



The Energy Diaries

An exploration of lived reality *and* solutions

October 2022



1 Introducing The Energy Diaries



Background and objectives

BritainThinks and Cadent conducted 'The Energy Diaries' research programme, designed to both explore experiences of the Cost of Living (CoL) crisis, and to co-create ideas and solutions to help address this unprecedented increase in the cost of living, especially around increases in household energy costs.

The co-creation phase was supported by the following specialist partners:



Action for Warm Homes

The Energy Diaries engaged in depth with members of the public over two months, as energy bills started to increase



Experience research

Diarists took part in online and face-to-face interviews and mobile ethnography diary tasks, capturing real-life experiences as everyday costs started to increase.

18th March – 18th April 2022



Co-creation research

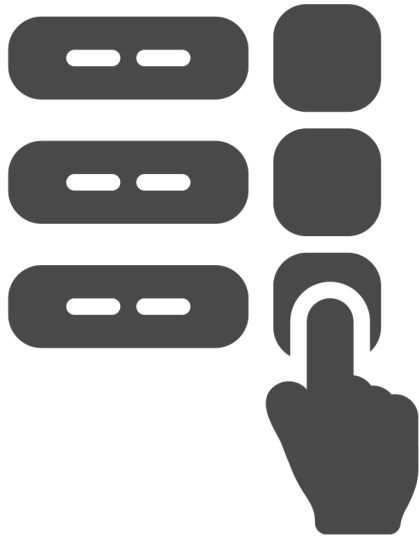
Diarists, Cadent staff and specialists convened in 3 virtual workshop sessions to create solutions based on the experiences reported in the diaries and interviews.

May 2022

Our diarist sample of 12 households includes individuals with a mix of ages, genders, life stages and housing situations, and are spread across North West England, the West Midlands, East England, the East Midlands and North London.

Sample includes 8 participants who are experiencing and expect to continue experiencing financial vulnerability.

As the energy crisis intensified, this was then followed by polling to quantify the qualitative findings



Cost of living polling

Online omnibus survey to quantify qualitative findings.

Nationally-representative of the population in Great Britain by gender, age, region and socio-economic grade.

22nd – 23rd June 2022

Energy diaries polling

Online omnibus survey to quantify qualitative findings.

Nationally-representative of the population in Great Britain by gender, age, region and socio-economic grade.

15th-16th August 2022

A note on context

Please note that this research was originally commissioned at the point of the first price increase to prepare for the subsequent increases that lay ahead. The wider context has developed rapidly over the past few months, with our participants likely facing even more difficult situations today compared to when this research was conducted in spring this year.

Given the shifting context, the discussion today is needed to reflect and build on the findings and ideas based on the most recent recent price increases and developments, ensuring any next steps remain relevant to the current situation.

2 Headline insights



5 headline insights

1.

Unprecedented cost of living increases, with energy costs front and centre are dominating every aspect of people's lives and lifestyles, hot on the heels of the financial and emotional hit of Covid. **Three-quarters (74%) of the public are really anxious about the cost of their energy bills this winter.**

2.

Over half (55%) of the public feel totally powerless when it comes to trying to reduce their energy bills, and see no way to further reduce essential energy use. Many people feel **resigned to their fate**, which with 53% feeling there is **no point in contacting their energy supplier** as they don't think there's any help available.

3.

A lack of accurate energy-saving information means **people can't work out how to reduce their energy use and costs**, with some using rules of thumb that might even increase costs. Around three-quarters **(73%) of the public would like there to be one single comprehensive information source for accurate and trustworthy information** about how they can reduce their energy bills and support available.

4.

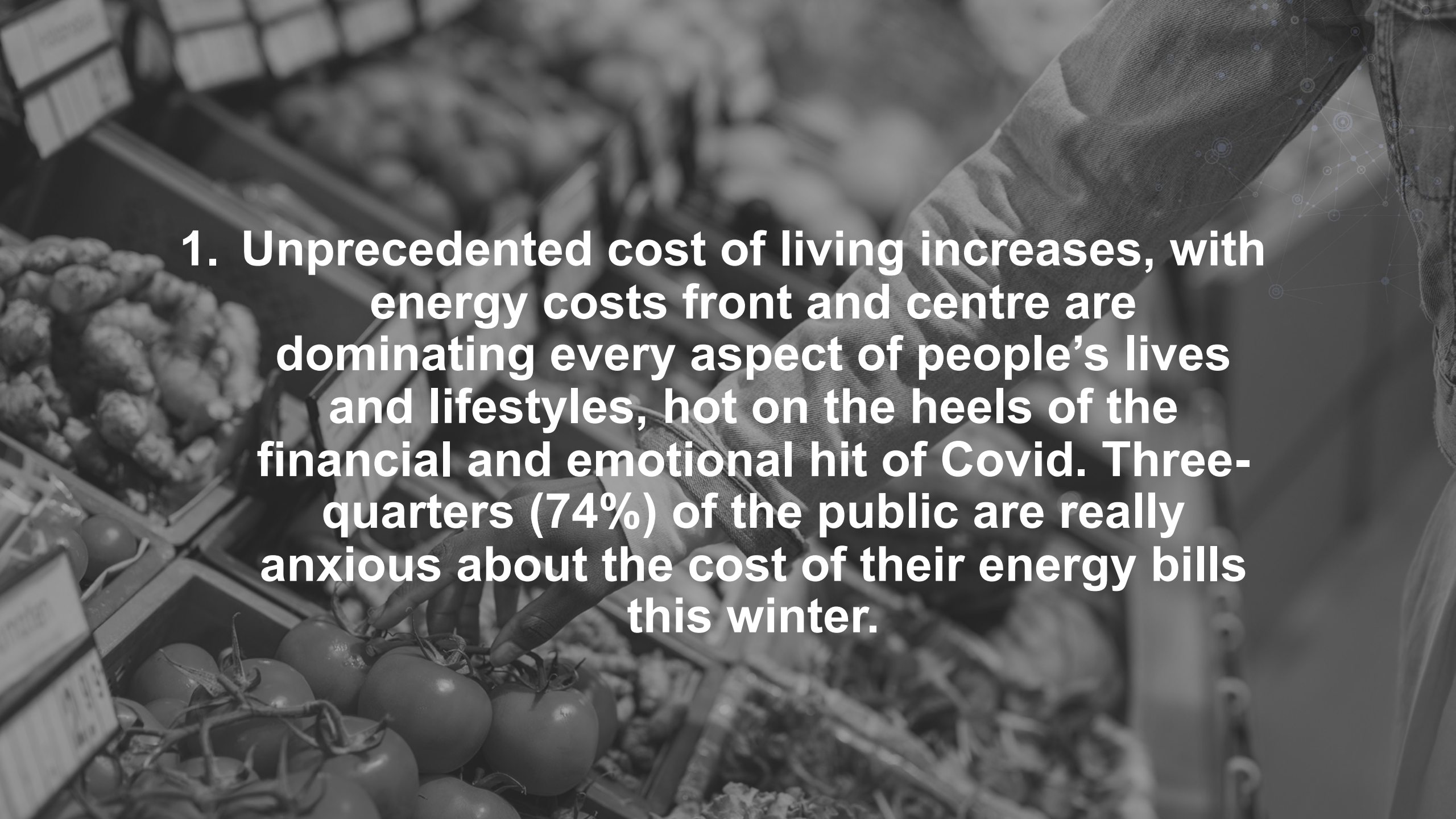
Few know about existing support for people struggling with energy bills, with **only 24% of the public thinking that their energy supplier has funding or financial support available**. People **want to see both Government and industry do much more to support those in greatest need** - only 14% think the Government are doing all they can, and 13% believe the energy industry has supported customers as much as possible.

5.

People are switching off from energy-related media coverage – **43% of the public say they avoid media coverage about the energy crisis** as it is all **doom and gloom** with no practical help.

3 Headline insights in detail





1. Unprecedented cost of living increases, with energy costs front and centre are dominating every aspect of people's lives and lifestyles, hot on the heels of the financial and emotional hit of Covid. Three-quarters (74%) of the public are really anxious about the cost of their energy bills this winter.

The CoL crisis is top-of-mind and exacerbating already stressful financial circumstances and insecurity

- A rise in the cost of living is consistently and spontaneously raised when considering concerns about participants' current and future personal lives.
- Participants describe it having an impact on all forms of household expenditure and are hoping to see a return to lower costs and greater financial stability as soon as possible.

