



# Energy Best Deal

**Evaluation Report, 2013/2014**

**Annex to the main report: Individual countries**

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# Introduction

This document is an annex to the Energy Best Deal Evaluation Report for the 2013-2014 campaign.

The Energy Best Deal programme seeks to inform domestic energy consumers about how they could reduce their energy costs: by changing tariff, payment method and/or supplier, taking up energy efficiency measures and by providing debt advice. Run by Citizens Advice in England and Wales and Citizens Advice Scotland in Scotland, the programme offers domestic energy consumers and frontline workers (both paid workers and volunteers) the opportunity to attend an information session on getting a better deal on their energy bills.

Between October 2013 and April 2014, 1,297 sessions were delivered by 179 delivery partners across the 14 regions of the Citizens Advice Financial Capability Forums<sup>1</sup> in England and Wales, and 187 sessions were delivered by 18 Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland. In total during 2013/2014, the programme reached 10,349 consumers and 5,408 frontline workers. The programme will have an ongoing impact through the consumer advice work of the frontline workers.

The evaluation of the 2013-2014 campaign was carried out using paper questionnaires completed immediately following the session, and follow-up telephone interviews carried out an average of three months after the session. A total of 6,086 questionnaires and 300 telephone interviews were completed. The ongoing effect of the 2012/2013 programme was also investigated, using a smaller sample of 50 interviews with people who attended Energy Best Deal sessions in 2012/2013.

The main evaluation report describes the results of the evaluation for England, Scotland and Wales aggregated together (Great Britain). This annex describes the results for each individual country.

An overall summary and conclusions of the evaluation are presented in the main evaluation report and are not repeated in this annex. This annex document should be read in conjunction with the main evaluation report, which provides a summary of key findings.

Table 1 shows how many attendees, questionnaire responses and interviews there were for each country, while Table 2 shows the same for frontline workers. Relative to the number of questionnaire responses received from each country or the number of attendees, the proportion of interviewees for each individual country is similar. Table 3 shows the number of sessions which took place in each country.

It should be noted that because the absolute number of interviews with participants in Scotland and Wales is small, the interview results should not be interpreted as representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees in each of these countries. If samples had been taken from Wales and Scotland to obtain the same statistical power as the results for England (which had a much larger number of sessions), this would have weighted the Great Britain sample too heavily towards the smaller number of sessions that took place in Scotland and Wales), and so the statistical power of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Financial Capability Forums are open to all organisations in a region with an interest in financial education. They meet quarterly and provide a way for member organisations to share experiences and resources and to develop new partnerships.

Scotland and Wales samples is necessarily smaller than the statistical power of the Great Britain sample as a whole.

<b>Consumers</b>	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Attendees	10,349	943	1,300	8,106
Questionnaires returned	6,086	586	612	4,888
<i>Questionnaires as % of attendees</i>	59%	62%	47%	60%
Interviews	150	19	22	109
<i>Interviews as % of attendees</i>	1%	2%	2%	1%
<i>Interviews as % of questionnaires</i>	2%	3%	4%	2%

**Table 1: Consumer attendees, questionnaires and interviews in each country**

<b>Frontline workers</b>	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Attendees	5,408	782	566	4,060
Questionnaires	3,337	351	366	2,620
<i>Questionnaires as % of attendees</i>	62%	45%	65%	65%
Interviews	150	18	20	112
<i>Interviews as % of attendees</i>	3%	2%	4%	3%
<i>Interviews as % of questionnaires</i>	4%	5%	5%	4%

**Table 2: Frontline worker attendees, questionnaires and interviews in each country**

<b>Total number of sessions</b>	GB	Wales	Scotland	England
Sessions	1,484	175	187	1,122

**Table 3: Number of sessions which took place in each country**

# 1. Results for Wales

## 1.1. Consumers: questionnaire responses – Wales

### Demographic information

In Wales, 943 consumers attended Energy Best Deal sessions. Sixty-two percent of attendees returned questionnaires, slightly higher than the overall GB return rate of 59%. Figure 1 to Figure 3 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in Wales.

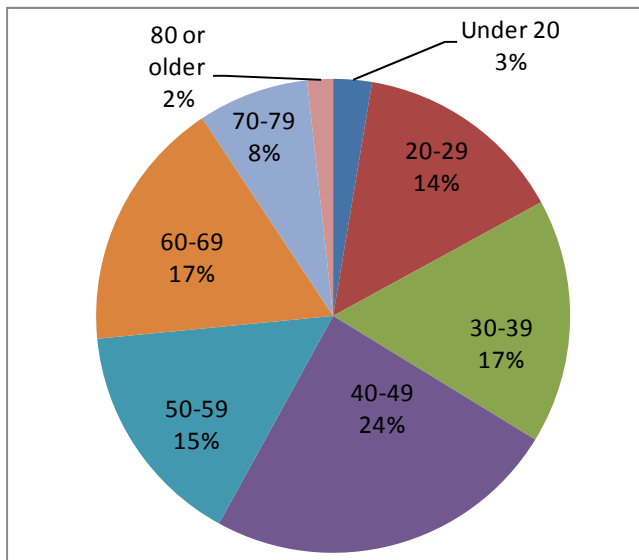


Figure 1: Age of respondents

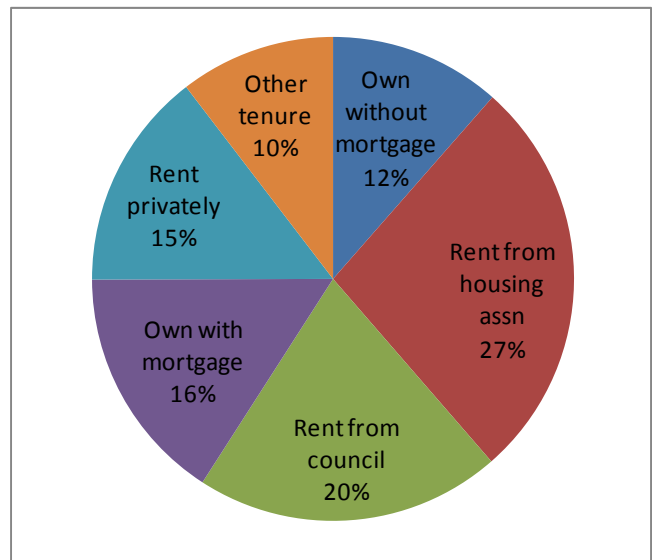


Figure 2: Tenure of respondents

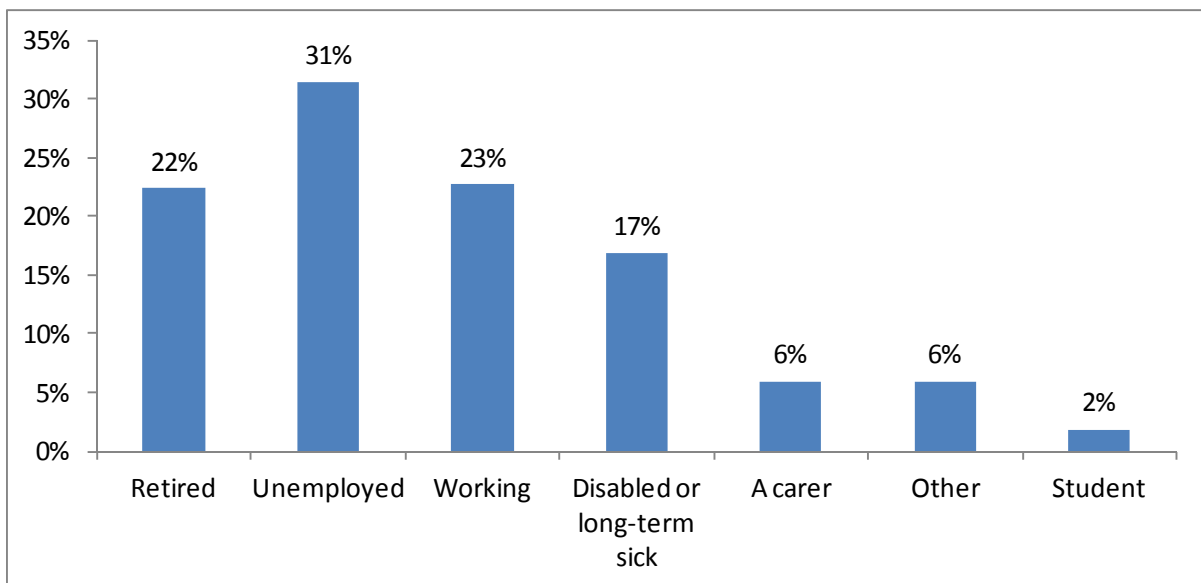


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents

## Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with heating their home in winter they were asked two questions. The first was about whether they could heat their home to a comfortable level (Figure 4) and the second was about their winter fuel bills (Figure 5). Forty-five percent are not able to heat their home to a comfortable level, which is higher than the figure of 38% for Great Britain overall. Almost a third (31%) find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 27% worry about their bills but are able to manage. Five percent of respondents find their winter fuel bills are impossible to manage and are in debt to their fuel supplier, which is the same as the figure for Great Britain overall (5%).

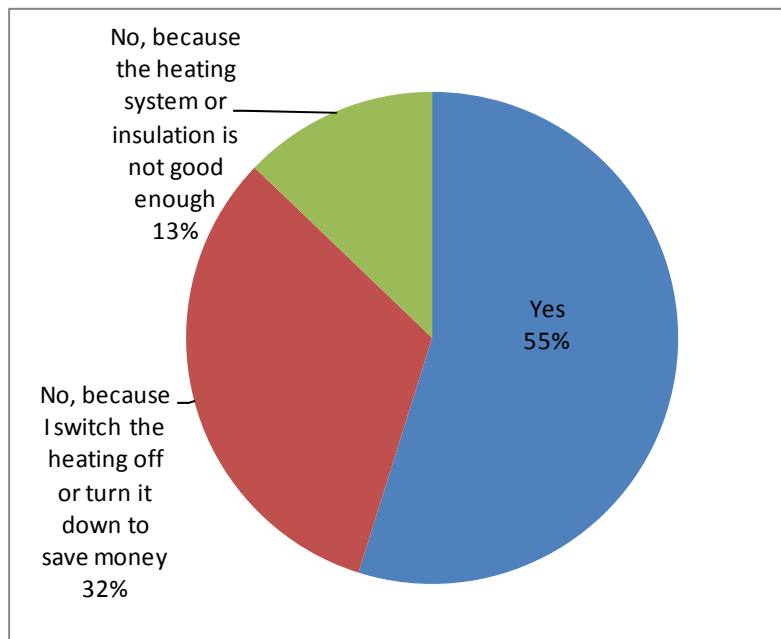


Figure 4: Can you heat your home to a comfortable level in winter?

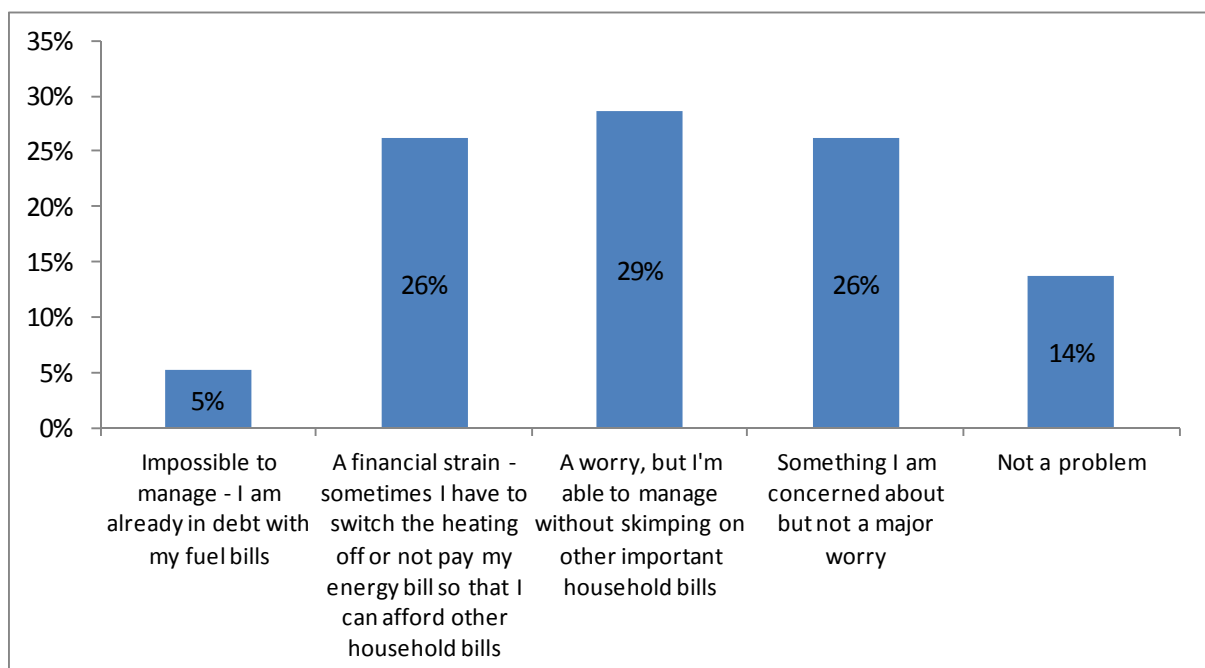


Figure 5: Attitudes to winter fuel bills

## Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session

Eighty-six percent of consumers already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. Twenty-nine percent of respondents had switched supplier once in the past, while 17% had switched more than once, a total of 46% of respondents who have experience of switching. The majority (66%) of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, while the rest were reactive switchers, switching in response to an approach from an energy supplier salesperson. Those switching as a result of an approach by an energy supplier salesperson may not have considered the full range of tariffs available to them before switching.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 19% had done so, and 24% did not know whether they had or not.

## The impact of the session

Ninety-seven percent of those who answered said they found the session useful. Figure 6 shows what consumers said they found useful about the session. Information about how to find the best deal was considered useful by the highest number of people, at 80% of respondents, with information about how to switch energy supplier coming second at 63%.

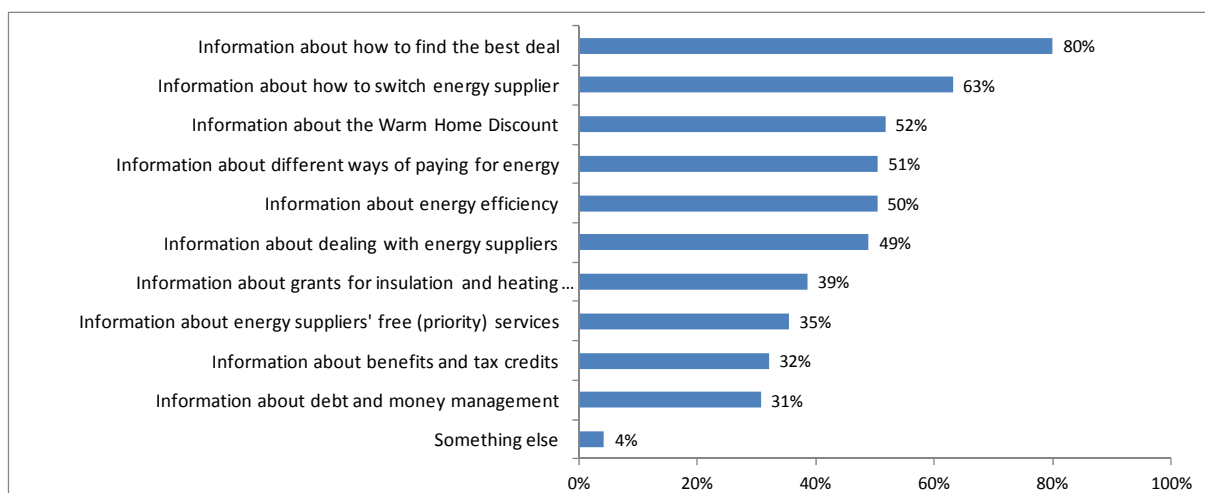
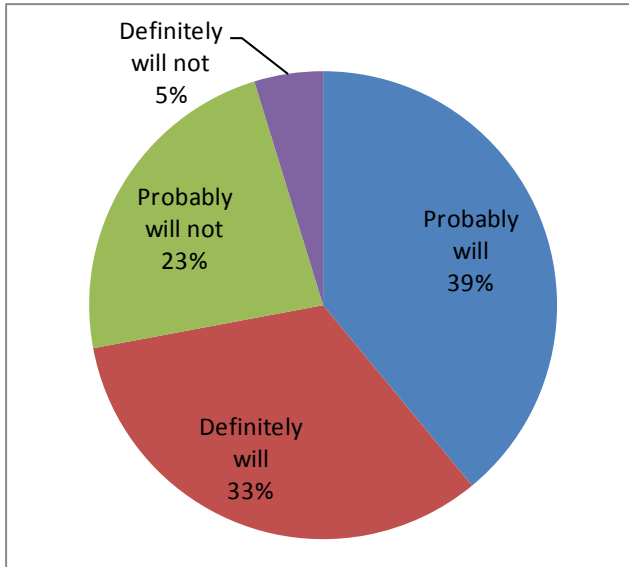


Figure 6: What did you find useful about the session?

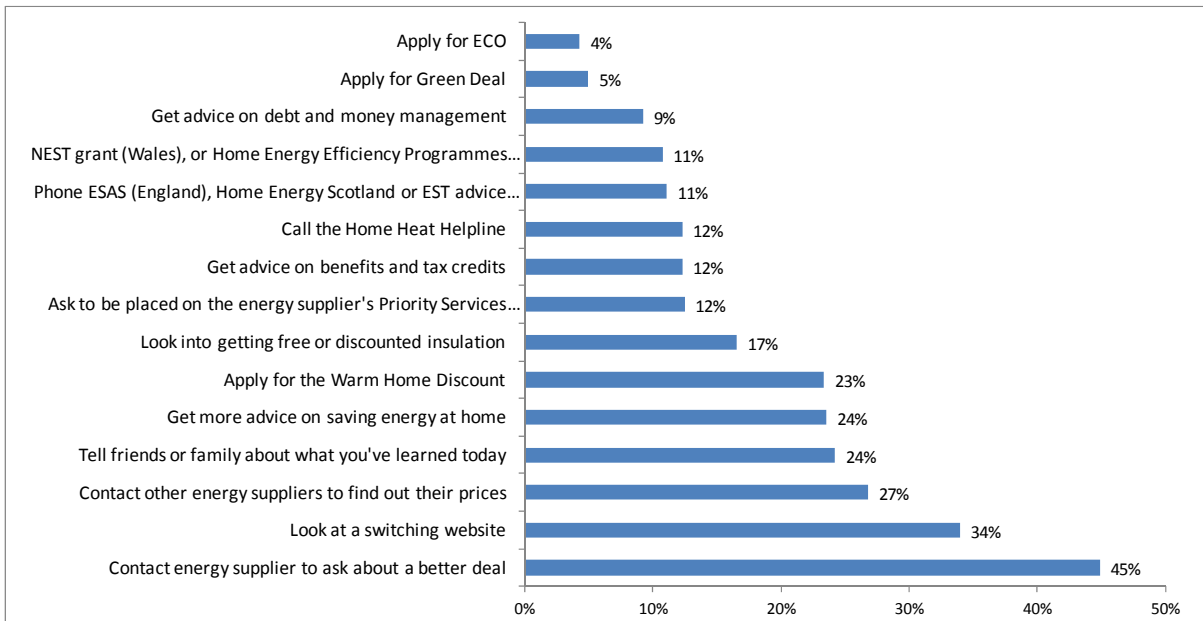
## Planned follow-up actions

Seventy-two percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of the session, as illustrated in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?**

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 8. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 45% of respondents, while looking at a switching website and contacting other suppliers were also popular, at 34% and 27% respectively.



**Figure 8: Planned actions following the session**



## **1.2 Consumers: follow-up interviews – Wales**

Nineteen consumers who were interviewed attended an Energy Best Deal session in Wales; this is equal to 2% of all consumers who attended sessions in Wales and 13% of all interviewees across GB. The absolute number of interviewees is small, and therefore the interview results should be taken as examples of individuals' experience rather than being representative of all Energy Best Deal attendees in Wales.

### **Action taken since the session**

In the interview, consumers were asked whether following the session they did any of the following:

- Found out about prices from suppliers
- Changed payment method
- Looked for more information about energy efficiency or improving their heating system
- Applied for NEST, free or discounted insulation, or the Warm Homes Discount
- Sought advice on benefits, tax credits, debt or money management
- Asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register
- Took any steps to save energy in their home (specifically prompted by the EBD session)

Each of these is discussed separately in the following sections. However, overall across all actions, a total of 15 out of 19 people (74%) in Wales had taken at least one of these actions. One of the people who had not taken action had told friends or family about what they had learned.

### **Looking for a better energy tariff**

Six people had taken action to look for a better deal since the session. All six of them checked prices with their existing supplier, while two also checked prices from different suppliers. Three people were offered a better deal with their existing supplier; one of these was also offered a better deal by a different supplier. All of these people switched to the better deal (the person who was offered a better deal by both the existing supplier and a new supplier chose to move to the better deal with the existing supplier).

All three people who switched to a different tariff with the same supplier had switched before. Two of these people who switched or intended to switch had switched supplier before, but one had previously done so as the result of an approach from a fuel company salesperson. This means they may not have checked all of the available options to get the best deal.

None of the consumers who were interviewed in Wales had changed the way they paid for their gas or electricity.

### **The process of switching supplier**

Two of the three people who had switched or intended to switch found the process 'fairly easy', the other found the process 'fairly difficult'.

### **Factors which discouraged people**

Thirteen interviewees did not look for a better deal. Of those who did not look for a better deal, one was living in rented accommodation and was unsure whether they could switch; one said all suppliers were the same so they might as well stay with their current supplier; one said they had a

debt with their supplier; and one was moving home shortly. Seven people said that they had not had time (3) or that it was too much hassle (4).

### Trustworthiness of energy companies

Interviewees were asked how trustworthy they perceived energy companies to be in general. They were given the options: very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not trustworthy, and 'I think mine is ok, but not all of them are trustworthy'. The responses are shown in Figure 9.

