

LES Consultation Qualitative Research Programme

Energy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- As part of the publication of the London Environment Strategy (LES), a three month stakeholder and public consultation was conducted in the period August-November 2017
- The public consultation used the following methodologies:
 - Representative polling of 1,000 Londoners
 - Surveys of the Talk London community (38,000 Londoners)
 - Online discussions with the Talk London community
 - Focus groups and interviews with selective sample of the Talk London community

Objectives

- This research aims to explore Londoners' attitudes towards energy, with a specific focus on energy behaviours in the home
- The discussion guide was structured in the following way:
 - Background views on environmental challenges facing London
 - Background views on energy efficiency
 - Behaviours and attitudes towards energy in the home/ retrofitting
 - Attitudes towards smart meters
 - Attitudes towards switching energy supplier

Methodology

- In August 2017, the Opinion Research Team conducted 4 focus groups
 - The groups were split by housing tenure as this is known to have a significant impact on energy behaviours
- Participants were recruited from the Talk London community*, and were paid £40 to attend the session
 - At point of recruitment participants were told that the research was on the environment but were not told that the specific focus would be energy

*This method of recruitment results in a more engaged sample than would be the case in the general population. This sample were more **pro environment and civically engaged** than would be expected from the general population. Results should be read with this in mind.

Total sample size: 27									
Gender		Age	Ethnicity		Nationality		Housing tenure		
Women	Men	Wide range of ages	White	BAME	British	Other	Home-owner	Private renter	Social renter
13	14		23	4	25	2	15	11	1

This report also contains finding from a representative poll of 1,000 Londoners conducted in July 2017 by YouGov on behalf of the GLA

Executive Summary

- Energy is a low salience issue, and one that tends to elicit feelings of boredom
 - Rarely spontaneously identified as a challenge for London
 - Does not feel like a problem but rather a mundane part of everyday life
- Being energy efficient is about small actions that are easy to do, but the motivation to do them is quite small
 - Stated motivation is mainly financial but participants had little expectation that actions would result in any significant savings (exception is heating)
- By contrast there is a clear motivation to have an energy efficient home but achieving this seen to be difficult (especially for renters)
 - Main motivation is comfort and warmth as well as financial savings
 - Renters recognize their landlords have no incentive to put in energy efficiency measures
 - Cost and hassle of installation the two key barriers for homeowners
- Renewable technology seen as interesting but relatively untested
 - Many said they would prefer to take a 'wait and see' attitude to new technology
- Participants saw little motivation to get a smart meter
 - Most do not believe it will have an impact on their behaviour/bills
- Or to switch energy suppliers
 - Perception that savings are too small to make it worth the time/effort that is required

Implications for LES

- **There is little awareness of the scale of the challenge London faces to adapt its energy system to a zero carbon future**
 - Energy not experienced as a problem
 - The energy system not well understood
- **Evidence that Londoners are not currently galvanized to make significant changes to their behavior**
 - Those who engage in positive energy behavior do so out of a sense of duty but have little sense of the impact/ importance of their actions
- **There is potential to build on strong demand for energy efficient homes**
 - Overcoming perception that retrofitting investments do not translate into higher house prices/ increased rental income would be a powerful way of doing this
 - Creating a sense of 'getting a bargain' e.g. through government subsidies could also be effective but will need to overcome perception that subsidies have all been cut/ are only available for certain groups
- **Evidence that there is an appetite for change in the energy sector**
 - Interest in the idea of a different type of energy company but only if there is no added cost to the consumer
 - Ability to position this as something quite different to what is currently on offer would help in overcoming inertia over switching supplier

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

- A review of existing research has been undertaken to inform the design of this research, and to provide context for the analysis of the results
- The review was not intended to be exhaustive, but has instead focused on the most relevant texts that provide key context to the research findings

Texts Reviewed

- Energy and Climate Change Public Attitude Tracker, Wave 22, BEIS, July 2017
- Home energy efficiency- review of evidence on attitudes and behaviours, ClimateXChange, 2014
- Understanding Homeowners' Renovation Decisions: Findings of the VERD project, UK Energy Research Centre, 2013
- Homeowners' willingness to take up more efficient heating systems, Energy Saving Trust, 2013
- What works in changing energy using behaviours in the home? A Rapid Evidence Assessment, DECC, 2012
- Data privacy and smart meters, Energy Networks Association, 2017
- Energy Myths, Energy Savings Trust, 2014
- YouGov Utilities Tracker Wave 9
- Public opinion in the post-Brexit era, Legatum Institute, October 2017

Literature Review: Smart meters

- Smart meter use is on the rise
 - Between January 2016 and January 2017 use increased from 8% to 16%
- There is support for the use of personal data generated from smart meters
 - Ipsos MORI research found that electricity consumption data is not considered sensitive information by most, and many were comfortable with this being accessed (on the understanding this was not linked to any personal contact information)
 - The use of consumption data to assist more efficient strategy planning was a benefit that resonated with many participants
 - Small group of participants who had concerns over privacy

- <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/05/16/smart-meter-coverage-doubles-year/>
- <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/data-privacy-and-smart-meters>

Literature Review: Home energy efficiency

- Research finds that potential savings on fuel bills is the primary driver for home energy efficiency measures
 - Evidence that people are often skeptical about the level of savings that would be realised, and this can be a barrier to uptake
 - And that cost is the most common barrier to uptake
 - Evidence that homeowners frequently over-estimate the cost of retrofitting measures
 - Financial incentives can go some way to overcoming the cost barriers, but evidence suggests that even schemes offering free installations encounter challenges engaging households
 - Evidence suggests the 'hassle' factor is often as significant a barrier as cost
- Home energy efficiency- review of evidence on attitudes and behaviours, ClimateXChange, 2014

Literature Review: Home energy efficiency

- Evidence suggests energy efficiency is not a significant factor in decision over whether to buy/rent a property
 - UK survey of private landlords found that only a quarter believe that energy efficient properties are let more quickly
 - Whilst awareness of EPC is high, studies suggest influence over decision is low
 - Research suggests there are key 'trigger points' when retrofitting measures become more likely
 - E.g. when moving home, or when improving or extending current home
 - Strong evidence that people only take certain measures out of necessity e.g. upgrading boiler
 - Research suggests homeowners do not believe an upgraded heating system would add value to a property
- Home energy efficiency- review of evidence on attitudes and behaviours, ClimateXChange, 2014
 - Homeowners' willingness to take up more efficient heating systems, Energy Saving Trust, 2013

Literature Review: Energy suppliers

- 2016 Utilities Tracker finds that large numbers of the public do not see switching as 'worth it'
 - 44% say they are unlikely to switch in the next 12 months
 - 19% think any savings made 'aren't worth the hassle'
- Evidence that public saliency and perceived burden of household bills has dropped
 - YouGov research found that in 2014 38% of respondents ranked it among top 3 issues facing the country whereas in July 2017 this had dropped to 4%
- Evidence of public support for nationalization of key industries, including utilities
 - October 2017 Populous poll found that 77% of British public support nationalization of electricity and gas (the poll found this to be consistent across age groups)

- <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/12/02/large-numbers-think-switching-energy-provider-isnt/>
- <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/07/25/energy-bill-woes-are-down-support-market-intervent/>
- <https://lif.blob.core.windows.net/lif/docs/default-source/default-library/1710-public-opinion-in-the-post-brexite-era-final.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

3. BACKGROUND VIEWS

Participants had high levels of engagement on environmental issues

- Issues which affected participants directly were cited as the most important
 - Air quality, noise and waste most frequently cited as top challenges for London
 - Over-population frequently cited as an underlying driver of deteriorating environment in London
- Nearly all participants said they think about their impact on the environment regularly and try to do what they can to reduce it
 - Recycling and taking public transport top of mind actions for reducing individual environmental impact

"Noise pollution for me because I live on a main road and now I can't sleep without ear plugs. It's not nice but I guess it's a fact of life in London."