“

We have the mortgage, all the expenses coming with it and plus the cost of living is quite daunting. My husband is the main income provider, and he hasn't had an inflation adjustment for years and gradually our expenses are creeping up and up.
(Female, 35-54, Greater London)

”

92%

Of the public are concerned

64%

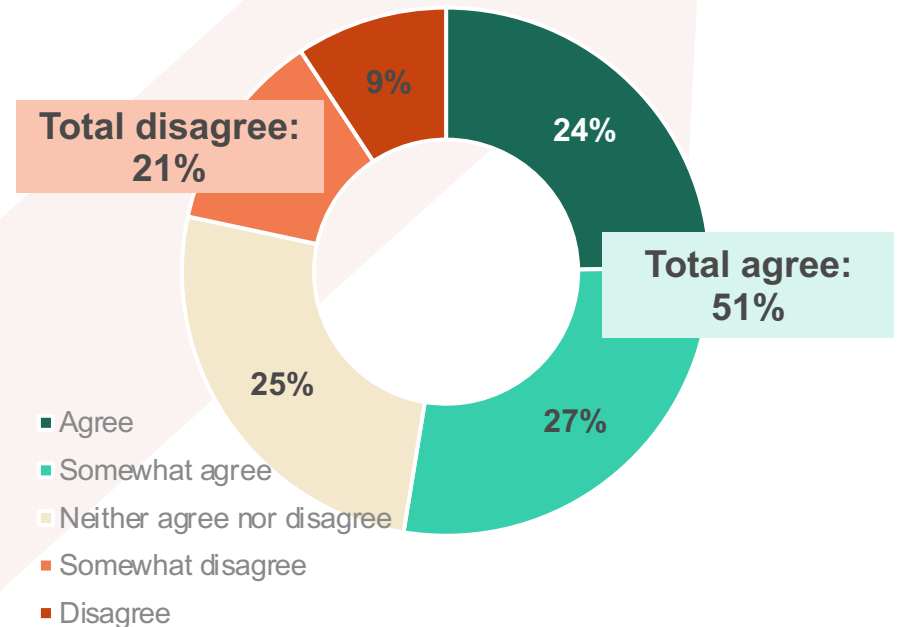
Of the public are very concerned

The rising price of gas and electricity was particularly impactful, with significant concern about affording essentials

- There is a sense that energy prices have been increasing month on month, and **continuing to experience increases at this rate feels alarming and unsustainable.**
- For those on pre-payment meters, **there was heightened concern around their electricity costs** as they have already experienced an increase in the amount of money they are loading onto the meter vs. the amount of electricity usage they are getting out.
- Needing to cut back in all areas of their lives **impacts on life goals and dreams, leading to a sense of joylessness (e.g. no holidays, never owning a car, a house)**, with participants focusing on and being concerned about being able to afford even just their essential bills.

Over a third (36%) of the public are pessimistic about being able to afford the *essentials* in life.

51% of the public agree that “*the increase in my energy bills is negatively impacting every single area of my life.*”



Those who are social grade DE (53%) are significantly more likely to agree than those who are AB (46%)

“

Everything is going up so rapidly – I want a job so I can cope with it better. I'm struggling. Everything has gone up... my electric is about to go up to £57 next month which is a big bill.

(Male, 55-69, North West)

”

“

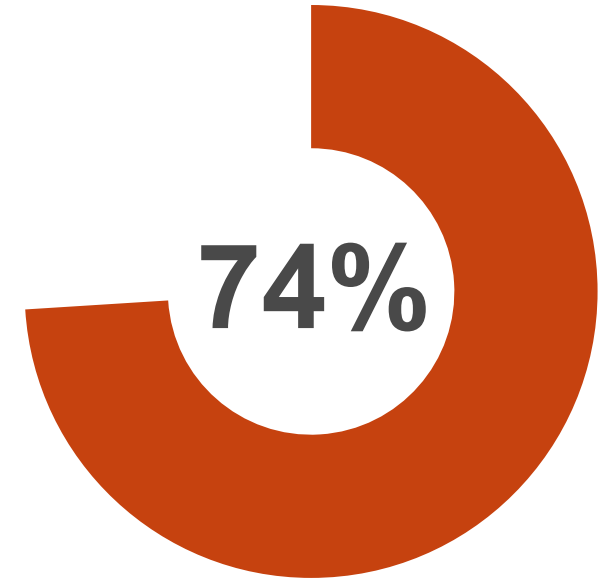
Well, it's gone up £40 pound a month, so that's gone up £480 pound a year, that's £480 I could have used for something else. That could have gone towards a holiday and not a camping one - we could have gone abroad somewhere, it would've paid for the flights.

(Male, 34-54, North West)

”

And looking toward winter, there is real concern around the colder weather and increased costs

- **Participants were broadly relying on the arrival of summer** to help reduce both their usage and costs and help mitigate their overarching concern.
- However, **many feel increasingly concerned about what the increase in costs will mean for them from October onwards** with the onset of colder weather and a greater need for heating.
- A small number of participants were aware of reports of another price increase in October, which adds to their worries.



...of the public are *really* anxious about the cost of their energy bills this winter.

Those who are social grade DE (77%) are more likely to agree than those who are AB (71%)

““

I did hear but didn't see this so don't know if it's fact but that it might go up again in August... if that is the case, I am screwed. I'm not being dramatic I am genuinely absolutely screwed if it goes up like it has done!
(Female, 21-34, West Midlands)

““

I'm feeling alright at the moment because it's summer and we're not using so much, but every time I think about the winter I worry about it, I hate the not knowing how much it will be, if it's 50% I think we'll probably be alright but what if it gets a lot worse because of the Ukraine.
(Female, 35-54, Greater London)

““

I did hear from a family friend that the prices are going up again in August - if that happens - I don't know how we will survive. And that might sound really silly, but I dunno how we will be able to do more than what we're doing....our lives are gonna be completely stripped back.
(Female, 21-34, West Midlands)

””

As a result, participants were trying to cut down their energy bills in three main ways:



1. Reducing their energy usage



2. Cutting down on other expenditures to pay energy bills



3. Spending money to save money



1. Reducing their energy usage



Electricity

All are taking action to cut down electricity usage on a **wide variety of appliances** (e.g. by switching things off fully instead of leaving them on standby; changing to LED lightbulbs; reducing use of the oven (e.g. by eating raw/cold meals instead, batch-cooking, using slow cookers); making an effort to switch lights off etc.).



Gas

Often considered the key cause of high gas bills, **all are trying to reduce heating and hot water usage** (e.g. by reducing the amount of time the heating is on for or turning the thermostat down by 1-2 degrees).

There is considerable uncertainty about the exact impact of these changes in behaviour are having on their usage and bills.

While some had started to use their smart meter to try and work this out, others were using this month as a 'test' month to see what changes are manageable for them and what kind of impact it has on their bills.

"I'm cutting down all the time - if you said, gimme a list of what [else] you can cut down today, there's nothing because all I'm using is a laptop cause that's for work. And then this evening I might go out and go to the gym. So there's no electric that I need to cut down any more.

(Male, 21-34, West Midlands)



2. Cutting down on other expenditures to pay energy bills



While at the beginning of the process some participants were hopeful that the energy crisis wouldn't impact other areas of their lives, **by the end of the research period most participants had made changes to other areas of their lives in the hope of saving** as much money as possible for their energy bills.

Examples of changes made include cancelling their gym memberships; reducing alcohol and takeaway consumption; cutting back on eating out; buying supermarket snacks for the cinema; using the car less.

“

I don't cook as much as I used to and I'm trying to live off sandwiches. It helps me save on my food shopping and also means I use less electricity.

(Male, 55-69, North West)

”

However, **at this stage participants were not willing or able to make further sacrifices to perceived essentials**, for example, watching the TV or playing on games consoles.



3. Spending money to save money



A handful of participants who can afford to are choosing to spend money to cut down on their usage for example by buying an electric blanket; buying a solar powered charging bank; buying more clothes (to cut down on washing); buying more energy efficient light bulbs.

Generally **participants are buying these items based on a vague sense that this will save them money, but not actually being aware or having calculated whether the cost** of buying the new item will actually turn out to be cost-effective in the long-run.

“

People have suggested that there are some electric blankets in Aldi for £35 which are really good. I think it's a great idea, especially at night when its colder and when we just have to be in a room.

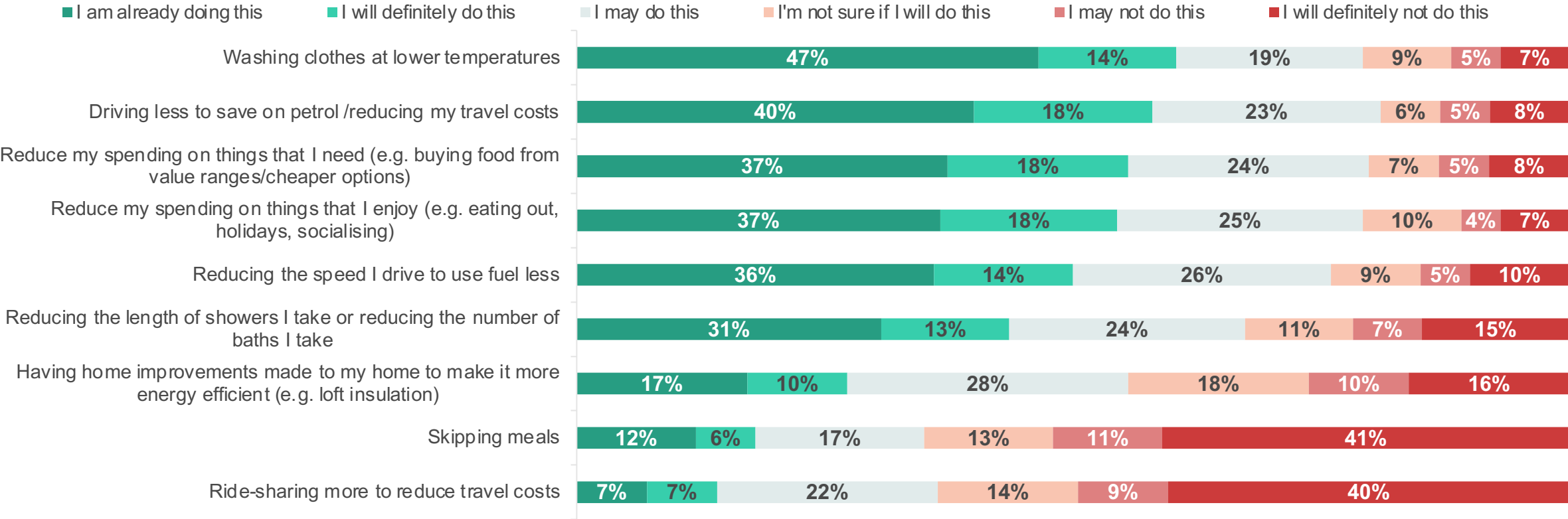
(Male, 35-54, Greater London)

