

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Q6. Do you agree that a centralised engagement programme, established by suppliers with appropriate checks and balances, is the most practical solution given other constraints? If not, what other practical alternatives are there?

From our experience with Change4Life and Digital Switchover we believe that a brand creates a "home" for Smart Meters as far as consumers are concerned; hence is beneficial. It is important for the brand to be perceived as independent and on the side of the consumers if it is to have the desired effect of raising awareness, building confidence, changing behaviours and ultimately delivering benefits to consumers. Thus participation from wider elements of society will be critical for its acceptance by consumers.

With major engagement programmes and multiple stakeholders there are obvious advantages in a collaborative approach to the communications plan. This helps avoid consumer confusion, misunderstanding and the additional cost of multiple messaging from multiple stakeholders. However, there is undoubtedly a risk that individual brands may perceive this as a missed opportunity to strengthen the loyalty within their customer base by delivering collaborative rather than own brand messaging. In taking a neutral view it is our opinion that the CDB model of collaborative centralised messaging would provide the most cost effective and consumer focused solution.

Q8. What are your views on the proposed objectives for the Central Delivery Body? Are there any additional objectives which should be included?

Overall the objectives are sound. However we would advise splitting objective number 1 into Awareness and Behaviour Change as the two elements necessitate different approaches.

Q9. What are your views on the suggested activities for the Central Delivery Body?

The body may wish to consider additional activities to monitor deployment progress and take actions as necessary to support overall campaign objectives.

Furthermore creation of a knowledge bank and communication planning support for the suppliers will be helpful in ensuring a consistency of messaging as received by the consumers. It will also enable the CDB to share learnings from the foundation phase for onwards regional campaigns in the rollout phase.

Lastly, there is no clear lifetime for the CDB for e.g. will it continue to function after all meters have been rolled out or until the benefits have been realised. Continuity is essential in order to ensure that support exists for consumers throughout the journey.

Q13. Do you think the objectives and activities of the Central Delivery Body described here will help deliver the aims of the consumer engagement strategy (see paragraphs 4.32 – 4.33)? Please explain your views. Do you have any alternative suggestions?

Yes, subject our comments to Q6, 8, and 9 being considered.

Q14. *How can we ensure that the Expert Panel attracts a sufficient level of expertise?*

Appointees to the expert panel should be opened up to non energy industry to allow for cross industry learning. There is potential for cross learning between industries that are going through/have gone through transformation and modernisation.

Q20. *What are your views on the need for the Central Delivery Body to establish an outreach programme?*

We support the establishment of an outreach programme and would welcome a discussion about how Royal Mail Group's unique reach in the community might support the programme aims.