
- Lower bills/cheaper to run (more money for other household bills)
- Guilt free warmth
- Win-win

The Panel were keen to stress the value women place on a safe and comfortable home, therefore the majority of messages focus on 'home' (as opposed to 'property') 'warmth' and 'health' 'in addition to the environmental angle. The Panel also consider that adding a strap line under the heading 'Green Deal' will help to focus communication

The above list focuses solely on outputs or outcomes. Further consideration should be given to the process or inputs. For example, the **hassle factor** can be a key barrier to uptake of energy efficient measures and messaging which tackles this should be placed alongside the messages on outcomes.

It may also be beneficial to communicate clearly that Green Deal is 'quality work, done safely' and there are **routes to redress** (including ultimately the Energy Ombudsmen) giving women assurances that the process will work for them. Linked to this, demonstrating Government commitment and backing is essential.

Consideration should be given to women across the socio-economic scale and whether tailored messages should be considered to women across the scale. Social media could be used to provide women with useful tools to facilitate engagement with others and leverage the power of recommendations.

Key Markets/Audiences & Engagement Routes

A key learning point from the second meeting of the Panel was that carers could be a key beneficiary from the Green Deal. This includes female carers who are caring for children and/or older people.

Whilst a focus on keeping *families* 'warm' and 'cosy' is helpful, consideration should also be given to women living on their own (given the increasing trend for single person households) as well as women operating their businesses from home. It is important to reflect the full diversity of the audience.

It is essential for trust and confidence that women see the Green Deal as something that will meet their own individual circumstances and that of their family rather than that of the property. What will deliver for a family of four with young children is very different to a single older woman who may both be living in identical houses.

Discussion centred on how to utilise both local and national networks. Emphasis was also placed on the power of combining national campaigns/messaging with local engagement e.g. by national messages making local campaigning/door-to-door engagement more permissible.

Local Networks

The key thinking behind this list was to tap into locations and events which women tend to visit in the course of normal business. Local networks also draw on the trust element which the Panel recognised as vitally important.

- Local Authorities as an important trusted partner
- Faith groups
- Schools – child/parent assemblies, coffee mornings, 'pester power'
- Book clubs
- Women's Institute (local groups)
- Rotary Clubs
- Local sports groups
- Women's Royal Voluntary Service
- GP surgeries/ health centres
- Friends, neighbours and local builders
- Student Networks including Student Unions

National Platforms

- Marketing and advertising by national Green Deal Providers
- Mumsnet and other social media

- Importance of targeting women's magazines that are regularly read/familiar for retrofit messages so that they don't have to actively seek out advice (e.g. through home improvement/retrofit magazines), supermarket magazines and proprietary Pharmacy magazines were seen as good options.
- Link with schools. There are national charities which work with schools on climate change. There may also be a role for the DECC Youth Advisory Panel (It was acknowledged that school children are concerned about saving the planet and might create a degree of 'pester power in support of Green Deal)

Mechanisms

Alongside these local networks and national platforms, the Panel considered engagement mechanisms, dividing these between the 'supply' and 'demand' sides of the Green Deal.

Supply:

- Encouraging female installers – engage Women and Manual Trades organisation
- Working with installers/architects/builders to ensure they have the best messages for women e.g. clarity about the hassle factor in advance of installation

Demand:

- Network of local champions, e.g. Portsmouth County Council's Green Ambassadors
- Insulating local buildings which women use as case studies, e.g. churches, schools
- Consider grants to local groups/actors on the ground to back up national messaging.
- Local and National case studies or show homes, recognising the value of 'show and tell', possibility of linking with Open Doors scheme
- Transition Town Networks – linking to existing community led initiatives
- Targeting the 'sandwich generation' who are caring for both older and younger relatives.
- Consider national messages targeted solely at women e.g. power of Boots 'here come the girls' advertising, and supermarket advertising
- Consider a launch month or a soft launch.
- Ensure consistency in message from all Green Deal Providers and co-ordinate their messages.
- Clear guidance on how the Green Deal could benefit properties by building type, and demonstrate clearly what can be achieved at what cost
- Consider a Green Deal 'battle bus' to tour shopping centres and supermarket car parks.

