

Energy Saving Trust's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Consumer Scotland Draft Workplan for Energy, Post and Water, 2022-23

Submitted 4 March 2022

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to comment on Consumer Scotland's draft workplan and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively in progressing action towards addressing the climate emergency, towards a just transition to net zero and particularly to support consumers through the current energy price crisis.

Consumer Scotland has a valuable ability to look across the economy and use its rich insight to understand consumers' experiences and the issues they face. When it comes to net zero, Consumer Scotland's insight across the economy and energy expertise will enable it to make important links between policy agendas and join up the key issues for people.

Energy Saving Trust is an independent organisation dedicated to promoting energy efficiency, low carbon transport and sustainable energy use. We aim to address the climate emergency and deliver the wider benefits of clean energy as we transition to net zero. We empower householders to make better choices, deliver transformative programmes for governments and support businesses with strategy, research and assurance – enabling everyone to play their part in building a sustainable future.

1. Are these appropriate cross-sector consumer issues to focus on in our work to improve outcomes for consumers in Scotland?

Energy Saving Trust believes that the cross-sector consumer issues detailed in the consultation (increasing costs for essential services, understanding the needs and aspirations of consumers in vulnerable circumstances and consumer attitudes and experiences of net zero) are appropriate for Consumer Scotland to focus on in their work to improve outcomes for consumers in Scotland.

These issues are relevant to our work and the results of the work proposed could help to shape the delivery work that we undertake on behalf of the Scottish Government. These issues are also ones where we have some expertise and where this would be useful we would be pleased to provide input.

2. Would you recommend the addition or removal of any cross-sector issues of focus?

No, we would not recommend the addition or removal of any cross-sector issues of focus.

However, prompted by the proposal in the consultation's water section to focus on "adapting to cope with flooding caused by climate change", and the fact that some level of global warming is already "baked in" to the system we wonder if it might be appropriate to expand the proposed work on "consumer attitudes and experiences of net zero" to consider adaptation as this is very much a cross-sectoral issue. This would ensure that Consumer Scotland could track ongoing consumer engagement with and progress towards adaptation at a household level.

3. Are these the appropriate energy issues to focus on in our work?

Yes, we think that the issues outlined in the consultation (fairness in the energy retail market, implementation of the fuel poverty strategy, a whole home approach to energy regulations, understanding the barriers and opportunities for accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles in Scotland, networks for net zero, smart meters – gateways to decarbonisation and Big Energy Saving Network) are appropriate energy issues for Consumer Scotland to focus on in their work.

These issues are relevant to our work and the results of the work proposed could help to shape the delivery work that we undertake on behalf of the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland. These issues are also ones where we have expertise and where this would be useful we would be pleased to provide input.

We look forward to seeing the final arrangements for the Big Energy Saving Network in Scotland in the final version of the workplan. It will be important to ensure the complementarity of the energy advice work undertaken by/funded by both our organisations. We would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss this in more detail.

4. Would you recommend the addition or removal of any energy issues?

No, Energy Saving Trust would not recommend the addition or removal of any energy issues.

5. Are these appropriate post issues to focus on in our work?

No response

6. Would you recommend the addition or removal of any post issues?

No response

7. Are these appropriate water issues to focus on in our work?

Energy Saving Trust agrees that the water issues listed in the draft work plan (adapting to cope with flooding caused by climate change, adapting the use of water and wastewater in homes to tackle climate change, fair and ethical regulation and practice within the non-household sector, represent the needs and interests of consumers on Scotland's Hydro Nation Forum, the adoption of the new EU recast Drinking Water Directive, and engagement in key industry forums) are appropriate issues for Consumer Scotland to focus on in their work.

Energy Saving Trust's interest in water efficiency relates to its ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in this context, Energy Saving Trust has worked with Scottish Water for several years to help people in Scotland to reduce their energy bills and carbon footprints by taking simple steps to save water. This work includes the provision of free, tailored water and energy saving advice and water efficiency devices to householders through the Home Energy Scotland phone line, events and workshops to help householders save water energy and money. Again, where our expertise would be of use, we would be very happy to provide input to relevant work streams.

8. Would you recommend the addition or removal of any water issues?

No, Energy Saving Trust would not recommend the addition or removal of any water issues.