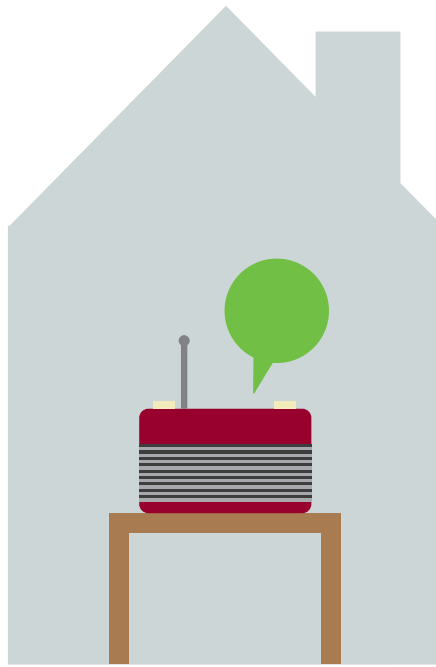
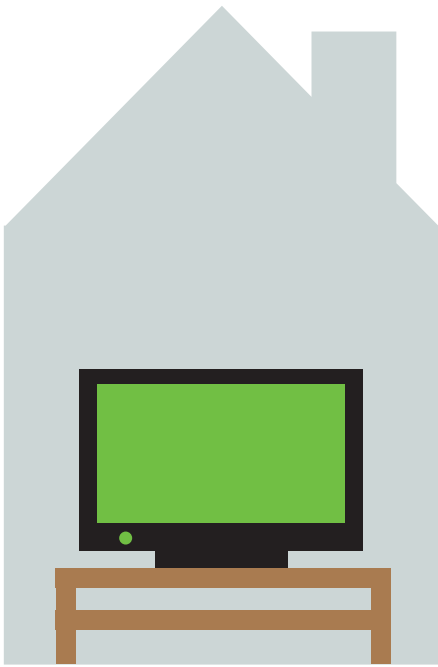
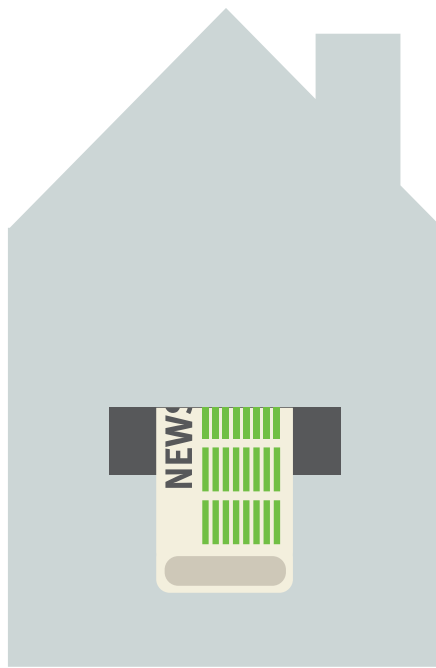


# Neither sermons nor silence

the case for national  
communications on energy use



“green  
alliance...”



A Green Living consortium report



## **Neither sermons nor silence:** **the case for national communications on energy use**

By Rebekah Phillips and Faye Scott

### **Green Alliance**

Green Alliance is a charity and independent think tank focused on ambitious leadership for the environment. We have a track record of over 30 years, working with the most influential leaders from the NGO and business communities. Our work generates new thinking and dialogue, and has increased political action and support for environmental solutions in the UK.

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# Executive summary

There have been vast strides in the understanding of behaviour change theory and its application to policy design and delivery over the past few years. The inability to shift behaviour through information alone is now well understood. As a result, broad brush environmental campaigns, unsupported by enabling policy, are a thing of the past.

Instead, government has focused on developing a range of consumer facing policies that will support householders in reducing their energy use. They include:

- Electricity microgeneration feed-in-tariff (FiT)
- Household Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP)
- Green Deal
- Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- Smart meter roll-out

These schemes provide people with valuable practical support. But they are missing a vital ingredient, as their communication has not been properly thought through.

All of these schemes encourage changes in behaviour, or to the home's fabric or source of energy, with the objectives of reducing carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty and improving

energy security. The rate of uptake needed to meet government targets is highly ambitious. It requires one home a minute to upgrade its energy efficiency between now and 2050, just under two homes an hour to install renewable heat between now and 2020 and ten homes a minute to have smart meters installed between 2014 and 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Achieving this will depend on the public actively engaging with the schemes and taking actions, which include spending their own money. A range of approaches and interventions will be needed to drive uptake and to secure sustained changes in people's behaviour around energy. These include fiscal and regulatory levers and incentives. But policies will fail if the public does not respond to them in sufficient numbers. Effective communication is therefore central to ensuring success.

There are behavioural barriers to uptake and the track record of demand for energy efficiency measures is low, even when they are being heavily subsidised or given away. So, the availability of new schemes will not automatically result in high levels of uptake. Co-ordinated communications are needed that are visible, consistent, provide context, are trusted and help to change social norms.

## What we mean by national communications

'National communications' is used to refer to an approach that :

is initiated and backed by government

is co-ordinated by a dedicated delivery body

has a clear remit to reduce household energy demand

focuses on marketing, consumer engagement and changing behaviour

acts as a hub for private sector, civil society and local authority activity

manages branding that is applied across various schemes and activities

is funded predominantly by delivery partners

This report argues that only national level communications can achieve this and that current government plans for multiple and dispersed communications will not be effective. It draws on the learning from national campaigns in the UK and abroad, of which we have provided example case studies. It also draws on Green Alliance's programme of research into

**“Policies will fail if the public does not respond to them in sufficient numbers. Effective communication is therefore central to ensuring success.”**

green living, supported by the Green Living consortium<sup>2</sup>, which has produced two major reports. *From hot air to happy endings* (2010) which described how politicians could improve their communication on climate change and inspire stronger public support for action, and *Bringing it home* (2011) which examined the role of government in securing behaviour change and how policy design could be improved to support it.<sup>3</sup>

**Support for a national brand**

The government's current intention is for multiple, dispersed communications on the new energy schemes to be developed by those delivering them and any organisations they partner with. This includes a mix of large and small private sector companies, with energy companies in particular having a prominent role, alongside local authorities, civil society organisations, community groups and housing associations.

Communications by these stakeholders will be essential to success. But many are aware that dispersed communications are unlikely to achieve the visibility and consistency needed to secure public engagement and action. As a result, they see a key role for national communications in providing context for their efforts, which they could then work alongside.

Simon Roberts, chief executive of the Centre for Sustainability Energy argues that “there is a

significant risk that their marketing budgets will each be separately focused on brand building and will in combination be inadequate to establish sufficient demand to meet government targets.”<sup>4</sup>

On smart meters, the government itself notes that “consumer engagement should not just be left to [energy] suppliers to manage individually. This could result in messages not being consistent and co-ordinated, which could lead to potential confusion or inefficiencies.”<sup>5</sup> This message is relevant across the range of policies under discussion. A review of over 150 household energy efficiency schemes in the USA found that building sustained, simple, powerful brands at the national and state level was essential to building consumer recognition and for the success of the schemes.<sup>6</sup>

By way of an example, the digital switchover campaign's success (see page 34) in achieving its objectives led the evaluation to conclude that any public change programme must be led by unequivocal government support and national branding.<sup>7</sup>

The Green Deal Network (a cross-sectoral group that includes Asda, Kingfisher, Birmingham City Council and Carillion, among others) has highlighted the need for a “neutral and authoritative central brand to build trust and understanding and articulate the fact that the [Green Deal] is new, different and government backed.”<sup>8</sup> They also note the important role that this will have in providing businesses with the confidence to invest: “a central marketing effort could deliver significant uplift in consumer response, create confidence among potential providers and leverage investment from businesses and commitment from the third sector, housing associations and local authorities, maximising early take up.”<sup>9</sup>

**Why national communications are necessary**

The need for national communications is further evident when assumptions about trust and building consumer acceptance are interrogated in more depth. Energy suppliers will be leading

the smart meter roll-out and many of them will be Green Deal providers as well. Yet only 16 per cent of people trust energy companies to deliver messages on energy efficiency.<sup>10</sup> Consumer Focus has also found a “lack of trust and a widespread negativity” amongst consumers towards energy companies.<sup>11</sup>

The government assumes that this can be overcome via partnerships with trusted organisations. Indeed, the range of trusted partners allied with the campaigns Love Food Hate Waste, the digital switchover, Change4Life, Fire Kills and Flex Your Power (all case studies featured at the end of this report) were critical elements of their success. But partners all felt comfortable aligning themselves with these campaigns because they were national and backed by government. This is unlikely to be the case with the dispersed communications being run on energy schemes. Many of them will be offered by private sector partners that wider stakeholders do not necessarily feel comfortable aligning with.

Government research into consumer views on the Green Deal noted that “in order for the Green Deal to enjoy widespread acceptance it was felt that endorsement by a trusted source was needed.” Participants in the research had made an “automatic assumption” that the government would play this visible, trusted role.<sup>12</sup> Green Alliance research on the Green Deal reinforces this, with local authorities and civil society organisations saying they would be hesitant to align themselves with a private initiative and to be seen to be endorsing a particular brand or product rather than an overall scheme.<sup>13</sup>

From a purely practical point of view, it is unrealistic to assume that community organisations, or even bigger charities, will be able to work simultaneously with a range of providers. The digital switchover campaign, for example, worked closely and intensely with a range of organisations over defined periods of time, and all of our featured case study campaigns were better able to engage trusted partners by virtue of having a single point of contact.

