

SWELL round 2 interviews

Report of findings

Jo Hamilton, 6th October 2016.

johamilton121@gmail.com

SWELL Round 2 interviews

- Responses from 40 participants
- 26 completed online survey
- 14 telephone interviews (10-15 mins) were conducted
- Survey and interviews completed between July- early October 2016 – all before the heating season.
- Data compiled onto Excel spreadsheet, and can be circulated next week once anonymised. Interview numbers refer to Second interview spreadsheet, not participant id
- Survey covered experience of participation, equipment, information from the project, what they learnt, timing and flexibility of electricity usage.

1. Overall experience of participating (n=40)

Positive overall (17)
interesting (14), fine (9)

- Part of something bigger,
- Appreciated feedback and information
- Interesting
- Small and larger changes made
- Appreciated SWELL team
- Teething problems – connections

‘Excellent. Great feedback and feeling of belonging to something.’ [#42]

‘it is a well-run project with admirable aims. There has been plenty of information available for participants’. [#29];

‘We have found the project very interesting and worthwhile although we have only managed to make marginal changes to our energy use.’ [#21]

‘I thought as it doesn’t cost me anything, I thought I would participate. And that’s it’ [#7];

2. Equipment: Satisfaction (n=40), likes and dislikes (n=33), difficulties (n=36)

- 30 participants either very satisfied or satisfied
- ten were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Dislikes: 17 reported dislikes: suggestions for improvements

Difficulties: 19 hadn't experienced difficulties, 17 had. Of these:

- 13 due to connectivity issues
- 2 smart plug programming – but one respondent ([#42] passionate about project and technology.

'Fan on battery quite noisy. Quite a lot of damage to wall during installation.' [#23].

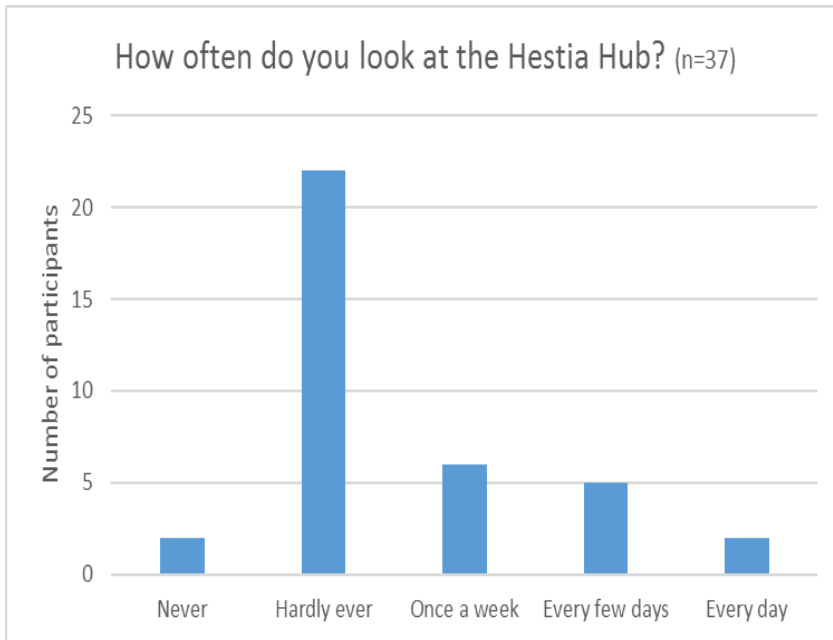
'Like it generally, but it would be great to have the sort of smart meter that gives real time data for energy usage' [#40].

'Maslow symbols and flashing lights difficult to interpret.' [#35]

"Several equipment faults, both at home and sports pavilion, sorted out via visits from SWELL team.' [#23].

The smart plug programming sucks! [#42]

3. Learning and understanding



General tailing off, but many reasons for not looking at it. Some have got used to new routines.

'I've kept meter readings of gas and both electricity meters [#5]

'I did at the beginning. I do when I get the statement through [#6]

'When I first started out I was looking at it daily or more frequently, but now ... I'm more familiar with it.' [#10].

" earlier ... used to be daily...so 3-4 times a week, and I find it fascinating to be able to' [#16].

