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£11.3 BILLION SMART METER COST TO BE MET THROUGH CUSTOMER BILLS – USWITCH.COM COMMENTS

The Government's smart meter proposals announced today will come as a shock to energy customers who have now finally been told that they will be picking up the £11.3 billion cost of the roll-out through their bills^[1]. Despite the fact that consumers will be helping to foot the bill, research from uSwitch.com shows that just four in ten know what a smart meter is^[2] and only 15% welcome their introduction^[2]:

- **Huge change: Approximately 53 million meters will need to be replaced, involving visits to over 30 million households and businesses^[1]**
- **Too little, too late? DECC reveals that the £11.3 billion cost of the roll-out will be funded through customer bills, but the new meters will end up saving an average of £23 a year on bills^[1]**
- **Lukewarm welcome: just 15% of people welcome the move to smart meters^[2]**
- **In the dark: just four in ten consumers (40%) know what a smart meter is while 35% have heard of smart meters but don't actually know what they do^[2]**
- **Greener future: 74% of households would use the information provided by a smart meter to cut down their energy usage and be more energy efficient^[2]**

Tom Lyon, energy expert at uSwitch.com, the independent price comparison and switching service, says: "Smart meters could well turn out to be a smart move for energy customers, but without better communication and information we are in danger of seeing consumers switched off before the meters are switched on. Today's announcement finally confirms that energy customers will be footing the £11.3 billion bill for smart meter implementation^[1]. Although this may mean more accurate and potentially lower bills in the future, the short term impact is that bills will rise. What consumers now need to know is by how

much and at what point they can expect to see the net £23 a year savings the Government now predicts^[1].

“Much more effort must now be made to educate British householders about the costs and subsequent benefits of the programme. At the moment, many consumers are in the dark – 35% have heard of smart meters but don’t actually know what they do, while 25% don’t even know what a smart meter is^[2].

“Smart meters will provide a golden opportunity for consumers to control and ultimately reduce their energy use. Almost three quarters (74%) would use the information provided by a smart meter to cut down their energy usage^[2], which is very positive. DECC has estimated the average saving as £23 a year^[1], but with consumer education, innovative new tariffs and greater uptake of energy efficiency measures there’s no reason why consumers couldn’t actually save more.”

For more information visit www.uSwitch.com or call 0800 093 06 07

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Notes to editors:

1. DECC Smart Metering Implementation Prospectus:
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/smart_mtr_imp/smart_mtr_imp.aspx: see 1.5 and 1.6 on page 5.
2. uSwitch.com research - survey conducted by YouGov online between 10th – 13th August, 2010. A total of 5,070 UK energy customers took part in the survey. The figures have been weighted.

About us

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

The service is also available via fax and post. Consumers should fax 020 7233 5933 or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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