TL Member, Renter

"I recycle. I walk as much as possible. I don't have a car."

TL Member, Homeowner

But many were skeptical as to how much impact any individual action can have

- *I feel guilty and want to do my bit*
- *I hate waste on principle*
- *I worry about future generations*

"You could solve all those problems but if we're then fried then what's the point?"

TL Member, Homeowner

"I'm a bit scared of the way things are going and I feel responsible for it individually so I like to do my bit."

TL Member, Renter

"It's got to be looked after for future generations. That's what I worry about."

TL Member, Renter

Action

Apathy

"They say this is more environmentally friendly but there's always costs we can't see so how to know for sure"

TL Member, Renter

- *Nothing I do will make any difference in solving climate change*
- *It's almost impossible to live in an environmentally positive way so why bother trying*
- *The technology is constantly changing so no point investing now*

Energy is a relatively low salience issue

- Energy tended not to come up unprompted as an environmental issue or action
 - During discussion participants also said it was not a topic they find particularly exciting to talk about
- Once prompted, participants did identify it as a major challenge for London
 - Lights on in commercial buildings at night a symbol of wastage culture
 - Taps into wider concerns around climate change/ resource demand
- But most said it's not something they think about very often
 - Energy a routine part of everyday life that works well and requires little thought

"I don't think much about energy efficiency. Lightbulbs is maybe the only thing that brings it to mind for me."

TL Member, Renter

"There's a lot of wastefulness. Like when you go past Portcullis House and the House of Commons at 3AM and every light is on!"

TL Member, Homeowner

Disconnect between energy at a system level and experience in everyday life

Energy in the abstract is about climate change, sources of supply, geo-political tensions

- Difficult to understand
- Distant and not something ordinary people have any influence over



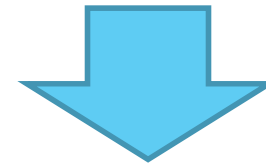
Evokes **anxiety**

"When I hear energy I think of fossil fuels and global warming. Climate change. It's all rather alarming."

TL Member, Renter

Energy in everyday life is about bills and daily routine

- Supply is always reliable
- Bills just a fact of life
- Savings to be had are small



Evokes **boredom**

"At home on the couch I don't really want to be looking at this sort of stuff. It's life admin."

TL Member, Renter

Energy is not well understood

- Participants did not know how much energy they use per month/ year
 - All know how much they pay per month but because of differences between tariffs this can mean very different amounts of energy
- Billing felt to be complex and confusing
 - Makes it difficult to understand the relationship between amount paid and amount of energy used
- The wider energy system not well understood
 - Uncertainty over where energy comes from and how it is delivered to customers

"I have got a reasonable degree of education but I can't understand the bills. As long as my monthly bill hasn't changed I just file it."

TL Member, Homeowner

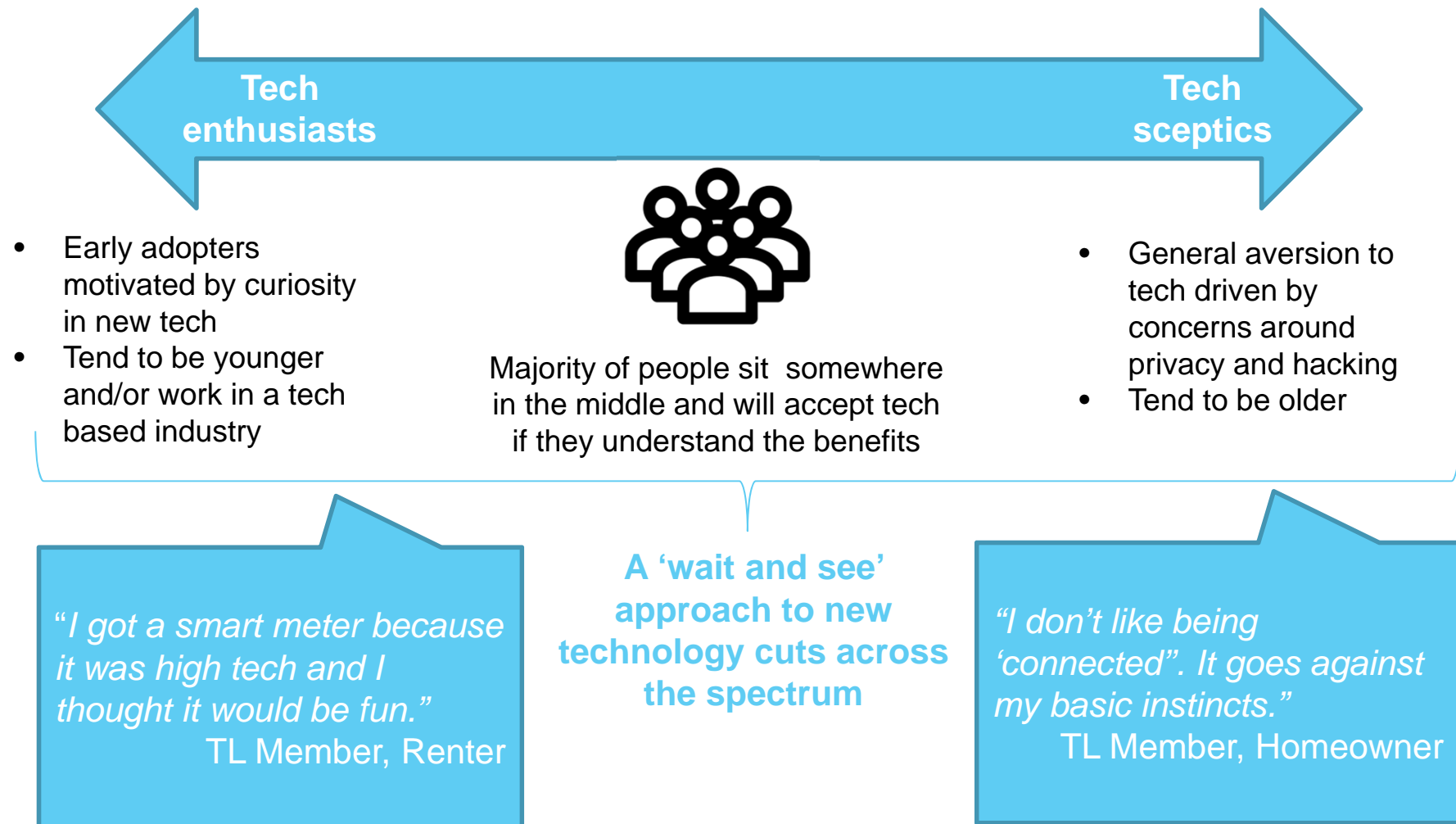
"If the price of petrol goes up at the Tesco station then it will also go up at the Sainsbury's station. But with gas and electricity forget it. There are probably 200 different tariffs just between the 6 main suppliers."