Learning:

- **3 participants mentioned that it confirmed what they already knew**
- **21 participants have found it interesting**
- **Some found data too general / not understandable**

Most and least useful information from the Hestia Hub (n=21)

Most useful information:

- data on the timing, usage and amount of their electricity consumption, comparison

'energy use tracking, so we can see what we've used over a month, and what times of day, and peak usage, and most expensive.' [#13];

I like the graphics - they are clear and easy to understand,' [#35].

Most participants understood the information on the Hestia hub

Least useful information:

- Would like historical data
- good to have a variety of 'views' for the data according to the interest and knowledge of the user, and what they would like to use the data for.

Average PV generation not that useful' [#23].

'see historic information to see how you've changed over time. If it was really smart it would ...track the weather on particular days, to see whether you've been good or bad with good or bad weather.' [#35]

Other sources of information to manage electricity (n=38)

- 21 participants didn't use other sources of information to help them manage their electricity.
- 17 participants used other sources. These included:
 - detailed records of solar PV generation and / or consumption of electricity (12)
 - SWELL reports and newsletters (5)
 - power monitors / Smart meters (3),
 - energy bills (1)
 - labels on white goods (1)
 - tariff-switching website (1).
- Note: some people used more than one source, so the sources will outnumber the participants.

Influence of SWELL project on day to day habits of electricity usage (n=37)

- **Yes, SWELL has influenced (31):**

Range of activities

- Constricted by working routines / families
- key information regarding wet appliances put into action
- Some cooking activities shifted

'to look out the window and see if the sun's shining, and think 'actually I could leave the washing until tomorrow if its pouring down with rain. I would never do that before, but because of this trial happening, I've tried to get myself more conscious about it.' [#15].

: 'Sometimes opting to microwave or grill instead of using oven.' [#35]

- **No, SWELL hasn't influenced (6):** using energy efficiently already, generating electricity with solar PV, having young family over.

"when we've got the grandchildren over which is regular at clockwork, you can't be stingy with electricity and gas' [#7].

Social side of SWELL

- **Discussing SWELL:** two thirds of respondents have discussed SWELL with other people in a variety of settings (home, social, work) and people (family, social situations).
- **SWELL social events and how they have helped understanding (n=36):** 17 respondents have attended some of the social events, 19 have not attended any events.

Times of day and week when using most electricity (n=33)

- 18 respondents still using the most during the morning and evening peak, although they might have shifted loads such as washing machines and dishwashers to other times
- Some shifted loads to night time when it was feasible to do so

Flexibility of electricity usage

12 could be flexible, mainly flexibility during the daytime

22 couldn't be flexible **Caveat** : Further analysis (and further questions in round 3) needed to determine their flexibility when they are (or perceive to be) using most electricity **over and above** the changes that some participants have already made.

➔ Interesting to further investigate the participant's perception of flexibility and when they use most electricity through the electricity monitoring data.

'Morning and evening peak, probably. Lights on, microwave for porridge (or oven for cooking), TV for the boys, radio for me. Not things that we can easily switch to other times of the day.' [#34]

General reflections and thoughts (n=21)

- Mainly positive, some suggestions for future
- Ongoing communication, quick response time and potential scale up of the project has been appreciated by the participants.
- Learning about consumption and shifting usage has happened on a number of levels, from those with minimal prior knowledge about energy efficiency, to those with most professional knowledge.

'it's an amazing thing and I'm really really pleased to be able to contribute. It's something that I really do support and engaged by, [#13]

'As a lifetime electrical engineer, it has proved very intriguing how a slight change in home power use can make significant changes to a pensioner's budget and encourage my continued interest in my chosen discipline.' [#27]

'I think the team are fantastic, lovely ... the efforts that they've made are just wonderful, it took me a little while to register that I should be trying to change my habits a bit more. Even a supposedly conscious person it took time to register fully' [#14].

General reflections from Jo

- Appreciations of team – despite some difficulties participants have felt valued
- Some self-judgements about good or bad behaviour / not being a ‘good’ participant, e.g. thinking they are letting the trial down by not shifting, or assuming they should have done more.
- Perceptions of what people have switched and if it’s ‘enough’
- Interplay of SWELL reports, Hestia Hub and behaviour – what happens during seasonal changes?
- Going forward - can dashboards / views of online info be customised to participant’s knowledge and interest?