Barriers to overcome

Where there are door-to-door sales, the following barriers were recognised:

- Husband/boyfriend blocking initial interest, particularly where a male salesmen/advisor initially spoke to the wife/girlfriend
- Lack of clear mapping, meaning that targeted sales are difficult
- Flipping of incentives/initiatives or the misalignment of schemes (e.g. Local Authorities varying offers or misalignment with national offers).

Future of the Women's Panel

Members of the panel felt there would be value in a further meeting of the group, around May 2013

Panel Members' Own Resources and Networks

In addition to the many suggestions above, Panel members suggested that they might pursue some of the following possibilities through their own networks:

- Ann Robinson outlined that Uswitch will have an online platform creating pathways to Green Deal Providers, also planning their own PR around launch.
- Angela Brady outlined the 'Be Home Wise' campaign by RIBA to improve the quality of Britain's homes. Green Deal will feature on this site.
- Sarah Butler-Sloss suggested that Ashden Awards could source some film material to help raise interest in the Green Deal. She also thought there might be an opportunity to showcase and learn from past winners, in particular the Sustainable Energy Academy which has a network of show homes.
- Catherine Ashworth of Mark Group outlined that her organisation will be working with all key players (including the big six). Their thermal imaging programme is a powerful communication tool.
- Baroness Parminter raised the importance of faith organisations and networks.
- Tessa Tennant suggested that Global Cool and their behavioural change work could have some important learnings for Green Deal demand, in particular their 'turn up the style, turn down the heat' messaging.
- Philippa Forrester recommended using Local Radio Networks and suggested the possibility of creating a list of spokespeople able to talk to the media about the benefits of Green Deal (and stated she is happy to undertake this role).
- Adeeba Malik offered a link into Ethnic Minority Networks as well as the student community through her Governor position at Sheffield Hallam University.

ANNEX 1

Green Deal Women's Panel - Terms of Reference

Background:

This working group aims to explore opportunities for influencing and changing public behaviour in installing energy efficiency measures in homes. In an often male dominated sector, it is important that we continue to listen to a range of perspectives, including women, on how to effectively unlock mass support and acceptance in delivering the Green Deal.

The Green Deal is an ambitious programme designed to increase the energy efficiency of millions of homes and businesses. New and innovative Green Deal finance will enable consumers to install energy efficiency improvements at no upfront cost, as part of a whole house retrofit approach. It is expected that the Green Deal will attract substantial private sector investment. However, in order to ensure its success, we need to effectively build customer confidence in, and awareness of, the scheme. More information on the Green Deal can be found at the following DECC website:

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/tackling/green_deal/green_deal.aspx

Purpose of the Panel:

The central remit of this Panel will be to provide government with recommendations for effective communication and for influencing public opinion on the benefits of installing Green Deal measures in their homes. Activity will focus on:

- Consider the best channels and opportunities for promoting the Green Deal to women, including the possibility of enlisting “advocates” or utilising the media to reach consumers.
- Explore what the actual critical path points for delivery are going to be. For example, should government work with particular organisations to achieve this goal?
- Identify the trigger points for stimulating take up of Green Deal.
- Consider how DECC and others could most effectively market the offer.
- Provide recommendations to DECC Ministers, in the form of a short report, on options for raising awareness of, and driving demand for, the Green Deal.

Timescale: Starting in December 2011, the Panel will consist of three meetings until the launch of the Green Deal in October 2012.

Attendance: The Panel will include approximately 10 high profile, professional women with extensive experience of communications and engaging the public in household retrofit and/or environmental issues.

Servicing and chairing the group: Greg Barker, DECC Minister for Energy and Climate Change, will attend the first meeting. Margot James, MP for Stourbridge, will Chair the group.

ANNEX 2

Green Deal Women's Panel – Members

Attendees	Organisation
Margot James (Chair)	Member of Parliament
Catherine Ashworth	Head of PR for Mark Group
Angela Brady	President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Sarah Butler-Sloss	Founding Director of Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy
Hilary Evans	Age UK
Philippa Forrester	BBC Presenter
Abeeda Malik	QED-UK
Heather McGregor	Taylor Bennett
Meg Munn MP	Member of Parliament
Baroness Parminter	Life Peer on the Liberal Democrat benches
Ann Robinson	Director of Consumer Policy at u-Switch.com
Kirsty Schneeberger	Director of Think 2050
Tessa Tennant	Executive Chair of ICE Organisation