As we discuss in depth in chapter 4, national communications will also provide important added value with the ability to: provide the bigger picture for the range of policies being rolled out; change what people see as normal energy behaviour; and avoid the rebound effect, which sees money saved on energy spent on high consumption products or activities instead. Dispersed communications will have little scope or incentive to focus on any of these outcomes.

### **An affordable approach**

The Coalition made it clear that excessive government spending on communications is no longer acceptable when it cut related expenditure by half in August 2010.<sup>14</sup> Communications must be cost effective and deliver real benefit and some useful decisions have been made on this basis. For example, Change4Life (see page 36) lost its entire budget in 2010 and, subsequently, suffered an 80 per cent drop in sign-ups to the campaign and a 90 per cent drop in calls to its information line. In an acknowledgement of the important role that communications can play in delivering policy objectives, it received new government funding of £14 million in May 2011.<sup>15</sup> This, in turn, is far outstripped by the private sector’s £200 million of in kind support over four years (2009-12).

This report argues that national communications are similarly essential to delivering the objectives of consumer facing energy policies and that, without them, there is a significant risk that the objectives will not be met. The case studies we examine and the proposed approach to communicating the smart meter roll-out provide useful funding models. They include full funding by non-government stakeholders, as in the case of the digital switchover and proposed smart meter communications, matched funding in the case of Love Food Hate Waste and Fire Kills, and small contributions from government matched by significant ones from other actors in the case of Change4Life (see page 28).

The campaigns studied also highlight that national communications do not have to be expensive and dependent on costly TV

advertising. Local media advertising, for example, was of great value to Fire Kills. A key strength of national communications on energy will be the ability to harness different networks, which communicate at very low cost via social media and local activity.

**“Co-ordinated communications are needed that are visible, consistent, provide context, are trusted and help to change social norms.”**

#### **Putting plans in place**

Real progress has been made on developing and linking up consumer facing energy policies and valuable work on consumer engagement is being done within departments. But there is a continuing failure to recognise that only national communications can provide the visibility, trust and context that will help to guarantee their success. This report provides clear evidence of stakeholder demand for national communications and the problems that will be hard to overcome without them, as well as suggested funding models. The vital next step will be to acknowledge this and to begin work on communications that have the potential to engage the public with the schemes on offer and deliver the environmental and social objectives at stake.

# 1

## **Sermons without substance: past approaches**



Government efforts to change behaviour started in earnest in World War II, with memorable appeals to ‘Dig for Victory’ or dire warnings that ‘careless talk costs lives’. These campaigns were based on a top down, expert led model in which government imparted information and made clear the type of public behaviour it expected. Such campaigns often demanded personal sacrifice or behaviour change, for the sake of the greater good.

These forms of communication secured a place in the public imagination and are the direct predecessors of more recent campaigns, such as those addressing drink driving or informing consumers what they need to do as part of the digital switchover. In recent decades, the focus has shifted to public education campaigns, presenting behaviour changes as ways for individuals to improve their lives.

Significant communications campaigns on green lifestyles started in the early 1990s. The Conservative government’s Energy Efficiency Office published a series of full page newspaper adverts trying to engender responsibility for action amongst the public, such as an image of a steaming kettle and the slogan “Global warming: how much of the responsibility rests at your door?”. This was a response to the growing idea that individuals are responsible for environmental action and for the success of related government policies.<sup>16</sup>

### **Going for green**

The first mainstream environmental campaign was the national Going for Green campaign, launched in 1995 as part of the government’s first Sustainable Development Strategy.<sup>17</sup> It was based on the theory that information would lead to action and included a national information campaign and a ‘Green Code’ with five actions that people could take to reduce their environmental impact. Community initiatives each received £50,000 to catalyse local projects. However, the model of engagement and the inflexible code didn’t succeed in achieving the degree of behaviour change hoped for.<sup>18</sup>

### **Are you doing your bit?**

The Labour government followed this with two high profile campaigns aimed at encouraging greener behaviours. First was Are you doing your bit?, created by John Prescott in the run up to the 1997 UN climate change negotiations in Kyoto. The campaign ran over three years, cost £28.4 million and was the first overarching communications campaign of its kind. It aimed to reinforce messages from the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and Tidy Britain programmes and to encourage small, habitual actions among concerned individuals who were capable of taking more action than they were already.<sup>19</sup>

Are you doing your bit? focused on educating and informing people through television, radio and press advertising as well as a roadshows and local partnerships. The campaign acknowledged that “supporting infrastructure, with clear signals from government and business that they are leading, is also essential to change consumer attitudes”.<sup>20</sup> But it made little attempt to put any enabling infrastructure in place, such as doorstep recycling, or reducing the cost of energy saving devices. The only practical support it offered was free exhaust checks.

Evaluation of the campaign showed increased awareness of climate change and of the actions that individuals could take, and noted that the public valued clear communication of the personal and collective benefits of action. But the public’s declared motivation to act was nowhere near as strong as the increased awareness, so the campaign’s actual impact with regard to changing behaviour was not clear.<sup>21</sup>

### **Act on CO<sub>2</sub>**

Act on CO<sub>2</sub> has been the most high profile government environmental communications campaign. It was introduced under the Labour government and included television adverts, a website, prominent advertising on billboards and buses, and an online calculator for people to find out their carbon footprint. It aimed to encourage people to take a range of individual actions, which were listed on the Act on CO<sub>2</sub> website, along with links

to sites like the Energy Saving Trust's which suggested how action could be taken.

But the campaign was not supported with practical schemes to enable people to take the actions that it suggested. For example, it might suggest insulating your loft, but failed to make it clear that you could get discounts from your energy supplier to help you do it. This meant that its links with existing government policies on climate change were unclear and it missed the opportunity to demonstrate government action on CO<sub>2</sub> at a national level and provide the public with a sense of coherence.

The campaign cost £18 million between 2007 and 2010.<sup>22</sup> It encountered numerous problems. For example, television adverts featuring nightmare endings to traditional bedtime stories were widely panned for scaremongering, rather than presenting a positive future.<sup>23</sup> An evaluation showed that, while awareness of the campaign messages was high, incidences of people who claimed to always recycle or stated their intention to reduce energy use in the home actually fell during the campaign period.<sup>24</sup>

### **Sermons.....**

All of these campaigns shared the assumption that a lack of knowledge was the main reason to people were not making greener choices. They started and finished with advertising, rather than seeing communications as one element in the broader range of interventions needed to change behaviour. They did not address the barriers to the actions they were advocating or provide practical measures to overcome them. And they didn't make the link between their messages and central government policy. In essence they were merely a lecture without support.

It is worth noting however, that while these broad brush environmental campaigns have floundered, communications focused on waste and recycling have been quietly successful. The Recycle Now and Love Food Hate Waste campaigns have single, coherent messages allied

with clear action on the ground and clear ways for individuals, local authorities, businesses and other stakeholders to engage. Both were developed by WRAP with professional communications agencies using knowledge about what makes people tick and social marketing techniques. Love Food Hate Waste is explored in more detail on page 32.

**“Some decisions on campaigns that had lost their funding were reversed when it became clear how essential they were to delivering policy objectives.”**

### **Followed by silence**

Act on CO<sub>2</sub> was dropped when the Coalition government took power amidst their £40 million cut to communications expenditure.<sup>25</sup> Budgets on all marketing activities over £25,000 were frozen immediately and any spending over this has to go through Francis Maude, the minister for the Cabinet Office. More recently, the government's Central Office of Information (COI) closed altogether, having already sustained a 49 per cent budget cut in 2010. Government communications are now handled via hubs, one of which consists of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT), with strategic work run by the Government Communications Centre.<sup>26</sup> All of this indicates the Coalition's strong view that government spending on communications had become bureaucratic, duplicative and profligate, with Francis Maude announcing that “The days of spending millions of pounds on expensive projects are over.”<sup>27</sup>

### **The door isn't closed**

Even so, the drastic cuts do not mean that the government sees no value in national communications, simply that they should be done in an effective and cost efficient manner. Since the initial scaling back, some decisions on

campaigns that had lost their funding were reversed when it became clear how essential they were to delivering policy objectives in areas like reducing obesity or quitting smoking. For example, following the loss of its budget in 2010, Change4Life (see page 36) suffered an 80 per cent drop in people signing up to its campaign and a 90 per cent drop in calls to its information line. This threatened the delivery of the outcomes that informed the campaign, so it received £14 million in new funding in May 2011.<sup>28</sup>

Decisions like these demonstrate the government's recognition of the value of communications in the right circumstances. The challenge is to demonstrate how essential a comparable national communications effort is, if the objectives of consumer facing energy policies are to be achieved.

Dropping Act on CO<sub>2</sub> was the right thing to do, as it was expensive and underperforming with no supporting policy framework. The current context could not be more different. A range of energy policies are about to be rolled out that require consumer engagement if they are to be successful. A national communications exercise will be central to successful delivery of the environmental and social objectives of schemes like the Green Deal, microgeneration and the smart meter roll-out.

# 2

## **The challenge of consumer engagement**

A range of consumer facing energy policies have already or are about to come online. They are all vital to the UK's efforts to tackle climate change and fuel poverty, as well as to improve energy security and to upgrade the electricity grid network. These policies should also provide people with warmer homes, lower, more reliable bills and a reduced carbon footprint.

But achieving the desired environmental outcomes relies on the public engaging with the policies, seeing them as relevant to their lives and choosing to take them up. Because of this, effective public communication is central to their success in a way that has not been the case for previous efforts to reduce energy demand.

