



Energy Best Deal

Evaluation Report, 2012/2013

Annex to the main report: Individual countries

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Introduction

This document is an annex to the Energy Best Deal Evaluation Report for the 2012-2013 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 October 2012 and March 2013, 753 sessions were delivered by 170 delivery partners across the 14 regions of the Citizens Advice Financial Capability Forums¹ in England and Wales, and 115 sessions were delivered by 13 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland. In total during 2012/2013, the programme reached 5,602 consumers and 3,334 frontline workers. The programme will have an ongoing impact through the consumer advice work of the frontline workers.

The evaluation of the 2012-2013 campaign was carried out using paper questionnaires completed immediately following the session, and follow-up telephone interviews carried out an average of two months after the session. A total of 5,672 questionnaires and 302 telephone interviews were completed. The ongoing effect of the 2011/2012 programme was also investigated, using a smaller sample of 50 interviews with people who attended Energy Best Deal sessions in 2011/2012.

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.

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

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.

In the consumer interviews, Wales was slightly over-represented while Scotland was under-represented: across Great Britain as a whole 3% of consumers who attended sessions were interviewed, in Wales this figure was 5% and in Scotland it was 1%.

In the frontline worker interviews, all three countries were similarly represented in terms of the number of participants from each country that were interviewed: 4%-5%.

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.

It should be noted that because the absolute number of interviews with participants in Scotland and Wales is small, the interview results should not be interpreted as representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees in each of these countries. If samples had been taken from Wales and Scotland to obtain the same statistical power as the results for England (which had a much larger number of sessions), this would have weighted the Great Britain sample too heavily towards the smaller number of sessions that took place in Scotland and Wales), and so the statistical power of the Scotland and Wales samples is necessarily smaller than the statistical power of the Great Britain sample as a whole.

Consumers	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Attendees	5,602	431	823	4,348
Questionnaires returned	3,429	302	519	2,608
<i>Questionnaires as % of attendees</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>60%</i>
Interviews	150	20	10	120
<i>Interviews as % of attendees</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>Interviews as % of questionnaires</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>5%</i>

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

Frontline workers	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Attendees	3,334	409	243	2,682
Questionnaires	2,243	308	157	1,778
<i>Questionnaires as % of attendees</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>60%</i>
Interviews	152	19	9	124
<i>Interviews as % of attendees</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Interviews as % of questionnaires</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>

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

1. Results for Wales

1.1. Consumers: questionnaire responses – Wales

Demographic information

In Wales 431 consumers attended Energy Best Deal sessions. Seventy percent of attendees (302 people) completed the consumer questionnaire. This response rate is higher than the response rate for Great Britain, which was 61%. Figure 1 to Figure 3 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in Wales.

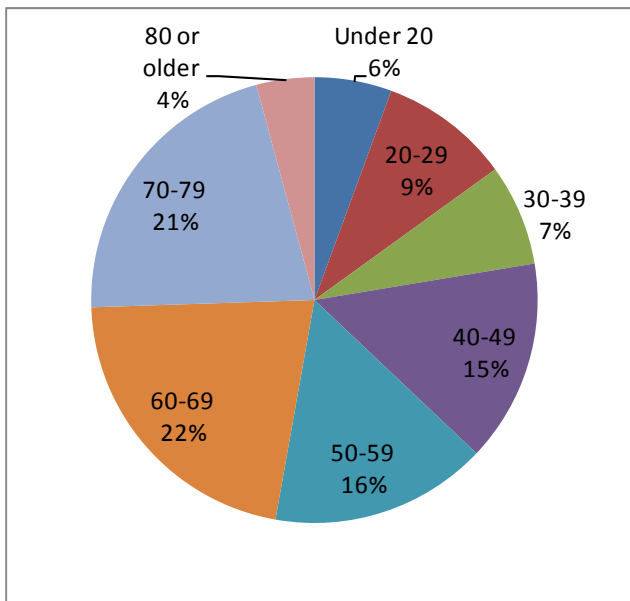


Figure 1: Age of respondents

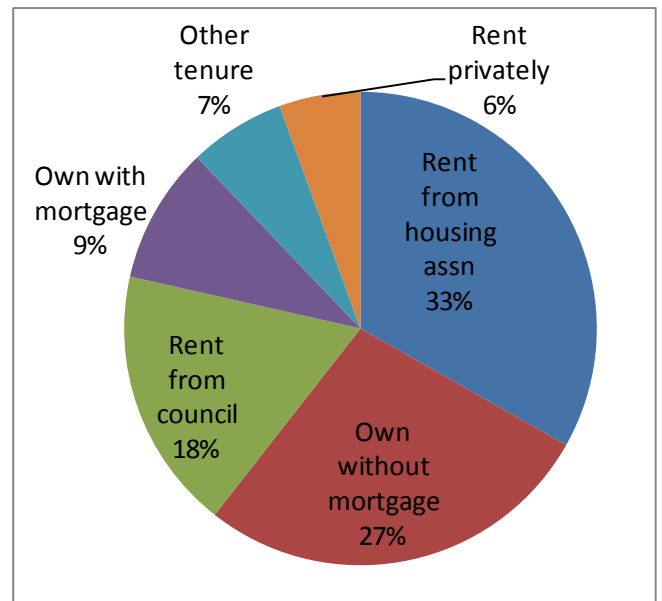


Figure 2: Tenure of respondents

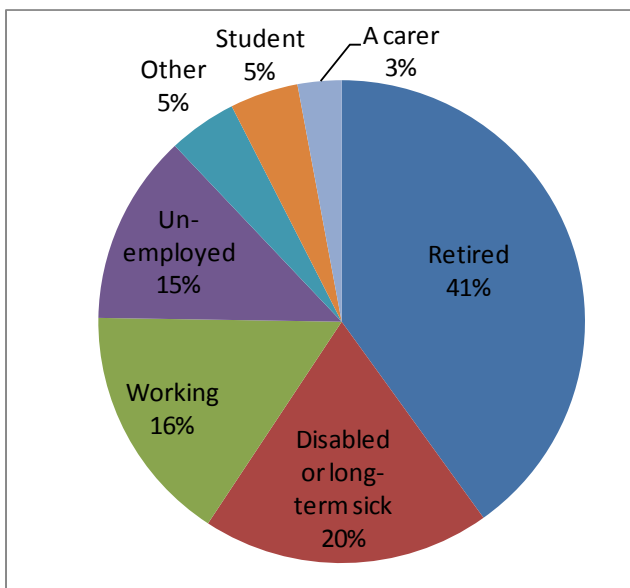


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents

Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with heating their home in winter they were asked two questions. The first asked whether they were able to heat their home to a comfortable level (Figure 4) and the second about their winter fuel bills (Figure 5). Forty-two percent are not able to heat their home to a comfortable level, which is on par with the average for Great Britain. Over a quarter (26%) find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 27% worry about their bills but are able to manage. Three percent of respondents find their winter fuel bills are impossible to manage and are in debt to their fuel supplier, which is half of the Great Britain average of 6%.

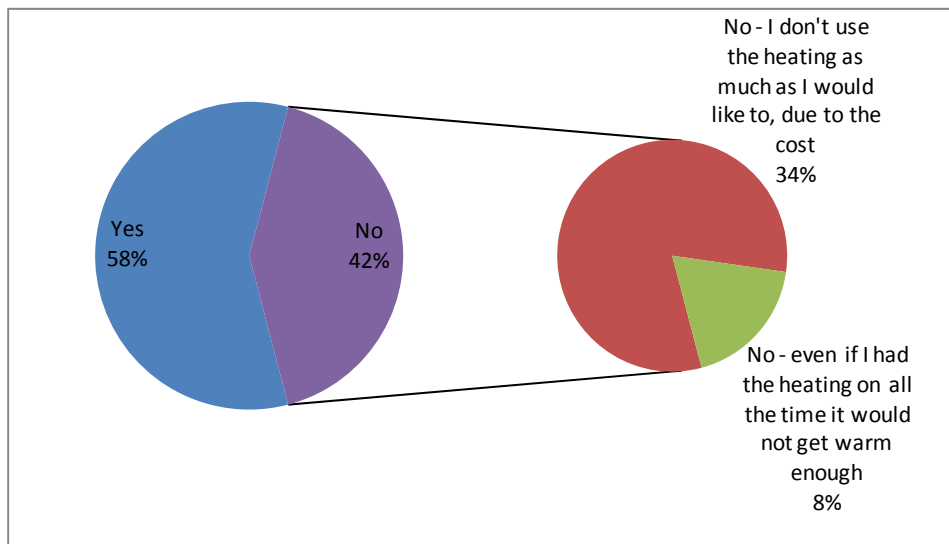


Figure 4: Can you heat your home to a comfortable level in winter?

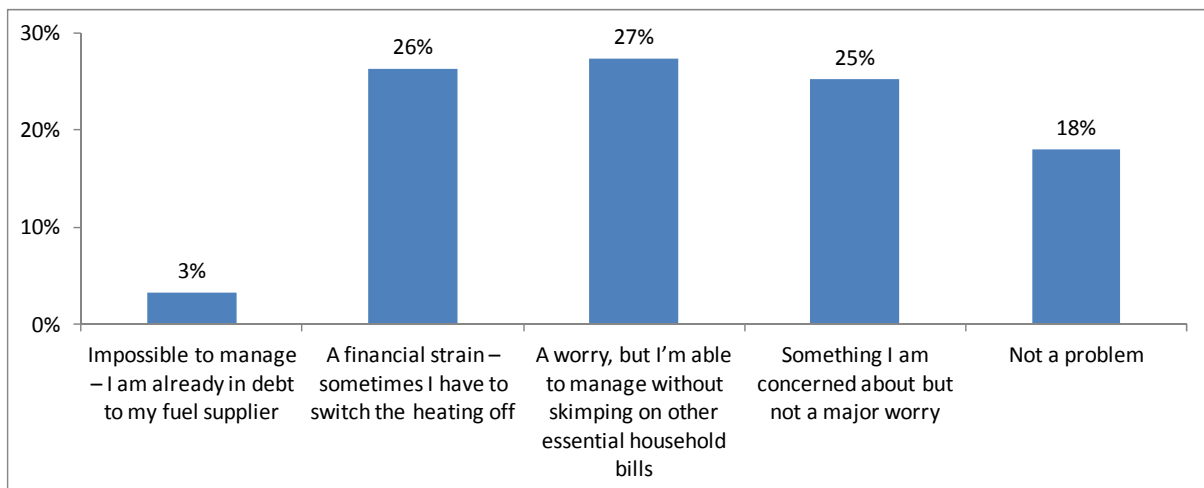


Figure 5: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Ninety-two percent of consumers already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. Thirty-two percent of respondents had switched supplier once in the past, while 27% had switched more than once, a total of 59% of respondents who have experience of switching. The majority (61%) of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, 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.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 26% had done so, and 18% 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 unanswered by 22 people, equal to 7% of respondents). Figure 6 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 energy supplier coming second at 59%.

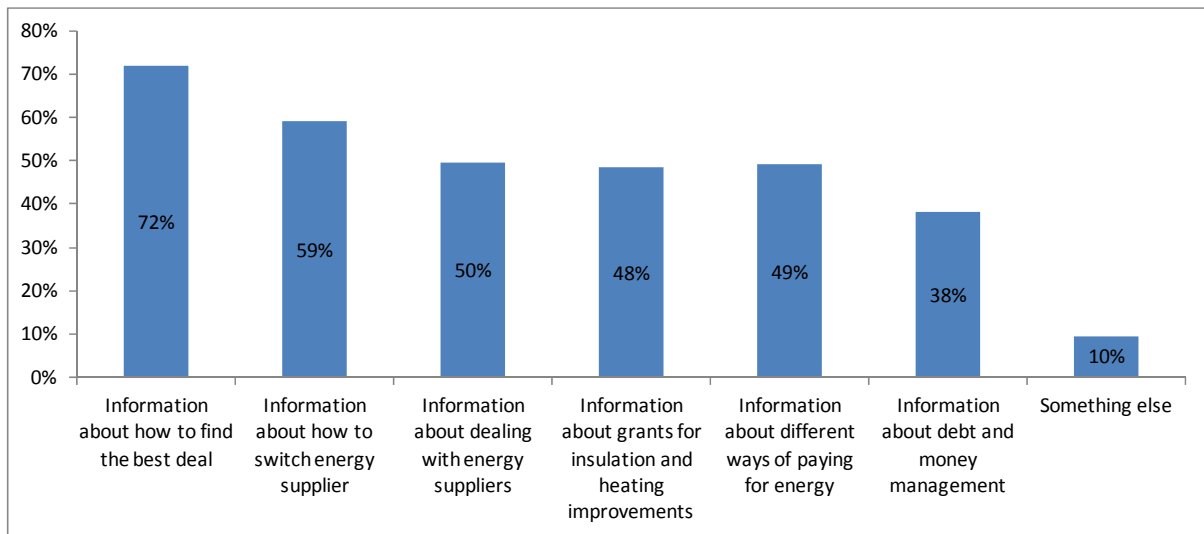


Figure 6: What did you find useful about the session?

Planned follow-up actions

Seventy-six percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of the session, as illustrated in Figure 7.

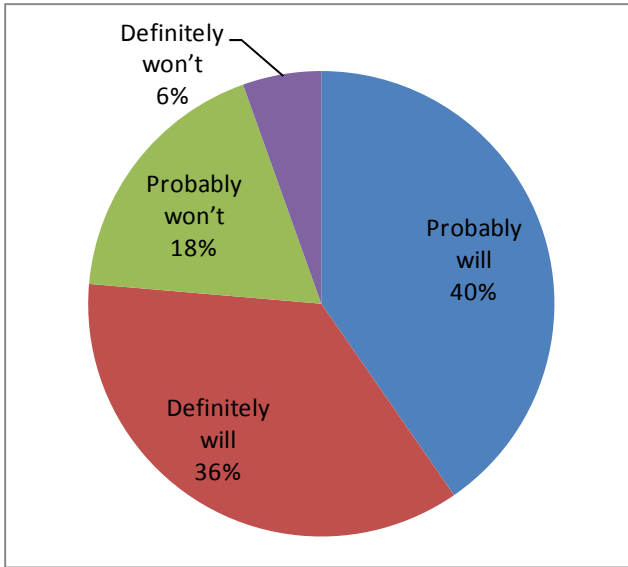


Figure 7: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 8. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 45% of respondents, while telling friends and family about what had been learnt at the session and contacting other energy suppliers were also popular, at 34% and 30% respectively.

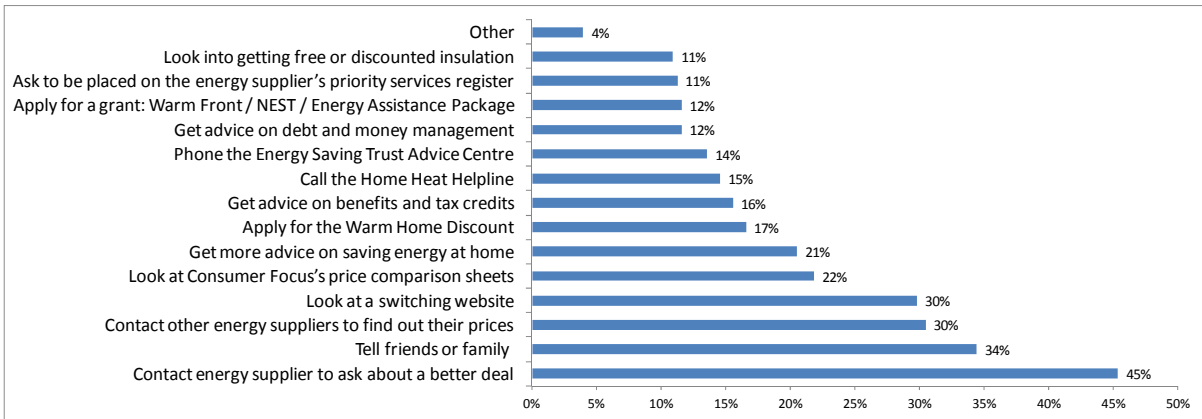


Figure 8: Planned actions following the session

1.2 Consumers: follow-up interviews – Wales

Twenty consumers who were interviewed attended an Energy Best Deal session in Wales; this is equal to 7% of all consumers who attended sessions in Wales and 13% of all interviewees across GB. The absolute number of interviewees is small, and 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

In the interview, consumers were asked whether following the session they did any of the following:

- found out about prices from suppliers
- changed payment method
- looked for more information about energy efficiency or improving their heating system
- Applied for Warm Front, free or discounted insulation, or the Warm Homes Discount
- Sought advice on benefits, tax credits, debt or money management
- Asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register
- Took any steps to save energy in their home (specifically prompted by the EBD session)

Each of these is discussed separately in the following sections. However, overall across all actions, a total of 13 people in Wales had taken at least one of these actions. Even where consumers had not taken action (7 people), most (5) had told family and friends about something they had learnt at the session. One person who had not yet taken action said the interview had prompted her and she would now contact her energy company.

Looking for a better energy tariff

Five people had taken action to look for a better deal since the session. Of these five people, four were offered a better deal – one with both suppliers and three with another supplier. Of these, two people had switched to a new supplier, with one intending to. The other person who was offered a better deal did not take it as it was only a marginally better deal, and they were happy with the customer service and other offers they were getting with their current supplier.

The three people who switched or intended to switch had all switched supplier before, but two had previously done so as the result of an approach from a fuel company salesperson. All had used price comparison websites this time and so were more likely to have found the best deal for them across the whole market.

None of the consumers who were interviewed in Wales had changed the way they paid for their gas or electricity.

The process of switching supplier

The three people who had switched or intended to switch all found the process 'easy' or 'very easy',

Factors which discouraged people

Fifteen interviewees did not look for a better deal. Of those who did not look for a better deal, one was living in accommodation where bills were included, three people said they were already on a

good deal, and two said they liked their current supplier. Eight people said that they had not had time (5) or that it was too much hassle (3).

Trustworthiness of energy companies

Interviewees were asked how trustworthy they perceived energy companies to be, in general. They were given the options: very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not trustworthy, and 'I think mine is ok, but not all of them are trustworthy'. The responses are shown in Figure 9.

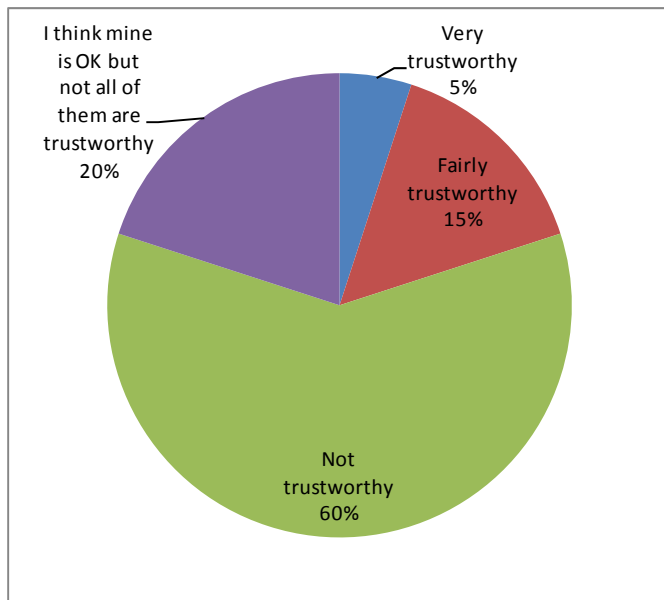


Figure 9: How do you rate the trustworthiness of suppliers?

Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had looked for any more information on improving their home energy efficiency or heating system since the session, and whether they had done so as a direct result of the session. Six interviewees had done so, as a result of the session. Sources of information used were: helpline number given in the Energy Best Deal booklet (1), newspaper (1), energy supplier (2), session delivery organisation (1), the council (1), housing association(1), advice website (1). Some people used more than once source of information.

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes since the session, and whether this was prompted by the Energy Best Deal session. Nine people said that they had done something, as a result of the Energy Best Deal session.

Identifying consumers qualifying for ECO² Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation

Consumers were asked two basic questions about benefits and income. The interview questions were designed during a transition period between two energy supplier obligations, CERT and ECO. Therefore the questions were designed to ascertain which consumers met the most common qualifying criteria for CERT, with the understanding that ECO Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) would be likely to have similar qualifying criteria. 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?

In fact, although the qualifying criteria for HHCRO turned out to be similar to CERT, there was an important difference in that the income threshold for HHCRO is lower, at £15,860. This means that there will be a slight over-estimate in the numbers qualifying for HHCRO; however as not all qualifying benefits were covered there may also be some consumers who would qualify under other criteria.

