

## The Authority conducted an online survey on comparing and switching plans

On 1 February 2024 the Electricity Authority (Authority) published the consultation paper *Options to support consumer plan comparison and switching*, which sought feedback on options to support consumers to compare and easily switch between electricity retailers and plans. The submission period ran from 1 February until 8 March 2024 — but some late submissions were also accepted.

As part of that consultation, the Authority also published an online survey on its Information Provision Platform. This survey was primarily aimed at seeking feedback from individual consumers, asking short-form questions based on those asked in the consultation paper.

We received 36 (of a total 79) submissions to the online survey. All of the online survey responses came from individuals, except for one from Alpine Energy who did not submit a long form response.

Below are the online survey responses received by the Authority. The remaining, non-survey submissions can also be found on the Authority’s website.

### Received online survey responses

#### Submission from Shea Smith on 1 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	The big pain point right now is comparing electricity plans. The current methods are not sufficiently straightforward.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	<p>Essentially I think there are several issues, a few of which the Authority has identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficultly knowing what plan you are on, and how that matches what is shown on power switching websites. Case in point has been that I recently attempted to do such a comparison for a relative. I had their power bill in my hand, along with the tariffs, but I could not find any matching plan in Powerswitch's database.</li> <li>- The amount of jargon on power switching websites.</li> <li>- The idea that consumers ought to know what an ICP number is, or what network they are on is a bit ridiculous. The website needs to seamlessly find the ICP number automatically from your address. The Authority's 'My Meter' page is able to do this, but it seems the Powerswitch website is often not able to (especially with rural addresses) Inaccuracy of estimates</li> <li>- Many of the estimates currently aren't always accurate. They do not take into account the actual usage of the household, rather they are making a guess based on their characteristics. This will never be truly accurate and makes</li> </ul>

	<p>it difficult to see the impact of zero-rated periods in some plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulty in finding the website</li> <li>- Retailers do not currently seem to proactively notify people about the existence of the site. Additionally the process needs to be significantly simpler (in an ideal world enter your address and that's it).</li> </ul>
<p>Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why or why not?</p>	<p>Otherwise the site will get impacted by the use of things like affiliate links, or by promoting bundle deals that aren't actually better for the consumer, based on those who are sponsoring the website. So plans that might not be the best for the user are promoted.</p>
<p>What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?</p>	<p>=- Seamless mapping of addresses to ICP numbers - Automatically detecting what plan you are on currently - The ability to easily access and upload consumption data to a website without having to contact retailer support desks.</p>
<p>Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>What issues do you see?</p>	<p>Difficulty of finding plan information for the current ICP</p> <p>In my view, the Authority should require that retailers specify the currently active plan for the user in the trader component on the ICP in the Electricity Registry. Therefore a comparison website run by the Authority would be able to pull that information and use it to automatically determine the users current plan. Retailers should also be required to submit all available plans and their tariffs to the Authority and have these plan names match the submission in the trader component.</p> <p>Better mappings of addresses to ICPs.</p> <p>My suggestion is that it may be beneficial for it to work more like the 'My Meter' search, rather than the current solution.</p> <p>The ability to supply actual half-hour consumption data to the website to ensure a more accurate result.</p> <p>In my view this would significantly increase consumer trust in the platform as consumers would know for a fact that the results are specifically tailored to them and that they're not going to be caught out by inaccurate estimates.</p> <p>I think there are several options to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option 1: Require retailers to have consumption data readily available from their websites, and allow this to be uploaded to the power switch website. This would replace the current need to contact many support desks directly, send an email and then wait for several days to get a response. The main disadvantage is the increased difficulty this would place on consumers. They'd need to login to their retailers website, download a file and then upload it to Powerswitch. This isn't a particularly straightforward process for many.</li> <li>- Option 2: Require retailers to supply individual consumption data to the Authority for the purposes of price comparison The power switch website could then use this data to derive</li> </ul>