### New or forthcoming government household energy schemes

Policy	What does it do?
<b>Electricity microgeneration feed-in-tariff (FiT)<sup>29</sup></b>	Upon the installation of microgeneration, such as solar panels, the FiT pays householders for every unit of renewable electricity generated (up to 5MW) and gives additional payments for every unit exported back to the grid. Generating their own energy, the householder will also benefit from reduced energy bills. From April 2012 anyone wishing to install solar PV has to prove that their building has an energy efficiency rating of D or above.
<b>Household Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP)</b>	The domestic RHI will be available from summer 2013. Upon installation of a renewable heat device, such as a heat pump, householders will get a payment for every unit of renewable heat they generate. Prior to its introduction, the RHPP enables householders to get a grant towards the cost of installing renewable heat measures.
<b>Green Deal</b>	This will be available to the public from autumn 2012. It aims to encourage the energy efficiency retrofit of homes by overcoming the financial barrier of having to pay for measures upfront. Householders will be able to get energy efficiency measures installed, via a Green Deal provider, and will pay back the cost through a charge on their electricity bill. The loans will be attached to the property, so when occupancy changes the loan responsibility will pass to the new occupant.
<b>Energy Company Obligation (ECO)</b>	This will be the successor to the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT), which is the current obligation on energy companies. A levy on household fuel bills will provide a pot of money that will be used to subsidise energy efficiency installations in properties that would not be eligible for financing under the Green Deal, for example, because they are hard to treat. Half of this money will be distributed by energy companies and half by other organisations who can each bid for a proportion.
<b>Smart meter roll-out</b>	This will provide every home in the country with a smart meter that can read real time energy use by 2019. It will be supplier led and therefore delivered by energy companies according to the pattern and timetable that they see fit for their customers. The meters should provide customers with more accurate bills. Display units will enable people to see their real time use of electricity and gas, and they will receive energy efficiency advice from installers.

## Psychological barriers to engaging with energy use

### Saliency

Energy efficiency improvements are not high on most people's priority list when thinking about how to spend money, even though it would save them money<sup>30</sup>

31% of people in one evaluation didn't take up solid wall insulation, as they simply didn't know it existed or didn't see it as relevant to their lives<sup>31</sup>

Making energy saving personally relevant is seen as a "primary challenge" of the smart meter roll-out, as people are not aware of their energy consumption<sup>32</sup>

### Beliefs about outcomes

36% of respondents to a survey had not installed energy efficiency measures due to concern they might be less comfortable in their homes<sup>33</sup>

### Hassle

Householders face burdensome actions, such as clearing their lofts. Even practical help cannot entirely overcome this, one of the reasons many 'Pay as you save' pilot homes dropped out<sup>34</sup>

31% of people see the hassle and disruption of making improvements as one of the "less attractive" features of the Green Deal<sup>35</sup>

### Cost

'Pay as you save' pilots experienced drop out due to concern about entering into long term financial commitments<sup>36</sup>

20% of people see uncertainty about costs on their energy bill as one of the "less attractive" features of the Green Deal<sup>37</sup>

### Inertia

People discount the future, preferring a smaller reward today than a larger reward over a longer period of time. So offering small savings on energy bills over a long period is not a sufficient incentive for many

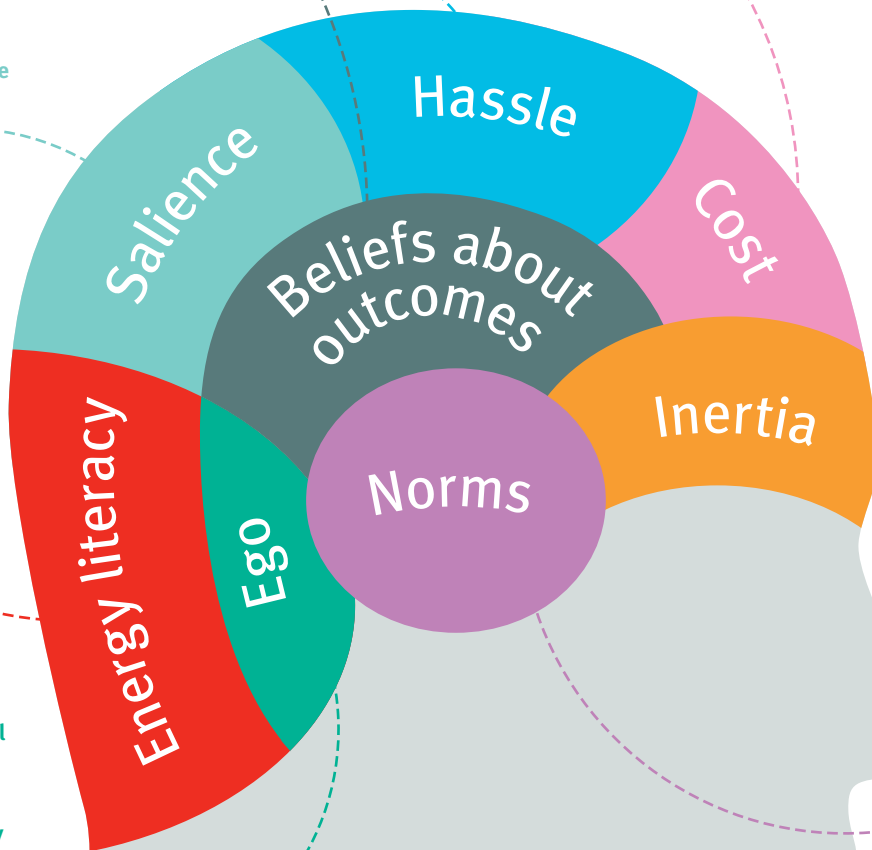
Two thirds of consumers are not fully confident that their home is as energy efficient as it could be. 47% are unaware how thick their loft insulation is, but 70% don't plan to improve the energy efficiency of their home in the next year<sup>38</sup>

### Energy literacy

Less than 50% of homeowners thought about running costs when making a purchasing decision<sup>39</sup>

### Ego

People across almost all segmentation groups, particularly higher earners, choose not to install energy efficiency measures due to concern that it will alter the look of their homes<sup>40</sup>



### Norms

Many people don't want to be first adopters or guinea pigs in taking up new energy schemes and technologies<sup>41</sup>

### Overcoming barriers to engagement

For these policies to achieve their objectives, enough households have to choose to install microgeneration, to improve the fabric of their homes and to make habitual changes that reduce their energy use. In practice this means serious investment and a willingness from householders to:

- spend time researching what is on offer;
- pay for energy efficiency/ generation measures or take out financing to cover them;
- take time off work to oversee assessors and installers;
- carry out any preparatory and post-installation work (such as clearing out lofts and refitting carpets or repainting walls);
- make habitual changes to reduce energy use on a daily basis;
- choose efficient appliances and products.

There are a number of barriers to people undertaking these actions, as shown on the left. When combined with evidence about the public's engagement with energy efficiency and microgeneration to date, they are a sobering reminder of the challenge ahead.

### Interest so far

Due to the barriers outlined, most of the existing schemes have so far failed to encourage householders to install energy efficiency or generation measures on a sufficient scale to meet the government's targets.

The exception has been the microgeneration FiT, which has been so successful that the government has had to reduce the tariff to avoid going massively over budget. But microgeneration FiTs are far less comparable to the other policies, as they have two significant advantages. The measure is very visible, which has a proven impact on take up.<sup>42</sup> FiTs also offered uniquely high financial returns of ten per cent at a time when conventional savings accounts offered interest rates of up to only four per cent. This meant that it was featured in the financial press and money saving websites as a

sensible financial measure; extending its reach to a much wider audience. It is also important to note that very little of the marketing would have made it clear to householders how their take up of the FiT was part of a wider landscape of energy policy and behaviour change. Even this successful policy struggles to be noticed, with Consumer Focus finding that 19 per cent of consumers don't know about it.<sup>43</sup>

**“Energy schemes have not, so far, proved attractive and people will continue to be influenced by psychological and social factors as they consider the new opportunities on offer.”**

When it comes to the other policies under discussion, the challenges of consumer engagement are clearer still. Energy companies are significantly behind on their carbon emissions reduction targets (CERT), having failed to interest enough households to take up loft and cavity wall insulation, even when offering it for free or with generous subsidies. Insulation is currently being delivered at the rate of 1.2 million installations a year, whereas two million are needed in 2012 to meet CERT targets. To meet the fuel poverty targets built into CERT, 18,000 installations are needed per month instead of the current 5,000. Overall, the £2.4 billion CERT target for expenditure on energy efficiency is unlikely to be fully spent by the 31 December 2012 deadline.<sup>44</sup> Even a scheme in Kirklees, which offered all households in the area free insulation, and is widely seen as a significant success, only managed to achieve a 37.7 per cent uptake.<sup>45</sup> This does not bode well for the government's new Green Deal which will offer broadly similar measures but, instead of being subsidised, they will largely be offered at full price with a commercial rate of interest.

