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19th August 2019

Chief Executive
Smart Energy GB
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Dear Sacha Deshmukh,

Citizens Advice welcomes Smart Energy GB's consultation on how to best target microbusinesses in the smart meter roll-out for the non-domestic sector. Microbusinesses present a huge opportunity to enable a large user base whilst achieving substantial energy savings¹.

As we have stated in previous consultation responses, there is a need to accelerate action in the microbusiness sector². Currently there are only 80,000 SMETS meters installed³ out of a total of around 1.4 million targeted SME and microbusiness sites¹. We understand this consultation is aimed at aiding the expansion and determining the needs of microbusinesses and the non-domestic market. This is an important task to ensure a positive experience for consumers during the roll-out.

Research we conducted in 2017 set out some policy recommendations for this area⁴. This identified particular considerations for suppliers to keep in mind when interacting with microbusinesses around smart meter installation. These are repeated below:

- Small businesses need a comprehensive and very basic campaign to inform them of the smart rollout.
- To be effective, communications efforts need to be more concentrated on reducing businesses' demand, rather than just on accurate bills.
- Suppliers must use the installation as an opportunity to promote demand reduction - the installation process (including aftercare) is not limited to the time spent physically installing.
- As in the domestic sector, basic access to data should be provided at no cost.
- Innovative technology relevant to small and microbusinesses should be encouraged and enabled.

¹ BEIS, [Smart Meter Implementation Programme](#) (2019)

² Citizens Advice, [Citizens Advice response to Ofgem's microbusiness retail energy market review](#) (2019)

³ BEIS, [Smart Meter Statistics Quarterly Report to end March 2019](#) (2019)

⁴ Citizens Advice, [Smart choices Investigating microbusinesses' interest in, and understanding of, smart meters](#) (2017)

Patron HRH The Princess Royal **Chief Executive Gillian Guy**

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Energy remains an essential for life service for microbusinesses. As the statutory consumer advocate, Citizens Advice is committed to ensuring all consumers, including microbusinesses, are at the heart of a rapidly changing energy market. Increased choice and opportunities to engage with the energy market (e.g. supply, products, data and services) must be underpinned by a secure and affordable energy supply.

We encourage Smart Energy GB to work in partnerships with trusted stakeholders as much as possible. We will continue to engage with Smart Energy GB and the government to ensure the smart meter roll-out is carried out effectively in both the non-domestic and domestic sectors.

Yours sincerely,



Arun Rao
Senior Policy Researcher, Energy Policy Directorate
Citizens Advice

Relevant research and policy reports we've published since 2016

2016	Microbusiness Contracts Factsheet Specific advice for microbusinesses from Ofgem and Citizens Advice
2017	Smart choices Investigating microbusinesses and smart meters
2018	Micro and Small Business Engagement in the Energy Market Research jointly funded with Ofgem Recovering energy debt from the smallest businesses Good practice guide on debt recovery processes
2019	Citizens Advice response to BEIS' consultation on proposals to improve non-domestic consumers' smart metering awareness and data access Consultation response Citizens Advice response to Ofgem's microbusiness retail energy market review Consultation response Closing the Protection Gap (forthcoming in 2019) New Citizens Advice research

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