TL Member, Homeowner

"Where do the companies get the energy? Is it National Grid? I don't really understand how it works."

TL Member, Renter

Technology a key frame for understanding energy behaviours



4. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Behaviours in the home

Participants felt that everyone knows how to be energy efficient

- Behaviour that is automatic and common sense
 - Something you learn as a child
 - Resonates with wider values around not being wasteful/ being a responsible adult
- And therefore not something that requires much thought/ research
 - Only one participant had ever gone online to search for ways to be more energy efficient

“My parents were really strict on all this sort of stuff so it was just ingrained in me...I don't really think about it. I just do it.”

TL Member, Renter

“We're all aware of all these things. I don't think anyone here is surprised by anything here.”

TL Member, Homeowner

Being energy efficient is about small, mundane actions that are easy to do

Things I definitely do....



- **Switching off lights** the most top of mind action
- And the one that is used to judge whether an individual/organisation cares about energy efficiency



- **Controlling heating** (certain parts of the house/timed) also top of mind
- Some said they avoided turning on heating altogether
- The action that is seen to have the greatest financial incentive



- **Eco settings/ lower temperatures** common practice but tended not to come up spontaneously
- Some pushback over using low temperatures for washing clothes



- A very commonly cited action was **not leaving devices on standby/ switching off at source** when away
- Most said they did this but also that it is easy to forget/ be lazy



- High spontaneous awareness that **taking shorter showers/ monitoring water use** can save energy
- But few said they actually did this

Less commonly cited actions included:

Using a microwave instead of the hob

Not using certain appliances e.g. dishwasher/ dryer

Only filling the kettle with the amount of water you need

Checking meter regularly

The motivation to do these actions is often quite small

- Participants state primary motivation as financial
 - Closely followed by concerns around 'not wasting' and 'being responsible'
- But, when pushed, have little expectation that their actions will result in any real financial savings
 - Apart from controlling heating
- And have little sense of how big/ small an environmental impact an action might have
 - Little sense of how much energy any individual action saves or what difference that makes in environmental terms

"For me it's about saving money...I don't know how much I save. I just do what I can."

TL Member, Renter

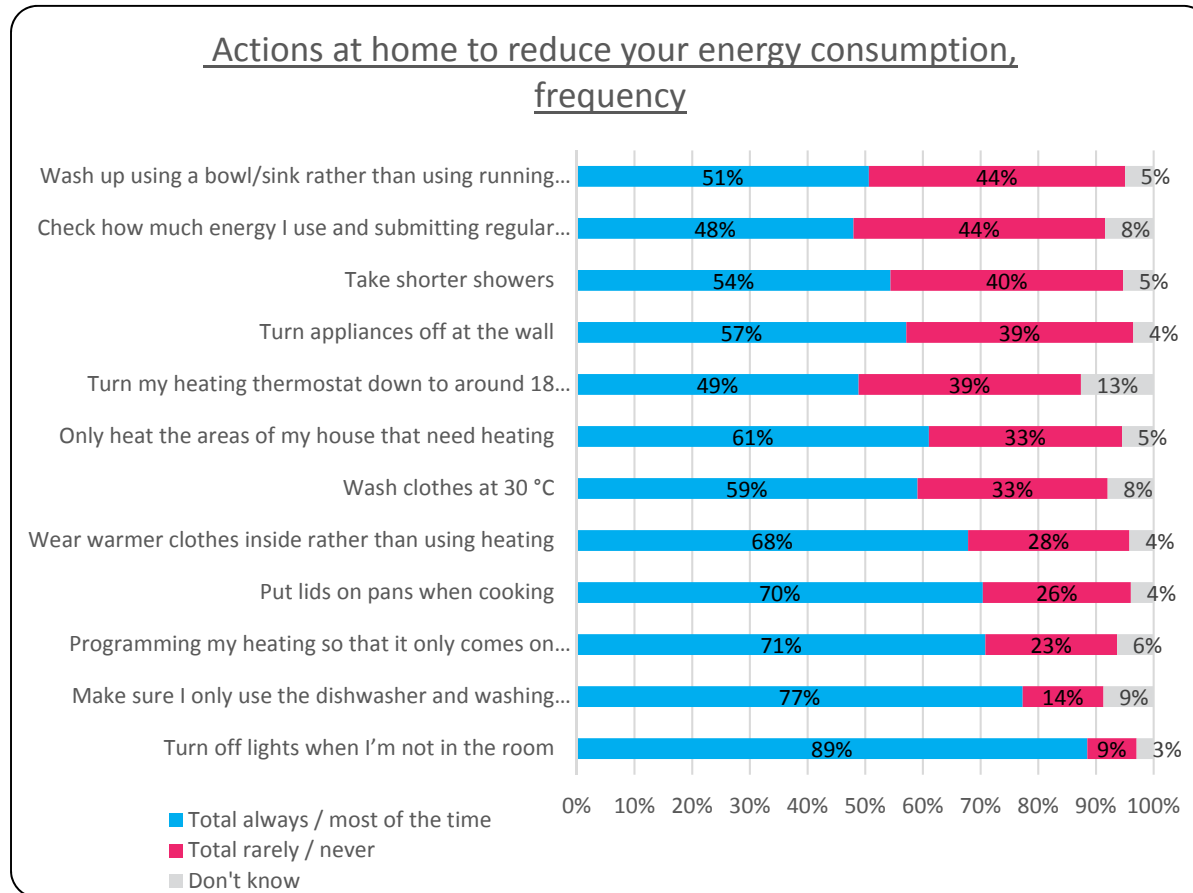
"All these things make very little difference. I do it because I've been indoctrinated against waste."

TL Member, Homeowner

Contrasts with waste where participants had a clear understanding of the environmental impact of not recycling i.e. more waste goes to landfill

As a result many said it is easy to be 'lazy' about energy efficiency

- This is reflected in the quant where a significant proportion of Londoners said they rarely or never take simple actions to reduce energy consumption



"I think people are aware of these things but also people are lazy. It takes a little bit of energy. You're on the sofa ready for bed and rather than go to the TV to turn it off at the wall you just press the button. It just takes that tiny bit of extra effort but maybe that's not always there."