The RHPP, which supports domestic renewable heat, is also significantly underperforming. Two thirds of the fund was unallocated by the end of



its first financial year (2011-12) with just 3,952 installations completed compared to a target of 25,000.<sup>46</sup>

The smart meter roll-out is already suffering from negative press attention and consumer concerns of the kind that derailed roll-outs in other countries. Research by uSwitch has shown that over 80 per cent of people are not happy with their current state of knowledge about smart meters. Over 40 per cent have misgivings about the amount of information smart meters will be able to access about their energy use and 24 per cent are concerned how suppliers will use the information. Or they simply find smart meters too 'Big Brother' for their liking.<sup>47</sup>

### **Complementary approaches**

Most of the policies we look at in this report aim to remove financial barriers. Yet success will require people to overcome the many other psychological and social barriers at work. These factors mean that energy schemes have not, so far, proved attractive and people will continue to be influenced by psychological and social factors as they consider the new opportunities on offer. Communications will also have an even lower level of demand as their starting point, as the shift from CERT to the Green Deal is projected to result in a 70 per cent drop in cavity wall insulation installations and a 93 per cent drop in loft insulation installations.<sup>48</sup>

Overcoming these barriers and building demand for more complex and disruptive offerings, such as solid wall insulation, will be incredibly hard. To do it at the scale needed to meet the government's ambitious targets will be even harder. It will require a number of complementary approaches including fiscal and regulatory levers and financial incentives. Whilst communications and marketing are the focus of this report, this does not negate the role of these other policy levers, as we explored previously in *Bringing it home*.<sup>49</sup> These should be considered together as part of the policy arsenal for a joined up consumer engagement policy programme.



# 3

## **Communications: the current context**

Whilst the government has started to join up the various elements of energy efficiency policy and to explore behavioural barriers to uptake, it has yet to develop a coherent offer for the public.

### **Actions so far include:**

#### **Cabinet Office behavioural insights team.**

Pilots are underway to explore how behavioural barriers to Green Deal uptake, such as the hassle factor, can be overcome and the potential of different incentives and networks to drive uptake.<sup>50</sup> It is also informing the design of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and energy bills to give better information on energy use, and informing the design of the FiT and RHI to encourage energy efficiency.

**Treasury funding.** £200 million is being put into stimulating demand for the Green Deal by rewarding early adopters. This is likely to entail some form of cash back offer to householders that install Green Deal measures.<sup>51</sup>

#### **Energy Efficiency Deployment Office (EEDO).**

Created by DECC to join up the delivery of energy efficiency internally, rather than policies being developed by different teams and failing to maximise uptake jointly. EEDO aims to provide coherence for the consumer and will develop an overarching energy efficiency strategy by the end of 2012.<sup>52</sup> The smart meter roll-out continues to be delivered in a different part of DECC though, and EEDO's strategy will not be in place by the time the Green Deal comes on stream.

**An energy efficiency advice line.** This was launched by DECC and will be run by EST, to provide Green Deal advice as well as information on existing programmes like CERT and Warm Front. The number will be promoted by Green Deal providers and wider stakeholders and will also feature on EPCs and Green Deal reports.

#### **Updating Energy Performance Certificates.**

CLG has updated EPCs to make links with the Green Deal clearer. They will now indicate which energy efficiency upgrades can be funded through the Green Deal, and other changes aim to make consideration of running

costs more prominent in purchase and rental decisions.

**A communications hub.** DECC, Defra, CLG and DfT are now in a 'communications hub' following the closure of the COI and the reorganisation of government communications. This would provide a useful foundation for national communications, which will need to communicate broad messages that share top line objectives but which are grounded in policies across these different departments.

**“If such dispersed communications prove inadequate to the task of engaging the public, the social and environmental objectives of the policies will be at serious risk.”**

#### **The stakes are high**

As shown in the table on the right, although the government is well aware of the challenge that successful public engagement presents and conversations about marketing are taking place, it does not currently see a lead role for itself in communicating consumer facing energy policies. Apart from a potential government role in communicating the smart meter roll-out, the intention is for the companies and other organisations delivering the schemes to lead on communicating them. But the stakes are high. If such dispersed communications prove inadequate to the task of engaging the public, the social and environmental objectives of the policies will be at serious risk.

## Planned government communications activity on energy schemes

Policy	Government communications
<b>Electricity microgeneration feed-in-tariff (FiT)</b>	FiTs have been exclusively promoted by private companies providing microgeneration installations eligible for the scheme, as well as community groups, local authorities and housing associations looking to set up schemes in their area. The government has provided factsheets on DECC's website, monitored installations through Ofgem, accredited installations over 50MW and ensured that suppliers comply with the scheme.
<b>Household Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP)</b>	As with FiTs, the government's main role has been to provide factsheets and record installations. It is also operating a helpline for any queries which is being run by the Energy Saving Trust. This is advertised on the DECC and Ofgem websites. Ofgem now runs roadshows to try and get more interest in the scheme.
<b>Green Deal</b>	The government currently sees its communications role as one of providing confidence to consumers by accrediting Green Deal providers and installers. A kitemark will be developed for use on accredited products and by accredited suppliers and assessors and the government is planning to run a website that will provide information on accredited companies. An energy saving advice line was launched in April 2012 which will give details of the Green Deal once it is launched. DECC has also produced a short video explaining why it thinks the Green Deal will be such a game-changer. Overall, Green Deal providers will be responsible for communicating what the Green Deal is and why householders should take it up.
<b>Energy Company Obligation (ECO)</b>	The delivery of the ECO will be integrated with the delivery of the Green Deal and will be communicated by the Green Deal providers.
<b>Smart meter roll-out</b>	DECC is currently exploring communications possibilities and a consultation is underway on what form this should take. The current proposal is to require energy suppliers to set up an independent body by mid-2013 to run a national communications campaign on smart meters from March 2014.

# 4

**National  
communications:  
the difference they  
can make**

National communications on consumer facing energy schemes have the potential to make the vital difference between capturing public interest, or confusion and even ambivalence. In short, they have the power to make the difference between success or failure.

This chapter explores the power of national communications, drawing on evidence from other behaviour change campaigns in the UK and overseas.

National level communications offer added value and the ability to secure lasting engagement among the public by:

- building greater visibility and consistency for messages;
- enabling trusted messengers to communicate;
- providing coherence and cohesion to practical action;
- avoiding a vacuum for negative stories;
- providing the bigger picture;
- changing what people see as normal energy behaviour; and
- helping to avoid the rebound effect, where financial savings through energy efficiency contribute to greater energy use elsewhere.

### **Stronger branding for visibility and consistency**

The private sector has extensive expertise in communications, and civil society, community groups and consumer organisations have significant experience of supporting behaviour change. The government is right to capitalise on this and, as we discuss below, a collaborative approach is definitely essential. But it is a risk to assume that the range of communications carried out will reinforce each other and add up to what is needed to secure public engagement. As Simon Roberts, chief executive of the Centre for Sustainability Energy, has explained in relation to the Green Deal:

“One of the abiding challenges in the development of the Green Deal is to understand

how demand will emerge in a new market for a service the public doesn't actively want. While many potential providers are being reasonably bullish about their intentions, there is a significant risk that their marketing budgets will each be separately focused on brand building and will in combination be inadequate to establish sufficient demand to meet government targets. Margins in Green Deal service delivery are likely to prove insufficient to support the sorts of expansive marketing budgets which are typically needed to crack a new market.”<sup>53</sup>

### **“Energy schemes will have to compete with many other products on offer for people's time, attention and money.”**

Energy schemes will have to compete with many other products on offer for people's time, attention and money. Even if a message begins to register, a marketing rule of thumb assumes that people need to receive a message at least six times a week for it to have any impact or prompt a response.<sup>54</sup> Communications on energy need to register with people repeatedly. The current approach is unlikely to achieve this, as the public will not necessarily recognise that differently branded initiatives are conveying the same message and are essentially about the same scheme or product.

In reference to smart meters, the government acknowledges that “consumer engagement should not just be left to suppliers to manage individually. This could result in messages not being consistent and co-ordinated, which could lead to potential confusion or inefficiencies.”<sup>55</sup> Yet their projections for Green Deal uptake assume 100 per cent awareness among the public;<sup>56</sup> a level that even the most coherent, sophisticated and expensive marketing campaign would be unlikely to aspire to.

Smart meter communications proposals also acknowledge that consumers will “want a joined up experience of the government's energy policies, regardless of the individual

policy mechanisms and their origin.”<sup>57</sup> A single unifying brand for consumer energy schemes would help achieve this. All the public will need to understand initially is the core premise of saving energy, rather than the complicated details of each company’s particular offer.

A review of over 150 household energy efficiency schemes in the USA found that building sustained, simple, powerful brands at the national and state level was essential to building consumer recognition and for the success of the schemes.<sup>58</sup> Research by the Green Deal Network (a cross-sectoral group that includes Asda, Kingfisher, Birmingham City Council and Carillion, among others) included the feedback that any communications about the scheme “has to have a consistent national identity.”<sup>59</sup>

**“The digital switchover campaign is a good example of the high visibility, saturation levels of messaging that a national campaign can achieve.”**

The findings of a study that modelled Green Deal uptake under different communications scenarios (see right) demonstrate the significantly greater ability that national communications will have to reach the public and prompt a response.

The digital switchover campaign is a good example of the high visibility, saturation levels of messaging that a national campaign can achieve. With clear branding, individuals can recognise the message being communicated even if it comes through a range of media and actors at different times and in different forms. Its success in achieving its objectives has led Digital UK to conclude that any public change programme must be led by unequivocal government support and national branding.<sup>60</sup>

Other campaigns also show the power of strong branding aligned to varied actions and schemes. In the USA, Flex Your Power applied its branding

to all actions associated with energy efficiency programmes, whether it was schemes working specifically with farmers, products on sale or nationwide adverts. The Recycle Now campaign in the UK has adopted a similar tactic, branding

**The Green Deal, the impact of silence**

The Green Deal Network commissioned modelling to examine potential Green Deal uptake in the first year under two marketing scenarios; one with what they called ‘central communications’ and one without.

The first scenario would see a three year, funded marketing plan with significant national and local press, radio and online advertising, on going PR work to secure press coverage, leaflets to every home and an advice line and website.

The second scenario would see PR work around the launch of the Green Deal to secure press coverage and would also include an advice line and website.

