Energy Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Technical Report – Fieldwork August/September 2023
Prepared by BMG for Ofgem and Citizens Advice

Contents

Context and objectives

Ofgem and Citizens Advice carry out a regular survey to monitor domestic consumers' perceptions about the quality of service delivered by energy suppliers. Ofgem use this information to support its monitoring and compliance activities. Citizens Advice use this information to inform their work in supporting consumers on energy issues and advocating for fair practices to protect all consumers.

The purpose of the research is to measure how well gas and electricity suppliers deliver to customer service principles set out by Ofgem, as well as to provide a measurement of topical energy issues and an understanding of consumer experiences when dealing with suppliers or energy matters.

The survey has been running since late 2018. This report discusses the methodological approach used for the August/September 2023 wave of the tracking survey (wave 17). This is the first wave conducted since late 2022 and the first wave conducted by BMG Research.

The survey covers a range of topics, including satisfaction with energy suppliers, satisfaction with the dimensions of customer service and experiences of supplier support for consumers struggling with energy affordability issues. More specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. how satisfied are consumers with the overall service their energy suppliers are providing?
2. how satisfied are consumers with key customer service dimensions?
3. what are the experiences of customers struggling financially or falling into debt?
4. how satisfied are consumers with other supplier interactions and services, including switching?

Reports and data tables for previous waves can be found here. The findings report, data tables and questionnaire for this wave can be found here.

Overview of approach

Fieldwork for this wave was conducted from 30 August to 18 September 2023. Comparisons to the previous wave are for 8 November to 5 December 2022.

Fieldwork was undertaken using three approaches:

5. an online panel component using an online panel partner, Savanta, to achieve the interviews. This approach captures the digitally enabled population.
6. a component of river sampling that reaches non-panel members to enhance the representativeness of the online sample.
7. an in-person interview component targeted at digitally excluded respondents.

Quotas were set to ensure a representative sample of the GB population. Results were weighted overall by age, gender, region, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), ethnicity and payment type. The methodology has been updated, but several steps have been taken to ensure comparability with the previous research agency:

▪ The latest wave comprised 3,742 interviews in total (maximum confidence interval of ±1.7% at the 95% level of confidence). A breakdown of completions by mode is outlined below. The below totals include boost interviews for standard credit and prepayment meter customers (see discussion on page 10). Note that Citizens Advice and Ofgem can in future choose to expand the survey to oversample ethnic minority respondents (n= c.150) in addition to prepayment meter and standard credit customers, though this option was not undertaken in the first wave.

Method	Sample size (unweighted)
Online panel	3,311
River sampling	210
Face-to-face interviews	221
Total	3,742

Questionnaire design

Alongside the methodology, BMG, Ofgem and Citizens Advice took the opportunity to review the questionnaire and make changes in line with evolving insight requirements and emerging issues. While much of the previous questionnaire remains consistent, changes and additions included:

- collecting postcodes to gather more precise regional data, assessing the Index of Multiple Deprivation, categorising urban versus rural areas, and streamlining the response process.
- introduced a question to explore the decision-making process and supplier consultations involved when changing payment methods.
- a question to gauge satisfaction levels among smart meter owners.
- modified the question on information satisfaction to enable analysis specifically of respondents who have received information from their supplier.
- added questions to understand the experiences of customers with prepayment meters, particularly focusing on instances and factors leading to disconnection.
- questions exploring customer experiences related to debt collection in the context of energy usage and bills.
- questions about whether customers were having contact with suppliers regarding support for energy bills and satisfaction with the support received.
- profiling questions were added to understand respondents' financial situations, including aspects of borrowing, saving, and their ability to handle unexpected expenses.

Cognitive interviewing

The quality of data collected in a survey is partially determined by respondents interpreting each question according to its intended meaning.[1] Cognitive interviewing is a widely used pre-testing tool that explores how respondents perceive questions and information given to them. Interviewers probe the meaning of specific terms or the intent of specific questions throughout the interview.