TL Member, Renter

4. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

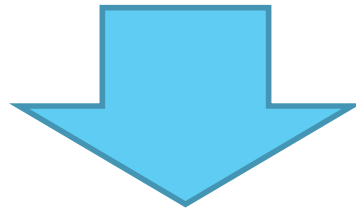
Retrofitting

An energy efficient home is seen to bring significant personal benefits

1. Increases personal comfort
2. Brings financial savings

"You do it to be warmer and to save money. But mainly to be more comfortable"

TL Member, Homeowner



Strong motivation to live in an energy efficient home even for those who have little interest in environmental benefits

Energy efficiency not a routine consideration when looking for a property

- Most said this is not something they think about when moving house
 - Most were either unaware of EPC certificate or said they had not paid it much attention at time of signing lease/ buying property
- In this sample renters had a higher awareness of this than homeowners
 - A few renters said as a result of bad experiences in the past they now make a point of checking EPC certificate and will factor this into decision making
- Homeowners do not expect energy efficiency to make a significant difference to value of their home
 - Expectation that it might help a bit but would never be a decisive factor

“Landlords in London know that if you don’t take the house someone else will so you don’t really have any leverage over them.”

TL Member, Renter

“I’m sure these things do add value but compared to the total cost of the house it’s probably irrelevant.”

TL Member, Homeowner

Renters feel powerless to do anything to improve energy efficiency of their homes

- Able to take inexpensive measures:
 - Energy saving light bulbs
 - Draft excluders
 - Reflective foil behind radiators
- But no ability to pursue significant improvements
 - Renters said they wouldn't have a problem raising issues over cold/ inefficiency with their landlord but had no expectation it would lead to any change
- As a result awareness of/ interest in retrofitting measures is low

In the quantitative research, 'not owning their own home' was the most common reason given across all retrofitting actions.

"There's a lot that's out of my control. I just have to take whatever washing machine or boiler is there."

TL Member, Renter

"In my old flat one of the radiators broke. We complained and they just bought an electric heater for us as if that was the solution. We got screwed on the bill."

TL Member, Renter

Nearly all homeowners had taken action to improve their property's energy efficiency

- Double glazing, insulation and boiler upgrades all common
- Homeowners also showed high degree of awareness of small measures that can help to keep home warm
 - Lining curtains
 - Insulation behind radiators
 - Carpets instead of hard floor
 - Replacing front door
- And felt that often these smaller measures are overlooked, despite being highly effective

"I've installed double glazing and I don't think it's as efficient as they make out. If you have some nice thick curtains and draw them at night it keeps the room warm."

TL Member, Homeowner

"I've put in carpets. That's made a big difference."

TL Member, Homeowner

74% of Londoners have installed low energy light bulbs

Motivation	Barriers	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental action that comes at relatively low extra cost in terms of effort/ money• LEDs felt to offer best value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buying lightbulbs a chore and not something you necessarily pay much attention to doing• Assumption that all lightbulbs are environmentally friendly so no need to pay attention to what you are buying• Uncertainty over how much of an environmental impact this makes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 27% of Londoners chose installing low energy light bulbs as one of their top 3 most effective actions

Summary: A popular action but benefits seen to be relatively small so little motivation to go out of your way to do this

"It's something that you buy more regularly than other stuff so you have to make a conscious decision when you buy them."

TL Member, Renter

53% of Londoners have installed double glazing

Motivation	Barriers	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve warmth and comfort (those who don't have it feel they are at a huge disadvantage)• Protect against noise pollution• Lower energy bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Living in a conservation area:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications rejected• Stipulations on aesthetics make cost prohibitively high• Concern over rogue contractors making it seem like too much of a hassle• Some said carpets/ curtains make just as much of an impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 52% of Londoners chose installing double glazing as one of their top 3 most effective actions

Summary: Most homeowners want this but encounter planning or financial barriers in following through. Also some reserve around the double glazing sector which has a reputation for rogue contractors ripping customers off. Tenants do not feel this is something they can request from their landlords.

"We got permission for double glazing but they have to be wooden because we're in a conservation area so it's a directive. It was going to cost £47,000 so we said forget it."

TL Member, Homeowner

37% of Londoners have upgraded their boiler for a more efficient one

Motivation	Barriers	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Necessity as old boilers break down• Save money on bills• Less wastage• High awareness of advantages of combination boilers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High cost to install• Something you only do out of necessity (same applies to other appliances)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 38% of Londoners chose upgrading their boiler to a more efficient one as one of their top 3 most effective actions

Summary: New boilers- especially combination boilers- seen to bring significant financial benefits but all said that the cost of installing new boiler means you only do it when you have no choice. No concerns around contractors.

"Mine was 20 years old and on its last legs. I put a combi boiler in because I like the demand side of it and it feels like it's not wasting anything."

TL Member, Homeowner

24% of Londoners have topped up or replaced loft insulation

Motivation	Barriers	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve warmth and comfort• Cheap to do• Can do it yourself• Save money on bills• Some awareness of Local Authority sometimes to provide service free of charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't have a loft• Don't have permission from my landlord• Don't know how to do it• Messy and difficult to do yourself• Low awareness of government schemes/ perception that unlikely to qualify for any schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 33% of Londoners chose top up or replace loft insulation as one of their top 3 most effective actions

Summary: Seen as an easy, effective and cheap measure that most homeowners said they would do if they had such a property. Tenants unsure whether they would be allowed to. Some concern about the expectation that you do it yourself and the difficulty involved.

"I insulated my loft and it was hell. It's a really small space and big rolls of scratchy insulation. It was dusty and filthy. It was difficult but worth it."

TL Member, Homeowner

17% of Londoners have put in cavity or solid wall insulation

Motivation	Barriers	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve warmth and comfort• Savings on bills• Those who have had solid wall insulation say it does not detract from aesthetics/ space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High levels of distrust of cavity wall insulation- perception that it can lead to problems with damp• Some concern that solid wall insulation takes away space/ impacts aesthetics of a room• Several said they would be unlikely to do either on its own- would be part of wider renovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28% of Londoners chose put in cavity or solid wall insulation as one of their top 3 most effective actions

Summary: High level of concern over cavity wall insulation, which many think can lead to damp. Solid wall insulation has a good reputation but uncertainty over level of effort/ expense. Little expectation that it would have a significant impact on value of the home.

“The Saturday papers always have horror stories of people who put in cavity wall insulation and ended up with damp walls and all sorts of horrors.”

TL Member, Homeowner

10% of Londoners have used smartphone apps/other technology to control energy use

Motivation	Barriers	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Controlled remotely meaning can rectify any mistakes (e.g. turning appliances off when away)Maximises convenienceReduce wastage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Vulnerable to hacking/ cyber-crimePerception that need to have a very modern boiler/ up to date technology for it to workNot convinced of the benefits- timer settings on heating can do the same thing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7% of Londoners chose 'use a smartphone app or other technology to control energy use' as one of their top 3 most effective actions

Summary: Approx 6 participants in total who had used Hive and others had heard of it. Those who had used it cited main benefit as being able to turn your heating on remotely but other participants unimpressed by this. Concerns over hacking a major barrier.

"You have your heating on a timer so I don't see the point...And if someone hacked you that could mean your heating would never come on."

TL Member, Homeowner

"If I could know whether I've left something on and turn it off remotely that would be awesome."