The study used marketing assumptions about the coverage and frequency of exposure to messages that adults require before they respond. They could not account for the impact of the dispersed communications that would be taking place by other stakeholders, but their model calculated web hits and calls to the advice line and, in turn, the projected number of Green Deal house surveys that would take place. The differences were huge. With central communications they found there would be:

- 31 times more web hits
- 49 times more calls to the advice line
- 75 times more home surveys<sup>61</sup>

both physical infrastructure, such as recycling points and bins, as well as products and commercials, which has led to the brand being adopted by most of the local authorities in the UK and being widely recognised.

### Enabling trusted messengers

Whether people listen to information depends heavily on who does the talking. Demographic and behavioural similarities between the messenger and their audience can improve persuasiveness because, essentially, people respond to others like them.<sup>62</sup> Marketing now aims to harness this, by getting friends, neighbours and other ‘real people’ to recommend products to each other.

It is therefore essential that messages about energy schemes reach people via the appropriate messengers and harness the power of a wide range of stakeholders. Current plans will see energy companies doing much of the communications. But they suffer from a significant trust issue which will reduce the effectiveness of their efforts. A recent poll by Accenture found that only 16 per cent of people trusted them to deliver messages on energy efficiency.<sup>63</sup> Consumer Focus has found a “lack of trust and a widespread negativity” amongst consumers towards energy companies.<sup>64</sup> In relation to smart meters, the government notes that “although suppliers will have an important role in engagement, third parties such as charities, consumer groups, community organisations, local authorities, housing associations and friends and family can be more effective, credible messengers.”<sup>65</sup>

Trust has also been a major problem in the delivery of the CERT programme, as householders were sceptical about why their energy company, whose business model is selling energy, would want to help them save it.<sup>66</sup> Energy companies themselves recognise this problem, as evidenced by their efforts to address it through partnering with local authorities and other trusted organisations. They have also used advertising to help explain why they would want to help people to save energy, for example, E.ON’s advert that asked the question “why on earth would an energy company want me to use less energy?”

National communications will be uniquely placed to overcome these issues and to enable the range of trusted messengers that are essential to

success. The ability for a range of partners to ally themselves with a single campaign was a critical element of success in the Love Food Hate Waste, Change4Life, Fire Kills and Flex Your Power campaigns, with their messages amplified and tailored to different audiences by local partners. Both the digital switchover and Fire Kills campaigns were able to reach vulnerable people with their messages by partnering with Age UK. Love Food Hate Waste gained traction with an important audience through its partnership with the Women’s Institute. Retail businesses were important partners in raising awareness for both Love Food Hate Waste and Change4Life by reaching people where they made decisions about food purchases.

Partners included the same mix of messengers and providers that the government hopes will come forward for schemes like the Green Deal but, critically, the government backed nature of the campaign made them all feel comfortable being part of a diverse group. The Green Deal Network’s exploration of how to increase Green Deal demand reinforces this, highlighting the need for a “neutral and authoritative central brand to build trust and understanding and articulate the fact that the [Green Deal] is new, different and government backed.”<sup>67</sup>

### **“Dispersed communications about energy schemes will find it far more difficult to form the kind of partnerships that are needed to help build trust.”**

In contrast, dispersed communications about energy schemes will find it far more difficult to form the kind of partnerships that are needed to help build trust. Due to lack of trust, some of the civil society organisations that have been vital conduits of information on other behaviour campaigns may not wish to work in partnership with energy companies. A Green Deal Network focus group participant noted that “If there are lots of names you could get schemes that aren’t what they seem”,<sup>68</sup> highlighting the worries that



organisations will have when it comes to endorsing or working with different schemes.

Our research on the Green Deal, conducted with three parliamentary constituencies, local authorities and civil society organisations said they were hesitant to align themselves with a private initiative and to be seen to be endorsing a particular brand or product rather than an overall scheme.<sup>69</sup> These groups wanted national support for any communications they might be running in their area, to give them legitimacy and to ensure control over the messages about the scheme. The government's own research into consumer views on the Green Deal noted that "in order for the Green Deal to enjoy widespread acceptance it was felt that endorsement by a trusted source was needed." Participants in the research had made an "automatic assumption" that the government would play this visible, trusted role.<sup>70</sup>

From a practical point of view it is also unrealistic to assume that community organisations, or even bigger charities, will be able to work simultaneously with a range of providers. The regional nature of the digital switchover meant that Digital UK could work closely and intensely with a range of civil society organisations, community groups, health providers etc over a defined period of time. The trusted messengers that are so essential would find such engagement hard to sustain over extended periods of time, especially if there is no single point of contact in the form of a national communications body.

### **Providing coherence and cohesion to practical action**

The lack of a supporting policy framework was a key reason for the failure of campaigns like Act on CO<sub>2</sub>. In contrast, a national communications campaign on energy demand would relate directly to a range of schemes that will enable people to take the kind of actions being promoted.

The most successful campaigns have communications as one part of a coherent national strategy. The Change4Life campaign is

an integral part of the government's 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives' policy approach. Similarly, Love Food Hate Waste was launched as part of the government's 2007 Waste Strategy and supported the roll-out of food waste collections. Any national communications on energy schemes will have the same potential for greater impact that a clear link with policy offers.

A national campaign also provides coherence to action on the ground. Energy companies need to access every home in the UK to install smart meters, Green Deal providers will be offering a range of opportunities to householders, and they may also receive messages about FiTs and the RHI. National communications about energy will situate all of these offers within a broader context and provide a sense that they are all part of the same overall effort. They will also help to provide trust in the schemes themselves: that they are credible, that people should let contractors into their homes, and that they are government backed.

### **“Successful campaigns have communications as one part of a coherent national strategy.”**

The nationally co-ordinated digital switchover brand gave private sector contractors on the ground credence, trust and agency. If the communications had been left to individual companies, householders would have experienced it as nothing more than private companies encouraging them to buy a digital TV. In contrast, the switchover campaign established it as a national process that required a response.

The smart meter roll-out will be similar to this effort in some ways (although it is not being done on a regional basis). People could just perceive it as their energy companies insisting that they allow the installation of a new meter, which evidence from abroad shows is unlikely to get the uptake needed. In California they approached the smart meter roll-out as an



infrastructure challenge, but now recognise that they should have seen it as a consumer engagement challenge.<sup>71</sup> A national campaign can provide the roll-out with added legitimacy and context; situating it as part of a wider move towards a 21st century energy system in the UK that will save households money and increase energy security.

### **Avoiding a vacuum for negative stories**

In *From hot air to happy endings*<sup>72</sup> we showed that a good story is a key ingredient of a successful campaign. All of the case studies we feature in this report have a compelling narrative, whether it is showing consumers they have the agency to help avoid blackouts (FlexYour Power) or that having a smoke alarm can save lives (Fire Kills).

This is about more than just rebutting negative stories. There has to be a strong positive narrative communicated via the media and other channels that is present alongside negative stories when they arise. Without this, there is a vacuum. The roll-out of smart meters in Victoria, Australia highlights this risk. It began in mid-2009 with “little demonstrable evidence”<sup>73</sup> of engagement with consumers or representative groups. Consumer backlash was severe, as they felt they were paying for the roll-out without receiving the benefits, and there was no positive story to counter this view. As a result, the programme was halted in March 2010. It was restarted in December 2011, acting on an audit’s recommendation to “develop, appropriately resource and implement a stakeholder engagement plan with a particular focus on addressing consumer issues arising from the [metering] project.”<sup>74</sup> In their assessment of the UK smart metering programme for Which?, the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) found that communications would be essential to mitigate a number of risks that might derail the roll-out, most of which were about assuaging consumer concerns.<sup>75</sup>

More recently, controversy over the government’s proposed changes to building regulations demonstrates the cost of not having positive communications in place. The

‘consequential works’ proposals would have put in place a valuable trigger for energy efficiency improvements to homes and Green Deal uptake. When undertaking work on a house, such as building an extension or a large conservatory, householders would have been required to upgrade the energy efficiency of the rest of their property as well. This would not have to be paid for up front, as they could have funded the improvements through the Green Deal.

However, in the absence of any positive communications about these proposals, the negative press, which dubbed the proposals a ‘conservatory tax’, gained undue prominence. Although the government’s official response to the consultation has not yet been released it is now very unlikely that these proposals will go ahead.<sup>76</sup> This is a significant setback for the Green Deal, as it would have helped to guarantee a certain level of uptake per year.

### **Providing the bigger picture**

National communications is the only approach that can go beyond high visibility and actually set a bigger picture for the public. Research exploring what the public want to see from government on energy policy has shown clear calls for:

- a positive big story or vision that provides a narrative for all actions, announcements and measures;
- a plan detailing how government and individual action over the next five years will contribute to that vision;
- clear examples of what individuals can do to contribute to that plan and ensure ‘freeloaders’ don’t take advantage of it.<sup>77</sup>

The government’s research into consumer responses to the Green Deal noted people’s view that the government should be involved in “setting and communicating the context and rationale for the Green Deal”.<sup>78</sup> National communications can do this, going beyond individual schemes and telling the big story that people are looking for. This would set out the need to take action, the different practical energy schemes and support on offer, and the reasons

behind the effort. As the Big Energy Shift showed, it would “provide vital context for other initiatives. . . [helping] people to notice and believe in local initiatives, which otherwise might be ignored or treated with scepticism...[it is therefore] a prerequisite for enabling any of the individual initiatives to work on the ground”.<sup>79</sup>

The bigger picture would also provide context to the environmental policies and debates that people read about in the press, helping to demonstrate that these schemes are all part of Britain moving towards a new energy future. This would enable the government to demonstrate publicly that it is acting, as most other government action on energy, such as the Carbon Reduction Commitment or the EU ETS, is invisible to most people.

