

Cross Party Group on Fuel Poverty

Wednesday 26th November 2014

Chair: Mark Isherwood AM

Minutes

Tackling Poverty: What can competition and regulation deliver for fuel poor households?

Attending

Mark Isherwood AM, Tony Breese - Seraph Energy, Helen Cunningham on behalf of Jenny Rathbone AM, Michael Anderson - SSE, Helen Roach - NEA Cymru, Carole Morgan-Jones - NEA Cymru, Andy Regan - Citizens Advice Cymru, Charlotte Jones - Citizens Advice Cymru, Lia Murphy – Ofgem, Sue Purnell - Customer Relations Manager SSE, Zoe McLeod - Consumer Vulnerability Manager Ofgem, Simon Harris - Wales representative CMA, Paul Haines - British Gas

Apologies

Simon Thomas AM, Aled Roberts AM, Nigel Winnan - Wales and West Utilities, David Fitzpatrick - Cynnal Cymru, Mark Cazaly - Energy UK, Haf Elgar - Friends of the Earth, Iwan Williams - Older People Commissioner Wales, Claire Durkin - NEA Trustee for Wales, Nick Speed - British Gas, Shea Jones - CH Cymru, Prof Phil Jones

No matters arising from last meeting minutes

Protecting vulnerable consumers – Zoe McLeod, Consumer Vulnerability Manager, Ofgem.

Zoe gave a presentation on Ofgem's work on protecting vulnerable consumers. Giving a brief overview on the vulnerability strategy and also talking about prepayment issues.

Zoe ran through the principal objectives of Ofgem, also outlining Ofgem's 6 areas of work on vulnerability;

- Inclusive markets and services
- Debt and disconnection
- Prepayment
- Affordability
- Non gas
- Innovation

Please see the attached presentation for more detailed information on Zoe's presentation.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation of the energy market: Process and engagement in Wales – Simon Harris, Wales representative CMA

Simon gave an overview and update on CMA's investigation into the energy market.

Simon briefly ran through who CMA is and what their mission is.

Please see the attached presentation for more detailed information on Simon's presentation.

Questions

1. In terms of the consultation, will you be contacting other providers other than CAB?
 - We would like to contact as many organisations as possible that would have an interest. The challenge is knowing who they are and where they are.

2. What contact are you having with Welsh Government regarding this?
 - Competition within the energy market is not a devolved matter, so nothing direct at the moment.
 - Suggestions made on who to contact within WG made (Carl Sargent)

3. One of the things that has already been suggested is that the changes to the devolution settlement might render your current findings slightly obsolete, is there scope within what you will find at the end to say if this happens if this devolution changes in this respect in Wales this will need to be revisited, is that a possibility?
 - There is scope that there are movable goalposts in the 18 month period so we need to be aware of any changes that occur during the investigation.

4. Is the investigation looking at the differences that the regions pay for energy and is it looking into not just the big 6 energy companies but including the distribution networks?
 - We are talking to all interested parties not just the big 6 and we are asking the questions about the regional differences in price. We are asking for breakdowns of variations on a regional and national basis.

Suggestion made that the CMA join the Energy Wales Strategic delivery group.

AGM

Mark Isherwood put forward as the Chair by Carole Morgan-Jones. Agreed by all.

Carole Morgan-Jones and Andy Regan put forward as joint secretary by Mark Isherwood.
Agreed by all.

Annual Report 2013-2014

Carole Morgan-Jones briefly ran through the Annual report and its contents including the financial statement.

Wales Fuel poverty conference on 22nd January 2015