Although there are other qualifying criteria, 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, these two major criteria were considered to be the ones most likely to be retained in the change from SPG under CERT to HHCRO.

Six interviewees receive Pension Credit, while one receives Child Tax Credit and have a household income under £16,190, making a total of seven interviewees who meet the above criteria. However, for HHCRO, people living in social housing are not eligible⁴. Only one of the six people here does not live in social housing.

Further actions

Interviewees were asked about a set of other actions, relating to seeking advice or applying for heating grants, that they had taken since the session. Seven people had done something, with two

² The ECO is the Government's new domestic energy efficiency programme which has replaced the CERT and CESP programmes, both of which came to a close at the end of 2012. Under the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, "suppliers must deliver measures which result in cost savings and which improve the ability of a householder to affordably heat their home. HHCRO (also known as ECO Affordable Warmth) focuses on low income and vulnerable householders, living in private housing (generally), where residents are in receipt of specific benefits and meet other related conditions (the affordable warmth group' or AWG')." (p.55, ECO Guidance for Suppliers, Ofgem, 13 March 2013). See [http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20\(ECO\)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%2015%20March.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20(ECO)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%2015%20March.pdf)

³ It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide advice to interviewees; 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.

⁴ However, the Carbon Saving Communities Obligation, which is another part of the ECO, will be targeted at specific deprived areas, and in these areas social housing will be eligible.

people taking more than one action. Three asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register, two had applied for the Warm Homes Discount, two had sought advice about benefits and tax credits, two had sought advice about debt and money management, and one had applied for NEST.

Information passed on to friends and family

Fifteen of the interviewees (75%) had passed on information from 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 ten.

1.3 Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Wales

Profile

In Wales 308 questionnaires were returned by frontline workers, a response rate of 75%. This is higher than the response rate for Great Britain, which was 67%. Figure 10 shows the organisations represented by frontline workers in Wales. The largest group of frontline workers in Wales fell under the 'other' organisations. These were housing associations and charities such as Barnardos, Adref, youth charities, and mental health charities. as well as housing associations and support organisations. Thirty-two per cent of Welsh frontline workers came from local authorities or other public sector organisations, with 19% coming from the Citizens Advice Bureau.

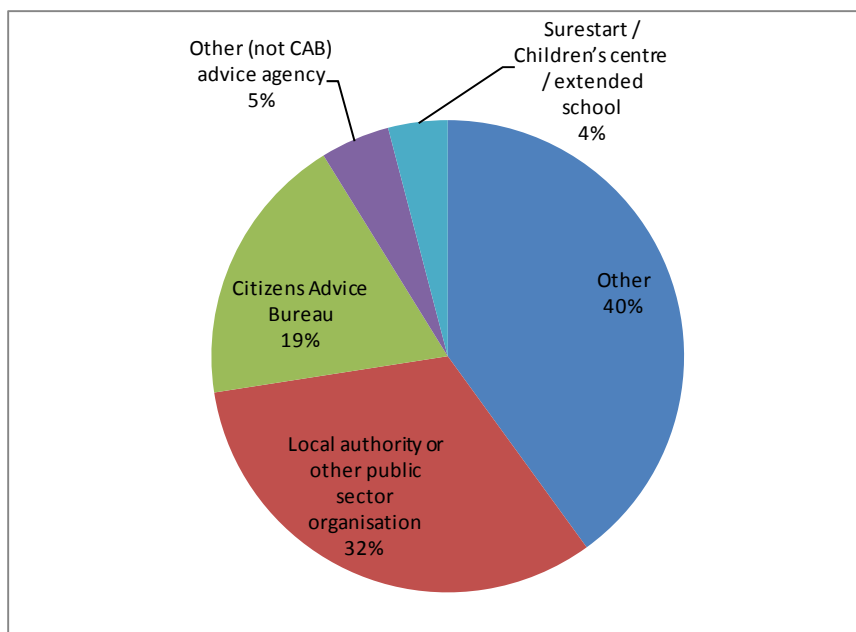


Figure 10: Frontline worker organisation types

Frontline workers were also asked if their organisation specialises in supporting specific groups or advising on specific topics. These are shown in Figure 11, as a percentage of the total number of frontline workers who attended sessions (many people chose more than one option and so the total sums to more than 100%). The topics that frontline workers' organisations in Wales most commonly specialise in are housing (59%), homelessness (41%) and health / mental health (36%).

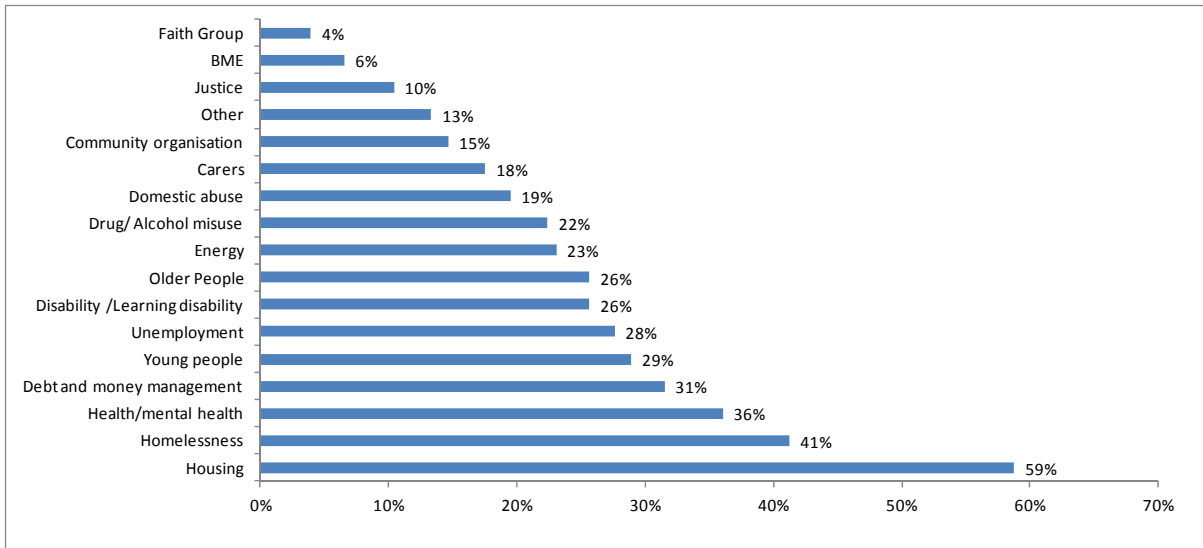


Figure 11: Frontline worker organisation: specialisms

Previous advice-giving

Figure 12 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice on prior to the session. Nearly half of the frontline workers had previously given advice on debt and money management, with nearly as many also advising on benefits and tax credits. The least commonly advised on topics prior to the session relate to specific schemes such as NEST, the Warm Homes Discount or grants for insulation, with around a fifth of frontline workers advising on each of these.

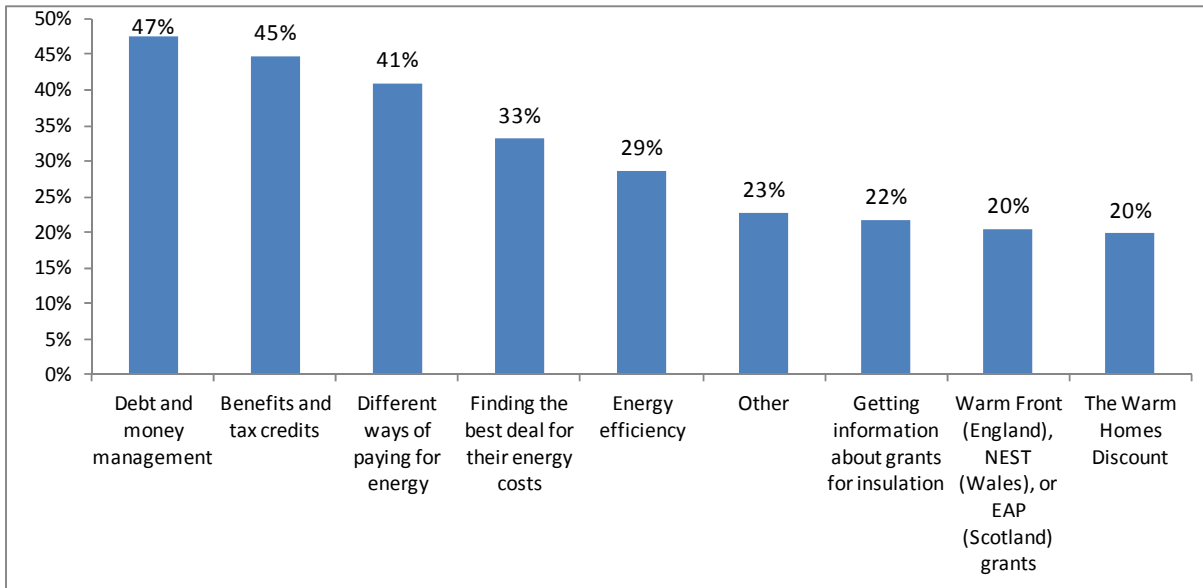


Figure 12: Previous advice-giving

The impact of the session

Eighty-four per cent of frontline workers said that the session had changed their view on fuel poverty. Frontline workers were asked to estimate what percentage of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. As can be seen in Figure 13, just over 30% of frontline workers estimated that 80 to 100% of their clients were in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while just over 31% estimated 60 to 80%.

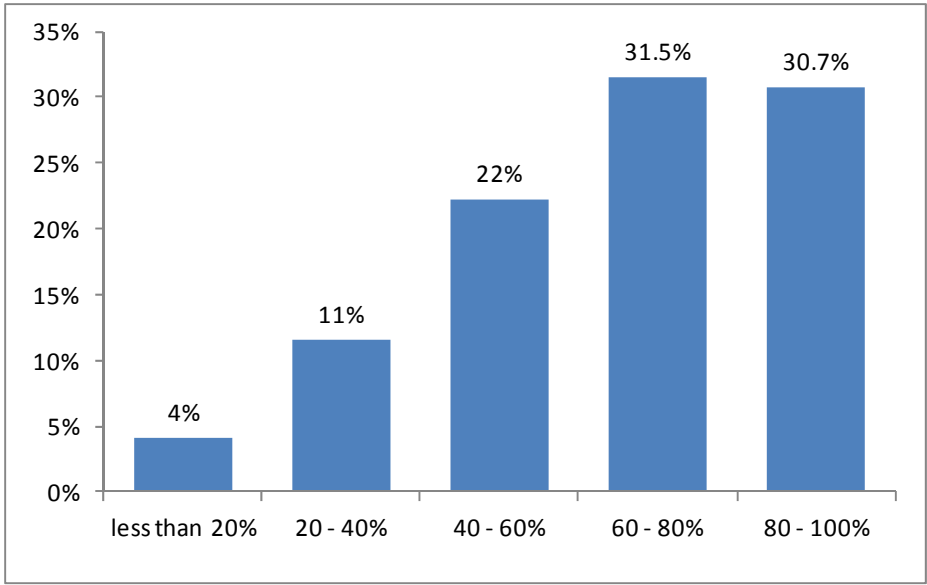


Figure 13: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-eight per cent said they did; 50% to a great extent, and 48% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 14.

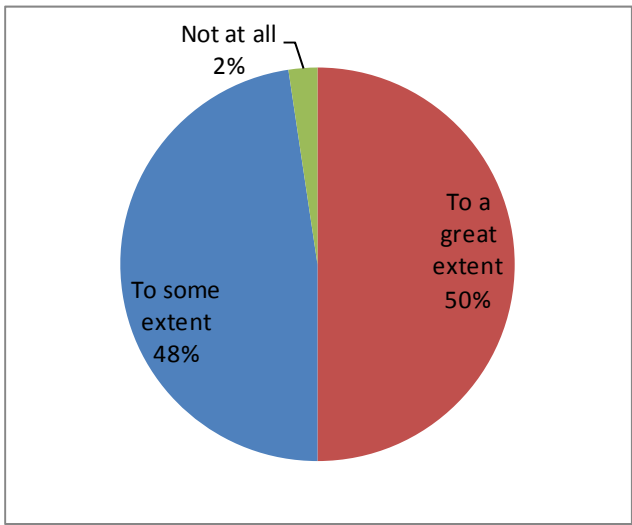


Figure 14: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?

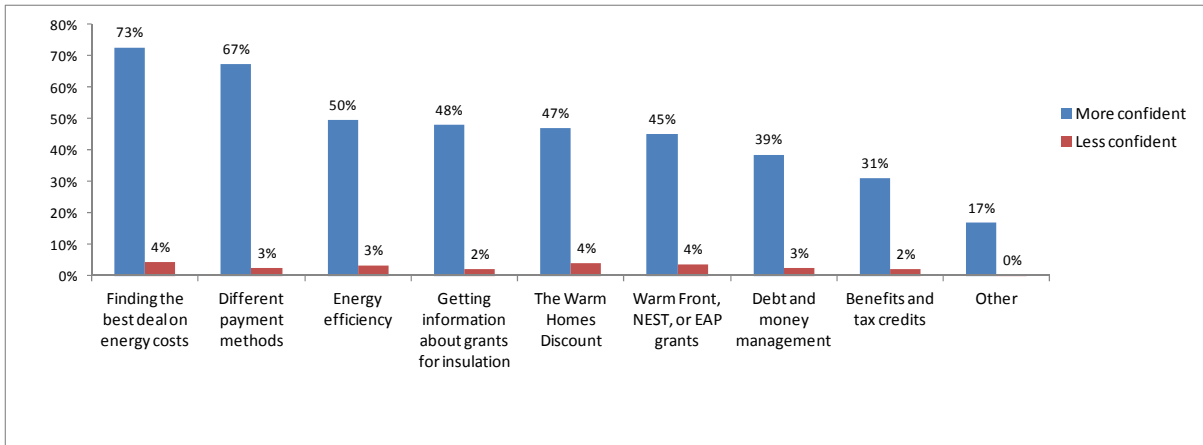


Figure 15: Increases and decreases in confidence after the session

For most topics, a large proportion of frontline workers felt more confident following the session. This was highest for 'Finding the best deal on energy costs', 'Different payment methods' and 'energy efficiency'. For each topic, a small number of frontline workers (up to 4% per topic) felt less confident following the session.

Passing on information from the session

Frontline workers were asked to estimate the number of clients to whom they would pass on information learnt at the session. The distribution is shown in Figure 16. The question was left unanswered by 24% of frontline workers.

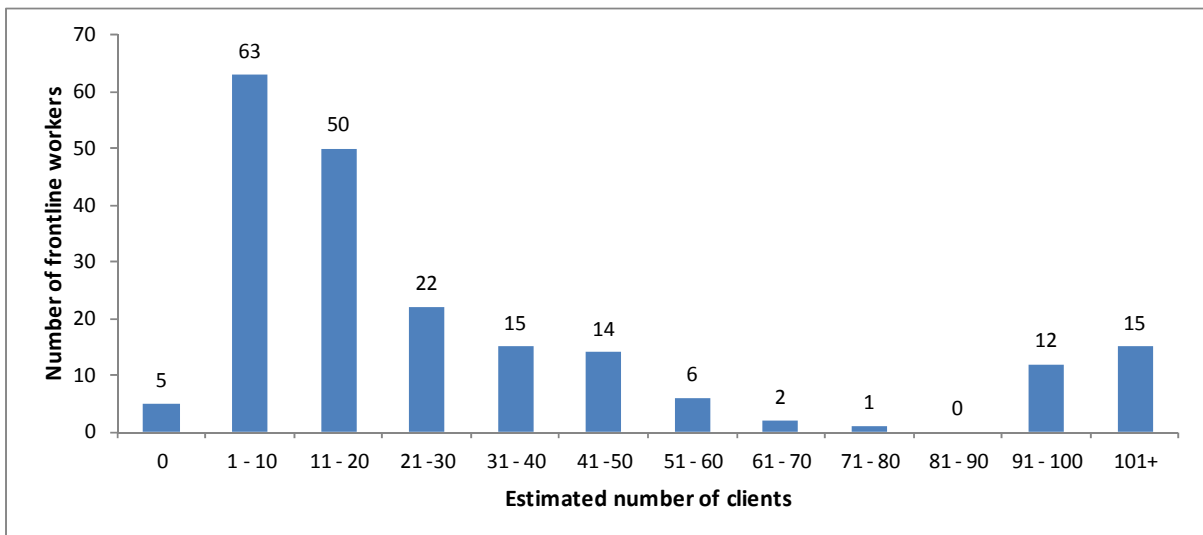


Figure 16: Number of clients information will be passed on to

Frontline workers were also asked if they thought they would pass on information from the session to *colleagues*, and if so, approximately how many they would pass information on to. Ninety-seven percent said they would pass on information (71% definitely and 26% probably). The majority (65%) said they would pass on information to between one and ten colleagues.

Seventy-two percent of frontline workers said they intended to look for a better deal on their own energy following the session.

1.4 Frontline workers: follow-up interviews – Wales

Nineteen frontline workers who attended sessions in Wales were interviewed. This is equal to 5% of all frontline workers who attended sessions in Wales and 13% of all frontline workers interviewed.

Four of the frontline workers were from Citizens Advice Bureaux, three were from other advice agencies, five were from local authorities or other public sector organisations, and 7 were from 'other' organisations, including two charities, a housing association, and a community organisation.

Advice-giving on Energy Best Deal topics

Frontline worker interviewees were asked to rate each of the five main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of their own level of knowledge before and after the presentation, using a scale of one to five where one is no knowledge and five is highly knowledgeable. Figure 17 shows the average score for levels of knowledge before and after the presentation. Scores were similar to overall Great Britain results, but interviewees in general rated their knowledge before the session slightly higher than the average across Great Britain. The average score increased for all topics, following the session.

'Finding the best deal on energy and dealing with suppliers' had the lowest score before the presentation, but the highest after the session.

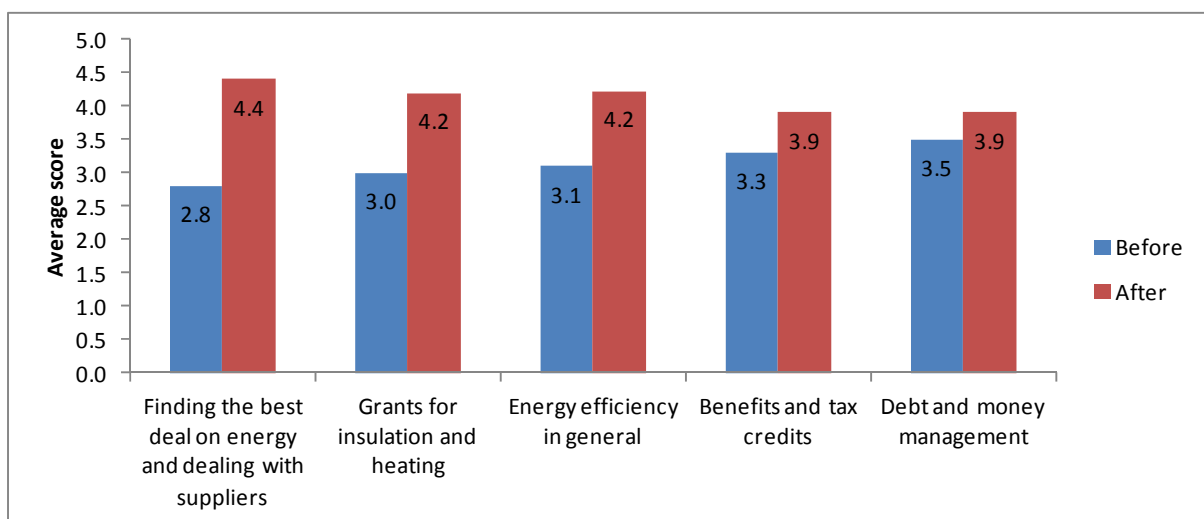


Figure 17: Levels of knowledge in topics covered in the session: average scores before and after

Interviewees were asked to rate the main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of importance to their job role, with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'highly important'. The responses are shown in Figure 18. For each topic, 'highly important' was chosen more frequently than any other rating. Benefits and tax credits was the topic which was most important to most interviewees.