### Changing norms

Our behaviour is deeply influenced by social context; by the actions of those around us and the practices that dominate a society. Both influence what we perceive as the norm.<sup>80</sup>

For consumer facing energy policies to succeed, saving energy needs to become normal. And to become normal it will need to be visible. This is a significant challenge, as it is often impossible to tell from the outside of a house whether it has insulation or efficient products inside. So visibility will not come from the measures alone.

If there is a common brand, people will start to see it around them and to notice that people are taking up these schemes. For example, they might see a branded van parked on their neighbour’s drive while they have insulation put in, or conversations might arise from prominent local advertising and coverage.

Clear and consistent communications on energy will make it evident that action is underway by a range of people. Without the visibility created by national communications, people will simply experience a number of different brands from different companies, offering different things. A sense of shared activity will not build up and the power of social norms to drive wider uptake and engagement will not be activated.

Activating the power of norms via national communications will also influence people’s perceptions of fairness and the degree to which they are willing to take certain actions, based on their view of whether others are doing so as well. John Thøgersen, a professor in economic psychology, explains: “What matters, is what other people do. If you don’t perceive that many people are also saving energy, then you [feel] a bit of a sucker, because you lose something without helping the problem.”<sup>81</sup> This also came out of the Big Energy Shift dialogue. If people are going to take an action they want to know that other people aren’t ‘freeloading’. Research by the Fabian Society also showed how beliefs about fairness can be a powerful force in driving behaviour and people moving away from an individualised frame towards one that puts their actions in the context of a large scale endeavour.<sup>82</sup>

### Avoiding the rebound effect

A national approach to communications is better placed to mitigate the rebound effect. Numerous studies suggest that savings from energy efficiency can be either directly or indirectly undone by the householder’s subsequent actions.<sup>83</sup> For example, by turning the heating up in a newly insulated home, or purchasing more energy consuming electronics with the money saved.

**“For consumer facing energy policies to succeed, saving energy needs to become normal. And to become normal it will need to be visible.”**

The extent of the rebound effect has much to do with how energy schemes are communicated or sold to the public. In an effort to resonate with people’s priorities, many campaigns focus on the financial savings that they offer. And in the drive to get their share of the market for new schemes, dispersed communications will, understandably, use whichever messaging is most immediately effective for their audiences.

But measures sold only on saving money are

more likely to result in consumers rebounding and using the money saved on high carbon activities. A recent report by the NHBC Foundation found that residents in eco-homes, sold on the grounds that they saved householders money, used their savings from energy bills primarily to buy consumer electronic goods and to go on holiday, thereby negating some of their energy saving effects.<sup>84</sup>

This is not to say that money saving should not be mentioned, as it is essential to highlight benefits that attract people. But national communications will have the added value of being able to contextualise messages. Indeed, according to social marketing expert Douglas

**“National communications can make the links between a range of activities and policies, clearly demonstrating how and why they all fit into an overall aim.”**

Mackenzie Mohr, a central, common brand is one of the only ways of overcoming the rebound effect and providing the policy objectives that lie behind a campaign with a greater chance of being met. This is because national communications can make the links between a range of activities and policies, clearly demonstrating how and why they all fit into an overall aim, of which emissions reduction will be one aspect alongside financial savings, practical installation of measures and so on. In contrast, dispersed communications have no incentive to ensure that their marketing achieves anything more than getting the measures installed in peoples' homes, as this is where the profits are.

# 5

## The way ahead

### Responding to demand

This report is not simply making an academic case for national communications. The policies under discussion and their opportunities are real and imminent and, after extensive planning and design, their communications have to be right. The arguments above clearly demonstrate how and why national communications are needed, what they will deliver in terms of consumer engagement. In contrast, dispersed communications are no match and will put policy objectives at risk. Our arguments build on repeatedly expressed views from a range of stakeholders, all of whom want to see consumer facing energy policies succeed, but who also want the government to recognise how critical a national communications strategy is to that success.

Communications carried out by the private sector, local authorities, civil society organisations, community groups and housing associations are also essential to success. Any communications around consumer facing energy policies will be a collaborative process, with different approaches working alongside national communications. But dispersed communications alone, some of which suffer from significant trust issues and much of which will be fragmented and even contradictory, will be unable to achieve the engagement needed.

**“Many stakeholders are candid about the fact that they do not want to ‘go it alone’ in communicating schemes like the Green Deal.”**

As a result, many stakeholders are candid about the fact that they do not want to ‘go it alone’ in communicating schemes like the Green Deal. The Green Deal Network notes that “a central marketing effort could deliver significant uplift on consumer response, create confidence among potential providers and leverage investment from businesses and commitment from the third sector, housing associations and local authorities, maximising early take up.”<sup>85</sup>

Concerns about low uptake of the Green Deal, if there are no national communications, prompted the Green Deal Network to commission the study cited on page 20, which examines projected uptake with and without national communications. Its stark conclusion, that there would be dramatically lower uptake in the absence of a national communications strategy, highlights exactly why stakeholders want the government to recognise the need for them.

**“A strength of national communications will be the ability to harness the power of different networks, due to its role as a trusted brand.”**

Stakeholders are reluctant to put too much of their marketing spend behind the energy schemes under discussion, because they are unsure how big the market will prove to be without a significant, national communications effort. The government announced the first group of Green Deal providers in April 2012 and it did include some big brands, such as British Gas, Carillion and Kingfisher.<sup>86</sup> But commentators noted privately that some brands, whose trusted names had been continuously referenced by government as the type of provider they were hoping for, had not come forward. When it comes to the range of smaller providers that the government also hopes will show interest, they simply do not have the brand presence and resources to invest in the communications necessary to reach the public effectively. Once again, a high profile national brand is essential for smaller stakeholders to align with.

### Funding national communications

The Coalition made it clear when it came into power that excessive government spending on communications would no longer be acceptable and that any expenditure must be cost effective and deliver real benefit. But it has acknowledged the role of communications in delivering policy in its reversal of decisions to cut campaigns like Change4Life.

This report shows that national communications are similarly essential to delivering the objectives of consumer facing energy policies and that, without them, there is a significant risk that objectives will not be met. Such an approach can also be affordable, rather than burdensomely expensive for government, as the case studies we have examined and the proposed approach to communicating the smart meter roll-out demonstrate.

Funding for other schemes:

- The digital switchover campaign was jointly funded by broadcasters.
- Change4Life will have benefited from considerable in kind support of £200 million from the private sector over four years (2009 – 2012), which far outstrips the government's current £14 million contribution.
- Love Food Hate Waste received £10 million of in kind support from the private sector, as part of the delivery of their Courtauld Commitments,<sup>87</sup> effectively doubling the campaign's budget.
- The government proposes that smart meter communications should be run through an independent delivery body entirely funded by energy suppliers.<sup>88</sup>

The case studies highlight that national communications do not have to be expensive. TV advertising undoubtedly is, but many campaigns, such as Fire Kills, were strategic in targeting local media and engaging local messengers in community based marketing campaigns which are far cheaper, more effective and trusted. As discussed, a strength of national communications will be the ability to harness the power of different networks, due to its role as a trusted brand. Much of the subsequent communications which that enables will be free and will take place via social media and local activity.

It is also worth noting that the government has committed to ambitious targets related to consumer facing policies. If the

communications put in place are not sufficient to drive the necessary demand then the government may end up having to spend more money in the long run to shore up demand for a scheme that is ailing, or to counteract negative messages.

**“Poor communications and the negative repercussions that follow can send policy makers back to the drawing board faster than anything else.”**

#### **Putting plans in place**

There have been vast strides in the government's understanding of behaviour change theory and its application to policy over the past few years. But designing policies that take account of behavioural theory will amount to nothing if the way that they are communicated is not handled correctly. Previous work by Green Alliance, which explored how awareness of behaviour change policies filters down to the household level, underlines this. Our 2011 report *Bringing it home* found that, if policy is to be effective from the public's point of view, the way a scheme is communicated is just as important as how it is designed.<sup>89</sup>

The government has belatedly recognised the benefits of trying to link up consumer facing energy policies, with the creation of the Energy Efficiency Deployment Office (EEDO). The consultation on smart meter consumer engagement also indicates movement in the right direction, as it proposes the creation of a national body to deliver smart meter communications. But it still assumes that such a body should be independent of other consumer facing energy schemes, and plans are being developed by the smart meter consumer engagement team, outside the EEDO's proposed remit.

Poor communications and the negative repercussions that follow can send policy makers back to the drawing board faster than

anything else. Fear of these repercussions is exactly what makes wider stakeholders reluctant to fill the role that the government expects of them.

Time is short, as we head quickly towards a Green Deal launch in autumn 2012. Valuable work is being done on communications and consumer engagement within departments, but there needs to be a recognition that only a government-initiated, national campaign can provide the visibility, trust and wider context that will help to guarantee the success of consumer facing energy schemes.

