



Energy Best Deal

Evaluation Report, 2011/2012

Annex to the main report: Individual countries

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Contents

Introduction	2
Results for Wales	4
Consumers: questionnaire responses - Wales.....	4
Consumers: follow-up interviews - Wales	7
Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Wales	10
Frontline workers: follow-up interviews - Wales.....	13
Quality of the presentation and materials - Wales.....	14
Results for Scotland	17
Consumers: questionnaire responses - Scotland.....	17
Consumers: follow-up interviews - Scotland	20
Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Scotland	22
Frontline workers: follow-up interviews - Scotland.....	26
Quality of the presentation and materials - Scotland.....	27
Geographical distribution of Energy Best Deal sessions in Scotland	29
Results for England	30
Consumers: questionnaire responses - England.....	30
Consumers: follow-up interviews - England	33
Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - England	36
Frontline workers: follow-up interviews - England.....	39
Quality of the presentation and materials - England.....	41

Introduction

This document is an annex to the Energy Best Deal Evaluation Report for the 2011-2012 campaign.

The Energy Best Deal programme seeks to inform domestic energy consumers about how they could reduce their energy costs: by changing tariff, payment method and/or supplier, taking up energy efficiency measures and by providing debt advice. Run by Citizens Advice in England and Wales and Citizens Advice Scotland in Scotland, the programme offers domestic energy consumers and frontline workers (both paid workers and volunteers) the opportunity to attend an information session on getting a better deal on their energy bills.

Between December 2011 and May 2012, 1,176 sessions were delivered by 158 delivery partners across the 14 regions of the Citizens Advice Financial Capability Forums¹ in England and Wales, and 140 sessions were delivered by 18 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland. In total during 2011/2012, the programme reached 8,473 consumers and 6,105 frontline workers. The programme will have an ongoing impact through the consumer advice work of the frontline workers.

The evaluation of the 2011/2012 programme was carried out using paper questionnaires completed immediately following the session, and follow-up telephone interviews carried out an average of three months after the session. A total of 9,781 questionnaires and 306 telephone interviews were completed.

The main evaluation report describes the results of the evaluation for England, Scotland and Wales aggregated together (Great Britain). This annex describes the results for each individual country. It should be noted that due to small sample sizes for interviews with participants in Scotland and Wales, the interview results should not be taken as representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees in each of these countries.

Across the questionnaire responses, there was very little variation between countries. There was some variation between countries in the interview responses, but this is likely to be due to the small interview groups for Scotland and Wales.

Table 1 shows how many attendees, questionnaire responses and interviews there were for each country, while Table 2 shows the same for frontline workers. Relative to the number of questionnaire responses received from each country or the number of attendees, the proportion of interviewees for each individual country is similar.

¹ The Financial Capability Forums are open to all organisations in a region with an interest in financial education. They meet quarterly and provide a way for member organisations to share experiences and resources and to develop new partnerships.

Consumers	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Attendees	8,473	957	978	6,538
Questionnaires	5,795	573	628	4,594
<i>Questionnaires as % of attendees</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>70%</i>
Interviews	153	25	15	113
<i>Interviews as % of attendees</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>	<i>1.7%</i>
<i>Interviews as % of questionnaires</i>	<i>2.6%</i>	<i>4.4%</i>	<i>2.4%</i>	<i>2.5%</i>

Table 1: Consumer attendees, questionnaires and interviews in each country

Frontline workers	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Attendees	6,105	683	633	4,789
Questionnaires	3,986	332	432	3,222
<i>Questionnaires as % of attendees</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>67%</i>
Interviews	153	11	12	130
<i>Interviews as % of attendees</i>	<i>2.5%</i>	<i>1.6%</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>2.7%</i>
<i>Interviews as % of questionnaires</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>3.3%</i>	<i>2.8%</i>	<i>4.0%</i>

Table 2: Frontline worker attendees, questionnaires and interviews in each country

An overall summary and conclusions are presented in the main evaluation report and are not repeated in this annex. This document should be read in conjunction with the main evaluation report, which provides a summary of key findings.

Results for Wales

Consumers: questionnaire responses - Wales

Demographic information

In Wales, 957 consumers attended Energy Best Deal sessions. Sixty percent of attendees (573 people) completed the consumer questionnaire. This response rate is slightly lower than the overall response rate for Great Britain, which was 68%. Figure 1 to Figure 3 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in Wales.

Figure 1: Age of respondents

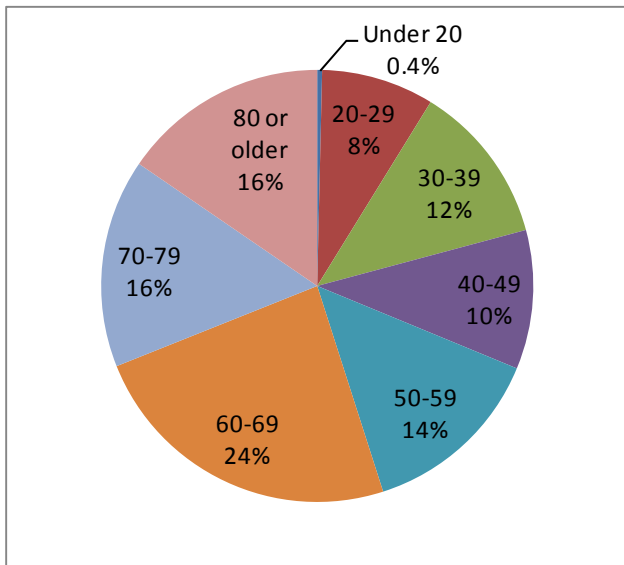


Figure 2: Tenure of respondents

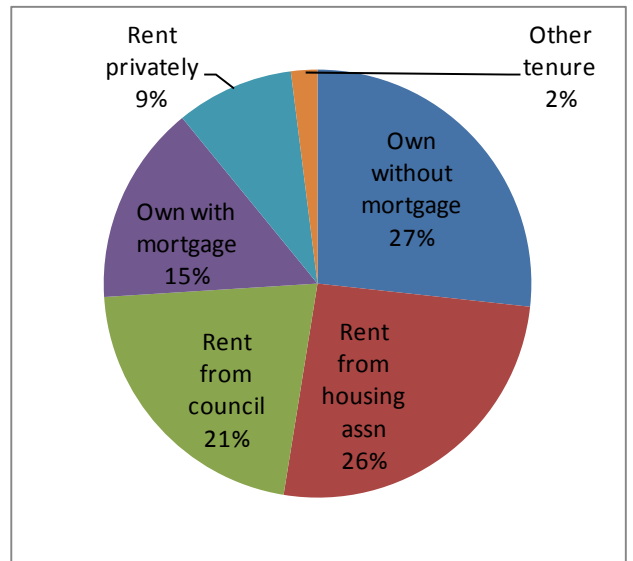
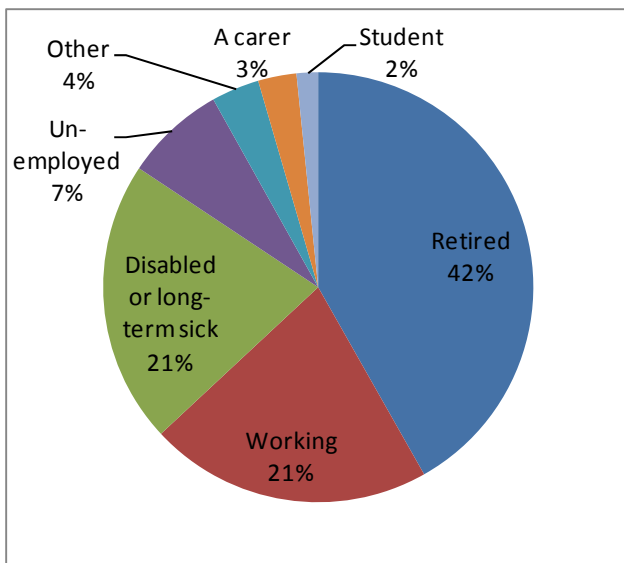


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents



Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with their winter fuel bills, the questionnaire asked, "In the winter, would you say your fuel bills are...", with a range of options which are illustrated in Figure 4. Almost a quarter (23%) find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 29% worry about their bills but are able to manage.

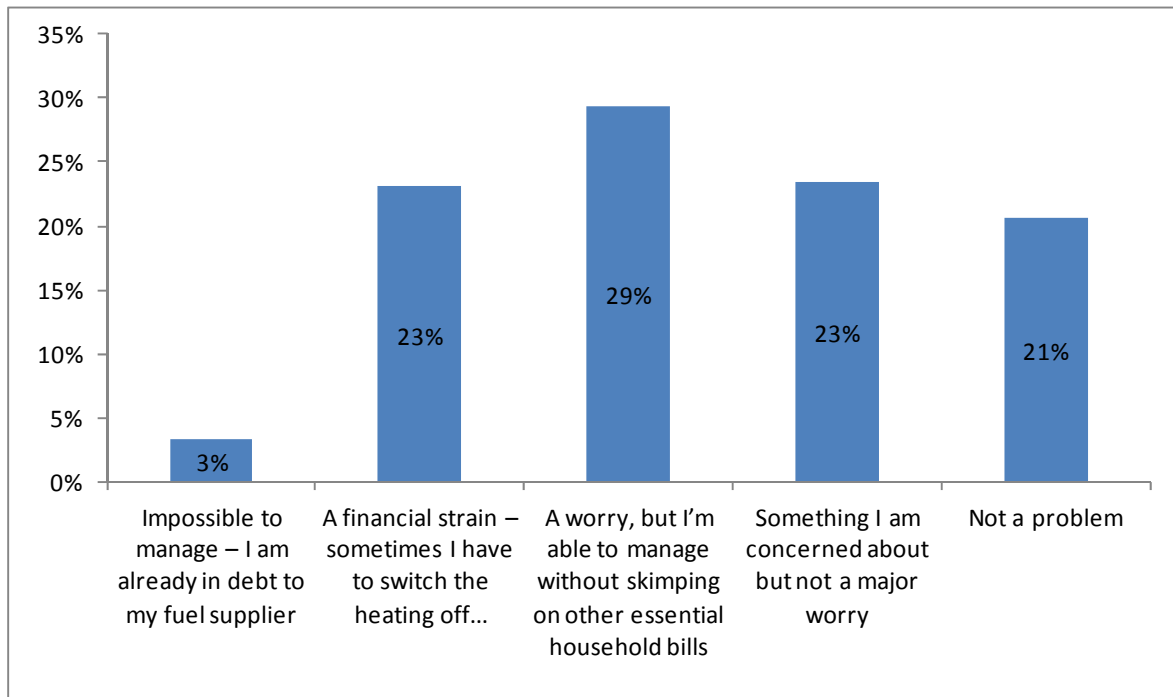


Figure 4: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Ninety percent of consumers already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. Thirty-four percent of respondents had switched supplier once in the past, while 21% had switched more than once, a total of 55% of respondents who have experience of switching. Sixty-two percent of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, having switched of their own initiative to get a better deal, while the rest were reactive switchers, switching in response to an approach from an energy supplier salesperson. Those switching as a result of an approach by an energy supplier salesperson may not have considered the full range of tariffs available to them before switching.

Sixty-two percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 22% had done so, and 16% did not know whether they had or not.

The impact of the session

Ninety-eight percent of those who answered said they found the session useful (this question was left unanswered by 25 people, equal to 4% of respondents). Figure 5 shows what consumers said they found useful about the session. Information about how to find the best deal was considered useful by the highest number of people, at 72% of respondents, with information about how to switch coming second at 53%.

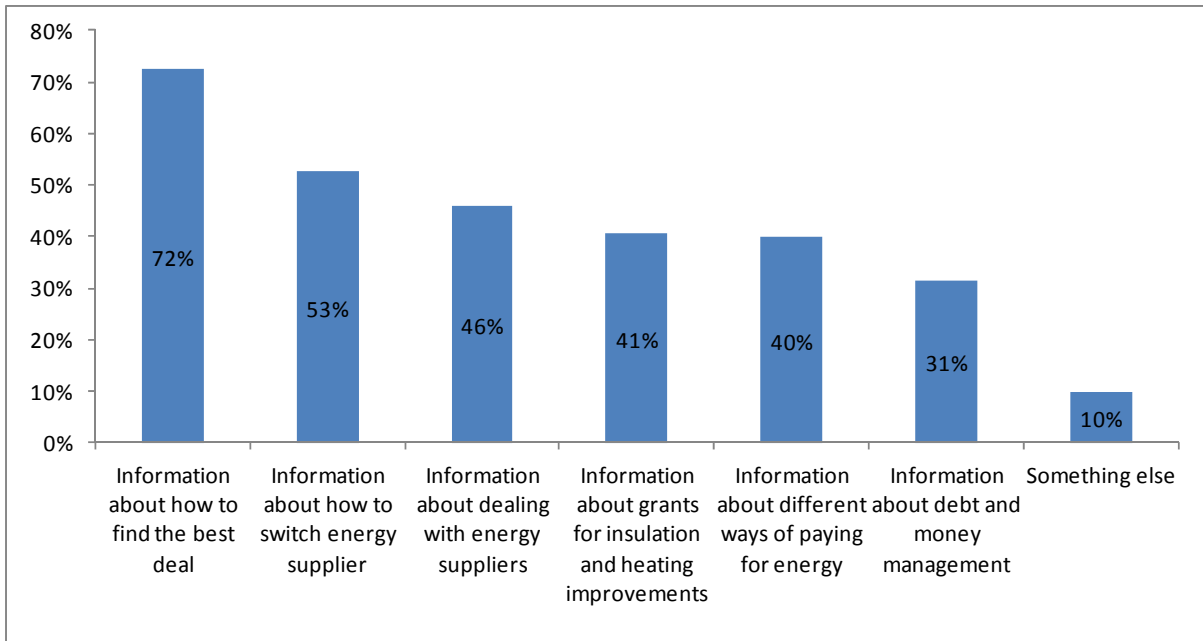


Figure 5: What did you find useful about the session?

Follow-up actions

Seventy-seven percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of the session. Figure 6 illustrates this.

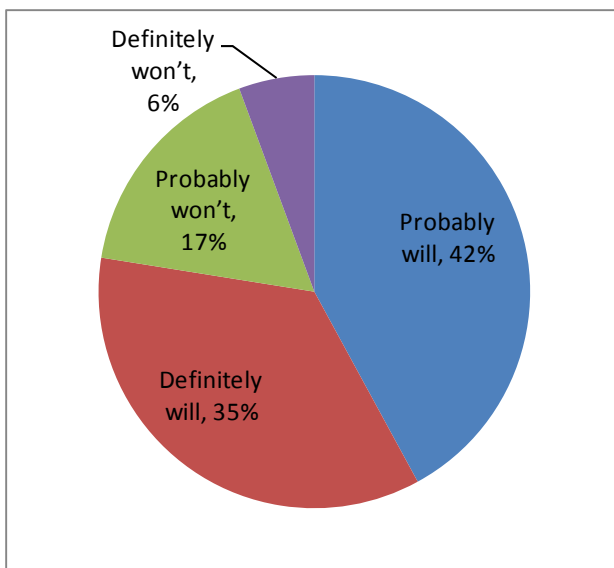


Figure 6: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 7. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 56% of respondents, while telling friends and family about what had been learnt at the session and looking at other companies' prices were also popular, at 36% and 35% respectively.

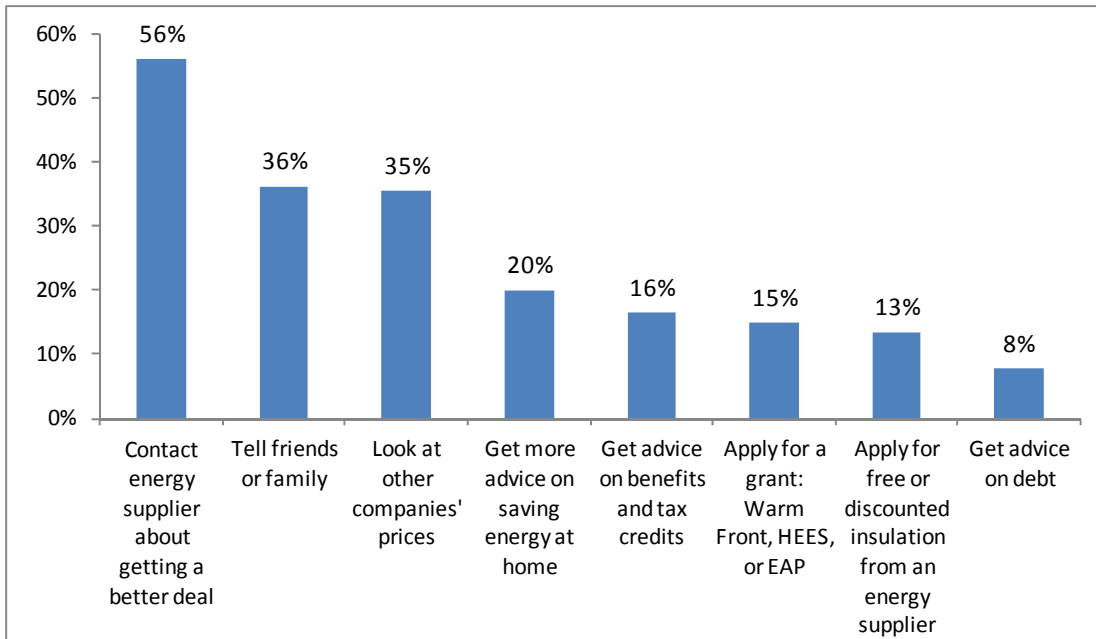


Figure 7: Planned actions following the session

Consumers: follow-up interviews - Wales

Twenty-five consumers who were interviewed attended sessions in Wales, equal to 2.6% of all consumers who attended sessions in Wales. While this is a larger proportion of consumers than the total for Great Britain, the absolute number interviewed is small. ***Therefore the interview results should be taken as examples of individuals' experience rather than being representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees in Wales.***

Action taken since the session

Ten people had taken action since the session, with several taking more than one action. Eight contacted their existing supplier, eight looked at energy suppliers' websites, four people looked at a switching website, one person looked at Consumer Focus's price comparison sheets, and one person, whose energy costs were included in her rent, spoke to her landlord.