	<p>what plan would be cheapest. At no point would the website specify the actual consumption data. The main disadvantage would be potential privacy implications as there would be no verification of actual ICP ownership. I believe however this would be significantly mitigated by not displaying the raw consumption data to the user.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option 3: Have the Authority, or the website operator, use the existing EIEP13 'agent' mechanisms to request consumption data. This would require some sort of proof of address (e.g. RealMe), which would place a significant burden on the consumer. Additionally, there would be likely be a significant delay in obtaining that data, as retailers have relatively long periods in which they can respond to any such requests, meaning any results would be delayed for several days.</li> </ul> <p>Of these three options, Option 2 seems to be the best, as it would allow the user to quickly and accurately compare plans, without compromising individual privacy around consumption to a great degree.</p>
<p>Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?</p>	<p>My preferred options are 4 and 5, with option 3 being acceptable. Option 1 in particular would likely result in third party sites appearing that promote bundle deals that aren't good for the consumer, boost retailers that pay or give affiliate revenue for the site or misleadingly show introduction pricing, rather than the average price across the whole term (an example of this is the Broadband Compare website, which does all of these things!). Authority endorsement and ideally control over the website would ensure it truly acts on behalf of consumers, rather than requiring the website to find alternative (and likely corrupting) revenue streams.</p>
<p>Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?</p>	<p>Periodic emails/mail to consumers (e.g. once a year) Potentially automatic switching in some cases (where the user wouldn't be materially disadvantaged) Persistent alerts in web portals</p>
<p>How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?</p>	<p>I have no particular opinion of the use of community advisors.</p>
<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to</p>	<p>True</p>

supporting consumer comparison and switching	
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	<p>To reiterate, the main focus of the Authority must be to reduce the number of consumers with the big few gentailers. It is simply not believable that every one of the customers currently with these large retailers is getting the best deal they can - rather it is far more likely they are simply there because that's who they've always been with. A major part in convincing consumers to switch is the availability of easy to use and importantly accurate comparison information. This means it's paramount that more information pertaining to individual ICPs is extracted from retailers (especially the plan information) and that there is a provision for the use of actual half-hour consumption data for such a service. Otherwise, if you keep relying on estimates and leave the barriers to access the website in place, consumers will not use it and they will therefore not switch their plans.</p>

Submission from Richard on 8 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	consistent information between companies so we can compare pricing
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	difficult to compare information
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Power companies cannot be trusted so the Authority's input is crucial
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	details about how power is charged
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Difficult to compare with whats on the website and whats on my bill
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	The government should be fully involved. You cannot trust private enterprise to behave ethically
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Monthly email
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Im not sure
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Im not sure
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	transparency from power companies about how they charge

What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	Im not sure
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	Im not sure

Submission from Martine on 8 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	I've tried to use it but I have solar panels and an EV and the website can't cope with these (unless you've upgraded it).
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Website doesn't take all variables into account - see comments re solar panels and EVs. I also don't really trust the data - I'm not sure that the website uses complex enough data. Needs to have a common input. Couldn't smart meters be accessed to give the best data?
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Yes - but it doesn't work for me
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Simple input that covers all users - including solar panel and EV users.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	See above
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	I don't really mind as long as it is easy to use, accurate and allows for solar generation and EV use
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Every year consumers should be contacted to discuss best options.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	I don't know but sometimes it is best to actually talk to a real person if their data is not easily entered into the website.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Not sure
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Need to have access to best and latest data.

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Transparency from retailers so that data is easily extracted from electricity accounts. Access to data from smart meters would be perfect.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>See above comments re EV and solar power users.</p>



Submission from Mike on 8 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Auckland Electricity Consumers Trust warps all comparisons.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Very difficult to find the basic information on pricing structures on your own power bill and on prospective company websites.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Creates independence
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	No Electric Vehicle selection Lack of clarity around Auckland Electricity Consumers Trust (and others nationally) dividend. We were with Mercury Energy for decades and recieved it every year. Switched to another supplier and did not receive it last year - unclear why.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	We have a smart meter now. They just need to analyse that data. Perhaps also give consumer opportunity to advise of coming changes in usage.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Needs to target consumers who willmay struggle to use website
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Budgeting services, Age Concern

<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>This is all based on the premise that we cannot change the current market dynamic where retailers only keep prices sharp when consumers are constantly shopping around. I don't know what it would look like but honestly feel there needs to be mechanisms to encourage retailers to reward long-standing customers. Particularly with more bundled services making it more difficult to switch.</p>