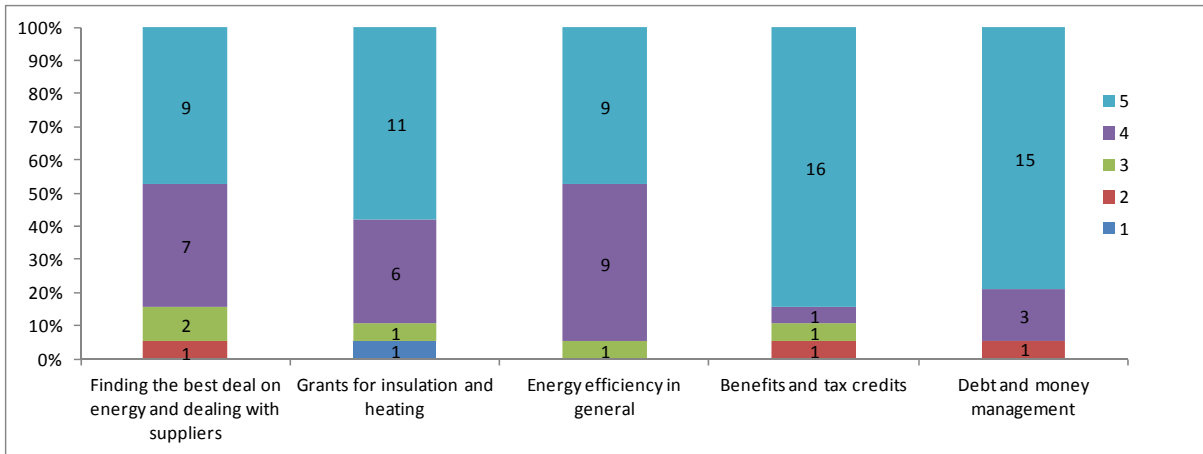


Figure 18: Importance of session topics in terms of interviewees' job roles

To get more detail on the previous question, interviewees were also asked whether any part of the presentation was particularly useful in helping them do their job. The responses are shown in Figure 19. The most common response was that all of the presentation was useful.

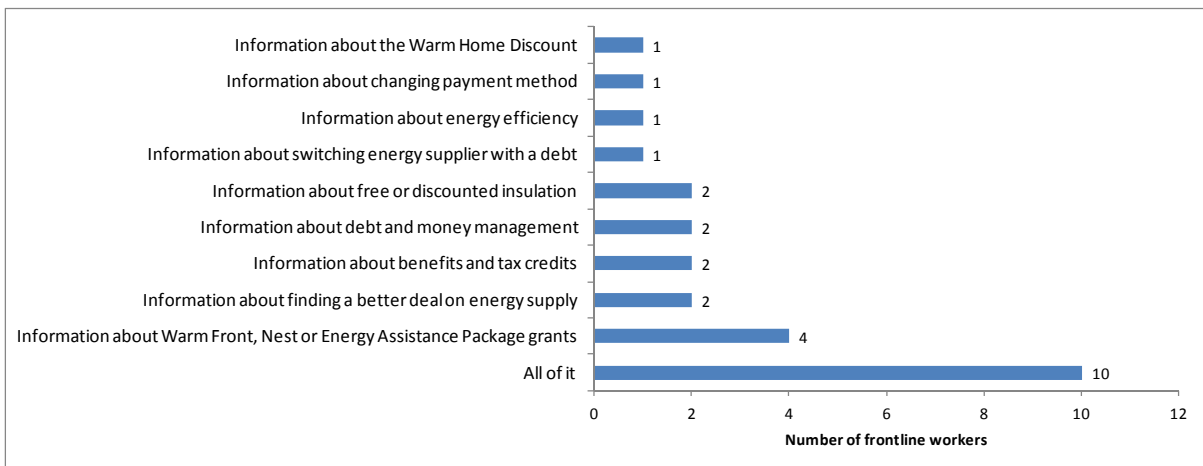


Figure 19: Did you find any part of the presentation particularly useful in helping you do your job?

Interviewees were given a set of statements about the effect of the presentation on the advice they were able to give to clients. They were asked to say whether the statements were applicable to them 'to a great extent', 'to some extent', or not at all.

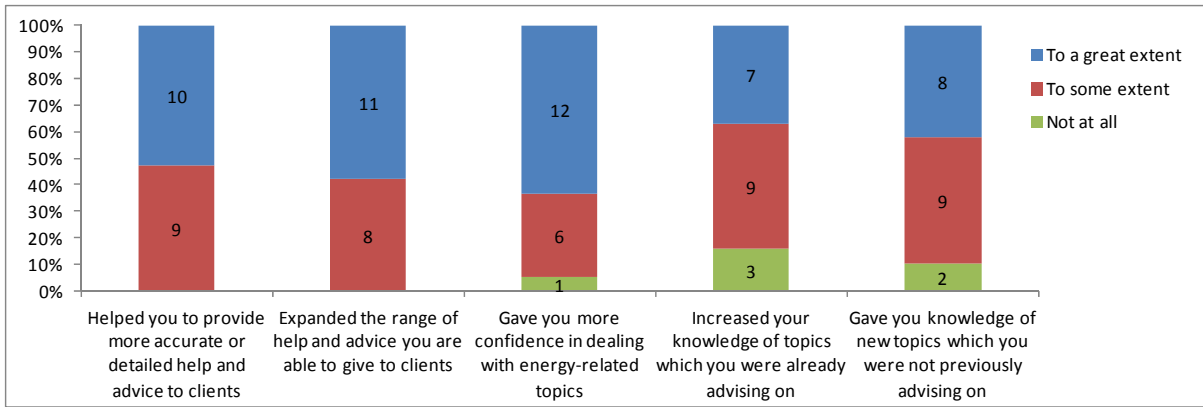


Figure 20: Effect of session in terms of advice giving

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. The answers are shown in Figure 21.

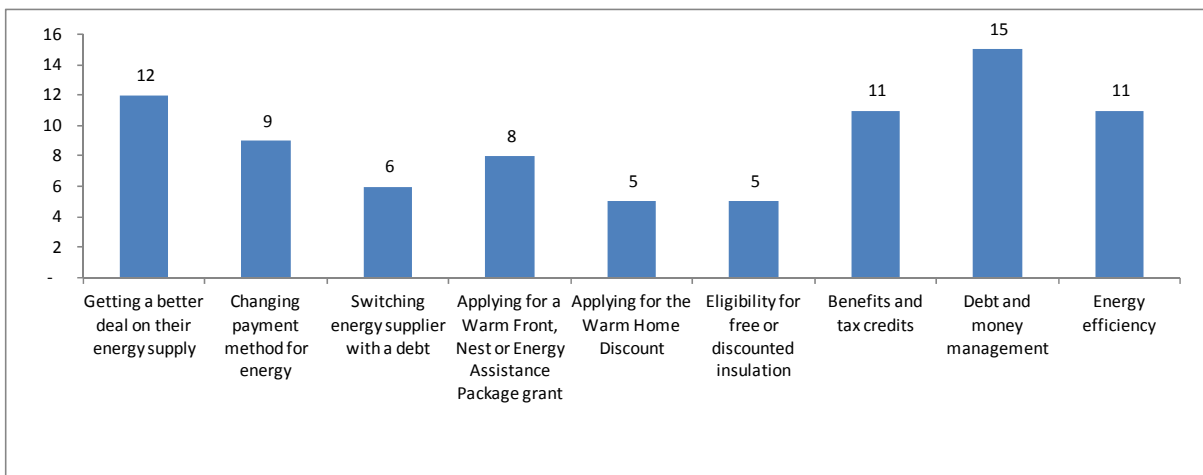


Figure 21: Topics advised on since the presentation

Debt and money management was the topic that the greatest number of frontline workers had given advice on since the session.

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. The total number across interviewees in Wales was 3,788, but this was skewed by a figure of 3,500, reached through a newsletter. Most people passed on information to between one and ten clients.

Eleven interviewees said that they would not have provided as much information to as many clients without attending the session, while seven said they would have provided the information even if they had not attended the session. All interviewees said that they would use information from the presentation to help clients in the future. No frontline workers in Wales felt *less* confident about any topics following the session.

Frontline workers were asked what the most common energy-related issue was that their clients seek help with. Five people said that this was debt, while another twelve said it was the cost of energy and paying bills.

Passing information on to colleagues

Twelve frontline workers said that they had passed some information from the Energy Best Deal session on to their colleagues.

In addition, twelve frontline workers had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family.

Frontline workers' own energy use

Since the session, six frontline workers had looked for a better deal on their own energy supply. Of these, three people had switched either tariff or supplier, or were in the process of doing so.

Eight frontline workers had taken steps to save energy in their own homes since the presentation while another six said that they were already very energy efficient.

1.5 Quality of the presentation and materials - Wales

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, on a scale from poor to excellent (Figure 22). The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainer as 'excellent.'

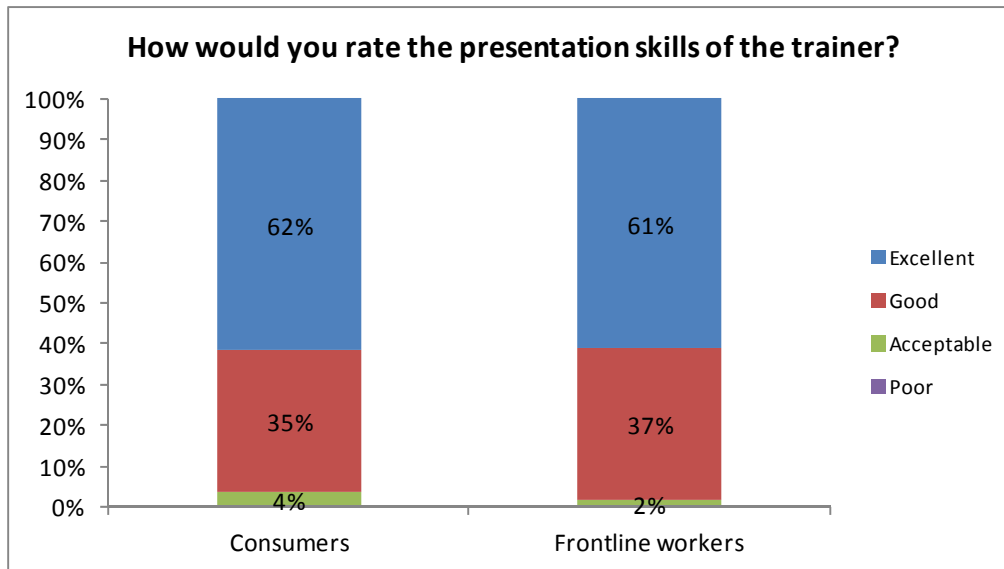


Figure 22: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

Consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the quality of the materials used during the session (Figure 23). This comprised the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts the trainer decided to use. The vast majority rated these as either 'excellent' or 'good', with ratings being roughly evenly split between these two categories.

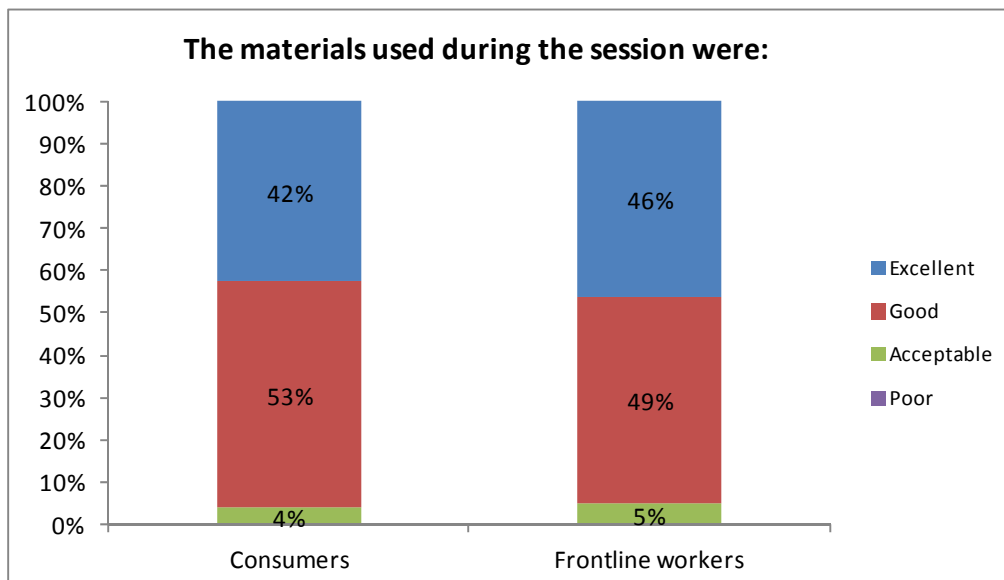


Figure 23: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

Consumers and frontline workers were also asked to rate the quality of the materials provided to take away, which comprised a booklet produced by Citizens Advice and Ofgem, and any handouts

the trainer decided to include (Figure 24). Again, the vast majority rated these as either 'excellent' or 'good', with ratings being roughly evenly split between these two categories.

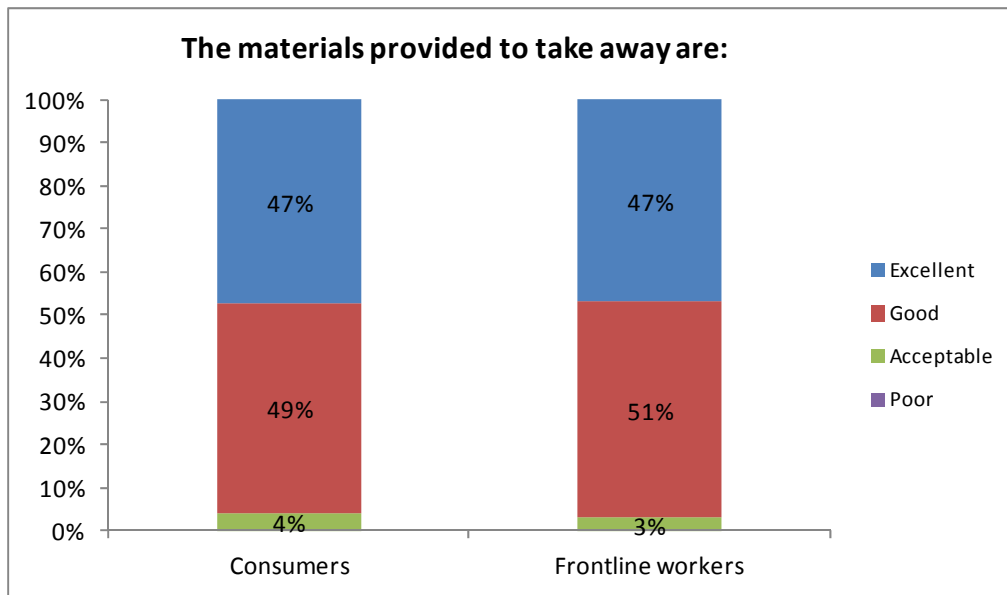


Figure 24: Ratings of the materials provided to take away

2. Results for Scotland

2.1 Consumers: questionnaire responses - Scotland

Demographic information

In Scotland 823 consumers attended the Energy Best Deal sessions, and questionnaire responses were received from 519 of these consumers. This is a 63% response rate, which is slightly higher than the overall response rate of 61% in Great Britain. Figure 25 to Figure 27 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in Scotland.

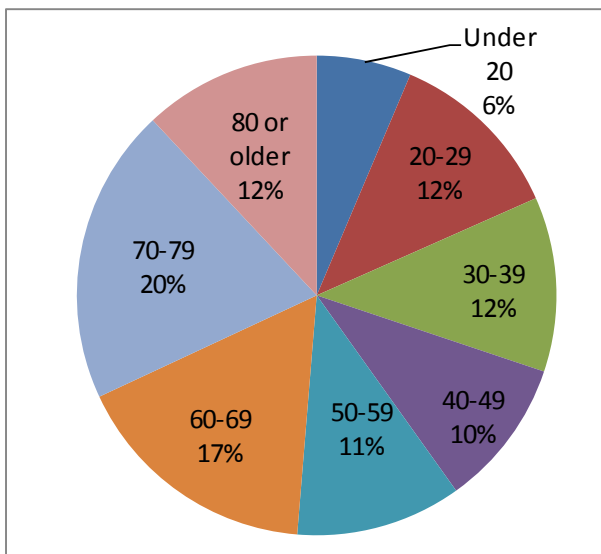


Figure 25: Age of respondents

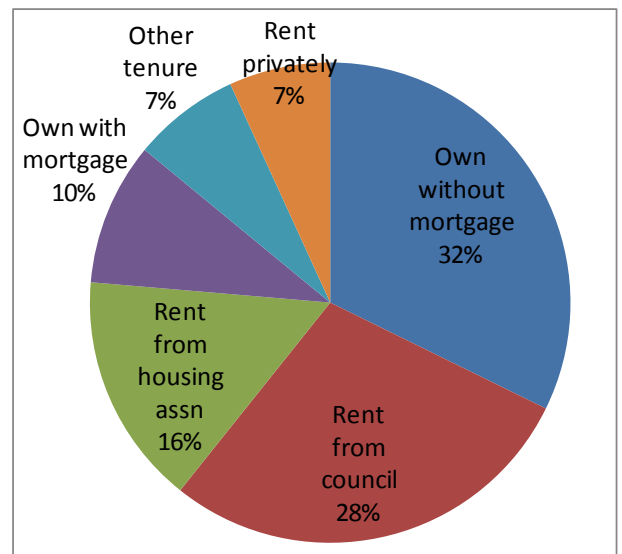


Figure 26: Tenure of respondents

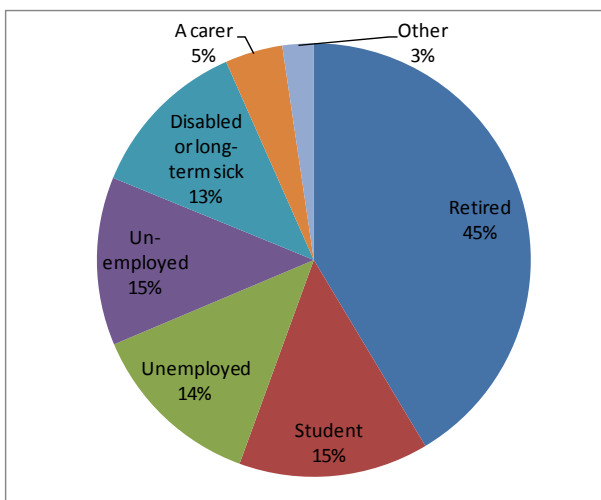


Figure 27: Occupation of respondents

Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with heating their home in winter they were asked two questions. The first asked whether they were able to heat their home to a comfortable level (Figure 28) and the second about their winter fuel bills (Figure 29). Forty-six percent are not able to heat their home to a comfortable level, which is slightly higher than the average for Great Britain. Over a fifth (21%) find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 22% worry about their bills but are able to manage. More consumers than the national average (11% in Scotland compared to 6% in Great Britain) find their winter fuel bills impossible to manage and are already in debt.

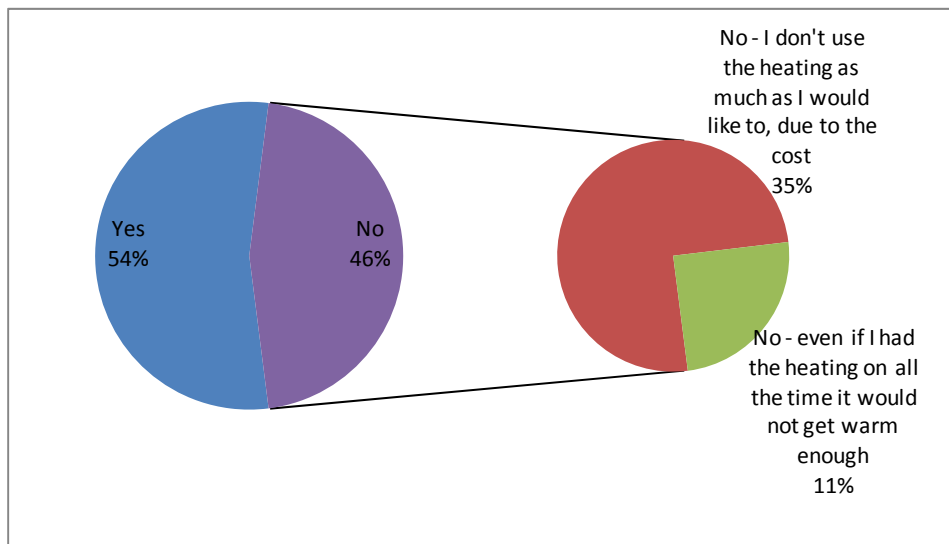


Figure 28: Can you heat your home to a comfortable level in winter?

