

2013 EPRG Public Opinion Survey:

Smart Energy – Attitudes and Behaviours

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Abstract We present results of the 2013 Energy Policy Research Group (EPRG) public opinion survey on smart metering and consumption behaviour. Our survey examines the energy consumption awareness and attitudes of the British public, the effect of peers on consumption behaviour, the potential for consumer engagement and consumer acceptance of various energy saving measures. Wherever possible, comparisons were made to EPRG public opinion surveys from 2006, 2008 and 2010. The share of individuals that would not want their consumption data recorded at all has gone down from 2010 levels from 30% to 22% although numerous concerns remain. Smart devices do lead to behavioural response but the challenge is the sustainability of this behaviour change over time. The share of electricity monitor householders that read the monitor at least once in a week is 26%, compared to less than 5% of non-monitor households that reported checking their meters at least once a week. However, the reading habit declines over time. Peer influence is not found to have strong impacts on behaviour change. Affordable and user friendly applications on smart phones that inform people of their consumption are seen as promising tools to raise awareness and induce behaviour change. There is scope for shifting load off-peak through smart technologies that minimise impact on availability and functionality, and guarantee consumer privacy.

Keywords Public opinion survey, Consumption awareness, Electricity policy, Energy consumption behaviour, electricity monitor, Smart appliances, Supplier switching

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