



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Smart Metering

A guide for local authorities and third sector organisations



Working together to help people take control of their energy use

Most households will have smart meters installed by their energy company between 2016 and 2020, although some energy companies are starting to install smart meters now. Households will have near real time information on their energy consumption to help them manage their energy use, save money and reduce emissions.

Smart meters will provide people with more accurate information, bring an end to estimated billing, and make switching energy supplier smoother and faster. They will also play an important part in moving Great Britain to a low-carbon economy and help us meet some of the challenges we face in ensuring an affordable, secure and sustainable energy supply for future generations.

Reaching all types of households to help them understand and use their smart meters is a challenging task. Local authorities, housing associations, charities and community organisations can play a key role in helping people to get the full benefits of smart meters. This leaflet explains why this is important and what your organisation could do to support people in your community.

What is a Smart Meter?

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters and they can offer a range of intelligent functions. Households will be offered an In-home Display linked to their smart meter, enabling them to see what energy they are using and how much it is costing.

What will smart meters do?

Smart meters will communicate directly with energy suppliers, allowing suppliers to give customers accurate bills; they will remove the need for manual meter readings and bring an end to estimated billing, helping people to budget better.

The In-home Display will put householders in control and help them to avoid wasting energy and money.

Will smart meters support pre-payment?

A smart meter can work in pre-payment or credit mode. Pre-payment customers will see some additional benefits from having a smart meter. For example:

- their energy supplier may offer new and more flexible ways of topping-up their meter including the ability to top-up over the phone or online;
- smart meters can provide a wider and more flexible range of emergency credit options to help ensure that people won't be left without power.

How will people find out about smart meters?

A wide range of organisations are involved. Energy suppliers will have a key role – they are the main point of contact with householders before, during and after the installation of smart meters. Suppliers' individual communications with customers will be supported by an independent body – Smart Energy GB. This body will run a programme of centralised consumer engagement, for instance developing and implementing promotional campaigns, providing advice and guidance, and tailoring engagement to vulnerable and low income consumers.



Individual suppliers and Smart Energy GB would also like to work with trusted organisations such as local authorities, housing associations, charities and community organisations, to ensure that people are engaged effectively and that the wide range of different consumer needs are understood and met.

Such organisations can provide a channel to communicate with people who are often hard to reach by other means. Organisations that are established within communities are much more likely to understand the needs of, and be trusted by, the people they work with. Local knowledge will also be highly valuable in ensuring householders have a positive experience before, during and after the installation of smart meters, and get the full benefit of this new technology.

What role could my organisation play?

This will depend on your organisation and what stage the roll-out is at. Your involvement could include: putting customers in touch with their supplier or directing them to Smart Energy GB's website; raising awareness of smart meters; discussing the benefits with householders; encouraging householders to use their smart meters so they become more energy efficient – maybe at events or on a one-to-one basis; or even providing practical help with using smart meters and In-home Displays. Such activities might be undertaken in partnership with energy suppliers or other organisations.

As a minimum, we think it's important for you to know that the roll-out is happening and what it will mean for people, not least because the roll-out will mean an installation visit for every household and many businesses throughout Great Britain.

Why get involved?

We want to make sure that everyone can benefit from smart meters, including those who are vulnerable or on low incomes. The benefits of smart meters may fit well with your organisation's own aims, for instance if they include helping people to stay warm, live more sustainably or to save money.

What should I do next?

You can find out more at the smart metering web pages on Gov.uk – www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-households-to-cut-their-energy-bills/supporting-pages/smart-meters

Also see Smart Energy GB's website at: www.smartenergygb.org/

Please also register your interest by sending an email to: enquiries@smartenergygb.org