



Creating sustainable and inclusive futures for all

# Call to Action: Renewable Home Energy and Heating solutions

# The research

The energy system is changing and moving towards greater electrification. What are the implications for disabled people? Our latest research investigated experiences when choosing and installing alternative renewable home heating and home energy solutions. It found that disabled consumers experience several difficulties that exclude access to sustainable choices.

Our findings were presented at a Webinar with stakeholders in November 2022 and actions to mitigate the identified problems were considered.

[Research report](#)

[Webinar presentation](#)

# Call to Action

Below we list our proposed actions, together with the organisations who we believe can make change happen and prevent disabled people being excluded from sustainable home energy and heating solutions.

## 1) Consumer Information & installation

Information about renewable heating and home energy options urgently needs to be more detailed, consistent, and easier to understand with less jargon, and comply to basic website accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1. AA).

### Who should make the change?

- UK Government websites (particularly BEIS; Ofgem; Energy Savings Trust, local government)
- Big 10 Energy suppliers' websites (British Gas, EDF, EON, Npower, OVO Scottish Power, Shell, SSE, Octopus)
- Equipment suppliers and installers.

## 2) Grant policy

Grants and subsidy schemes to support home renewable solutions (e.g. heat and air pumps & solar panels) must reflect disabled people's actual circumstances, particularly around return on investment (ROI). For some disabled and older people ROI (Return on Investment) needs to be over a shorter time frame – reflecting life expectancies and future changes in housing and care needs. They should also reflect the full range of housing stock, tenancy and ownership structures in terms of eligibility.

### Who should make the change?

- UK Government (particularly Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), UK Energy regulator (Ofgem)).

## **Who should lobby / work for this change?**

- Consumer policy groups (particularly Which?, Energy Savings Trust, National Energy Action, National Energy Foundation)
- Disability and Older Person Campaign Organisations (Scope, Age UK, Disability Rights UK)
- Energy UK Commission for Customers in Vulnerable Circumstances

## **3) Product design**

Product design and development of home heating and energy solutions should follow best practice by implementing national and international standards on inclusive design, with user experience (UX) research involving disabled people from the outset. Government innovation competitions and funding for new energy products and services should always require accessible design as prerequisites.

## **Who should make the change?**

- Government funded innovation competitions (particularly BEIS, Innovate UK, Energy Savings Trust and Ofgem)
- Renewable heating and home energy industries
- Industry and Industry Trade Bodies (BEAMA, REAL)

## **4) Installation**

Code of practices and staff training for installation of renewable home energy and heating solutions should specifically address the needs of disabled and older customers. This should include flexibility in choice of communication channels for contact and quotes (phone, home visits, email etc)

## **Who should make the change?**

- Renewable heating and home energy product installers and providers

## **Who should lobby / work for this change?**

- Industry Trade Bodies (particularly Energy UK, Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd (REAL))
- Big 10 Energy suppliers
- UK Government BEIS