TL Member, Renter

Concern over contractors increases the 'hassle factor' of undertaking work

- A particular concern for double glazing installation
 - But true for any significant work to a property
- Participants weren't sure if it would ever stop them doing any work
 - But it does increase the 'hassle' factor and perceived risk of undertaking work
- Participants all felt they knew how to source a good contractor
 - Preferred method was word of mouth-friends or through neighbourhood Facebook/ Whatsapp/ email groups
 - Rated sites and trusted organisations also a key source of recommendations e.g. AgeUK or British Gas

"The reason I haven't got double glazing yet is that I just worry about getting ripped off. You hear so many stories and the companies are so pushy. I just don't need it right now but I will get around to it."

TL Member, Homeowner

"It's much easier now with the internet and the review sites. I use Check-A-Trade and Rated People."

TL Member, Homeowner

4. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Renewable energy (solar panels/ heat pumps)

There was a high degree of interest in solar energy

- A few homeowners had had solar panels fitted to their houses, and several more were looking into it
 - Renters also said that they found the idea of living a house with solar panels attractive
- Motivation is primarily financial
 - Participants estimated that you could save between 20% and 50% on your energy bills
 - Idea of being self sufficient and 'future proofing' your house also attractive
 - For some there is appeal in being at the forefront of modern technology
- High awareness amongst homeowners that Tesla were beginning to manufacture solar panels
 - Seen to provide a solution to aesthetic considerations (but at a cost)
 - Taken as a sign that the technology is about to improve significantly

"I got solar panels because I like the idea of free electricity!"

TL Member, Homeowner

"I know nothing about solar panels but what I do know is that the technology behind them is taking huge leaps forward every 12 months and now Tesla has come into the market the advance will probably be even bigger."

TL Member, Homeowner

Cost and concerns over technology the key barriers to uptake

3% of Londoners have installed renewable energy technology such as solar panels or heat pumps

Cost	Technology	Government support	Aesthetic/Practicality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most common estimate was that this would be £10,000 for an average house• Perception that withdrawal of government support means this is no longer a good deal• Buy back period makes this too long to be attractive to most	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anecdotes of panels installed over 5 years ago that are no longer working and now have a negative impact on house prices• Expectation that technology will continue to improve and that therefore it is better to wait for the next generation of panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anecdotes of panels bought with help of government subsidies causing issues at point of sale due to legal complications around ownership of panels• Perception that all government support has now been withdrawn (very low awareness of feed in tariff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aesthetics a concern for some as seen to have implications for value of house• Tesla expected to pave the way for significant improvements in this (meaning some would prefer to 'wait and see')• Uncertainty over practical questions (i.e. north facing/ type of roof)

"I looked at buying a house recently that had solar panels. They were old and I looked at having them removed but they were tied into a government scheme so you couldn't get rid of them even though most were broken."

TL Member, Homeowner

"They are not exactly pretty and if you had a nice little Queen Anne box it might drop the price a bit."

TL Member, Homeowner

Awareness of and interest in heat pumps was much lower

- Very low awareness amongst both homeowners and renters
 - Approx 1 person in each group who knew what they were
 - None had ever considered installing one
- Little awareness of the benefits
 - No awareness of how much energy this would save a year
 - No awareness of government subsidies
- Cost a barrier
 - Participants had no idea how much a heat pump would cost but anticipated it would be high
- As is need for outside space
 - Perception that need for outside space make heat pumps impractical for most London properties

"I've heard of them because I've seen them on Grand Designs but I'm not sure how they work."

TL Member, Homeowner

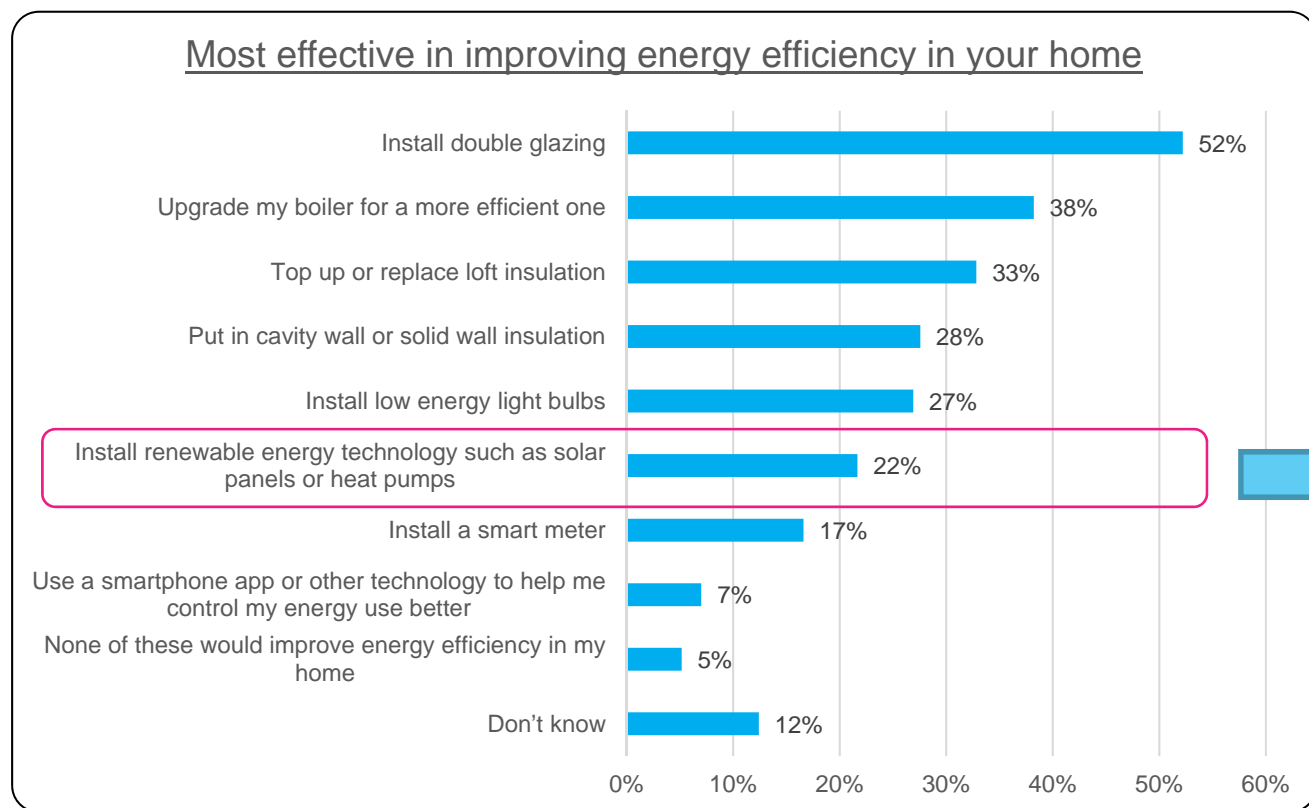
"I guess that is more suitable for new builds. I don't think fitting that kind of thing to an existing house is very easy."

TL Member, Homeowner

"That won't be helpful in London where having outside space is tricky."