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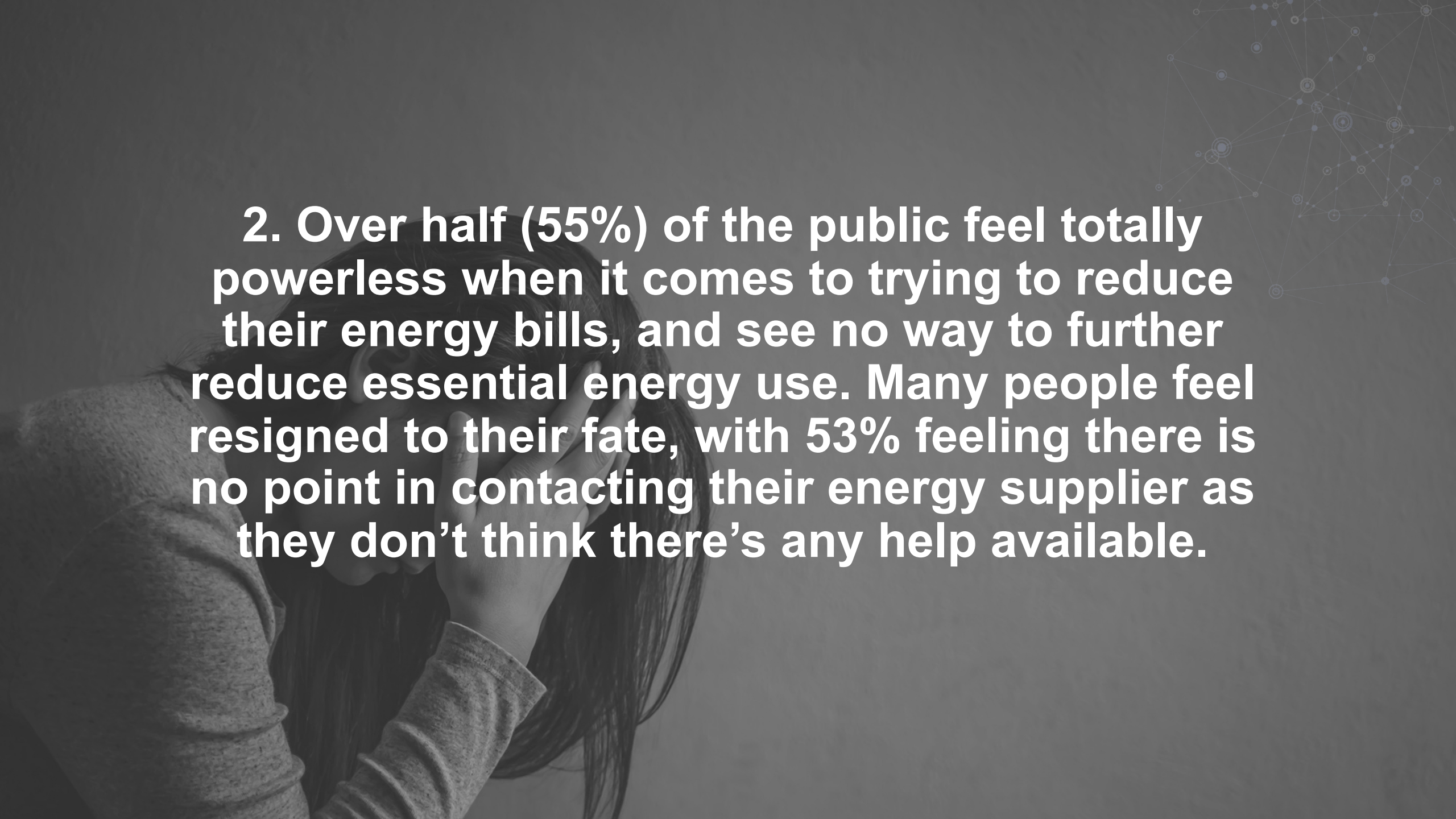
However, **for most, this did not feel financially feasible** nor was it something they had thought about or looked into spontaneously.

Many people have already implemented changes to their lifestyle to address rising costs

Actions in relation to cost of living
Showing total % selecting each



BritainThinks, *Cost of Living Diaries*, June 2022 . Q5. Below are some actions people may be taking in relation to an increasing cost of living. To what extent are you doing any of these this year in relation to your budgeting and spending? Base: all respondents (n=2073)

A grayscale photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored sweater, covering her face with her hands in a gesture of distress or despair. The background is a dark gray with a faint, glowing network diagram of interconnected nodes and lines in the upper right corner.

2. Over half (55%) of the public feel totally powerless when it comes to trying to reduce their energy bills, and see no way to further reduce essential energy use. Many people feel resigned to their fate, with 53% feeling there is no point in contacting their energy supplier as they don't think there's any help available.

Ultimately, participants feel a strong sense of powerlessness around the affordability of their household bills

55%
Of the public
feel totally
powerless
when it comes
to trying to
reduce their
energy bills.

Not feeling like they can significantly change their circumstances

Solutions to addressing the increase in costs feel few and far between, with consumers being unable to 'shop around' as before, feeling they are already doing all they can to try and reduce energy use, and feeling resigned to the fact that everyone is 'in it together'.

Not having a clear sense of when or how the situation might improve

Participants have no knowledge of exactly why the energy prices have increased so quickly and so much.

Not having a clear understanding of the reasons behind this also contributes to a strong sense of uncertainty, unease, and concern for the future, with some feeling that any further increases could happen at any time.

While more optimistic participants felt that "something will have to give" and are expecting action to be taken to help alleviate the situation and avoid worst-case scenarios (e.g. rationing), **those more concerned and pessimistic don't see the situation improving in the foreseeable future.**

These feelings are strengthened by the perception that some behaviours are less negotiable and/or more difficult to change

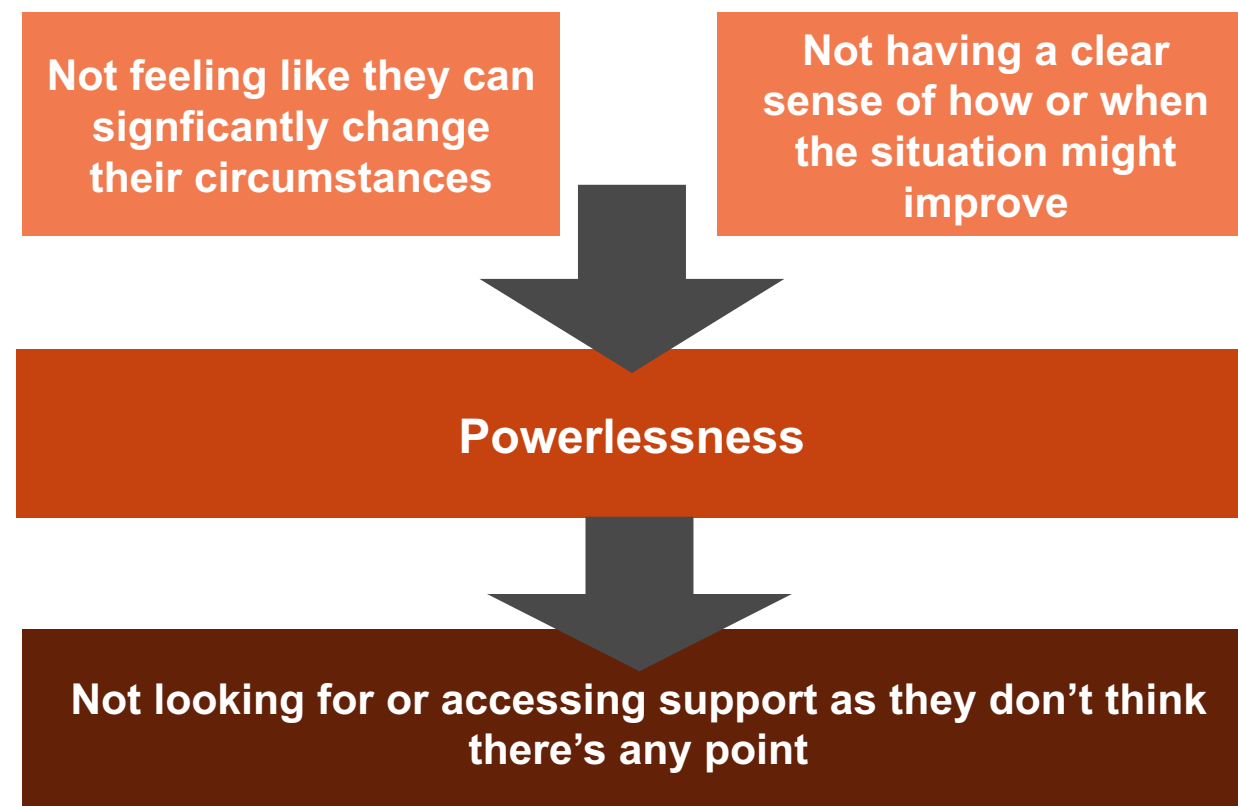
- **Parents of young children in particular feel less willing and/or able to make changes to energy usage where it may impact their child's needs.**
 - For example, keeping a light on all night for a young child who is scared of the dark or turning the heating on to keep a baby warm; ensuring that a daughter who is studying for her exams is comfortable and has everything she needs to concentrate.
- **And for some parents, implementing changes relies on buy-in from their children** which makes it more difficult to enforce (i.e. while they can ask their children to turn off lights in their room or take shorter showers, it is not always done in practice).
- **Others struggle to see how they can reduce usage of certain appliances** – for example, needing to use a laptop when working from home or keeping the fridge on).

