Improving the Customer Journey: Go Renewable

Project leads:

The MCS Service Company
Energy Savings Trust Ltd

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What were the objectives of the project?

The project aimed to make the heat pump installation journey quicker and simpler for both customers and heat pump installers. It aimed to:

- **Provide a more integrated customer journey for heat pump adoption** by developing a user-friendly website that supports customers from initial interest to installation.
- **Create a more active and competitive marketplace for heat pump installation** that generates high-quality leads for installers and enables customers to receive multiple quotes based on a single home survey.

What activities were funded?

- Designing, building and user testing the Go Renewable website.
- Incorporating the Energy Saving Trust's online tool, which assesses the suitability of a variety of domestic renewable technologies, and extending free access to it from Scotland to all of the UK.
- Incorporating an enhanced version of the MCS 'Find a Contractor' platform.

What did the project achieve?

The project created the ‘Go Renewable’ website to guide customers through the journey for installing a range of renewable technologies, including heat pumps, solar PV and electric batteries. Go Renewable leads them through the process from expressing initial interest, to a free online assessment, to booking an independent home survey carried out by an Elmhurst-accredited Energy Assessor (Elmhurst are the UK’s largest accreditation scheme for energy assessors). The online assessment is based on the established Home Energy Scotland assessment, created by Energy Saving Trust, which assesses technology suitability, estimated installation costs and potential savings based on characteristics of the customer’s home and the customer’s preferences.

The platform then links to an enhanced version of the MCS ‘Find a Contractor’ platform that allows customers to request quotes from multiple MCS certified contractors based on the results of the single Elmhurst home survey. Using a single home survey to inform several quotes avoids the need for customers to pay for multiple surveys to compare offers from different installers. For installers, producing a quote using an existing heat pump home survey improves the quality of customer leads by connecting installers with customers who have committed to undertaking the survey and, therefore, are more likely to proceed with the rest of the heat pump adoption journey. Once a quote has been accepted, a site visit is still advised to finalise the quote and installation process with the customer.

Go Renewable is currently being piloted in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Bristol and Oxfordshire. Feedback from customers and installers has been positive about the platform and use of the Elmhurst home survey to inform quotations. As of January 2025, 11 jobs have been posted to the online marketplace, with 26 quotations given and three heat pump installations completed. All 11 jobs posted to date have included a requirement for a heat pump install, with some also looking to install solar panels and batteries.

Project objective 1: Provide a more integrated customer journey for heat pump adoption by developing a user-friendly website that supports customers from expressing initial interest to installation

Why is this important?

Customer journeys for heat pump adoption can often be disjointed, complex and time-consuming, requiring customers to navigate much of the process themselves using various sources of information and to find reputable installers. These inefficiencies increase the likelihood of customers dropping out of the customer journey and require more time and support from heat pump professionals, leading to increased costs. Customers are also often unsure as to which renewable energy technologies are suitable for their home.

What activities were funded?

The project created a website that takes customers from expressing initial interest to receiving multiple quotes for heat pump installation from MCS certified installers. The website incorporates the following elements:

- An online survey and assessment of the suitability of renewable energy technologies (heat pumps, biomass boiler, electric battery, solar PV and solar thermal) for the customer's home, based on Energy Saving Trust's established SAP-based energy and improvements model for domestic properties.
- Links to Energy Saving Trust's trusted advice to help customers build their knowledge.
- Commissioning of an Elmhurst home survey to assess the viability of the selected technologies and to produce an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), as required. The creation of the survey itself was funded by MCS and Elmhurst outside of Heat Pump Ready, but uses a method created by Build Test Solutions and Elmhurst as part of the MEASURED Heat Pump Ready project. The cost of the survey starts at £300 for a standard assessment but may increase depending on the size of the house.
- A platform to connect customers with local MCS certified installers that meet the customers' requirements. The platform also enables installers to proactively provide customers with quotations that are directly comparable.

In addition to building the website, the project also undertook user testing and website design.