Submission from Richard Shearer on 8 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	I think the "authority" needs to act like an authority and do what is in the best interest of consumers. I think the option approach is a cop out and you are expecting submitters to advise you on how to act. NZ is a regulated energy market with all participants able to earn appropriate margins and profit on capital employed. Therefore, the authority should do all it can to assist consumers gain the best deal.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Variation in offerings from various suppliers in various regions. There is no problem as such with "switching" providers, more of a problem comparing various offers.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Seems the industry cant do it on its own, and isnt honest or transparent. le confusion as a marketing tool.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Ease of use, consistent information in same formats. Quality of comparison.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Not always easy to compare as retailers have so many plans, some gas and electricity, some electricity only.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	5. I dont trust the industry to do this on its own. I think the "authority" should be a consumer driven agency, not an industry driven agency.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	This should be mandatory. The information is obviously available, and it should be required that retailers always act in the best interest of their customers since the industry is regulated in the first place.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	I dont think this is required if other actions above are done properly.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	I think just do your job properly. I was very disappointed with your CEO's interview on RNZ, where she either deferred to consumers advising her what to do, or didnt know answers to questions asked.
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	n/a

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>False</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	<p>over complicated. Just make the market behave efficiently for consumers. Dont make consumers bear the burdon of making this industry operate properly.</p>
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Not if some basic actions carried out. ie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- make retailers offer least cost options to any customer or face fines</li> <li>- enhance data sharing from retailers so that comparision is simple, easy to understand and reliable.</li> </ul> <p>I dont necessarily think that desiring a certain rate of switching is a valuable metric if the industry is operating properly. Competition would be automatic if a) retailers had to provide best deal and b) switching was easy and accurate.</p>

Submission from Susan on 8 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	It's very difficult to compare plans and prices. I feel like the system is stacked against the consumer, and this is surely against the fair trade rules?
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	At the moment it's impossible to compare my plan and pricing - as stated on my bill - with the plans and pricing on the Powerswitch website. It's time consuming, and really difficult to make an informed decision and be confident that switching is going to be worth it.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	<p>The process needs to be more transparent, and more in favour of the consumer.</p> <p>Unlike shopping around at supermarkets or for fuel, where we can compare prices and volumes (and all the pricing is in the public domain and easy to understand) with power it's impossible to do this. I heard that power companies don't like the idea of their competitors knowing what their pricing is? They need to get into the real world and stop being so secretive and greedy - that sounds like a harsh judgement, but when it's so difficult for me to understand the pricing I have to wonder who's benefiting? The power is literally and figuratively in the hands of the retailers.</p>
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Power bills, across all companies, need to be standardised so that like can be compared for like. Keep it simple, clear and straightforward so that consumers can see what they are paying for, how much, and be able to compare this with other potential suppliers.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	<p>I spent two hours yesterday trying to use the Powerswitch website to compare likely outcomes if I switched from my current provider. I had no faith in the figures - because I couldn't easily compare my bill to the offers of other companies on Powerswitch - there are too many barriers, and the information isn't clear.</p> <p>I ended up feeling stupid and frustrated and decided not to bother switching. This is after getting a power bill this summer equivalent to my mid-winter power bills.</p>
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 3
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True

<p>What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?</p>	<p>They should be offering the best plan" and the best price as a standard practice. The system is unnecessarily complicated. "</p>
<p>How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?</p>	<p>An 0800 number and an ongoing publicity campaign - a bit like the broadcasting complaints authority used to do - so that fairness and choice and clear pricing are at front-of-mind for consumers.</p>
<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Power retailers should be required across the board to provide standardised info and plans with the same names so that we can understand and compare their offerings.</p> <p>Reflecting on the electricity sector reforms of 25 years ago - which promised us all cheaper power - I am really annoyed that consumers continue to be overlooked while the electricity companies rake in the \$\$.</p> <p>The ability to compare and switch should have been built in to the reforms right from the start.</p> <p>I really hope you can fix this and make the system more transparent and consumer-friendly.</p>

Submission from Ewan Briggs on 14 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Transparency and credibility of information on the key issues to consumers which I see as price and carbon emissions.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	A lack of information on carbon emissions associated with their potential choices. Confusion around the different pricing structures, plans and tariffs, particularly when including solar export and time of use rates.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	I think this is the best way for the comparison site to have credibility.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Clear and concise headline/summary information on price and carbon of the options available based on customer location and type. More detailed information available to click into. Perhaps a brief survey for customers to fill out that would educate them on the best tariff approach based on their situation - location, consumption type and patterns (EV overnight charging and/or solar exporting etc)
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	No information on carbon emissions. No apparent account for EVs
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4 or 5.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	As part of their billing process, on perhaps a quarterly or half year basis they should include information about potential other plans that might suit the customer better.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	The authority should be working to facilitate the electrification of our energy services in NZ. These community advisers could educate consumers on the benefits of electrification of their heating and cooking needs in particular, but also transport - ebikes, EVs etc.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	EECA would be a good organisation to collaborate with. Rewiring Aotearoa