Of the eight people who contacted their current supplier, four were offered a better deal. Of these, two had switched to a better tariff, one was waiting for the energy company to post information, and the fourth was offered a better tariff if he switched away from his prepayment meter, which he did not want to do.

Three of the people who contacted their existing supplier also looked at prices from other suppliers. All of these people opted to stay with their existing supplier.

There were two people who did take action to get a better deal but did not contact their existing supplier. One of these looked at a switching website and found she would not save money by switching, while the other person asked her landlord about switching as her energy costs are included in her rent.

The results are summarised in Figure 8.

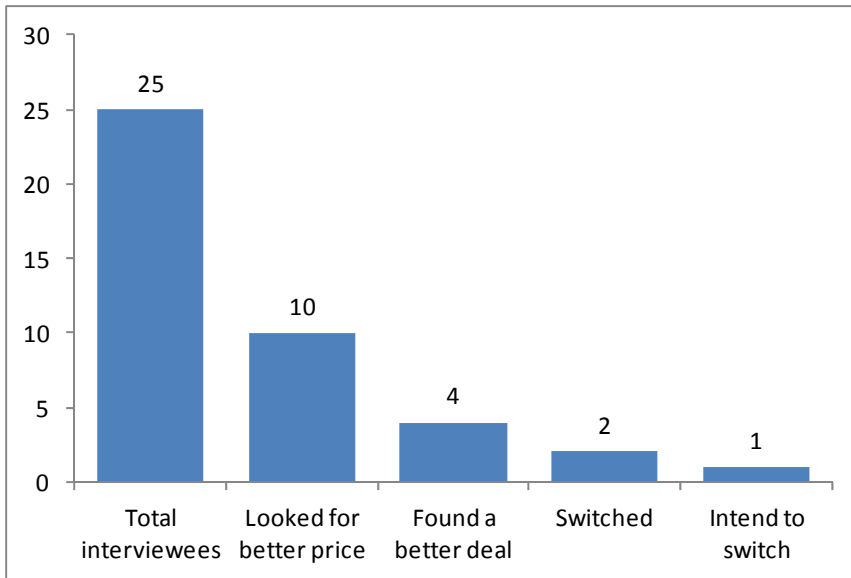


Figure 8: Looking for a better price - results

Of the 15 people who did not take action following the session, seven people said that they preferred to stay with their current supplier. Two other people said they lived in rented accommodation where the bills are included, and two had switched supplier shortly before the session. Two said they had not had time to check prices, one person was put off by worries about something going wrong and another said she was happy with the deal she has currently.

Other actions

Interviewees were asked about other actions they had taken since the session. Thirteen people had taken at least one action; eight of these took more than one action. The most popular action was contacting the current supplier for advice, followed by looking into getting free or discounted insulation and asking to be placed on the priority services register. Actions are summarised in Figure 9 below.

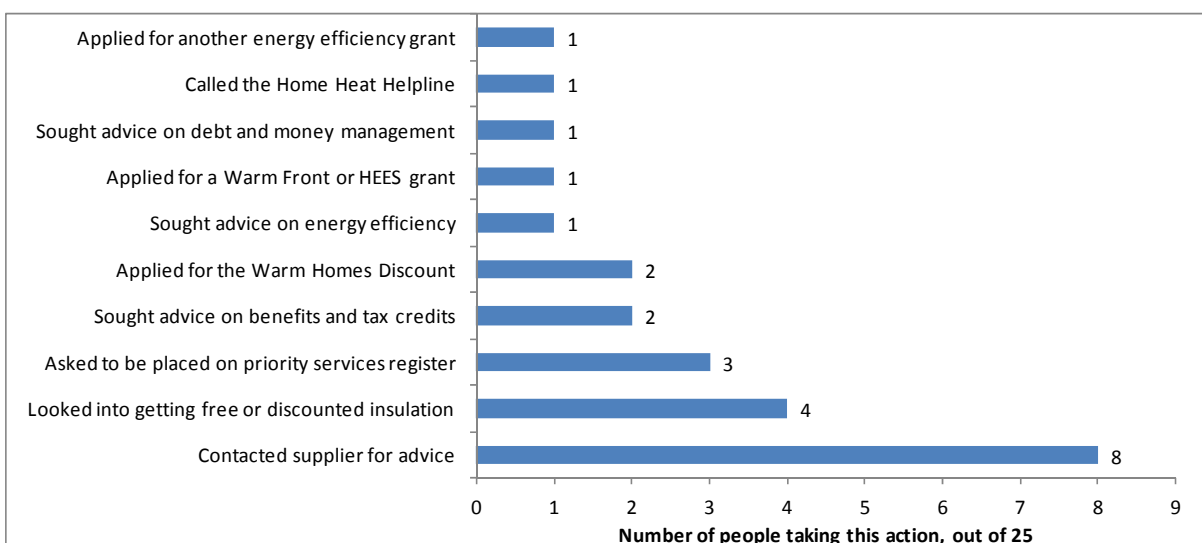


Figure 9: Other actions taken by interviewees

Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes since the session. Ten people said they had. Most of these were low- or no-cost actions, but one person was planning to install solar PV, and one person had installed loft insulation. A third person intended to get cavity wall insulation but found she already had it.

Consumers qualifying for CERT² Super Priority Group

For the 2011/2012 evaluation, additional questions were asked in the interview to ascertain the proportion of interviewees who would qualify for Super Priority Group (SPG) under CERT. Although CERT is almost over, the qualification criteria for ECO are likely to be similar. Interviewees were asked³:

- Does anyone in your household receive either Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit?
- If the latter, is your household income under £16,190?

Although there are other qualifying criteria for SPG, there was a need to strike a balance between getting useful information and asking so many questions that interviewees would be reluctant to answer, which is especially a risk when asking about benefits claimed. In addition, as the criteria for ECO were unclear at the time of setting the questions, these two major criteria were considered to be the ones most likely to be retained in the change from SPG under CERT to ECO⁴.

A total of 16 interviewees were eligible for SPG. This is 64%, much higher than the figure for consumer interviewees in Great Britain as a whole (37%). However, as this is a small group of interviewees this result should **not** be interpreted as meaning that Wales has a higher proportion of people who qualify for SPG or that Energy Best Deal in Wales targeted SPG customers better than in Great Britain as a whole; this kind of conclusion cannot reliably be drawn from such a small sample.

Information passed on to friends and family

Twenty consumer interviewees had passed on something that they had learnt at the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family. Due to the small sample size it is not appropriate to report a median or mean number of people that information was passed on to, but per interviewee the number ranged from one person to thirteen.

² The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) is an obligation which government has put on energy suppliers to reduce carbon emissions from domestic energy use. Suppliers do this by funding discounted energy efficiency measures for domestic consumers. Under CERT there is a 'Priority Group' and a 'Super Priority Group' of customers with specific circumstances (e.g. types of benefits claimed, age). Energy suppliers must provide a specific proportion of their CERT work to these groups, which means that energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation are normally provided free to consumers in these groups.

³ It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide advice to interviewees who qualified for CERT; however, interviewees were provided with a list of telephone numbers for local advice lines which they could give to the interviewee if more information on subsidised measures was requested.

⁴ CERT is due to end in September 2012. A new scheme, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), will replace it. This will also provide discounted energy efficiency measures to consumers and target groups under ECO are likely to be similar to those under CERT.

Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Wales

Profile

In Wales, 683 frontline workers attended Energy Best Deal sessions, and 332 questionnaires were returned. This is a response rate of 49%, somewhat lower than the rate for the whole of Great Britain, which was 65%.

Figure 10 shows the organisations represented by the frontline workers in Wales. The largest group were from Citizens Advice Bureaux (32%). The second largest group overall was the Housing Association (25%), followed by local authorities and other public sector organisations (23%).

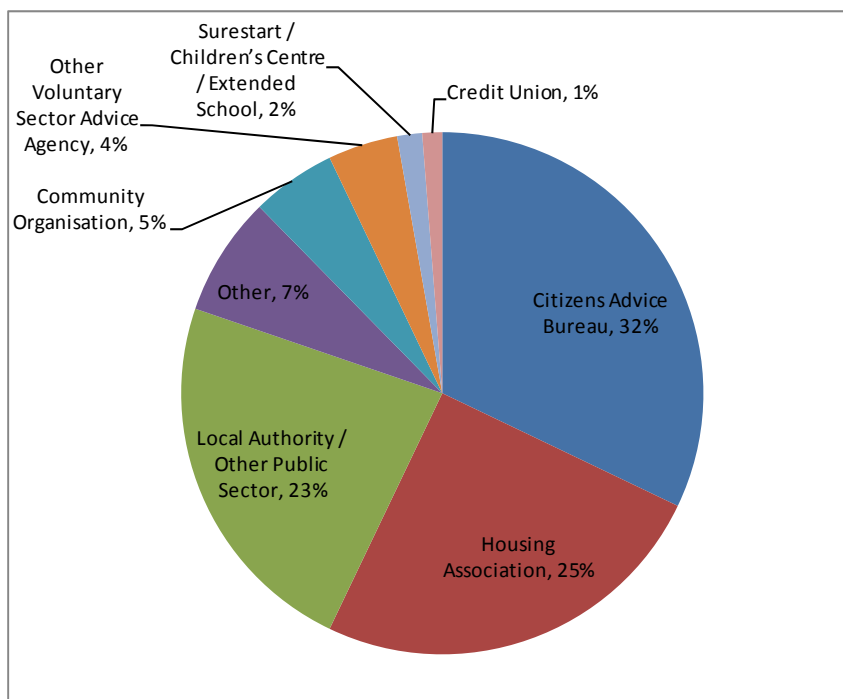


Figure 10: Frontline worker organisation types

The 'Other' category included representatives from Macmillan, the Royal National Institute of Blind People, CAIS (Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation), Care and Repair, and projects supporting families.

Previous advice-giving

Ninety-eight percent of respondents already knew that it was possible to change gas and electricity supplier, and 87% of respondents knew that some payment methods are more expensive than others.

Figure 11 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice on prior to the session. Just over 40% had given advice on debt and money management, while topics more specifically about energy were less common but still advised on by a good proportion of frontline workers prior to the session. 'Finding the best deal on energy costs' was the topic which the smallest proportion of frontline workers had previously advised on, at 24%. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.

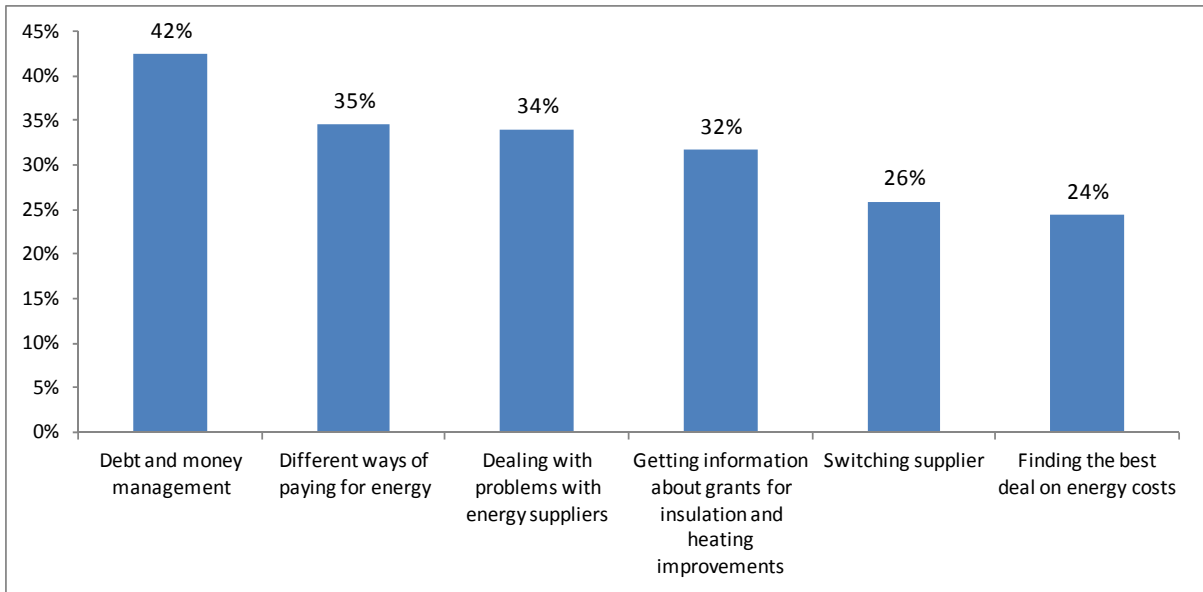


Figure 11: Previous advice-giving

The impact of the session

Eighty percent of frontline workers said that the session had changed their opinion on the importance of fuel poverty to their clients. Frontline workers were asked to estimate the proportion of their clients who were in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty. The results are shown in Figure 12. Over a third estimate that 60-80% of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 27% estimate this figure to be between 40% and 60% of their clients and 20% estimate it to be between 80% and 100%.

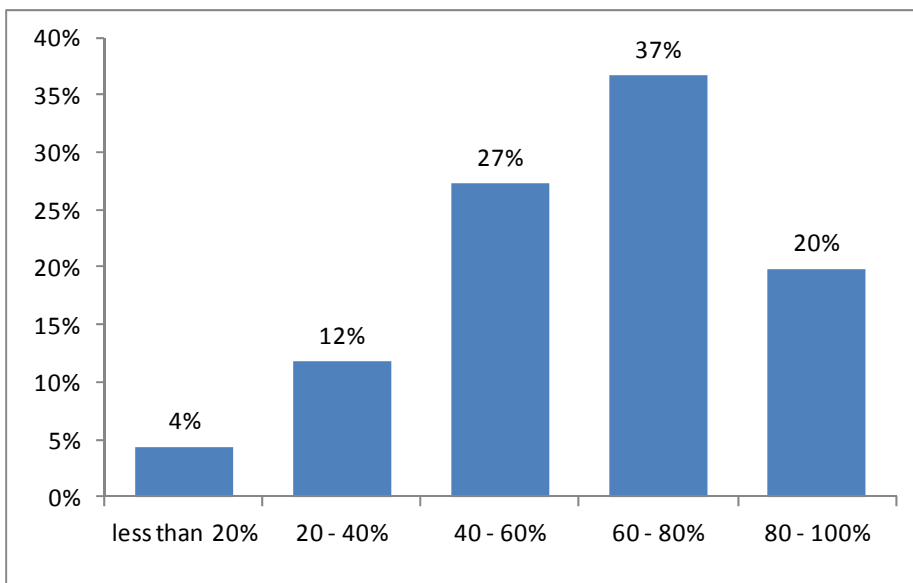


Figure 12: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-six percent said they did; 49% to a great extent, and 46% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 13.

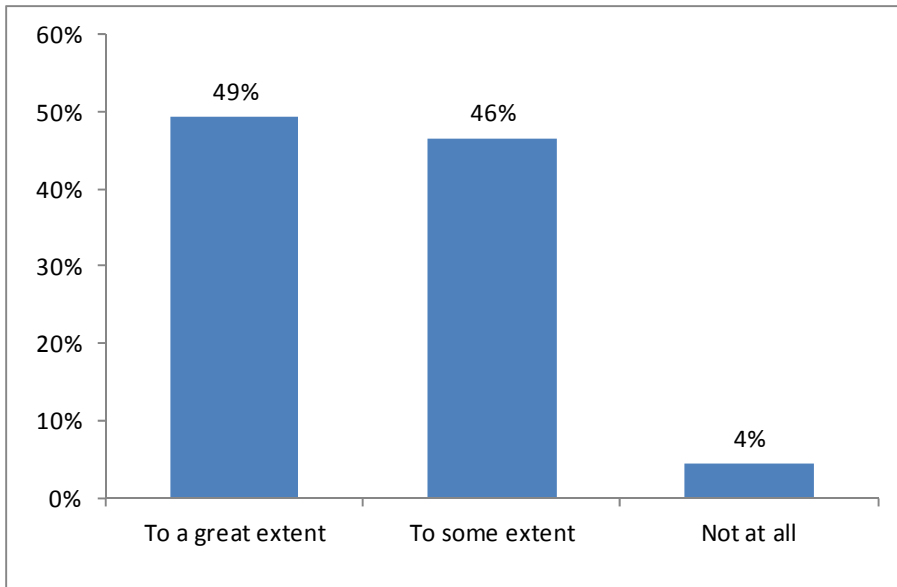


Figure 13: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?

Frontline workers were asked if they now felt more or less confident in advising clients about the topics covered in the presentation. The answers are illustrated in Figure 14.