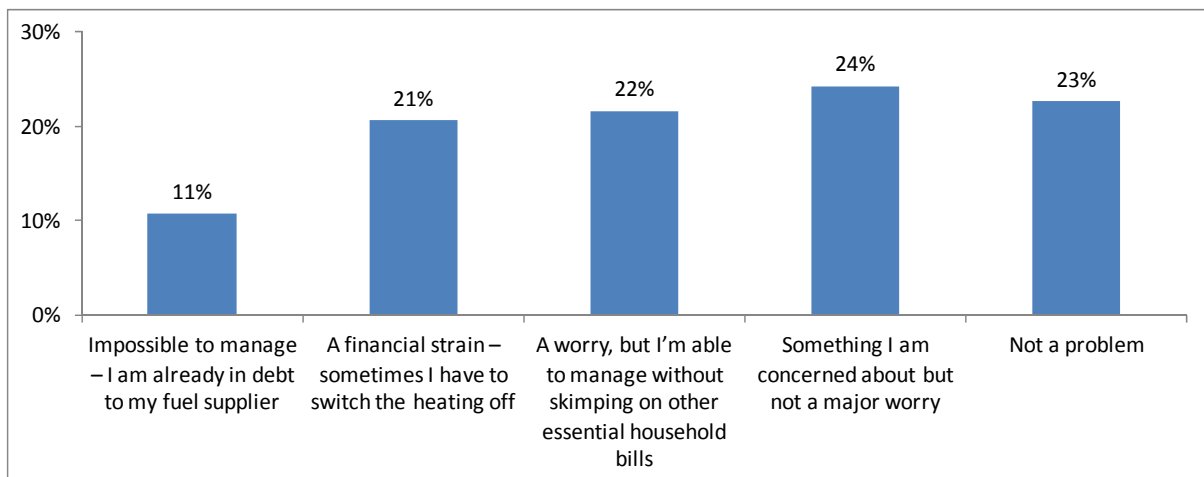


Figure 29: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Eighty-eight percent of consumers in Scotland already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. A total of 28% of consumers had switched supplier once in the past, and a further 22% had switched more than once. Fifty-five percent of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, having switched on their own initiative, 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.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 21% had done so and 20% 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 26 people, equal to 5% of respondents). Figure 30 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 68% of respondents, with information about how to switch energy supplier coming second at 56%.

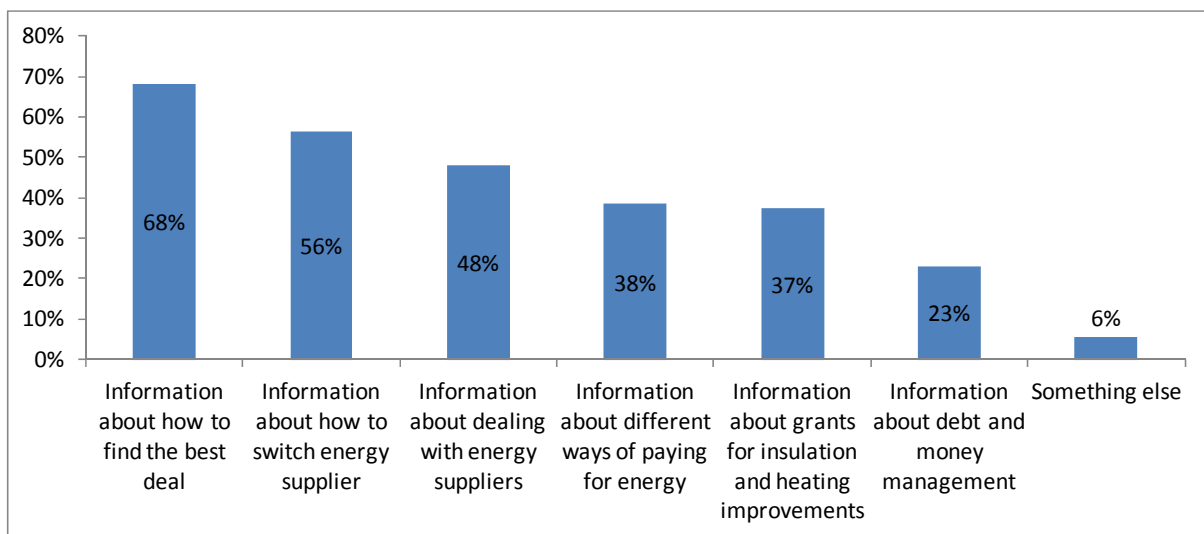


Figure 30: What did you find useful about the session?

Planned follow-up actions

Seventy-two percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of this session (34% said they definitely will and 38% said they probably will do something), as illustrated in Figure 31.

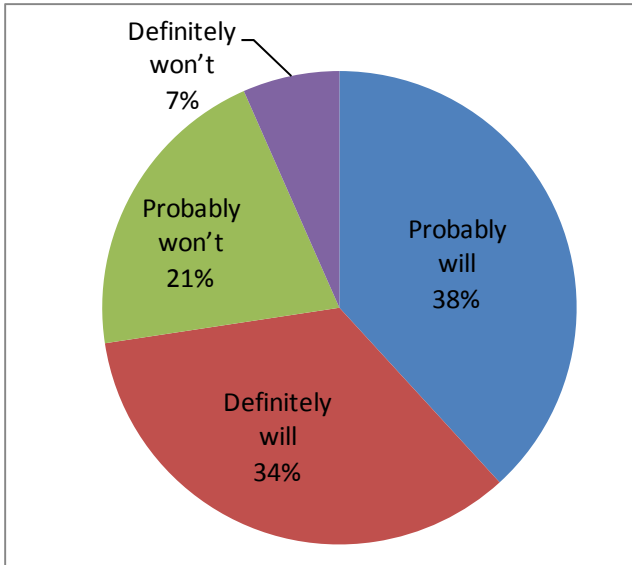


Figure 31: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 32. Contacting the current energy supplier to ask about a better deal was the most popular planned action at 45% of respondents, followed by applying for the Warm Home Discount with 28% of respondents.

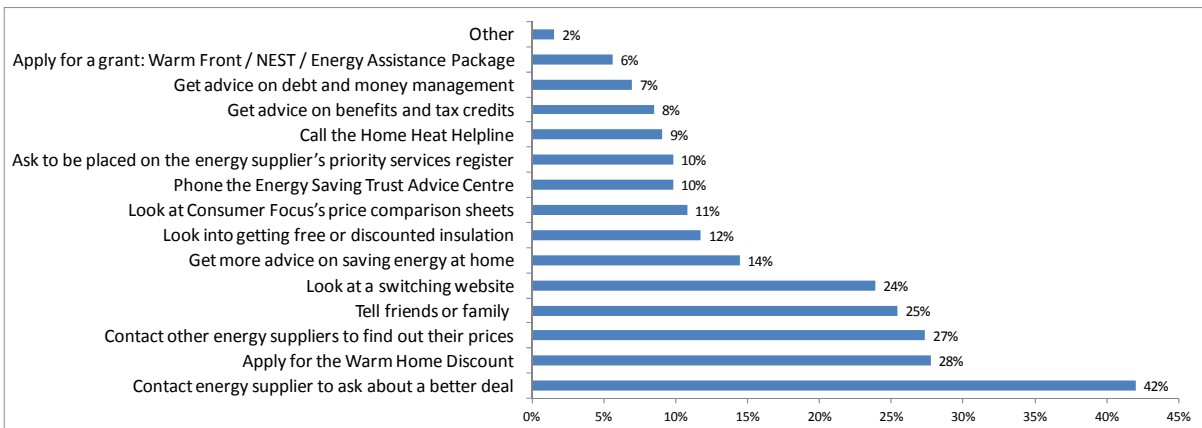


Figure 32: Planned actions following the session

2.2 Consumers: follow-up interviews – Scotland

Ten consumers who attended sessions in Scotland were interviewed. This is equal to 1% of consumers who attended sessions in Wales, and to 7% of all interviewees.

Action taken since the session

In the interview, consumers were asked whether following the session they did any of the following:

- found out about prices from suppliers
- changed payment method
- looked for more information about energy efficiency or improving their heating system
- Applied for Warm Front, free or discounted insulation, or the Warm Homes Discount
- Sought advice on benefits, tax credits, debt or money management
- Asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register
- Took any steps to save energy in their home (specifically prompted by the EBD session)

Each of these is discussed separately in the following sections. However, overall across all actions, a total of eight out of ten people had taken at least one of these actions. One of the people who had not taken any actions had told friends and family about the session.

Looking for a better energy tariff

Three out of the ten Scottish consumers had looked for a better deal on their energy. One had checked with their own supplier, one with a different supplier and one with both their current and a different supplier. Two of them found a better deal with their current supplier. Two found a better deal with a different supplier (one person found a better deal with both). One consumer switched to a better tariff with the existing supplier.

One of the people who looked for a better tariff had switched supplier once in the past, in response to an approach from a fuel company salesperson, while two had never switched supplier before.

The two interviewees who checked prices from different suppliers both used price comparison websites.

One Scottish interviewee had changed the way they paid for the gas and electricity, from paying on arrival of the bill to direct debit payments.

Factors which discouraged people

Interviewees who did not look for a better deal said that it was because they had not had time (3 consumers), and a variety of other reasons including believing they were already on a good deal (1), could not switch due to personal circumstances (1 person planned to move house, while another was not in charge of the bills) or needed help to go through the process (1 person, due to disability).

Trustworthiness of energy companies

Interviewees were asked how trustworthy they perceived energy companies to be, in general. They were given the options: very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not trustworthy, and 'I think mine is ok, but not all of them are trustworthy'. The responses are shown in Figure 33.

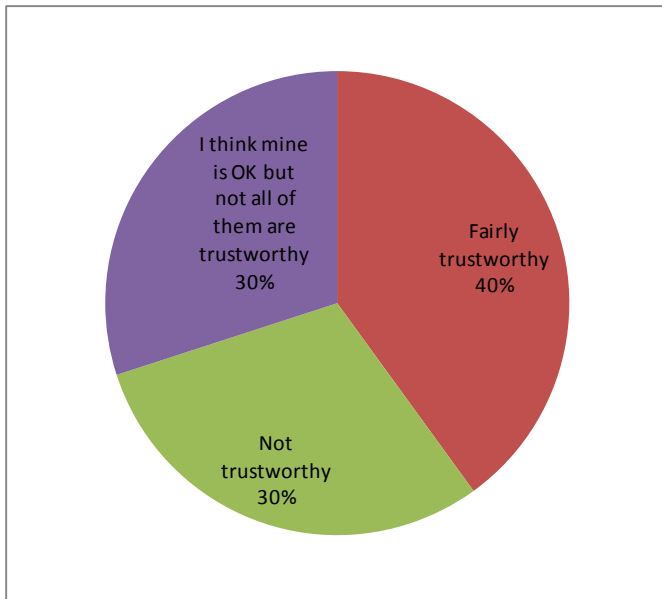


Figure 33: How do you rate the trustworthiness of suppliers?

Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes or to make their homes more energy efficient since the session. Five said they had, and one further consumer said they had but it was not prompted by the Energy Best Deal session. Three of these people had undertaken low or no-cost actions, such as turning off appliances when not in use or adjusting their heating controls. Two people had applied for insulation, one from the council and the other from their landlord. Finally one consumer had installed a cladding on the outside of their house as a kind of solid wall insulation.

Identifying consumers qualifying for ECO⁵ Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation

Consumers were asked two basic questions about benefits and income. The interview questions were designed during a transition period between two energy supplier obligations, CERT and ECO. Therefore the questions were designed to ascertain which consumers met the most common

⁵ The ECO is the Government's new domestic energy efficiency programme which has replaced the CERT and CESP programmes, both of which came to a close at the end of 2012. Under the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, "suppliers must deliver measures which result in cost savings and which improve the ability of a householder to affordably heat their home. HHCRO (also known as ECO Affordable Warmth) focuses on low income and vulnerable householders, living in private housing (generally), where residents are in receipt of specific benefits and meet other related conditions (the affordable warmth group' or AWG')." (p.55, ECO Guidance for Suppliers, Ofgem, 13 March 2013). See

[http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20\(ECO\)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20(ECO)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf)

qualifying criteria for CERT, with the understanding that ECO Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) would be likely to have similar qualifying criteria. Interviewees were asked⁶:

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

In fact, although the qualifying criteria for HHCRO turned out to be similar to CERT, there was an important difference in that the income threshold for HHCRO is lower, at £15,860. This means that there will be a slight over-estimate in the numbers qualifying for HHCRO; however as not all qualifying benefits were covered there may also be some consumers who would qualify under other criteria.

Although there are other qualifying criteria, 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, these two major criteria were considered to be the ones most likely to be retained in the change from SPG under CERT to HHCRO.

Two interviewees receive Pension Credit, while one receives Child Tax Credit and have a household income under £16,190, making a total of three interviewees who meet the above criteria. However, for HHCRO, people living in social housing are not eligible⁷. Applying this further criteria removes one person, making a total of three interviewees likely to qualify for HHCRO.

Further actions

Interviewees were asked about a set of other actions, relating to seeking advice or applying for heating grants, that they had taken since the session. Three people had taken action; one had applied for the Warm Homes Discount, one had sought advice on benefits and tax credits, and one had sought advice on debt and money management.

Information passed on to friends and family

Eight out of the ten Scottish consumers interviewed said they had passed on information from the 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 two to 15.

⁶ It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide advice to interviewees; 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.

⁷ However, the Carbon Saving Communities Obligation, which is another part of the ECO, will be targeted at specific deprived areas, and in these areas social housing will be eligible.

2.3 Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Scotland

Profile

In Scotland 157 frontline workers returned questionnaires from the session. This is a response rate of 65%, only very slightly lower than the GB figure of 67%. Figure 34 shows the organisations represented by the frontline workers in Scotland. There are fewer organisation types represented in Scotland than in England and Wales, and the majority (70%) of frontline workers belong to the Citizens Advice Bureau. 'Other' organisations include Housing Support charities and the NHS.

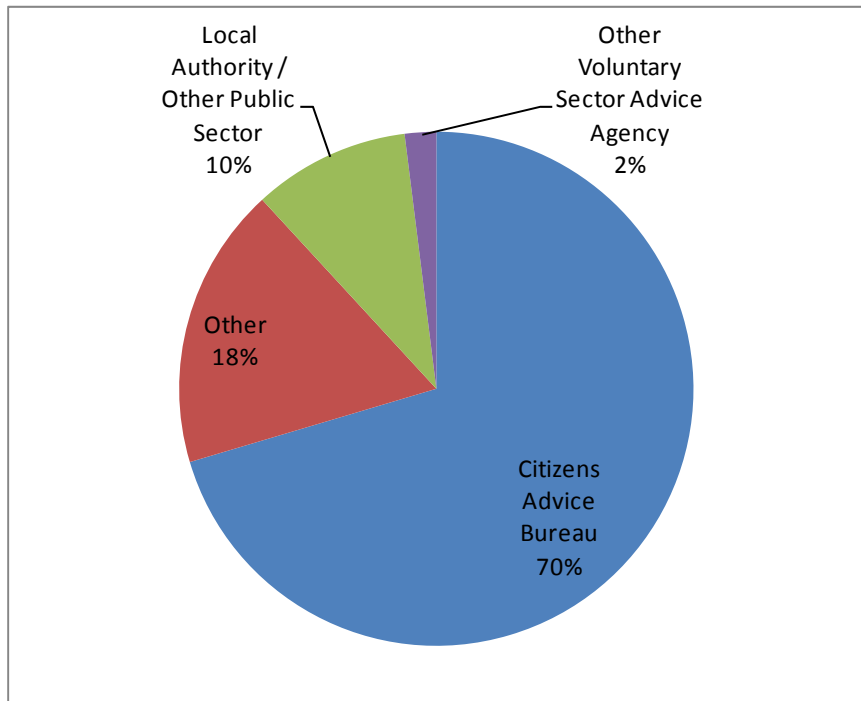


Figure 34: Frontline worker organisation types

Frontline workers were also asked if their organisation specialises in supporting specific groups or advising on specific topics. These are shown in Figure 35, as a percentage of the total number of frontline workers who attended sessions (many people chose more than one option and so the total sums to more than 100%). The topics that frontline workers' organisations in Scotland most commonly specialise in are debt and money management (58%), housing (55%) and homelessness (52%).

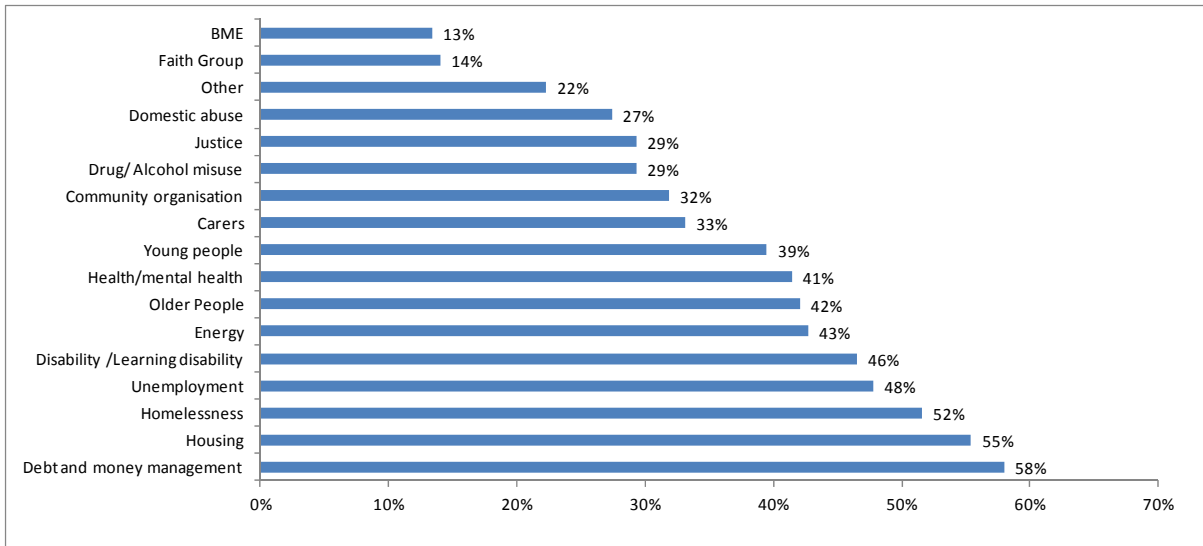


Figure 35: Frontline worker organisation types

Previous advice-giving

Figure 36 shows the topics no which frontline workers had given advice prior to the session. Sixty-four per cent had given advice on benefits and tax credits, with 59% had given advice on debt and money management. Topics about specific grants and energy efficiency were less commonly advised on, although still around a fifth of frontline workers. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.

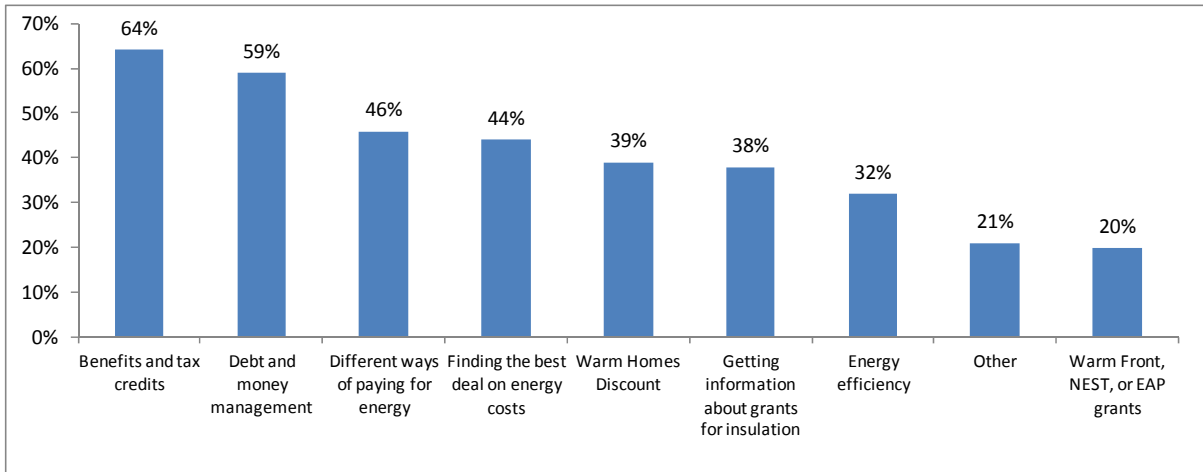


Figure 36: Previous advice-giving

The impact of the session

Eighty-one per cent 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 37. Just under a third estimate that 40-60% of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 60% estimate this figure to be over 60% of their clients.