<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Examples of real-world case studies. Increased publicity and general awareness so that the community adviser isn't going in cold, the customers have already heard about the potential benefits of electrification.</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Combatting gas and fossil fuel industry disinformation.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Carbon emissions - customers are given no information on this with regard to their choices - it's a big issue for many customers.</p>



Submission from Barbara Hammonds on 16 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Too many plan options! Providers not having what plan I am on named on each bill. I had to ring to find out, and it took the person on the other end of the phone a while to find out. way too many plan options on offer, and not always being presented in a consistent way. I think Powerswitch is doing a great job under trying circumstances. low users like me being penalised through hefty daily charges
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	As above. Complexity, and lack of standard ways of presenting options.. Difficult to compare apples with apples
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	It's difficult enough now with Powerswitch due to the issues above. It would be a nightmare without it. EA funding and supporting also means it is independent of electricity retailers, lines companies and generators, which is important for credibility.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	plan details in the comparison options, overall cost of each option based on current usage, ability to incorporate recent changes in usage - which doesn't seem possible with the way Powerswitch is at the moment.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	As above. While I found it relatively straightforward to use, I couldn't see a way to factor in a recent change, i.e. starting to charge an EV at home, which so far has only been the summer months. I didn't want to give my usage just for that period as winter would be excluded, so I looked at the bill since I switched all my appliances to electricity from gas earlier in the year and added a bit to the monthly average
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	For a start, and I know this isn't the question being asked but I need to say it somewhere, regulate to make retailers' plans better align, ie consistent across retailers, and reduce the number of plans on offer. Every 6 months.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	advisors will need to be very well trained given the confusing number of different plan options and ways these are presented at present, another reason to reduce the plans on offer and ensure retailers present them in a consistent way.

<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	<p>Citizens Advice Bureaus, budget advisory services</p>
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Don't know, but must be a free service.</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Don't know</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Question	Answer
<p>What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?</p>	<p>Ease of use. Powerswitch terms and conditions would scare a lot of people in using it. Many of those in energy hardship would likely not use it, thinking their personal info is being collected/past on - so keep it as a tool with no conditions.</p> <p>A comparison tool needs everyone's buy in otherwise its not a fair comparison e.g. Slingshot and Grey Power are not on Powerswitch Keep in mind that most in energy hardship (that would benefit from the tool) don't have PC's.</p> <p>Maybe a phone. Interface has to be simple. Maybe has an option for someone to complete on their behalf (language and disability considerations)</p> <p>How do people know its up to date and can they be sure there are no (behind the scenes) manipulation of the best options.</p> <p>Contracts - keep this top of mind. So many people I know of succumb to contracts with the give aways and 2 year terms</p> <p>Useability - Powerswitch identifies how people heat their home but while I have a log burner and a heat pump it may be true I use the HP most of the year but in the winter I use the log burner all the time - I'm sure this will screw the results</p> <p>There are other obvious questions needed in the tool e.g. if family has young babies, there are likely to be more baths. If there are teenagers, showers may be longer, just because someone has a log burner they may not be able to afford wood. Some people in the family may work shifts, has more than one fridge freezer, game all night, charge EV cars etc etc. Maybe there has to be a fact track option for those wanting a quick comparison and a more comprehensive option to capture more details.</p> <p>Would be good to see the tool recommending a proper home assessment with the assessor doing an in house comparison?</p>
<p>What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?</p>	<p>Understanding their own bill with so many different tarriffs. Many bills do not make it easy to see the tarriff/plan they are on.</p> <p>Understanding what 'free' electricity means i.e. the rate will be more expensive for normal use</p> <p>Restrictive terms and conditions (as above)</p> <p>Trust - is the data up to date and not slanted towards one or more retailers</p> <p>Price increases - when will these happen - would give someone an option to come back after the price increase</p> <p>Contracts</p> <p>Ease of use in using app - note comment above re mobile phones and disabilities</p> <p>Some retailers offer options on Powerswitch that are not available if you just rang up/used their website - See Meridian</p>
<p>Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?</p>	<p>True</p>