TL Member, Renter

Quant suggests benefits of renewable technology are not well understood amongst general population



Low ranking could reflect low levels of experience of this technology (only 3% of Londoners have this in their home)

Homeowners showed little interest in government schemes for energy efficiency

- Homeowners said that this is not something they generally consider when researching home improvement measures
 - Many said they didn't bother because they assumed that they would not qualify for support
- And were sceptical about the efficiency/ desirability of government schemes
 - Perception that government schemes can be a hassle/ tie you into a bad deal
- The exception is solar panels where government subsidies were seen to be generous
 - But nearly all participants thought that subsidies have been entirely cut, meaning that some felt the time had passed for investing in solar

"I got in touch with one of the green deal outfits when my boiler blew up. They came round and did a report and either I completely misunderstood the whole process or the process completely misunderstood me because we ended up not making any use of it."

TL Member, Homeowner

"The golden age for solar in terms of making money off it has gone. The incentives for that were all a decade ago."

TL Member, Homeowner

4. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Smart meters

There is high awareness of smart meters

- Participants didn't like the idea of estimated bills, but did like the reliability of paying the same amount each month
 - Approximately half of participants said they submitted regular meter readings to avoid getting overcharged
 - But many said they just monitor monthly consumption and are happy if it stays the same
- Approx 3 people in each group had smart meters, and most others had heard of them
 - Relatively good understanding of what they do-known as a tool that means you don't have to do meter readings
 - Uncertainty over whether you have to pay for installation

"I just look at my bill to check it's the right amount and if it is then I don't think much more about it."

TL Member, Renter

"A smart meter keeps track of the energy you use so you don't have to."

TL Member, Renter

This is broadly in line with the quant:

- 48% of Londoners said they always/most of the time check how much energy they use and submit regular meter readings
- 21% of Londoners have installed a smart meter

Initial appeal of smart meters is accuracy of billing

- This was the stated motivation for most of those who had had one installed
 - Tended to be the most financially conscious
- But for those who hadn't had one installed, this wasn't a very compelling motivation
 - Many felt that it requires so little effort to take a meter reading- and they are so used to doing it- that they could see little benefit in no longer having to do it

"I got one because it saved me having to do meter readings ever month but I was also very curious to see how it peaks and troughs."

TL Member, Homeowner

"It takes about 30 seconds for me to email the gas and electricity reading so why do I need a meter?"

TL Member, Homeowner

For those who had a smart meter, main benefit was knowledge gained

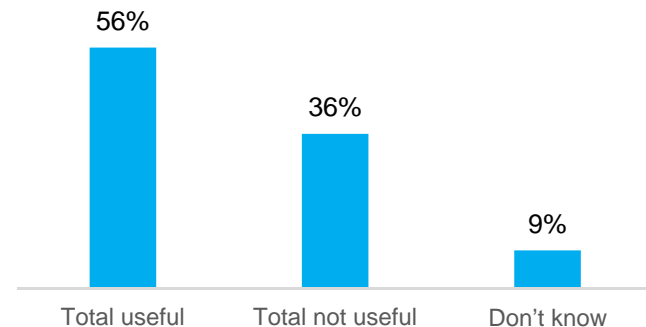
- Participants who had smart meters all spoke of an initial period where they took a high degree of interest in what devices were using most energy
 - But most said that after the initial novelty had worn off they stopped paying it much attention
- And nearly all said they had had moments of surprise which had led to (small) changes in their behaviour
 - Including using washing machine more carefully, not filling the kettle right up, taking shorter showers
- But participants were unsure of overall impact on their energy behaviour/bills
 - One participant said she thought it had saved her £50 a year but others said they had no idea if they had made any savings

"I make sure I only put one cup of water in the kettle. That's one of the things the smart meter taught me!"

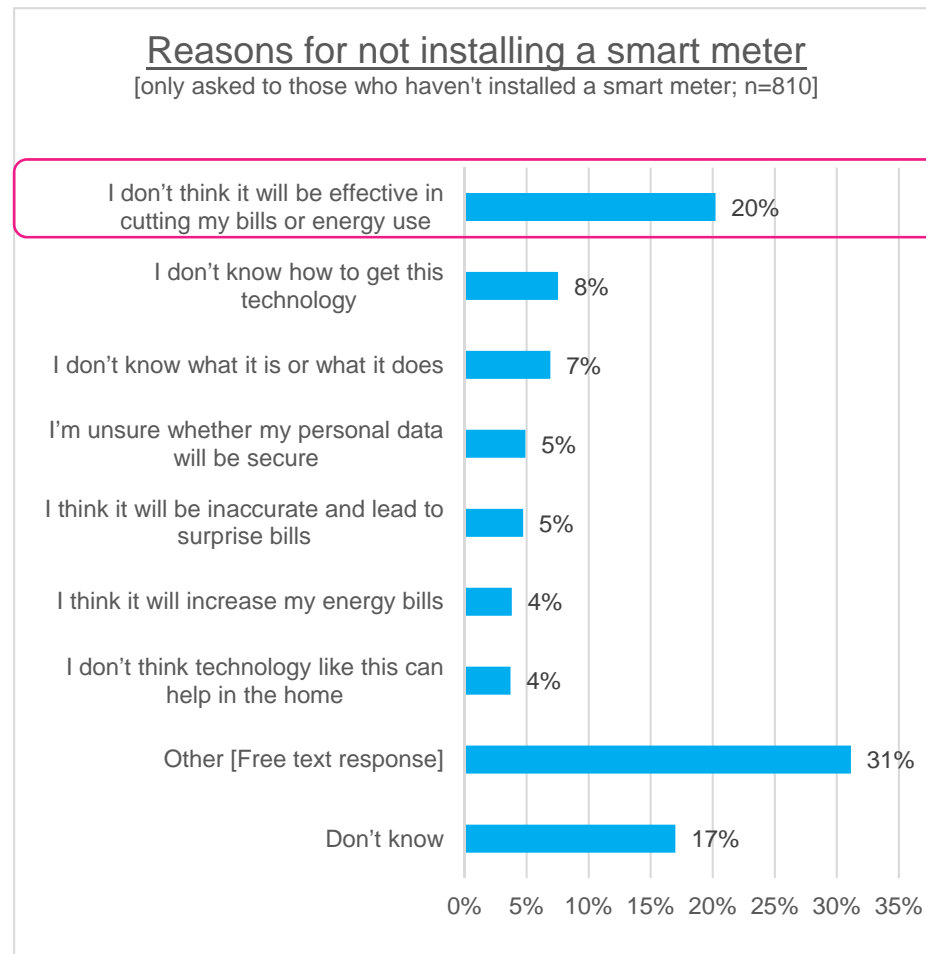
TL Member, Homeowner

How useful, if at all, has your smart meter been in helping you manage your energy use?

[only asked to those with a smart meter; n=190]



In line with quant, the main barrier to uptake was lack of motivation



- Most participants felt they are already energy efficient and thought it unlikely that they would change their behaviour as a result of getting a smart meter

"I don't think it would make much of a difference to me. It's going to be useful for students and young people who maybe don't understand how to be responsible with energy."