Questions were tested in 8 cognitive interviews. This happened after an initial draft of the survey was scripted, meaning the participant experienced the survey as it would appear to a 'real' respondent, including the look and feel of the survey, the question layouts, and routing.

Interviews were conducted between 8 August and 14 August 2023. Six cognitive interview participants completed the cognitive interview online via video call using a screen share, with two in-person interviews conducted in person with digitally excluded respondents. Interviews were carefully recruited

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[1] Examining the complex psychological processes involved in answering different types of survey questions https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261815491_The_Psychology_of_Survey_Response_by_Roger_Tourangeau_Lance_J_Rips_Kenneth_Rasinski

with a broad demographic and regional mix of participants, covering all the main payment types and including participants who had fallen behind on their bills or run out of credit on their prepayment meter.

The feedback from the interviews was analysed and reported back to Ofgem and Citizens Advice, including recommendations for final changes to the questionnaire.

Scripting and least fill logic

Use of least fill

Some consumers have more than one supplier or payment type (i.e. one supplier or payment for gas and another for electricity). A logic-based system was implemented in the script to handle these situations. This narrowed down what we were asking each respondent about in order to simplify the survey experience. Logic rules varied slightly depending on the section of the questionnaire. An overview is provided below, with the full questionnaire also available in the appendix.

Overall and customer service satisfaction questions:

- if the respondents had the same electricity and gas supplier, in the initial section, respondents answered about their experience with that supplier in relation to both electricity and gas.

- if the respondents had different electricity and gas suppliers, they answered questions about one supplier and associated fuel type at random. A least-fill approach was used to select which supplier and fuel type they were asked about based on the supplier with the lowest number of responses.[2] For subsequent questions later in the survey asking about their experience with a specific supplier, the supplier selected for the overall and customer service satisfaction questions was referred to. However, later questions tended to mention the supplier only and did not specify the fuel type.

- note that some questions later in the survey were not supplier-specific - for example, questions about experiences with smart meters.

In previous waves, if consumers said they were with different suppliers for gas and electricity, then they would be assigned to one of those two suppliers based on whichever supplier has fewer respondents. This was designed to maximise the data from respondents with smaller suppliers. This is being reviewed for future waves.

Questions about changing payment methods:

- respondents who had both electricity and gas were asked in separate questions whether they had changed payment types for electricity and then gas.

- if they had changed for only one fuel type, they were asked about this experience in follow-up questions – irrespective of whether this was a different supplier and associated fuel type that was asked in the overall and customer service satisfaction questions.

- if they had changed payment methods for both electricity and gas, a least-fill approach was used to select which fuel type they were asked about in subsequent questions (to keep survey length manageable).

- due to the survey's design, there was a small chance that a respondent could be asked about their satisfaction with one energy supplier, and then about payment methods with another supplier. This situation could arise if the respondent changed their payment method for only one

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[2] A least-fill survey approach examines the overall number of completions across key variables of interest and then ensures that the respondent taking the survey is asked about the category - in this case, the fuel type - where the fewest responses have been received up to that point. This is calculated in real-time at the moment the respondent takes the survey.

type of fuel and had different suppliers for each type of fuel. As a result, the supplier related to the payment method change might be different from the one randomly selected for the overall customer service satisfaction questions. Where this did arise, these responses were removed from the dataset so as to ensure consistency across the dataset in the supplier being asked about. This affected a very small number of responses.

Consistency with the previous script

The supplier change required us to create a new survey script using different scripting software. However, by leveraging a previous test link of the survey, we took deliberate measures to replicate the layout and aesthetics of the previous script. This intentional effort aimed to maintain consistency in terms of layouts, routing, randomisation, and script appearance. Consequently, this helped ensure the uninterrupted tracking of metrics.

Questionnaire soft launch

The survey was launched online first, with the early survey completes extracted and reviewed to 'sense-check' the data on 30 August. These checks included ensuring that the number of valid responses was being correctly recorded and checking the survey logic and routing were working as intended. Once everything was confirmed as working, the face-to-face administered Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) approach was launched on 1 September, with the river component launched on 3 September.