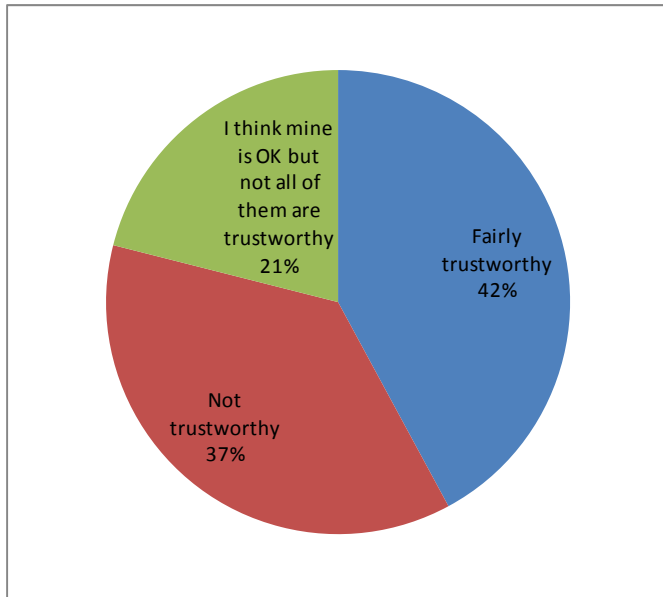


Figure 9: How do you rate the trustworthiness of suppliers?

### Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had looked for any more information on improving their home energy efficiency or heating system since the session, and whether they had done so as a direct result of the session. Three interviewees had done so as a result of the session. Additional sources of information used were: a local council, the internet and an insulation supplier.

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes since the session, and whether this was prompted by the Energy Best Deal session. Twelve people said that they had done something, as a result of the Energy Best Deal session.

## Identifying consumers qualifying for ECO<sup>2</sup> Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation

Consumers were asked two basic questions about benefits and income, which were designed to identify most people who would be eligible for ECO HHCRO funding for heating measures for their homes.

- Does anyone in your household receive either Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit?
- If yes to the latter, is your household income under £15,860?

There are other qualifying criteria for HHCRO, and so people who answer no to these questions could still be eligible if they claim certain other benefits; however, there was a need to strike a balance between getting useful information and asking so many questions that interviewees would be reluctant to answer, which is a risk when asking what benefits are claimed.

Two interviewees (11%) receive Pension Credit and two (11%) receive Child Tax Credit and have a household income under £15,860, making a total of 21% of interviewees who meet the above criteria. However, for HHCRO, people living in social housing are not eligible. Applying this additional indicator leaves one Pension Credit recipient eligible and no Child Tax Credit recipients under the income threshold eligible.

### Further actions

Interviewees were asked about a set of other actions, related to seeking advice or applying for heating grants, that they had taken since the session. One person had sought advice on debt and money management, one person had applied for NEST, three people had applied for free or discounted insulating or heating from a supplier or another source, and four people had applied for the Warm Home Discount.

### Information passed on to friends and family

Ten of the interviewees (53%) had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family. Due to the small sample size it is not appropriate to report a median or mean number of people that information was passed on to, but per interviewee the number ranged from one person to four.

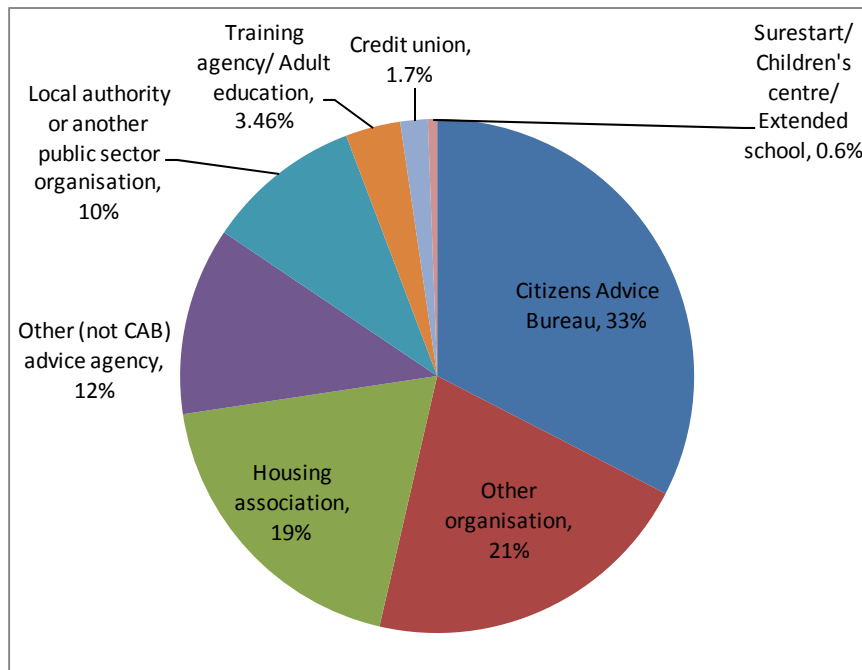
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<sup>2</sup> Under the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, "suppliers must deliver measures which result in cost savings and which improve the ability of a householder to affordably heat their home. HHCRO (also known as ECO Affordable Warmth) focuses on low income and vulnerable householders, living in private housing (generally), where residents are in receipt of specific benefits and meet other related conditions (the 'affordable warmth group' or AWG')." (p.55, ECO Guidance for Suppliers, Ofgem, 13 March 2013). See ([http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20\(ECO\)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20(ECO)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf))

### 1.3 Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Wales

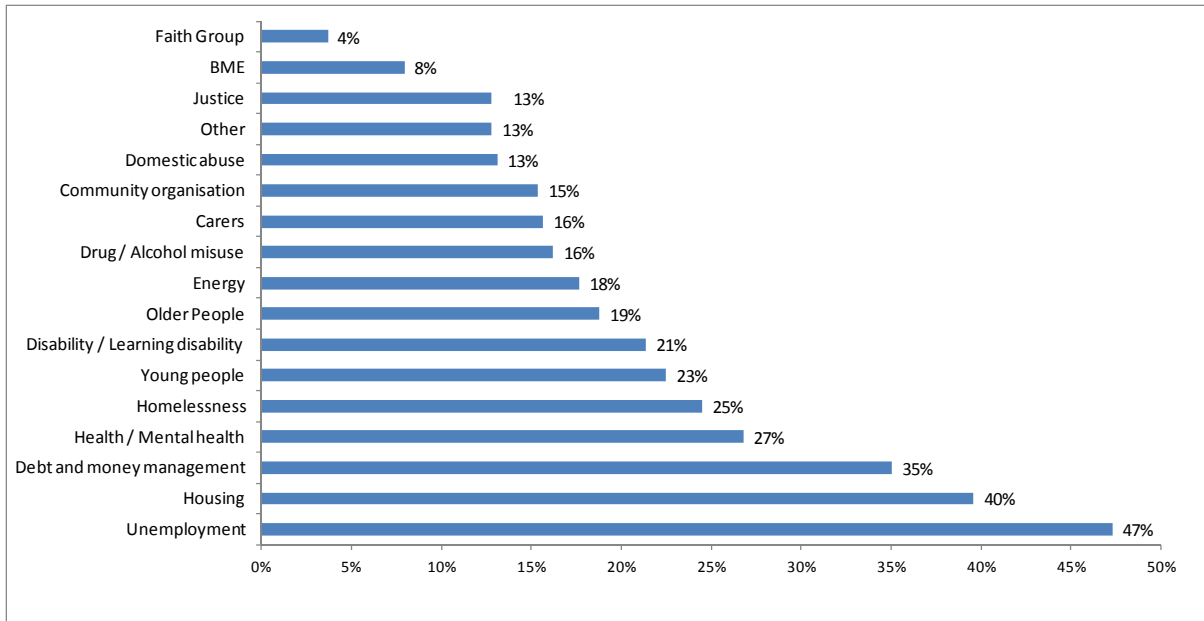
#### Profile

In Wales 351 questionnaires were returned by frontline workers, a response rate of 45%. This is lower than the response rate for Great Britain, which was 62%. Figure 10 shows the organisations represented by frontline workers in Wales. The largest group of frontline workers in Wales came from Citizens Advice Bureaux (33%), with the second largest group identifying themselves as coming from 'other' organisations - those not listed as the default choices. 'Other' organisations represented by attendees in Wales were mostly community organisations.



**Figure 10: Frontline worker organisation types**

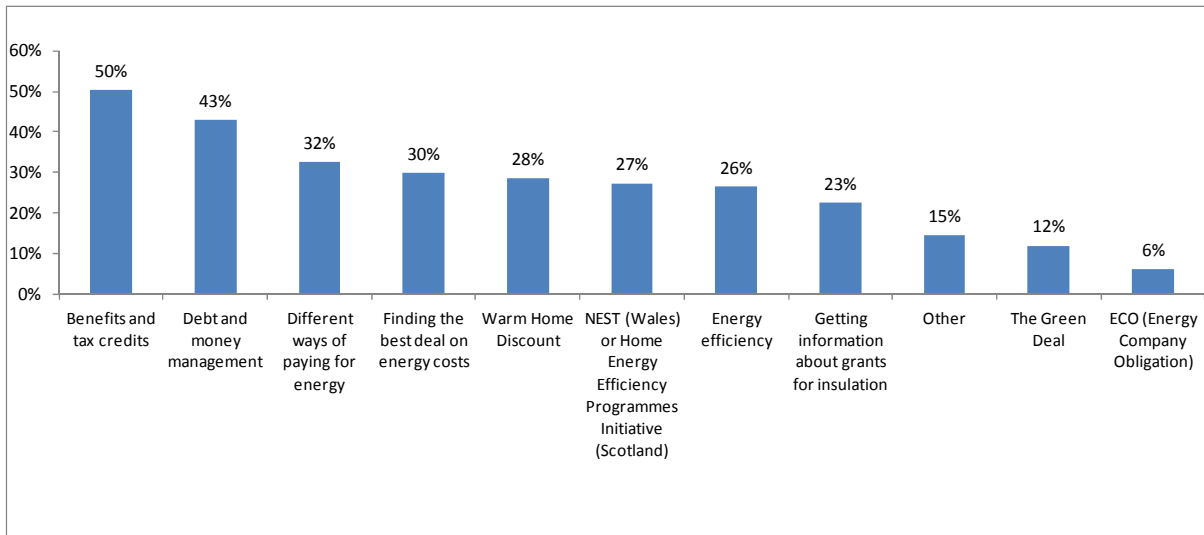
Frontline workers were also asked if their organisation specialises in supporting specific groups or advising on specific topics. These are shown in Figure 11, as a percentage of the total number of frontline workers who attended sessions (many people chose more than one option and so the total sums to more than 100%). The topics that frontline workers' organisations in Wales most commonly specialise in are unemployment (47%), housing (40%) and debt and money management (35%).



**Figure 11: Frontline worker organisation: specialisms**

### Previous advice-giving

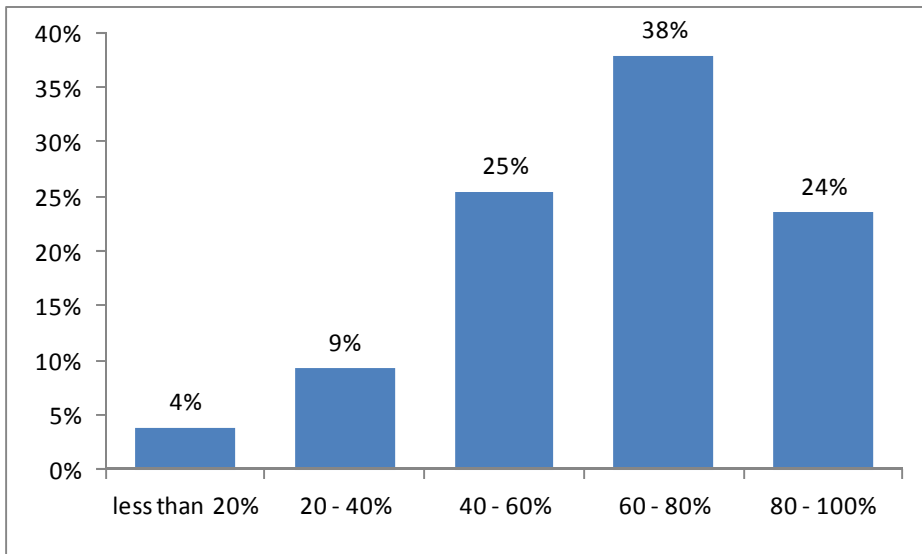
Figure 12 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice on prior to the session. Half of the frontline workers had previously given advice on benefits and tax credits, with 43% advising on debt and money management. The least commonly advised on topics prior to the session relate were ECO and the Green Deal.



**Figure 12: Previous advice-giving**

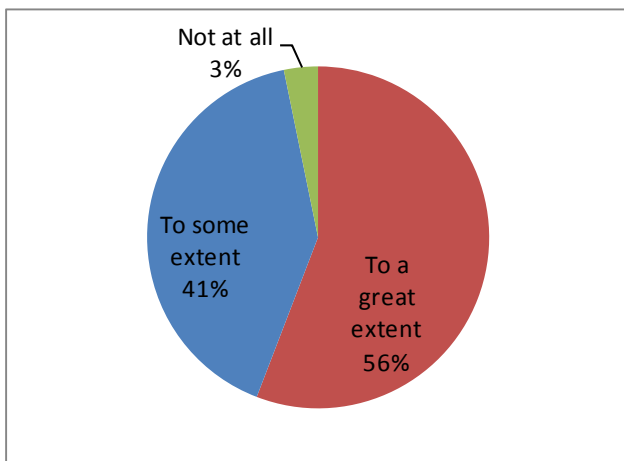
### The impact of the session

Eighty-two per cent of frontline workers said that the session had changed their view on fuel poverty. Frontline workers were asked to estimate what percentage of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. As can be seen in Figure 13, 24% of frontline workers estimated that 80 to 100% of their clients were in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 38% estimated 60 to 80%.



**Figure 13: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty**

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-seven per cent said they did; 56% to a great extent, and 41% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 14.



**Figure 14: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?**

Frontline workers were asked if they felt more or less confident about specific topics following the session. The results are illustrated in Figure 15. For most topics a large proportion of frontline workers felt more confident following the session, with none or very few feeling less confident, apart from in the area of the Green Deal and ECO, where 2% and 1.4% felt less confident respectively.

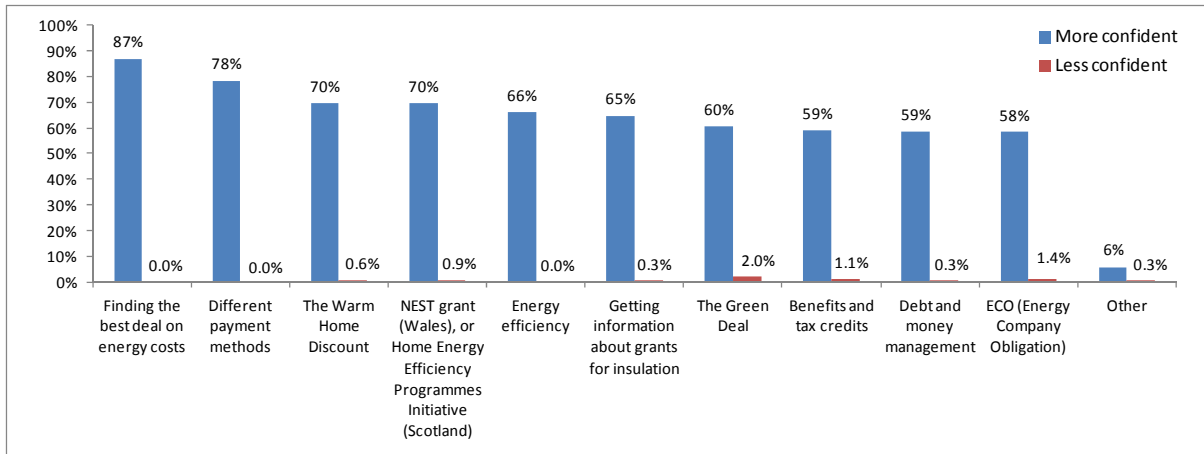


Figure 15: Increases and decreases in confidence after the session

### Passing on information from the session

Frontline workers were asked to estimate the number of clients to whom they would pass on information learnt at the session. The distribution is shown in Figure 16. The question was left unanswered by 13% of frontline workers.

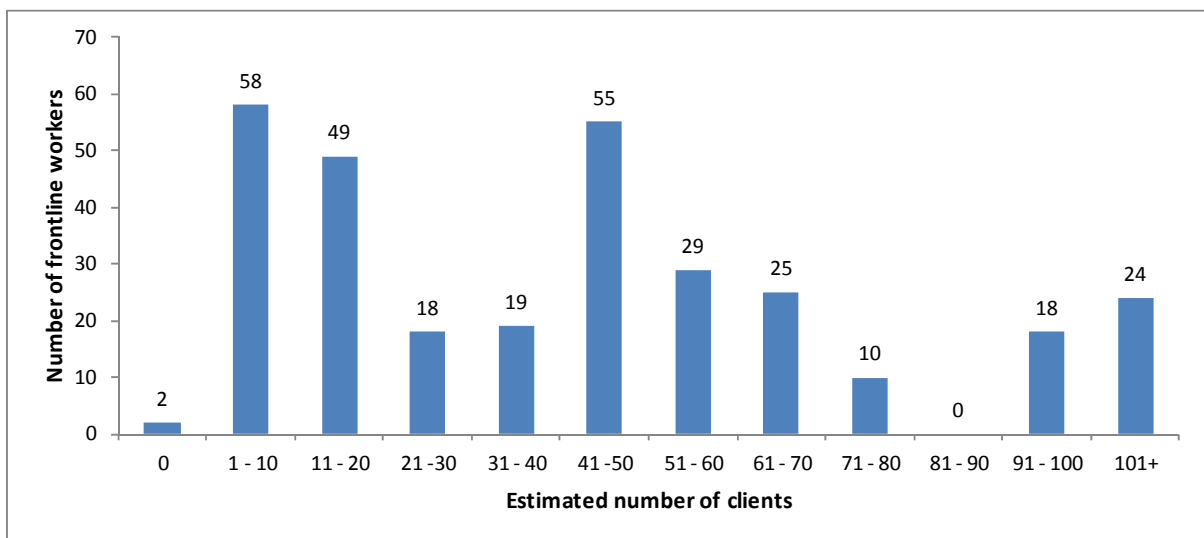


Figure 16: Number of clients information will be passed on to

## 1.4 Frontline workers: follow-up interviews – Wales

Eighteen frontline workers who attended sessions in Wales were interviewed. This is equal to 2% of all frontline workers who attended sessions in Wales and 12% of all frontline workers interviewed.

Seven of the frontline workers were from Citizens Advice Bureaux, one was from another advice agency, three were from housing associations, three were from local authorities or other public sector organisations, one was from a training agency, and three were from 'other' organisations (no specifics available).

### Advice-giving on Energy Best Deal topics

Frontline worker interviewees were asked to rate each of the five main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of their own level of knowledge before and after the presentation, using a scale of 1 to 5 where one is no knowledge and five is highly knowledgeable. Figure 17 shows the average score for levels of knowledge before and after the presentation. Scores were similar to overall Great Britain results, but interviewees in general rated their knowledge before the session slightly higher than the average across Great Britain. The average score increased for all topics, following the session.

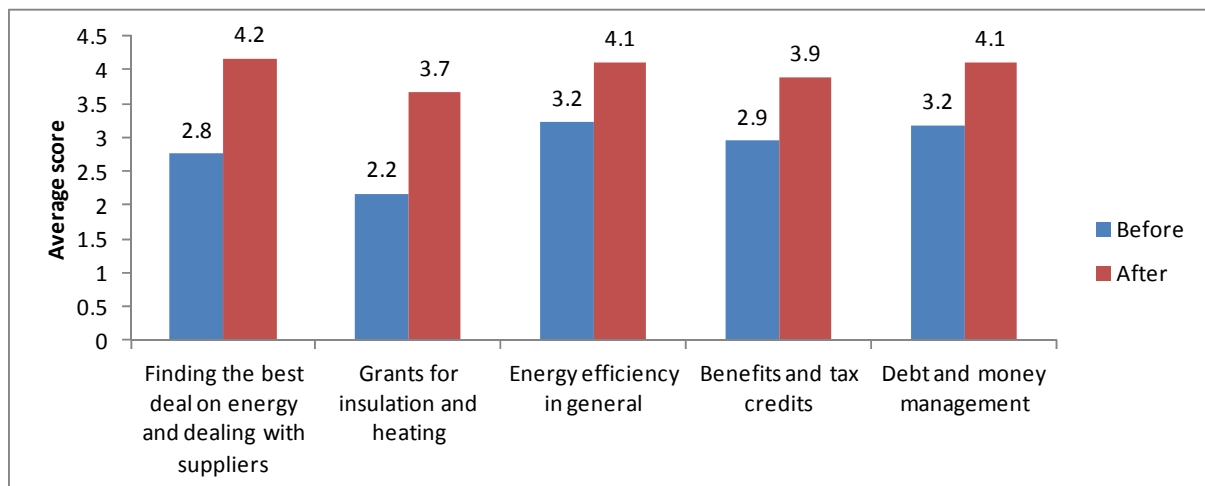
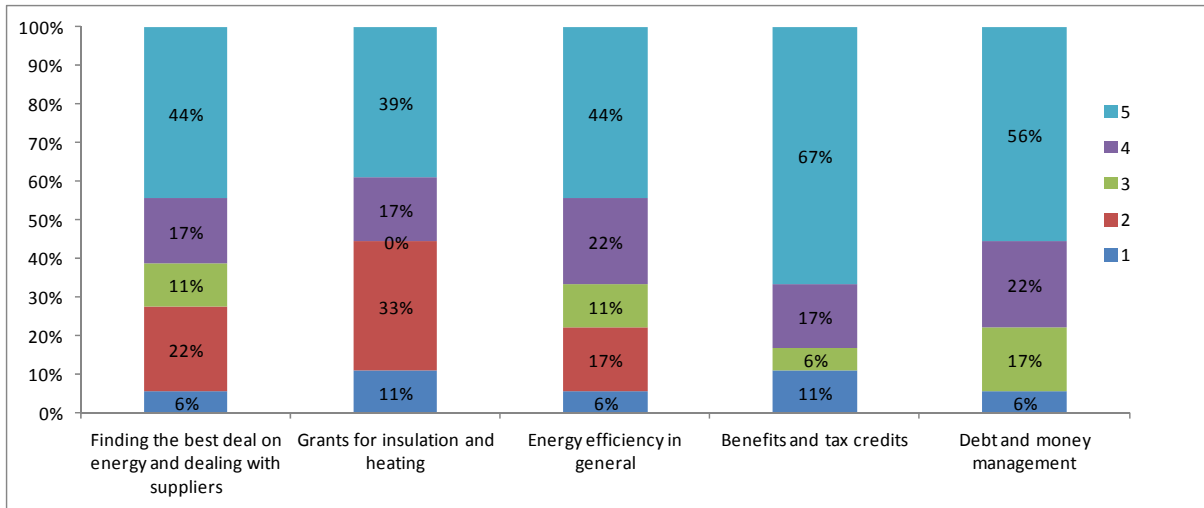


Figure 17: Levels of knowledge in topics covered in the session: average scores before and after

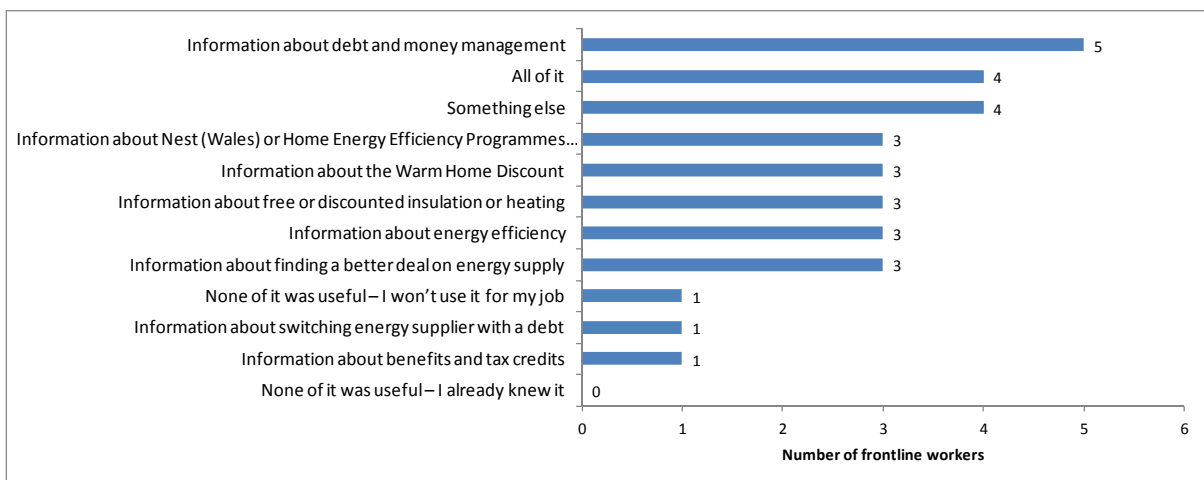
Interviewees were asked to rate the main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of importance to their job role, with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'highly important'. The responses are shown in Figure 18. For each topic, 'highly important' was chosen more frequently than any other rating. Benefits and tax credits was the topic which was most important to most interviewees.





