



NEED User Event

15 September 2014

This note summarises the discussion at the user event for the National Energy Efficiency Data-Framework (NEED) on 15 September 2014. The event was well attended by users from academia, local government, and private and third sector energy researchers, a number of whom had made use of the recently published anonymised dataset. It built on on-going engagement with energy suppliers.

The event aimed to give users an update on progress with NEED (domestic and non-domestic), and gain feedback on release of the anonymised datasets and future priorities.

Presentations from the event are available on the following webpage (National Energy Efficiency Data-Framework: presentations from stakeholder event on 15 September 2014):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/national-energy-efficiency-data-need-update>.

In addition to the presentations, there were two main opportunities for input and discussion, summarised below.

Anonymised dataset – feedback and future direction

Feedback from tables highlighted the following points.

General:

- It would be helpful to undertake a comparison of the EPC and VOA data to understand accuracy of the EPC data.
- Users would like access to more detailed data – happy for that to be in a restricted environment if that allowed greater granularity and linking.
- More detail on the weather correction methodology would be welcomed.
- A link to the detailed accompanying documentation should be available on UK Data Archive website.

A number of attendees wanted to see changes to existing variables:

- More detailed information on date of EPC¹ (otherwise energy efficiency band is not valuable).
- Include more detail on floor area band.
- More detail on main heating fuel (not just gas/other).
- More detailed geographic information (LA and LSOA requested) – one suggestion was to follow the approach taken by the American Household Survey, where more detailed geographic information is included in areas where it would not be disclosive.

Users wanted to see additional variables included in the dataset:

- Variables about occupants (e.g. from ONS datasets).
- Information on solid wall and Solar PV installations.

Some attendees were happy to see the following variables dropped, though this was not agreed by all discussion groups, where the general view was that nothing could be dropped:

- Energy efficiency band (to allow more information on inspection date, it was considered this variable had limited use without a better understanding of the year of EPC inspection).
- Number of years consumption data included.

¹ DECC had hoped to include individual year of EPC in the dataset published (following requests from consultation respondents). However, following testing including year of EPC it became clear the risk of disclosure with this variable included was too great unless significant changes were made to other variables. It should be possible to include more detail in a more restricted dataset in future.

Priorities for the future of NEED

In the afternoon, attendees were asked to provide views on the priorities for the future of NEED, including domestic NEED and non-domestic NEED. The following were considered top priorities by users attending the event:

- Access to a more detailed restricted access NEED dataset which could be linkable (by LSOA/OA or address) – this was raised as a priority by all discussion groups.
- Information on occupants and measure of change of occupants.
- More information on the quality of EPC data.
- A forum to share work/research related to NEED.
- Compare my energy tool for non-domestic properties.

Other future developments which users considered valuable (and not included in the anonymised dataset section) included:

- Summary stats of well represented non-domestic premises types.
- Use non-domestic NEED to identify current energy use of the N-DEEM sample of buildings to detect extent of change. Could help validate and understand BEES results.
- Use AddressBase UPRN as a common unique identifier across all datasets.
- Focus on bettering quality of domestic NEED rather than taking forward non-domestic NEED.
- Seek to develop a comparison tool to highlight for particular building / business types to where energy use was very large and very small.

Actions

Following the event there are a number of actions which DECC will be taking forward:

- UK Data Archive page on NEED anonymised dataset to be updated to include link to documentation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-energy-efficiency-data-framework-need-anonymised-data-2014>) and downloadable version of documentation.
- Use outputs from discussion to inform development of the anonymised dataset.
- Consider how to facilitate interaction between researchers working with NEED. E.g. create a space (blog) for researchers to share work and incorporate this aim into future user event.
- Include more detail on the weather correction methodology in future documentation for NEED and sub-national gas consumption publications.
- Further investigation of the quality of EPC data.

Actions for NEED users:

- Let DECC know how NEED data and outputs are being used and their value.
- Complete the user feedback survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YHC2JHH>).