Sampling approach

The sample was designed to be representative of Great Britain's domestic energy consumers aged 18 and over. Screening questions ensured participants met all of the following criteria:

- Aged 18 or above
- Residents of Great Britain, verified by their postcode
- Have mains gas or electricity in their home
- Solely or jointly responsible for their household's energy bills
- Directly pay their energy bills to their supplier, not through other arrangements like rent to landlords or student accommodation fees

As outlined in the overview of approach section above, the survey sample consists of three methods: online panel, river sampling, and face-to-face interviews. Each of these methods required slightly different approaches, each of which are detailed below.

Online panel quotas

Quotas and weights were set on age, gender, region, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), ethnicity and payment type. As outlined above, these targets were updated from those used in previous waves. A breakdown of sources for the updated approach and the approach taken by the previous research agency is provided below.

The previous research agency had used Census household reference person figures as a proxy for consumers on the age and region variables. The household reference person is the member of the household in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented or is otherwise responsible for the accommodation. In households with a sole householder, that person is the household reference person.

Rather than a household reference person used for age and region, gender used the all-person target.[3] While the targets were updated using more recent Census data available, this use of household reference person targets for age was retained.[4]

Variable	Waves 1-16 (previous research agency)	Updated approach for wave 17
Age	2001 census (household reference person)	2021 census (household reference person)[5]
Gender	2001 census (all persons)	2021 mid-year population estimates (all persons)
Region	2001 census (household reference person)	2021 mid-year population estimates (all persons)
Ethnicity	n/a	2021 census (all persons)[6]
IMD	n/a	ONS release for 2019 in England and 2016 for Scotland (LSOA level data)
SEG	2001 census (household reference person)	n/a
Payment type	n/a	Ofgem Consumer Impacts of Market Conditions (November 2022)

A full breakdown of targets alongside the achieved sample composition is provided below. Note that these quotas were applied for the online panel element only, with a tolerance of 10% applied on each cell to ensure quotas did not become too restrictive.

A separate sampling strategy was used for the small component of face-to-face interviews based on the prior composition of digitally excluded respondents (outlined later in this report). However, so the final achieved composition is clear, the achieved percentages cited below include those collected face-to-face in addition to those achieved online via panel and the river approach.

Formal quotas are not possible on river sampling as participation is voluntary through email participation. However, the sample is ordered proportionately based on the online quotas. Again, for completeness,

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[3] Data for all persons is balanced by gender but household reference person skews towards males. Overall, a balanced approach was seen as preferable as this was the approach taken by the previous research agency, ensuring continuity.
[4] Gender and age are the variables where you see greater difference between all persons and household reference person data. There is much less variation for region and ethnicity and only all person population numbers were available in the format needed on the ONS website.
[5] Figures only available for England and Wales only as Scotland census estimates not yet released. The whole sample was weighted using these targets given age profile of Scottish household reference persons is likely to be similar.
[6] Figures only available for England and Wales only as Scotland census estimates not yet released. The whole sample was weighted using these targets.

the achieved percentages set out below include those collected via river sampling. The achieved percentages below also incorporate the numbers from the boost sample of prepayment meter and standard credit customers.

Age (2021 census, Household Reference Person)	Target (%)	Achieved across all components (%)
18-34	16%	15%
35-49	26%	30%
50-64	29%	29%
65+	29%	25%

Gender (2021 mid-year population estimates, all persons)	Target (%)	Achieved across all components (%)[7]
Male	48%	47%
Female	52%	52%

Region (2021 mid-year population estimates, all persons)	Target (%)	Achieved across all components (%)
North East	4%	4%
North West	11%	11%
Yorkshire and the Humber	8%	10%
East Midlands	8%	8%
West Midlands	9%	11%
East	10%	10%
London	13%	12%
South East	14%	13%
South West	9%	7%
Wales	5%	5%
Scotland	9%	8%

IMD quintile (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), ONS release	Target (%)	Achieved across all

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[7] A small number selected non-binary and prefer not to say.

