

How has linking my energy data helped Understanding Society?



Using Understanding Society's linked energy data, researchers can better understand:

- The impact of low energy price resilience (LENRES) which is a measure that helps identify households that are most vulnerable to the energy price crisis.
- Our environmental attitudes towards new Government policies, e.g. paying for single-use plastic bags.
- Information on our household consumption and our energy ratings.
- The effect of our carbon footprint on our wellbeing

Without the linking of data, this research would not have been possible. Thanks again for your support.



What is this leaflet about?

With your permission, we would like to link your Understanding Society survey data with your energy usage data.

What energy information would be linked?

Information on energy use and energy efficiency for each address in the country is collected by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and then held by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). We would like to link the information for your address to your survey answers to help with valuable research on the energy use of different types of households.

What if I change my mind?

If you wish to withdraw your permission at any point in the future, please write to:

**FREEPOST RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS,
Understanding Society,
University of Essex,
Wivenhoe Park,
Colchester, CO4 3SQ.**

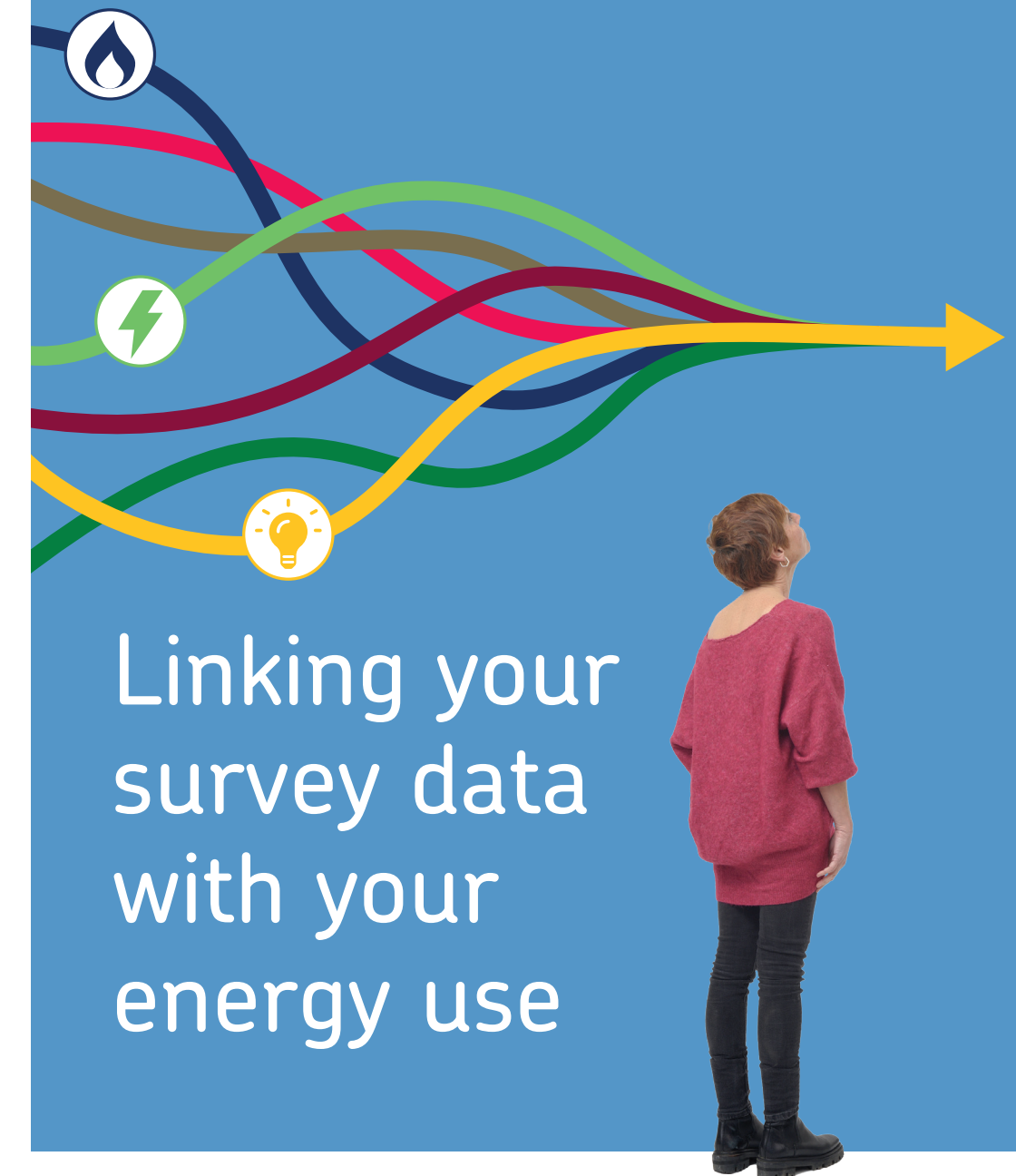
Please sign and date your letter.

