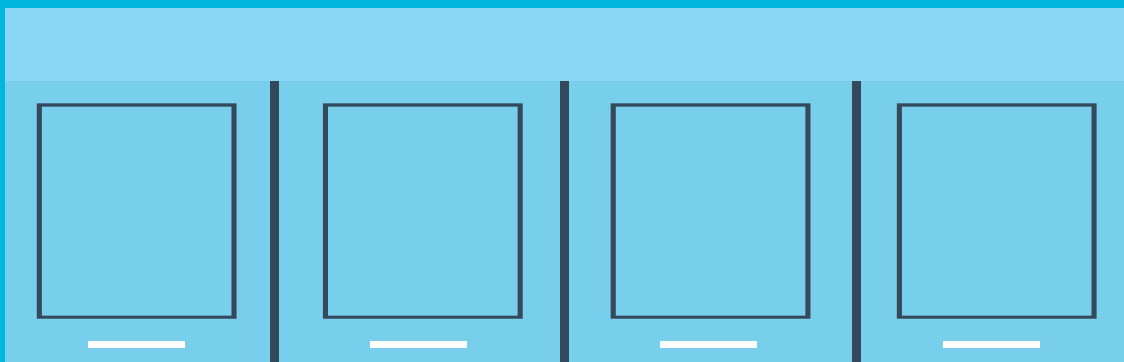




Smart Meters – A Guide For Housing Associations

Between now and 2020, every British home will be offered a smart meter from their energy supplier at no extra cost. This short guide for housing associations provides some background information about smart meters, the rollout and what you can do to help tenants.



Introduction

You may have heard about smart meters and have questions about what it means for you and tenants. To remedy this, Community Housing Cymru (CHC) and Smart Energy GB are working together to raise awareness and understanding of smart meters and how they can benefit housing associations and tenants.

What is a smart meter?

Smart meters are the new generation of gas and electricity meters. They are being installed in homes across Great Britain at no extra cost, to replace traditional meters, including prepay key meters.

What do smart meters do?

A smart meter sends automatic meter readings directly and securely to the energy supplier. This means no more manual meter readings, no more estimates and more accurate bills. A smart meter includes a portable smart meter display which shows exactly how much energy is being used and what it's costing in pounds and pence, in near real time.

]] Installing **53 MILLION** smart meters will **SAVE** Britain **£6 BILLION**. By 2030, the average consumer will save **£43** a year. **]]**

How do smart meters work?

No one will have to take meter readings manually. The smart meter will send automatic readings to the energy supplier via the Data Communications Company (DCC), a secure national network solely for smart meters. This works in the same way as other wireless systems, using radio waves like car-key or TV remotes. Although it's a wireless system, there is no need for Wi-Fi in the home for it to work. And it won't need to operate on the tenant's Wi-Fi if they do have it.

Why is the rollout happening?

Most of the gas and electricity meters in homes were designed decades ago. Right now, most people in Great Britain have little idea of how much energy they are using, where it's being used or what it's costing. A third of households also don't understand their energy bills. Smart meters are part of the UK Government's plan to bring our energy system up to date. By 2020, every home in Great Britain will be able to use smart meter technology to see exactly how much energy they're using, and what it's costing in pounds and pence. In addition to these immediate benefits, the rollout also lays the foundation for Great Britain's move to a lower carbon economy and a secure energy supply. So people will be able to work out where they can save energy, cut bills and do their bit for the environment.

Who is Smart Energy GB?

Smart Energy GB is the voice of the smart meter rollout. Its task is to help everyone in Britain understand smart meters, the national rollout and how to use their new meters to get their gas and electricity under control.

What is Smart Energy GB's role?

Smart Energy GB's objectives are to:

1. Build consumer confidence in the installation of smart metering systems by gas and electricity suppliers.
2. Build consumer awareness and understanding of the use of smart metering systems (and the information obtained through them).
3. Increase the willingness of energy consumers to use smart metering systems to change their behaviour so as to enable them to reduce their energy consumption.
4. Assist consumers with low incomes or prepayment meters, or consumers who may encounter additional barriers to realise the benefits of smart metering systems due to their particular circumstances.

]] SMART METERS will mean an **END** to estimated bills and the **INCONVENIENCE** of having people come to **READ** the meter. **]]**

Why is CHC getting involved?

In Wales, it is estimated that 31% of social housing tenants, approximately 70,000 people, live in fuel poverty so helping tenants reduce their energy bills is a key priority. It is also hoped that it will encourage greater numbers of tenants to "shop around" for better energy packages.