for 2019 in England and 2016 for Scotland)		components (%)[8]
1st quintile - least deprived	20%	14%
2nd quintile	20%	15%
3rd quintile	20%	20%
4th quintile	20%	23%
5th quintile - most deprived	20%	27%

Ethnicity (2021 census, all persons)	Target (%)	Achieved across all components (%)[9]
White	82%	83%
Non-white	18%	16%

Face-to-face quotas

As outlined above, the face-to-face approach was included as a route to reach digitally excluded respondents. While this represented a change from the telephone approach used previously, all respondents went through the same digital exclusion screeners as in previous waves. To qualify, digitally excluded respondents had to fall into at least one of the following categories[10]:

8. no access to the internet.
9. access to the internet but not confident using it.
10. only use the internet for email, browsing, news or social media.

To ensure consistency, the following age and gender quotas were assembled based on the sample composition of digitally excluded respondents reached via telephone in wave 16 of the survey under the previous research agency. When compiling the targets, consideration was also given to the composition by age and gender achieved in Ofgem's Consumer Impacts of Market Conditions survey.

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[8] The achieved numbers are more skewed for IMD relative to the target, partly due to the tolerance around quotas, but also because the face-to-face CASI approach targeted areas of higher deprivation. This is one of the variables used in the Low Connectivity Index to help identify respondents more likely to be digitally excluded. Moreover, the boost targeted at standard credit and prepayment meter customers meant reaching more respondents residing in more deprived areas. Percentages calculated on all those that provided postcode. Cases excluded where postcode wasn't provided.

[9] Percentages calculated on all those that agreed to provide ethnicity. 1% of respondents chose not to answer this question.

[10] This is broadly based on research from Ofcom - Digital Exclusion Review (see page 5-7) and Adults' Media Use and Attitudes report 2022 (ofcom.org.uk) (see page 9).

Age and gender	Wave 16 (previous research agency, via telephone)	Consumer Impacts of Market Conditions (Waves 1-3)	Target range (min-max)	Achieved via face-to-face fieldwork
18-34	0%	7%	2% - 15%	5%
35-64	18%	27%	15% - 30%	32%
65+	82%	66%	65% - 85%	63%
Male	39%	42%	40% - 55%	48%
Female	61%	58%	40% - 55%	52%

A regional sampling point selection strategy was also created to ensure a spread of interviews across Great Britain, with a total of 10 sampling points selected. Each area consisted of a small cluster of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in different regions of the country, each of which scores highly on BMG's Low Connectivity Index, which identifies, on average, older and more deprived localities (two variables highly predictive of digital exclusion).

In each area, approximately 22 interviews were conducted[11], ensuring a broadly proportionate regional mix, with coverage in Scotland, Wales, and different regions of England. It was also ensured that two cluster areas were in rural areas, in line with population statistics – see breakdown below.

Region	Population count	% of population	Sampling points selected	Target interviews	Achieved interviews
South					
South East	7,234,655	14%			
South West	4,546,239	9%			
London	6,954,893	13%			
East	4,912,789	10%			
South total	23,648,576	46%	4	88	89
Midlands					
East Midlands	3,857,688	8%			
West Midlands	4,655,599	9%			
Midlands total	8,513,287	17%	2	44	44
North					
Yorkshire & Humber	4,351,987	8%			
North East	2,147,125	4%			
North West	5,795,875	11%			
North total	12,294,987	24%	2	44	44

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[11] The original target was 20 per area, but this was increased to 22 to support the boost interviews.

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Devolved nations					
Scotland	4,439,078	9%	1	22	22
Wales	2,539,714	5%	1	22	22
Urban-rural					
Urban	46,900,000	83%	8	176	184
Rural	9,700,000	17%	2	44	37

Prepayment meter and standard credit boost sample

The decision to boost the sample size for prepayment and standard credit meter customers was made because they represent a smaller subset compared to direct debit customers. Doing so enhances the confidence in measurements when making payment type comparisons and enables more detailed subgroup analysis within each payment type.

