

#### Respondent 4

Who is your current energy supplier?

I'm with Bulb at the moment. They are renewable suppliers I think.

Oh great, so was that the deciding factor? That they supplied renewable electricity?

Well partly. It was offering some good deals in comparison to the other suppliers. I didn't actively go out and look for renewable suppliers but that one was being advertised on, Go Compare I think it was, and the deal sounded good, so I clicked on it and it told me they were suppliers of renewable energy. And I thought that sounded good to me, I mean I would say cost and price was most important to me, I would look at that first, but I've always like the idea of using renewables, so I suppose it was sort of an extra selling point, if you know what I mean. Renewable energy is definitely the future.

Ok, and when you say you like the idea of it, what aspect do you like? Does it make you feel good?

Yes it does! I don't feel so bad consuming energy when I know its renewable. I feel like I'm doing my bit.

Ok, so in terms of finding the supplier, did you find this an easy process, and if not, what difficulties did you encounter?

It was a fairly easy process, Go Compare is great for that sort of thing, because they assist you, and you can trust them because so many other people use them. It cuts down the time it would take to search yourself. And also I wouldn't be able to trust what the suppliers say on their websites because they're selling themselves, whereas having a third party means you get an experienced outside opinion.

Ok, that's interesting, and so would you say that you don't trust the suppliers because they are such large corporations? Would you trust a smaller supplier more?

Um, yes I probably would you know, I'd feel less like a number to them, and more like a valued customer. So they are going to treat you right, you know.

Yes that is likely to be true. So how long have you been with this energy supplier?

About a year? Not long. I think I decided the other supplier was charging us too much. Because we don't have gas, just bottled, and central heating, the electric bill is so high. Its one of the things I hate. I often think I could be rich without the energy bill. Its one of the largest outgoing costs in our house. I think I just hate the idea of paying so much to such large, rich companies. That's why I liked the idea of Bulb because they're actually doing some good to the planet. Its all so impersonal otherwise, you're just treated like a number, like I said before.

Ah ok, so would you place more value on using a supplier that was local to you, and that you knew of/

Yes definitely, but I think it would take a lot more time and be more difficult to find those, going on Go Compare is so easy. And they're not the cheapest which is so important for me.

Which tariffs are you on and why?

A standard rate I think. We use too much energy in the day that we couldn't use at night, I mean, they can't be moved.

Oh I see, so you're saying that the activities you undertake in the day aren't particularly flexible.

No, not without a lot of effort, and as I'm working and my daughter is at school we need to use the electricity in the evenings when we get in to cook food, and then go to bed during the evening and sleep.

And would you describe the process to actually set up and regularly pay your energy bill an easy process? If not why not?

Yes, very easy, its just direct debit straight out of my account. But that is also not great in a way, and before I had the smart meter too, because I just didn't have to think about the energy I was using, it was just there, so I'd use it, and not think about the impact that might have on the bill. Now I have a very different attitude though.

Ok, and is that to do with your smart meter? Your change in attitude? Do you now make a purposeful effort to reduce your energy usage?

Yes it is. I've become so stingy now, making sure everything's switched off. We have a smart meter which is terrible because now I just can't stop watching it, if I see something that's using energy I'm like, 'switch it off!'. For example, my daughter had her hair straighteners on the other day and I saw from the meter it was costing me £1.50 and I said 'switch them off', but my daughter says 'no mum I need to straighten my hair!'. She hates it when I nag her like that, I've become so tight haha.

But that is a good thing, you must be saving electricity costs?

Yes definitely, I've noticed a real difference, it just makes me think about what I'm using all the time.

And so does this involve changing your routine, and getting rid of some activities that consume electricity, or reducing the time you take to do them?

I suppose it does a little, yes, like I always make sure I switch off all the electricals, and cook manually rather than with appliances as much as I can. Oh and making sure I switch the oven off straight away. It doesn't really make any difference to me, because I get no benefit out of what I was doing before, but it really does cut costs. And you get used to it too. I have got into the habit of doing those things and don't even think about it half the time.

Ok, so overall, how often would you say you now thought about energy use?

All the time, at least twice a day if I was to give you a rough figure.

And do you think this has translated into how you think about energy supply?

Well I suppose it has. I think more about where it comes from. When I see something using energy from the smart meter, I think about the process, so I think 'that is coming from the energy supplier, who I then have to pay'. So although I am more relaxed than I was when we first got the smart meter because its renewable, I still worry about the money, so I still have to reduce the amount we use, for the cost.

Yes, so money is a very important factor. So, are you involved in your local community? To what extent would you support community energy projects and trading?

Yes definitely, but again it would completely depend on price and ease I think. If it was going to take up my time, which is limited because I work fairly long hours, I wouldn't support it. But if it was as easy as the system I have now, then yeah, why not!

Have you ever considered producing your own energy? Why did you decide against this?

If I could produce my own energy I would, I hate paying the electric bill. But it is too expensive to install. So not an option for now. But I love the idea of it, being self sufficient.

Yes, that is a response I've had from many of the other respondents. So finally, do you know anybody within your local community with a renewable technology? If it were possible, would you consider trading with them?

Um, yes I know there's a few people in our village that have them. I don't know them that well, but yes if it was cheap and easy I would definitely buy their energy. It would be nice to know that money was going towards helping local people.

Yes, staying in the local economy.

Yes exactly, rather than towards these huge corporations.