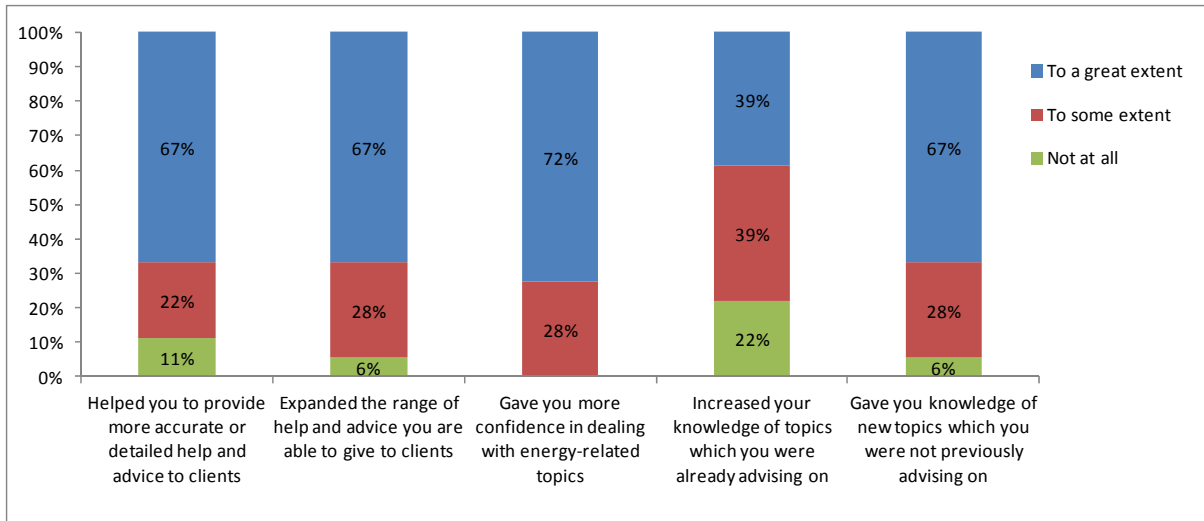
**Figure 18: Importance of session topics in terms of interviewees' job roles**

To get more detail on the previous question, interviewees were also asked whether any part of the presentation was particularly useful in helping them do their job. The responses are shown in Figure 19. The most common response was that information about debt and money management was particularly useful. All respondents thought at least one aspect of the training was of particular use.



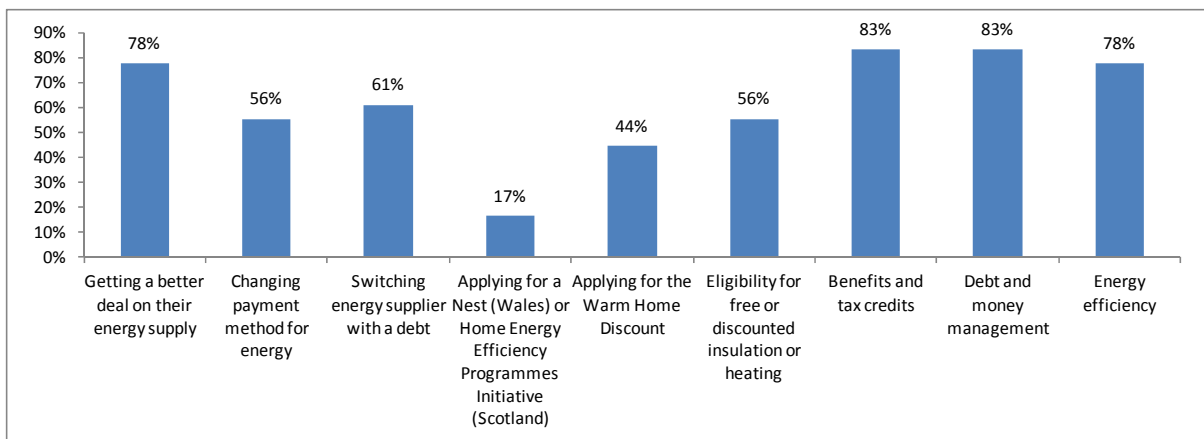
**Figure 19: Did you find any part of the presentation particularly useful in helping you do your job?**

Interviewees were given a set of statements about the effect of the presentation on the advice they were able to give to clients. They were asked to say whether the statements were applicable to them 'to a great extent', 'to some extent', or not at all. The responses are shown in Figure 20.



**Figure 20: Effect of session in terms of advice giving**

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. The answers are shown in Figure 21.



**Figure 21: Topics advised on since the presentation**

Debt and money management and benefits and tax credits were the topics that the greatest number of frontline workers had given advice on since the session.

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. The total number across interviewees in Wales was 669 with a mean of 39 and median of 18.

Twelve interviewees said that they would not have provided as much information to as many clients without attending the session, while three said they would have provided the information even if they had not attended the session. All interviewees said that they would use information from the presentation to help clients in the future. No frontline workers in Wales felt *less* confident about any topics following the session.

Frontline workers were asked what the most common energy-related issue was that their clients seek help with. Three people said that this was debt, while another eight said it was the cost of energy and paying bills.

### **Passing information on to colleagues**

Seven frontline workers said that they had passed some information from the Energy Best Deal session on to their colleagues.

In addition, thirteen frontline workers had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family.

### **Frontline workers' own energy use**

Since the session, nine frontline workers had looked for a better deal on their own energy supply. Of these, one person had switched supplier and another was in the process of switching.

Eight frontline workers had taken steps to save energy in their own homes since the presentation while another five said that they were already very energy efficient.

### 1.5 Quality of the presentation and materials - Wales

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, on a scale from poor to excellent (Figure 22). The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainer as 'excellent.'

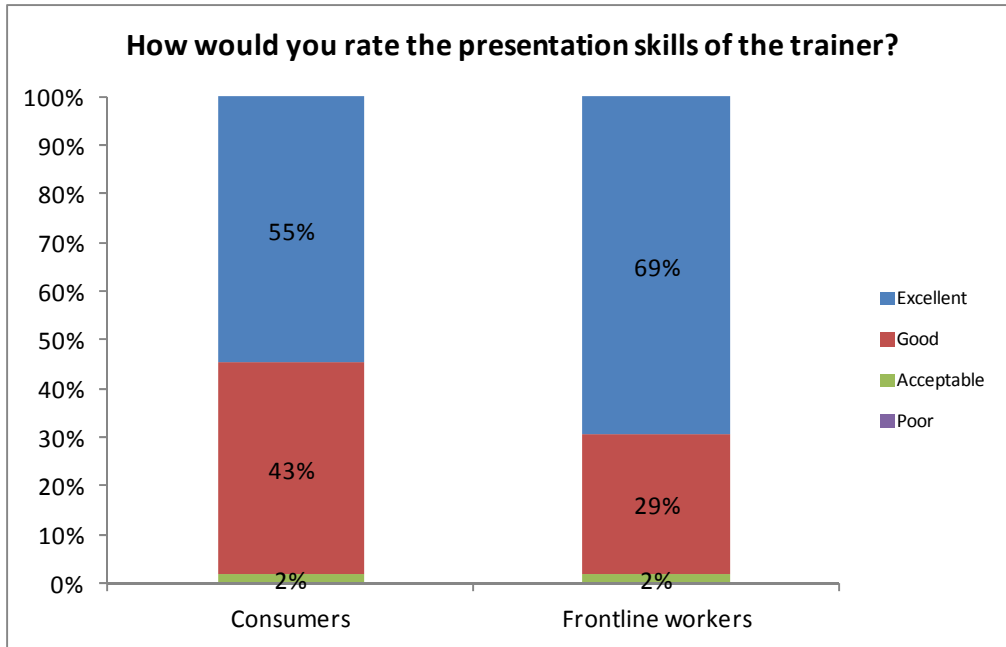


Figure 22: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

Consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the quality of the materials used during the session (Figure 23). This comprised the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts the trainer decided to use. The vast majority rated these as either 'excellent' or 'good', with ratings being roughly evenly split between these two categories.

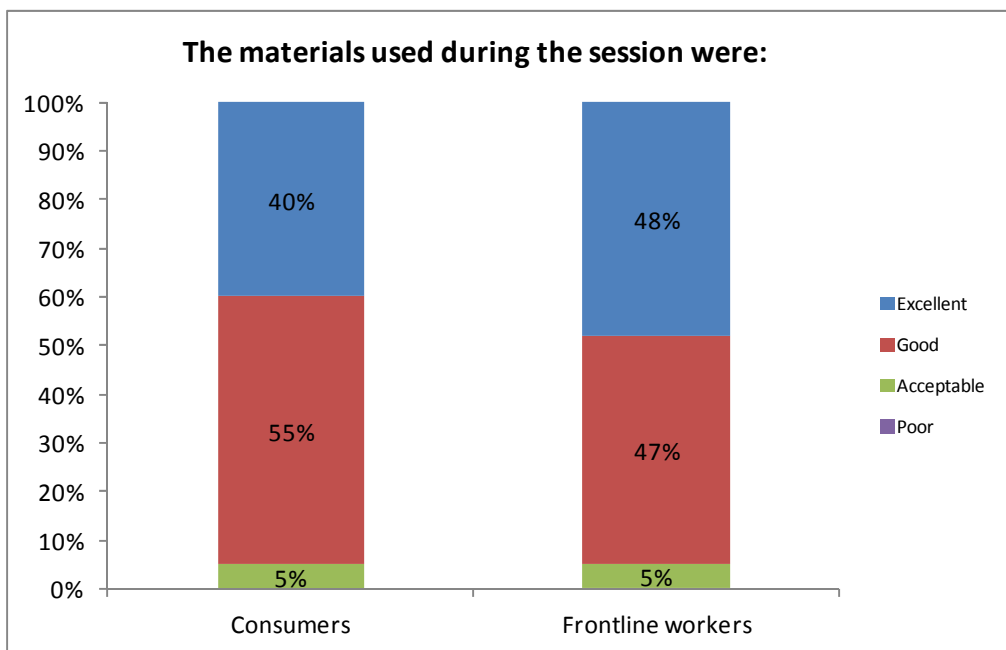


Figure 23: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

Consumers and frontline workers were also asked to rate the quality of the materials provided to take away, which comprised a booklet produced by Citizens Advice and Ofgem, and any handouts the trainer decided to include (Figure 24). Again, the vast majority rated these as either 'excellent' or 'good', with ratings being roughly evenly split between these two categories.

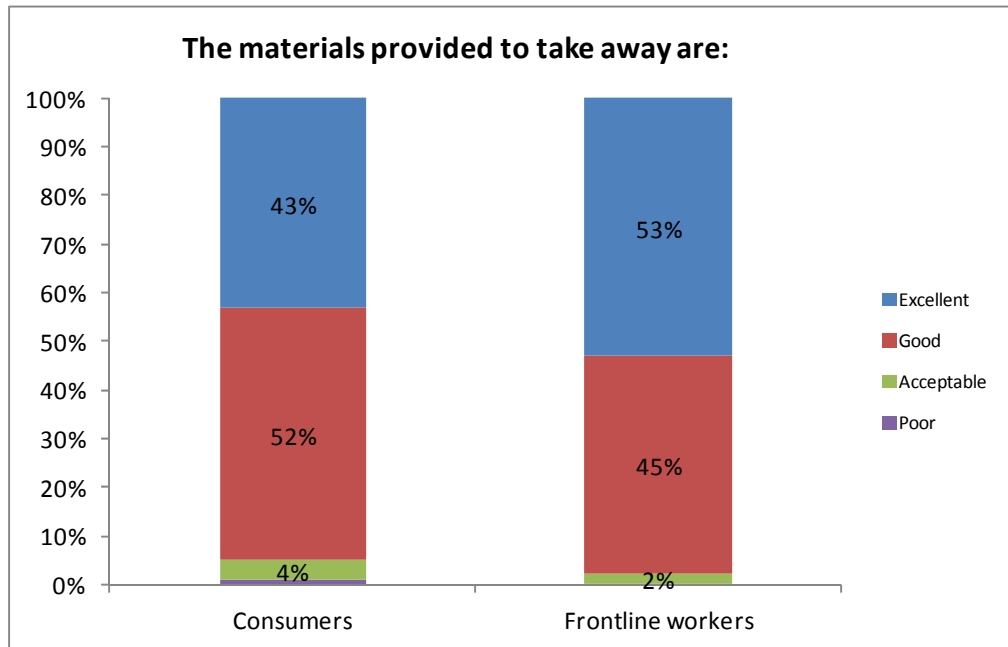


Figure 24: Ratings of the materials provided to take away

## 2. Results for Scotland

### 2.1 Consumers: questionnaire responses - Scotland

#### Demographic information

In Scotland 1,300 consumers attended the Energy Best Deal sessions, and questionnaire responses were received from 612 of these consumers. This is a 47% response rate, which is significantly lower than the overall response rate of 59% in Great Britain. Figure 25 to Figure 27 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in Scotland.

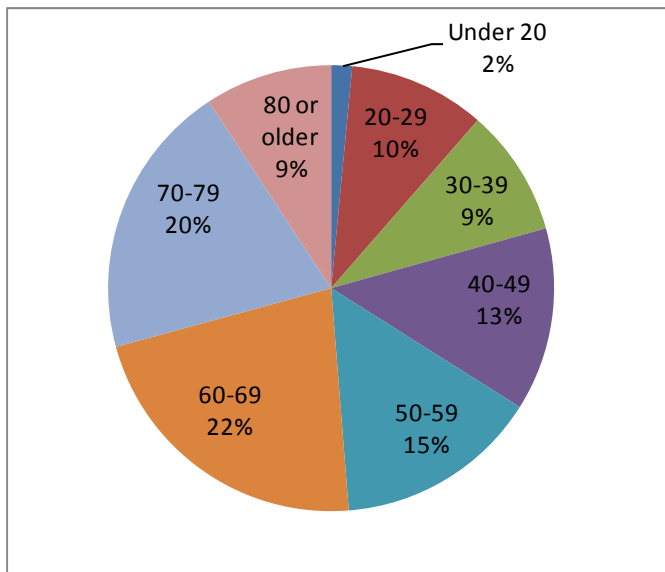


Figure 25: Age of respondents

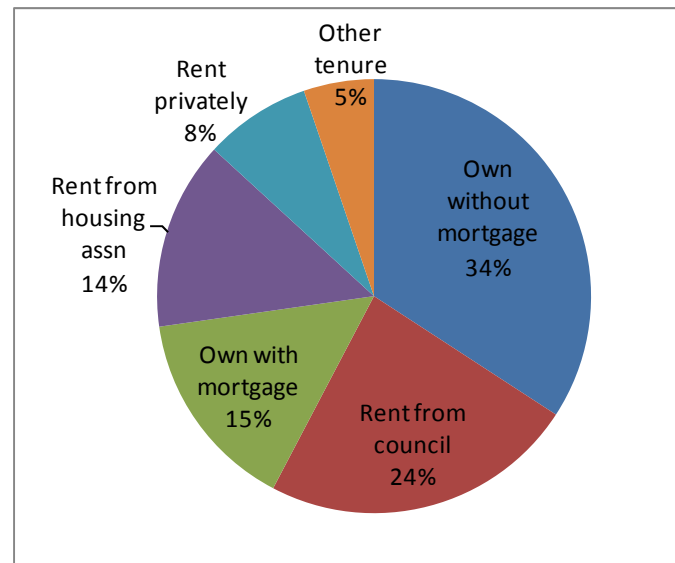


Figure 26: Tenure of respondents

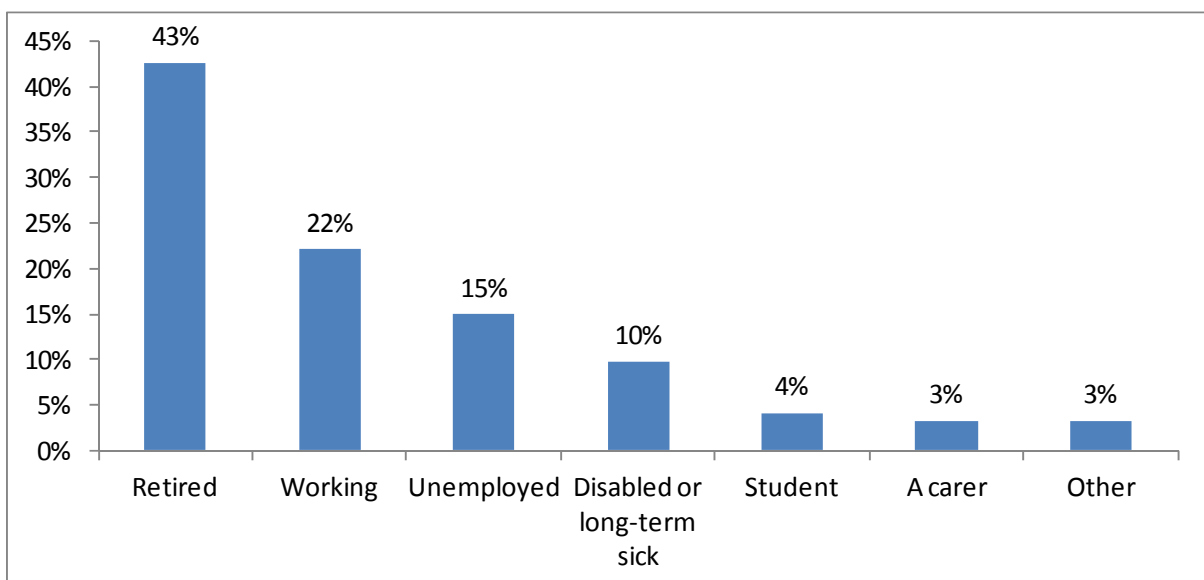


Figure 27: Occupation of respondents

## Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with heating their home in winter they were asked two questions. The first asked whether they were able to heat their home to a comfortable level (Figure 28) and the second about their winter fuel bills (Figure 29). Forty-four percent are not able to heat their home to a comfortable level, which is slightly higher than the average for Great Britain. Twenty-nine percent of interviewees turn the heating down or off to save money, whilst fifteen percent cannot heat their home due to inadequate heating and insulation systems.

Over a fifth (21%) find their energy bills to be a financial strain, while 32% worry about their bills but are able to manage. The number of consumers who find their winter fuel bills impossible to manage and are already in debt than is around the national average (4% in Scotland compared to 5% in Great Britain).