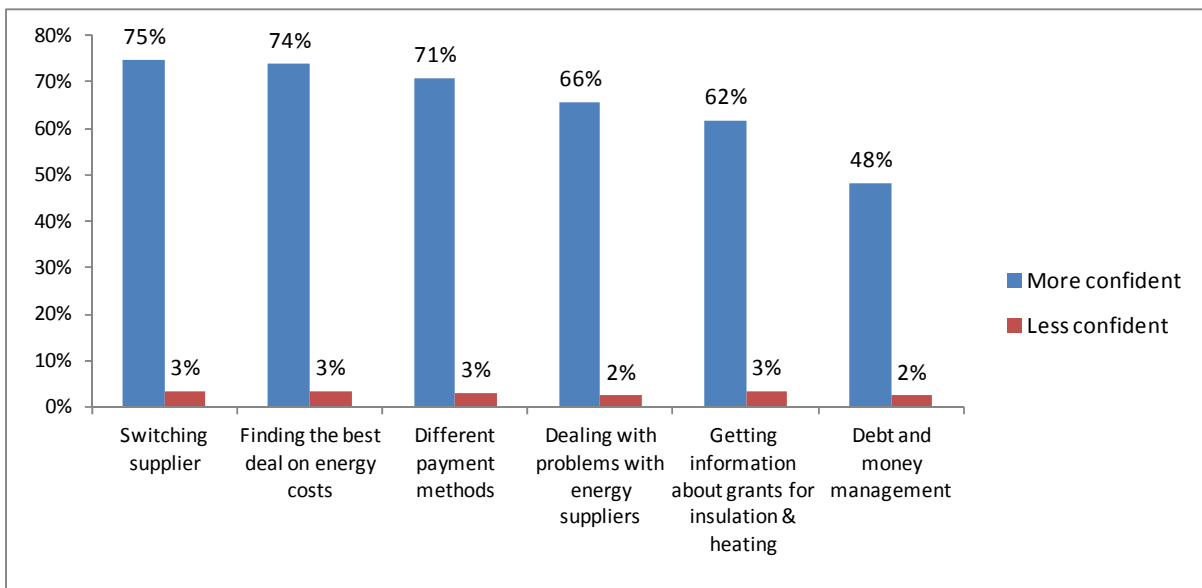


Figure 14: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session

For nearly all topics, a large majority felt more confident advising on the topics covered in the presentation. A small group felt less confident following the session – this remained at 2% or 3% for all topics covered.

In addition, 77% of frontline workers said they intended to look for a better deal on their own energy following the session.

Frontline workers: follow-up interviews - Wales

In Wales, eleven frontline workers were interviewed, equal to 1.6% of all frontline workers in Wales who attended sessions. This is slightly smaller than the proportion for the whole of Great Britain (2.5%), but even if it was an equal proportion, the group of interviewees in Wales would only number seventeen, which would still be a very small group. **Therefore the interview results should be taken as examples of individuals' experience rather than being representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees in Wales.**

Frontline worker interview results

Frontline workers were asked how frequently, before the presentation, they had advised on the topics covered in the presentation. The majority (9) had given advice on these topics infrequently (5) or never (4). Two people had previously advised frequently on these topics.

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. Nine people had given advice on at least one of the topics covered in the presentation since the session. The topics and the number of frontline workers who gave advice on them since the presentation are shown in Figure 15.

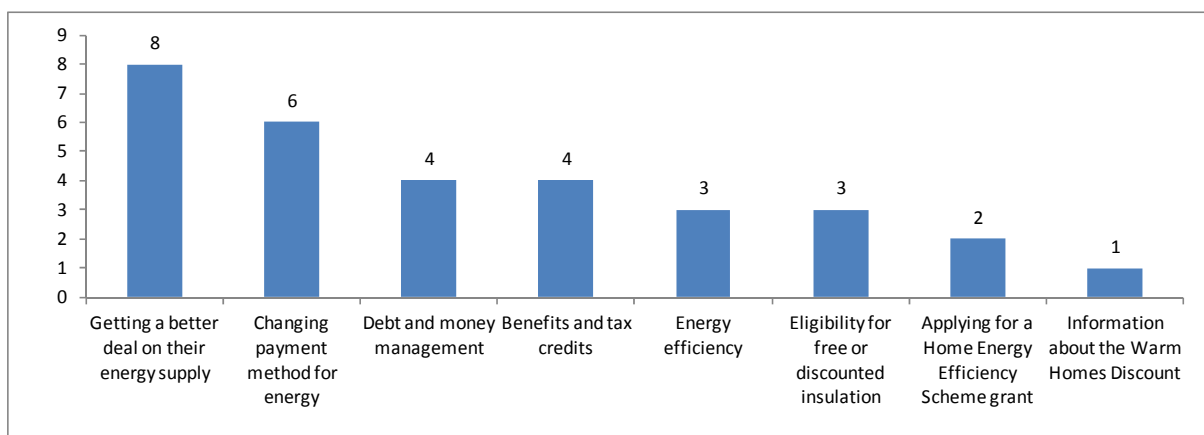


Figure 15: Topics advised on since the presentation

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. Nine people had provided information to clients since the session. Due to the small sample size it is not appropriate to report a median or mean figure here, but the number of clients told per frontline worker ranged from 3 to 60. The distribution is shown in Figure 16.

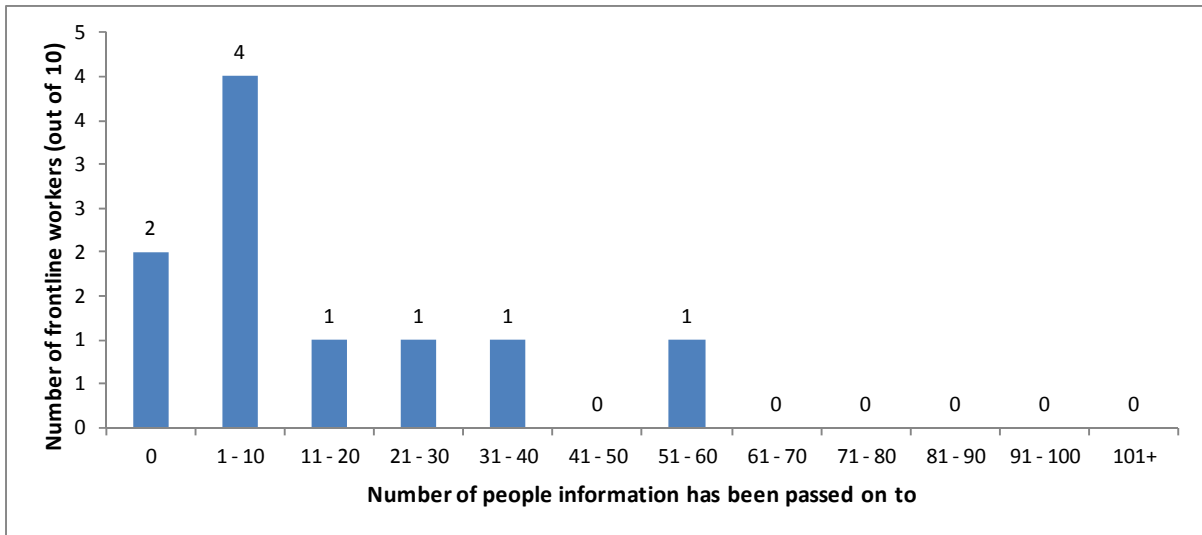


Figure 16: Number of people information has been passed on to since the session⁵

Seven frontline workers said that they have provided information on the topics covered by Energy Best Deal to clients more frequently since the presentation than before. Ten interviewees said they expect to use the information from the Energy Best Deal sessions frequently in the future. Three people said that the presentation helped them with topics they were already advising on, while six people said the presentation helped them with new topics.

Five frontline workers have passed information on to colleagues since the presentation. Due to the small sample size it is not appropriate to give a mean or median number of colleagues told, but the number told per frontline worker ranged from two to five.

Quality of the presentation and materials - Wales

The sessions in Wales were delivered by 16 different organisations, and so there were at least 16 different trainers delivering sessions. The materials used were a set of PowerPoint slides (and facilitators' notes, although these would not have been seen by people completing the questionnaire). Individual trainers may have used additional materials. The materials provided to take away comprised a booklet produced by Citizens' Advice and Ofgem, with useful information such as how to deal with problems with suppliers, details of grant schemes, and telephone and website details of further sources of information. Again, individual trainers could also hand out their own additional materials.

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, the quality of the materials used and the quality of the materials provided to take away. The responses are shown in Figure 17 to Figure 19. The results are split by consumer and frontline worker.

The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainers as excellent. Over 50% of both consumers and frontline workers thought that the materials used during the presentation were good, with over a third saying they were excellent. Just over half of both

⁵ Data on the number of people given information is missing for one frontline worker, which is why the graph shows results out of 10 instead of 11.

consumers and frontline workers rated the materials provided to take away as good, with 40% of consumers and 42% of frontline workers rating them as excellent.

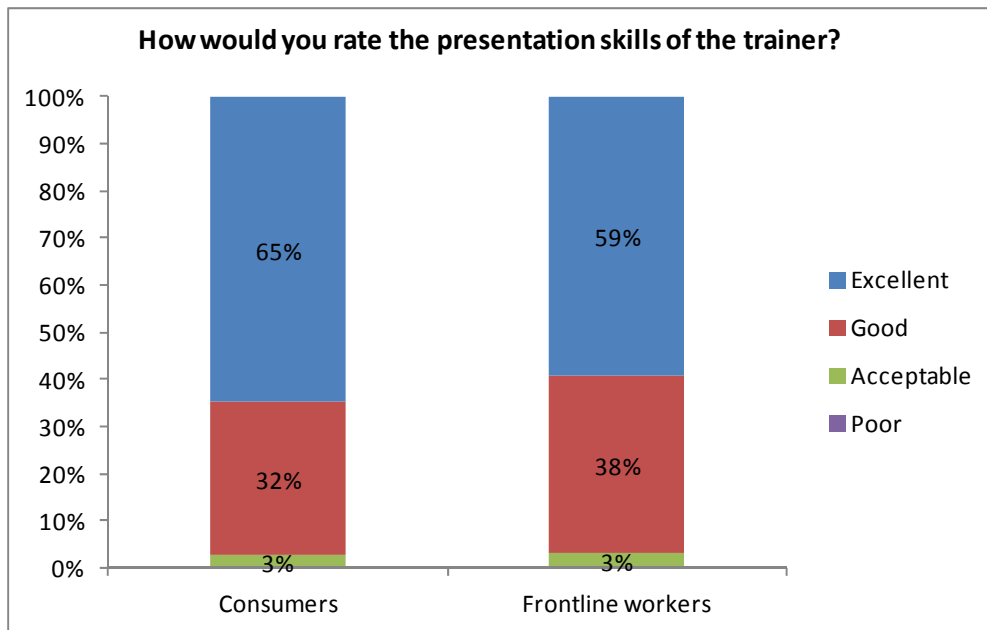


Figure 17: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

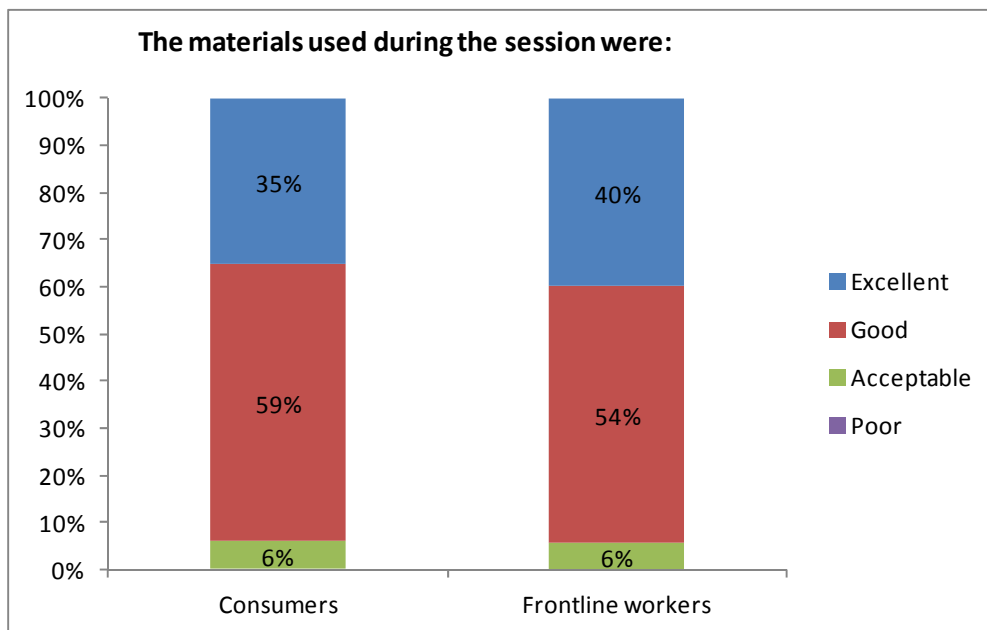


Figure 18: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

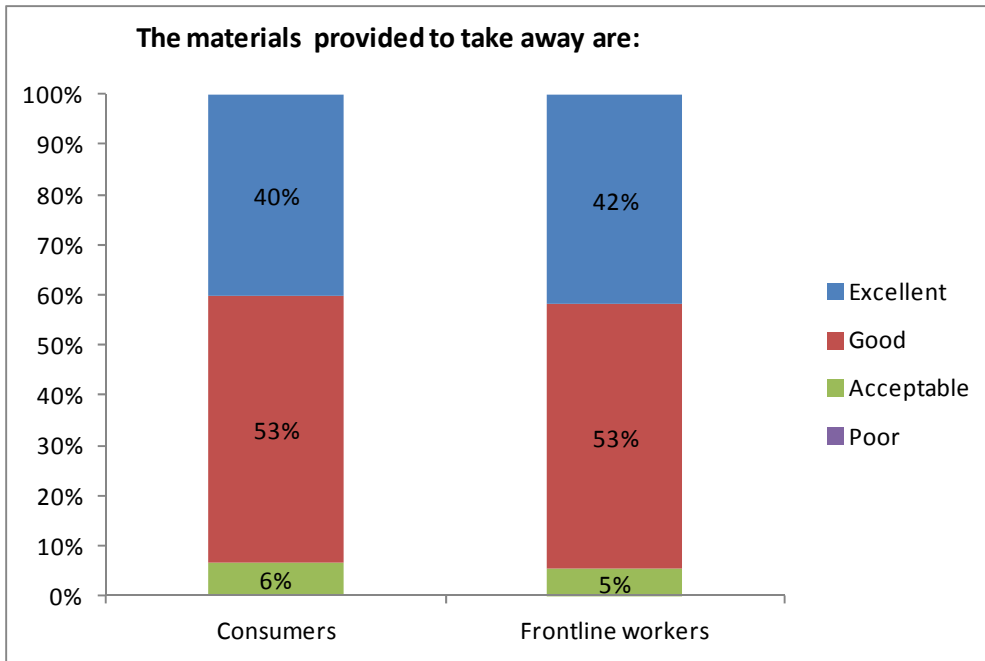


Figure 19: Ratings of the materials provided to take away.

Results for Scotland

Consumers: questionnaire responses - Scotland

Demographic information

In Scotland, 978 consumers attended the Energy Best Deal sessions, and questionnaire responses were received from 628 of these consumers. This is a 64% response rate, which is slightly lower than the overall consumer response rate of 68% across Great Britain.

Figure 20 to Figure 22 show demographic characteristics of the consumer respondents.

Figure 20: Age of respondents

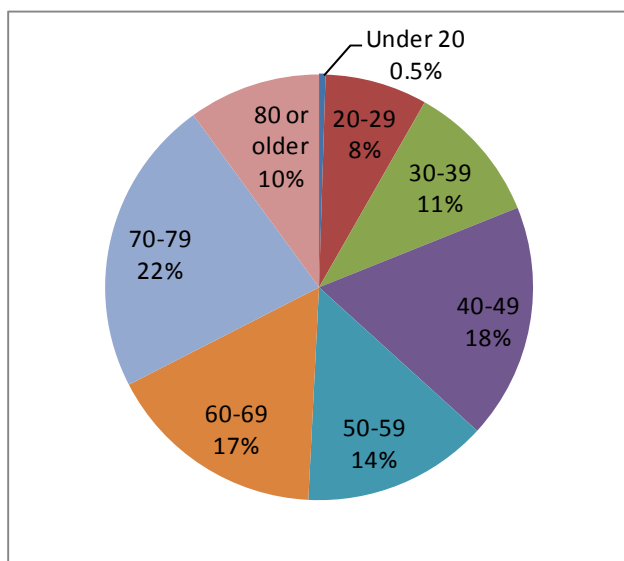


Figure 21: Tenure of respondents

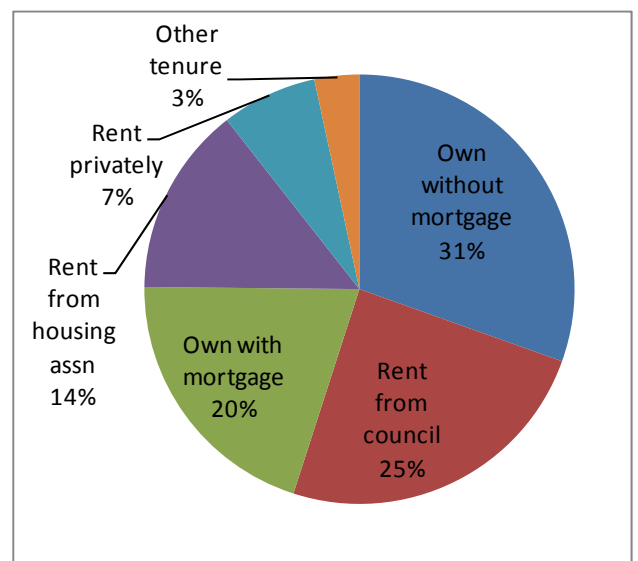
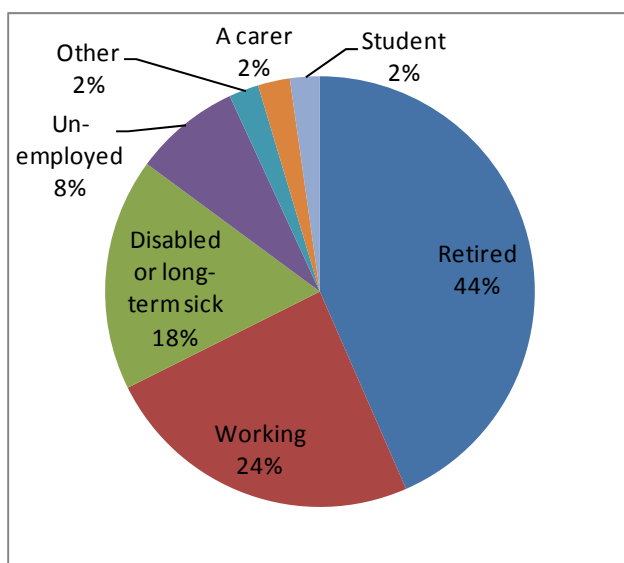


Figure 22: Occupation of respondents



Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with their winter fuel bills, the questionnaire asked, "In the winter, would you say your fuel bills are...", with a range of options which are illustrated for Scotland in Figure 23. Just under a third (31%) said they were concerned but not significantly worried about their bills, while just over a quarter (26%) said they worried about their bills, but were able to manage without reducing other essential expenditure. Just over a fifth (21%) said their bills were a financial strain and that they used their heating less than they would like. Eight percent said they found their bills impossible to manage and were already in debt. This is a higher proportion than in Wales (3%) or England (6%) or across Great Britain (6%).