“

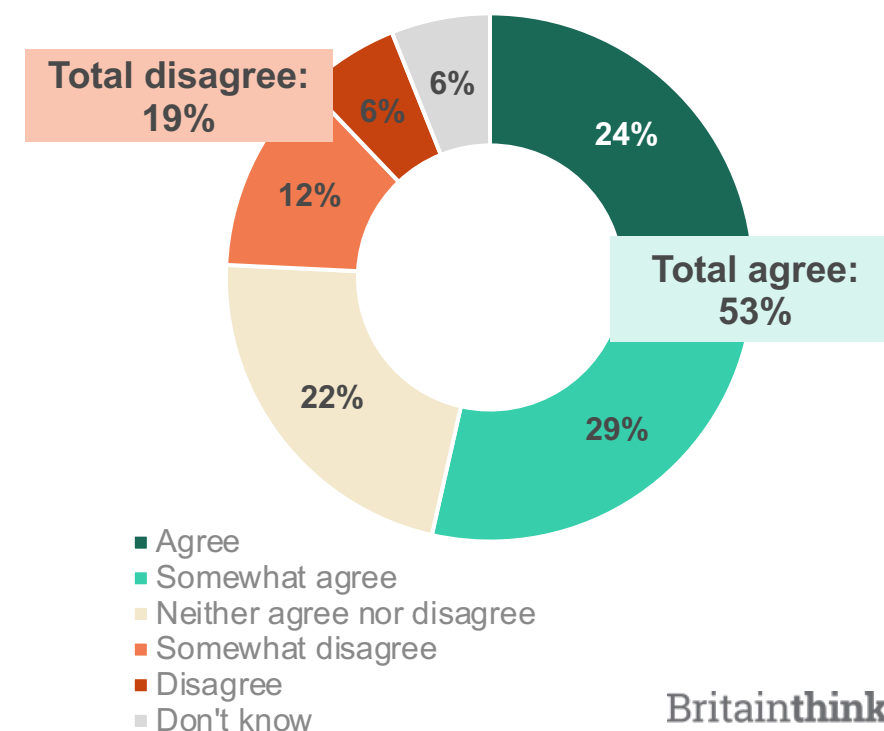
Working from home [is a barrier to reducing energy use] as my laptop battery only lasts to halfway through the day and my wife needs two screens for her job ...It's alright for me and my wife to put on extra jumpers if we get cold, but we have to think about the little one – we can't have him walking around as a Michelin man, and he can't say when he's cold.
(Male, 35-54, East Midlands)

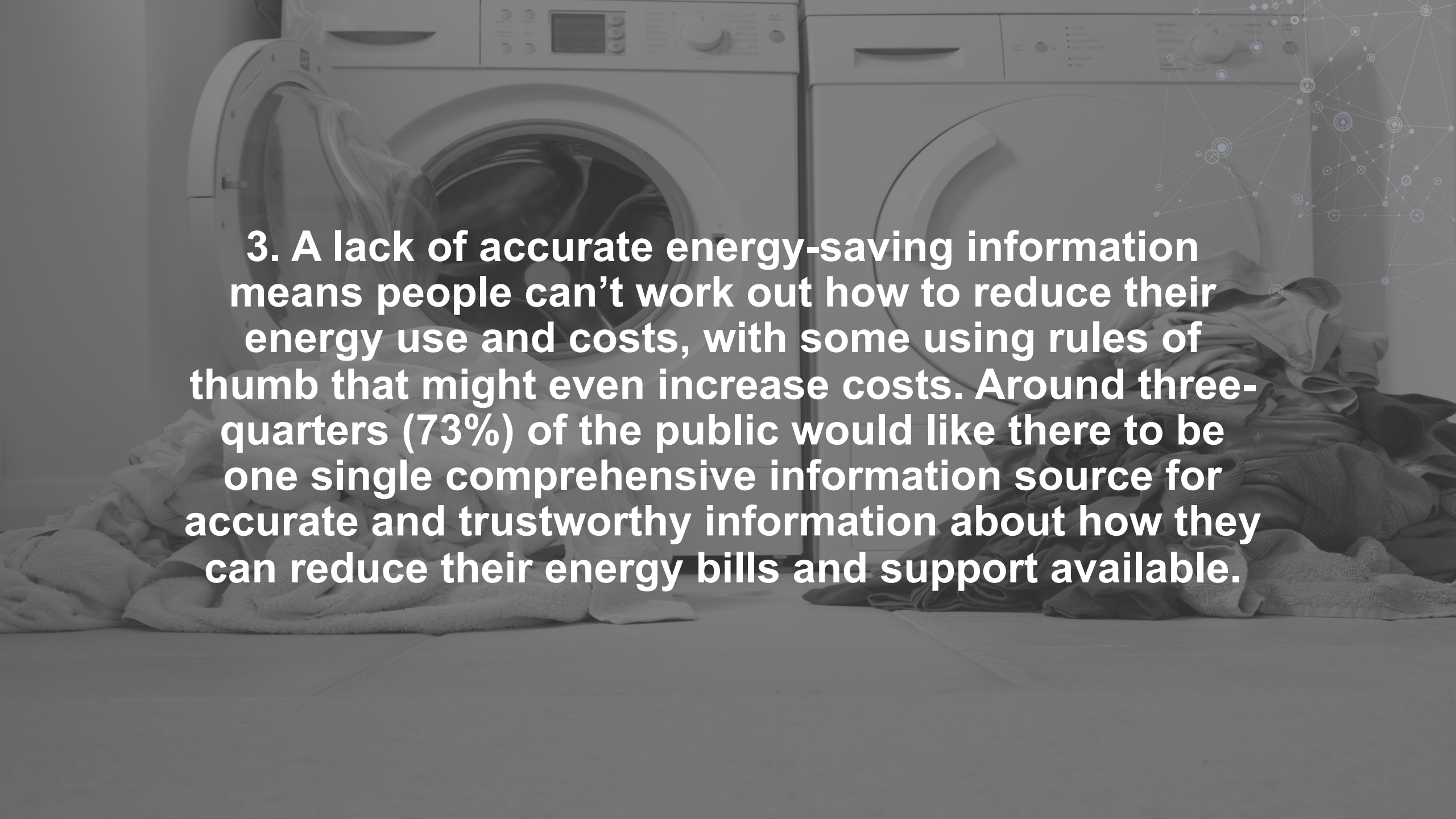
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Worryingly, this fatalism stops people from contacting energy providers as they assume no advice or financial support will be available



Over half (53%)
of the public agree that *“there is no point in contacting my energy supplier about my energy bills as I don't think there's any help available.”*



A grayscale photograph of two front-loading washing machines. The machine on the left has its door open, revealing laundry inside. Piles of laundry are scattered on the floor in front of both machines. In the top right corner, there is a faint, stylized network diagram with nodes and connecting lines. Overlaid on the center of the image is a large block of white text.

3. A lack of accurate energy-saving information means people can't work out how to reduce their energy use and costs, with some using rules of thumb that might even increase costs. Around three-quarters (73%) of the public would like there to be one single comprehensive information source for accurate and trustworthy information about how they can reduce their energy bills and support available.

A lack of accurate information is a significant barrier stopping people making effective behaviour changes

While participants *think* they both already know a lot about how to cut down their energy use, and *think* they are already doing all they can to cut down on their energy usage and their bills, **a range of issues related to information stops people making effective changes in *practice*:**

Lack of appliance and systems knowledge:

Not knowing how to use their systems or appliances in the most energy efficient way stops participants being able to make effective changes.

Energy consumption uncertainty:

Not knowing exactly how much energy is used by what and the corresponding impact on their bills, combined with a lack of real-time feedback, stops people making effective changes.

Inaccurate rules of thumb:

Participants often cited behaviours that they think are helping them but are in fact hindering them. These often seem like they would help and be 'common sense' but are not in fact saving them energy.

The 'say-do gap': Participants often say they carried out energy-saving activities. However, during in-home interviews it was clear this wasn't always the case, with these behaviours not yet having formed into consistent habits, or participants not being fully aware of the extent of the impact of the behaviour to always follow through on it.

Lack of appliance and systems knowledge

Not knowing how to use their systems or appliances in the most energy efficient way stops participants being able to make effective changes.

- Among participants, there is a lack of awareness of how to make the best and most efficient use of their appliances, including their full heating system.
- For example, some do not know how to use on/off switches on the boiler and/or how to manage the individual radiators (e.g. not thinking about having the radiators on lower settings or being able to turn it off completely).
- While participants talk about switching off the heating, only 1 participant confidently and actively uses his thermostat to regularly adjust the heating.
- Others think they know how to use their thermostat but prefer to avoid changing the settings for fear of ‘messing it up’.



I think if we have a takeaway it might get us cheaper than using the oven. We still have our showers and we still have to use it, we charge our phones and laptops and use Alexa to listen to the news.

(Female, 21-34, East of England)



Energy consumption uncertainty

A lack of real-time feedback as well as not knowing how much it costs to run different appliances and how much energy is used by what, stops people making effective changes.