TL Member, Homeowner

Installation also a significant barrier

- Perception that installation is a hassle
 - Anecdotal stories of it being a long process of having to call energy company, have house inspected, take a day off work for installation etc
- Also concerns that you have to change meter every time you change energy company
 - This was raised as a concern in every group, with one participant who had had direct experience of this
 - For people who regularly switch energy supplier this is a major barrier
- For many this outweighs any convenience benefit that comes from not having to check your meter

"I just haven't got round to doing it. It requires working from home one day, working all the stuff out. It's a lot of effort and from what I can tell when I give my meter readings they're giving me an accurate bill anyway so I've not been incentivised to actually do it."

TL Member, Renter

"I have a smart meter but then I changed energy supplier to Affinity Energy and they said they would need to put in their own meter. So I think that's a bit redundant. I mean they're supposed to be smart!"

TL Member, Renter

Attitudes towards technology also impacted views

- Tech enthusiasts were curious about smart meters
 - Some said they had installed a smart meter for this reason
- For tech sceptics the increased 'connectivity' that comes with a smart meter is off-putting
 - Very small minority of participants who voiced this concern
- As with renewable energy some said they preferred to take a 'wait and see' approach
 - Sense that it is still early days and that it would be better to wait until the technology has been better tested

"I think this means there is a chance that the government or the company is actually controlling you a little bit more."

TL Member, Renter

"I would get one but I am waiting for all the teething problems to come first. I'll let other people be the guinea pigs."

TL Member, Homeowner

Most participants were comfortable with the idea of sharing data from smart meter

- Participants did not consider data on energy use to be sensitive
 - Many pointed out they already share this data with their energy company
 - Tech sceptics said they were not comfortable with this, even though they did not have any precise concerns
- But found it hard to imagine how tariffs based on usage would work
 - Participants had no reference point for this
- And there were some concerns- driven by low trust in energy companies- that data would be used against them
 - e.g. companies raising prices during peak times, companies punishing customers for high consumption

"I mean they're going to see your energy consumption anyway aren't they? So sharing the data isn't a big deal. There's no personal information there."

TL Member, Renter

"There's too much electrical stuff telling too much about people unknowingly. I don't like it."

TL Member, Renter

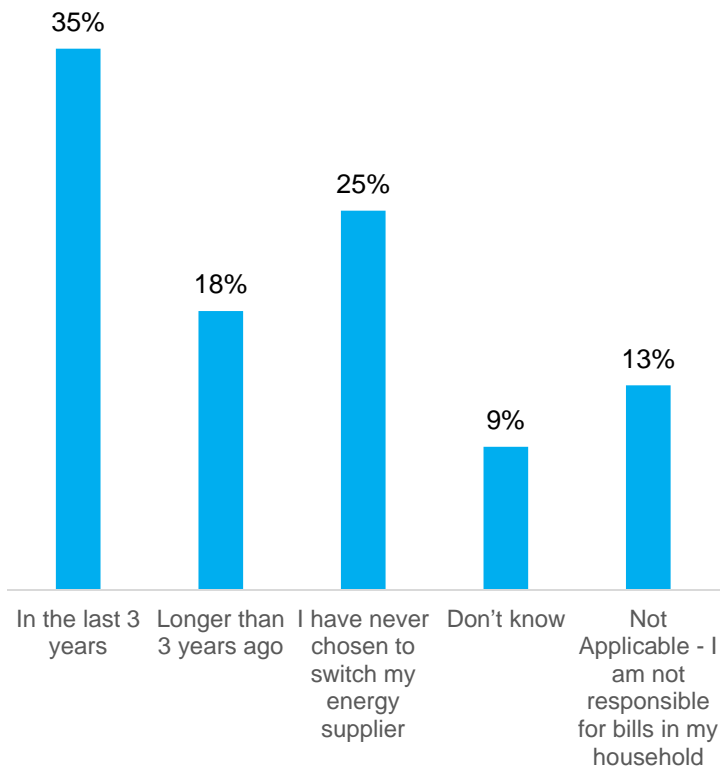
"The problem I see is that they use your energy usage against you by charging you loads because you are a high user or something."

TL Member, Renter

5. ENERGY COMPANIES

Participants were aware that there are benefits to switching energy supplier

Not including when you have moved house, when was the last time you chose to switch energy supplier?



- At least 3 people in each group who had switched suppliers recently
 - These tended to be regular switchers i.e. switching every year
 - People who had switched energy supplier tended to also be proactive in other ways e.g. installed a smart meter
- Nearly all other participants said they knew that you could save money by switching
 - But many- especially those living in small properties- assumed it would not be a significant amount (£100-£200)

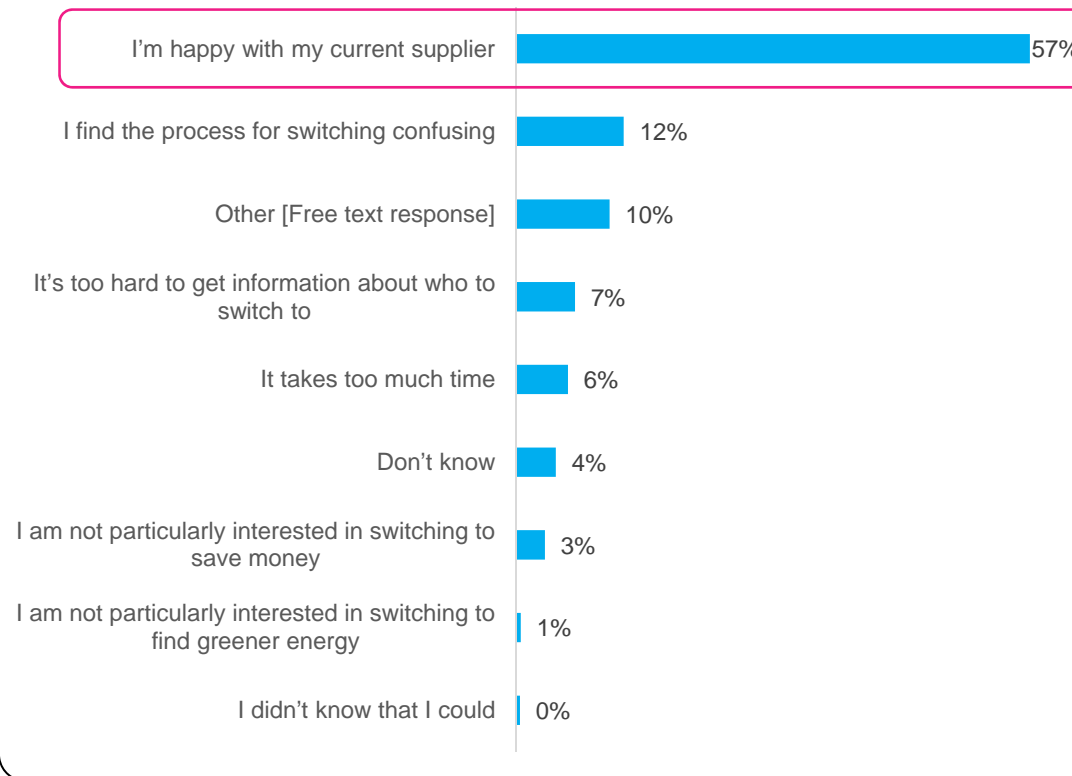
"I put in the data every year and switch supplier every year. I do it through comparison websites. Money Saving Expert. I save hundred sometimes."