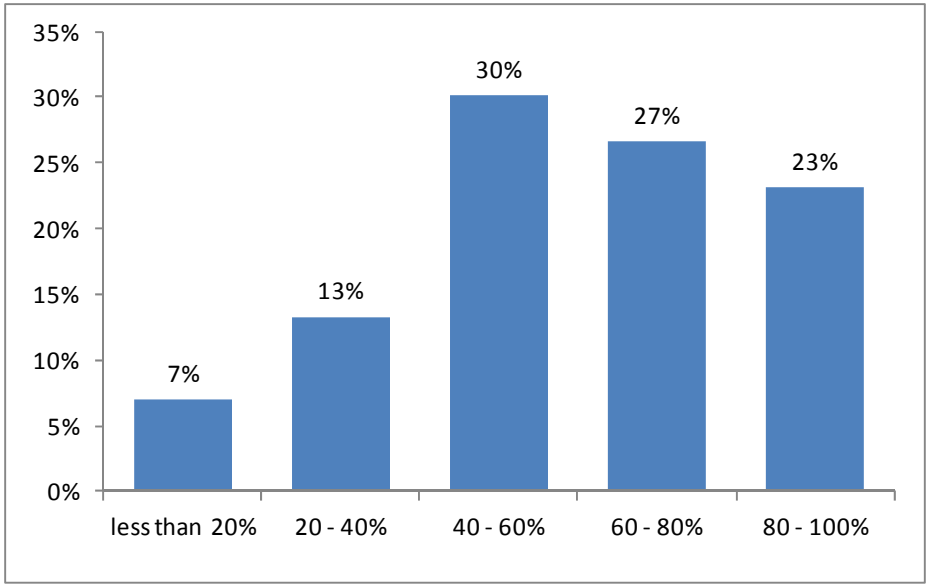


Figure 37: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-nine per cent said they did; 52% to a great extent and 47% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 38.

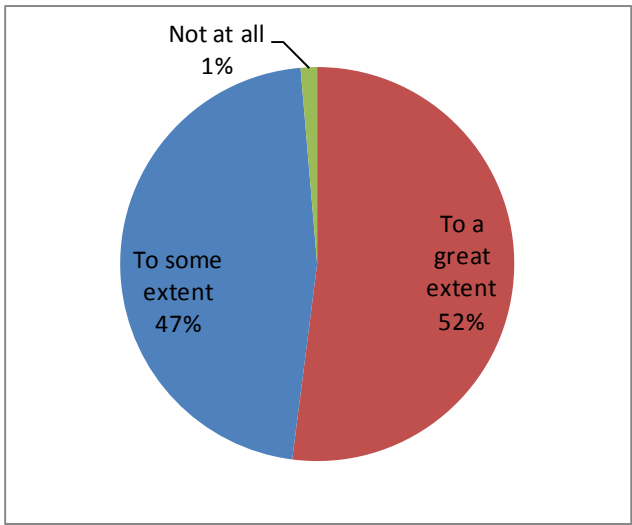


Figure 38: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?

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 39.

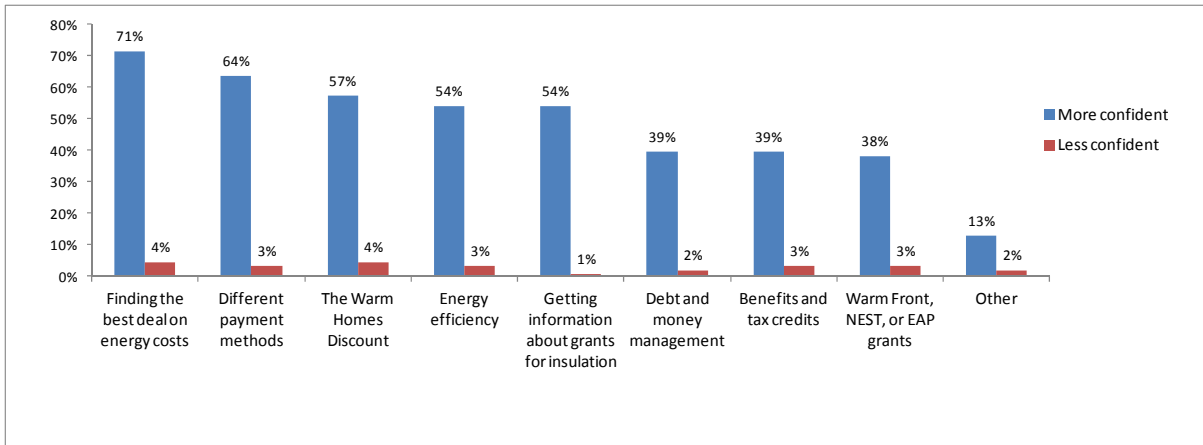


Figure 39: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session

High proportions of frontline workers felt an increase in confidence on the topics covered in the session, with Warm Front, NEST or AEP grants being the topic where least respondents felt more confident. A small number of frontline workers felt less confident following the session – this was 1% to 3% for all topics covered.

Passing on information from the session

Frontline workers were asked to estimate the number of clients to whom they would pass on information learnt at the session. The distribution is shown in Figure 40.

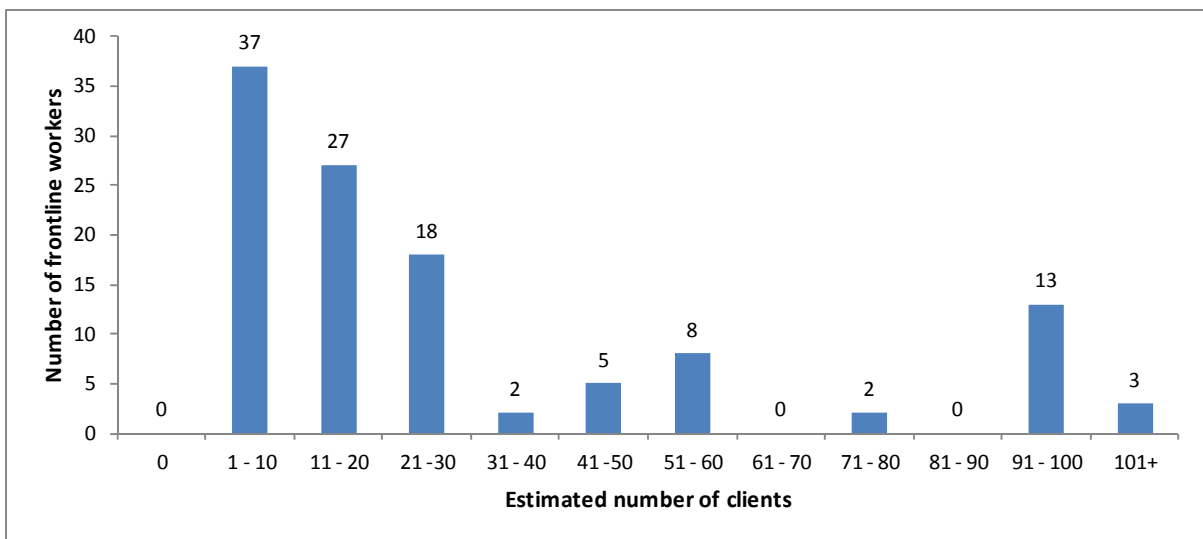


Figure 40: Number of clients information will be passed on to

Although no-one answered that they would pass on information to zero clients, 42 respondents (27% of frontline workers) did not answer this question. Frontline workers were also asked if they thought they would pass on information learnt at the session to **colleagues**, and if so, approximately how many. Ninety-five percent said they would pass on information to colleagues (64% definitely and 31% probably). The majority (59%) said they would pass on information to between one and ten colleagues.

Seventy-four percent of frontline workers said they intended to look into getting a better deal on their own energy following the session.

2.4 Frontline workers: follow-up interviews – Scotland

Nine frontline workers who attended sessions in Scotland were interviewed. This represents 4% of all frontline workers who attended sessions in Scotland, and 13% of all frontline worker interviewees.

Seven of the frontline workers interviewed were from Citizens Advice Bureaux and two were from 'other' organisations with no further details.

Advice-giving on Energy Best Deal topics

Frontline worker interviewees were asked to rate each of the five main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of their own level of knowledge before and after the presentation, using a scale of one to five where one is no knowledge and five is highly knowledgeable. Figure 41 shows the average score for levels of knowledge before and after the presentation. The average score increased for all topics, following the session.

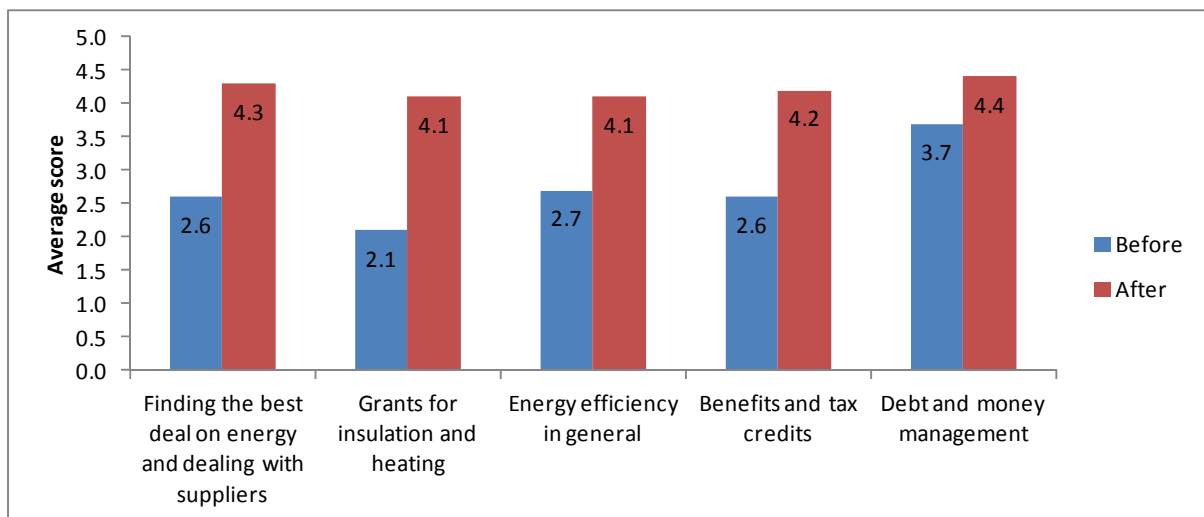


Figure 41: Levels of knowledge in topics covered in the session: average scores before and after

Interviewees were asked to rate the main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of importance to their job role, with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'highly important'. The responses are shown in Figure 42. For each topic, 'highly important' was chosen more frequently than any other rating, apart from grants for insulation and heating, which was equally split between highly and moderately important.

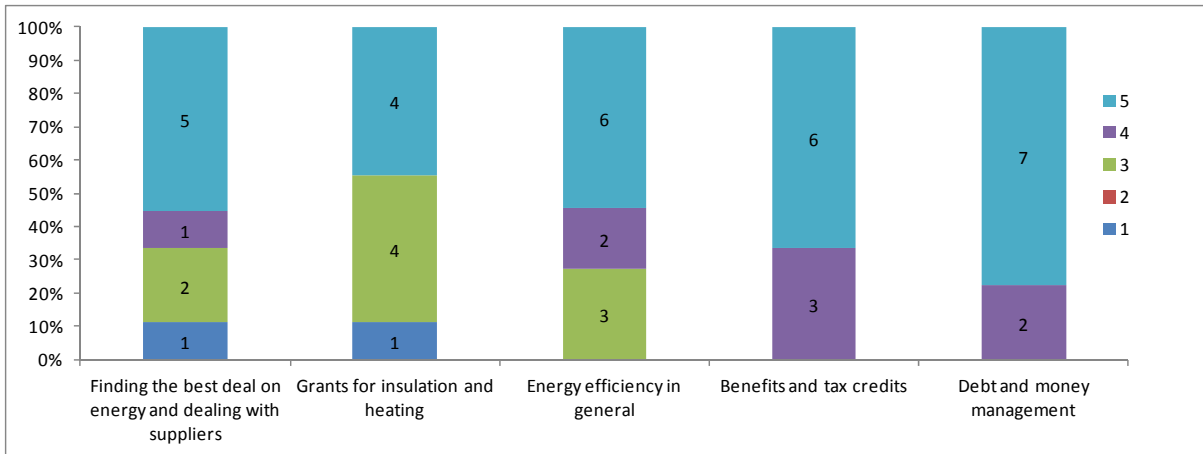


Figure 42: Importance of session topics in terms of interviewees' job roles

When asked if there was anything they found particularly useful about the presentation, four people said they found all of it useful, and three people said they found information on finding a better deal on energy supply useful. Topics identified as useful by one person each were: Information about changing payment method, Information about switching energy supplier with a debt, Information about Energy Assistance Package grants, Information about free or discounted insulation, and Information about benefits and tax credits.

Interviewees were given a set of statements about the effect of the presentation on the advice they were able to give to clients. They were asked to say whether the statements were applicable to them 'to a great extent', 'to some extent', or not at all.

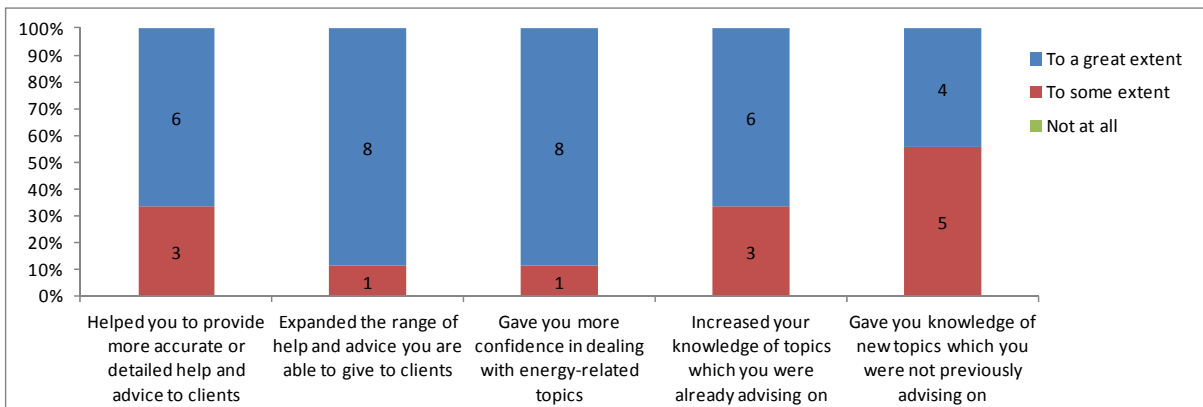


Figure 43: Effect of session in terms of advice giving

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. The answers are shown in Figure 44.

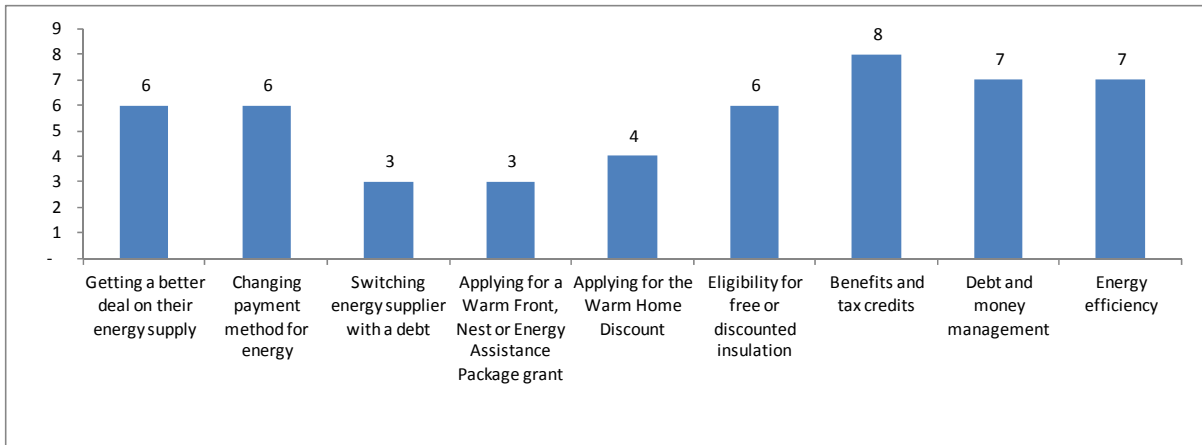


Figure 44: Topics advised on since the presentation

Most frontline workers interviewed in this group were from Citizens Advice Bureaux, so providing information about benefits and tax credits and money management is part of their day to day work. However, most frontline workers had advised on the energy specific-topics since the presentation as well.

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. This ranged from 3 to 120 people, with most providing information to between 3 and 8 clients. In terms of the percentage this represented of the total number of clients they had seen in this time, this ranged from 5% to 100% of clients.

When asked if they would have provided this information to as many clients without attending the session, three said that they would have done, but of these two said they would have done so with less confidence and detail. One person said they probably would have provided the same information, but with less confidence. The remaining five said they would not have provided the information to the same number of clients.

Frontline workers were asked what the most common energy-related issue was that their clients seek help with. Five frontline workers said it was the cost of bills, one said managing debt and switching supplier with a debt, one said switching suppliers, and one said understanding tariffs.

Passing information on to colleagues

Five frontline workers said that they had passed some information from the Energy Best Deal session on to their colleagues. These frontline workers had between them passed on information to a total of 61 colleagues.

In addition, all nine frontline workers had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family.

Frontline workers' own energy use

Since the session, five frontline workers had looked for a better deal on their own energy supply, and all of them had switched either tariff or supplier, or were in the process of doing so.

All nine frontline workers interviewed had also taken steps to save energy in their own homes since the presentation.

2.5 Quality of the presentation and materials - Scotland

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, on a scale from poor to excellent (Figure 45). The majority of both consumers and frontline workers, in particular frontline workers, rated the presentation skills of the trainer as 'excellent.'

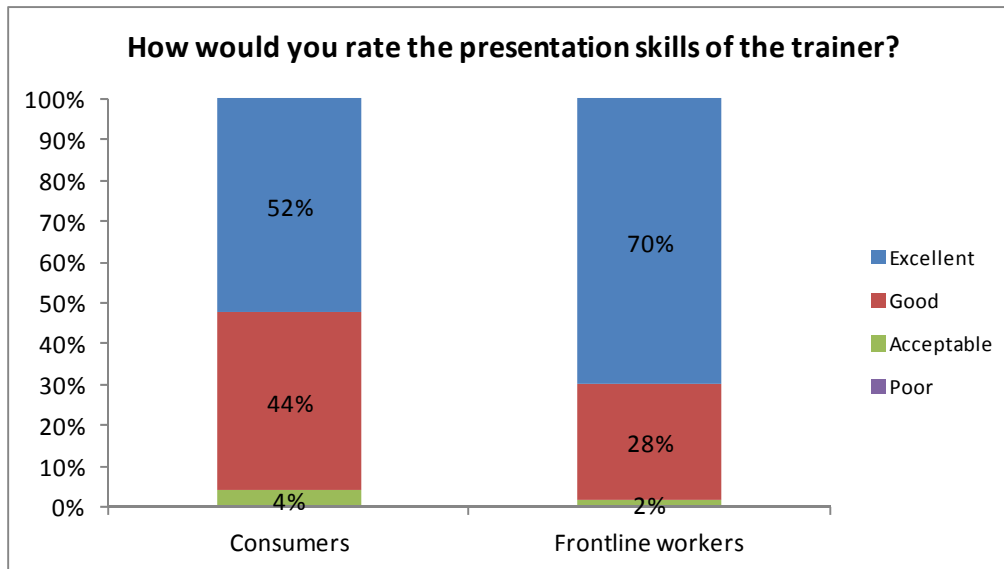


Figure 45: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

Consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the quality of the materials used during the session (Figure 46). This comprised the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts the trainer decided to use. The majority rated these as either 'good', with most others rating them as 'excellent'.

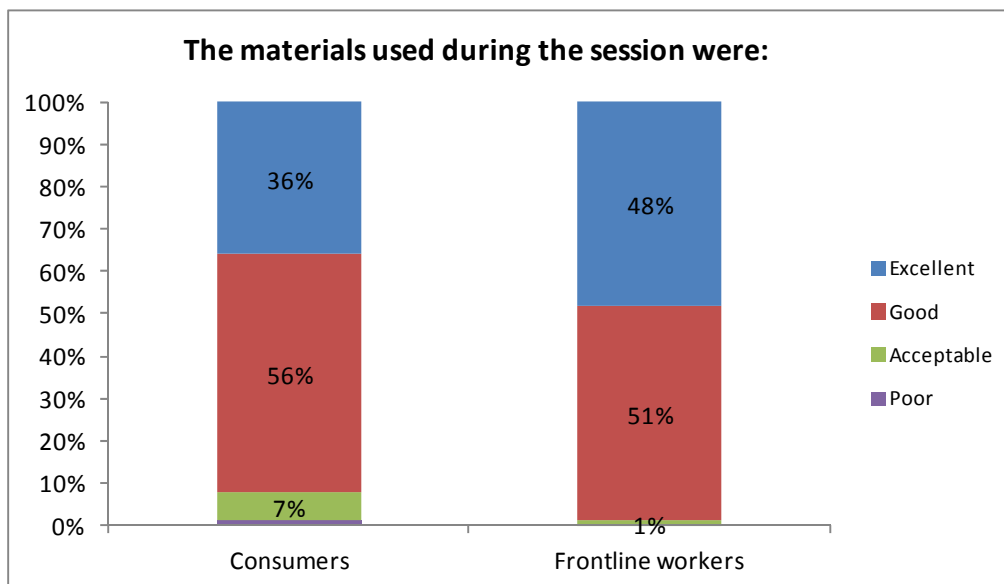


Figure 46: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

Consumers and frontline workers were also asked to rate the quality of the materials provided to take away, which comprised a booklet produced by Citizens Advice and Ofgem, and any handouts the trainer decided to include (Figure 47). The majority of consumers rated the materials as 'good', while the majority of frontline workers rated them as 'excellent.'