# Why national communications are essential

## **National communications:**

build greater visibility and consistency of messages

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enable trusted messengers to communicate

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provide coherence and cohesion to practical action

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avoid a vacuum for negative stories

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provide the bigger picture

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change what people see as normal energy behaviour

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help avoid the rebound effect, where financial savings through energy efficiency contribute to greater energy use elsewhere

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These are covered in depth in chapter 4

## **Case studies show that an effective behaviour change communications campaign should also include:**

**A clear behavioural goal and call to action:** aiming to change specific behaviours rather than just influence knowledge, attitudes and beliefs

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**A strong narrative:** telling a compelling, positive story

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**Evidence based design using social marketing principles:** based on in depth understanding of relevant behaviours and the barriers to and motivations for change, as well as how they link to local concerns and decision contexts

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**Evolution:** modify the approach throughout the campaign as behaviours change and knowledge about successful methods improves

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**Multi-method creative communications:** many faceted and many layered using a variety of different channels, taking advantage of moments of change and using segmentation to engage particular audiences with different messages

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**Multi-scale, multi-stakeholder delivery:** large scale national approaches can reinforce more locally specific communications, which link to local concerns. National campaign resources can support local organisations that offer more tailored, innovative communities, as well as pre-existing networks to use as communications channels

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**A strong brand with sub-brands:** a strong national brand is essential and will be most effective if it can be divided into sub-brands for particular behaviour campaigns and for tailoring by different stakeholders. It should be open source so that diverse stakeholders and actors can ally themselves to it, although its use should also be clearly regulated. It should be used in the delivery of all policies associated with energy savings in the home

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# 6

## Case studies

## Love Food Hate Waste



Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) is run by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), a government funded not-for-profit private sector company. LFHW was launched in 2007 and aims to raise awareness about food waste and encourages action to address it. Suggested actions for individuals include portion control, better storage of food, and the use of leftovers in cooking, which is enabled through recipe provision. WRAP is also working with businesses to reduce wastage before food gets to the consumer.

### Budget

Between 2007 and 2011, WRAP has spent around £11.5 million on LFHW, covering research, consumer engagement, development of materials for partners and funding of local authority partnerships. Additional spending by Courtauld Commitment signatories and local councils is believed to have more than matched WRAP's own expenditure, with retailers and brands contributing £10 million through their own advertising and programmes.<sup>90</sup> The budget has been reduced under the current government with more reliance on providing private sector partners with research, information and materials for them to use in their own customer communications activities.

### Nature of campaign

A strong, simple, clear message and call to action, developed through consumer testing.

A professional logo, trademarked with legal protection and control over misuse, although this has been relaxed under the current government.

Roadshows including cookery demonstrations and recipe competitions.

Partnerships with a range of stakeholders including local authorities, community groups, housing associations, local businesses and civil society groups. These were supported by guidelines about how to get engaged and led to initiatives such as 'Love Food Champions', an initiative in partnership with the Women's Institute.<sup>91</sup>

Partnerships with large retailers and brands and agreements with them to take action to help reduce food waste. These have tailored the campaign for their audiences, for example, Sainsbury's 'Love Your Leftovers' and Morrisons' 'Great Taste Less Waste' campaigns. They have also led to the introduction of better labelling, eg Warburtons has removed 'display until' dates from its products to reduce date labelling confusion, and Kingsmill has introduced pack sizes that are better suited to today's households, such as its 'Little Big Loaf'.<sup>92</sup>

Advertising in local press and magazines, on buses and bus shelters, at train stations and on local radio.

## Impact

More than 300 local authorities in England have set up their own LFHW initiatives to help residents reduce food waste.<sup>93</sup> According to WRAP's evaluation, key achievements are food waste savings of 670,000 tonnes, with a value of over £1.5 billion. The production of this food and the disposal of the waste would have produced more than 1.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions a year. They estimate that more than two million people have made positive changes to the way they shop for, prepare, store and use food. The campaign has saved money for consumers, as every pound spent by WRAP on LFHW has prevented around £150 of food being wasted, and for local authorities, who have saved at least £22 million in avoided waste facility gate fees and landfill charges.<sup>94</sup>

## Relevant learning

Align a clear call to action with policy and actions that enable the behaviours being promoted: Love Food Hate Waste was launched at the same time as the 2007 Food Waste Strategy and alongside a significant increase in service provision, with the roll-out of local authority food waste prevention activities across the country and food waste collections.<sup>95</sup>

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Build a strong brand with clear, evidence-based messaging: in this case building on the fact that people don't like wasting food.

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A strong brand draws others to it: the Greater London Authority dropped their own campaign on food waste and moved to LFHW, as uptake and brand awareness became so widespread amongst other local authorities.

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Tight control of the brand is key: it avoids it being used in ways that would elicit negative responses.

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Businesses value a core brand that they can align with but tailor to their own needs: major brands and retailers all engaged with the core campaign but developed different approaches.

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# The digital switchover



The government's decision in 2000 to switch public television from analogue to digital required all households to have a television set capable of receiving digital television signals at some point between 2008 and 2012, depending on the region, if they were to continue receiving broadcast television.

The government facilitated the creation of Digital UK, a not-for-profit company set up by BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, S4C and Teletext. Its role was to manage the technical side of the switchover

and to run a public information campaign. An additional company, Digital Switchover Help Scheme Limited (DSHS Limited), was set up to assist vulnerable people in the switchover.

## Budget

£201 million from the 2007-13 BBC licence fee settlement was used to fund the communications campaign, which is currently estimated to come in at least 30 per cent under budget. The help scheme, which includes the costs of equipment to assist vulnerable people in the switchover, was funded by a further £603 million from the licence fee settlement in the same period. Overall, the switchover process is estimated to deliver £1.7 billion of net benefit to the UK.<sup>96</sup>

## Nature of campaign

Mailings to every household about the switchover.

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High visibility national and regional advertising campaigns.

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The use of a robot known as Digit Al as a key mascot for the campaign that appeared in TV adverts, billboards and in costume at events

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Co-ordinated communications campaigns in each region, with leaflets and a 'switchover roadshow' in popular shopping areas.

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A certification mark known as the 'digital tick' for use by manufacturers and retailers to show consumers which products are digital enabled, and shared branding that could be used by both digital platforms and retailers.

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A Digital Outreach programme to provide tailored support to up to one million people identified as potentially vulnerable, but who may not be eligible for the help scheme, by the end of the programme.

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## Impact

As of April 2012, the switchover was complete in 13 out of 15 regions and has been a huge success. By the time the actual switchover takes place in each region, the communications campaign will have typically increased awareness and conversion to digital TV to 98-100 per cent. Ninety three per cent of households are comfortable with the process and complaints have been minimal, at 0.001 per cent of households switched to date.<sup>97</sup>

Although this campaign is now seen as a success, it is worth noting that it was initially unpopular. Research indicated that digital take up would plateau at 70-80 per cent without a switchover and that over a third of the UK thought that switchover was “unfair or unjust”. While, to some extent, the programme benefited from the decisions of consumers who were inclined to buy digital products anyway, in every region there was a remainder of ten per cent of homes, often highly resistant to or fearful of change, that would not convert until close to the end.<sup>98</sup>

## Relevant learning

Digital UK have started evaluating the campaign and have highlighted a number of recommendations relevant to the communication of any nationwide scheme:<sup>99</sup>

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A single purpose organisation is needed with a clearly defined remit running a campaign.

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A centralised delivery vehicle should act as a hub for activity.

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Any public change programme must be led by unequivocal government and regulator support.

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A layered communication model should be used, first nationally, then narrowing down regionally and locally that uses a clear brand and consistent communications.

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Regional co-ordination can be enormously beneficial, as it enables engagement of stakeholders and support networks. The multiple messages from many sources creates a sense of momentum among consumers, which drives action.

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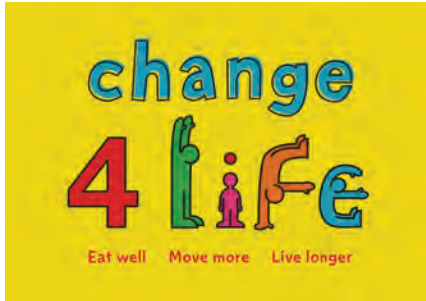
Use existing networks to communicate the message to different audiences; Digital UK created a consortium called Digital Outreach that consisted of Age UK, CSV and the CEL Group.

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Actively support those who are likely to find the action difficult.

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# Change4life



The Change4Life campaign started in January 2009. It aims to reduce obesity by promoting healthier diets and more exercise, particularly amongst families, pregnant women and black and minority ethnic groups.<sup>100</sup> It is managed by the Department of Health in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Transport (DfT), the Department for Education (DfE), and a variety of sports businesses, food retailers (particularly supermarkets), and civil society organisations.

## Budget

The advertising budget for Change4Life began at £75 million for a three-year campaign,<sup>101</sup> but was frozen by the Coalition government in 2010. A year later, following an 80 per cent drop in the number of people joining the campaign, the government committed £14 million a year to ensure its continuation.<sup>102</sup> In addition to government funding, 33 private sector partners will have given the equivalent of £200 million in services and advertising space to the campaign by the end of 2012.<sup>103</sup> To put this in context, the private sector spends £335 million every year on advertising confectionery, snacks, fast food restaurants and carbonated beverages.<sup>104</sup>

## Nature of campaign

A clear slogan; “eat less, move more, live longer”.

Strong, engaging branding with brightly coloured television adverts and mascots.

A variety of marketing approaches including voucher offers for healthier food products, an informative website, cooking tutorials with the chef Ainsley Harriott and recipe cards.

A number of sub-brands that make campaigning on single issues easier, such as Breakfast4Life, Cook4Life, and Start4Life. Other government departments aligned their communications to the brand, such as DfT with Walk4Life and Bike4Life, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport with Swim4Life and Defra with MuckIn4Life, which encourages conservation volunteering.

Partnerships with businesses on all scales from small convenience stores to large retailers.

Partnerships with local authorities and community groups.

A phased communications campaign, which local partners could co-ordinate their activities around.