Why or why not?	Buy in and shows a commitment to helping consumers
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	I think I covered this above
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	As above
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 3 - Accredited is harder but means more. Supported is easier and is really just a badge that is likely given just with someone sending an email or letter. Better that the authority has skin in the game.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Quarterly review and easily understood summary of usage over times of days. Option to look at the website comparison tool. Retailers have access to Smart Meter data. Legacy customers may be more of a challenge but I'm sure there is meaningful data tha
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	100% agree to this approach. People need help with this. Just in understanding their bill! Would be good to see retailers support this option. Meridian are doing this and reach out to various agencies to help. [ ] <b>Confidential Information</b> Agencies would be food banks and support organisations e.g. City Mission, Kainga Ora, Council teams, Community groups, Lines companies. Would encourage running local events and bringing people together. [ ] <b>Confidential Information</b> NZ needs a mandated rating scale (similar to UK) to ensure the home meets mimimum standards and tenants understand what the home might cost to 'run' - its not just about the bill! Anyway, I'll get off my soap box :)
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	As above
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Having the skills to understand the many different aspects of the home that contribute to energy use. Having funds to be able to provide some products to help e.g. LED bulbs, insulation, door strips, window film.  Proving info leaflets.  Training as to
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	Knowledge.  Supporting them.  Care if attending the home - is the environment safe? Trusting them to do a great job
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to	True

supporting consumer comparison and switching	
Why not?	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Personally I think meeting the consumers and working with them on understanding their power usage situation and need is the better approach to coming up with a solution for them. Also, revisiting them a few months later to see how things have changed. This could be done on the phone or self serve on a website page but many would be turned off by this. Having simpler tariffs and clearer bills would help as would using the smart data more efficiently.</p> <p>As mentioned above I think more metrics of the customers situation needs to be captured so that a better recommendation of plan is provided i.e. how many baths are being taken, how many rooms in the home, how many people live there, is the property rented etc...</p> <p>Switching process has to be simple and the comparison options clear (maybe in side by side table form - similar to comparing cars or domestic appliances)</p>

Submission from Alex on 27 Feb 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Ease of service. Being able to compare tariffs from different providers without having to enter personal information or sign up to a site/service.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Lack of transparent information on price differentials and any sort of calculation on how much switching could save you per year/month/week, etc.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Retailer ran comparison services will often obfuscate information to make it appear they are the best option. Independent services often make money from use/sale of peoples personal data.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	No requirement to enter personal information (email address, phone number, etc). Options to enter in how much electricity you currently use, but not have this be a requirement.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	False
What issues do you see?	
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5: Expanded government utility comparison website.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Retailers should use the data they currently collect to inform consumers if there are any better plans available to them. This information should be conveyed in a way that the customer selects, eg on the bill, via email, text, phone.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Use Citizens Advice Beareau. They are already a trusted, independent service available to all.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Utilise MSD to help people with bill payments if they are struggling.
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Free service, available outside of working hours and on weekends.

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Multiple channels of help - Utilising in person facilities like CAB, internet platforms such as websites and social media campaigns.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from John on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	How easy it is to switch plans/retailers Exit fees if early termination
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Credit ratings Gifts/credits locking consumers in for a long time Exit fees
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	I find it useful to compare plans & prices, often I check monthly.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	How long the term & exit fees if any
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	False
What issues do you see?	
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Options 3, 4 & 5 I believe are good options
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	This ensures consumers are on the best plan available
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Community advisers can help getting the right plan and possibly reduced/no exit fees
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Winz
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	The advisors have no motive to try switch to u to another plan. The only motive should be are u on the right plan for your needs.



<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Getting exit fees reduced or eliminated.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Better support if you have bad credit and reduced exit fees</p>

Submission from Ruth Jackson on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Accessing information to be able to compare plans. Companies are hiding information.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	The Power companies are the barrier. This needs government to step in.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	It's obvious that the present optional system hurts consumers.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Transparency.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Not clear enough for comparisons. Too much latitude for the companies.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Consumer chooses how want to access the information... txt , links to site, at same time as receive power bill.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Consumer groups, not just power company agents. Independence is important.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	see above
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	computer software support, so links and sites can be kept in good order.