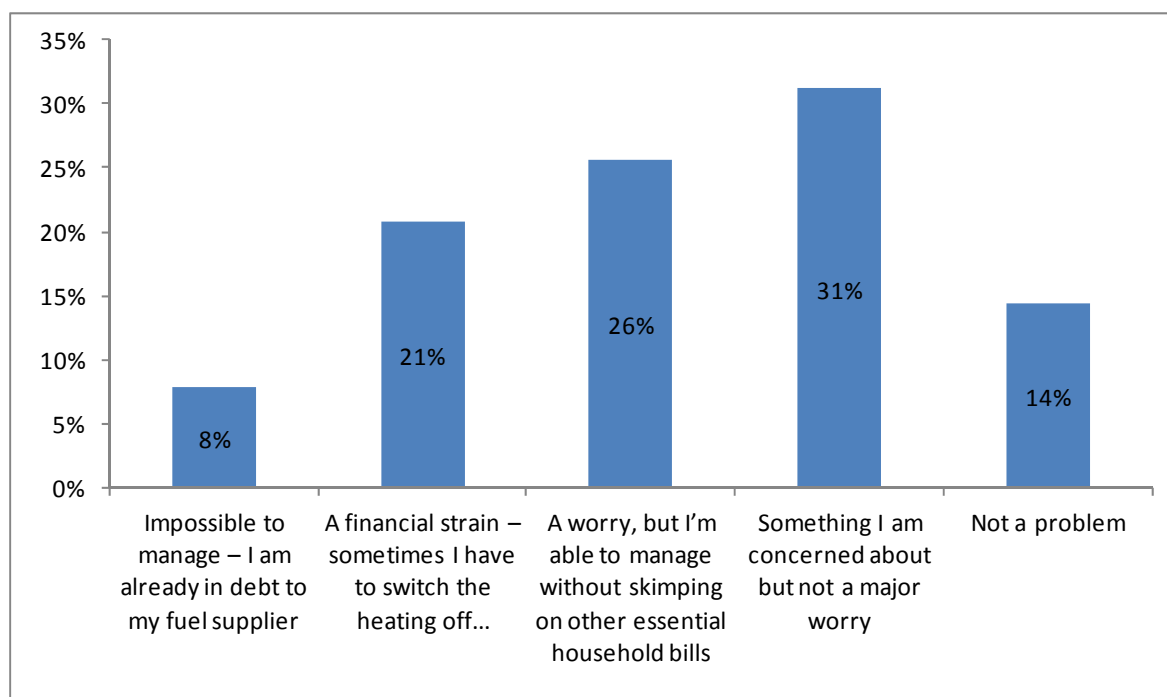


Figure 23: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Ninety-one percent of consumers in Scotland already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. A total of 54% of consumers had switched supplier in the past; 34% percent of respondents had switched once in the past, while a further 20% had switched more than once. Fifty-nine percent of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, having switched of their own initiative to get a better deal, while the rest were reactive switchers, switching in response to an approach from an energy supplier salesperson. Those switching as a result of an approach by an energy supplier salesperson may not have considered the full range of tariffs available to them before switching.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 16% had done so, and 17% did not know whether they had or not.

The impact of the session

Ninety-seven percent of those who answered said they found the session useful (this question was left unanswered by 19 people, equal to 3% of respondents). Figure 24 shows what consumers said they found useful about the session. Information about how to find the best deal was considered useful by the highest number of people, at 70% of respondents, with information about how to switch coming second at 63%.

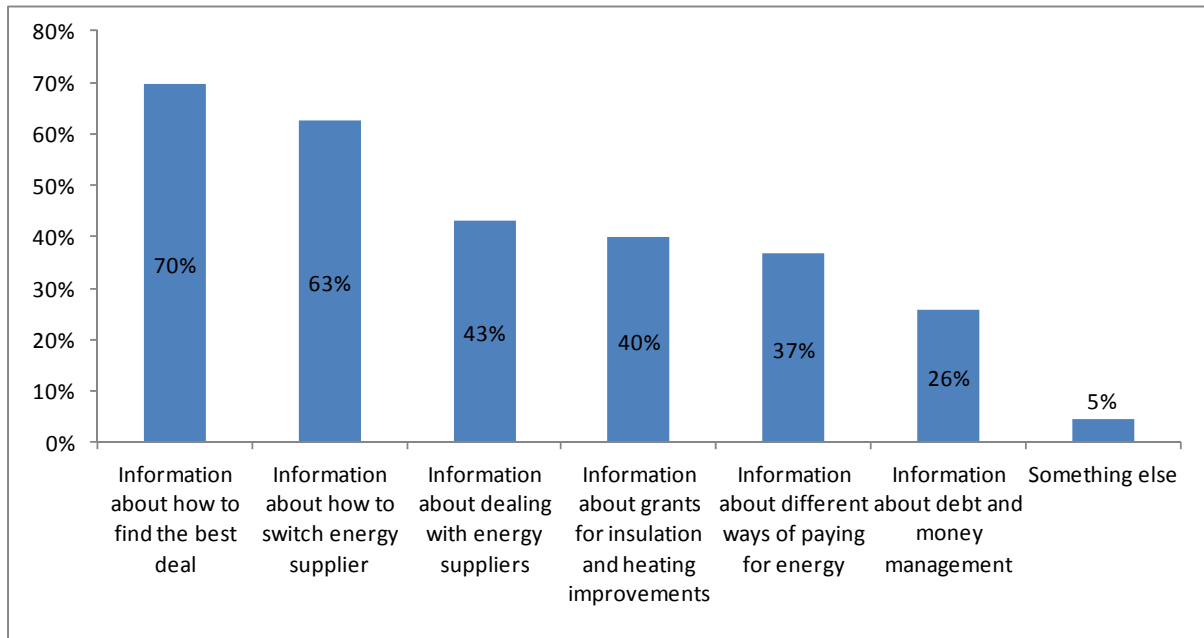


Figure 24: What did you find useful about the session?

Follow-up actions

Seventy-nine percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of the session (this was split between 44% of respondents who said they would probably do something, and 35% of respondents who said they would definitely do something). Figure 25 illustrates this.

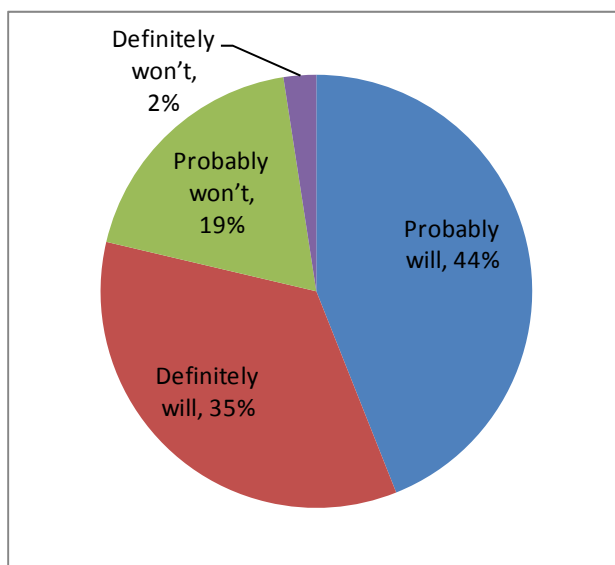


Figure 25: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 26. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 56% of respondents, with looking at other companies' prices and telling friends and family about what they learnt at the session also being popular, at 46% and 40% respectively.

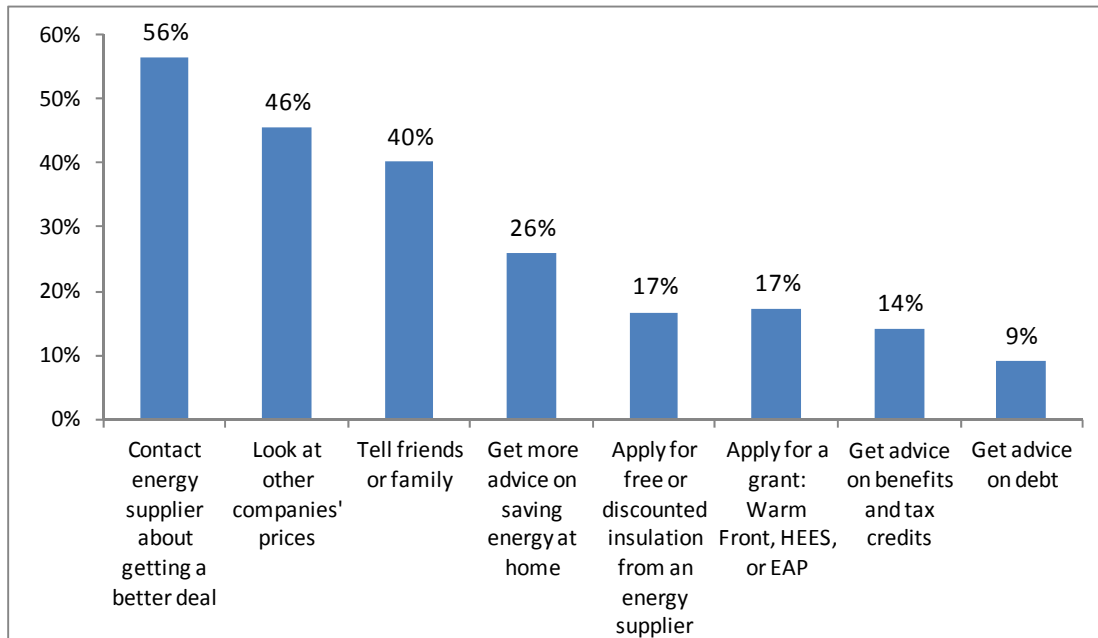


Figure 26: Planned actions following the session

Consumers: follow-up interviews - Scotland

Fifteen interviewees had attended sessions in Scotland; this is equal to 1.5% of those who attended sessions. This is a similar proportion to the whole of Great Britain (1.8%); however, the absolute number is very small and therefore *these interview results should be taken as examples of individuals' experience rather than being representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees.*

Action taken since the session

Four out of fifteen people had taken action since the session. Actions taken were: looking at switching websites (3 people), looking at energy suppliers' websites (2 people), looking at Consumer Focus' price comparison sheets (1 person), and contacting the existing supplier (1 person).

As a result of these actions, one person was offered a better tariff with their current supplier, and switched to it, and one person found a cheaper deal with another supplier and was in the process of switching to the new supplier. The other two who looked at prices found that they would not save money by switching.

Those who had not taken action since the session said they had not taken action because they have not had time (5 people), because it is too much hassle (1 person), or because they prefer their current supplier (3 people). One other person said they had recently switched before the session, while the remaining person did not give a reason for not taking action.

None of the Scottish interviewees had changed payment method as a result of the session.

Other actions

Interviewees were asked about other actions they had taken since the session. Eight of the interviewees in Scotland had taken at least one action, with three of the interviewees each taking four actions. The most popular actions were seeking advice on energy efficiency and looking into getting free or discounted insulation, followed by contacting the current supplier for advice and applying for a Warm Front or HEES grant. Actions are summarised in Figure 27 below.

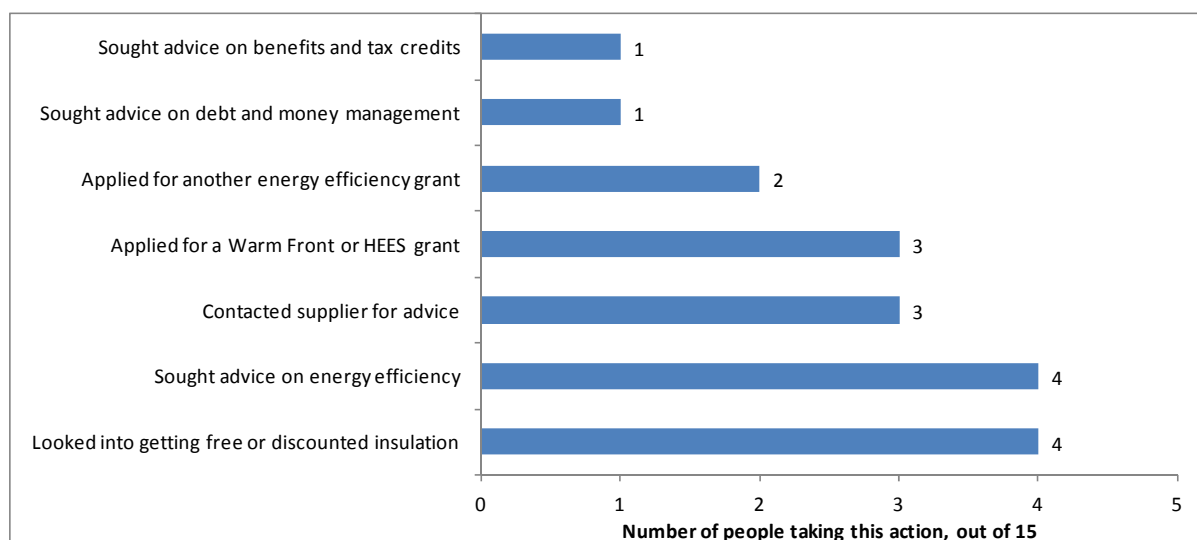


Figure 27: Other actions taken by interviewees

Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes since the session. Five interviewees said they had. One person had received subsidised roof insulation. One person had bought an energy monitor, started switching everything off at night, and had looked into getting cavity wall insulation but found that she already had it. Two people had taken basic actions, such as making sure unused lights were switched off, and draught stripping. One person had installed new windows and doors.

Consumers qualifying for CERT⁶ Super Priority Group

To ascertain whether any interviewees who would qualify for Super Priority Group (SPG) under CERT. Although CERT is almost over, the qualification criteria for ECO are likely to be similar. Interviewees were asked⁷:

⁶ The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) is an obligation which government has put on energy suppliers to reduce carbon emissions from domestic energy use. Suppliers do this by funding discounted energy efficiency measures for domestic consumers. Under CERT there is a 'Priority Group' and a 'Super Priority Group' of customers with specific circumstances (e.g. types of benefits claimed, age). Energy suppliers must provide a specific proportion of their CERT work to these groups, which means that energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation are normally provided free to consumers in these groups.

⁷ It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide advice to interviewees who qualified for CERT; however, interviewees were provided with a list of telephone numbers for local advice lines which they could give to the interviewee if more information on subsidised measures was requested.

- Does anyone in your household receive either Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit?
- If the latter, is your household income under £16,190?

One of the consumers interviewed in Scotland met these criteria, compared with a figure of 37% for Great Britain. However, *it is not possible to draw conclusions about the targeting of the sessions from this result*, as the group is too small to give representative results; a larger group may have given very different results. In addition, there are other qualifying criteria for SPG which interviewees were not asked about. This was because there was a need to strike a balance between getting useful information and asking so many questions that interviewees would be reluctant to answer, which is especially a risk when asking about benefits claimed. In addition, as the criteria for ECO were unclear at the time of setting the questions, these two major criteria were considered to be the ones most likely to be retained in the change from SPG under CERT to ECO⁸.

Information passed on to friends and family

Ten of the consumer interviewees had passed on something that they had learnt at the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family. Due to the small sample size, it is not appropriate to report a median or mean number here, but the number of people told something about the session by individual interviewees ranged from one to six.

Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Scotland

Profile

In Scotland, 633 frontline workers attended Energy Best Deal sessions, and a total of 432 questionnaire responses were received from these frontline workers, a response rate of 68%. This is very slightly higher than the frontline worker response rate for the whole of Great Britain, which was 65%.

Figure 28 shows the organisations represented by the frontline workers in Scotland. The majority came from Citizens Advice Bureaux (61%). Twelve percent were from 'Other' organisations (those not shown as tick boxes on the questionnaire) which included representatives from the NHS, a mental health charity, and a carers' charity.

⁸ CERT is due to end in September 2012. A new scheme, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), will replace it. This will also provide discounted energy efficiency measures to consumers and target groups under ECO are likely to be similar to those under CERT.