CHC is working with Smart Energy GB to provide resources and guidance that will help housing associations inform tenants about what is happening and the benefits of the smart meter rollout.

Benefits of smart meters to tenants and housing associations

Benefits to tenants

- Tenants will always know what they are paying for their energy - with a smart meter, they get an easy-to-understand portable display that shows exactly what they are spending in near real time. More transparency around energy usage and costs will help people avoid getting into debt with their energy supplier.
- An end to estimated bills – tenants only pay for the energy they use.
- Smart meters show exactly how much gas and electricity is being used, so tenants will be able to make informed decisions about what appliances might be more costly to use and where they can save both energy and money.
- Smart meter technology also works with prepayment meters, making it easier for tenants to top up their credit. Depending on the supplier, they will be able to add credit online or via a smartphone app. This will end the need for top up keys or topping up in a shop (although that option will still be available for those who want it).
- It will make switching between payment methods (e.g. direct debit or prepay) much easier as an installer will not have to visit the property to change the meter.
- Smart meters will be installed by suppliers at no extra cost to consumers.

Benefits to housing associations

- Smart meters will help tenants manage their finances and stay out of debt.
- Reducing energy costs could mean fewer tenants under-heating their home, helping to protect their health and wellbeing as well as protecting housing stock from damp and other associated problems.
- There will be no more manual meter readings to interrupt the working day.
- Data on consumer energy behaviour and property performance could help housing associations analyse the performance of different types of property, target and monitor energy saving measures, develop local energy programmes and offers. The ownership and permission to share data will always belong to the customer.
- By reducing energy usage, smart meters will help Britain contribute to a lower carbon economy.
- Accurate records of energy usage and straightforward switching will make it easier to manage void properties.

What can housing associations do to help the rollout?

It is important that low income households and those with additional barriers, who could benefit the most from smart meters, are not left behind in the rollout. In most cases, the energy of your homes is managed by the tenant and so they will be responsible for saying yes to having a smart meter installed.

The primary objective of the Smart Energy GB and CHC partnership is to ensure that tenants are aware of smart meters and know how to get one.

There are a number of ways in which you can help, including:

- informing tenants about smart meters during face-to-face and telephone conversations.
- information in your regular tenant communications – newsletters and on social media
- information about smart meters at tenant events etc.
- putting up posters and providing information in the communal areas of your properties.

If you want to get directly involved in the rollout then you can work with energy suppliers to request the installation of smart meters:

- when you build new homes
- when a property becomes empty.

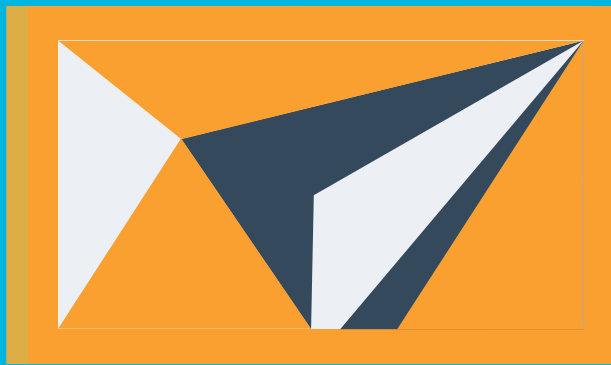
How CHC is helping you

CHC has undertaken a range of activities to help you tell tenants about the benefits of smart meters:

- We ran a number of workshops offered by Smart Energy GB to provide some of your staff with all the information they need to tell tenants about smart meters.
- Marketing material: CHC has provided templates for leaflets, adverts, pop up banners, stands, presentations and articles – saving you time and money.
- CHC provides regular updates on its website, in newsletters, at events and through social media to keep you up to date with the latest developments.
- We can help answer any questions about smart meters and liaise with
- Smart Energy GB if there are any queries.

All information can be found at:

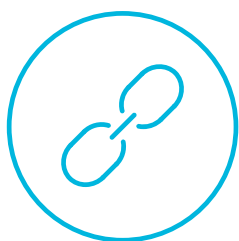
<http://chcymru.org.uk/en/policy/energy-and-sustainability/smart-energy-gb>





Next steps

- Visit CHC's website to view the resources available:
<http://chcymru.org.uk/en/policy/energy-and-sustainability/smart-energy-gb>



Additional useful links

Smart Energy website
www.smartenergygb.org

Smart Energy GB You tube channel
www.youtube.com/smartenergyGB

Additional resources to promote smart meters
www.smartenergygb.org/partner-resources



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