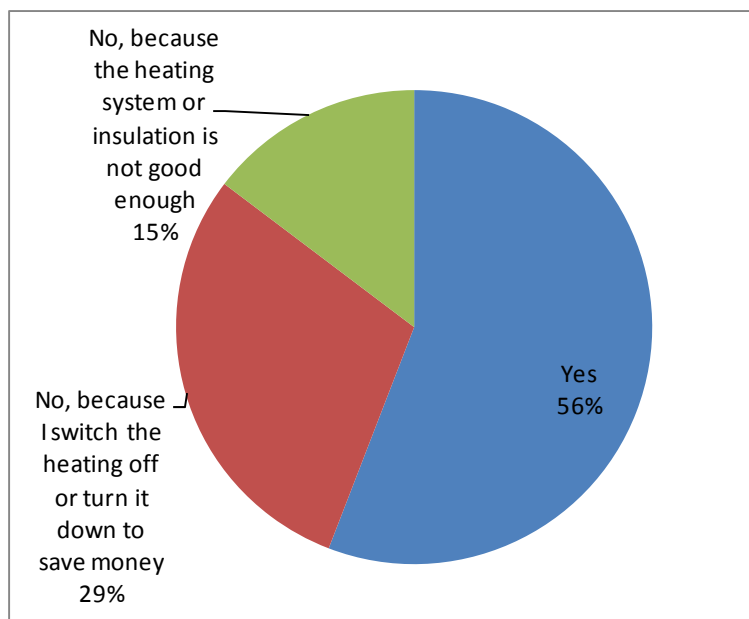
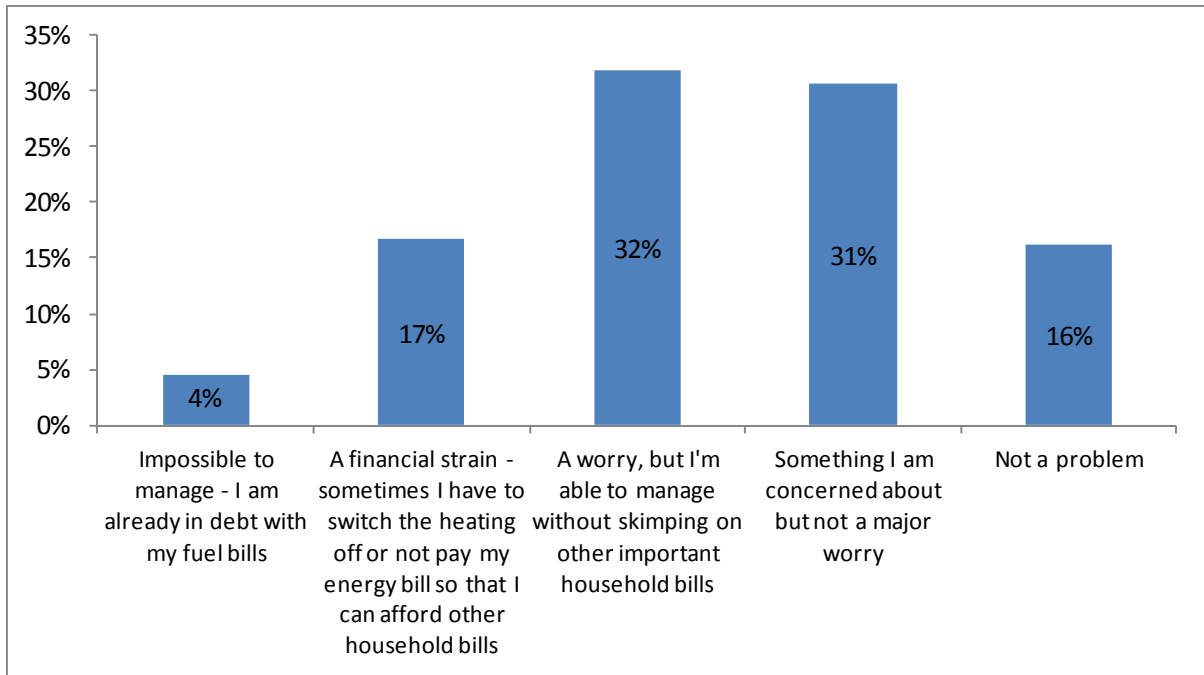


Figure 28: Can you heat your home to a comfortable level in winter?



**Figure 29: Attitudes to winter fuel bills**

### **Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session**

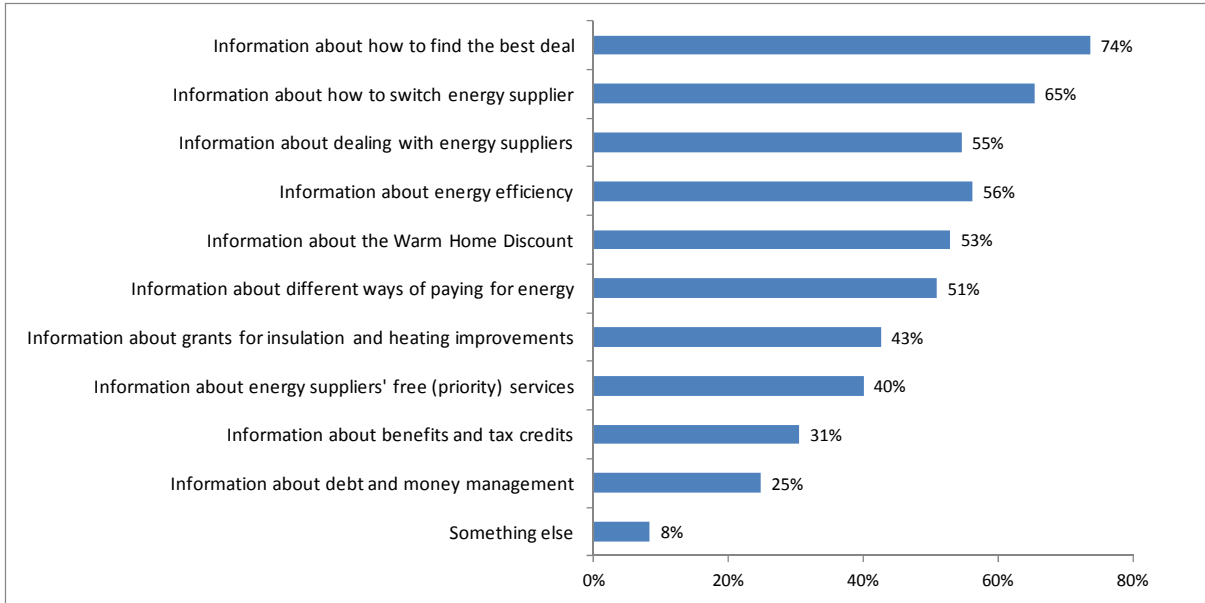
Eighty-nine percent of consumers in Scotland already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. A total of 32% of consumers had switched supplier once in the past, and a further 14% had switched more than once. Sixty-five percent of those who had switched in the past were proactive switchers, having switched on their own initiative, while the rest were reactive switchers, switching in response to an approach from an energy supplier salesperson. Those switching as a result of an approach by an energy supplier salesperson may not have considered the full range of tariffs available to them before switching.

Sixty percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 26% had done so and 14% did not know whether they had or not.

### **The impact of the session**

Ninety-five percent of those who answered said they found the session useful. Figure 30 shows what consumers said they found useful about the session. Information about how to find the best deal was considered useful by the highest number of people, at 74% of respondents, with information about how to switch energy supplier coming second at 65%.

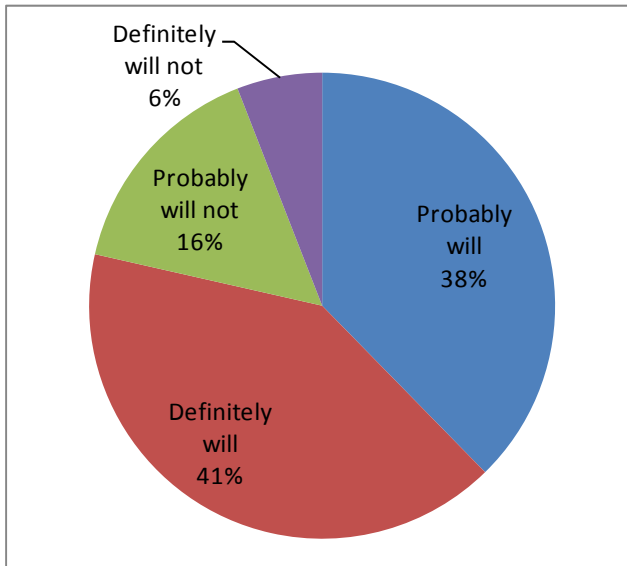




**Figure 30: What did you find useful about the session?**

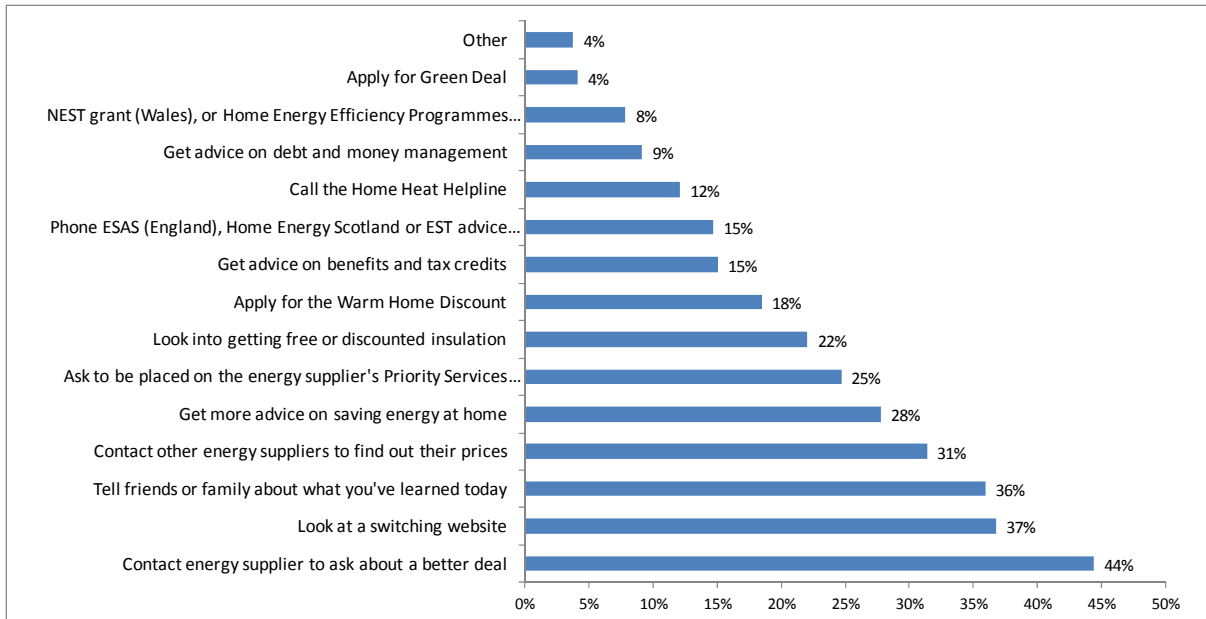
### Planned follow-up actions

Seventy-nine percent of people said they would definitely or probably do something as a result of this session (41% said they definitely will and 38% said they probably will do something), as illustrated in Figure 31.



**Figure 31: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?**

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 32. Contacting the current energy supplier to ask about a better deal was the most popular planned action at 44% of respondents, followed by looking at a switching website with 37% of respondents.



**Figure 32: Planned actions following the session**

## 2.2 Consumers: follow-up interviews – Scotland

Twenty-two consumers who attended sessions in Scotland were interviewed. This is equal to 2% of consumers who attended sessions in Scotland, and to 15% of all interviewees.

### Action taken since the session

In the interview, consumers were asked whether following the session they did any of the following:

- Found out about prices from suppliers
- Changed payment method
- Looked for more information about energy efficiency or improving their heating system
- Applied for the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Initiative, free or discounted insulation, or the Warm Home Discount
- Sought advice on benefits, tax credits, debt or money management
- Asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register
- Took any steps to save energy in their home (specifically prompted by the EBD session)

Each of these is discussed separately in the following sections. However, overall across all actions, a total of sixteen out of twenty-two people (73%) had taken at least one of these actions. All but one of the people who had not taken any actions had told friends and family about the session.

### Looking for a better energy tariff

Five out of the twenty-two Scottish consumers had looked for a better deal on their energy. Three had checked with their own supplier, and four with a different supplier; there is an overlap as two interviewees checked with both their current and a different supplier. One of them found a better deal with their current supplier, while 3 found a better deal with a different supplier, with no overlap between these groups. All four of those who found a better deal switched to the better deal.

All of the people who looked for a better tariff had switched supplier in the past; two had done so on multiple occasions. One of these had also previously switched to a different tariff with the same supplier. In all but one of these cases the switch was initiated because of an approach from an energy supplier.

Two interviewees who checked prices from different suppliers used price comparison websites, another had help from CAB or another advice service, and the fourth received a sales phone call from another supplier. No Scottish interviewee had changed the way they paid for their gas or electricity.

### Factors which discouraged people

The reasons given by interviewees for not looking for a better deal were: being on a fixed tariff (4), being happy with their current deal (5), issues with pre payment meters (2), lack of time (2), problems switching (2), that they wouldn't save enough money to make it worthwhile and it being too much hassle (2).

## Trustworthiness of energy companies

Interviewees were asked how trustworthy they perceived energy companies to be, in general. They were given the options: very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not trustworthy, and 'I think mine is ok, but not all of them are trustworthy'. The responses are shown in Figure 33.

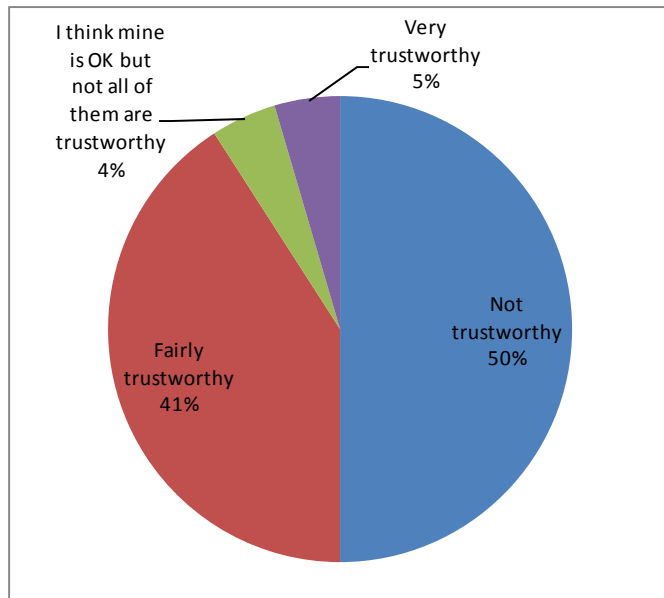


Figure 33: How do you rate the trustworthiness of suppliers?

## Energy efficiency actions

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes or to make their homes more energy efficient since the session. Thirteen said they had, and two further consumers said they had but it was not prompted by the Energy Best Deal session. All of these people had undertaken low or no-cost actions, such as turning off appliances when not in use or adjusting their heating controls. One person had installed new double glazing.

## Identifying consumers qualifying for ECO<sup>3</sup> Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation

Consumers were asked two basic questions about benefits and income, which were designed to identify most people who would be eligible for ECO HHCRO funding for heating measures for their homes.

- Does anyone in your household receive either Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit?
- If yes to the latter, is your household income under £15,860?

<sup>3</sup> Under the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, "suppliers must deliver measures which result in cost savings and which improve the ability of a householder to affordably heat their home. HHCRO (also known as ECO Affordable Warmth) focuses on low income and vulnerable householders, living in private housing (generally), where residents are in receipt of specific benefits and meet other related conditions (the 'affordable warmth group' or AWG')." (p.55, ECO Guidance for Suppliers, Ofgem, 13 March 2013). See ([http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20\(ECO\)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20(ECO)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf))

There are other qualifying criteria for HHCRO, and so people who answer no to these questions could still be eligible if they claim certain other benefits; however, there was a need to strike a balance between getting useful information and asking so many questions that interviewees would be reluctant to answer, which is a risk when asking what benefits are claimed.

One interviewee (5%) received Pension Credit, while no interviewees received Child Tax Credit and have a household income under £15,860, making a total of 5% of interviewees who meet the above criteria. However, the interviewee who receives Pension Credit lives in social housing and so is ineligible for HHCRO.

### **Further actions**

Interviewees were asked about a set of other actions, relating to seeking advice or applying for heating grants, that they had taken since the session. Five people had taken action; two had applied for the Warm Home Discount, two had sought free or discounted insulation or heating from another source, and one had asked to be placed on their energy supplier's priority services register.

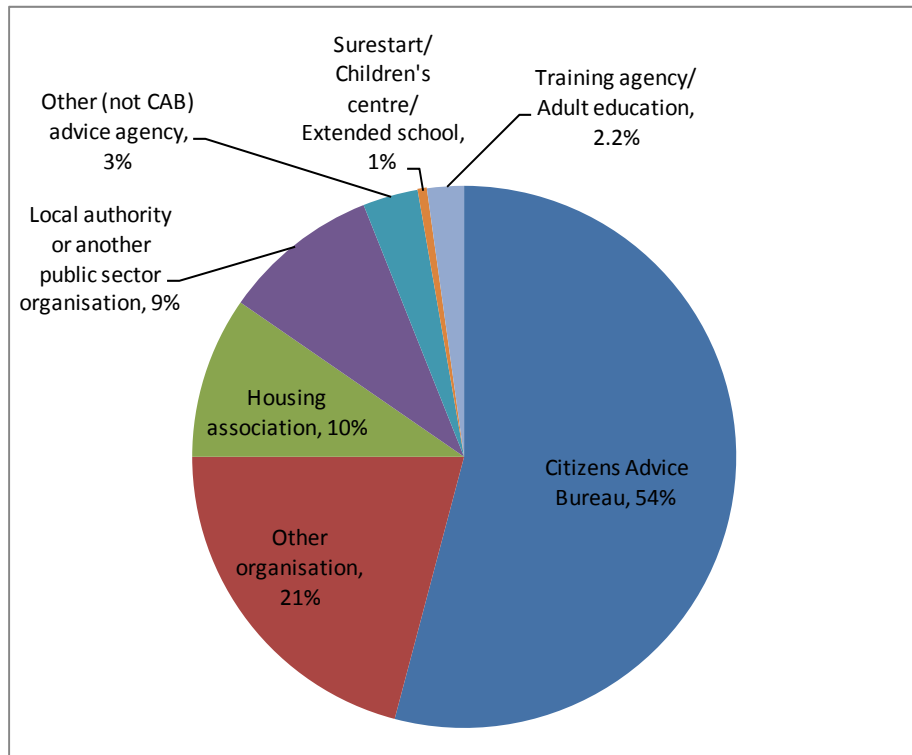
### **Information passed on to friends and family**

Sixteen out of the twenty-two Scottish consumers interviewed said they had passed on information from the session to friends and family. Due to the small sample size, it is not appropriate to report a median or mean number here, but the number of people told something about the session by individual interviewees ranged from one to 11.

## 2.3 Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - Scotland

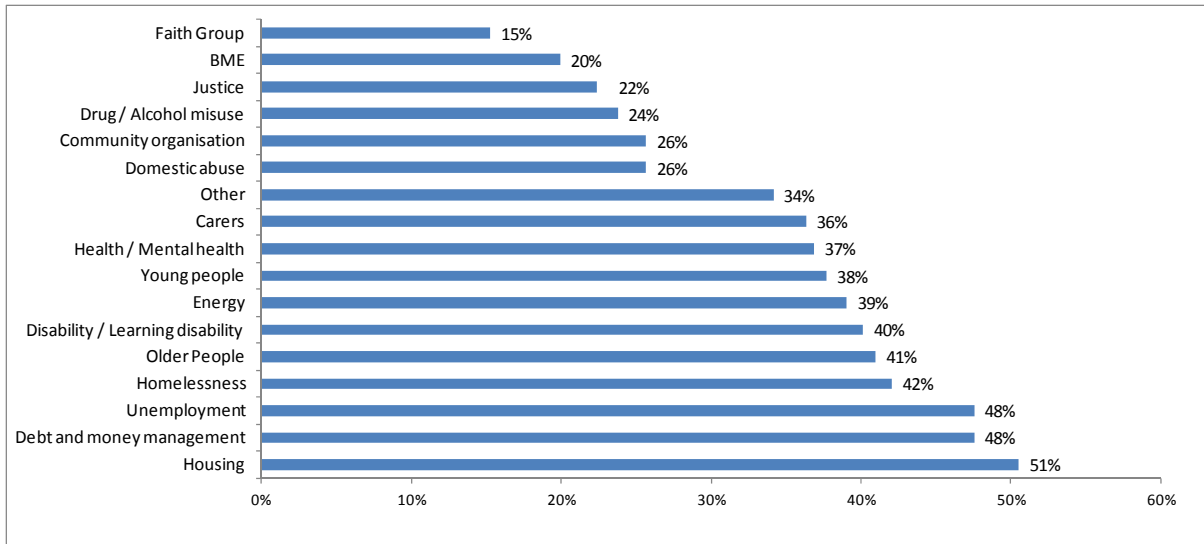
### Profile

In Scotland 366 frontline workers returned questionnaires from the session. This is a response rate of 65%, very slightly higher than the GB figure of 62%. Figure 34 shows the organisations represented by the frontline workers in Scotland. There are fewer organisation types represented in Scotland than in England and Wales, and the majority (54%) of frontline workers belong to the Citizens Advice Bureau. 'Other' organisations include Housing Support charities and the NHS.



**Figure 34: Frontline worker organisation types**

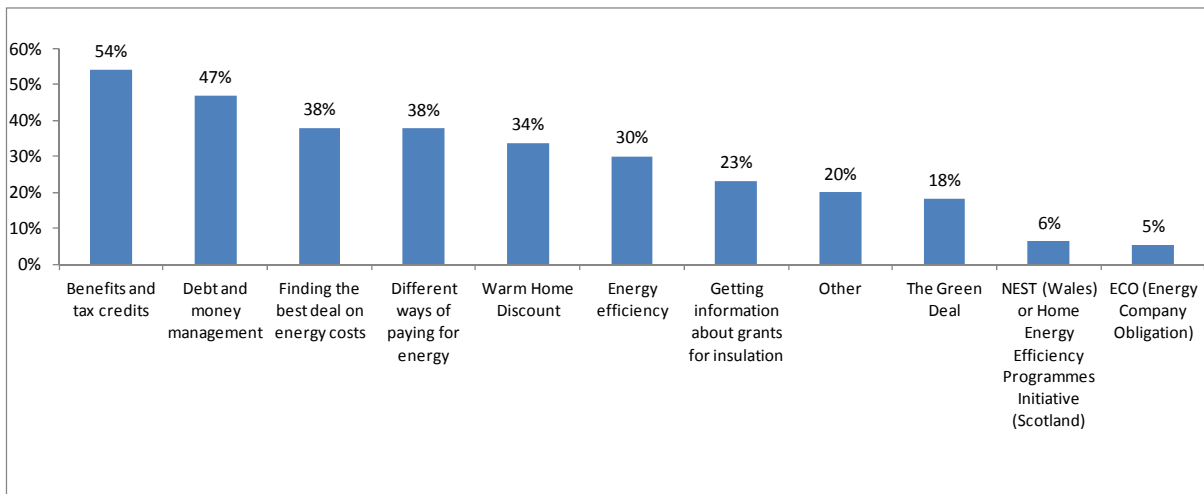
Frontline workers were also asked if their organisation specialises in supporting specific groups or advising on specific topics. . These are shown in Figure 35, as a percentage of the total number of frontline workers who attended sessions (many people chose more than one option and so the total sums to more than 100%). The topics that frontline workers' organisations in Scotland most commonly specialise in are housing (51%), debt and money management (48%), and unemployment (48%).