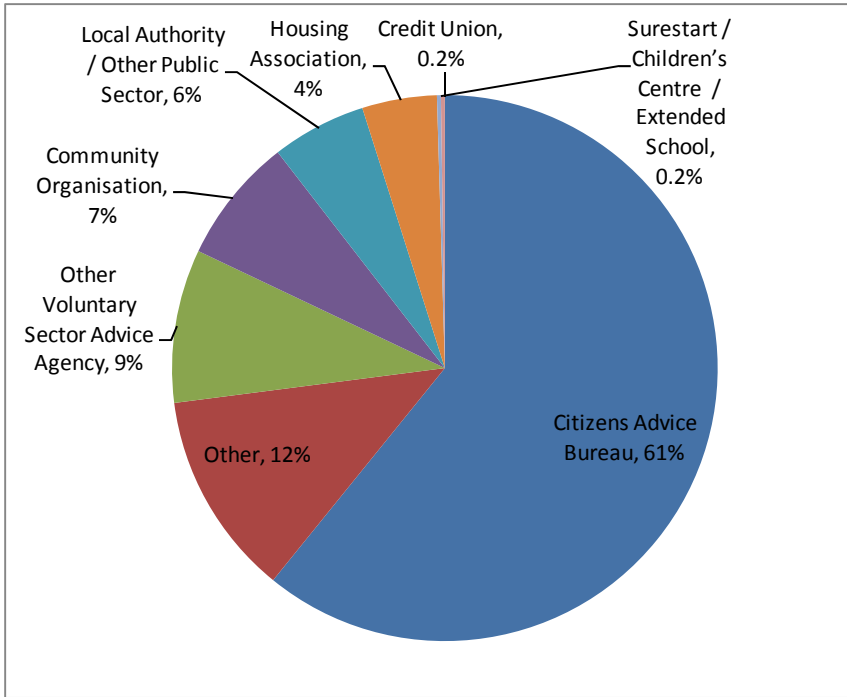


Figure 28: Frontline worker organisation types

Previous advice-giving

Figure 29 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice prior to the session. Fifty-eight percent had given advice on debt and money management, while topics more specifically about energy were less common but were still advised on by a good proportion of frontline workers prior to the session. ‘Finding the best deal on energy costs’ was the topic which the smallest proportion of frontline workers had previously advised on, at 30%. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.

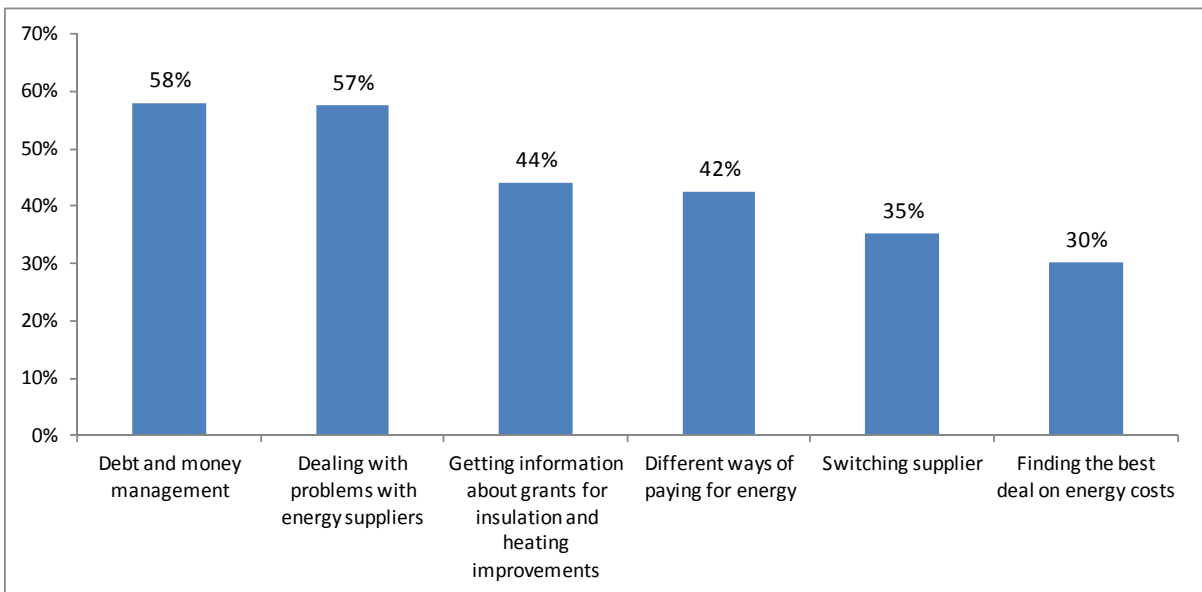


Figure 29: Previous advice-giving

Ninety-eight percent of respondents already knew that it was possible to change gas and electricity supplier, and 86% of respondents knew that some payment methods are more expensive than others.

The impact of the session

Eighty percent of frontline workers in Scotland said that the session had changed their opinion on the importance of fuel poverty to their clients. Frontline workers were asked to estimate the proportion of their clients who were in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty. The results are shown in Figure 30. Over a third estimate that 40-60% of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 28% estimate this figure to be between 60% and 80% of their clients. Eleven percent estimate that 80%-100% of their clients are in fuel poverty (this proportion is similar for Great Britain as a whole, where the proportion is 12%).

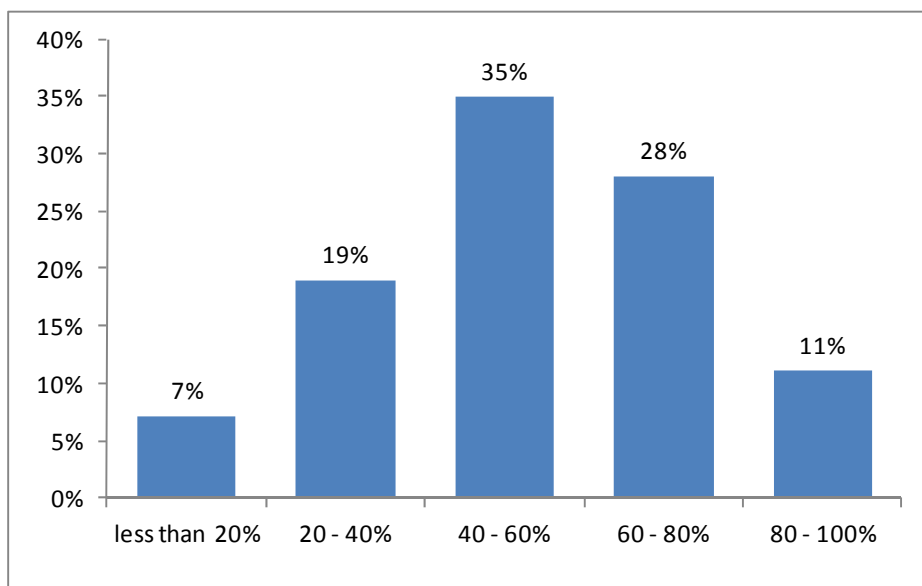


Figure 30: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-nine percent said they did; 53% to a great extent, and 46% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 31.

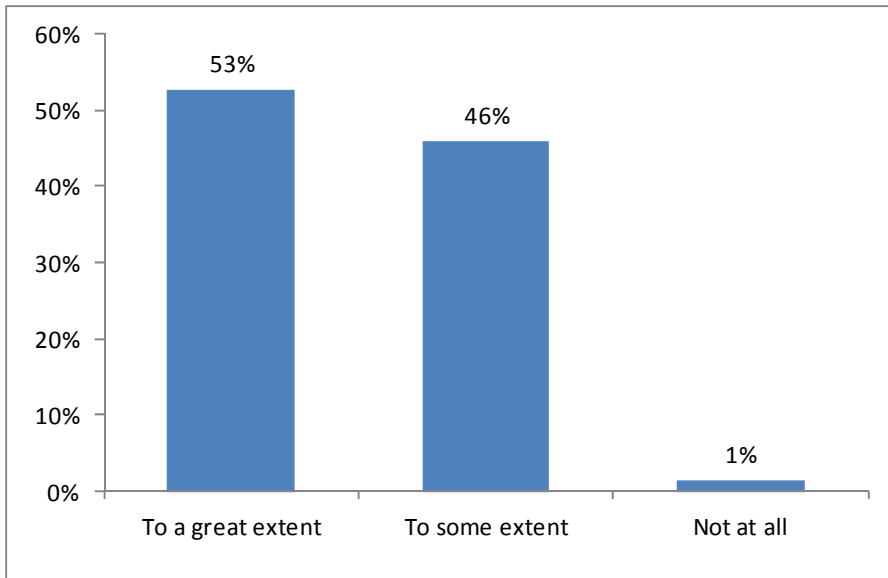


Figure 31: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?

Frontline workers were asked if they now felt more or less confident in advising clients about the topics covered in the presentation. The answers are illustrated in Figure 32.

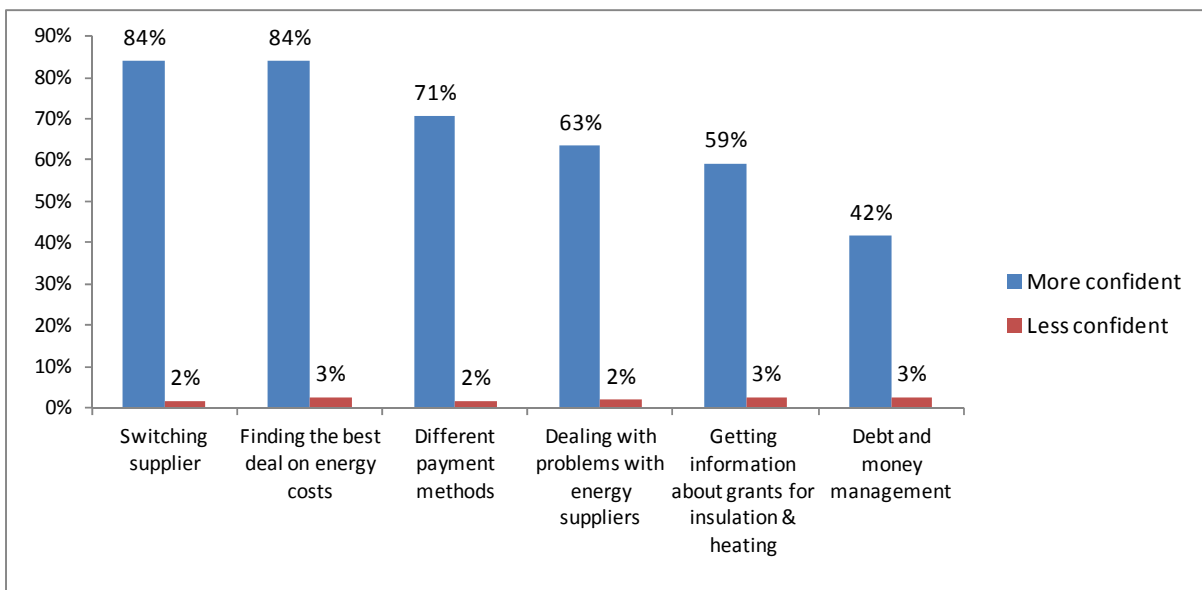


Figure 32: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session

High proportions of frontline workers felt an increase in confidence on the topics covered in the session, with debt and money management being the topic where least respondents felt more confident. A small group felt less confident following the session – this remained at 2% or 3% for all topics covered.

In addition, 74% percent said they intended to look for a better deal on their own energy following the session.

Frontline workers: follow-up interviews - Scotland

In Scotland, 12 frontline workers were interviewed, equal to 1.9% of frontline workers who attended a session. This represents a slightly smaller proportion of the total attendees than the interviewees for the whole of Great Britain (2.5%). However, even if the proportion was the same, the absolute number of interviewees would still only be 16, and so ***the interview results should be taken as examples of individuals' experience rather than being representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees.***

Frontline worker interview results

Frontline workers were asked how frequently, before the presentation, they had advised on the topics covered in the presentation. Six people had given advice on the topics infrequently, while three had never given advice on the topics, and two had frequently given advice on them.⁹

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. Seven interviewees had given advice on at least one topic since the presentation. The number of people giving advice on each topic since the session is shown in Figure 33.

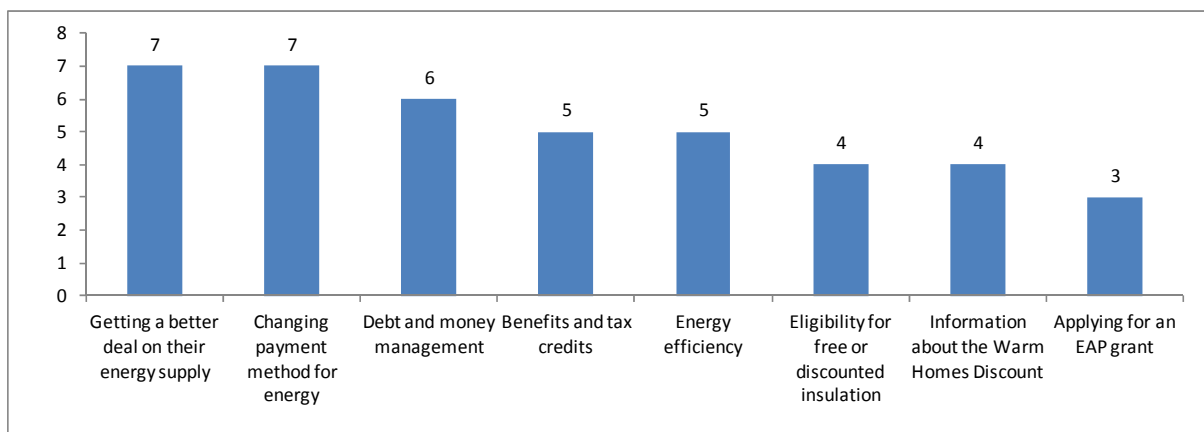


Figure 33: Topics advised on since the presentation

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. Eight people had passed information on to clients since the session. The distribution of the number of clients information was passed to is illustrated in Figure 34. Due to the small sample size, it is not appropriate to report a median or mean number here, but the number of people information had been passed on to by an individual frontline worker ranged from 1 to 100.

⁹ The data is missing for the 12th person here due to an error with data capture during the interview.

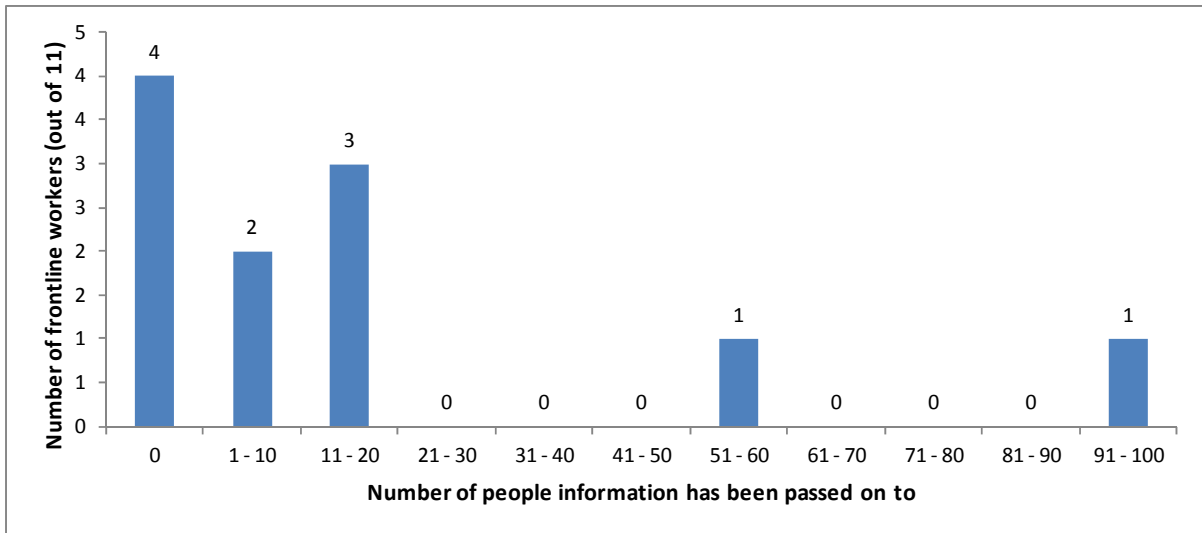


Figure 34: Number of people information has been passed on to since the session¹⁰

Eight frontline workers said that they have provided information on the topics covered by Energy Best Deal to clients more frequently since the presentation than before. Eleven interviewees said they expect to use the information from the Energy Best Deal sessions frequently in the future. Six people said that the presentation helped them with topics they were already advising on, while six people said the presentation helped them with new topics. Three people said it helped them with both new topics and topics they were already advising on.

No interviewees felt *less* confident on any topics following the session. This could be because they have had time to digest the information since the presentation; several comments on the questionnaire responses flagged a need to re-read and digest the information in the Energy Best Deal materials.

In the average of three months since attending the session, nine frontline workers had passed on what they learnt at the session to colleagues. The number of colleagues that information was passed on to ranged from 3 to 40.

Quality of the presentation and materials - Scotland

In Scotland the sessions were delivered by 18 different Citizens Advice Bureaux, and so there were at least 18 different trainers delivering sessions. The materials used were a set of PowerPoint slides (and facilitators' notes, although these would not have been seen by people completing the questionnaire). Individual trainers may have used additional materials. The materials provided to take away comprised a booklet produced by Citizens' Advice and Ofgem, with useful information such as how to deal with problems with suppliers, details of grant schemes, and telephone and website details of further sources of information. Again, individual trainers could also hand out their own additional materials.

¹⁰ The data is missing for the 12th person here due to an error with data capture during the interview, and so the results are shown out of 11.

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, the quality of the materials used and the quality of the materials provided to take away. The responses are shown in Figure 35 to Figure 37. The results are split by consumer and frontline worker. The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainers as excellent. The majority of both consumers and frontline workers thought that the materials used during the presentation and the materials provided to take away were good, with over 40% rating them as excellent.

