

Smart Prepay: Frequently Asked Questions

<p>Do smart meters work in blocks of flats?</p>	<p>This is considered in the report. Most of the remaining major technical barriers have been removed, with work to provide a solution for larger blocks of flats ongoing. Connectivity for homes has been a barrier in the past, but work has commenced to increase the instances where the connection between the IHD and smart meter is strong enough for the IHD to work.</p> <p>The solution for larger flats – an alternative ‘home area network’ will be in place so that smart meters are available for everyone before the end of the rollout</p>
<p>What about SMETS 1 meters that are not interoperable between suppliers?</p>	<p>SMETS 1 meters that have not been enrolled to the DCC are unable to switch to some suppliers without losing some smart functionality. NEA was not supportive of installing such meters that were not interoperable, but is now fully supportive of the new SMETS 2 meters that resolve this issue.</p> <p>SMETS 1 meters are in the process of being enrolled into the DCC, meaning that they will receive the functions of SMETS 2 meters. Over 4 million have already been enrolled by the DCC</p>
<p>Will there be a wider choice of Smart PPM tariffs soon?</p>	<p>In our research we gained anecdotal evidence that there is a strong belief that more tariffs will become available in the near future.</p> <p>Suppliers currently aren’t mandated to have to offer a prepayment tariff to smart customers. However, NEA hopes that this will shortly change.</p>
<p>Are there risks of more rationing if households are more aware of their spend through the IHD?</p>	<p>Yes, there could be risks to increased rationing if there is increased awareness of usage. Smart meters must be part of a holistic solution including energy efficiency measures and advice to limit the amount of rationing that takes place.</p> <p>Smart Energy GB’s view is that this is unlikely to occur in many prepay homes, as prepay customers are already very closely monitoring their energy expenditure.</p> <p>In credit homes, sometimes it is the fear of a large, unexpected bill that causes rationing. With an in-home display this is less likely, so some homes with smart meters will be able to spend more on their energy and have a warmer, safer home. This will need close monitoring over time.</p>
<p>Did you look into the scale and nature of problems that can arise from faulty smart prepay installs?</p>	<p>The report did not consider this, but we are keen to understand this and other barriers in more detail in our future work.</p>

Is the quality of information given about IHDs during installs sufficient?	This is not something that was considered a significant barrier by participants in the study. If you have information regarding this, please share it. It could help with our broader understanding of the topic
What happens to the households that have smart prepayment fitted that don't work?	<p>If a customer has a smart prepayment meter which isn't working as they'd expect, then their energy supplier is best placed to assist them as only they can provide specific information about a particular meter. We'd advise contacting the supplier to find out how the issue can be resolved.</p> <p>If a customer with a first generation/SMETS1 meter(s) switches supplier the supplier will take steps to ensure the household continues to receive energy. In some cases the new supplier may replace the meter with a smart meter of their own.</p>
What steps is Smart Energy GB taking (or do they need to take) to create campaigns to inform and educate those most at risk of fuel poverty and using legacy meters?	<p>Smart Energy GB has a specific legal duty to support consumers in vulnerable circumstances, so they do not miss out on the benefits of smart meters. They deliver against this in a number of ways. A key element of this is the Smart Energy GB in Communities programme, which recruits partners through a grant-making fund. We award grants to regional organisations across Great Britain to reach specific communities.</p> <p>Previously this has included organisations in the voluntary and public sectors, such as Groundwork London, Care & Repair Cymru and Carers Scotland. Our in Communities programme has benefitted a variety of communities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are deaf or have hearing impairments • People who are aged 65+ • Those who are on a low income <p>Our partners provide information about smart meters and address any concerns the groups may have. This activity is delivered face to face, which has proved to be the most effective way to engage with these groups.</p> <p>Smart Energy GB has a free-to-access resource centre that partners can access for information and materials in a range of languages and formats.</p>
Why do we prefer a cashback option over savings through a tariff?	<p>Our research has found that the Smart PPM tariffs on offer have not been successful in providing an adequate price signal to households to make Smart PPM attractive from a price perspective.</p> <p>A Cashback option would give the household certainty that they are receiving the savings, and would also provide a much sharper incentive than the long term, year on year savings may arise from tariffs.</p>
The benefits of Smart PPM are clear, but is there any	According to Smart Energy GB research nearly 9 in 10 prepay customers would recommend smart prepayment meters thanks

evidence that they been realised for those households that have received smart meters already?	to the benefits they provide. 90% of customers with a smart meter in prepay mode have also taken at least one step to reduce their energy use, such as turning off the lights in empty rooms and changing the way they use household appliances. Almost 80% of smart prepay customers agreed their smart meter helps them feel more in control of their energy usage.
How will poor connections with the DCC be addressed?	Our research has found that significant progress has been made with connecting to the DCC, and in almost all circumstances, this issue has been resolved, or is already on its way to being resolved. The DCC reports that it provides a connection to 99.3% of British premises (as of June 2021)
Are there any plans to introduce a single standardised process across all suppliers are all meter software so that clients can easily find the right screen on their meter and only have to learn once how to operate and top-up a meter?	We are not aware of any plans to do this, but we will take this forward in our broader advocacy around smart meters.
Is smart prepay still worthwhile for digitally excluded households?	Yes, the meter itself does not need a stable internet connection in the home to work properly. Furthermore, while all of the extra top up options may not be accessible for those without the internet, there are still additional top up options such as remotely topping up by phoning the supplier.