- Generally, participants claim that they what changes they need to make to reduce their bills. **However, the research suggests that they generally have little to no understanding of what changes would reduce their bills**, and as such are often guessing or making assumptions based on observations (e.g. features of the appliance or length of time it is on).
- Although electricity is more expensive, participants feel it is easier to decrease their energy usage and their bills by cutting down their gas usage (e.g. their heating) as making a difference by cutting electricity usage is felt to be harder as it is felt to be used for more ‘smaller’ tasks.
- By the end of the research, those with smart metres had started to use them for the first time to try and work out what uses the most energy and where they can save money.

**Only half
(52%)**

say they know how much energy different appliances use and therefore how they need to use their appliances differently to save money on their bills.



I have my smart meter and I watch it to make sure it's going down; well it's not going down a lot but I make sure every day I try to use a little bit less electricity.

(Female, 70+, East of England)



Inaccurate rules of thumb

Participants often cited behaviours that they think are helping them but are in fact hindering them. These are often behaviours that seem like they would help and be 'common sense' but are not in fact saving them energy.

- Examples of energy-saving behaviours cited by participants that are based on hearsay and may not in fact be saving them energy include:
 - Keeping the heating on more consistently at a lower level is energy efficient, due to the belief that it takes more energy to switch the heating on and off.
 - Shorter and quicker dishwasher and washing machine cycles.

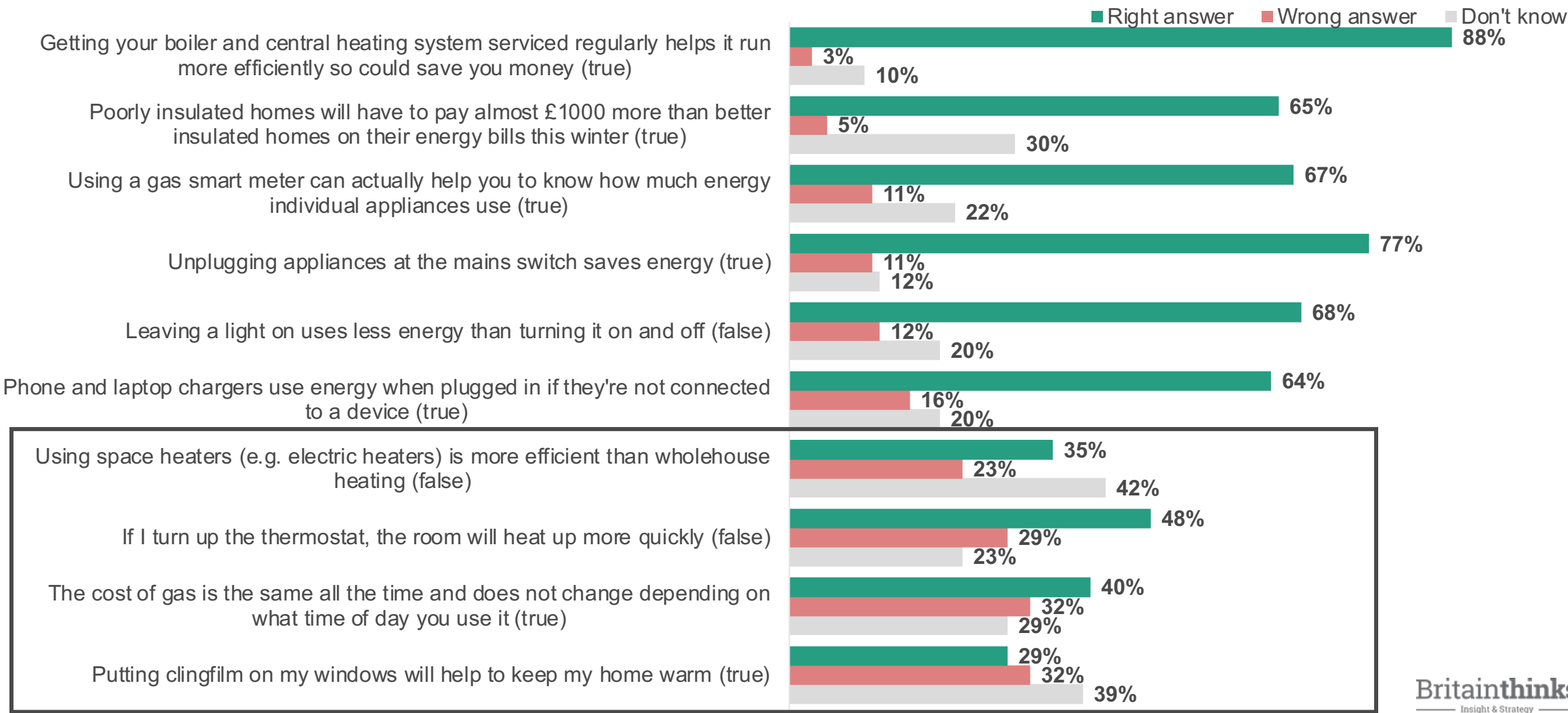
“

I've discovered that there is a washing cycle which says 'refresh' and had a house guest who wanted to do some laundry and he put that setting on as it was just a 30 min cycle which I am now using more.
(Female, 35-54, North West)

”

There is significant uncertainty about several energy saving behaviours

% of those who gave the right or wrong answer, when identifying statement as true or false



Thinking they already do all they can and not knowing where to go stops people actively seeking further information

Thinking they already know and do all they can

A strong sense that they already know and are doing all they can to reduce their energy use means that most participants did not actively seek any further information or support in reducing their energy usage and bills.

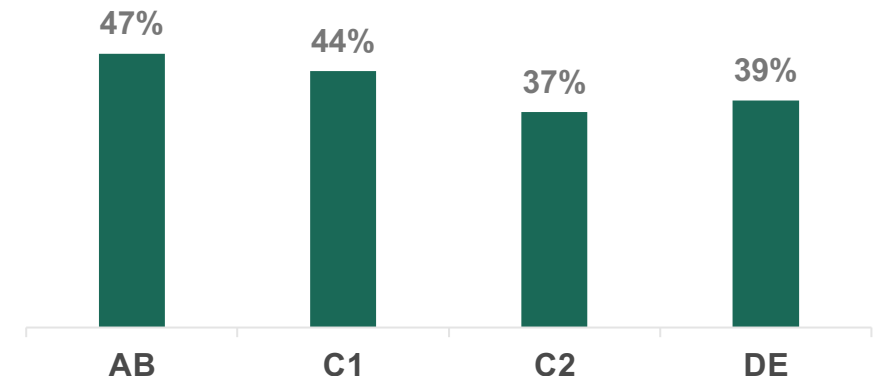
Not knowing where to go

Although a small number of participants are aware of support and advice given by Martin Lewis, generally participants do not know where else they could go for any additional information and there was no mention of contacting their suppliers, charities, or other industry bodies for any information.

Less than half (42%)

say they know where to go for information and support for reducing their energy bills.

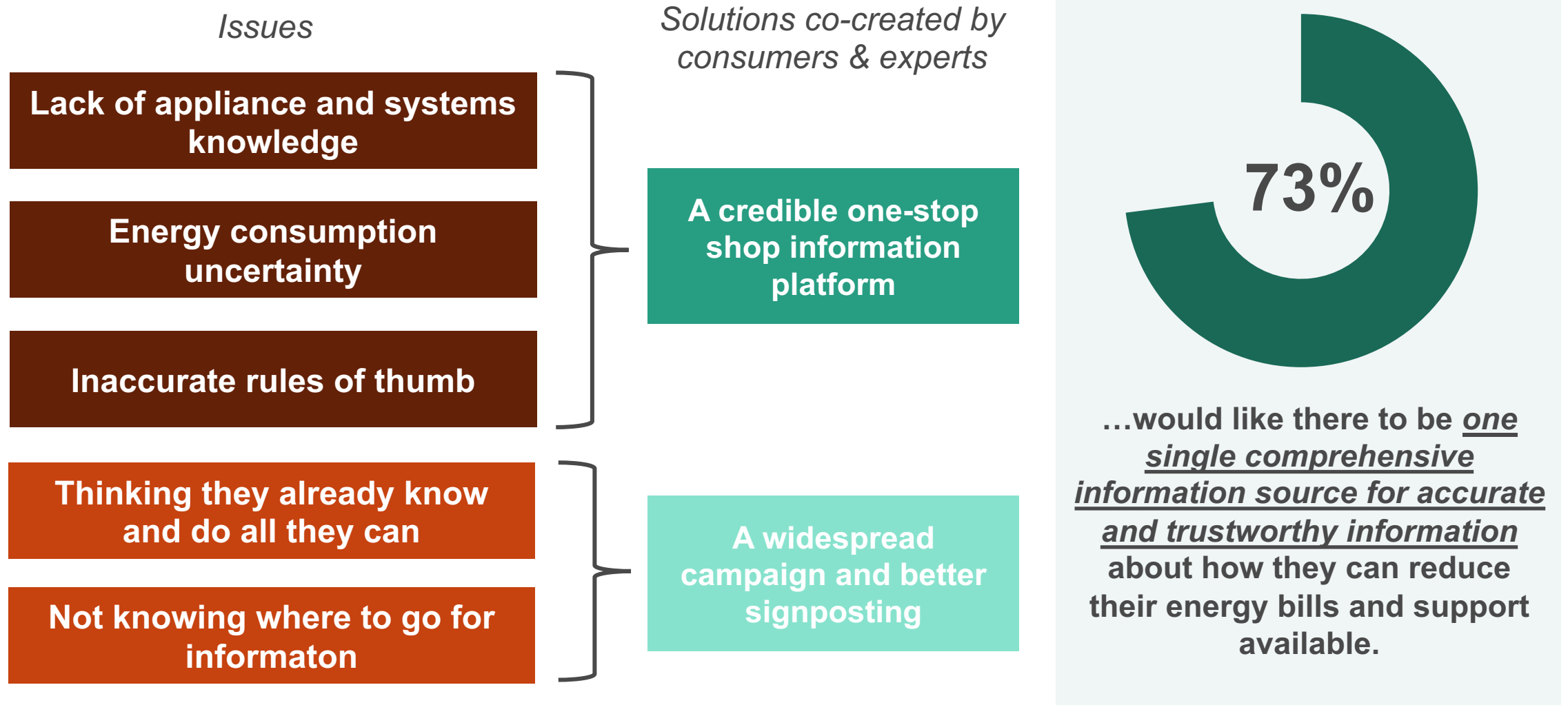
Those who are social grade AB are significantly more likely to agree than those who are C2 and DE