**Figure 35: Frontline worker organisation types**

### Previous advice-giving

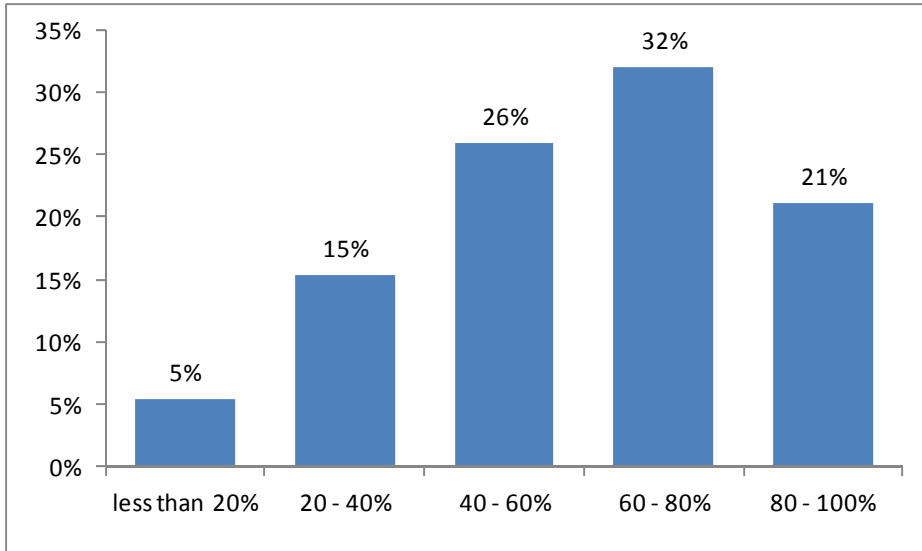
Figure 36 shows the topics to which frontline workers had given advice prior to the session. Fifty-four per cent had given advice on benefits and tax credits, with 47% had given advice on debt and money management. Topics about specific grants and energy efficiency were less commonly advised on, although still around a quarter of frontline workers. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.



**Figure 36: Previous advice-giving**

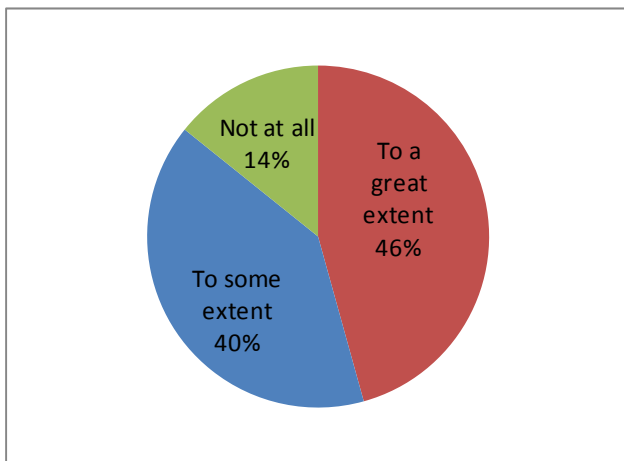
### The impact of the session

Eighty-four per cent of frontline workers in Scotland said that the session had changed their opinion on the importance of fuel poverty to their clients. Frontline workers were asked to estimate the proportion of their clients who were in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty. The results are shown in Figure 37. Just over a quarter estimate that 40-60% of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 53% estimate this figure to be over 60% of their clients.



**Figure 37: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty**

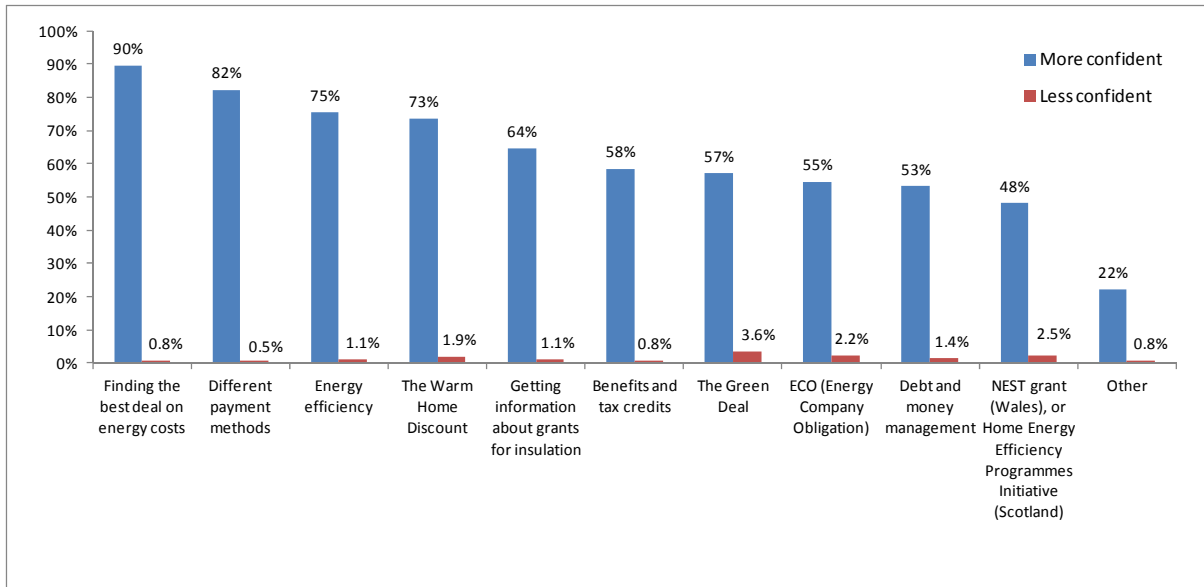
Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Eighty-six per cent said they did; 46% to a great extent and 40% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 38.



**Figure 38: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?**

Frontline workers were asked if they now felt more or less confident in advising clients about the topics covered in the presentation. The answers are illustrated in Figure 39.



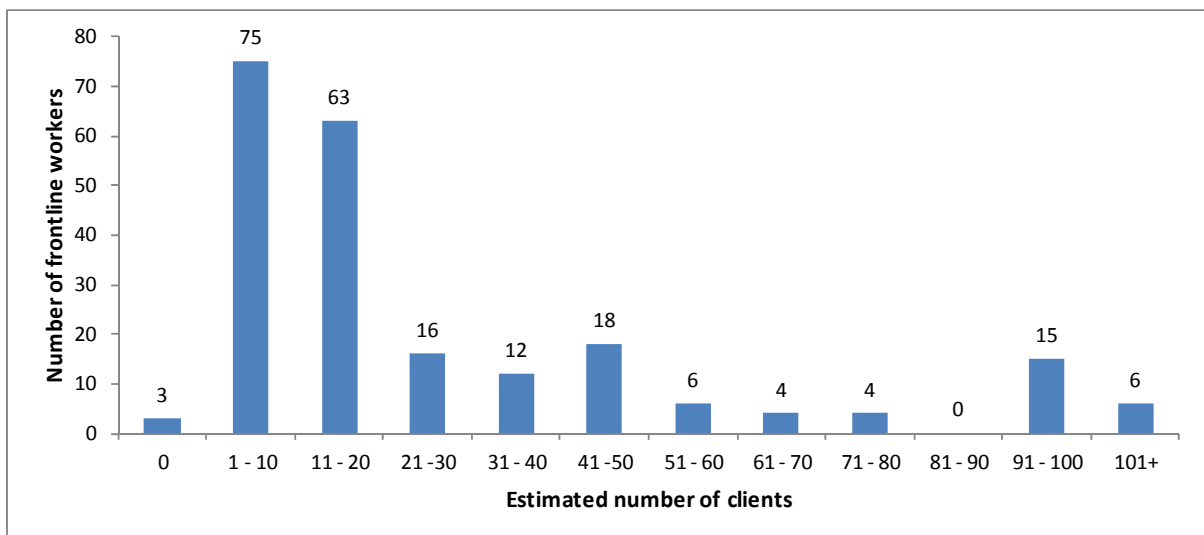


**Figure 39: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session**

High proportions of frontline workers felt an increase in confidence on the topics covered in the session, with debt and money management, NEST or ECO grants being the topics where least respondents felt more confident. A small number of frontline workers felt less confident following the session – this was less than 4% for all topics covered.

### Passing on information from the session

Frontline workers were asked to estimate the number of clients to whom they would pass on information learnt at the session. The distribution is shown in Figure 40. One hundred and forty-four people (39% of respondents) did not answer the question and are not included.



**Figure 40: Number of clients information will be passed on to**

Frontline workers were also asked if they thought they would pass on information learnt at the session to *colleagues*, and if so, approximately how many. Ninety-one percent said they would pass

on information to colleagues (63% definitely and 28% probably). The majority (59%) said they would pass on information to between one and five colleagues.

Seventy-two percent of frontline workers said they intended to look into getting a better deal on their own energy following the session.

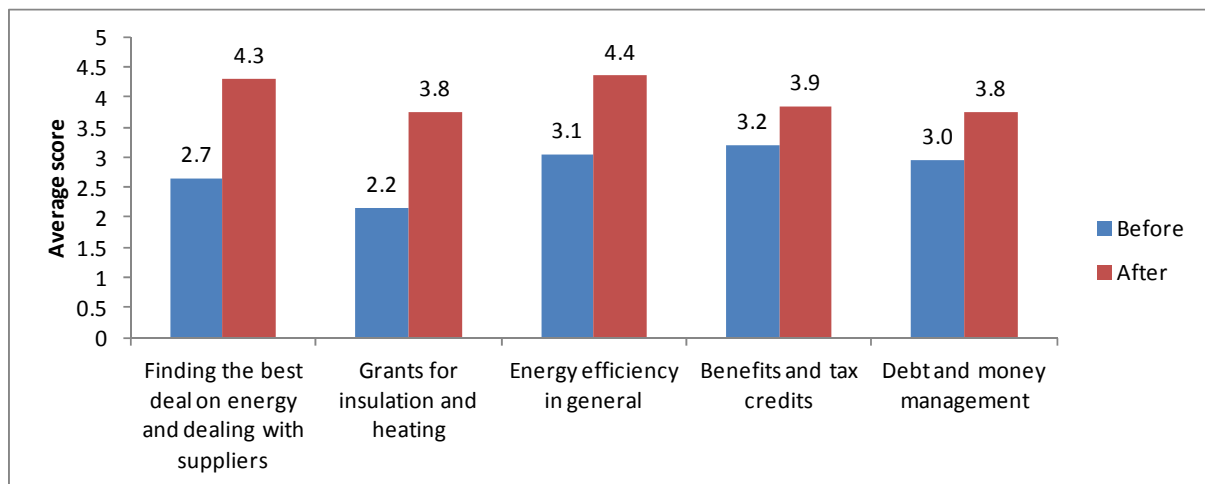
## 2.4 Frontline workers: follow-up interviews – Scotland

Twenty frontline workers who attended sessions in Scotland were interviewed. This represents 4% of all frontline workers who attended sessions in Scotland, and 13% of all frontline worker interviewees.

Fourteen of the frontline workers interviewed were from Citizens Advice Bureaux, two were from other advice agencies, two were from 'other' organisations (one of which was Care and Repair; no details available for the second), one was from a housing association and one was from a local authority or other public sector organisation.

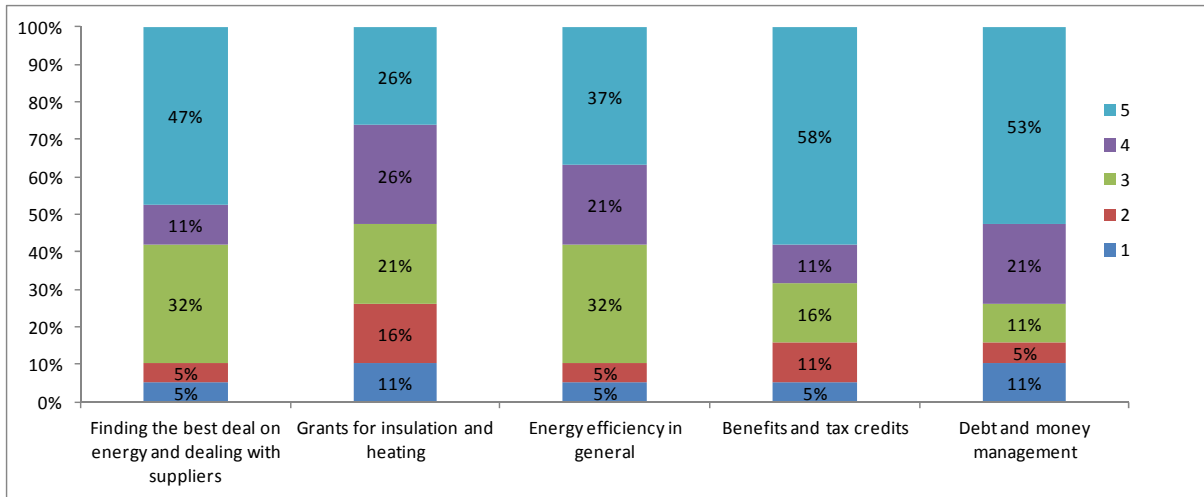
### Advice-giving on Energy Best Deal topics

Frontline worker interviewees were asked to rate each of the five main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of their own level of knowledge before and after the presentation, using a scale of one to five where 1 is no knowledge and 5 is highly knowledgeable. Figure 41 shows the average score for levels of knowledge before and after the presentation. The average score increased for all topics, following the session.



**Figure 41: Levels of knowledge in topics covered in the session: average scores before and after**

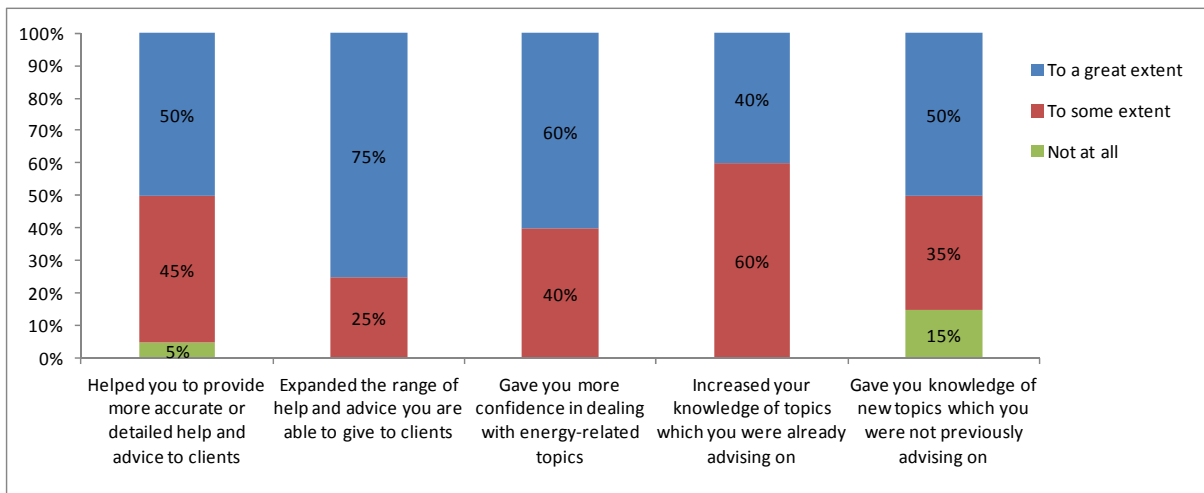
Interviewees were asked to rate the main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of importance to their job role, with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'highly important'. The responses are shown in Figure 42. For each topic, 'highly important' was chosen more frequently than any other rating, apart from grants for insulation and heating, which was equally split between highly and moderately important.



**Figure 42: Importance of session topics in terms of interviewees' job roles**

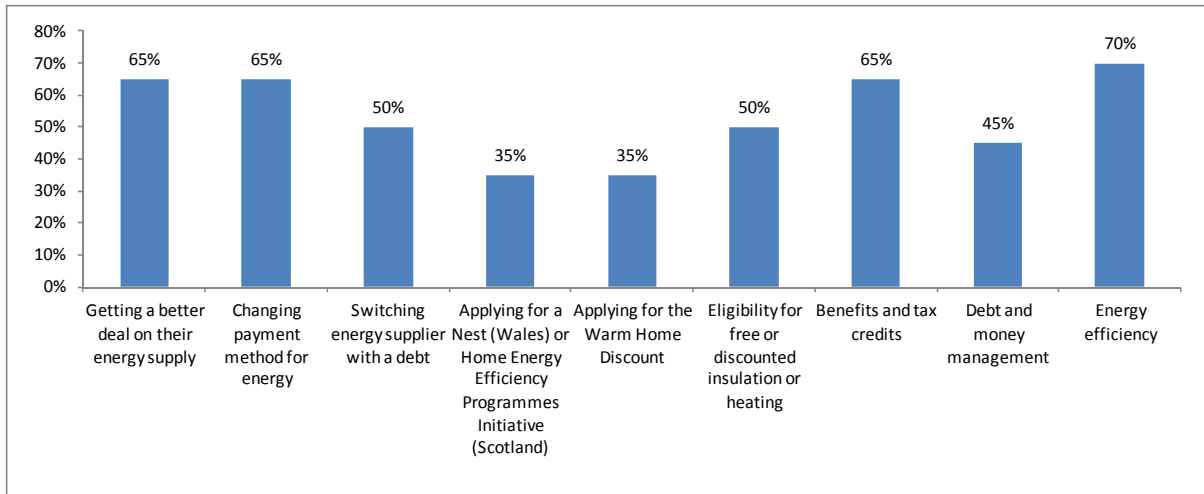
When asked if there was anything they found particularly useful about the presentation, five people said they found all of it useful. Three people each found information about finding a better deal on energy supply, the warm home discount and energy efficiency useful. Topics identified as useful by one person each were: information about switching energy supplier with a debt, information about Energy Assistance Package grants, information about free or discounted insulation, and information about benefits and tax credits.

Interviewees were given a set of statements about the effect of the presentation on the advice they were able to give to clients. They were asked to say whether the statements were applicable to them 'to a great extent', 'to some extent', or not at all. The results are shown in Figure 43.



**Figure 43: Effect of session in terms of advice giving**

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. The answers are shown in Figure 44.



**Figure 44: Topics advised on since the presentation**

Most frontline workers interviewed in this group were from Citizens Advice Bureaux, so providing information about benefits and tax credits and money management is part of their day to day work. However, most frontline workers had also advised on energy specific-topics since the presentation as well.

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. This ranged from 7 to 100 people, with a median of 18 clients. In percentage terms of the total number of clients they had seen in this time, this ranged from less than 5% to 75% of clients.

When asked if they would have provided this information to as many clients without attending the session one said they would have done so but with less confidence; the remaining nine who answered the question said they would not have provided the information to the same number of clients.

Frontline workers were asked what the most common energy-related issue was that their clients seek help with. Six said managing debt, three said switching suppliers, and two said getting the best deal.

### **Passing information on to colleagues**

Ten frontline workers said that they had passed some information from the Energy Best Deal session on to their colleagues.

In addition, thirteen frontline workers had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family.

### **Frontline workers' own energy use**

Since the session, eleven frontline workers had looked for a better deal on their own energy supply, and three of them had switched either tariff or supplier.

Sixteen of the frontline workers interviewed had also taken steps to save energy in their own homes since the presentation, with one saying they were already being energy efficient before the presentation.

## 2.5 Quality of the presentation and materials - Scotland

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, on a scale from poor to excellent (Figure 45). The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainer as 'excellent.'

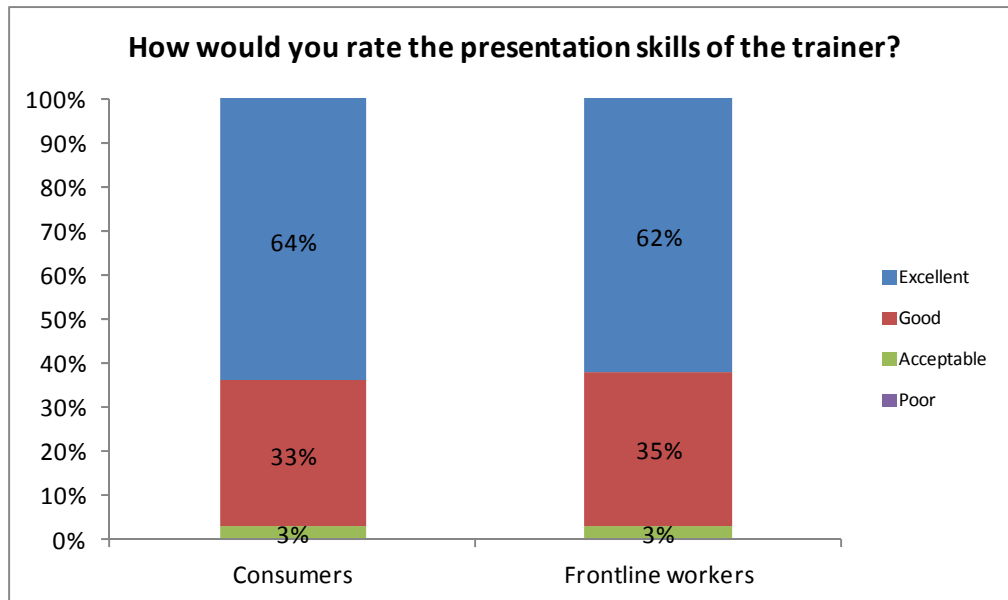


Figure 45: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

Consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the quality of the materials used during the session (Figure 46). This comprised the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts the trainer decided to use. The vast majority rated these as either 'good' or 'excellent'.

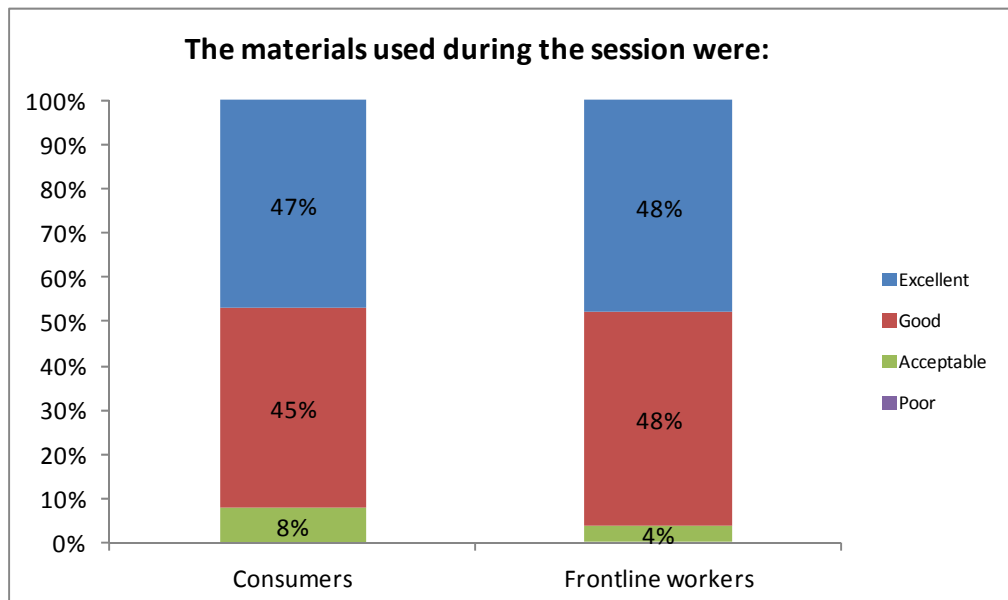


Figure 46: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

Consumers and frontline workers were also asked to rate the quality of the materials provided to take away, which comprised a booklet produced by Citizens Advice and Ofgem, and any handouts

the trainer decided to include (Figure 47). Around half of both consumers and front line workers rated the materials as 'excellent', with the majority of the remainder rating them as good.