What were the project findings and did the project achieve this objective?

The project has created the 'Go Renewable' website and is using it as part of pilot schemes in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Bristol and Oxfordshire.

The project adopted a user-centric approach to website development and conducted workshops and user testing to gather customer feedback. The sessions focussed on usability testing (i.e. how easy is it to navigate the customer journey, visual appeal and accessibility) and performance testing (i.e. site responsiveness and error handling). Understanding user needs, preferences and pain points, and then incorporating that user experience feedback into the development process is vital for enhancing the usability and effectiveness of the website. Development is anticipated throughout the pilot stage with additional evaluation of how developments improve outcomes on the platform.

Project objective 2: Create a more active and competitive marketplace for heat pump installation that generates high-quality leads for installers and enables customers to receive multiple quotes based on a single home survey

Why is this important?

For installers, turning customer interest into commitment can be costly. Site visits, generating quotations, and addressing customer questions require a significant investment of time with no guarantee that the customer will progress to installation. To recoup this cost, installers either charge an upfront fee, which can create a barrier to customer interest, or indirectly transfer it to successful installations. Informed customers – who understand the suitability of their home for a heat pump and associated installation and running costs – require less support and fewer site visits from surveyors and installers. Increasing the proportion of leads from engaged and informed customers, therefore, has the potential to reduce the cost of customer acquisition and installation lead times.

Historically, installers have often required that they conduct their own survey of the property to provide a quote, meaning that customers may require multiple surveys to get quotes from a number of different installers for price comparison purposes. Using a single trusted survey to inform multiple quotes saves customers and installers time, reduces disruption and cost, and standardises the basis of the quotes, which makes quote comparison easier. Enabling installers to proactively contact customers also saves customers time and effort, accelerating the customer journey