The online panel and face-to-face approaches were used to achieve the 150 boost interviews with standard credit customers and 150 with prepayment meters.[12] The nature of river sampling means targeting particular groups is harder, so this approach was not used to achieve the boost interviews.

Panel approaches were primarily used to source the boost surveys, with a small number of additional surveys carried out via the face-to-face CASI approach (c. 2 per cluster area). Invites online were sent proportionately across the UK, with screener questions used to ensure only customers paying by the relevant payment type were interviewed.

Customers who had more than one payment method (i.e. one for electricity and another for gas) were eligible for the boost if one of their payment types was either standard credit or prepayment meter.

Prepayment meter boost	Target
Panel	130-140
Face-to-face CASI	10-20
Total	150

Standard credit boost	Target
Panel	130-140
Face-to-face CASI	10-20
Total	150

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12 Boosts are optional and not necessarily commissioned in every wave.

Changes to the previous approach

Overview of changes

BMG inherited the programme from a previous research agency and made a series of revisions to the methodology, following a full methodological review. There are four main changes, which we outline below, alongside the rationale behind each change:

11. **replacing telephone interviews with a face-to-face approach:** The programme is unsuited for telephone interviews as it leads to excessively long interviews and poor engagement from respondents. The approach uses a face-to-face administered Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) approach. Here, the interviewer completes some of the initial screening questions with the respondent and then hands over the survey device to respondents to self-complete the rest of the questionnaire.[13] This is quicker to administer, mirrors the self-complete methodology for online interviews, and retained the same screening criteria to ensure it reaches digitally excluded respondents.

12. **incorporating river sampling:** River sampling involves recruiting respondents via panels who are not panel members. It has various advantages because it allows us to reach people who, for whatever reason, would not join a panel to take surveys regularly. Using this approach helps attract a broader spread of online users. Essentially, this involves the reverse of the standard panel process. Instead of recruiting respondents to a panel and then taking surveys with them, our approach involves surveying people immediately (and, if desired, inviting them to a panel).

13. **updating quota and weighting targets with more recent population estimates:** Many of the targets for quotas and weights were from the 2001 census. Targets were updated to use the latest available estimates. Most of this resulted in marginal changes in the percentage targets across variables. The most notable changes were replacing the socioeconomic grade (SEG) target with the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), in addition to introducing a quota and weight for ethnicity and payment type. More detail on the rationale for replacing SEG with IMD is provided below.

14. **incorporating a payment type sample boost:** Given that standard credit customers (12%) and prepayment meter customers (14%) account for a relatively small part of the population, a boost of c.150 interviews with each was incorporated. Doing so provided a greater sample size for comparisons and subgroup analysis within each. A weight for payment type was added to ensure these customers were not disproportionately represented in the final numbers. This was an optional boost and may not be conducted in each wave of the survey.

Note that Citizens Advice and Ofgem can choose to expand the survey to oversample ethnic minority groups (n= c.150) in addition to prepayment meter and standard credit customers. This option was not undertaken in the first wave and will not necessarily be commissioned in future waves. However, weighting for ethnicity was included to prepare for any future boosts. This will ensure that if oversampling is undertaken in the future, it can be adjusted to match the population estimates accurately.

Introducing IMD to replace SEG

The previous research agency had used Socio-Economic Grade (SEG) as a quota and weight. Several issues with retaining SEG as a quota and weight variable were identified. These were:

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[13] Exceptions were made where respondents were less comfortable using a tablet device or needed support for accessibility-related reasons. In these instances, the interviewer led the interview.

- **no up-to-date figures:** The National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC) has slowly replaced Social Grade (SEG) over the last decade, and this is the variable available for the 2021 census.[14] This meant no recent targets were available for SEG.

- **NS-SEC variable is not comparable to SEG:** The NS-SEC data is available, but the categories differ and do not easily translate into A-E SEG bands.