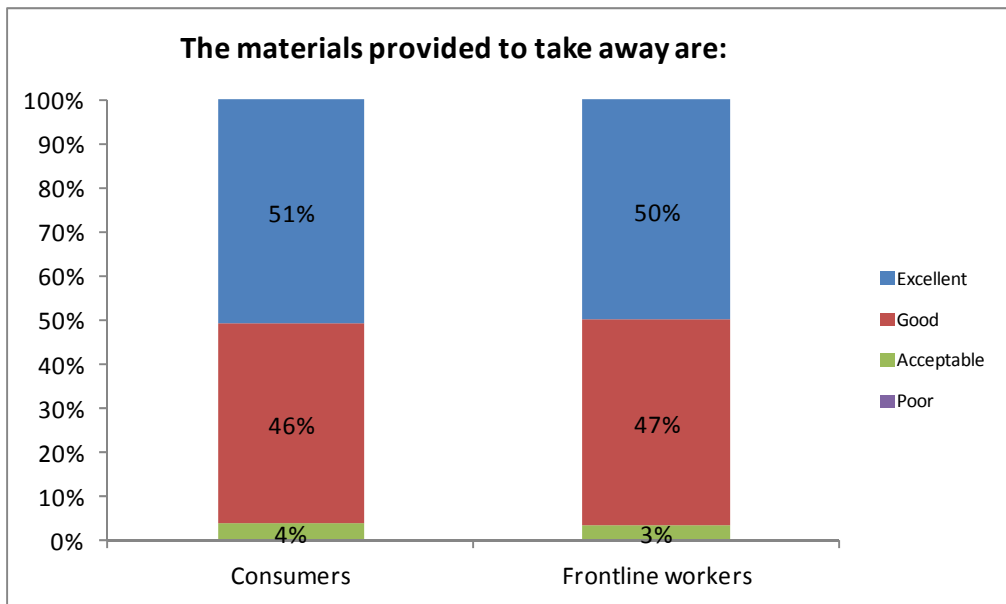


Figure 47: Ratings of the materials provided to take away

### 3. Results for England

#### 3.1 Consumers: questionnaire responses - England

##### Demographic information

In England 8,106 consumers attended Energy Best Deal sessions. Sixty percent of attendees (4,888 people) completed the consumer questionnaire. This response rate is around the same as the overall response rate for Great Britain, which was 59%. Figure 48 to Figure 50 show demographic characteristics of consumers attending sessions in England.

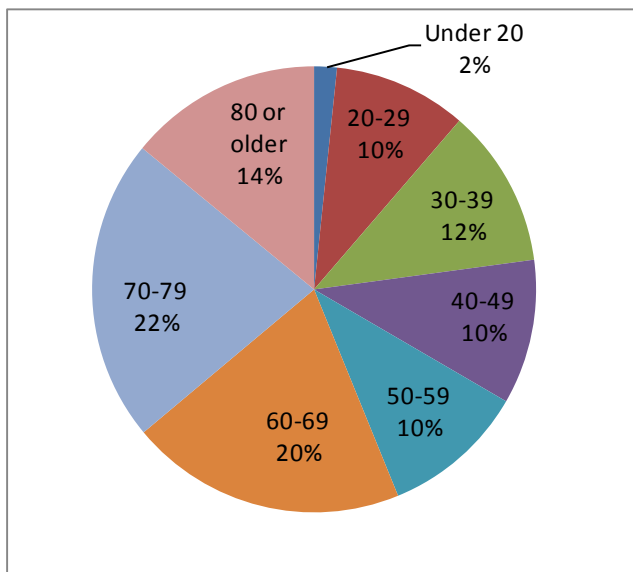


Figure 48: Age of respondents

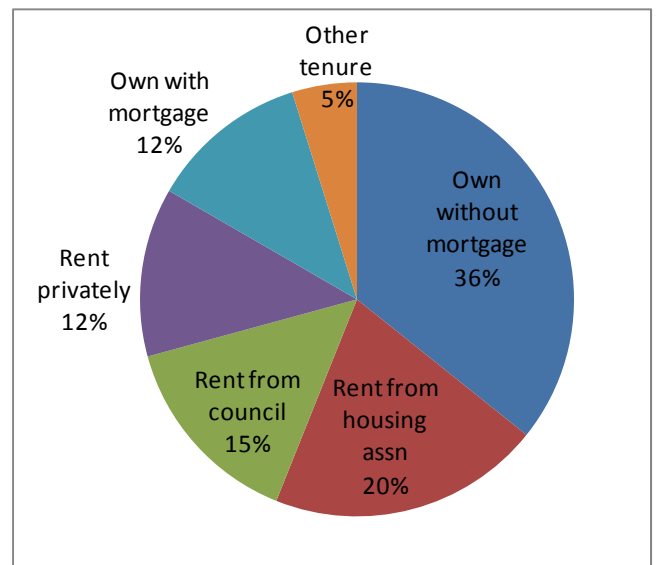


Figure 49: Tenure of respondents

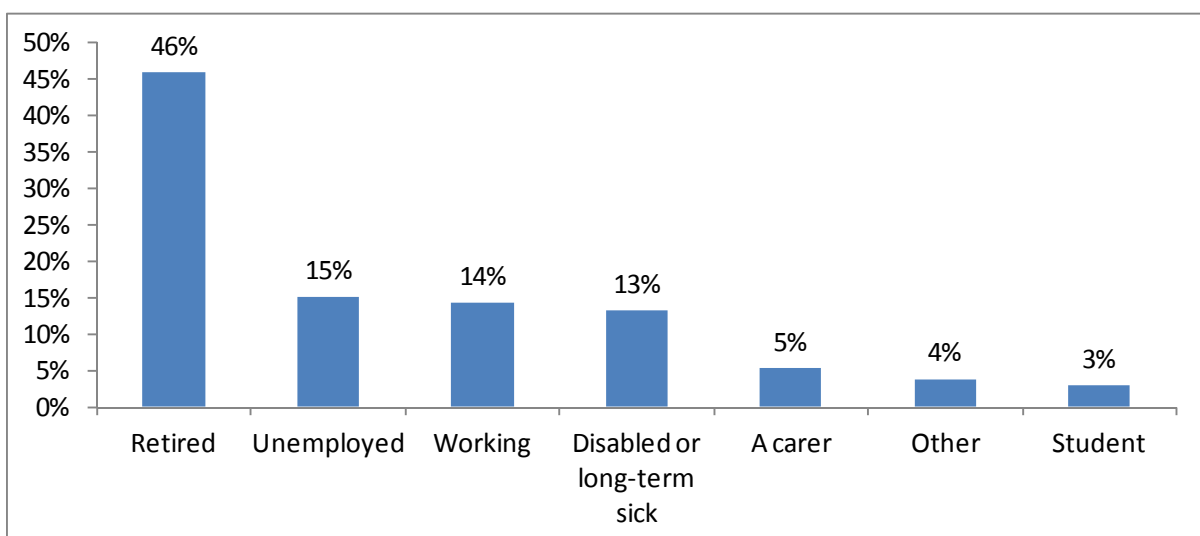


Figure 50: Occupation of respondents



## Attitudes to bills

To find out how consumers coped with heating their home in winter they were asked two questions. The first was about whether or not they were able to heat their home to a comfortable level (Figure 51) and the second about their winter fuel bills (Figure 52). 36% are not able to heat their home to a comfortable level. A quarter said that they switch off or turn down their heating in order to save money, 11% cannot heat their home adequately due to poor heating systems or insufficient insulation.

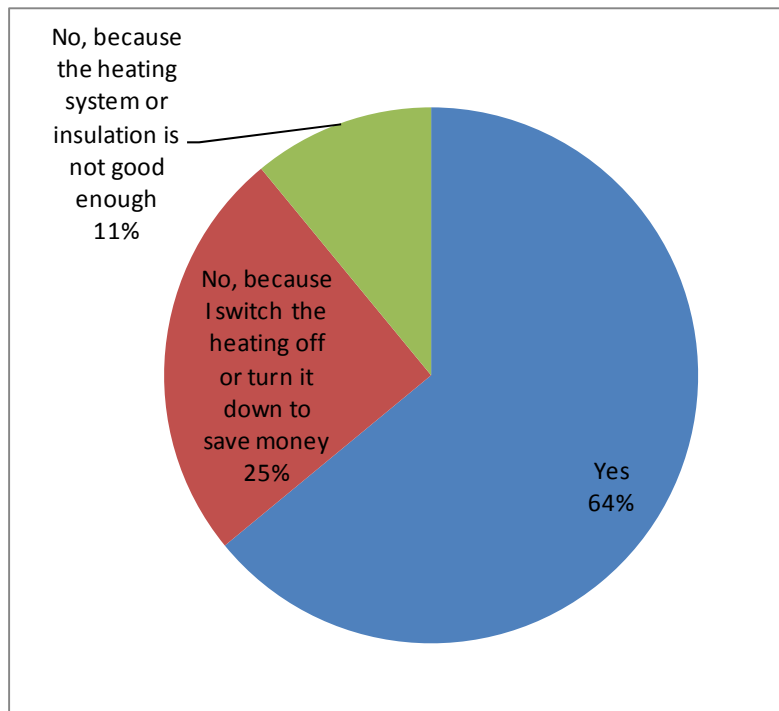
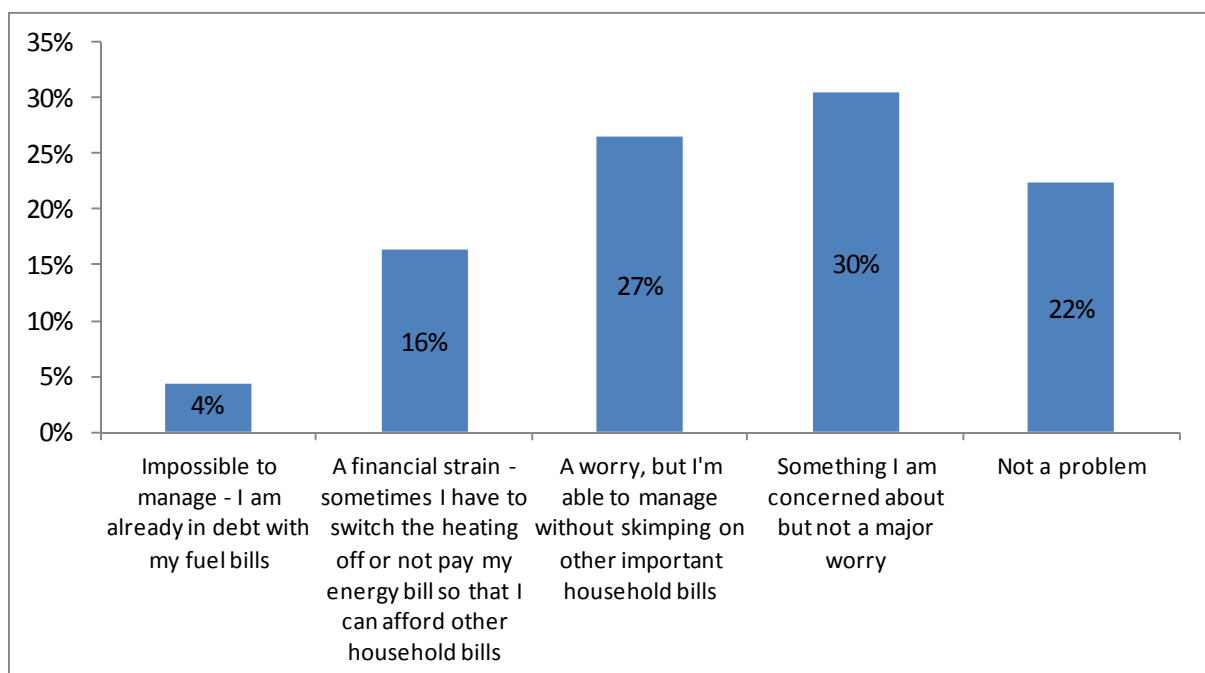


Figure 51: Can you heat your home to a comfortable level in winter?



**Figure 52: Attitudes to winter fuel bills**

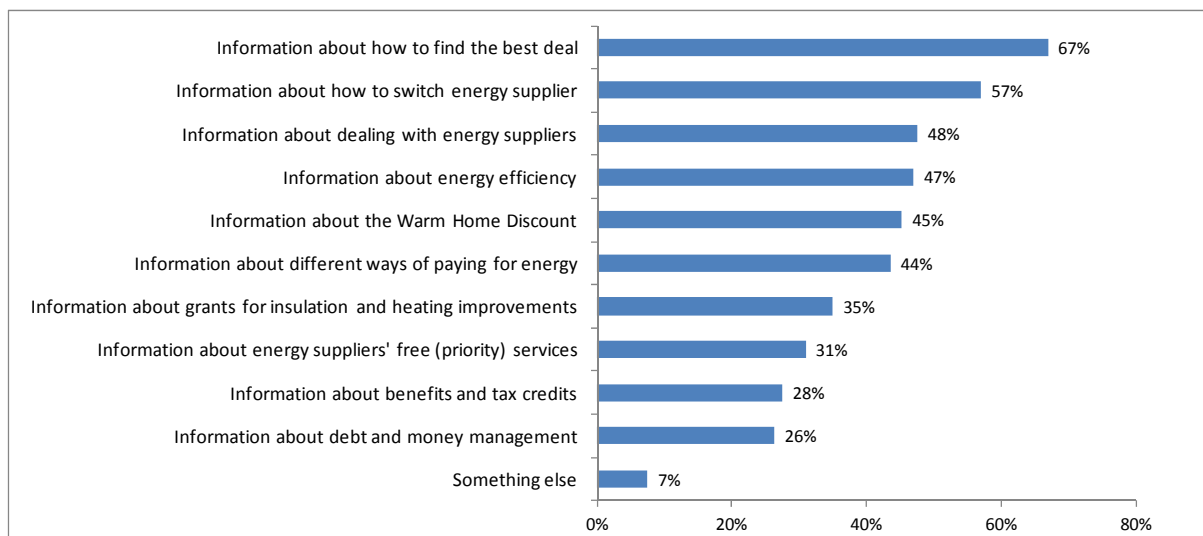
### **Experience and knowledge of switching prior to the session**

Ninety percent of consumers in England already knew that it was possible to switch energy supplier. Thirty-two percent of respondents had switched supplier once in the past, while 20% had switched more than once, making a total of 52% who have experience of switching. Twenty-six percent of those who had switched in the past were reactive switchers, switching in response to an approach from an energy supplier salesperson. Those switching as a result of an approach by an energy supplier salesperson may not have considered the full range of tariffs available to them before switching.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said they had never switched to a different tariff with the same supplier, while 27% had done so, and 16% did not know whether they had or not.

### **The impact of the session**

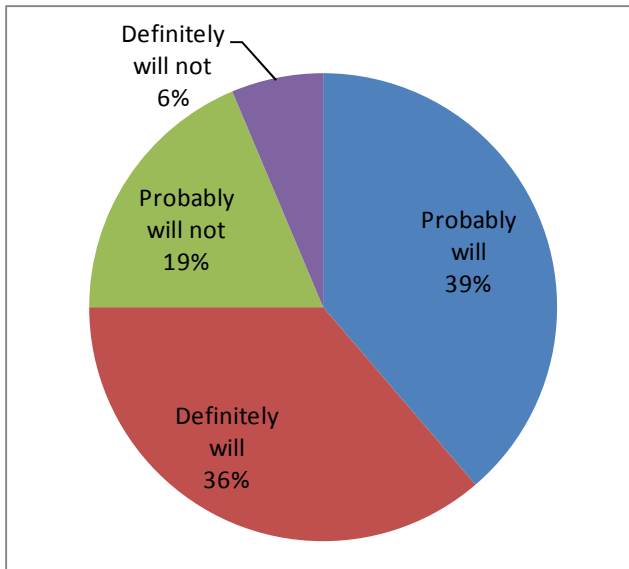
Ninety-seven percent of those who answered said they found the session useful. Figure 53 shows what consumers said they found useful about the session. Information about how to find the best deal was considered useful by the highest number of people, at 67% of respondents, with information about how to switch coming second at 57%.



**Figure 53: What did you find useful about the session?**

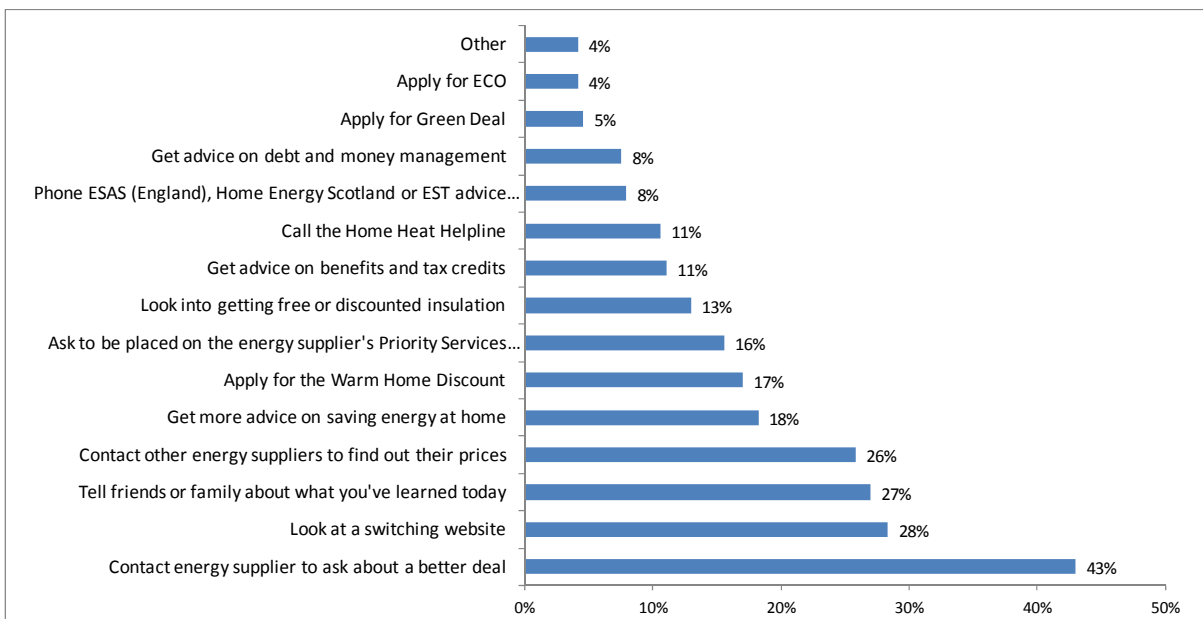
### **Planned follow-up actions**

Seventy-five percent of people said they would definitely (36%) or probably (39%) do something as a result of the session, as illustrated in Figure 54.



**Figure 54: Will you do anything as a result of the session today?**

Consumers were asked what they planned to do as a result of the session. The responses are shown in Figure 55. Contacting the current energy supplier was the most popular planned action at 43%, while looking at a switching website, telling friends and family about what had been learnt at the session and looking at other companies' prices were also popular, at 28%, 27% and 26% respectively.



**Figure 55: Planned actions following the session**

### 3.2 Consumers: follow-up interviews – England

In England, 109 consumers were interviewed, equal to 73% of consumers interviewed, and equal to 1% of all consumers that attended sessions in England. While similar to Wales and Scotland in terms of proportion of all attendees, the absolute number of interviewees is much higher for England. As most sessions took place in England and most interviewees attended sessions in England, the results for England are very similar to the results for Great Britain overall.

#### Action taken since the session

In the interview, consumers were asked whether following the session they did any of the following:

- found out about prices from suppliers
- changed payment method
- looked for more information about energy efficiency or improving their heating system
- Applied for Warm Front, free or discounted insulation, or the Warm Homes Discount
- Sought advice on benefits, tax credits, debt or money management
- Asked to be placed on the Priority Services Register
- Took any steps to save energy in their home (specifically prompted by the EBD session)

Each of these is discussed separately in the following sections. However, overall across all actions, a total of 80 people had taken at least one of these actions. Of the 27 people who had not taken action, 9 had told friends and family about something they had learnt at the session.

#### Looking for a better energy tariff

Forty-two people (39%) had looked for a better price on their energy since the session. Thirty-two had contacted their own supplier for a better deal, with 25 checking prices with different suppliers. There was an overlap of 15 people who checked prices with both their existing supplier and other suppliers.

Of these 42, 21 found a better deal. Fifteen people were offered a better deal with their current supplier, and 9 found they could get a better deal with a different supplier. There was an overlap between these groups, because three people found they could get a better deal with *both* their current supplier *and* a different supplier. Nineteen of the people who found a better deal switched, twelve to a new tariff with their current supplier and seven to a new supplier, with a further person intending to switch to a new supplier.

Twenty-eight of the people who looked for a better tariff had switched supplier in the past; all but two had decided to look for a better deal proactively.

Where interviewees checked prices from different suppliers, they were asked what sources of information they used. Twenty people (80% of all people who checked prices from a different supplier) used a price comparison service.

How did interviewees satisfy themselves that the tariff offered really was a better deal? Of the 15 people who had been offered a better deal by their current supplier, four relied on the supplier to work out what was the best deal and did not check prices from other suppliers (66% of those who

answered this question). Therefore they may have obtained the best deal their own supplier had to offer but missed out on the best tariff available for them on the market.

Of the three consumers who were offered a better deal with both their own and another energy supplier, one has switched to a new supplier and two have switched to a different tariff with the same supplier.