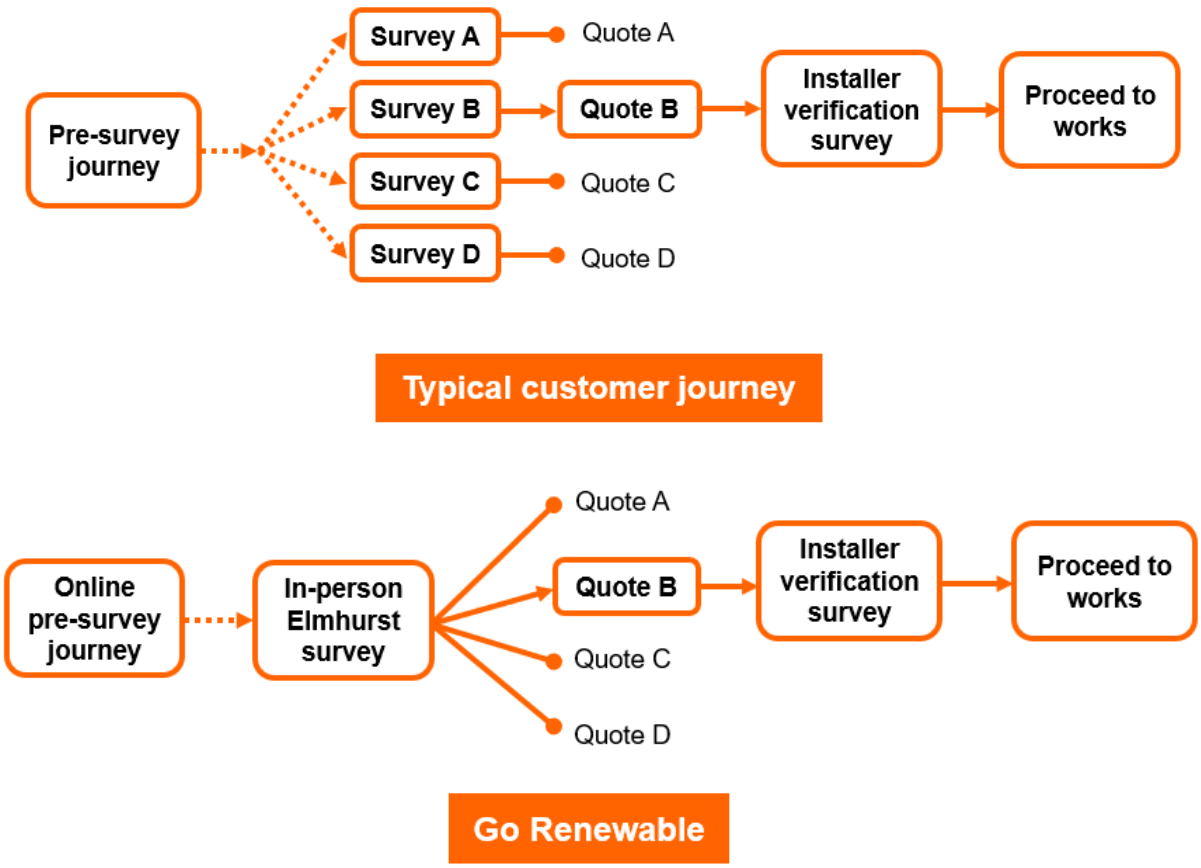

Figure 1 Illustrative comparison of the surveying process for a typical heat pump customer journey and the Go Renewable approach.

What activities were funded?

The project completed the creation of the Go Renewable platform to match customers with local MCS certified installers that meet the customers' requirements, expediting customers' search for reputable installers. The platform also enables multiple installers to proactively offer customers directly comparable quotations based a single home survey. This saves customers time and effort and offers installers a stream of vetted, high-quality customer leads whose homes' suitability for a heat pump have already been assessed.

What were the project findings and did the project achieve this objective?

The Go Renewable Heat Pump Ready project achieved the creation of a 'marketplace' platform to match customers and installers. Outside of the Heat Pump Ready project, MCS and Elmhurst developed a single home survey that can be used by several MCS certified installers to provide a quote, which is a key element of the Go Renewable platform. The cost of the survey starts at £300 for a standard assessment but may increase depending on the size of the house. This pricing is comparable to other heat loss surveys on the market, offering potential savings of around £600 compared to obtaining three separate quotes based on three separate surveys. In reality, customers are unlikely to commission three separate surveys. Therefore, the real-world benefits are expected to stem from increased customer choice and better value for money. Customers have been positive about the impartiality of the Elmhurst home survey and the potential cost saving.

Installer working groups were held to ensure the Elmhurst home survey[1] contained the necessary information for installers to confidently quote across all technologies included on the Go Renewables platform. Whilst installers had initial reservations about the thoroughness and accuracy of the survey, a number of quotations have since been generated by installers via the Go Renewable platform, based on the Elmhurst home survey. Installers' trust in the survey is expected to build through continued engagement and by incorporating their feedback as the Go Renewable platform scales. Installers are still advised to conduct a site visit to verify the system design, check for potential complications with the installation and provide a final quotation.

More trained assessors are required for widespread adoption of a 'single survey' method
A key challenge has been attracting assessors to train to undertake the new survey format, making it difficult to match customers to assessors. A lack of coverage of qualified assessors across the country meant that the tool was launched as a regional pilot rather than a full national launch. This highlights that consideration should be given to workforce skills limitations when trying to roll out novel practices at scale.

Elmhurst manage the process of onboarding assessors into a new region. The whole process, including engagement, training and onboarding, takes approximately three months and costs an average of £450 per assessor for the training provider. As of January 2025, Go Renewable has nine Elmhurst assessors delivering surveys across the pilot region in the South West. This is sufficient for the current scale and utilisation of the platform but will require growth ahead of the platform's expansion. MCS is exploring opportunities to grow the assessor workforce and reach more customers by including additional

[1] For more information on the heat pump specification method used as part of the Elmhurst home survey, please see the MEASURED Heat Pump Ready case study.

accreditation schemes as well as Elmhurst. The workforce expansion is expected to include existing EPC assessors, who could benefit from higher earnings through the Elmhurst home survey (£300+) compared to a traditional EPC survey (£150).