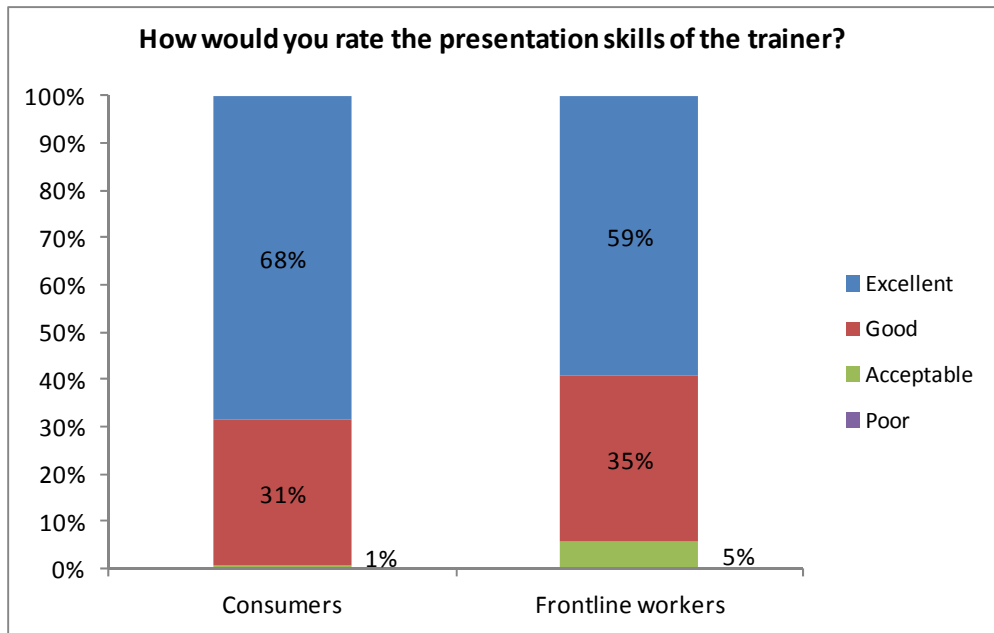


Figure 35: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

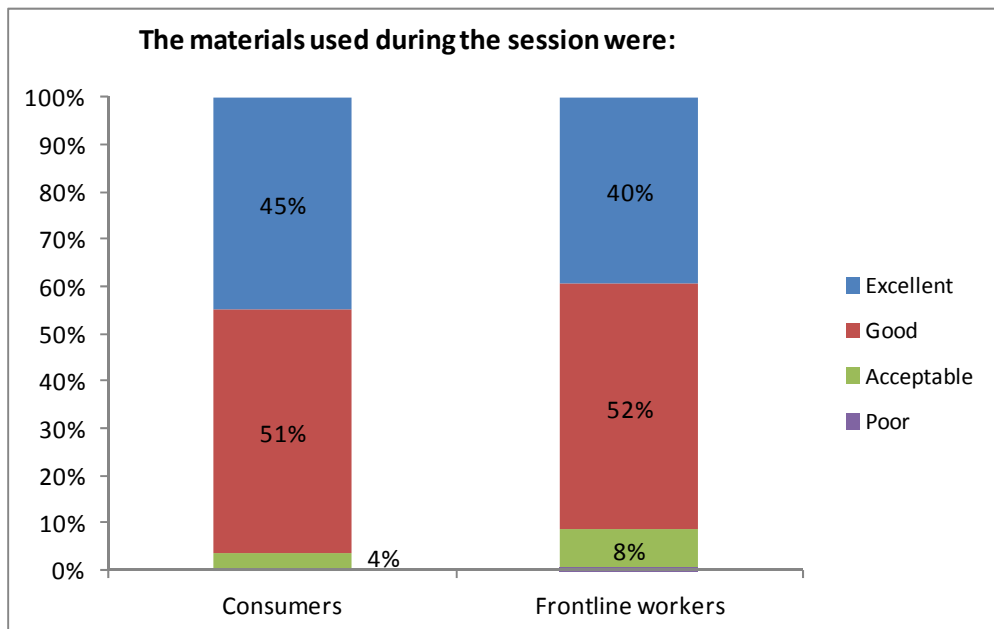


Figure 36: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

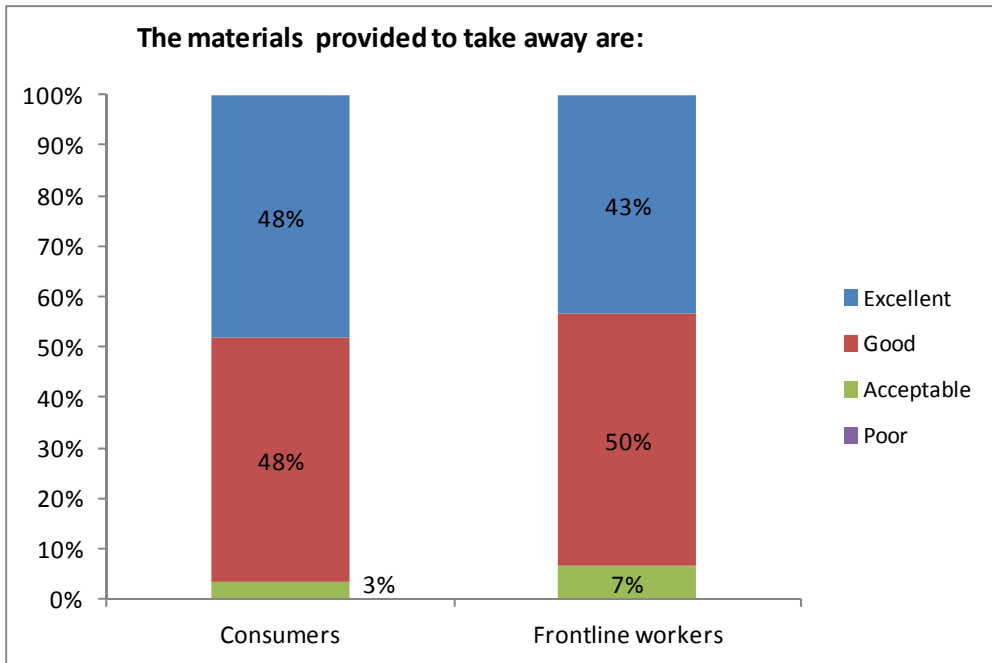


Figure 37: Ratings of the materials provided to take away.

Geographical distribution of Energy Best Deal sessions in Scotland

The geography and population distribution of Scotland present a challenge in terms of reaching many isolated areas with potentially high rates of fuel poverty. For this reason stakeholders have expressed an interest in the geographical distribution of the Energy Best Deal sessions in Scotland. Below is a list of the delivery partners which delivered sessions in their local areas:

- Airdrie Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian
- Citizens Advice Bureau Westhill and District, Aberdeenshire
- Citizens Advice Edinburgh
- Clydesdale Citizens Advice Bureau
- Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service
- Denny & Dunipace Citizen's Advice Bureau
- East Dunbartonshire Citizen's Advice Bureau
- East Sutherland Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Glasgow Central Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Motherwell Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Nairn Citizen's Advice Bureau
- North Ayrshire Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau
- Perth Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Roxburgh & Berwickshire Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Rutherglen and Cambuslang Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Stirling Citizen's Advice Bureau

Results for England

Consumers: questionnaire responses - England

Demographic information

In England, 6,538 consumers attended Energy Best Deal sessions. Seventy percent of attendees (4,594 people) completed the consumer questionnaire. This response rate is slightly higher than the overall response rate for Great Britain, which was 68%. Figure 38 to Figure 40 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in England.

Figure 38: Age of respondents

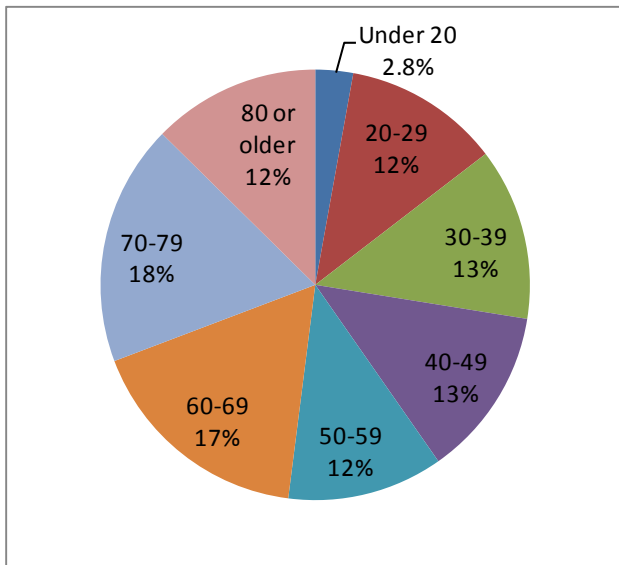


Figure 39: Tenure of respondents

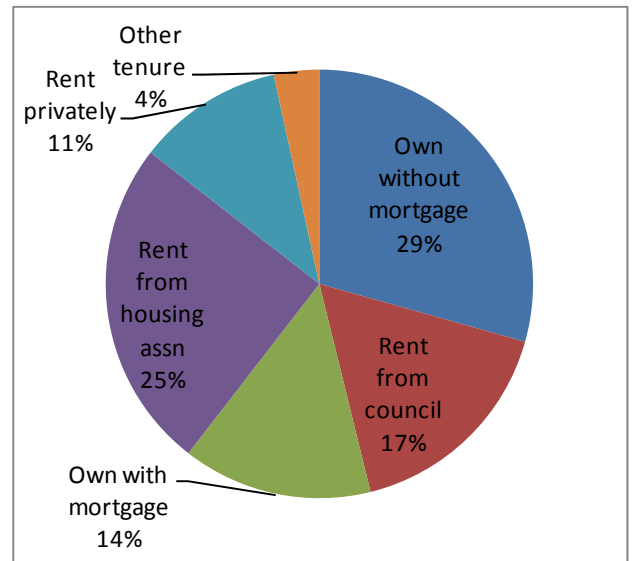
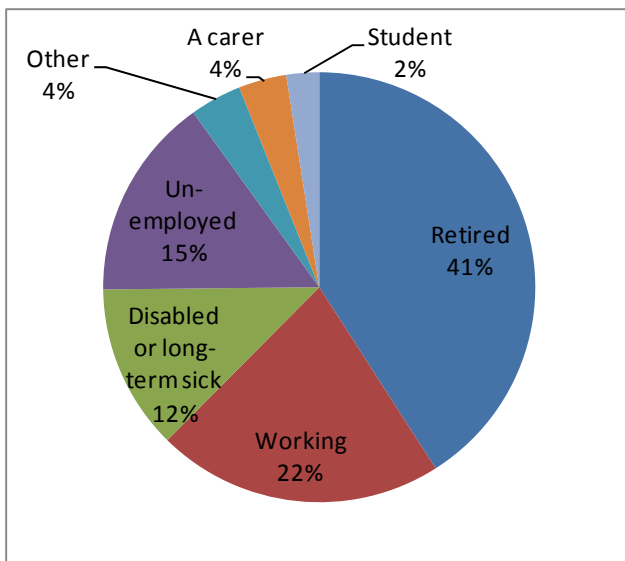


Figure 40: Occupation of respondents



Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with their winter fuel bills, the questionnaire asked, "In the winter, would you say your fuel bills are...", with a range of options which are illustrated in Figure 41. A quarter (25%) find their energy bills to be impossible to manage or a financial strain, while 28% worry about their bills but are able to manage. The same percentage (28%) said that they were concerned about their bills but did not find them to be a major worry.

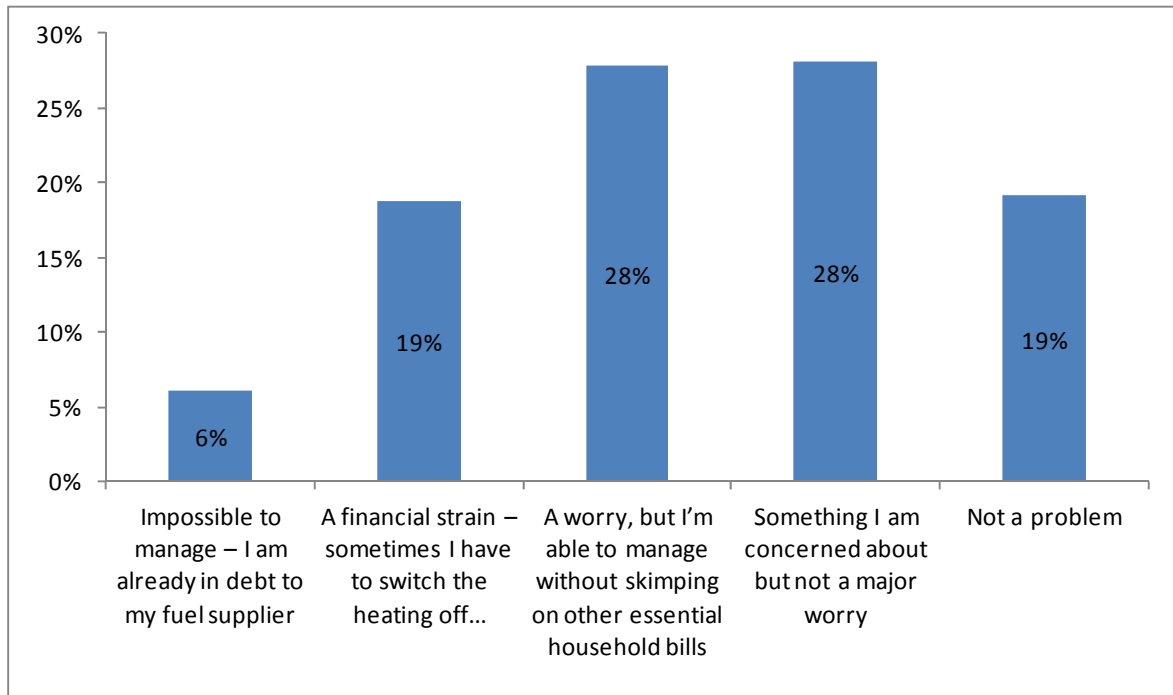


Figure 41: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Eighty-nine percent of consumers already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. Thirty-three percent of respondents had switched supplier once in the past, while 21% had switched more than once, a total of 55% of respondents who have experience of switching. Sixty-eight percent of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, having switched of their own initiative to get a better deal, while the rest were reactive switchers, switching in response to an approach from an energy supplier salesperson. Those switching as a result of an approach by an energy supplier salesperson may not have considered the full range of tariffs available to them before switching.

Sixty-three percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 19% had done so, and 18% did not know whether they had or not.

The impact of the session

Ninety-seven percent of those who answered said they found the session useful (this question was left unanswered by 387 people, equal to 8% of respondents). Figure 42 shows what consumers said they found useful about the session. Information about how to find the best deal was considered

useful by the highest number of people, at 64% of respondents, with information about how to switch coming second at 48%.

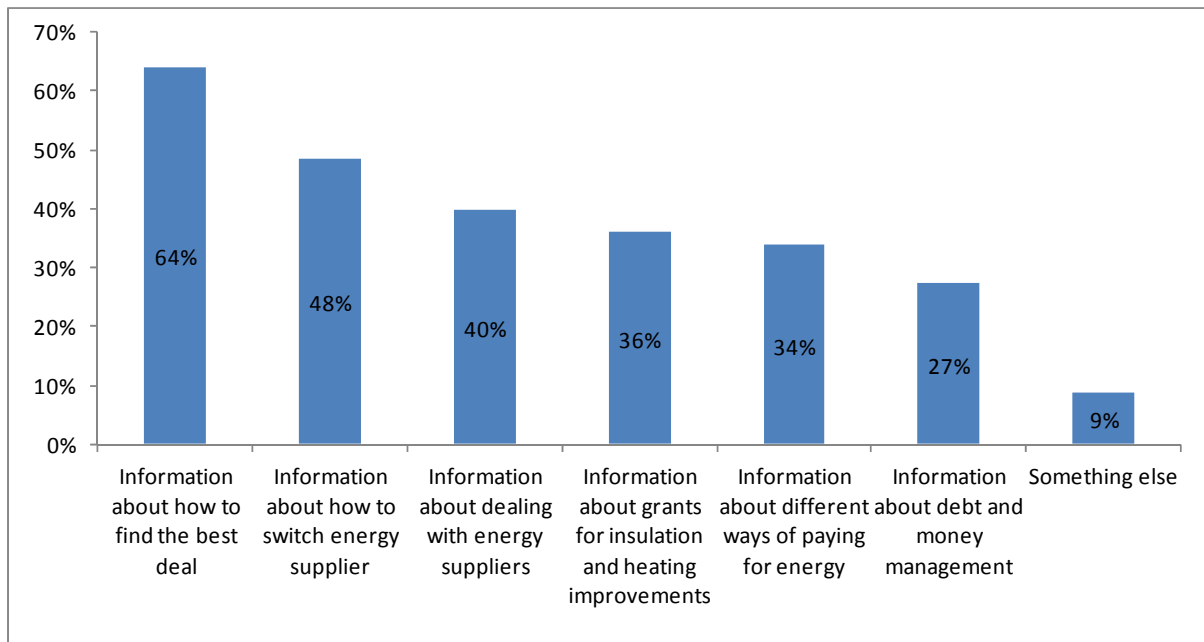


Figure 42: What did you find useful about the session?

Follow-up actions

Seventy-six percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of the session. Figure 43 illustrates this.

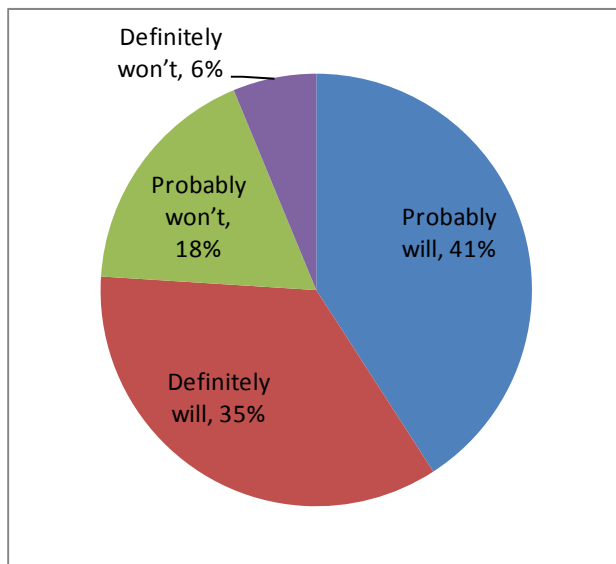


Figure 43: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 44. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 48%, while looking at other companies' prices and telling friends and family about what had been learnt at the session were also popular, at 34% and 33% respectively.