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Greed. Profiteering.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>good software is essential. Many well meaning NGOs have fragile or absent computer capability.</p>

Submission from Stephen John Conway on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	The lack of motivation for electricity suppliers to do anything other than maximise their profit at the expense of customers.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	The inability to obtain accurate comparisons between the plans suppliers have.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Because the private sector cannot be trusted to do the right thing as their PRIMARY focus is to make the maximum profit they can.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	The ability to readily compare similar plans and costs from different providers.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	I can't find it.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Using the same method they bill the consumer.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Unsure.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	I'd suggest MSD but I think they are pretty ineffective.
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Knowledge of the market and providers.

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Unsure.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Brenda on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	It all feels too complicated.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	It provides a neutral place to start gathering information, before having to approach your own, or other, power companies.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	The Powerswitch website doesn't offer an option about power use information that is relevant for apartment dwellers. We have central heating/cooling in our building, and water is centrally gas heated. In the section relating to heating there isn't an option that accurately relates to our situation.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Retailers have all the relevant information about customers' power use, and they understand the implications of each of their plans, so it should be easy for them to work out which plan is best for each customer.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	

<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>I support the approach, but think it is incomplete.</p> <p>I think the Electricity Authority should require companies to inform customers of the best plan for their usage, at least every three months .</p> <p>It would be even better to require companies to automatically switch all customers to the best plan for their usage.</p> <p>Make powerswitch work better by allowing people to input their own actual electricity use data (while protecting privacy). This would be far better than the website relying on estimates.</p> <p>Require companies to include standard information on all electricity bills to enable comparison, as suggested by the Consumer Advocacy Council.</p> <p>Remember the people who cannot switch because no other retailers will take them, eg. people with poor credit scores.</p> <p>Investigate ways to ensure everyone can access affordable electricity, including a range of post-pay plans, regardless of credit history. In the meantime, investigate prepay prices to ensure those without options are not penalise</p>

Submission from Piyush Patel on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	All information should be given about electricity plans and companies, including about switching plans and providers, so that consumers can make an informed decision about their electricity. Also the Authority should continue to switch consumers to the best electricity plan on a regular basis. The Powerswitch website should continue to be accessible to the general public so they can continue to make informed decisions about their power through the website also.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	They do not know which power company has the cheapest electricity charges and even after using the Powerswitch website, they do not know within a power company as to which is the best plan to be on.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	So consumers continue to be aware of the power company with the least electricity costs on a regular basis and can continue to make an informed decision on this, include making the switch when and as may be necessary.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Power company average electricity cost (rate of power) as well as a power company's plans so that the public know which power company and which plan to be on.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	That a power company's plans are not visible on this website, just the electricity provider with the best rate of power.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5 so that consumers should be able to know not only which power company has the best rate of power but which of the plans of a power company in question is the best to be on (least rate of power on an eligible plan)
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Provide what the rate of power is for each plan and provide features for each plan what is included in the plan, then only can consumers make an informed decision.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Have an electricity expert available at Citizens Advice Bureaus who can keep customers informed about which provider has the best rate of power and which plan should they be on. These experts can also help consumers who are facing problems with their power company particularly when power is bundled with internet or other such services.



<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	<p>Have the Utility Disputes Authority onboard also as consumers may even after switching power companies can run into problems that only the Utility Disputes Authority can solve!</p>
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Have the Utility Disputes Authority onboard also as consumers may even after switching power companies can run into problems that only the Utility Disputes Authority can solve!</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>The barrier that an electricity expert is not available in person to be able to advise consumers about which power company provides the best rate of power and within a power company as to which plan has the best rate of power. This barrier can be removed</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Kath on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	People need easily accessible and understood information from a trustworthy source, i.e. a source that does not gain from its position of influence.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	<p>Difficulty with technical language in trying to understand usage.</p> <p>Difficulty in comparing different pricing systems and weighing up the various sweeteners that different providers offer.</p> <p>Understanding why the best options/offers keep changing and why the process of choosing the best option has to continually be repeated.</p> <p>Suspicion that it's all marketing smoke and mirrors and will not really make a difference.</p> <p>Fear of making mistakes and being worse off.</p> <p>Worry that frequently changing providers will be a lot of bother including changing direct banking arrangements</p>
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	There needs to be a trustworthy source of information
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Easy to use Easy to understand
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	I haven't used it so the issue is that I've not been convinced as to why I should
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Whenever they change their pricing they should email consumers with a clear outline of the implications for them and highlight whether there is a better alternative available
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Perhaps this role could sit in local authorities and every local authority (district council) should have an energy adviser within their environmental and resource management teams.