Of the 20 people who switched or intended to switch, seven had never switched supplier before. Eight had switched once in the past and five had switched more than once. One person had switched in the past as the result of an approach from a fuel company salesperson, while the other 12 had done so on their own initiative because they decided to look for a better deal.

### **The process of switching supplier**

Of those people switching to a new deal, one person found the process fairly difficult. This was because their old supplier repeatedly contacted them to ask if they wanted to move back, while the new supplier made administrative errors (which the interviewee perceived as the new supplier wanting to get out of the agreed deal). The rest of those switching found the process very easy or fairly easy.

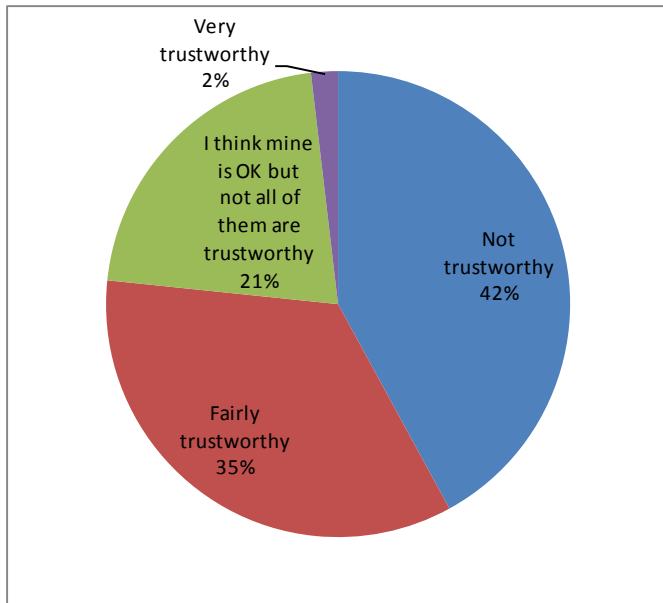
### **Factors which discouraged people**

Of the 67 people who did not look for a better deal on their energy supply, Those who did not look for a better deal said that they had not had the time (17), it was too much hassle (5) , they didn't feel they would save enough money to make it worthwhile (5), they had debt with their current supplier (4), they weren't sure they would save money (1), they thought something might go wrong (4), they were concerned the price would go up again (1) or other prices would come down (1). Other reasons were being on a fixed tariff (10) or unable to switch for a different reason, having switched recently or feeling like they were on the best deal or feeling happy with and loyal to their current supplier (6).

Those who did not switch despite finding a better deal did not do so because of: concerns about something going wrong in the switching process (2), inability to access the tariff as it was online only (1) and uncertainty over future usage (1).

### **Trustworthiness of energy companies**

Interviewees were asked how trustworthy they perceived energy companies to be in general. They were given the options: very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not trustworthy, and 'I think mine is ok, but not all of them are trustworthy'. The responses are shown in Figure 56. The majority of respondents gave a positive response, although more than a fifth felt positive about their own supplier but not others.



**Figure 56: How do you rate the trustworthiness of suppliers?**

### **Payment method**

Five people had changed the way they paid for their energy since the session. Of those who had not changed payment method, 57 (52%) thought they were already on the best payment method, five people had not got round to it, seven people liked using a prepayment meter, and one person did not want to pay to replace their prepayment meter.

### **Energy efficiency actions**

Interviewees were asked if they had looked for any more information on improving their home energy efficiency or heating system since the session, and whether they had done so as a direct result of the session. Twenty-one interviewees had done so, as a result of the session, with a further three also having looked for information but not attributing this to the Energy Best Deal session. The most common ways of looking for information were the internet and the local council (6 people each), three people contacted their supplier and two a commercial company. The following sources were used by one person each; a local energy advice phone line, the EST advice phone line and a landlord or housing association

Interviewees were asked if they had taken any steps to save energy in their homes or make their home more energy efficient. Forty-seven consumers said they had, with a further fifteen saying they had done something but it was not prompted by the Energy Best Deal session. The most common actions taken were no or low-cost actions, such as replacing light bulbs with more energy efficient light bulbs, turning off appliances when not in use and adjusting the heating controls. Five people have either checked their current level of insulation or enquired into having insulation put in, and one person had replaced their boilers.

## Identifying consumers qualifying for ECO<sup>4</sup> Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation

Consumers were asked two basic questions about benefits and income, which were designed to identify most people who would be eligible for ECO HHCRO funding for heating measures for their homes.

- Does anyone in your household receive either Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit?
- If yes to the latter, is your household income under £15,860?

There are other qualifying criteria for HHCRO, and so people who answer no to these questions could still be eligible if they claim certain other benefits; however, there was a need to strike a balance between getting useful information and asking so many questions that interviewees would be reluctant to answer, which is a risk when asking what benefits are claimed.

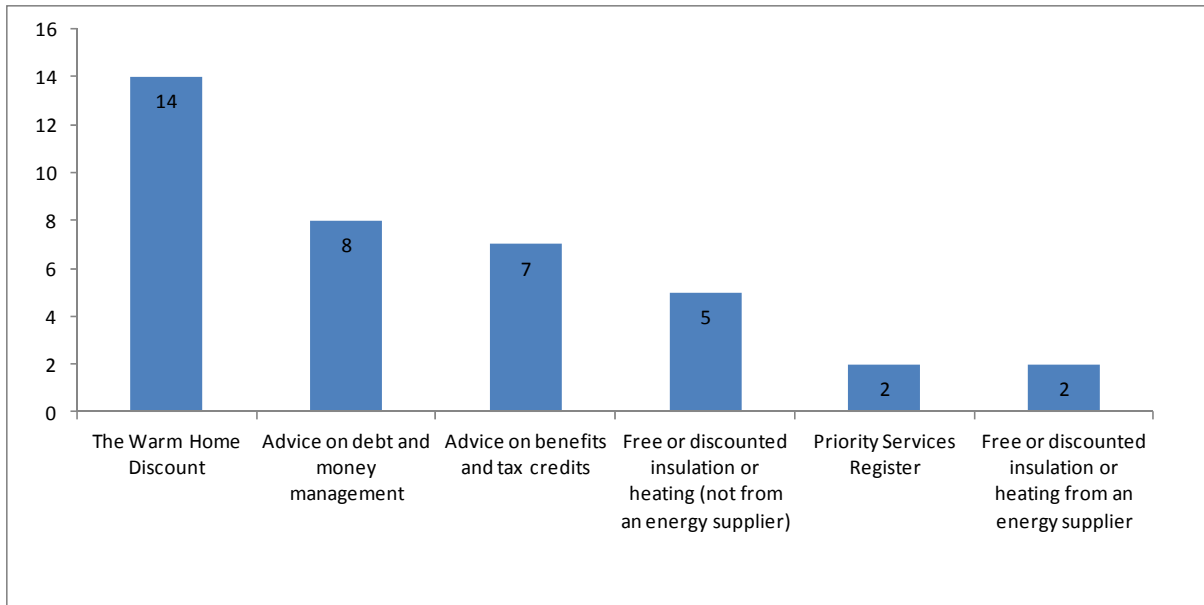
Fifteen interviewees (14%) receive Pension Credit, while 19 (17%) receive Child Tax Credit and have a household income under £15,860, making a total of 36% of interviewees who meet the above criteria. However, for HHCRO, people living in social housing are not eligible. Applying this further criteria leaves six Pension Credit recipients (6% of all interviewees) eligible and eight Child Tax Credit recipients under the income threshold eligible (7% of all interviewees), making a total of 13% of interviewees likely to qualify for HHCRO.

### Further actions

Interviewees were asked about a set of other actions, relating to seeking advice or applying for heating grants, that they had taken since the session. The actions covered and the number taking these actions is shown in Figure 57 below. Thirty-two people had taken at least one of these actions, with some taking more than one action.

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<sup>4</sup> Under the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation, "suppliers must deliver measures which result in cost savings and which improve the ability of a householder to affordably heat their home. HHCRO (also known as ECO Affordable Warmth) focuses on low income and vulnerable householders, living in private housing (generally), where residents are in receipt of specific benefits and meet other related conditions (the 'affordable warmth group' or AWG')." (p.55, ECO Guidance for Suppliers, Ofgem, 13 March 2013). See ([http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20\(ECO\)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Environment/ECO/guidance/Documents1/Energy%20Companies%20Obligation%20(ECO)%20Guidance%20for%20Suppliers%20-%202015%20March.pdf))



**Figure 57: Further actions taken by interviewees**

### **Information passed on to friends and family**

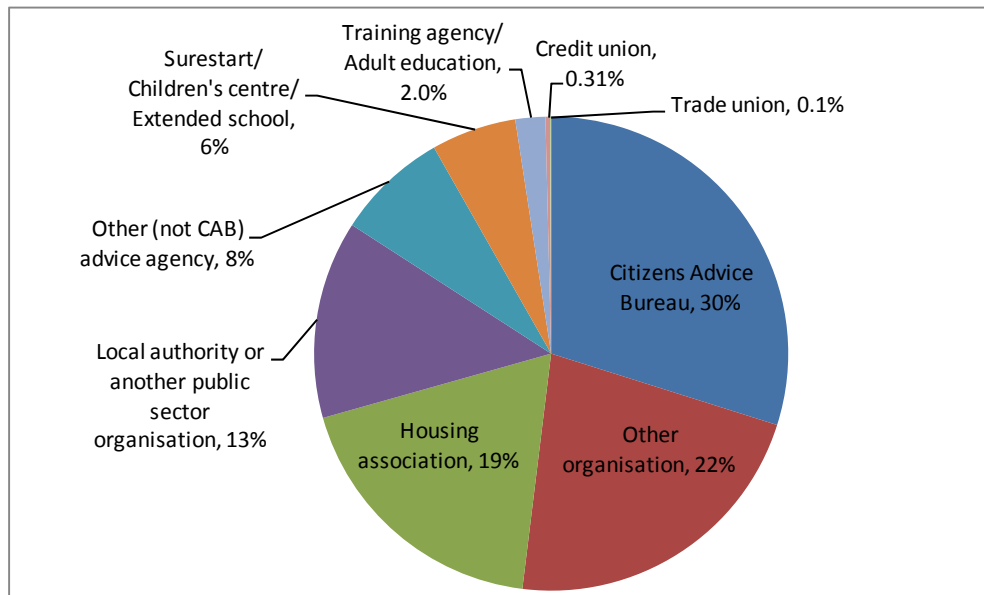
Sixty-eight consumers (62%) had passed on information from the session to friends and family. The number of friends and family that they passed the information on to ranged from 1 to 20, with a median of 2 people being passed information.



### 3.3 Frontline workers: questionnaire responses - England

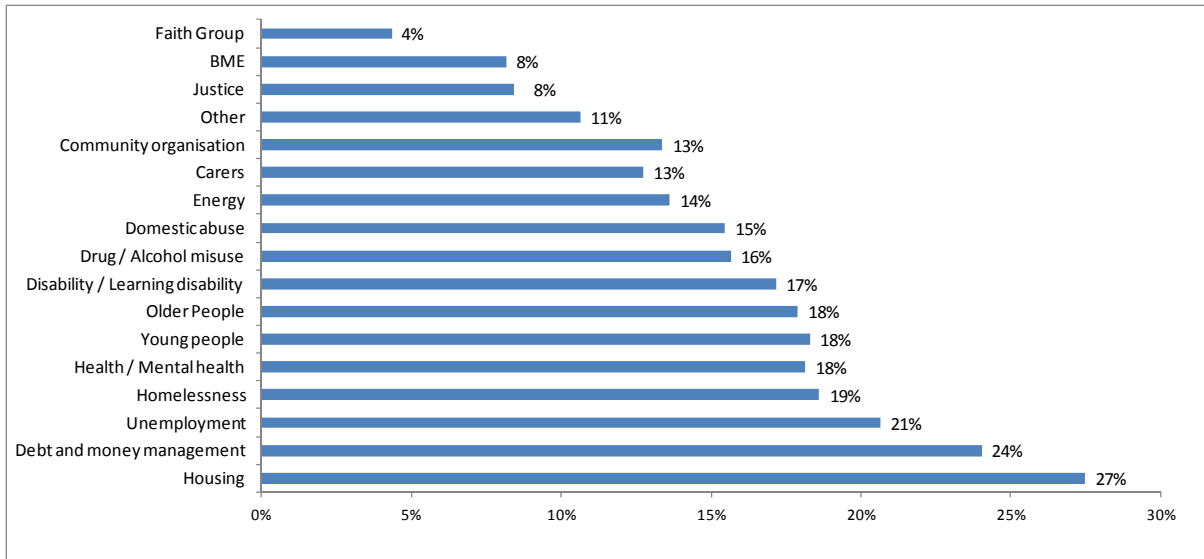
#### Profile

In England 2,620 frontline workers returned questionnaires, out of 4,060 who attended sessions. This is a response rate of 65%. Figure 58 shows that the organisations represented by the frontline workers in England. The largest group were from the Citizens Advice Bureau (30%). The second largest group overall was 'other'. The 'other' category included Age UK and other charities, such as domestic abuse support and food banks, as well as a large group from housing associations.



**Figure 58: Frontline worker organisation types**

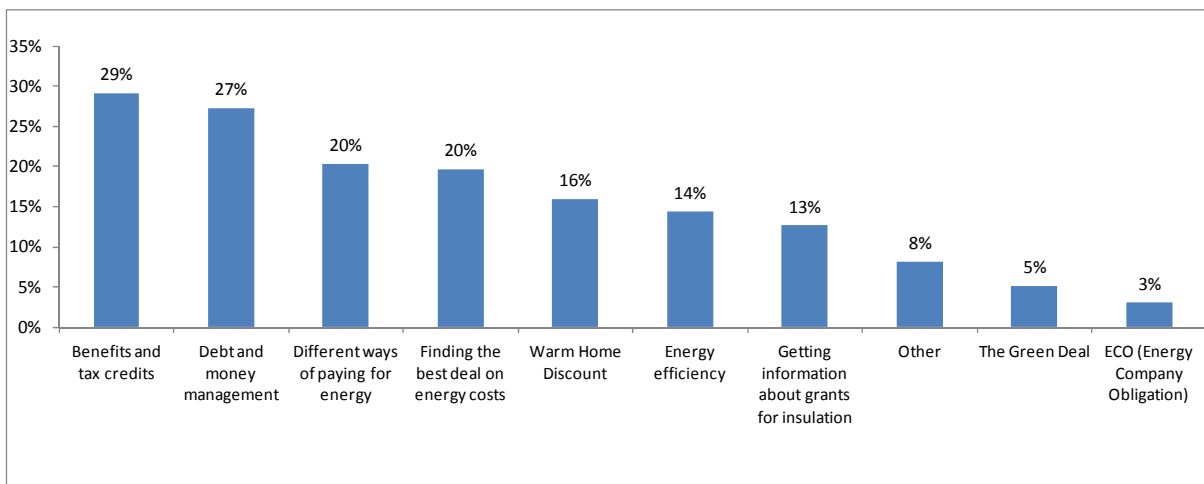
Frontline workers were also asked if their organisation specialises in supporting specific groups or advising on specific topics. These are shown in Figure 59, as a percentage of the total number of frontline workers who attended sessions (many people chose more than one option and so the total sums to more than 100%). The topics that frontline workers' organisations in England most commonly specialise in are housing (27%), debt and money management (24%) and unemployment (21%).



**Figure 59: Frontline worker organisation types: specialisms**

### Previous advice-giving

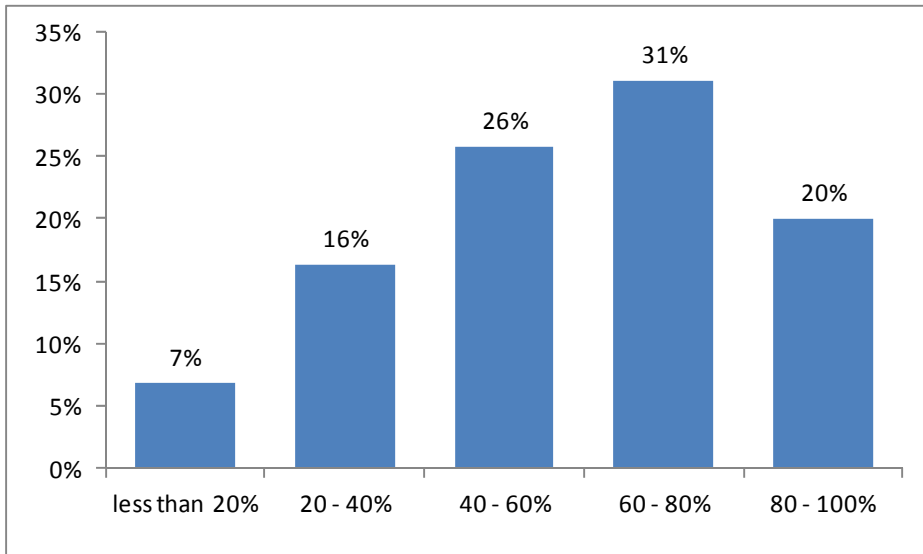
Figure 60 shows the topics on which frontline workers had given advice on prior to the session. Over a quarter had previously given advice on benefits and tax credits and debt and money management, while topics about specific schemes (such as the Green Deal and ECO) were less common. Therefore quite a large proportion of frontline workers had some experience of the topics covered in the Energy Best Deal session.



**Figure 60: Previous advice-giving**

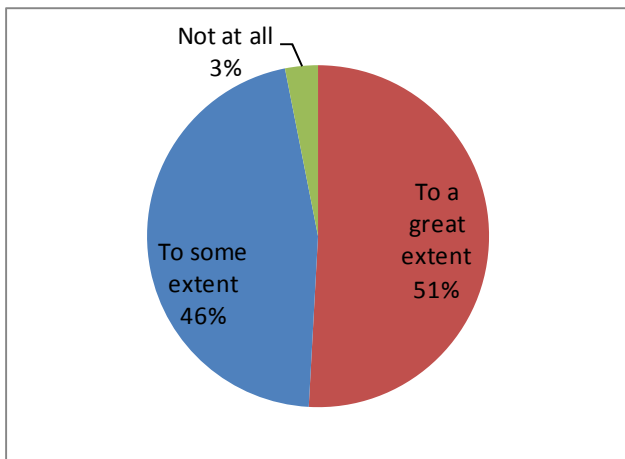
### The impact of the session

Eighty per cent of English frontline workers said that the session had changed their opinion on the importance of fuel poverty to their clients. Frontline workers were asked to estimate the proportion of their clients who were in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty. The results are shown in Figure 61. Nearly a third estimate that 60-80% of their clients are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty, while 26% estimate this figure to be between 40% and 60% of their clients and 20% estimate it to be between 80% and 100%.



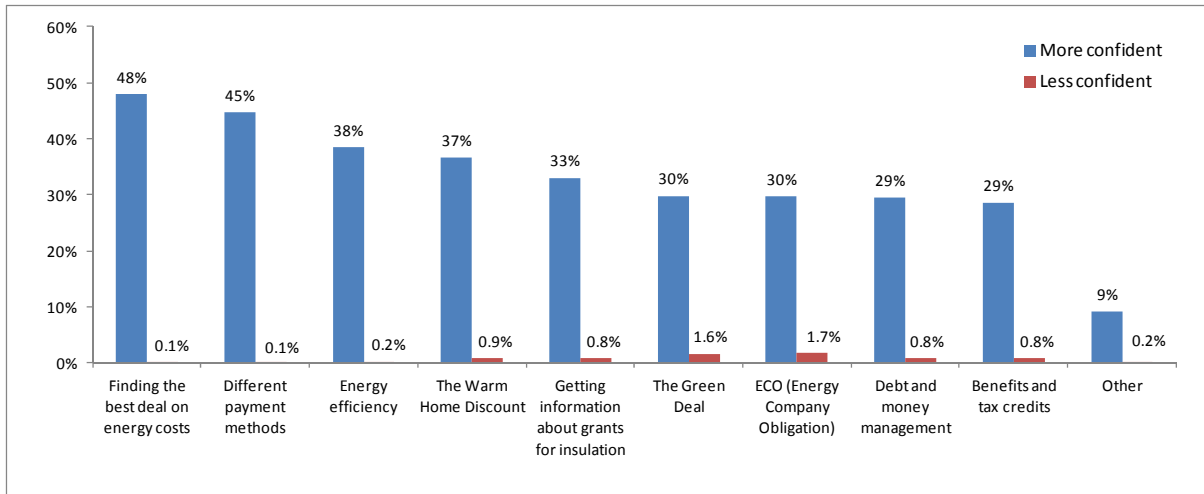
**Figure 61: Estimated number of clients in fuel poverty**

Frontline workers were asked if they felt better informed as a result of the session. Ninety-seven percent said they did; 51% to a great extent, and 46% to some extent. This is illustrated in Figure 62.



**Figure 62: Do you feel better informed as a result of the session?**

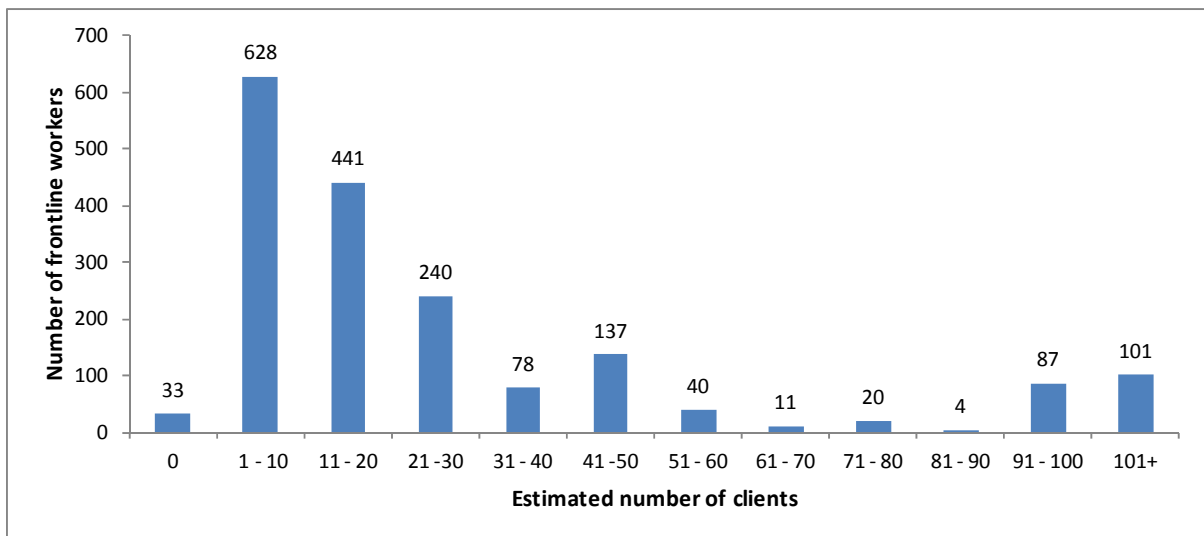
Frontline workers were asked if they now felt more or less confident in advising clients about the topics covered in the presentation. The answers are illustrated in Figure 63.