- **NS-SEC (and SEG) are complex to define:** SEG in the survey is collected via self-classification questions where each respondent classifies themselves. This was not how the data was collected in the census. Instead, data from multiple questions are used together, with each case expertly assigned a category by the ONS. Using self-classification SEG questions for weighting is less reliable as the figures are more subject to respondent error.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was seen as the best alternative to SEG. IMD is a measure of relative deprivation for Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) – a small geographic unit used for statistical purposes by the ONS.[15] It is a combined measure of deprivation based on several indicators, each of which reflects a different aspect of deprivation experienced by individuals living in an area.[16]

IMD was chosen because it correlates with SEG as it measures socio-economic characteristics, has more up-to-date ONS targets available, and is derived through postcode, meaning it is less subject to respondent error.

Impact of methodological changes

As part of the revisions, careful consideration was given by BMG, Ofgem and Citizens Advice as to the impact of these changes on the ability to track the results. An assessment was made that, while there is inevitably likely a small impact at a total market level, the changes still allowed credible tracking with previous waves. This was for the following reasons:

- online panel Savanta was retained as the sole panel provider used to collect data. This meant avoiding so-called panel 'house effects' skewing findings.[17]

- most of the variables were used for quota and weighting targets that were also used by the previous research agency, with the targets simply updated to more recent figures. In most cases, the changes in the population between the old quota and the weighting target used by the previous agency and the new one were relatively minor.

- face-to-face interviews targeted the same group as the telephone approach, with identical screening questions used. Steps were also taken to ensure this component was sampled consistently in terms of the age and gender profile of digitally excluded respondents relative to the telephone approach undertaken in the previous wave.

- as an online administered method, river sampling ensures a consistent respondent experience to the online panel sample, meaning mode-specific impacts are unlikely. It's a small part of our overall sample that helps broaden the sample base beyond our usual panellists – so the impact would be limited in any case.

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[14] For more information, see the discussion here: https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatisticssocioeconomicclassificationnssecrebasedonsoc2010.

[15] In terms of population size, an LSOA typically encompasses a population of around 1,000 to 3,000 people. This size is chosen to allow for meaningful statistical analysis while maintaining a manageable geographic area.

[16] For more information, see: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

[17] Different survey panels may use varied recruitment strategies, such as online advertisements, referrals, or phone recruitment. These methods can attract different types of respondents, leading to variations in the demographic composition and attitudes of the panel members.

- tests were conducted to evaluate the impact of the new weights, comparing the results across various KPIs between the updated approach and the targets used by the previous research agency. Across KPIs, the differences were usually no more than a percentage point, with the rounded figures often identical.

Accordingly, given the impact is only minor and results can still be credibly tracked, BMG, Ofgem and Citizens Advice all felt they were worth making as they enhanced the quality and accuracy of the survey.

Weighting

The sample was weighted using the above target percentages set out above for age, gender, region, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), and ethnicity. Given the oversampling of standard credit and prepayment meter customers, weights were also applied to adjust the total sample for payment type, ensuring these customers were not disproportionately represented in the total figures.

Note that this adjustment will be applied in each wave irrespective of whether boosts are commissioned, ensuring each wave is comparable to the others. See the payment type adjustment target below, based on the natural fallout from Ofgem's recent Consumer Impacts of Market Conditions Survey (November 2022)[18].

Boost adjustments	Target (%)
Standard credit	12%
Prepayment meter	14%

The effective sample size helps assess the impact of the weights on the unweighted sample. The effective sample size is a measure of the precision of the sampling approach and the efficiency of the weights. In essence, they help assess the strength and accuracy of the survey results by accounting for potential biases and uncertainties introduced by weighting factors. The overall effective sample size was 90%.

This is in the high range, suggesting the sample selection process is working well, especially given boosts to standard credit and prepayment meter customers meant some respondents were purposefully oversampled before being adjusted back down in the weighting. Essentially, an effective sample size of 90% means that the weighted sample behaves as if it were 90% as large as the unweighted sample in terms of its capacity to produce accurate and unbiased estimates.

This figure is a useful measure because it indicates that the weighting adjustments, while necessary to ensure the sample accurately represents the broader population, have only modestly reduced the sample's statistical efficiency.

