



CrowdFlex Customer Feedback Recommendations

April 2026



About CrowdFlex

CrowdFlex is a [NESO](#)-led innovation project investigating the potential of domestic flexibility to help operate the grid.

CSE carried out customer feedback research throughout the trial to explore the experiences of different consumer groups. This report provides a summary of our recommendations.

For more information, [see our website](#).



Automation

While the majority shifted their electricity use manually, those who used automation (such as smart plugs or delay settings on appliances) shifted significantly more electricity during events.

Recommendations

Government and service providers should promote understanding and uptake of automation, including small measures, to help people shift greater volumes and overcome some common barriers to participating.



Maintaining interest

Those who felt they were making a difference were least likely to lose interest.

Recommendations

Clear and engaging explanations on the purpose and importance of demand flexibility, from both service providers and government, could help people feel engaged and invested. Service providers should give regular feedback on users' contributions to broader social and environmental goals.



Demand turn up

Survey respondents found it easy to participate in turn up events but some were unsure of how to engage and felt uncomfortable about using more electricity.

Recommendations

Government and service providers should clearly communicate messages around demand shifting and how this differs from demand creation and destruction, and communicate the benefits of demand flexibility, including turn up, to the wider energy system.



Targeted messaging

Different groups reported opportunities or concerns in higher numbers, suggesting that targeted messaging to specific groups may have an impact.

Recommendations

- Renters reported positive experiences of CrowdFlex, suggesting that service providers could explore options to promote schemes and flexible tariffs specifically aimed at renters.
- Strategic partnerships between service providers and organisations supporting people with particular health conditions may enable more bespoke services or support.
- Those with lower propensity to trust in technology could benefit from reassurance messaging and learning support to ease apprehension.



Inclusive service design

Different types of household, including those with vulnerability risk factors, were engaged as much as everyone else, but reported slightly less positively on several measures.

Recommendations

Further consumer research is needed to explore what inclusive and accessible service design means for different consumer groups.

Ofgem should monitor participation of different groups at the population level and address any gaps to ensure there are offers on the market for different types of household.



Supporting safe participation (1)

Some participants who were already rationing their energy use turned off essential appliances to take part.

Recommendations (1)

Service providers should collect information about people's circumstances at onboarding to identify who might need more support. Ongoing communication to emphasise safe participation, and accessible support and information should be provided for those who need it. Providers should establish mechanisms to check whether customers are participating effectively and intervene if a customer is not benefitting from services as expected.



Supporting safe participation (2)

Some participants who were already rationing their energy use turned off essential appliances to take part.

Recommendations (2)

Government should ensure provision of household energy advice that addresses a range of energy related issues and is bespoke to household and personal circumstances. Better understanding of how vulnerability interacts with domestic flexibility is also needed, as well as considering the role of the existing Priority Services Register in a smart energy market.



We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

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