## Impact

The campaign attracted some criticisms related to the use of pre-made elements in recipes,<sup>105</sup> questions about whether the vouchers offered real savings or simply promoted associated brands<sup>106</sup> and concerns about its self-policed format. But branding and awareness-raising have proved successful. The Central Office for Information’s audit concluded that Change4Life had the fastest awareness build of any government campaign they had ever monitored, and the ‘How are the kids?’ questionnaire (a national survey of children’s diet and activity levels) was the most cost-effective response mechanism in government.<sup>107</sup> It is harder to assess impact on the ground, but positive differences have been observed among families engaged with Change4Life relative to a control group. In particular, families signed up to Change4Life favour low fat milks and low sugar drinks and over one million mothers claim to have made changes in response to the campaign.<sup>108</sup>

The convenience store sub-programme has been a particular success. It aimed to increase the access and availability of fresh fruit and vegetables in deprived areas. It had separate funding to support participating retailers, intensive support from the Department of Health, a very focused message and strictly controlled branding. The results showed improved customer perceptions of the stores involved; an average increase of fruit and vegetable purchasing of 143 per cent and an increase in reported fruit and vegetable consumption amongst residents. However, it failed to engage as many community groups as hoped.<sup>109</sup>

### Relevant learning

The Department of Health identified the following lessons in regard to running a national behaviour change campaign:

Link communications to policy: Change4Life is an integral part of the government's health policy, 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives', and has helped to bind the policy together and explain it to the public.

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Use an evidence-based approach to designing campaigns: Change4Life acted on evidence generated throughout the campaign, shared it widely and sought expert advice where the evidence base was limited. It also used segmentation techniques to effectively target interventions and identify trusted messengers.<sup>110</sup>

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Constantly reinforce messages but evolve them over time.

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Build a coalition of partners, including commercial sector, NGOs and other government departments to help create a wide variety of trusted messengers.

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Make use of existing networks: in this case the scheme used regional obesity and regional physical activity leads from primary care trusts and local authorities, as well as healthy schools co-ordinators, to promote the campaign locally and encourage other stakeholders to get involved. However, it is important to be aware that it takes a prolonged period of action to do this effectively.

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Create a compelling brand: the Change4Life brand identity captured the imagination of the public and made it possible to land some hard-hitting messages in an engaging and charming way.

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Use sub-brands within a larger brand: the convenience store project benefited from being part of the broader Change4Life brand whilst having a more targeted message. The greatest change was evident among participants who were aware of how the sub-initiative fit into the broader programme.<sup>111</sup>

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Central government funding and tight brand control are essential: many of the criticisms of the campaign arose after the budget and brand control of this campaign had been significantly reduced, making it more reliant on major food and drink brands who have been perceived as using it more as a marketing opportunity.<sup>112</sup>

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## Fire Kills



The Fire Kills campaign, run by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), began in 1988 after a realisation that only nine per cent of homes had a smoke alarm.<sup>113</sup> It initially focused on encouraging smoke alarm ownership but evolved into a wider campaign that sought to bring down house fire injuries by raising awareness of key safety issues and the need to maintain smoke alarms by replacing batteries. The national advertising is supported by local fire and rescue services. Since 2006 it has focused on those most vulnerable to fire and, since 2010-11, the campaign has worked more closely with civil society and private sector partners, such as smoke alarm manufacturers, to deliver messages.

### Budget

The latest 'breathe' campaign, running since October 2009, had a budget of £4 million in 2009-10, which was reduced to £1 million in 2010-11. The government aims to reduce the impact of this cut through working more with partners.<sup>114</sup>

### Nature of campaign

The most recent 'Don't drown in your smoke' campaign was designed to highlight the dangers of toxic smoke and to encourage people to test their smoke alarms regularly. It was informed by a specific model developed by the behavioural theorist James Prochaska<sup>115</sup> and included:

A radio campaign encouraging listeners to test their smoke alarms every weekend at the same time, as research indicated that this is when people are most likely to be at home and to be doing other household chores and would help make it into a regular habit.

Complementary print advertising featured in the weekend sections of TV listings magazines to reach people when they were in their homes.

Community messaging (radio advertorials) and Featurelink (press advertorials) activity placing adverts close to stories about fires in the area.

Local media space paid for centrally but used by local fire and rescue services to develop locally-specific content.

Link ups with a number of seasonal campaigns, which led to a National Schools' Fire Safety Week and child friendly information and a website, as well as messages around Christmas, when fire risk is greater.

Working closely with civil society and private sector partners to extend the reach of the campaign, for example, putting the logo on smoke alarm packaging.

Partnerships with local fire and rescue services who helped raise awareness and fit and test smoke alarms.

A Fire Kills practitioners' group to ensure that the national campaign is effectively supporting work at the local level. Members include community fire safety and communications teams.



## Impact

In 1987, only nine per cent of homes had a smoke alarm. This figure now stands at 86 per cent.<sup>116</sup> An independent evaluation of the Fire Kills television advertising campaign in 2009 indicated that its advertising was one of the main contributors to people acquiring and checking smoke alarms. More people owning working smoke alarms has been a major factor in the continuing fall in the number of accidental fire deaths in the home.<sup>117</sup> The evaluation concluded that advertising about smoke alarm maintenance saves up to 21 lives per year with a net benefit to the economy of over £30 million.<sup>118</sup>

## Relevant learning

A clear call to action.

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Aim to change behaviour in the long term, rather than just focus on one action: this means campaigns can evolve their focus. In this case, once it had increased smoke alarm ownership, the campaign shifted to smoke alarm maintenance, after evidence showed there were a growing number of fires in the home where smoke alarms were present but failed to operate.

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Local support and knowledge are critical in making a campaign a success: fire and rescue services were able to build on the national campaign's advertising, merchandise and public relations activity to better target the vulnerable groups in their communities with crucial fire safety messages.

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Make use of existing networks to reach different audiences via messengers they trust: endorsement from Age UK helped secure wide coverage in publications and on websites that reach more vulnerable audiences.

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Partnership with the private sector multiplies the message and can give campaigns longevity: the Fire Kills logo features on smoke alarm packaging across all brands and is now also on insulation with fire protection qualities. The strength of partnerships meant that smoke alarm manufacturers continued to deliver the Fire Kills messages while the campaign was on hold for part of 2010–11.<sup>119</sup>

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## Flex your power



Flex your Power is California's household energy efficiency communications scheme, initiated in 2001. It is still the biggest programme of its kind in the United States, partnering with utilities, businesses, charities and government agencies.

The campaign's original aim was to reduce power cuts, which the state was experiencing due to excess demand, by encouraging the uptake of energy efficient measures and behaviours. But it also hoped to make energy conservation, including energy efficiency, a way of life.<sup>120</sup> Since 2007 the campaign has incorporated messaging about global warming, with its tagline changing from "Save energy, money and the environment," to "Save energy, money and prevent global warming."

### Budget

In 2001 and 2002 the FlexYour Power campaign was funded by the California state government with just over \$50 million a year (£38 million at the time). In subsequent years, the project has received \$11 million a year (£7 million) from a Public Goods Charge levied directly from utility bills.<sup>121</sup>

### Nature of campaign

Strong evidence-based brand, messaging and programme developed using social marketing techniques.

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Brand used as an umbrella for all outreach and promotion.

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Retail promotions, a comprehensive website, an electronic newsletter, educational materials and TV, radio, outdoor and online advertising.

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Messages are targeted for specific audiences and focus on key actions for sectors such as business, residential and agriculture; focusing on the influencers in each with one or two tailored messages.

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Media and outreach are used to encourage private sector investment in the promotion of energy efficiency.

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It is accompanied by significant enabling steps from the state. These included millions of dollars for efficiency funding, changing the pricing structure of energy to penalise 'energy hogs', incentives to encourage buying efficient appliances, public commitments to reducing air conditioner use; integrating messages into school lessons and encouraging state pension funds to invest in energy efficiency.

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## Impact

The campaign started from very low awareness rates; only ten per cent of Californians understood the concept of peak energy, and even fewer thought it was important.<sup>122</sup> It was successful in reducing power outages by achieving peak demand reductions of 8.9 per cent and reducing overall energy consumption by 6.7 per cent in its first year, even though it was a hot summer (when air conditioning would be used more than normal).<sup>123</sup> In 2006 reductions in energy use during a heatwave meant that California avoided blackouts altogether.<sup>124</sup> It is impossible to ignore the context of the campaign, as awareness of energy issues was heightened due to widespread talk about price increases and blackouts, but Flex Your Power successfully made the connection between the collective challenge and individual action. The campaign has received national and international recognition, including an ENERGY STAR award for excellence.<sup>125</sup>

## Relevant learning

An umbrella brand is key to unifying a wide array of disparate activity and providing partners with credibility. In this case it helped provide an emotional connection for people with the various activities and served as an umbrella for outreach and promotions by utility providers.

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Positive, evidence-based messaging works: Flex your Power's messaging is upbeat, encouraging individuals and businesses that they do have the power to act. The campaign tested messaging and applied the findings to its design. It found that neither fear nor blame motivated people. People responded best to messages like 'we need to deal with it before it becomes a crisis' and 'we don't want to leave these problems to our children'.

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A number of carefully orchestrated intervention strategies working together amplify each other's effectiveness.

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Social marketing should inform engagement techniques and can be used to test messaging.

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Evolve the message over time in response to changes in the target behaviours.

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Keep a successful brand and messaging going: Flex your Power examined energy conservation campaigns around the world and found that each time they stopped and started it was harder to start again. By keeping the campaign going with the right tone and messaging, it had a very favourable rating.

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Support any messaging with significant enabling steps from the state.

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