What if I have concerns?

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study, or if you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact our Participant Communications Team on Freephone **0800 252 853** or by email: **contact@understanding.ac.uk**. They will pass the information onto the principal investigator of the project, Professor Michaela Benzeval.

If are still concerned, or if you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, or you feel that you cannot approach the principal investigator, please contact the departmental Director of Research in the department responsible for this project, Professor Paul Clarke, **pclarke@essex.ac.uk**.

If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager, Mantalena Sotiriadou **ms21994@essex.ac.uk**.



Who will use it?

Like your survey responses, the additional information would be used by academic and social policy researchers for non-profit use. It will not be used for sales or marketing research. Any sensitive information would only be made available to them under restricted access arrangements, so the information is used responsibly and safely. Names and addresses are never included in the results and no individual can be identified from the research.

No individual can be identified
when data is linked

What are the benefits of me giving consent?



Shorter surveys:

If we can link your survey answers with your energy use, we don't have to ask you about these in the survey and the interview can be much shorter.



Help improve energy services:

Linking energy data means researchers can look closer at our energy habits and maybe in the future this might help reduce energy bills for certain households.



Lots of research has already been carried out with the benefit of data linkage, please see our publications library www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/research/publications

What does my permission cover?

Information can only be released with your permission. To make the link between energy use and efficiency records for your home and your survey responses, we would need to give your address to the ONS. They will use this information to identify your administrative records.

Your address will only be used to identify your information. Before any information you have consented to share is sent back to us, your address will be removed by the ONS. Your energy data will be linked to your survey responses using an anonymous unique ID number. This will be stored securely at the ONS. None of your survey responses will be shared with these organisations, and your current or future dealings with any of the departments or agencies will not change.

Like the answers you have given us in the survey, the additional energy information will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

How long does my consent last?

We would like to add information relating to your present, past and future circumstances. We are not putting an expiry date to this consent as we do not know exactly when we will obtain and add the information. We will remind you every three years of the permissions you have given, and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time. If you do choose to withdraw your consent, we will no longer link your records to your survey responses going forward. However, we will retain data which has been previously linked if you gave us permission.

What about data security?

Your survey answers and linked energy use and efficiency records will be anonymised and will only be used for research and statistics. We are extremely security conscious, and all our systems are password protected and only accessed by a small number of authorised staff.

The information we need to exchange with the government departments and agencies will be sent via secure transfer systems. We follow the most up-to-date data security protocols and procedures and are compliant with the standards of the ISO 27001 data security protocols and procedures. Your personal details, such as your name and address will be secure at all time.



Are there any risks involved in giving permission?

There are no risks associated with adding information on energy use and energy efficiency at your address to your survey responses.

Do I have to let you link my data?

No, linking your energy data, like the rest of Understanding Society is completely voluntary.

Has the study been reviewed and approved by an Ethics Committee?

Yes. In this case, the study has been approved by the NHS Health Research Authority, South Central - Hampshire Research Ethics Committee, reference: 24/SC/0316

Your information will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.