

24th August 2020

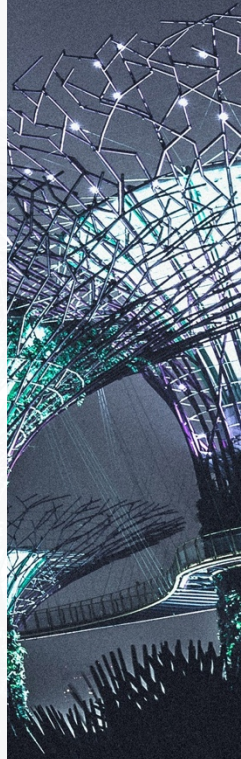
Engaging with energy poor households - experience from Great Britain

SocialWatt capacity building workshop, remote project meeting

Louise Sunderland
Senior Advisor
Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP)®

Rue de la Science 23
B-1040 Brussels
Belgium

+44 7989 356644
lsunderland@raponline.org
raponline.org



History of energy (fuel) poverty

- First recognised in 1970s (following oil crisis and the end of subsidies)
- First recognised by Government in 1997 and in legislation in 2000
- 25 years of energy companies targeting energy poor households through EEO

EESoP (1994-2002), 3 phases			EEC (2002-2008)	CERT (2008-2012)	CESP (2009-2012)	ECO1 (2013-2015)	ECO2 (2015-2017)	ECO3 (2018-2022)
30%	65%	67%	>50%	>40% plus 15% Super Priority Group	100% area based	45% of which 20% area-based	63% of which 28% area based	100%

Challenges of outreach & engagement

Energy company challenges

- Cost of outreach
- Imperfect data
- New offer/role for utility
- Overcome 'confusion' of energy retailer offering efficiency
- Messaging: knowledge of 'what works' to engage energy poor and vulnerable households

Household considerations

- Stigma
- Lack of trust
- Lack of time
- Bigger non-energy issues
- Language barriers, multiple vulnerabilities
- Digital exclusion

COVID-19: households with new challenges and less developed coping strategies, challenges of social isolation and social distancing

Examples of energy company approaches to outreach and engagement: GB

Mass communication

Direct
personal
engagement

Engagement
partner

Referral
network

Area-based
engagement

Examples of energy company approaches to outreach and engagement: GB

Mass communication

Direct
personal
engagement

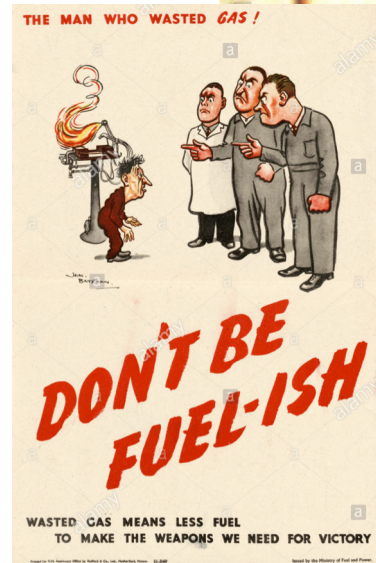
Engagement
partner

Referral
network

Area-based
engagement

Mass communication and direct engagement

- Mass communication/ awareness raising campaigns
- Direct engagement: awareness raising and provision of non-tailored energy saving tips or measures. Usually through direct mail out.
- Positive awareness raising impact.
- Risks of uncertain or limited energy poverty impact with untailored solutions (eg cfl scandal)



Examples of energy company approaches to outreach and engagement: GB

Mass communication

Direct
personal
engagement

Engagement
partner

Referral
network

Area-based
engagement

Engagement partnership

Partnership with an engagement partner (social/community org, local authority, installer/service network etc).

- Benefits:
 - partnership with trusted organisation,
 - partners' existing relationship with clients,
 - partners' existing contact point(s), trigger points or infrastructure and existing expertise.
 - Partner can bundle services for a smooth customer journey.

Example: VERBUND-Stromhilfefonds der Caritas

- Relationships vary e.g., contracted delivery partner, project funding, guarantee of support etc.

Examples of energy company approaches to outreach and engagement: GB

Mass communication

Direct
personal
engagement

Engagement
partner

Referral
network

Area-based
engagement

Referral network

- Effective method of significantly extending outreach
- Can include a variety of types of partner eg, housing orgs, social services, citizens advice, local authorities, health practitioners, community organisations, etc
- Partners provide referrals only, not services, but can be empowered to check/sign off eligibility.
- Can reach households who do not self-refer and are hard to reach.
- A payment can be provided for referral.

Example: Seasonal Health Intervention Network ([SHINE](#)). GPs, respiratory health centres, district nurses refer patients suffering from health issues that are exacerbated by cold homes into Local Authority advice service and utility-funded measures.



Examples of energy company approaches to outreach and engagement: GB

Mass communication

Direct
personal
engagement

Engagement
partner

Referral
network

Area-based
engagement

Area-based outreach

- Area-based outreach focusses resources, enables more intensive outreach (door to door) and more local visibility.
- Techniques developed by community regeneration
- Street-by-street delivery of measures is more cost effective.
- Areas defined by low income and/or poor housing/housing type.
- Two approaches to eligibility:
 - All households in the area (eg CESP)
 - Target outreach in defined area, eligibility checks still required (eg Warm Zones)

Community Energy
Saving Programme



Summary

- Challenges for both utilities and households in successful delivery of energy poverty services
- Many routes and methods for outreach and engagement:
 - Mass communication
 - Direct communication
 - Working with an engagement partner
 - Establishing a referral network
 - Engagement on an area-by-area basis

About RAP

The Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP)® is an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organization dedicated to accelerating the transition to a clean, reliable, and efficient energy future.

Learn more about our work at raponline.org



Louise Sunderland
Senior Advisor
Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP)®

Rue de la Science 23
B-1040 Brussels
Belgium

+44 7989 356644
lsunderland@raponline.org
raponline.org

Eligibility

- Proxies are most often used for energy poverty – accurate data is not available or assessment too expensive
- Data: what is available, how up to date is it?
- Sensitivity: what are you comfortable asking, what are households comfortable sharing?
- Balance between accuracy and cost
- Most commonly used in UK:
 - Benefits based – means tested benefits as a proxy for low income, disability benefits, old age benefits (caution)
 - Area-based – low income areas defined as eligible (caveat up to date data)