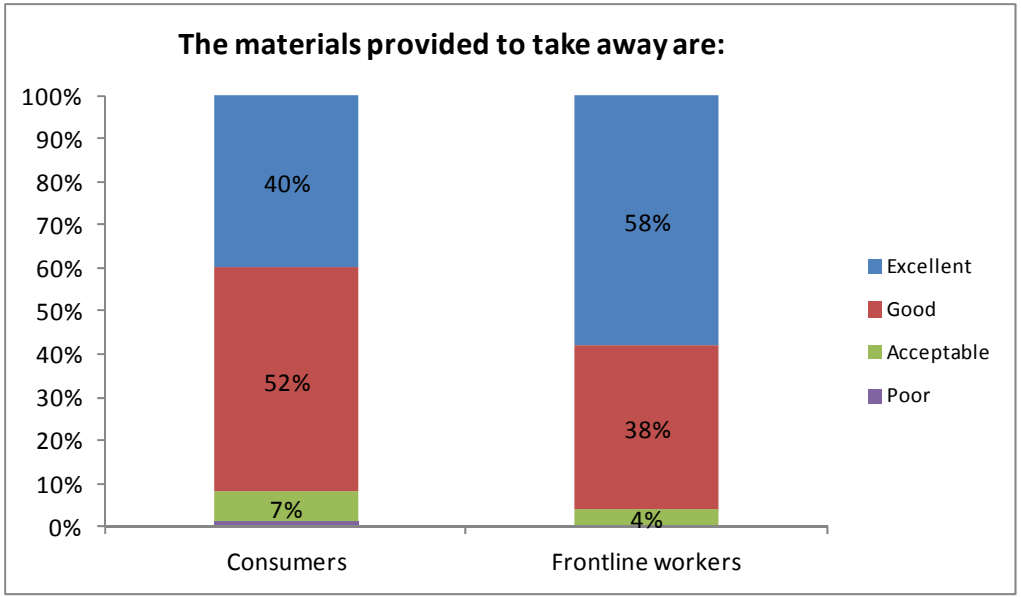


Figure 47: Ratings of the materials provided to take away

3. Results for England

3.1 Consumers: questionnaire responses - England

Demographic information

In England 4,348 consumers attended Energy Best Deal sessions. Sixty percent of attendees (2,608 people) completed the consumer questionnaire. This response rate is around the same as the overall response rate for Great Britain, which was 61%. Figure 48 to Figure 50 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in England.

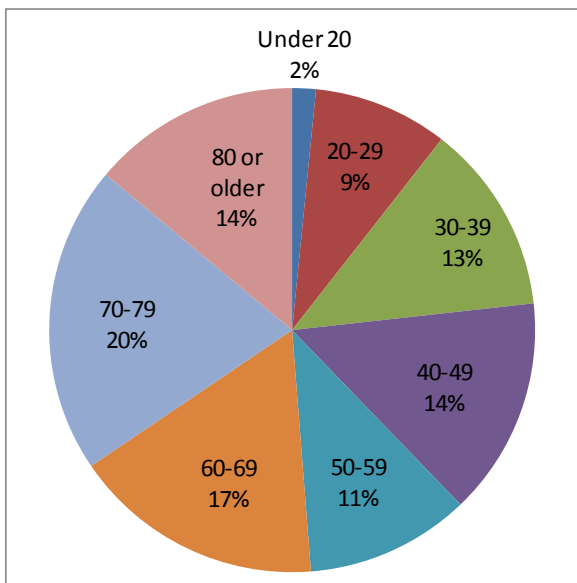


Figure 48: Age of respondents

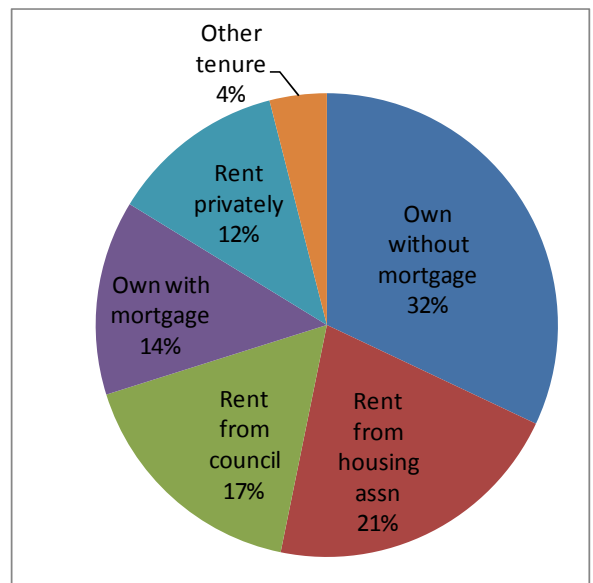


Figure 49: Tenure of respondents

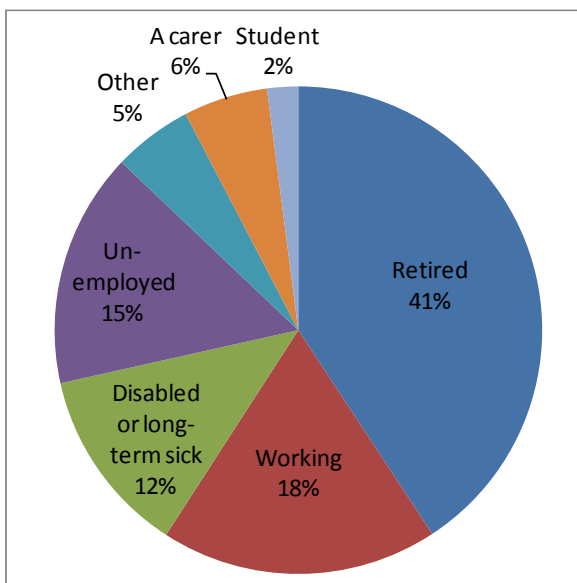


Figure 50: Occupation of respondents

Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with heating their home in winter they were asked two questions. The first asked whether they were able to heat their home to a comfortable level (Figure 51) and the second about their winter fuel bills (Figure 52). Just over 40% are not able to heat their home to a comfortable level, which is on par with the average for Great Britain. Just under a fifth (19%) find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 28% worry about their bills but are able to manage. 29% worry about their bills but are able to manage, while 18% find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 28% worry about their bills but are able to manage.

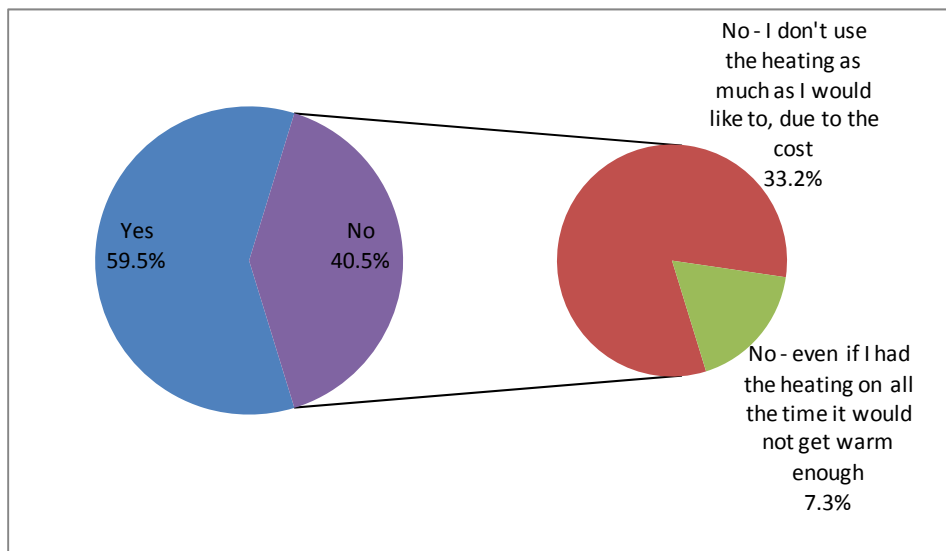


Figure 51: Can you heat your home to a comfortable level in winter?

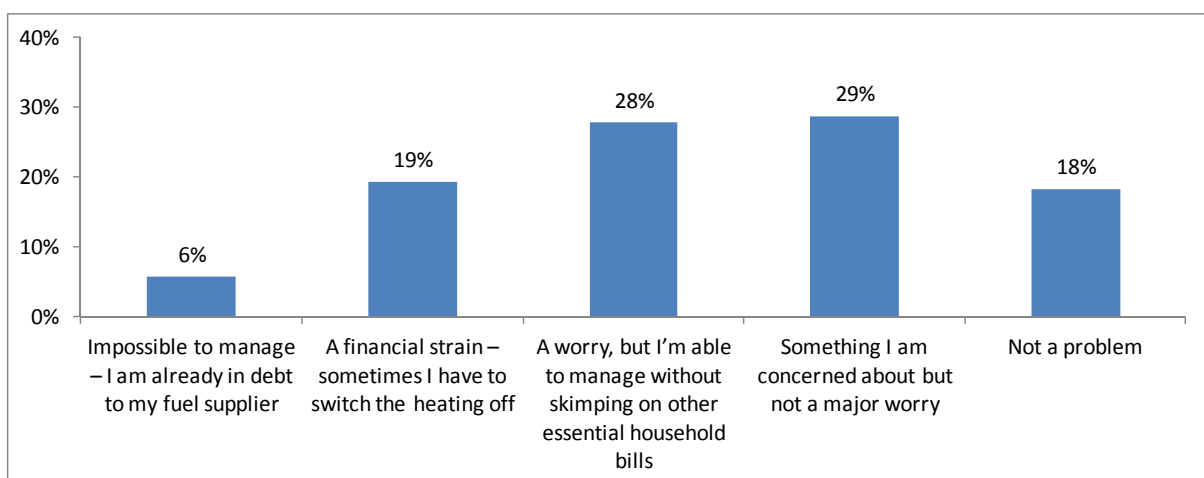


Figure 52: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Ninety-one percent of consumers in England already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. Thirty-seven percent of respondents had switched supplier once in the past, while 19% had switched more than once, a total of 56% who have experience of switching. Fifty-nine percent of those who had switched in the past were proactive 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 percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 22% had done so, and 18% 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 198 people, equal to 8% of respondents). Figure 53 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 56%.

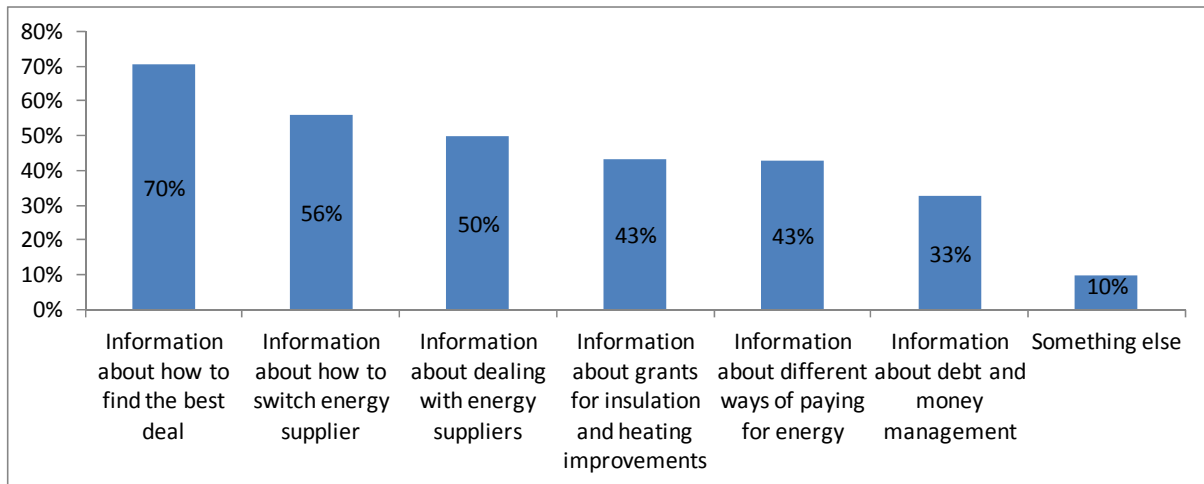


Figure 53: What did you find useful about the session?

Planned follow-up actions

Seventy-eight percent of people said they would definitely (39%) or probably (39%) do something as a result of the session, as illustrated in Figure 54.

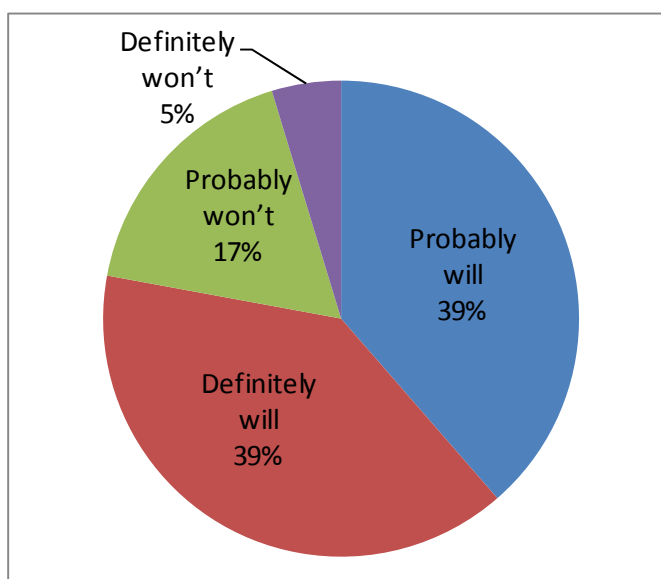


Figure 54: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 55. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 47%,

while telling friends and family about what had been learnt at the session and looking at other companies' prices were also popular, at 37% and 29% respectively.

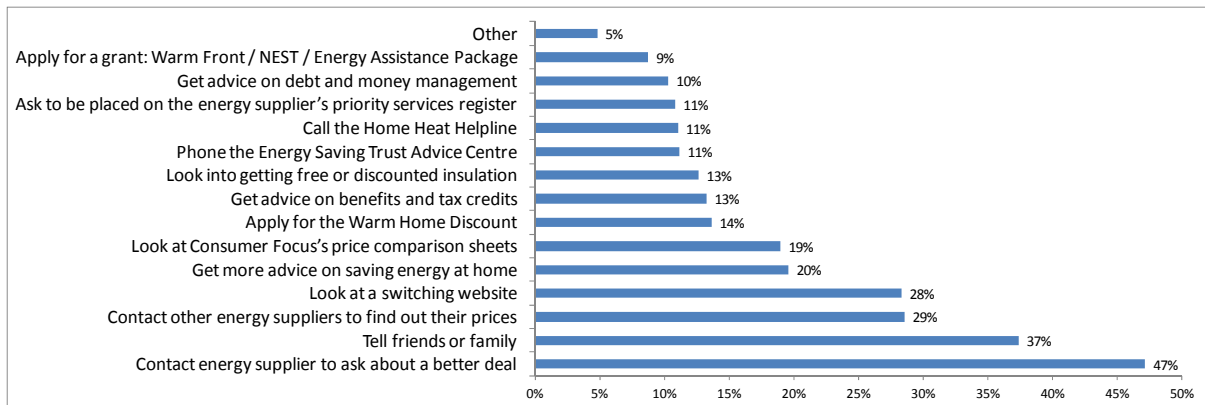


Figure 55: Planned actions following the session

3.2 Consumers: follow-up interviews – England

In England, 120 consumers were interviewed, equal to 80% of consumers interviewed, and equal to 3% of all consumers that 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

In the interview, consumers were asked whether following the session they did any of the following:

- found out about prices from suppliers
- changed payment method
- looked for more information about energy efficiency or improving their heating system
- Applied for Warm Front, free or discounted insulation, or the Warm Homes Discount
- Sought advice on benefits, tax credits, debt or money management
- Asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register
- Took any steps to save energy in their home (specifically prompted by the EBD session)

Each of these is discussed separately in the following sections. However, overall across all actions, a total of 82 people had taken at least one of these actions. Of the 38 people who had not taken action, 19 had told friends and family about something they had learnt at the session.

Looking for a better energy tariff

Forty people (one third) had looked for a better price on their energy since the session. Thirty-six had contacted their own supplier for a better deal, with 25 checking prices with different suppliers. Twenty-one people checked prices with both their existing supplier and other suppliers.

Of these 40, 27 found a better deal. Eighteen people were offered a better deal with their current supplier, and 14 found they could get a better deal with a different supplier. There was an overlap between these groups, because five people found they could get a better deal with both their current supplier and a different supplier. Seventeen of the people who found a better deal switched, nine to a new tariff with their current supplier and eight to a new supplier, with a further three people intending to switch (two to a new tariff with their current supplier and one to a new supplier). Those who did not switch despite finding a better deal said that they wanted to do further research and checks before switching.

Twenty-five of the people who looked for a better tariff had switched supplier in the past; eleven had done so as a result of an approach by a fuel company.

Where interviewees checked prices from different suppliers, they were asked what sources of information they used. Twenty people (80% of all people who checked prices from a different supplier) used a price comparison website.

How did interviewees satisfy themselves that the tariff offered really was a better deal? Of the 18 people who had been offered a better deal by their current supplier, 11 relied on the supplier to work out what was the best deal and did not check prices from other suppliers. Therefore they may

have obtained the best deal their own supplier had to offer but missed out on the best tariff for them on the market.

Of the five consumers who were offered a better deal with both their own and another energy supplier, two have switched to a new supplier and two have switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, with the fifth person intending to switch to a new tariff with the current supplier.

Of the 20 people who switched or intended to switch, seven had never switched supplier before. Six had switched once in the past and seven had switched more than once. Seven of the people who had previously switched had done so as a result of an approach from a fuel company salesperson, while the remaining six had switched on their own initiative.

The process of switching supplier

Of the 17 people who had already switched to a new deal, one person found the process very difficult because the original supplier objected to the switch. The rest found the process very easy or fairly easy.

Factors which discouraged people

Of the 80 people who did not look for a better deal on their energy supply, Those who did not look for a better deal said that they had not had the time (36), it was too much hassle (11) , they didn't feel they would save enough money to make it worthwhile (4), they had debt with their current supplier (2), they weren't sure they would save money (3), they thought something might go wrong (2), or they were concerned the price would go up again (2) or other prices would come down (1) or that they would switch to a worse deal (1). Other reasons were being on a fixed tariff or unable to switch for a different reason, having switched recently or feeling like they were on the best deal or feeling happy with a and loyal to their current supplier.

Seven people found a better deal but did not switch: two of these people were planning to do more research before making a decision.

Trustworthiness of energy companies

Interviewees were asked how trustworthy they perceived energy companies to be, in general. They were given the options: very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not trustworthy, and 'I think mine is ok, but not all of them are trustworthy'. The responses are shown in Figure 56. The majority of respondents gave a positive response, although almost a fifth felt positive about their own supplier but not others.

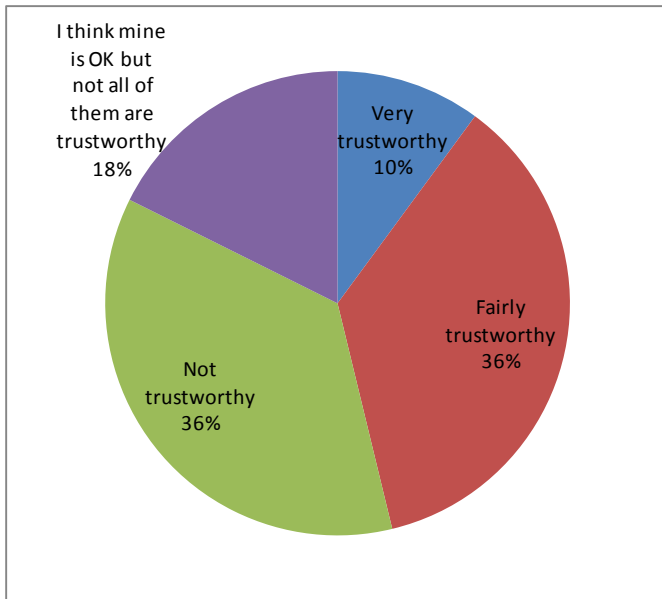


Figure 56: How do you rate the trustworthiness of suppliers?

