

Smart Meters

Smart meters are set to transform how people understand and manage their energy usage. Smart meters will digitise the energy sector and will enable suppliers to offer innovative tariffs such as time of use tariffs and a far better customer service. In-home displays and mobile phone applications will provide customers with near real-time, accurate information on their energy consumption and the financial cost of this, helping them to better understand and budget for their energy use.

The roll-out

The Energy Acts of 2008 and 2011 provided the Secretary of State for Energy with broad powers to implement and direct the roll-out of smart gas and electricity meters. The mass roll-out of smart meters is due to start in 2016. 1.5 million Smart and AMR (Advanced Meter Reading) meters have been installed in domestic and non domestic premises. In 2013, the then Secretary of State for Energy announced that the completion date for the full-scale roll-out of the smart programme would be 2020.

Benefits & costs

- ▶ **Accuracy:** Smart meters will allow energy suppliers to read gas and electricity meters remotely, putting an end to estimated billing.
- ▶ **Innovation:** There is more potential for suppliers to offer innovative products and services.
- ▶ **Energy security:** Smart meters will help contribute to improvements in demand side management which could make a significant contribution towards energy security and sustainable energy use.
- ▶ **Overall cost of roll-out:** £10.9 billion.
- ▶ **Overall estimated benefits, in part from energy efficiency:** £17.1 billion.

Privacy

Keeping the information generated from smart meters secure is a key consideration of the project. Energy UK, alongside DECC and Consumer Futures, have developed the 'Data Guide' which sets out customers smart metering data rights and how suppliers will communicate those rights to customers.

Smart Energy GB

Smart Energy GB is the not-for-profit organisation tasked by government with consumer engagement during the smart meter roll-out. Their independent national campaign will inform every consumer how they can get a smart meter, and how they can use the new technology to get the full range of benefits. Smart Energy GB works in close contact with energy suppliers, and has a particular focus on ensuring that low income, vulnerable and pre-payment customers reap the benefits from smart meters.