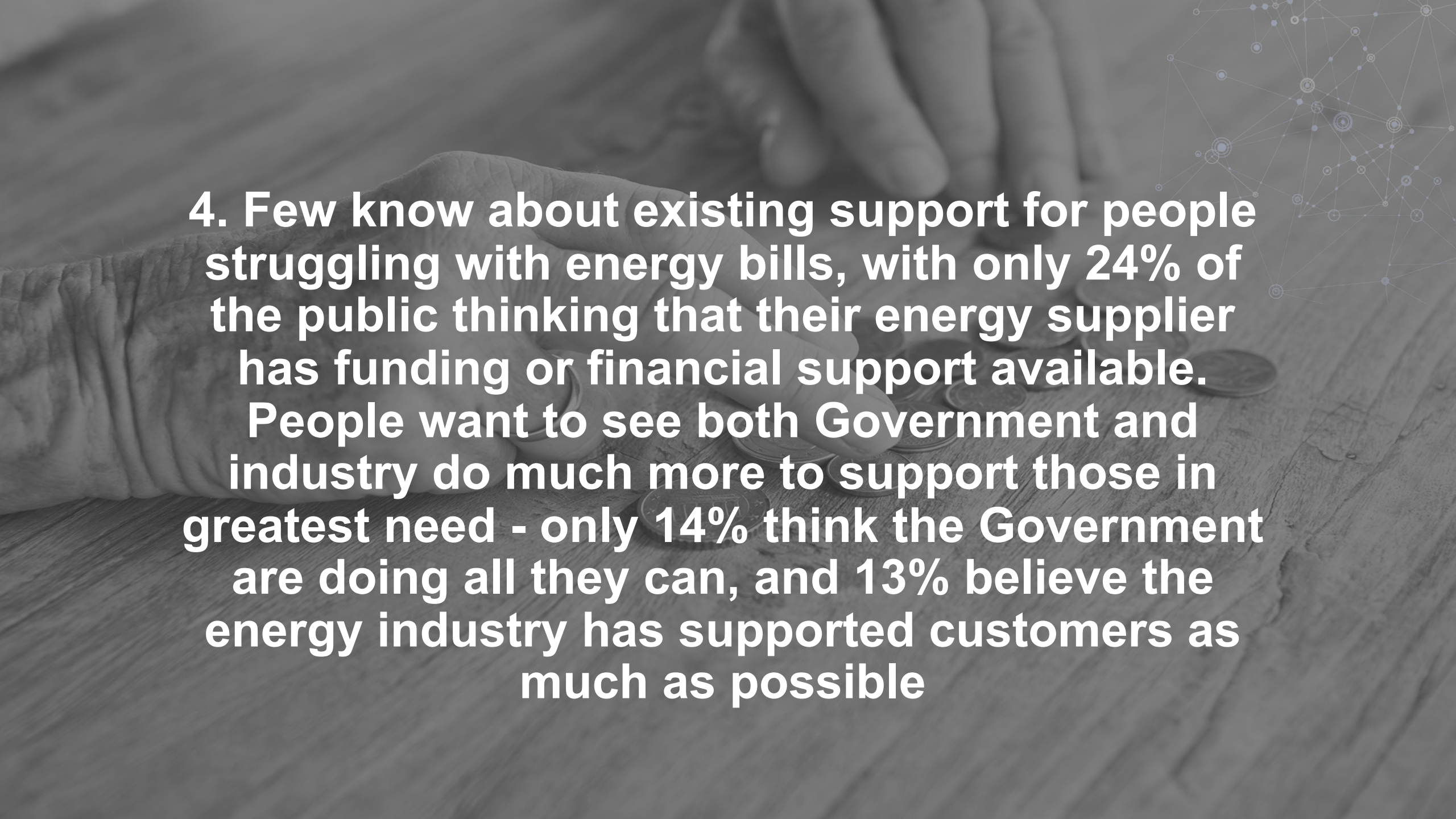


“ The comments that Martin Lewis has made, he can't give any further advice on how to help people save with gas and electricity. Its not about misuse, its about the cost that the government isn't managing, and that people need help and the government needs to act.

(Female, 35-54, North West)

A one-stop shop for accurate and trustworthy information and advice alongside clear signposting would be very welcome





4. Few know about existing support for people struggling with energy bills, with only 24% of the public thinking that their energy supplier has funding or financial support available. People want to see both Government and industry do much more to support those in greatest need - only 14% think the Government are doing all they can, and 13% believe the energy industry has supported customers as much as possible

There is little awareness of existing support provision, including the detail around Government support

- Among participants, there is little awareness of any existing support available to those struggling to pay their bills support.
- While 7 of 12 participants had heard of the tax rebate offered by the Government, participants are largely unaware of the detail around any support available.
 - There is substantial confusion around the specific amount, eligibility and how the funding would work in practice, including what the application process involves.
 - This lack of certainty around key details is likely a key barrier to applying for any support available.
- Of the 12 participants, only 1 participant is confident that the tax rebate applies to him and would be helpful, and therefore he is the only one looking into this further.

“

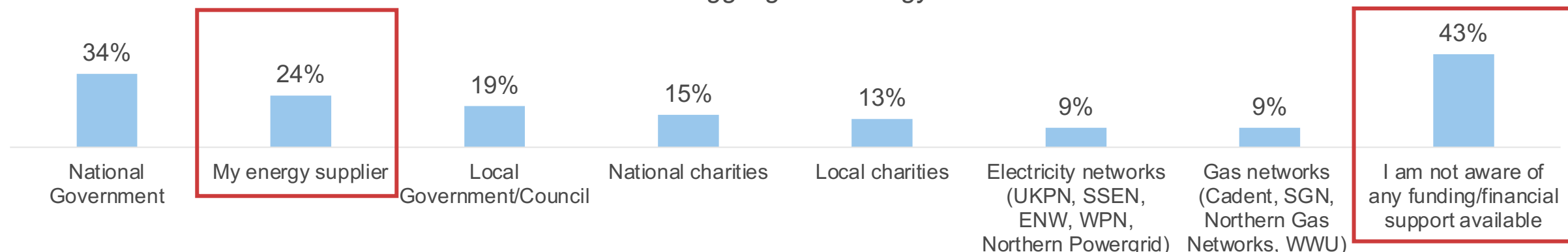
I've heard about this [tax rebate] in the news, but I couldn't find out how it is going to work and if we can benefit from it... So as far as I understood, there would be a £200 bill reduction in October this year but I'm not sure about how to apply for it.

(Female, 21-34, East of England)

”

Only around a quarter think their energy supplier has support available and that information from them has been helpful

Which of these, if any, have funding/financial support available for customers struggling with energy costs?



Half (51%)
of the public say they expect to hear/read about support for reducing their energy costs (including financial support and advice) from their energy supplier.

A quarter (25%) of the public say information from their energy provider has been helpful to know what help and support is available.

Perceptions of (a lack of) Government support and everybody being in the same boat are further barriers to seeking support

A perceived lack of Government support

For some, the perceived limited usefulness of the Government's mini-budget also contributes to a sense that there's no point in seeking additional help, as they feel like any opportunities for support would have been highlighted by the budget.

The fact that it didn't include any useful support leads people to think that there is in fact nothing else that could help.

Everybody in the same boat

The sense that "everyone is in the same boat" and everybody needs support also means participants are less likely to look for additional help and/or think that any will be available.

They can't imagine there will be support available that could address the sheer scale of the issue.

“ How are we protecting the more vulnerable members of society? It doesn't feel that there's a safety net there.
(Female, 35-54, North West)



An overwhelming majority of the public do not think that the energy industry or the Government are doing enough

Around 1 in 10 (13%)
agree that the *energy industry* has supported customers as much as possible in a very difficult situation.

% agreement with “the energy industry has supported customers as much as possible in a very difficult situation”

Total agree: 13%

Total disagree: 63%



■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

Only 14%
agree that *Government* are doing all they can to help people during the energy crisis.

% agreement with “the Government are doing all they can to help people during the energy crisis”

Total agree: 14%

Total disagree: 67%



■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

Those who are social grade AB (18%) are more likely to agree than those who are DE (11%)

“

One of the big companies announced something like £20 billion profit. So obviously that's, that's what made me angry because I thought people are struggling to live and you are making massive amount of profits compared to last year...