Payment method

Eight people had changed the way they paid for their energy since the session; seven had changed the way they paid for their gas and electricity, and one had changed the way they paid for electricity only. The majority had changed to direct debit from a variety of different methods, while one person had changed from a prepayment meter to a credit meter and paying on receipt of the bill.

Of those who had not changed payment method, 64 (57%) thought they were already on the best payment method, eight people had not got round to it, nine people liked using a prepayment meter, seven people did not want to use direct debit, and three people did not want to pay to replace their prepayment meter.

Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had looked for any more information on improving their home energy efficiency or heating system since the session, and whether they had done so as a direct result of the session. Thirty-three interviewees had done so, as a result of the session, with a further six also having looked for information but not attributing this to the Energy Best Deal session.

Twelve people used the internet to find information, while the following sources were used by two people each: the council, landlord / housing association, energy supplier, a commercial company. Two people obtained information from Warm Front.

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes or make their home more energy efficient. Fifty-four consumers said they had, with a further nine saying they had done something but it was not prompted by the Energy Best Deal session. The most common actions taken were no or low-cost actions, such as replacing light bulbs with more energy efficient light bulbs, turning off appliances when not in use and adjusting the heating controls. Nine people have either checked their current level of insulation or enquired into having insulation put in, and three people have replaced their boilers.

Identifying consumers qualifying for ECO⁸ Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation

Consumers were asked two basic questions about benefits and income. The interview questions were designed during a transition period between two energy supplier obligations, CERT and ECO. Therefore the questions were designed to ascertain which consumers met the most common qualifying criteria for CERT, with the understanding that ECO Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) would be likely to have similar qualifying criteria. Interviewees were asked⁹:

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

In fact, although the qualifying criteria for HHCRO turned out to be similar to CERT, there was an important difference in that the income threshold for HHCRO is lower, at £15,860. This means that there will be a slight over-estimate in the numbers qualifying for HHCRO; however as not all qualifying benefits were covered there may also be some consumers who would qualify under other criteria.

Although there are other qualifying criteria, 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, these two major criteria were considered to be the ones most likely to be retained in the change from SPG under CERT to HHCRO.

Sixteen interviewees receive Pension Credit, while 18 receive Child Tax Credit and have a household income under £16,190, making a total of 34 interviewees who meet the above criteria. However, for HHCRO, people living in social housing are not eligible¹⁰. Sixteen of these interviewees live in social housing, and so applying this criteria leaves 18 interviewees meeting the above criteria.

Further actions

Interviewees were asked about a set of other actions, relating to seeking advice or applying for heating grants, that they had taken since the session. The actions covered and the number taking

⁸ The ECO is the Government's new domestic energy efficiency programme which has replaced the CERT and CESP programmes, both of which came to a close at the end of 2012. Under the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, "suppliers must deliver measures which result in cost savings and which improve the ability of a householder to affordably heat their home. HHCRO (also known as ECO Affordable Warmth) focuses on low income and vulnerable householders, living in private housing (generally), where residents are in receipt of specific benefits and meet other related conditions (the affordable warmth group' or AWG')." (p.55, ECO Guidance for Suppliers, Ofgem, 13 March 2013). See [http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20\(ECO\)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%2015%20March.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20(ECO)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%2015%20March.pdf)

⁹ It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide advice to interviewees; 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.

¹⁰ However, the Carbon Saving Communities Obligation, which is another part of the ECO, will be targeted at specific deprived areas, and in these areas social housing will be eligible.

these actions are shown in Figure 57 below. Twenty-seven people had taken at least one of these actions.



Figure 57: Further actions taken by interviewees

Information passed on to friends and family

Seventy-six consumers (63%) had passed on information from the session to friends and family. The number of friends and family that they passed the information on to ranged from 1 to 35, with a median of 4 people being passed information.

3.3 Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - England

Profile

In England 1,778 frontline workers returned questionnaires, out of 2,682 who attended sessions. This is a response rate of 66%. Figure 58 shows that the organisations represented by the frontline workers in England. The largest group were from the Citizens Advice Bureau (30%). The second largest group overall were local authorities and other public sector organisations (27%), followed by 'other'. The 'other' category included Age UK and other charities, such as domestic abuse support and food banks, as well as a large group from housing associations.

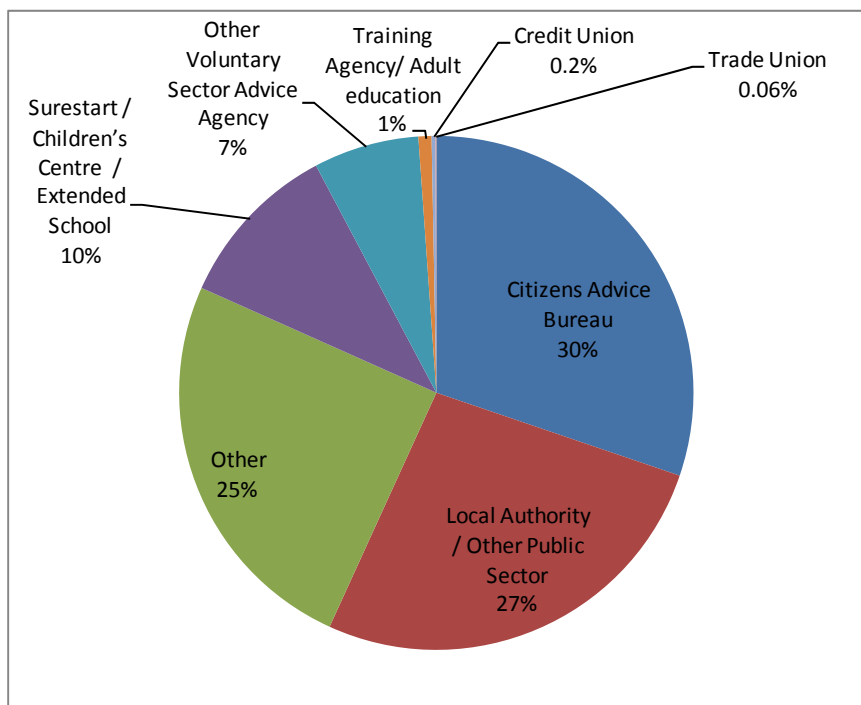


Figure 58: Frontline worker organisation types

Frontline workers were also asked if their organisation specialises in supporting specific groups or advising on specific topics. These are shown in Figure 59, as a percentage of the total number of frontline workers who attended sessions (many people chose more than one option and so the total sums to more than 100%). The topics that frontline workers' organisations in England most commonly specialise in are housing (38%), debt and money management (28%) and unemployment (24%).

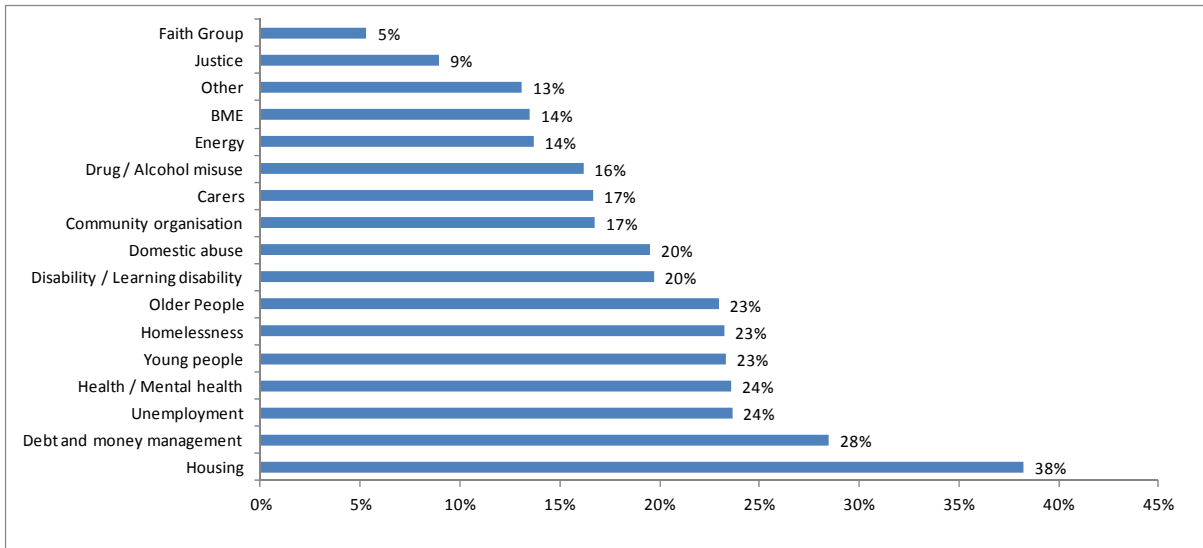


Figure 59: Frontline worker organisation types: specialisms

Previous advice-giving

Figure 60 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice on prior to the session. Over half had previously given advice on debt and money management and benefits and tax credits, while topics about energy efficiency and specific schemes (such as the Warm Homes Discount) were less common. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.

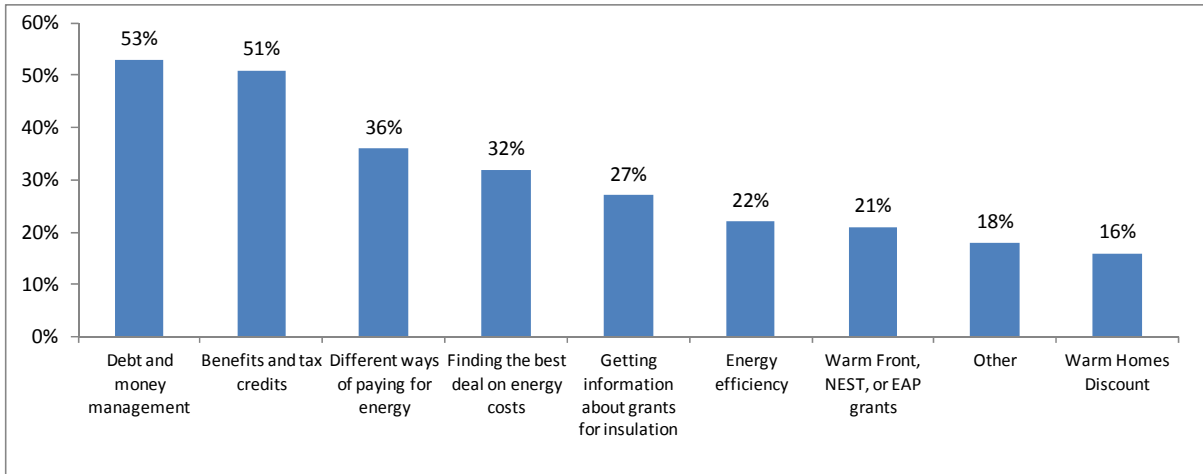


Figure 60: Previous advice-giving

The impact of the session

Eighty-three per cent of English 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 61. 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 18% estimate it to be between 80% and 100%.

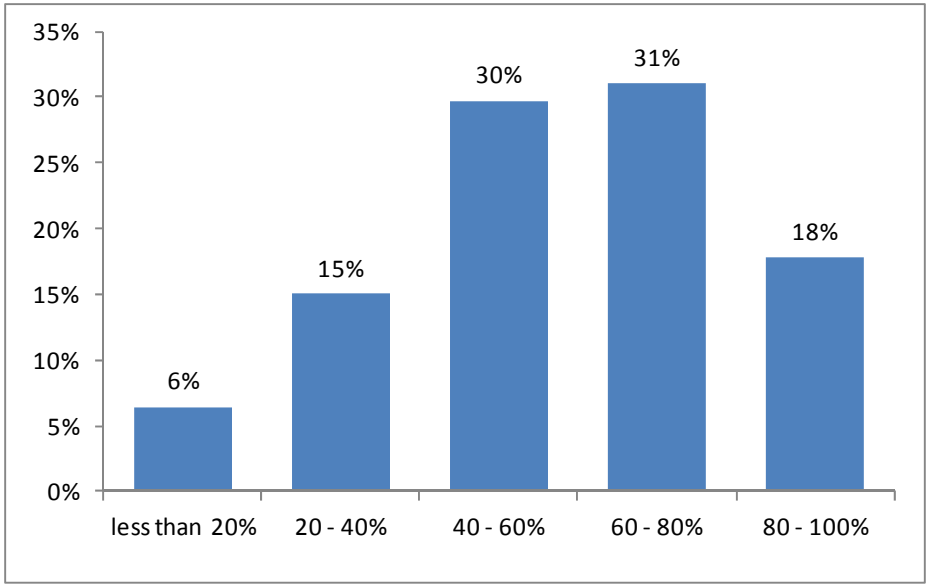


Figure 61: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-seven percent said they did; 53% to a great extent, and 44% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 62.

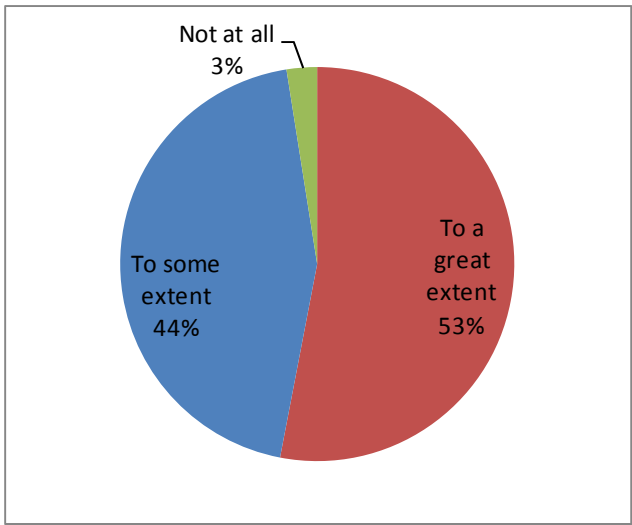


Figure 62: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?

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 63.

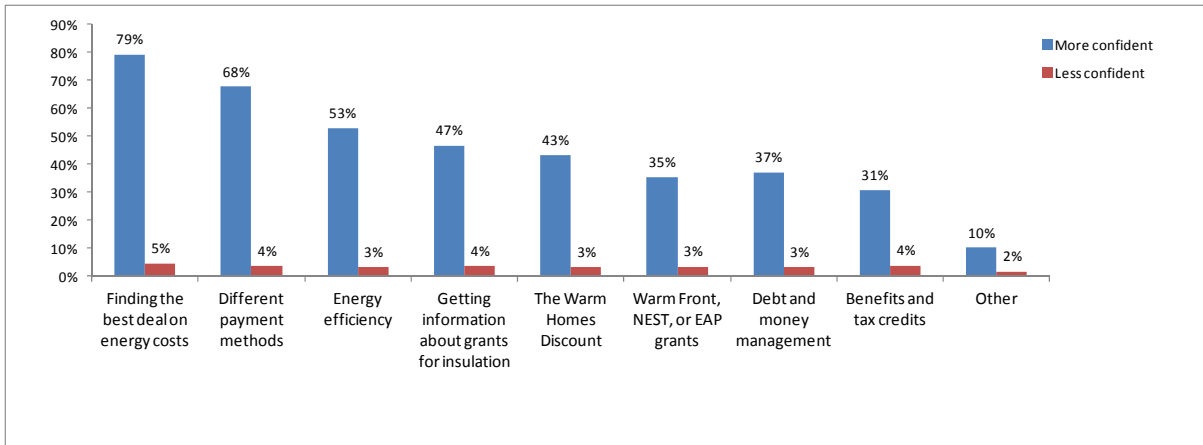


Figure 63: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session

Passing on information from the session

Frontline workers were asked to estimate the number of clients to whom they would pass on information learnt at the session. The distribution is shown in Figure 64.

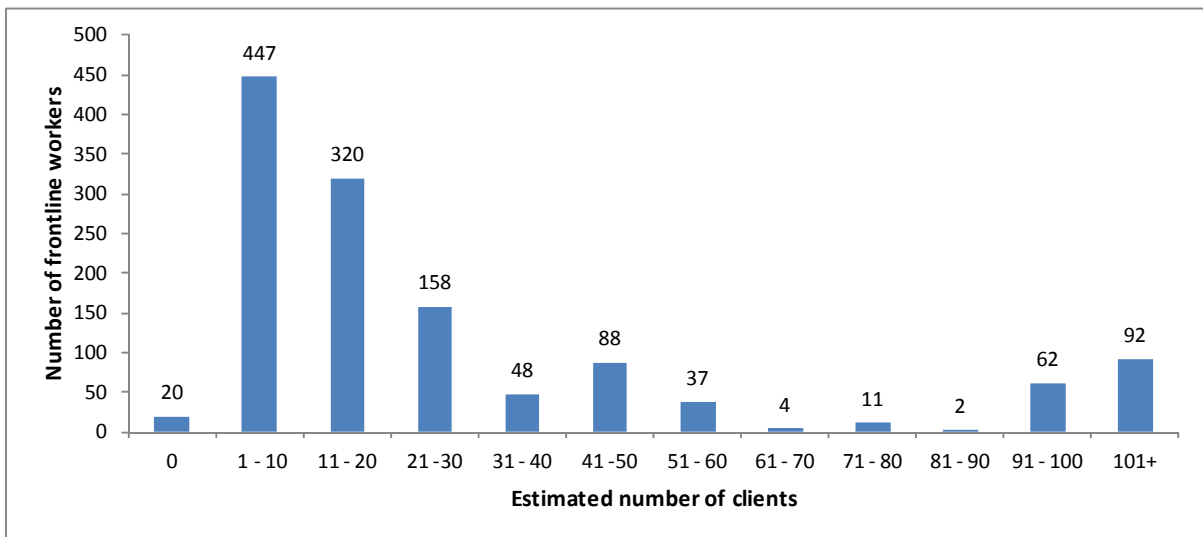


Figure 64: Number of clients information will be passed on to

In addition, 489 people did not answer the question, equal to 28% of all frontline workers in England. Frontline workers were also asked if they thought they would pass on information from the session to *colleagues*, and if so, approximately how many. Ninety-six percent said they would (67% definitely and 29% probably). The majority (64%) said they would pass on information to between one and ten colleagues.

Seventy-eight percent of frontline workers said they intended to look for a better deal on their own energy following the session.

3.4 Frontline workers: follow-up interviews – England

One hundred and twenty-four frontline workers who attended sessions in England were interviewed, equal to 5% of all frontline workers who attended sessions in England and 80% of all frontline workers who were interviewed.

The organisation type of the frontline worker interviewees is shown in Figure 65. 'Other' organisation types include ten housing associations.

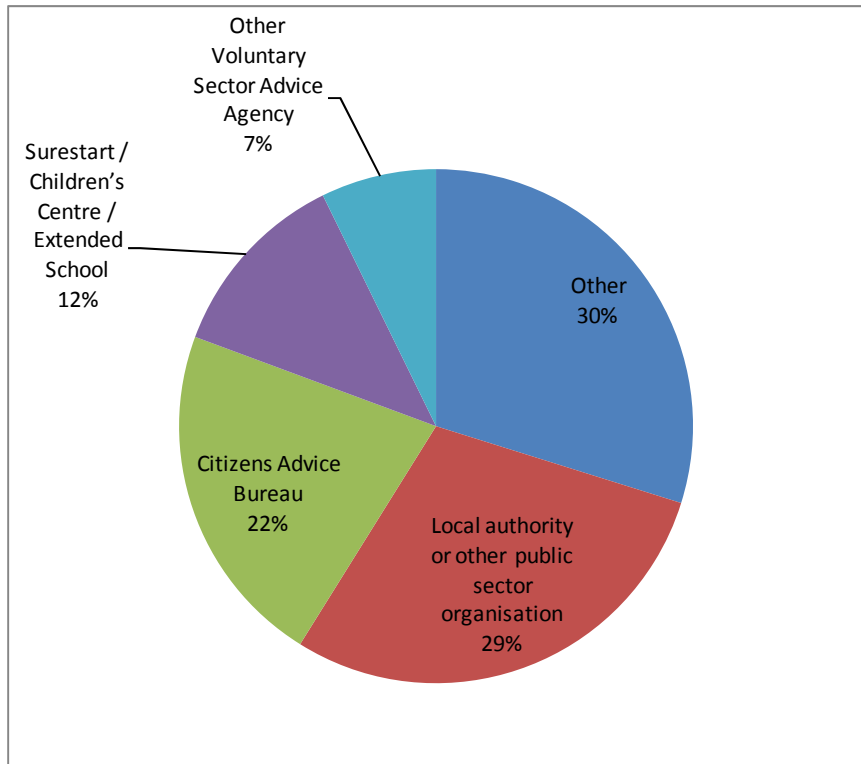


Figure 65: Frontline worker interviews - organisation type

Advice-giving on Energy Best Deal topics

Frontline worker interviewees were asked to rate each of the five main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of their own level of knowledge before and after the presentation, using a scale of one to five where one is no knowledge and five is highly knowledgeable. Figure 66 shows the average score for levels of knowledge before and after the presentation. The average score increased for all topics following the session. 'Finding the best deal on energy and dealing with suppliers' had the second lowest score before the presentation, but the highest after the session.