Quality checks

To maintain the highest data quality, we've implemented several checks. These include questions designed to identify and filter out respondents who rush through surveys (speeders), with additional steps to remove such responses post-survey.

Our approach is device-agnostic, allowing participants to respond on any platform, thereby reducing bias. The survey also incorporated postcode validation checks to verify respondents' locations. The panel component also uses Savanta – a well-established, high-quality panel - helping to ensure the integrity of our data.[19]

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[18] See: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/consumer-impacts-market-conditions-survey-wave-3-novdec-2022
[19] See: https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/report/37-questions-answered/

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Our commitment to quality extends to our data-checking process. We meticulously review our data tables, focusing on verifying the application of weights, the accuracy and consistency of cross-break creation, and the correct application of significance testing. These steps ensure that our findings are not only accurate but also meaningful and reliable for decision-making.

Data processing and coding

With the exception of the coding of responses to open-ended questions, no data entry phase was required for this survey. The programmed script ensured that all question routing was performed automatically, and no post-editing of the data was required in the way that might be necessary for surveys administered using a 'Pencil and Paper' method.

Responses from fully open-ended questions were collated, and code frames were created to reflect all key themes in the responses. A specialist team carried out coding.

All coders who worked on the study were briefed on the subject matter of the study, and a written set of instructions was made available to ensure accuracy. Code frames used by the previous research agency were unavailable, so new code frames were created.

Supplier level results

When comparing customer experience indicators across suppliers, it is important to note that there may be differences between each supplier's customer base, e.g. demographic or other characteristics. These differences could contribute to differences in some suppliers' results.

Statistical significance

Statistical significance is a measure used to determine the likelihood that the results observed in a survey are due to chance rather than a specific factor or intervention. It helps in assessing whether the patterns and differences found in the data are genuine and can be reliably used to infer conclusions about the broader population.

Given that the survey uses quotas rather than random probability sampling, statistical significance is indicative only, but is still a useful measure of where differences are meaningful.

Where significant differences between sub-groups and the total sample are identified, 'total sample' represents the total sample minus the sub-group in question.

Significance differences in reporting are calculated at a 95% confidence level and shown on charts throughout the report with the use of an up ▲ or down ▼ arrow. Only where a difference is statistically significant is it discussed in the analysis of the report.

In the data tables (see image example below), symbols '+' and '-' denote statistical significance at the 95% confidence interval relative to the aggregate value excluding the column under consideration. Specifically, a '+' symbol indicates a value significantly higher than the adjusted total, whereas a '-' symbol signifies a value significantly lower.

Additionally, letters are employed to highlight significant differences when comparing one subgroup to others in the tables. These groups are identified by corresponding letters placed beneath the column headers in the cross-break section of the table. A letter underneath a percentage figure means the figure is significantly higher at 95% confidence interval than for the group denoted by the letter.

B3: How do you currently pay your electricity bills?
Base: electricity or dual fuel

		Gender			
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**18 to 24**	**25 to 34**
	(A)	**(B)**	**(C)**	**(D)**	**(E)**
Base: Total Answering	3672	1733	1929	194	359
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Unweighted Total	3676	1717	1949	187	352
Effective Sample Size for Statistic Base	3300	1543	1748	166	315
A regular direct debit or standing order	2734	1299	1428	119	227
	74%	75%	74%	61%	63%
				-	-
Pay only on receipt of a bill by cash/cheque/debit or credit card/BACS/App	410	207	201	38	53
	11%	12%	10%	19%	15%
				+ A,G,H,I	G,H
I have a prepayment meter, so I pay in advance by putting credit on a key, card or App	465	193	271	32	71
	13%	11%	14%	17%	20%
		-	+ A,B	H,I	+ A,H,I
Another method	33	14	19	5	1
	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
					-
Unsure	24	17	7	-	6
	1%	1%	0%	-	2%
		+ A,C	-	-	D,H
Prefer not to answer	6	3	4	1	1
	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%

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