Potential further research

Opportunities for future research

The Go Renewable project has identified several areas that would benefit from further research. These were unable to be explored in the scope of this Heat Pump Ready project but present opportunities for future investigation. These include:

- **Accuracy of the Elmhurst survey:** As the Go Renewable platform builds its dataset of customer journey data, evaluating the accuracy of the Elmhurst survey will be important – both in terms of how accurately it calculates heat loss and how accurate the subsequent installation cost estimate is.
- **Installer confidence in a single, shared survey:** The Go Renewable platform is based upon the use of a single survey to inform heat pump installation cost estimates from multiple installers. Evaluating the collective level of confidence of installers in the use of a single, shared survey will determine the effectiveness of this approach, compared to installers continuing to use their own survey to produce a cost estimate, and indicate whether this practice could become more common.
- **Engagement with the platform:** the Go Renewable platform has recently launched in a pilot region. As it becomes more established, it will be important to evaluate the level of engagement with the platform from both installers and customers, including surveying installers about the quantity and quality of leads generated through the platform's marketplace.
- **Use of an independent surveyor:** as the platform becomes more established, evaluating customer sentiment regarding the use of an independent surveyor will be important. This includes assessing the level of trust in a surveyor not affiliated with the installation company and any concerns about not having a consistent point of contact. It should be noted that feedback given to date about Go Renewable has not indicated that these are significant problems.
- **User experience:** Evaluating customer usage of the platform will help identify key elements for optimising user engagement with Go Renewable and increasing the rate of progression and completion of customer journeys.
- **Growing the installer workforce:** As the Go Renewable platform expands beyond the regional pilot, it will be important to evaluate the cost and challenges of growing the home assessor workforce to meet increased demand and geographical coverage – both in terms of the Elmhurst assessor workforce specifically, as well as the inclusion of other comparable surveying methods/accreditation bodies.
- **Increasing competition:** As the dataset of customer journeys grows, it will be instructive to assess the extent to which the Go Renewable platform increases activity and competition for heat pump installation. This includes evaluating whether the platform facilitates higher quality customer leads for installers and whether the platform creates a competitive marketplace where multiple installers can quote for the same job, thereby improving customer value for money.

Summary:

The Go Renewable website leverages the brands and assets of MCS and Energy Saving Trust to **provide a more integrated customer journey for heat pump adoption** by developing a user-friendly website that supports customers from initial interest to installation. The platform also aims to **create a more active and competitive marketplace for heat pump installation** that generates high-quality leads for installers and enables customers to receive multiple quotes based on a single Elmhurst home survey. Although the survey itself was created outside of this Heat Pump Ready project, its inclusion in a customer journey website or platform is novel. The project is currently undertaking a regional pilot but will ultimately be rolled out to all of the UK.

What impact could this have on accelerating the heat pump rollout?

Go Renewable's impact could help customers and installers by:

- Increasing the number of customers embarking upon their heat pump journey and supporting them to keep progressing all the way through to final installation.
- Accelerating the time taken to get multiple quotes from MCS certified installers, all through the website.
- Reducing the burden for customers and installers and improving lead quality for installers, accelerating the rate of heat pump installations.
- Surveying customers to

What next?

Go Renewable is currently being piloted in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Bristol and Oxfordshire, before a planned nationwide expansion. The platform is exploring opportunities to grow the assessor workforce able to undertake Elmhurst surveys to support the expansion.

As the project progresses, MCS will be able to use anonymised customer journey data from the website to better track the rollout of heat pumps across the country. This includes which stages customers have reached on their journey, quote pricing evolution through the journey (i.e. how the final cost compares to quotes), as well as seeing the number of installs that have resulted from engagement with the Go Renewable website.

Where to find out more

Visit www.gorenewable.org.uk

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