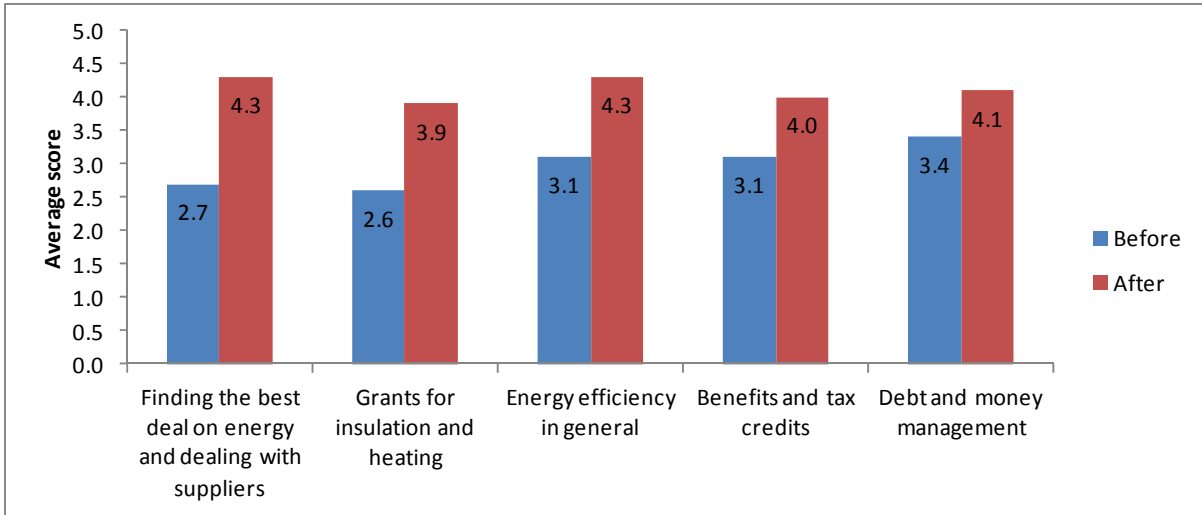


Figure 66: Levels of knowledge in topics covered in the session: average scores before and after

Interviewees were asked to rate the main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of importance to their job role, with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'highly important'. The responses are shown in Figure 67. For each topic, 'highly important' was chosen more frequently than any other rating.

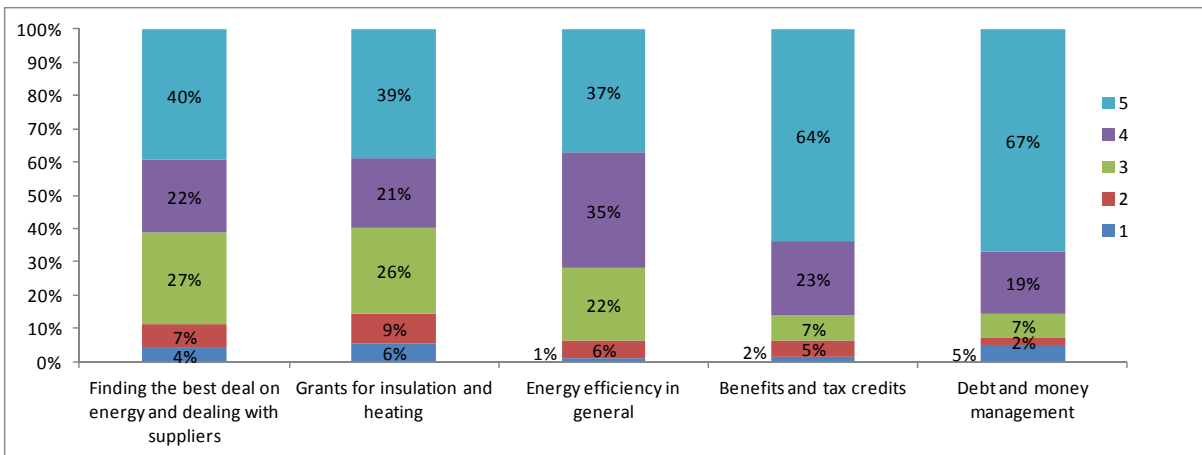


Figure 67: Importance of session topics in terms of interviewees' job roles

To get more detail on the previous question, interviewees were also asked whether any part of the presentation was particularly useful in helping them do their job. The responses are shown in Figure 68. Those people who said that 'something else' about the presentation was useful gave a range of different aspects that were useful, including: the handouts provided, explanation of energy comparison websites, quizzes included in the presentation, and examples of how much energy different appliances use.

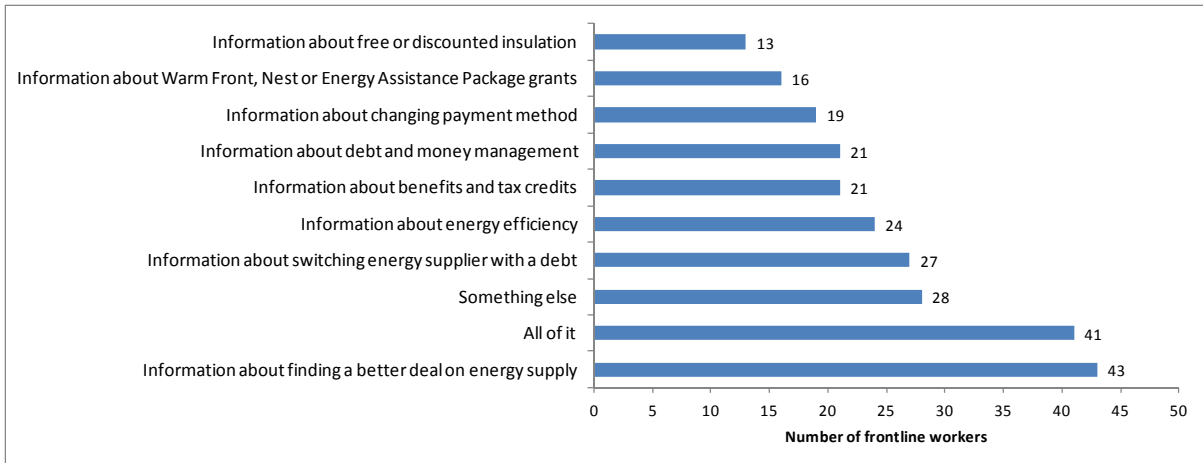


Figure 68: Did you find any part of the presentation particularly useful in helping you do your job?

Interviewees were given a set of statements about the effect of the presentation on the advice they were able to give to clients. They were asked to say whether the statements were applicable to them 'to a great extent', 'to some extent', or not at all.

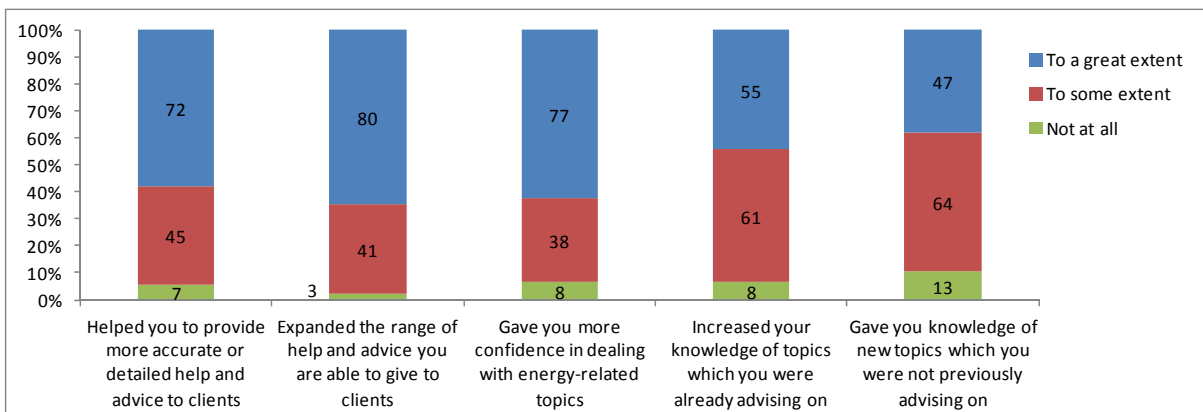


Figure 69: Effect of session in terms of advice giving

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. All but five of the interviewees had advised on at least one topic since the presentation, and a breakdown of these topics can be seen in Figure 70. The most commonly advised-on topics were debt and money management, benefits and tax credits and energy efficiency.

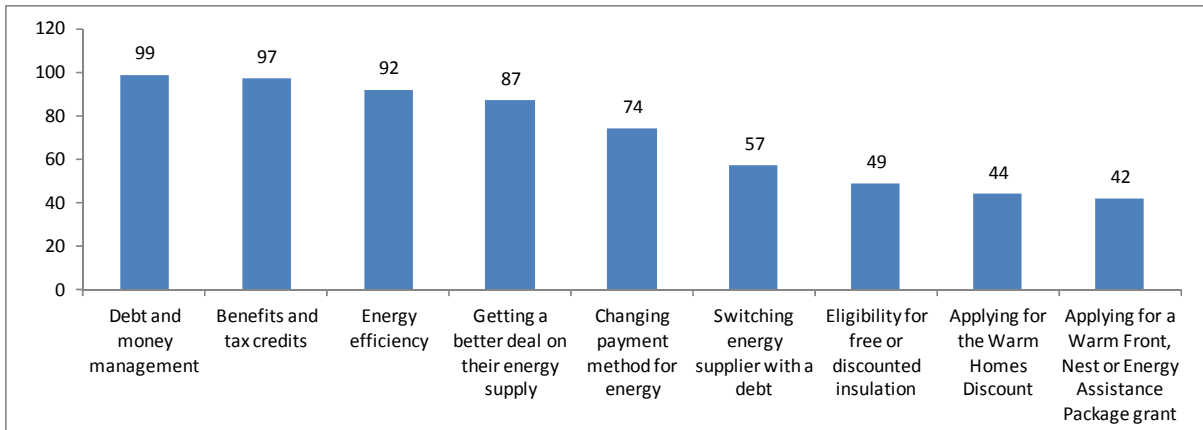


Figure 70: Topics advised on since the presentation

Four-fifths had given advice on debt and money management, with just over three-quarters giving advice on benefits and tax credits and just under three-quarters on energy efficiency.

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. Seven interviewees had not provided information to any clients, with the rest of the frontline workers providing information to between 1 and 2,500 clients (the larger numbers through newsletters and other publications). The mean number of clients that information was passed to was 40 and the median was 10, the median being a more representative measure as the mean is skewed by a few very high values such as 2,500 clients reached through a newsletter. The distribution is shown in Figure 71.

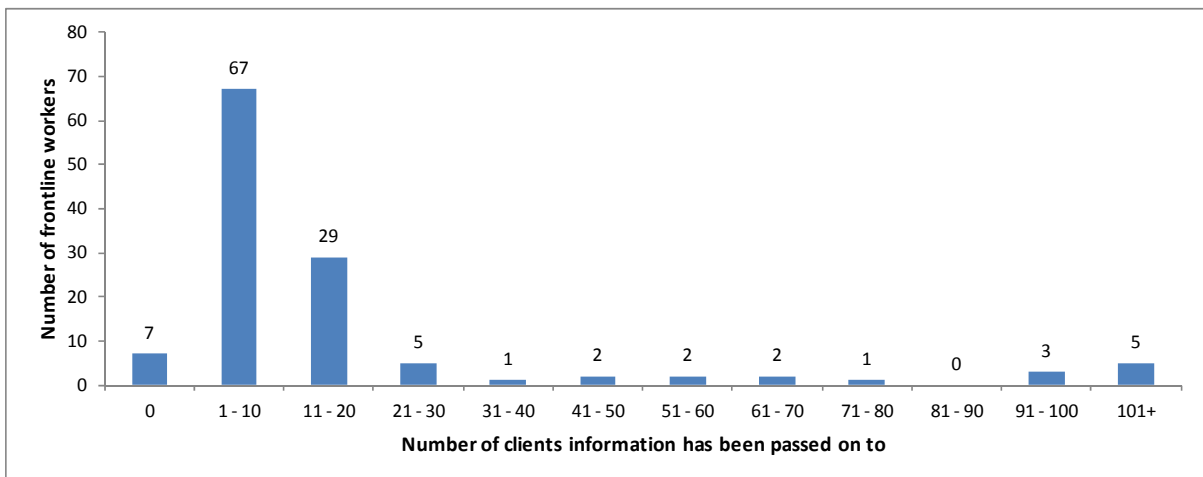


Figure 71: Number of clients information has been passed on to since the session

Eighty-four interviewees said that they would not have provided as much information to as many clients without attending the session, while 28 said they would have provided the information even if they had not attended the session (the rest did not know). Ten of those who said they would have provided the information anyway said they would not have provided as much detail or given the information with as much confidence without having attended the presentation. One hundred and nineteen interviewees said that they would use information from the presentation to help clients in the future.

Frontline workers were asked what the most common energy-related issue was that their clients seek help with. Affordability of energy and dealing with debt were the most common answers. Frontline workers were also asked if there were any energy-related issues that their clients seek help with which were not covered in the presentation.

Passing information on to colleagues

Seventy-three frontline workers (59%) had passed information from the session on to their colleagues. The number of colleagues information had been passed on to ranged from 1 to 150, with a mean of 9 and a median of 4 colleagues being given information by an individual frontline worker. Two frontline workers also stated that all of their colleagues were on the course.

In addition, 94 frontline workers had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family.

Frontline workers' own energy use

Since the session, 51 frontline workers had looked for a better deal on their own energy supply. Of these, 29 people had switched either tariff or supplier, or were in the process of doing so.

Forty-three interviewees said they had taken steps to save energy in their own homes since the presentation. Ten said they were already very energy efficient.

3.5 Quality of the presentation and materials - England

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, on a scale from poor to excellent (Figure 72). The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainer as 'excellent.'

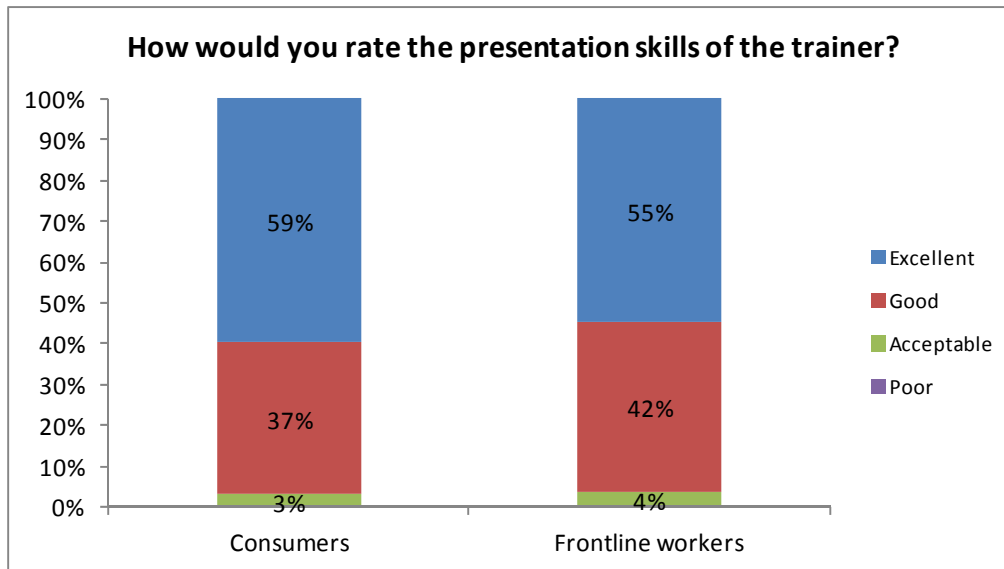


Figure 72: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

Consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the quality of the materials used during the session (Figure 73). This comprised the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts the trainer decided to use. The majority rated these as 'good', with a large minority rating them as 'excellent'.

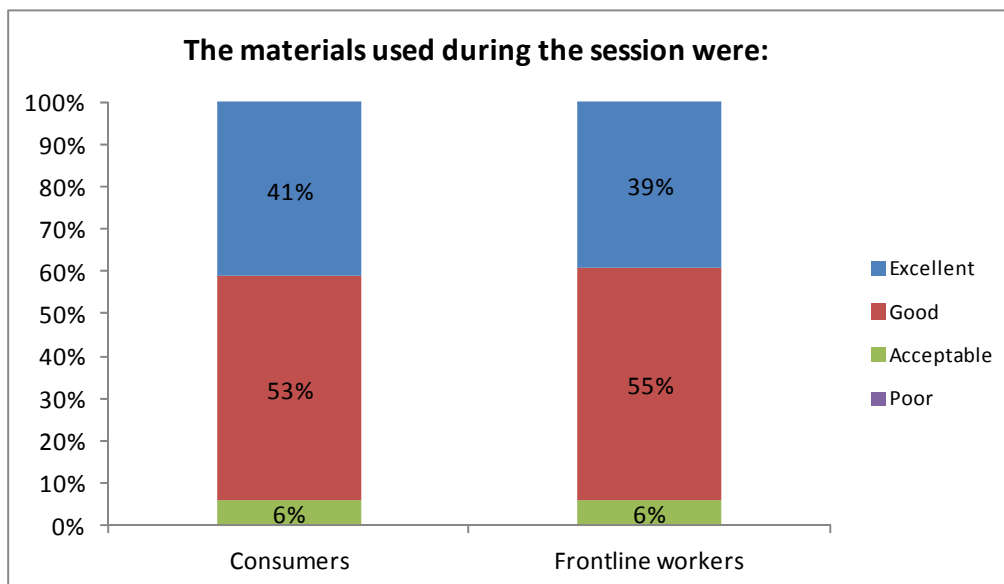


Figure 73: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

Consumers and frontline workers were also asked to rate the quality of the materials provided to take away, which comprised a booklet produced by Citizens Advice and Ofgem, and any handouts the trainer decided to include (Figure 74). Again, the majority rated these as 'good', with a large minority rating them as 'excellent'.

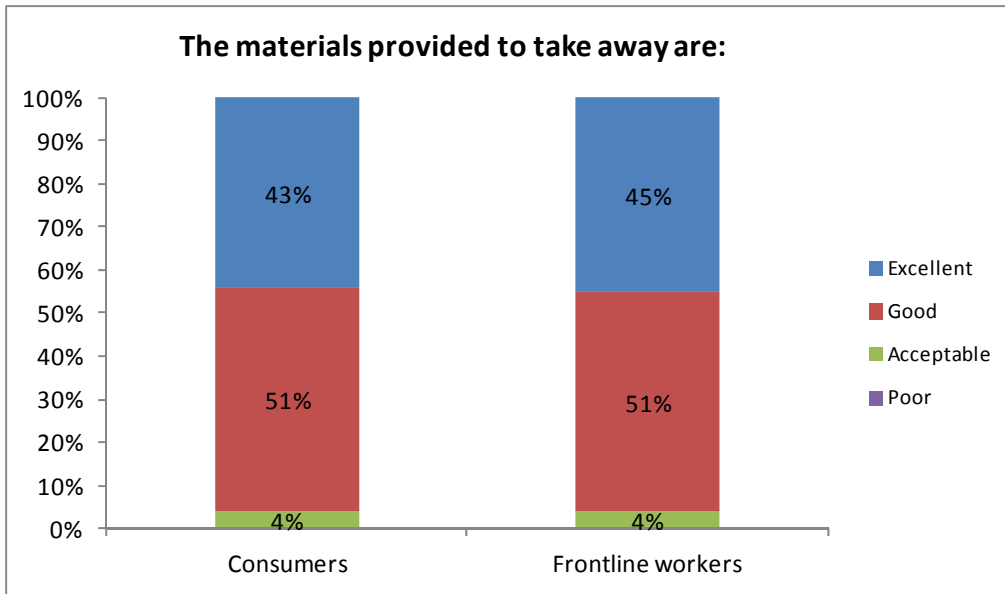


Figure 74: Ratings of the materials provided to take away