**Figure 63: Increases and decreases in confidence since the session**

### Passing on information from the session

Frontline workers were asked to estimate the number of clients to whom they would pass on information learnt at the session. The distribution is shown in Figure 64. However, 800 people did not answer the question, equal to 31% of all frontline workers in England, and these are not shown in the graph.



**Figure 64: Number of clients information will be passed on to**

Frontline workers were also asked if they thought they would pass on information from the session to *colleagues*, and if so, approximately how many. Ninety-five percent said they would (66% definitely and 29% probably). The majority (64%) said they would pass on information to between one and ten colleagues.

Seventy-five percent of frontline workers said they intended to look for a better deal on their own energy following the session.

### 3.4 Frontline workers: follow-up interviews – England

One hundred and twelve frontline workers who attended sessions in England were interviewed, equal to 3% of all frontline workers who attended sessions in England and 75% of all frontline workers who were interviewed.

The organisation type of the frontline worker interviewees is shown in Figure 65. 'Other' organisation types include Macmillan, a food bank, a hospice, Christians Against Poverty, and organisations supporting financial capability.

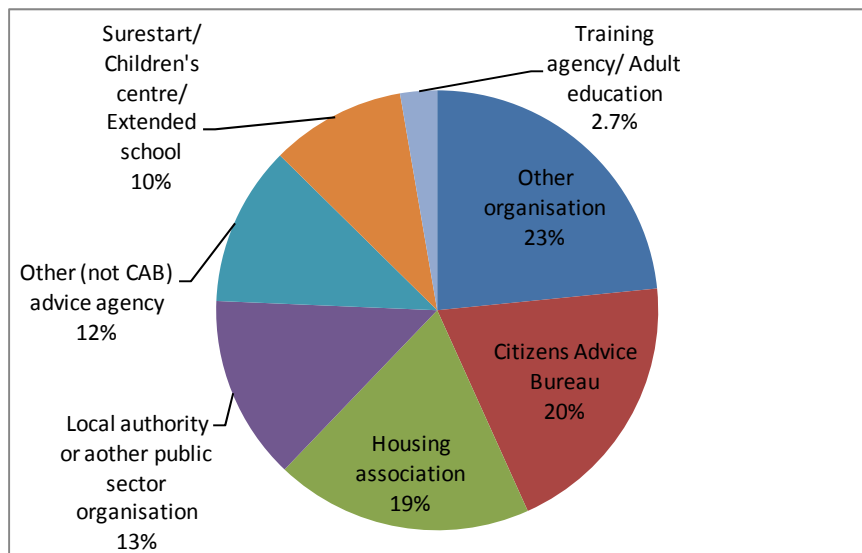


Figure 65: Frontline worker interviews - organisation type

### Advice-giving on Energy Best Deal topics

Frontline worker interviewees were asked to rate each of the five main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of their own level of knowledge before and after the presentation, using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is no knowledge and 5 is highly knowledgeable. Figure 66 shows the average score for levels of knowledge before and after the presentation. The average score increased for all topics following the session. Grants for insulation and heating saw the biggest increase in knowledge.

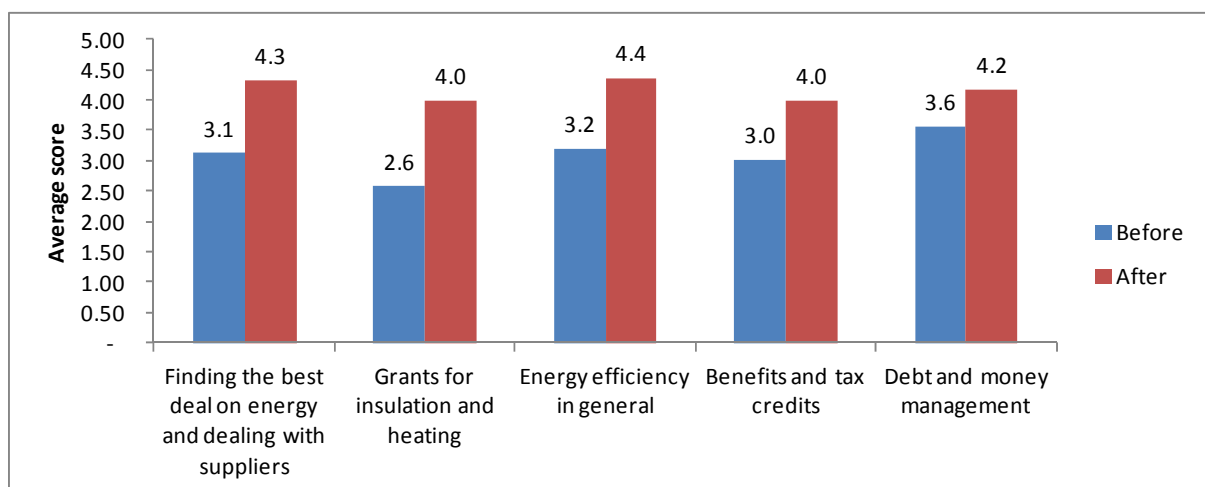
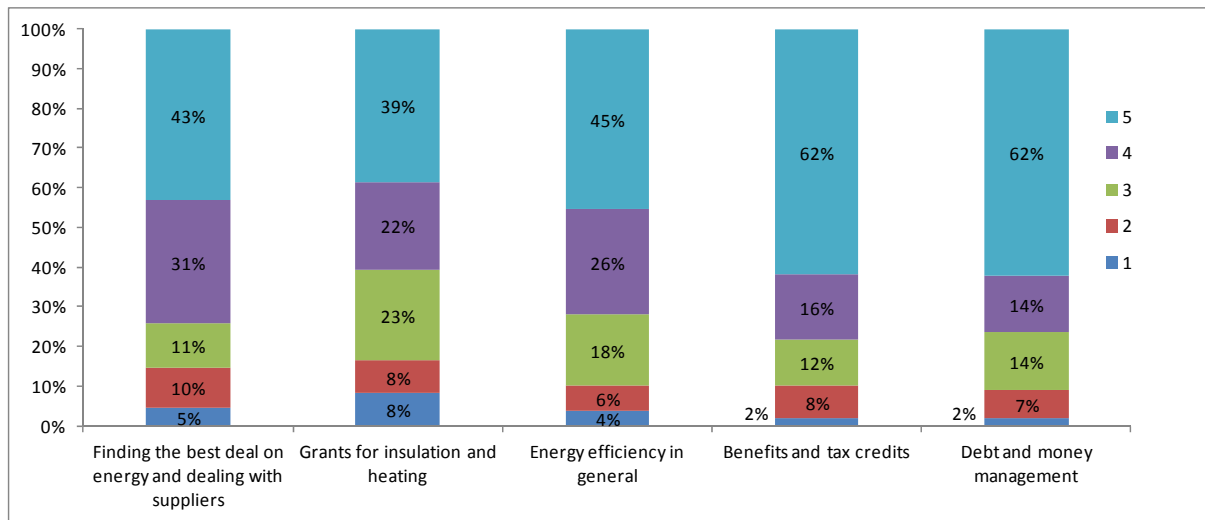


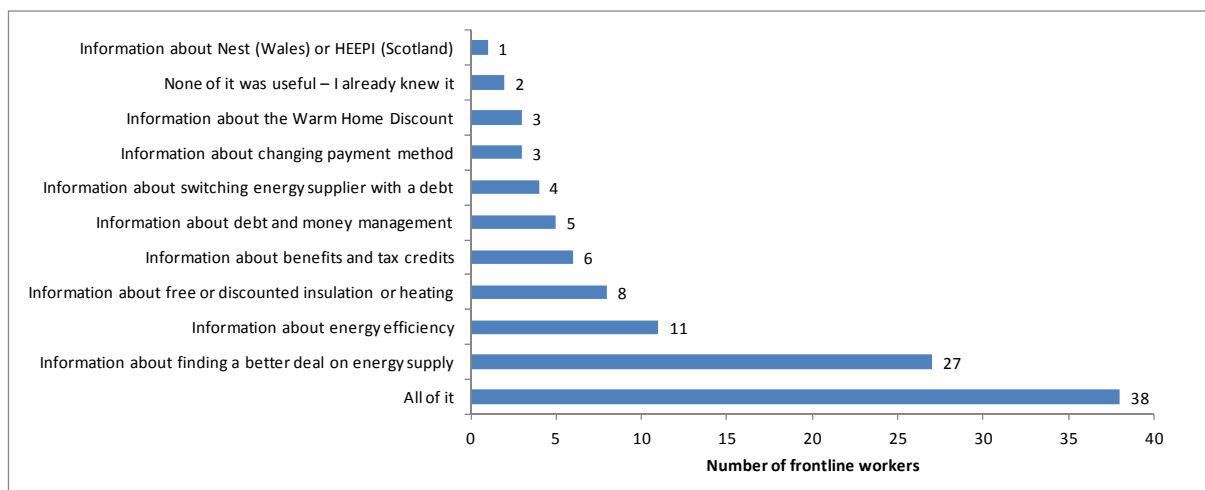
Figure 66: Levels of knowledge in topics covered in the session: average scores before and after

Interviewees were asked to rate the main Energy Best Deal topics in terms of importance to their job role, with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'highly important'. The responses are shown in Figure 67. For each topic, 'highly important' was chosen more frequently than any other rating.



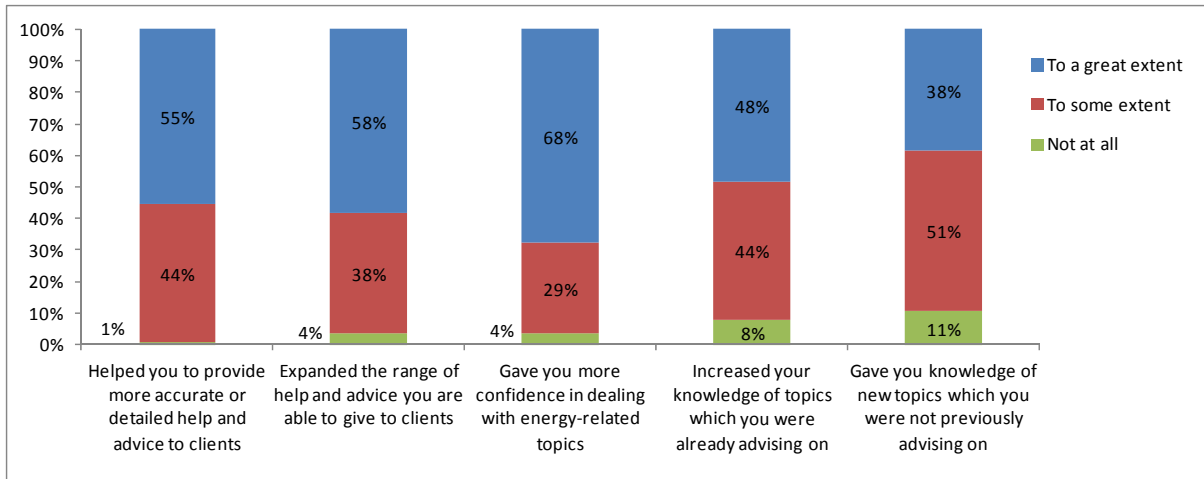
**Figure 67: Importance of session topics in terms of interviewees' job roles**

To get more detail on the previous question, interviewees were also asked whether any part of the presentation was particularly useful in helping them do their job. The responses are shown in Figure 68. Those people who said that 'something else' about the presentation was useful gave a range of different aspects that were useful, including: the handouts provided, explanation of energy comparison websites, role plays, and examples of how much energy different appliances use.



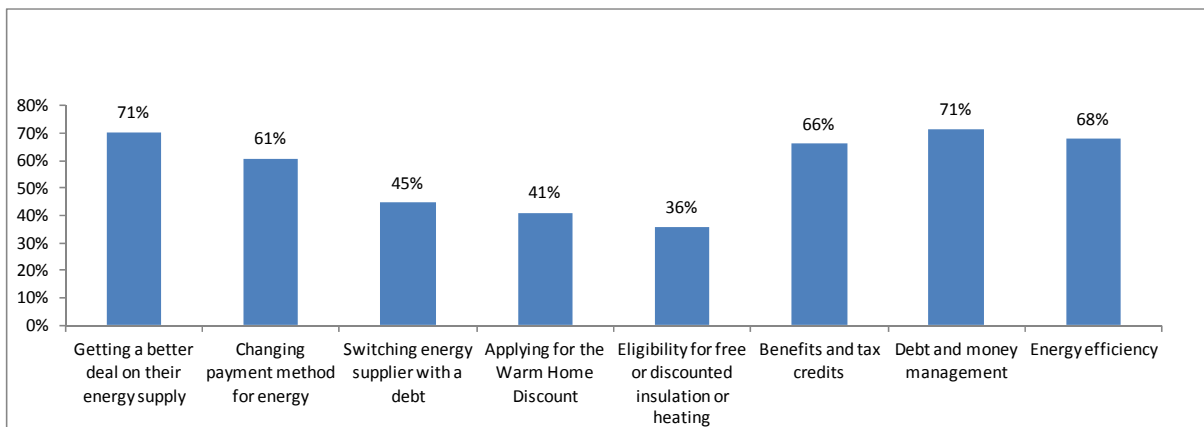
**Figure 68: Did you find any part of the presentation particularly useful in helping you do your job?**

Interviewees were given a set of statements about the effect of the presentation on the advice they were able to give to clients. They were asked to say whether the statements were applicable to them 'to a great extent', 'to some extent', or not at all.



**Figure 69: Effect of session in terms of advice giving**

Interviewees were asked which topics they had given advice on since the presentation. All but sixteen of the interviewees (88%) had advised on at least one topic since the presentation, and a breakdown of these topics can be seen in Figure 70. The most commonly advised-on topics were debt and money management, getting a better deal on energy supply, benefits and tax credits and energy efficiency.



**Figure 70: Topics advised on since the presentation**

The topics most advised on were getting a better deal on energy supply and debt and money management (71%). The least advised upon topic was eligibility for discounted insulation or heating.

Interviewees were asked to estimate how many clients they had provided information to since the session. Fifteen interviewees had not provided information to any clients, with the rest of the frontline workers providing information to between 1 and 500 clients. The mean number of clients that information was passed to was 33 and the median was 12, the median being a more representative measure as the mean is skewed by a few very high values such as 500 clients reached. This was on average 63% of those who the frontline workers had provided advice to.

Sixty-two interviewees said that they would not have provided as much information to as many clients without attending the session, while 29 said they would have provided the information even if they had not attended the session (the rest did not know). Eight of those who said they would

have provided the information anyway said they would not have provided as much detail or given the information with as much confidence without having attended the presentation. All but one of the interviewees said that they would use information from the presentation to help clients in the future.

### **Passing information on to colleagues**

Sixty-five frontline workers (58%) had passed information from the session on to their colleagues. The number of colleagues information had been passed on to ranged from 1 to 40, with a mean of 8 and a median of 5 colleagues being given information by an individual frontline worker. Many frontline workers stated that all of their colleagues were on the course.

In addition, 83 frontline workers had passed on information from the Energy Best Deal session to friends and family.

### **Frontline workers' own energy use**

Since the session, 58 frontline workers had looked for a better deal on their own energy supply. Of these, 30 people had switched either tariff or supplier, or were in the process of doing so.

Fifty-seven interviewees said they had taken steps to save energy in their own homes since the presentation. Fourteen said they were already very energy efficient.



### 3.5 Quality of the presentation and materials - England

Both consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the presentation skills of the trainer, on a scale from poor to excellent (Figure 71). The majority of both consumers and frontline workers rated the presentation skills of the trainer as 'excellent.'

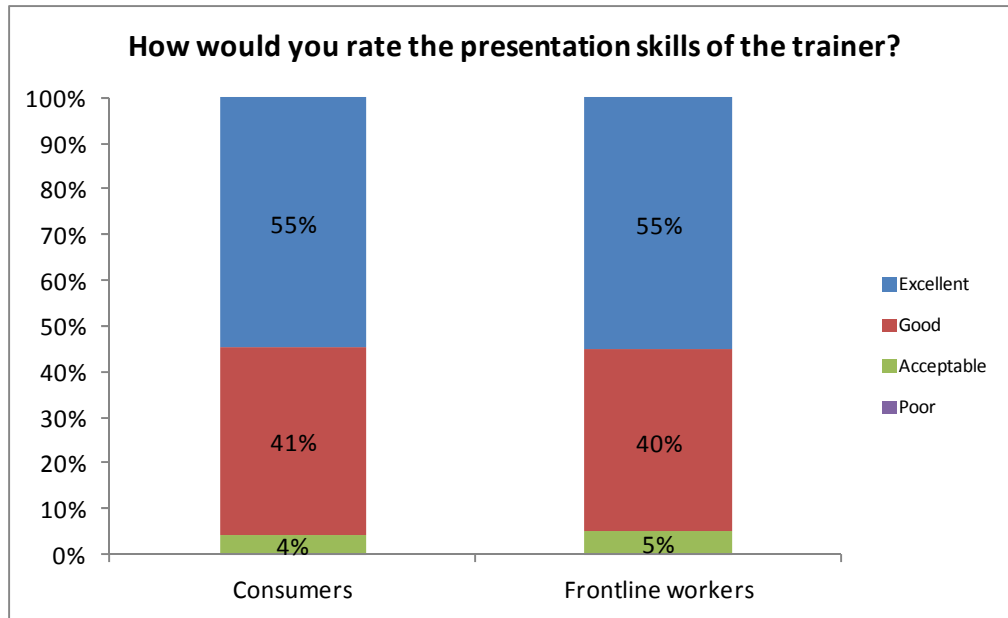


Figure 71: Ratings of the presentation skills of the trainer

Consumers and frontline workers were asked to rate the quality of the materials used during the session (Figure 72). This comprised the PowerPoint presentation and any handouts the trainer decided to use. The majority rated these as 'good', with a large proportion rating them as 'excellent'.

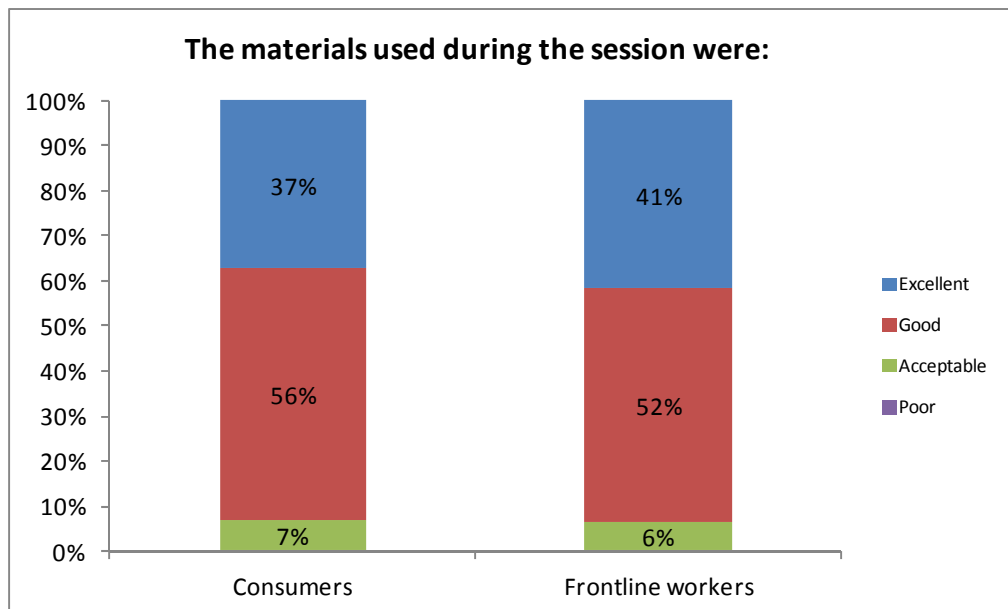


Figure 72: Ratings of the quality of the materials used during the session

Consumers and frontline workers were also asked to rate the quality of the materials provided to take away, which comprised a booklet produced by Citizens Advice and Ofgem, and any handouts

the trainer decided to include (Figure 73). Again, the overwhelming majority rated these as either 'good' or 'excellent'.

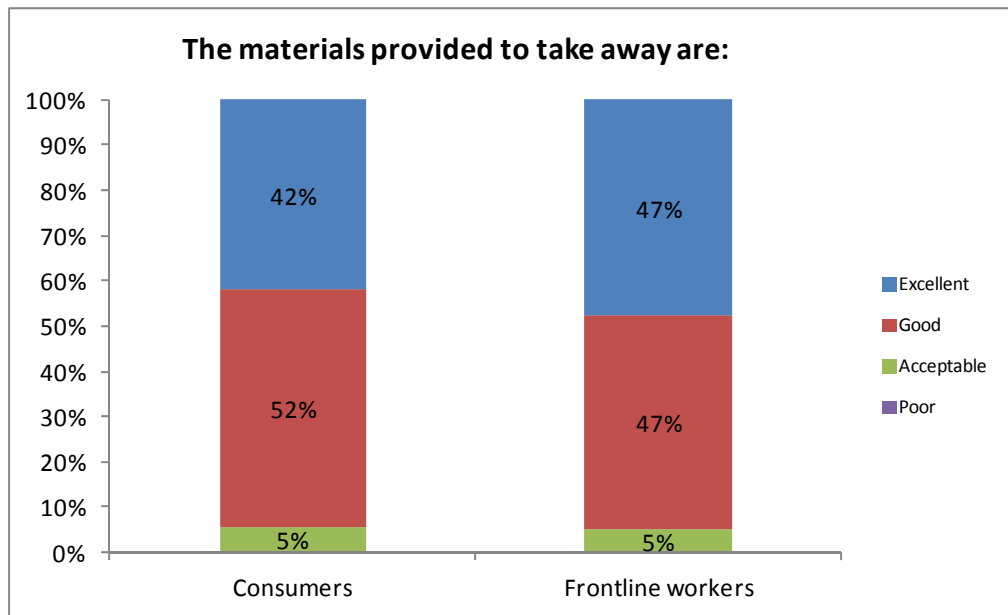


Figure 73: Ratings of the materials provided to take away