(Male, 21-34, West Midlands)

”

Greater awareness-raising and clear signposting of any existing financial support will help to address issues

Issues

A perceived lack of Government and Industry support

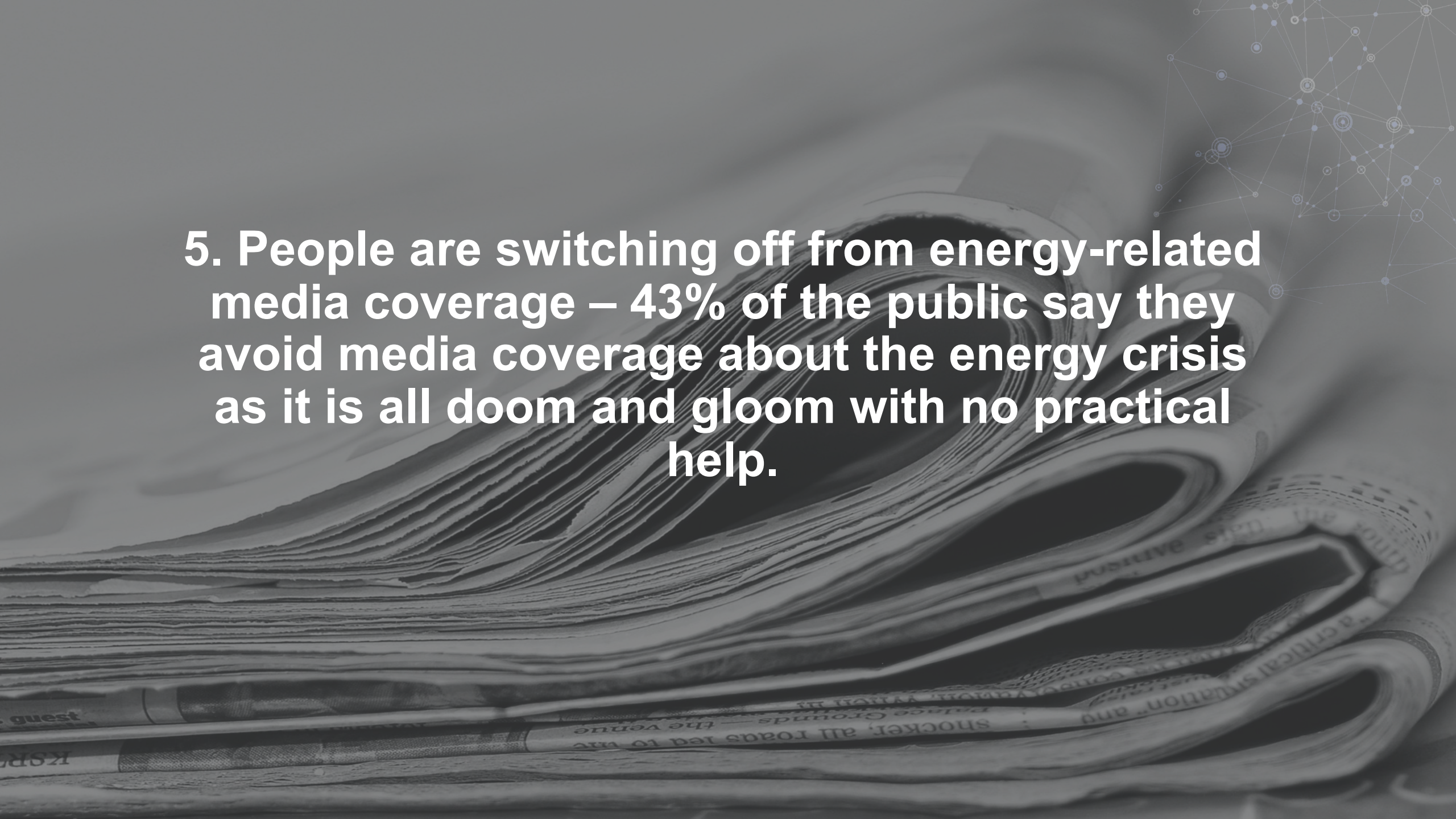
Limited awareness of existing support provision

Everybody in the same boat

Solutions co-created by consumers & experts

Increased information and financial support provision

Greater awareness-raising and clearer signposting of any sources of financial support and eligibility.

The background of the slide features a grayscale image of a large stack of newspapers, with their pages fanned out and creating a sense of depth. In the top right corner, there is a faint, light blue network diagram consisting of interconnected nodes and lines, resembling a digital or social network. The text is centered over the newspapers in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

5. People are switching off from energy-related media coverage – 43% of the public say they avoid media coverage about the energy crisis as it is all doom and gloom with no practical help.

Where media stories are picked up on, most focus on the potential impact to the consumer, rather than root causes

- When they do engage with media articles, participants recall accessing news first-hand or via social media platforms.
- Articles about the energy crisis that caught the eyes of participants focus on the direct impact to the consumer. For example:
 - Negative stories about likely increases in bills and the impact of this on people's circumstances.
 - Positive articles about potential information or support that participants could access.
- Participants have not engaged with any media articles that cover any in-depth background context to the energy crisis, including causes and solutions.

“

We heard on the TV and read in the newspaper about the high prices and I think it makes you think if its really worth it to just leave the heating on for hours and hours.
(Female, 21-34, East of England)

”

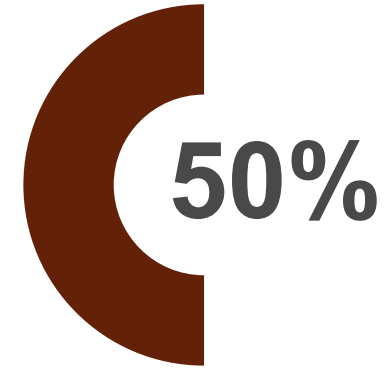
However, people are switching off from energy-related media coverage

Overall engagement with media stories about rising energy prices is limited, mainly driven by:

Coverage feeling overly negative and not constructive or helpful, with it being hard to translate to their personal situation (e.g. stories including percentages about how much the bills will increase for an average household).

The fact that many people are just about coping, are keen to avoid additional negativity, and are therefore reluctant to think too much about how much financial strain they may experience in the future.

“I didn't see anything on the news or BBC. I think the panic happened at the beginning but now we just have to live with it and the prices.”
(Female, 21-34, East of England)

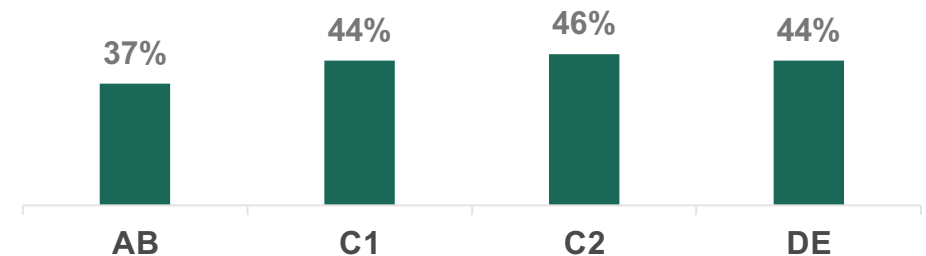


...of the public agree that *“the prices are going up and I just have to pay, the news is just noise.”*

2 in 5 (43%)

of the public agree that *“I avoid media coverage about the energy crisis as it is all doom and gloom with no practical help.”*

Those who are social grade C1, C2 and DE are more likely to agree than those who are AB.



This lack of engagement could well be driven by a wider sense of crisis fatigue

2016

**Brexit vote,
Donald Trump
elected**

Trump wins US election: How world leaders have reacted
© 9 November 2016

UK votes to leave EU after dramatic night divides nation
Historic referendum vote in favour of leaving EU raises questions over futures of David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn
● Britain votes to leave EU - live

2020

**Covid: first and
second national
lockdowns**

UK coronavirus: Boris Johnson announces strict lockdown across country - as it happened



2021

**Covid: third
national
lockdown**

Another Covid Christmas: Britons to delay festive plans
Analysis: scientists say high transmission rates mean caution is critical if people are to stay safe
● Coronavirus - latest updates

Covid: England's third national lockdown legally comes into force
© 6 January 2021

Coronavirus pandemic

2022

**War in Ukraine,
CoL and energy
crises, travel
chaos, climate
breakdown**

Why has Russia invaded Ukraine and what does Putin want?
By Paul Kirby
BBC News

Up to 1.5MILLION households will struggle to pay food and energy bills amid cost-of-living crisis that will plunge UK into recession, think tank warns

UK's 40C heatwave 'basically impossible' without climate change
By Georgina Rannard
BBC News Climate & Science

The number of people who say they actively avoid the news has doubled to 46% since 2017.

Source: Reuters Institute

People are tired of hearing about crises - meaning they are more likely to disengage from communications and don't have the bandwidth for complex messages – some just want to be told what to do.

Media disengagement combined with wider crisis fatigue underlines calls for clear signposting and a single information source

Issues

Switching off from energy-related media

Crisis fatigue

Solution co-created by consumers & experts

Eye-catching, clear and simple signposting to a single comprehensive source of credible information will help to achieve reach and cut-through.

This should be provided in a variety of formats, that are tailored to diverse needs and ensure there are no barriers to access



Conclusions and solutions

There is a clear need for *increased, improved* and *accessible* provision of advice and financial support

1

There is appetite for a credible and accessible one-stop shop information and financial support platform for accurate and trustworthy information related to energy usage and bills, including an overview of financial support available. This should go beyond self-service and be provided in a variety of formats, that are tailored to diverse accessibility needs (e.g. also F2F).

