

# SMART METERS

## Privacy Factsheet



**SMART METERS** are technology which will replace your existing gas and electricity meters. They are a mobile connected device which will send data about your energy use to your energy supplier. Currently the scheme is entirely voluntary but the Government are keen for everyone to have a smart meter by 2020. Smart meters will change the way we engage with our energy. It is important to understand what they are, what they can do and what control and choice you have.

\* \* \* \* \*

### What are smart meters?

**Smart meters** are a piece of mobile connected technology which will be provided and installed by your energy supplier.

**They will be connected** to your energy supplier over a mobile cellular network in order to share your energy readings.

**An In Home Device (IHD)** will also be provided to help you see and understand the amount of energy you are using.

**Currently this data** will stay on that device and will only be available for you to see.

\* \* \* \* \*

### How do smart meters work?

**Smart meters** are made up of two parts: the meters and the In Home Device.

**The smart meter** replaces your current gas and electricity meters.

**The In Home Device** will sit in your home and will give readings of your energy use.

**Your smart meter** will keep a track of your energy use using wireless technology. It sends the data to both the In Home Device so you can see what energy you use and to the energy supplier so they can prepare your bill.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Do I have to have a smart meter?

**No.** Smart meters are entirely voluntary. You do not have to have one. Your energy company may encourage you to switch to a smart meter but **you can say no.**

**Currently** there are no plans to make smart meters compulsory, but this could change in the future.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Are there privacy concerns about smart meters?

**Because smart meters** take a reading of your energy use every half an hour the data can indicate how you and your family live your lives and what your routine is.

**It will clearly show** when you are at home or when the house is empty based on energy use. This information may be attractive to criminals such as burglars or data hackers.

# SMART METERS

## Privacy Factsheet



### What can I do to restrict access to my data?

If you choose to install a smart meter you should be given a choice as to how often the smart meter gives an energy reading to your energy supplier. You can change how often it contacts your supplier any time you like.

You can choose between, every half hour, every hour, every day or every month.

If you don't make a choice, the standard setting will give a reading every day.

It is important you read the [terms and conditions](#) to be sure that you are clear about what you are sharing.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Can anyone else access my data?

If you install a smart meter you will be asked if you wish to share your data for marketing purposes, you can choose no. You can change your mind at any time.

The marketing you will receive, if you say yes, will only come from your energy supplier. It will be information regarding other products which you may be interested in.

The Government have been very clear that currently your data will not be accessed by anyone else.

But because the data associated with smart meters may prove to be very interesting, it is possible that researchers, statisticians or other organisations may wish to access the data for other uses beyond your energy supply.

In the future smart meters may be able to connect with smart technology such as white goods or other household sensors. They could also be controlled by smartphone apps. This has yet to be decided.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Are smart meters the same as smart heating?

#### Smart meters

- Allow you to see how much energy you are using.
- They do not replace your thermostat.
- Are products the government have asked the energy suppliers to provide.

#### Smart heating

- Is a thermostat allowing you to control how your home is heated.
- Is a commercial product such as Nest or Hive.
- Can be purchased from your energy supplier.
- Can be controlled from remotely by apps on smartphones or tablets.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Don't forget

- Smart meters are a replacement for your current gas and electricity meter.
- Smart meters do not replace your thermostat. They provide information not energy.
- Smart meters wirelessly send data about your gas and electricity to a device in your home and to your energy supplier.
- Smart meters are not compulsory.