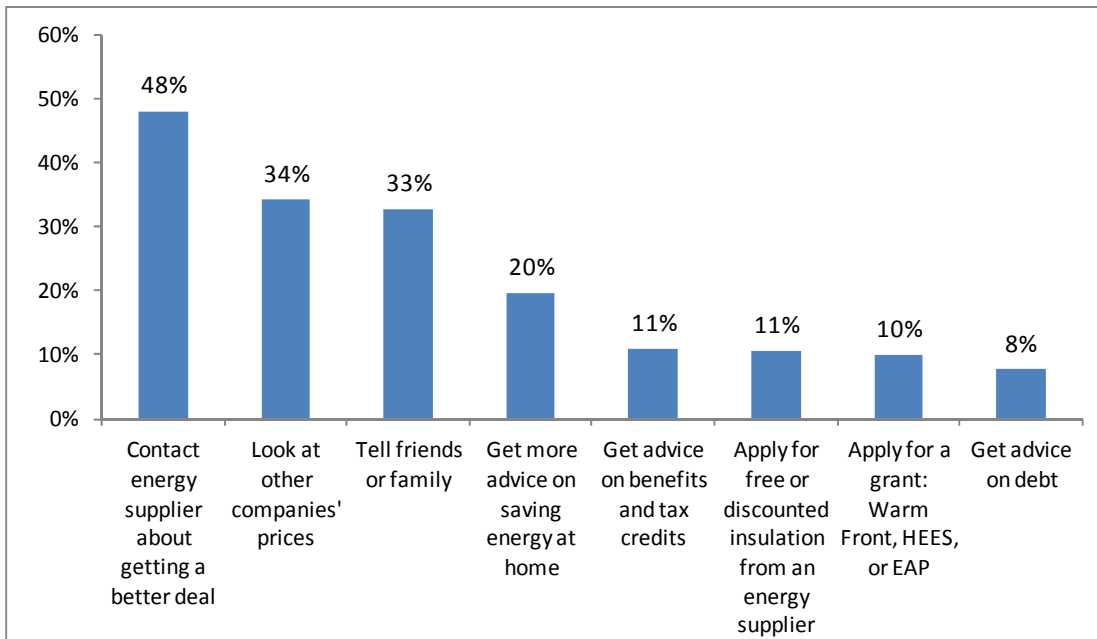


Figure 44: Planned actions following the session

Consumers: follow-up interviews - England

In England, 113 consumers were interviewed, equal to 1.7% of all consumers who attended sessions in England. While similar to Wales and Scotland in terms of proportion of all attendees, the absolute number of interviewees is much higher for England. As most sessions took part in England and most interviewees attended sessions in England, the results for England are very similar to the results for Great Britain overall.

Action taken since the session

Forty-four people (39%) had taken action since the session, with several taking more than one action. Twenty-three contacted their existing supplier, six looked at energy suppliers' websites, twenty-seven people looked at a switching website, six looked at Consumer Focus's price comparison sheets, whilst four people took other actions such as contacting the council for advice on the Green Deal loans¹¹.

Of the 23 people who contacted their current supplier, 14 were offered a better deal. Of these, all fourteen had switched to a better tariff. Fifteen of the people who contacted their existing supplier also looked at prices from other suppliers; seven of these people were offered a better deal by another supplier, but all of those who were also offered a better deal by their existing supplier opted to stay with their existing supplier. Of those who did not have the option of a better tariff from their existing supplier, four people found a better deal with another supplier, two of whom have switched, with the other two planning to switch soon.

¹¹ Forty-one people had either contacted their supplier, looked at other suppliers' prices, or both. The remaining three had taken other actions such as finding out about the Green Deal.

Eighteen people did not contact their existing supplier but did compare prices from other suppliers. Seven of these found they would save money; six of these have switched or plan to switch, while the other plans to ask his current supplier to match the other supplier's price.

The results are summarised in Figure 45.

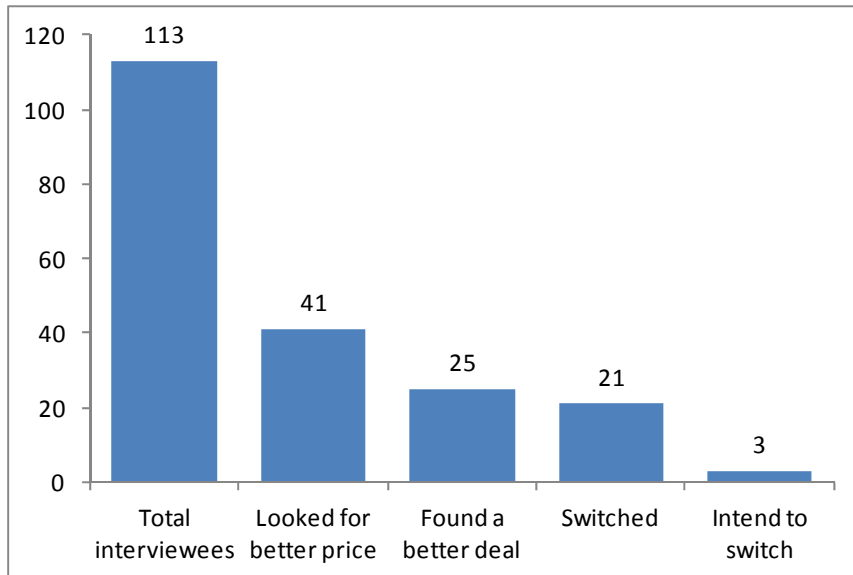


Figure 45: Looking for a better price - results

Of the 69 people who did not take action following the session, 24 people said that they preferred to stay with their current supplier. Seventeen people said they had not had time to look into getting a better deal. Six people said they were worried about something going wrong, and seven people had debt with their current supplier. The remainder gave a variety of other reasons, including living in sheltered accommodation and not having control over who the supplier is, and being on a social tariff.

Other actions

Interviewees were asked about other actions they had taken since the session. Fifty-five people had taken at least one action, with 30 people taking two or more actions. The most popular action was contacting the current supplier for advice, followed by seeking advice on energy efficiency and looking into getting free or discounted insulation. Actions are summarised in Figure 46 below.

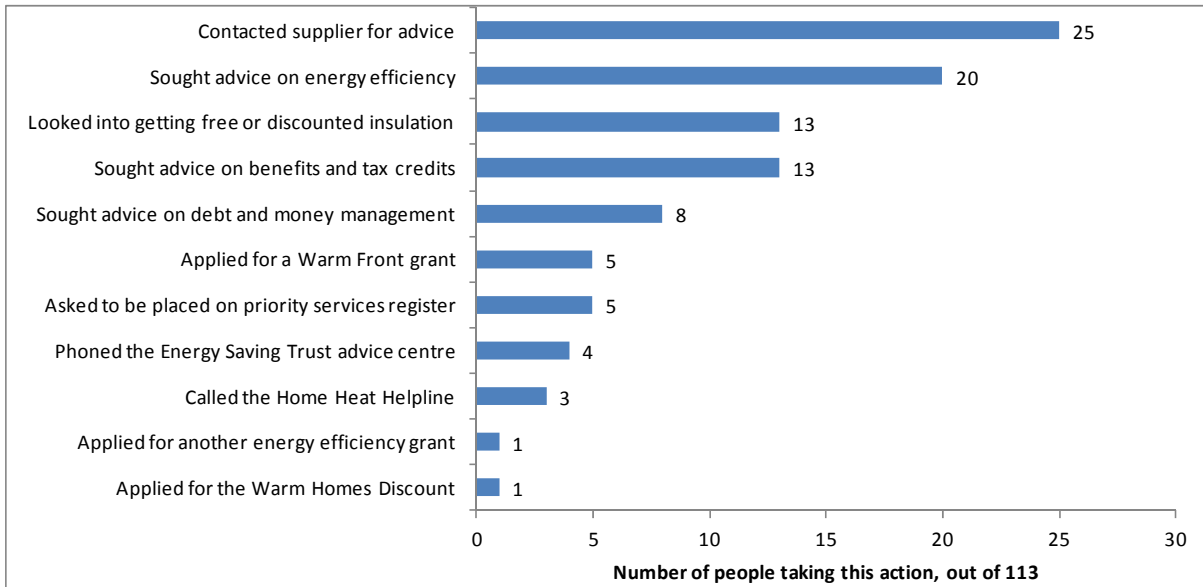


Figure 46: Other actions taken by interviewees

Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes since the session. Fifty-five people (49%) said they had. Most of these were low or no-cost actions, but four people installed loft, cavity wall or roof insulation while a further six people were looking into getting insulation. Two people switched to economy 7 while two people changed their boilers.

Consumers qualifying for CERT¹² Super Priority Group

For the 2011/2012 evaluation, additional questions were asked in the interview to ascertain the proportion of interviewees who would qualify for Super Priority Group (SPG) under CERT. Although CERT is almost over, the qualification criteria for ECO are likely to be similar. Interviewees were asked¹³:

- Does anyone in your household receive either Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit?
- If the latter, is your household income under £16,190?

Although there are other qualifying criteria for SPG, there was a need to strike a balance between getting useful information and asking so many questions that interviewees would be reluctant to answer, which is especially a risk when asking about benefits claimed. In addition, as the criteria for

¹² The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) is an obligation which government has put on energy suppliers to reduce carbon emissions from domestic energy use. Suppliers do this by funding discounted energy efficiency measures for domestic consumers. Under CERT there is a 'Priority Group' and a 'Super Priority Group' of customers with specific circumstances (e.g. types of benefits claimed, age). Energy suppliers must provide a specific proportion of their CERT work to these groups, which means that energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation are normally provided free to consumers in these groups.

¹³ It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide advice to interviewees who qualified for CERT; however, interviewers were provided with a list of telephone numbers for local advice lines which they could give to the interviewee if more information on subsidised measures was requested.

ECO were unclear at the time of setting the questions, these two major criteria were considered to be the ones most likely to be retained in the change from SPG under CERT to ECO¹⁴.

A total of 40 interviewees were eligible for SPG. This is 35%, similar to the figure for consumer interviewees in Great Britain as a whole (37%). It is unsurprising that the figure is similar to the overall total for Great Britain, as most sessions were carried out in England and most interviewees attended sessions in England.

Information passed on to friends and family

Seventy-seven (68%) consumer interviewees had passed on something that they had learnt at the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family. The mean number of people that information was passed on to was 7 and the median was 4.

Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - England

Profile

In England, 4,789 frontline workers attended Energy Best Deal sessions, and 3,222 questionnaires were returned. This is a response rate of 67%, somewhat lower than the rate for the whole of Great Britain, which was 65%. Figure 47 shows the organisations represented by the frontline workers in England. The largest group were from Citizens Advice Bureaux (23%). The second largest group overall were local authorities and other public sector organisations (21%), followed by the Housing Association (18%).

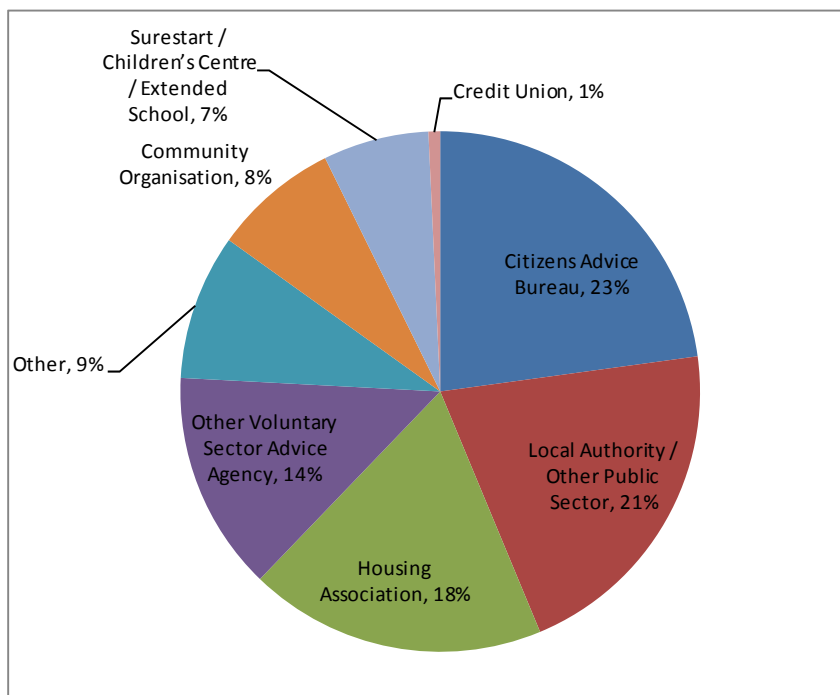


Figure 47: Frontline worker organisation types

¹⁴ CERT is due to end in September 2012. A new scheme, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), will replace it. This will also provide discounted energy efficiency measures to consumers and target groups under ECO are likely to be similar to those under CERT.

The 'Other' category included representatives from the Health Service, Carers First, Age Concern, Home Start, DASH and other charities.

Previous advice-giving

Ninety-eight percent of respondents already knew that it was possible to change gas and electricity supplier, and 89% of respondents knew that some payment methods are more expensive than others.

Figure 48 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice on prior to the session. Just over half had previously given advice on debt and money management, while topics more specifically about energy were less common but still advised on by a good proportion of frontline workers prior to the session. 'Finding the best deal on energy costs' was the topic which the smallest proportion of frontline workers had previously advised on, at 28%. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.

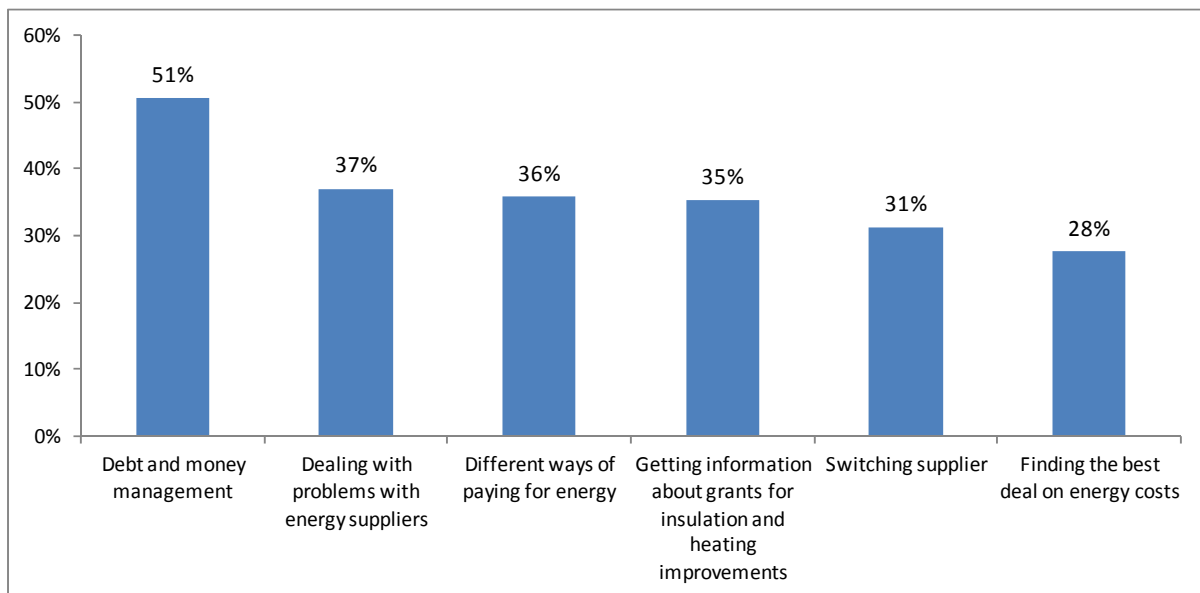


Figure 48: Previous advice-giving

The impact of the session

Eighty-one percent of frontline workers said that the session had changed their opinion on the importance of fuel poverty to their clients. Frontline workers were asked to estimate the proportion of their clients who were in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty. The results are shown in Figure 49. Nearly a third estimate that 60-80% of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 30% estimate this figure to be between 40% and 60% of their clients and 12% estimate it to be between 80% and 100%.

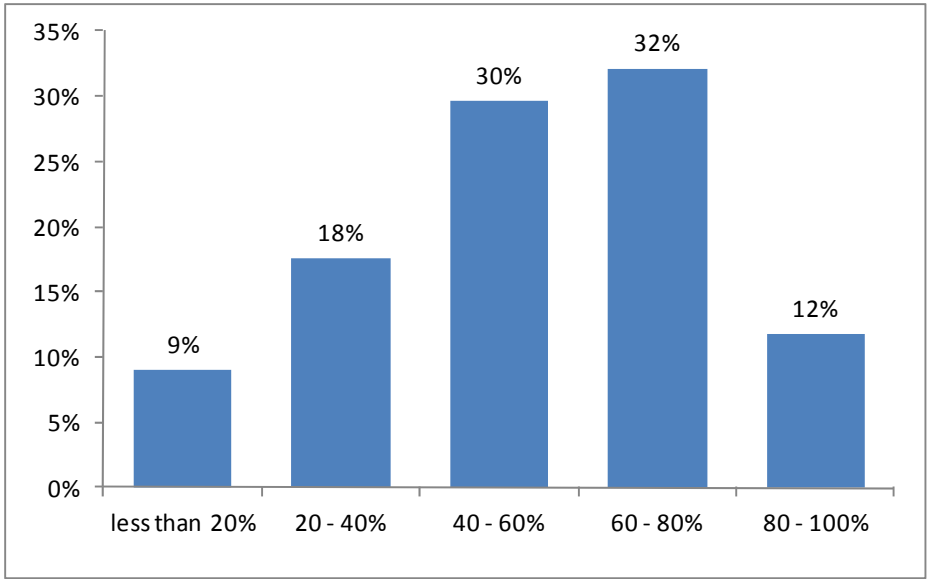


Figure 49: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-seven percent said they did; 54% to a great extent, and 43% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 50.