2

Alongside this, participants want to see a clear and attention-grabbing communications campaign, highlighting the existence of the information and financial support platform and how they can access it.

Given the scale, urgency and scope of the issue, there is a desire and expectation for this to be provided by a range of sources including Government, regulators, energy suppliers and providers, independent 3rd parties and charities e.g. Citizens Advice.

There is appetite for a credible and accessible one-stop shop information and financial support platform for accurate and trustworthy information related to energy usage and bills. This should go beyond self-service and be provided in a variety of formats, that are tailored to diverse accessibility needs.

This should include the following:

Accurate information and advice on energy **consumption and costs** related to different appliances and activities, including **myth busting**, to enable people to be **empowered** to make the right choices

Suggestions, ideas and **realistic behaviour changes and adaptations** that people can make to reduce their energy use and costs without compromising their safety and comfort (and other requirements e.g. sustainability)

Guidance on financial support and how to access it, including how to effectively approach energy suppliers and other agencies who can help

This should be provided in a variety of formats, **that are tailored to diverse accessibility needs and ensure there are no barriers to access.**

Alongside this, participants want to see a clear and attention-grabbing communications campaign, highlighting the existence of the information platform and how they can access it

This should include the following:

A widespread campaign about the information platform is necessary to highlight the knowledge gaps the public may have, and ensure that the public know where to go to access this information and financial support.

Eye-catching, clear and simple signposting to a single comprehensive source of credible information will help to achieve reach and cut-through.

Campaigns and signposting **rolled out across as many different formats as possible**, to ensure it is seen and accessed by as many people as possible, including (but not limited to print, online, TV and radio)

Cost-of-Living Support and Services

Your Supplier

Call your supplier as soon as you can if you are worried about paying your energy bills or are in debt to your supplier. Under Ofgem rules, suppliers must work with you to agree on a payment plan you can afford. This includes reviewing a plan you have agreed before. Many energy companies offer schemes or grants to help with home heating and energy costs.

The largest UK energy suppliers are:

- [British Gas](#)
- [Scottish Power](#)
- [Npower](#)
- [E.ON](#)
- [EDF Energy](#)
- [SSE](#)

Your supplier may be able to help you manage your bills by putting you on an alternative tariff, installing a pre-paid meter or smart meter, or by enrolling you on a number of schemes such as WaterSure.

[WaterSure](#) - If you're on a water meter but have high water usage because you have 3 or more children or a water-dependent medical condition, your bills can be capped.

Cadent

Visit the [Cadent website](#) or contact Cadent directly (0800 389 8000) for information, support and advice on how you can reduce and manage your gas usage.

The Cadent Foundation is an established charity, designed to provide funding to charities, community groups and individuals to support in the development of local energy projects as well as bill payments. Visit the [Cadent Foundation website](#) for more information.

The Government

There are a range of grants and funds available from the government to help those struggling with the Cost-of-Living Crisis. Domestic energy customers in Great Britain will receive a £200 reduction in energy bills, which will be paid back automatically over the next 5 years. Households liable for Council Tax in Bands A-D in England will also receive a £150 non-repayable Council Tax Rebate in 2022. If you are already claiming benefits, you may be eligible for:

- [Winter Fuel Payment](#) – a £100 to £300 fuel payment for people born on or before 26 September 1955
- [Cold Weather Payment](#) – a £25 payment for every 7 days of very cold weather between November and March
- [Warm Home Discount](#) – a £140 discount for some people getting Pension Credit or some people in low-income households
- [Household Support Fund](#) – a funding package to help vulnerable households this winter
- [Child Winter Heating Assistance](#) – A £202 annual payment per disabled child and young person under 19 living in Scotland
- [Winter Fuel Support Scheme](#) - A £200 annual payment for Welsh households in receipt of certain benefits

Other Support and Advice Services

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice is an independent organisation specialising in confidential information and advice to assist people with legal, debt, consumer, housing and other problems in the United Kingdom. They have a wide range of online resources available, including what to do if you're struggling with living costs, debt advice and a list of [grants and benefits](#) you may be entitled too.

Call: 0808 223 1133

Text: dial 18001 followed by the helpline number

StepChange

The UK's most comprehensive debt advice service. StepChange help people with debt problems take back control of their finances and their lives. Get free debt advice to help deal with your debt and set up a solution. Online resources include an Online Debt Advice Tool, Budget Templates and guides for coping with the rising cost of living.

Call: 0800 138 1111

Emmaus

Emmaus is a national homelessness charity. They campaign to overcome homelessness and social exclusion, supporting those that have experienced homelessness by providing accommodation, food and financial support.

Call: 0300 303 7555

National Energy Action

National Energy Action (NEA) campaigns for an end to fuel poverty across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The website provides a range of online resources, including training, advice services and updates on current issues, events and news.

Call: 0800 304 7159

Email: info@nea.org.uk

Advice Direct Scotland

Energy Action Scotland (EAS) campaigns for an end to fuel poverty in Scotland. The website provides a range of online resources, including training, updates on current issues, events and news.

Call: 0141 226 3064

Email: info@eas.org.uk

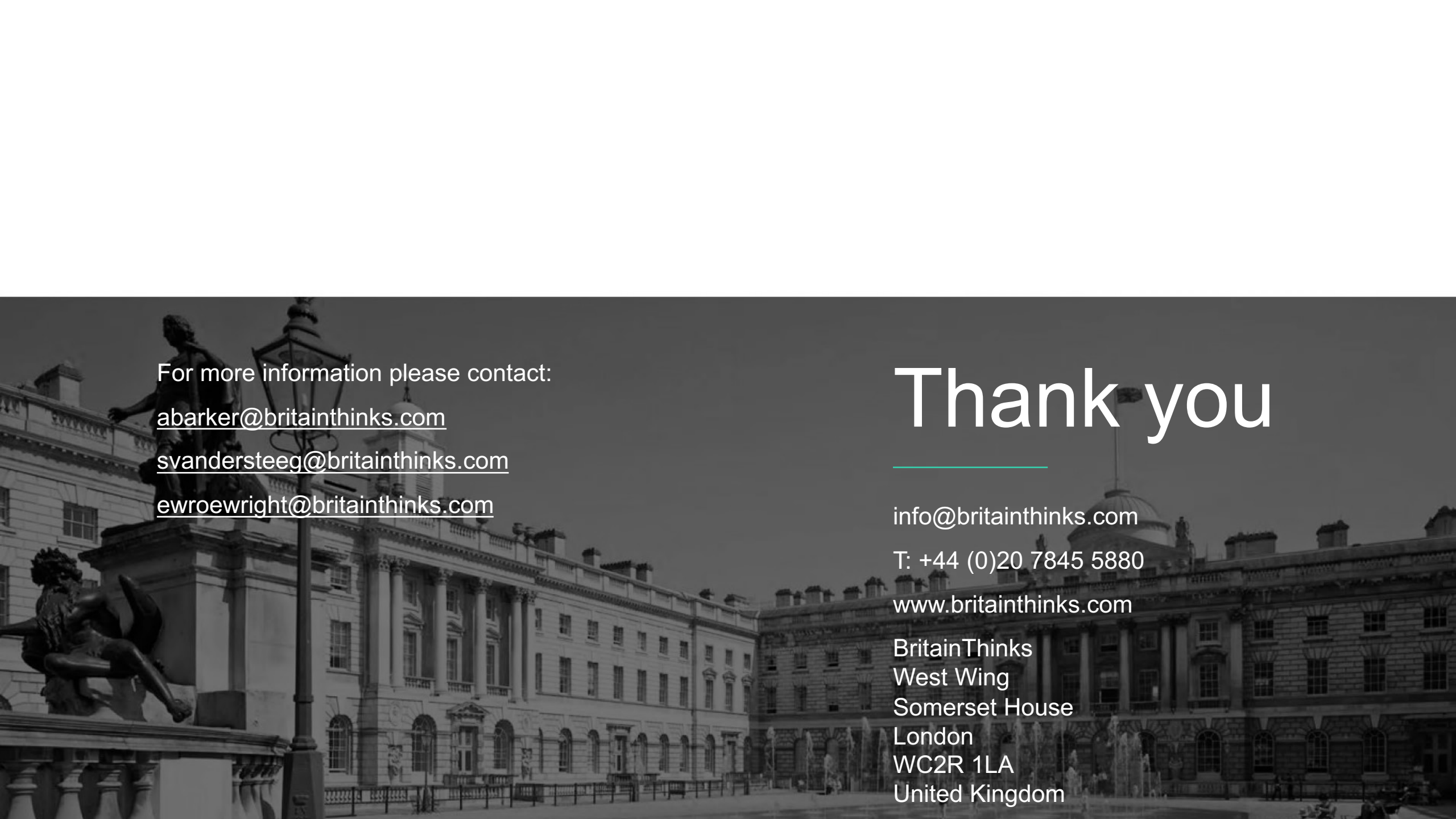
SHINE (London)

The Seasonal Health Intervention Network (SHINE) is a fuel poverty referral network and free energy advice service for Londoners. SHINE London offers a dedicated helpline and affordable warmth interventions to ensure households get the help they need to reduce utility bills, tackle energy debt and stay well and warm. SHINE accepts referrals for households of any tenure, with an income below £16,190 or where a households member falls under a SHINE target group.

Turn2Us

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help. The website includes useful resources including a [Benefits Calculator](#) and [Grants Search](#).

Call: 0808 802 2000



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