TL Members, Renters

Lack of motivation is the key barrier to switching

Main reason for not switching energy supplier in the past 2 years?

[Only asked to those who haven't switched energy supplier in the past 2 years; n=503]



- Most of those who hadn't switched said they thought they were getting a fair deal
 - Some evidence of brand loyalty especially amongst older participants
- And that unless they thought they were being ripped off they were unlikely to switch
 - Partly because it requires thinking about something that they find quite dull

"I don't feel what I am paying now is extortionate. It's fine and they've been reliable. It hasn't crossed my mind to switch."

TL Member, Renter

Participants were surprised by how much money you could save by switching

- Some participants estimated they had saved between £300 and £500 a year by switching
 - This made a big impression on other participants who hadn't thought figures would be that high
- Despite savings, these participants were annoyed that they had to keep switching to get the best deal
 - Frustration with a system that puts so much onus on the customer
- Most participants, including those who had never done it, did not think switching would be a difficult/ time consuming process
 - But it does become onerous if you have to keep doing it

"I jus thought they all kind of charged the same amount. I guess it's just laziness on my part for not looking into it. I definitely will now I know I can save hundreds of pounds."

TL Member, Renter

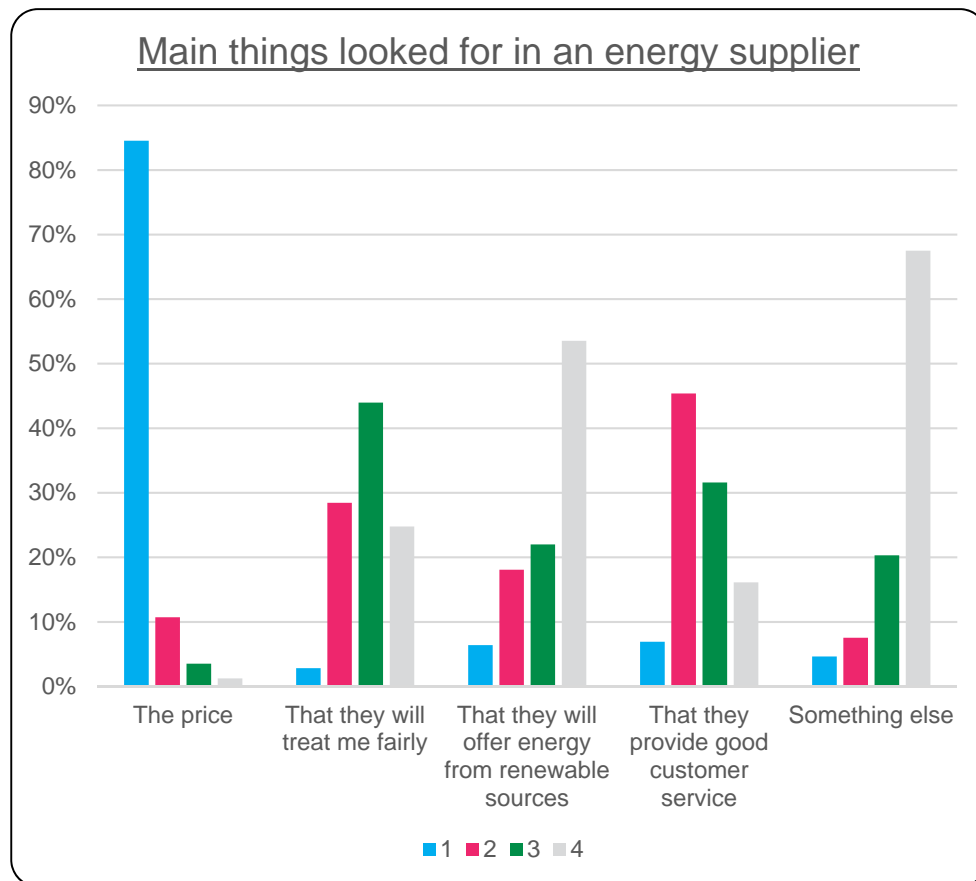
"There's so much choice it's hard to know which one to switch to and you would be switching every month if you really followed the prices."

TL Member, Homeowner

"I switch whenever the introductory discount goes. You have to keep switching. It's really annoying."

TL Member, Homeowner

In line with the quant, participants said price is the key factor in choosing an energy supplier



- For most participants cost was the only consideration
 - The only reason they had considered switching in the first place
- Some said they also took customer experience into account
 - Tended to be those who had had bad experiences
- Nationality of the company a consideration for some
 - A few participants said they didn't like the idea of energy being controlled by foreign companies

Green energy not a concern for most

- Several participants did not understand what it meant for an energy company to be 'green'
 - Had never given much thought to fuel sources/ energy system
- Some had looked into this but always been put off by the trade-off in price
 - A couple of participants said they had gone for the 'cheapest green' option as a compromise but most felt the trade-off was too high
- Low trust in energy companies meant several participants were skeptical about 'green' options
 - A small minority of participants cast doubt on the integrity of energy companies' claims to be green

"I'm not sure I believe in it. I mean what does it actually mean?"

TL Member, Renter

"Does anyone else think this is just a marketing ploy to make out that things are greener than they actually are?"

TL Member, Homeowner

An ideal energy company would be good for consumers and for the environment

Cheap and green	Transparent billing/simple tariffs	Exemplary customer service	Reliable	Social conscience
Major point of difference with what is already on offer	Making it easy to know how much energy you are using and how you can save energy	About going above and beyond e.g. helping customers save energy	Mostly taken for granted but new, smaller companies still need to emphasise this	Doing something to mitigate environmental harm
<i>"I would like them to be investing in green energy but without passing that on to the consumer"</i> TL Member, Homeowner		<i>"Not run by fat cats. Not having to make massive profits."</i> TL Member, Homeowner		<i>"It would be nice if they did something to counter the damage they are doing. Make you feel better about funding their evils."</i> TL Member, Renter

Nationalisation came up spontaneously in every group

- Spontaneous speculation about a 'not for profit' energy company in every group
 - Participants felt ideal energy company couldn't exist if it was profit making
- Participants tended to assume such a company would have to be government run
 - 'Not for profit' defined as not having shareholders/ putting surplus back into looking after customers
- This immediately sparked debate about re-nationalisation
 - Participants were split on their views on this with younger participants tending to be in favour and older participants tending to associate this with unreliable supply and poor customer service
- A government company competing against private companies a new and interesting idea
 - Provides reassurance around concerns that this would result in fall in standards of reliability/ customers service

"I am uncomfortable about that because I think you could end up back in the bad old days of having to wait two months for a telephone call because the nationalised company can't be bothered to give you a proper service."

TL Member, Homeowner

"A not for profit company could take a longer term view because notoriously those in charge of large energy companies take a very short term view because they want to keep their shareholders happy."

TL Member, Homeowner