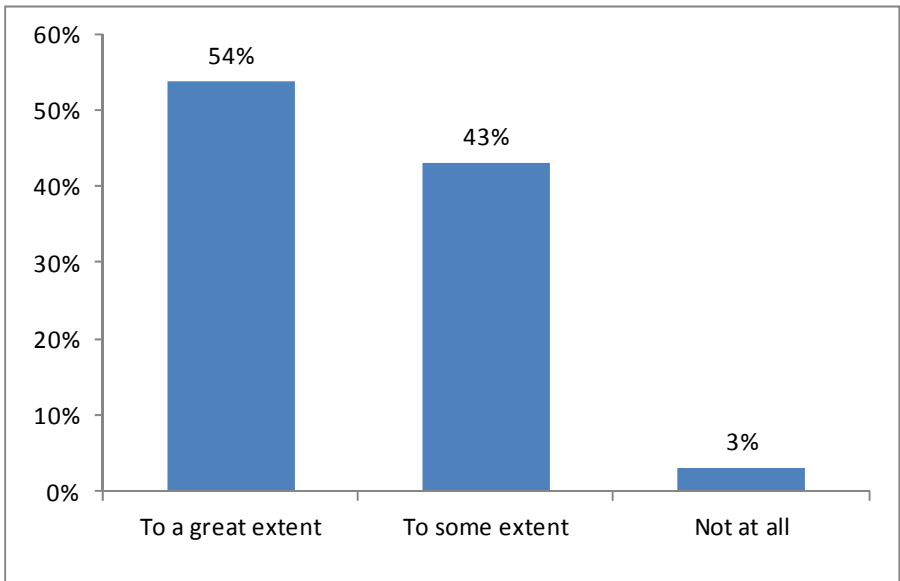


Figure 50: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?

Frontline workers were asked if they now felt more or less confident in advising clients about the topics covered in the presentation. The answers are illustrated in Figure 51.

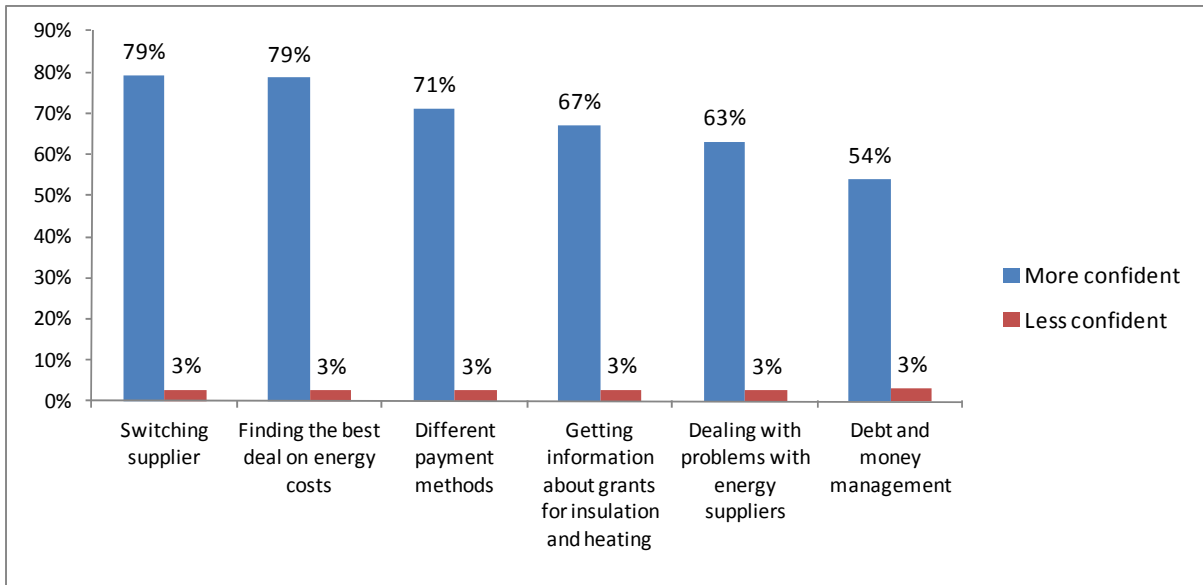


Figure 51: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session

For nearly all topics, a large majority felt more confident advising on the topics covered in the presentation. A small group felt less confident following the session – this remained at 3% for all topics covered.

In addition, 76% of frontline workers said they intended to look for a better deal on their own energy following the session.

Frontline workers: follow-up interviews - England

From the set of frontline workers who had completed questionnaires with contact details, some were chosen at random to take part in a follow-up interview, an average of three months after attending a session. Over the whole of Great Britain, 153 frontline workers were interviewed, equal to 3.8% of those who completed questionnaires. In England, 130 frontline workers were interviewed, equal to 4% of all frontline workers in England who returned questionnaires.

Frontline worker interview results

Frontline workers were asked how frequently, before the presentation, they had advised on the topics covered in the presentation. The majority had given advice on these topics infrequently (57%) or never (22%). Twenty-one percent of people had previously advised frequently on these topics.

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. One hundred and seven frontline workers (82%) had given advice on at least one of the topics covered in the presentation since the session, with many giving advice on more than one of the topics (73, equal to 56%) gave advice on four or more topics). The topics and the number of frontline workers who gave advice on them since the presentation are shown in Figure 52.

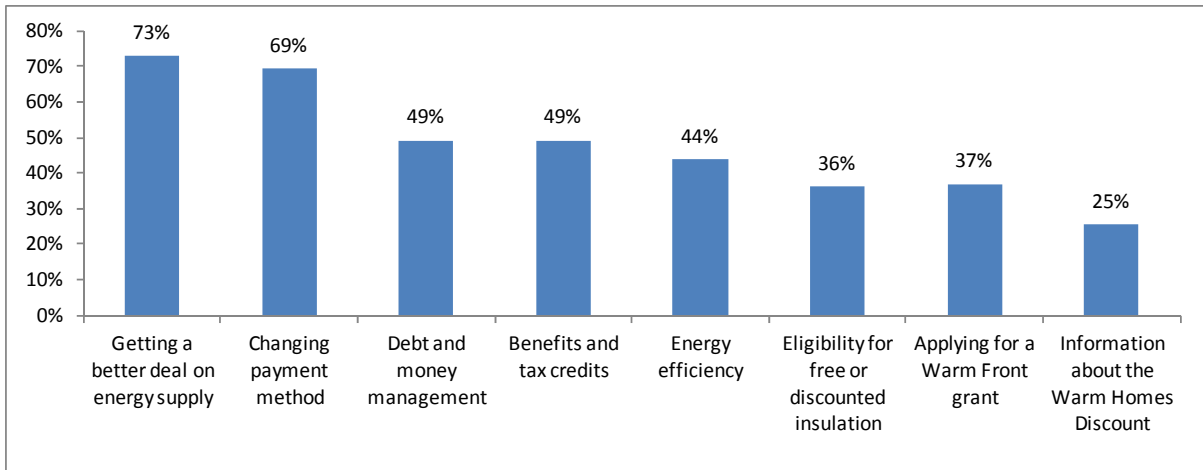


Figure 52: Topics advised on since the presentation

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. One hundred and four people (80%) had provided information to clients since the session. The median number of clients told per frontline worker was eight. The distribution is shown in Figure 53.

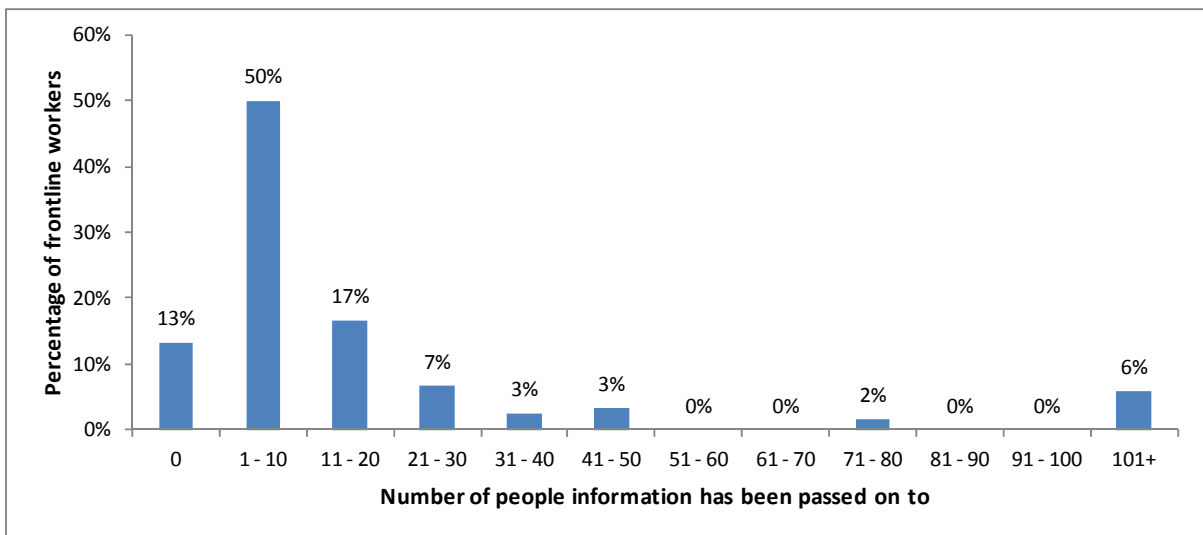


Figure 53: Number of people information has been passed on to since the session

Ninety-six frontline workers (74%) said that they have provided information on the topics covered by Energy Best Deal to clients more frequently since the presentation than before. One hundred and two frontline workers (78%) said they expect to use the information from the Energy Best Deal sessions frequently in the future. Forty-seven people (36%) said that the presentation helped them with topics they were already advising on, and forty-seven people (36%) said the presentation helped them with new topics.

Eighty-nine frontline workers (78%) had passed information on to colleagues since the presentation. The mean number of colleagues told per frontline worker was six.

Quality of the presentation and materials - England

The sessions in England were delivered by 142 different organisations, and so there were at least 142 different trainers delivering sessions. The materials used were a set of PowerPoint slides (and facilitators' notes, although these would not have been seen by people completing the questionnaire). Individual trainers may have used additional materials. The materials provided to take away comprised a booklet produced by Citizens' Advice and Ofgem, with useful information such as how to deal with problems with suppliers, details of grant schemes, and telephone and website details of further sources of information. Again, individual trainers could also hand out their own additional materials.

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, the quality of the materials used and the quality of the materials provided to take away. The responses are shown in Figure 54 to Figure 56. The results are split by consumer and frontline worker.

The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainers as excellent. Over 50% of both consumers and frontline workers thought that the materials used during the presentation were good, with over a third saying they were excellent. Over half of both consumers and frontline workers rated the materials provided to take away as good, with 39% of consumers and 41% of frontline workers rating them as excellent.

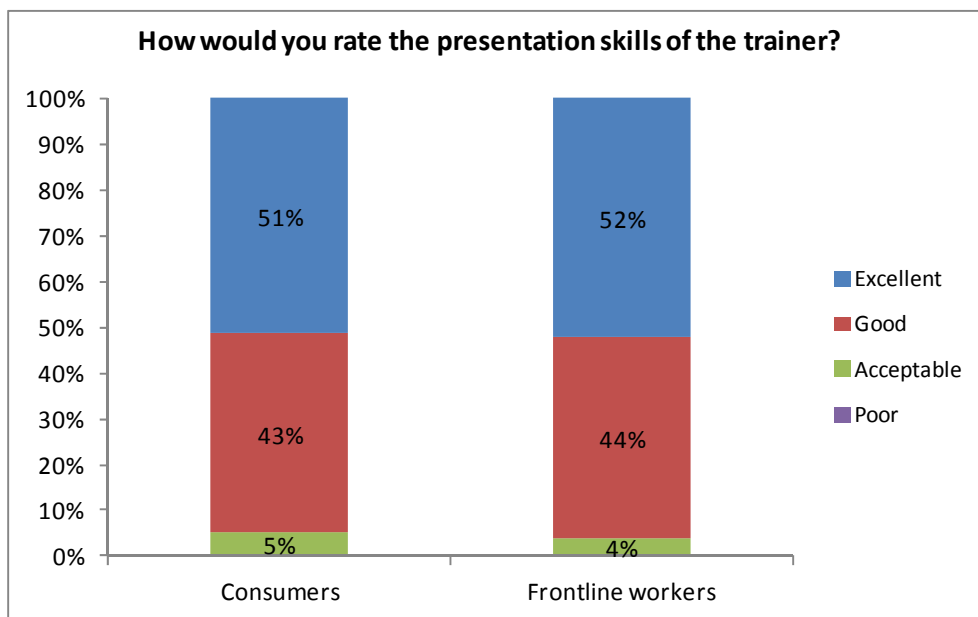


Figure 54: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

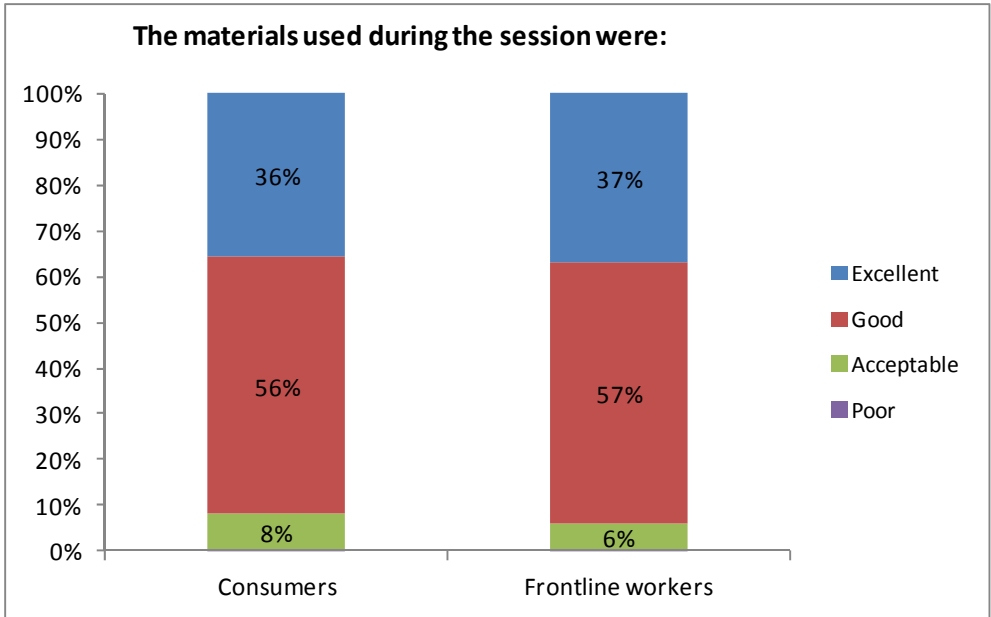


Figure 55: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

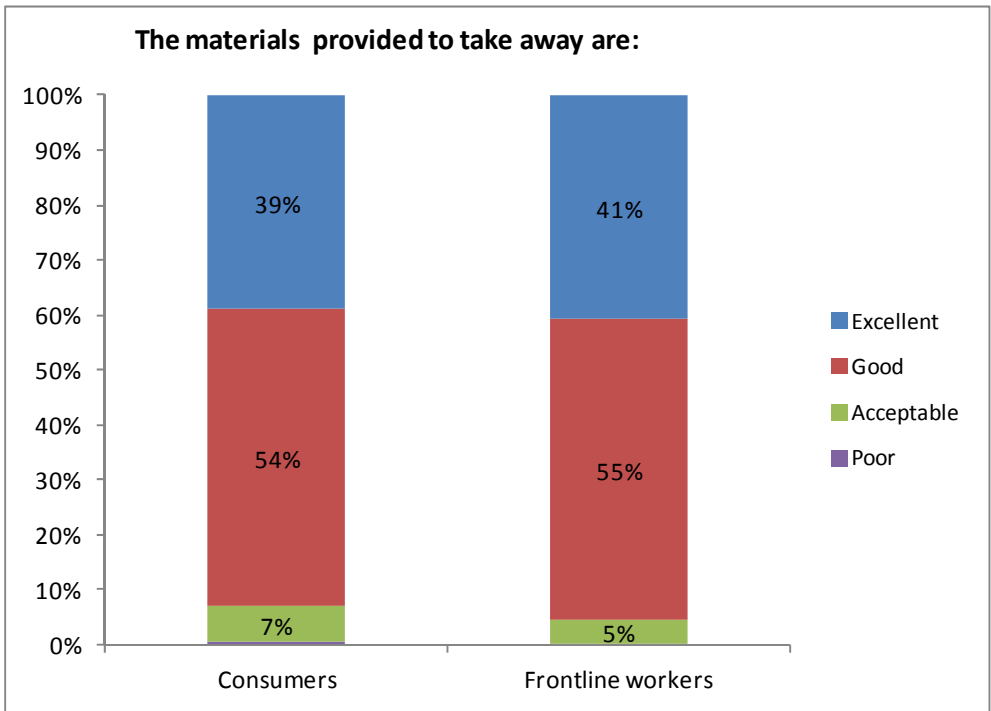


Figure 56: Ratings of the materials provided to take away.