<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	<p>Council community development teams Social service providers Iwi and Maori development organisations Budget advisory services</p>
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>The people in the roles would need to have a suitable skill set and appropriate expertise to deliver this service in communities</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>They would need to be accessible and responsive and qualified to provide accurate and credible advice.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from flynn on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	transparency and honesty, These qualities are not presently valued, but rather financial rewards for those at the top and economic growth.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	It just becomes another bureaucratic nightmare.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	But the fear, of course, is that it will increase costs of electricity.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	transparency and honesty, and motivations for each company to do what they are doing.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	False
What issues do you see?	
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	My choice would be option 4, but any of them would do as long as there was honesty and transparency, not just luring people into their company so they could be a financial success.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	The best way would be to explain why (honestly) this is the best plan.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	That is an interesting question, as it requires trust that people are being honest. Sadly, we don't live in a culture where people want to do the 'right' thing; since 1984 the cultural prerogative is to make \$\$\$.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Moira on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Have comparable data on electricity bills so that it is easier to make comparisons between providers.  Powerswitch needs to be continued and supported to help consumers make an informed choice of provider.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	It is difficult to work out how much fixed and variable charges are when comparing electricity plans. They all measure differently. The maths can be too complicated.  Bonuses and free power are good but difficult to compare. Cheaper prices overall would be even better.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	If power companies have different plans, then consumers should be able to make a fair comparison and choose the plan which works best for them.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	clear comparison of pricing. day and night rates are clear fixed and variable rates are easy to understand.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	it is too hard for many people to make comparisons as the details vary so much between companies.  Some customers are unable to access the internet to view other plans.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Best plan information should be attached to a bill.  It would be based on the customer's pattern of consumption of electricity.  it could be provided every 6 months.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Community agencies often have budget advisors who could be helpful to consumers in changing their power supplier.  Advisors being available in a public place such as a library or CAB.

<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	<p>Budgeting Services; community support services; RSA.</p>
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Private areas with internet access that are easily reached by the elderly, disabled and wider community. Advisors need training and support so their information is current.</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Information that the service is available and where needs to be advertised widely.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Gillian Cameron on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	That these options are supported and adopted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (1) the EA requires companies to tell customers which plan is best for their usage, at least every 3 months</li> <li>- (2) the EA requires companies to automatically switch all customers to the best plan for their usage.</li> <li>- (3) community advisers are funded and trained to support people to compare and switch providers</li> <li>- (4) the EA runs publicity campaigns to promote comparison and switching services such as a website</li> <li>- (5) Require companies to include standard information on all electricity bills to enable comparison, as suggested by the Consumer Advocacy Council.</li> </ul>
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	The different companies all have different plans and it is impossible to assess which is best - and I've tried!
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	its the best way to inform customers of their options
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Make powerswitch work better by allowing people to input their own actual electricity use data (while protecting privacy). This would be far better than the website relying on estimates. Require companies to include standard information on all electricity bills to enable comparison, as suggested by the Consumer Advocacy Council.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	You can't easily compare like with like  The website should allow people to input their own actual electricity use data (while protecting privacy). This would be better than relying on estimates
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4 or 5
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Require companies to inform customers of the best plan for their usage, at least every three months.



How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	By funding trusted organisations like Community Advice Bureau or Consumer NZ
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Community Advice Bureau or Consumer NZ
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	They need to be properly funded - both training and employment of advisers
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	I'm not sure what this means
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	Why not consider option 5: expanded government utility comparison website?

Submission from Fritha Stalker on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
<p>What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?</p>	<p>require companies to inform customers of the best plan for their usage, at least every three months.</p> <p>Or, even better - require companies to automatically switch all customers to the best plan for their usage.</p> <p>Powerswitch will work better by allowing people to input their own actual electricity use data (while protecting privacy). This would be far better than the website relying on estimates.</p> <p>Require companies to include standard information on all electricity bills to enable comparison, as suggested by the Consumer Advocacy Council.</p> <p>Do not forget about the people who cannot switch because no other retailers will take them, eg. people with poor credit scores. Investigate ways to ensure everyone can access affordable electricity, including a range of post-pay plans, regardless of credit history. In the meantime, investigate prepay prices to ensure those without options are not penalised</p>
<p>What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?</p>	<p>lack of standardised information easily accessible to consumers</p>
<p>Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why or why not?</p>	<p>to create an equitable playing field for consumers in the light of the many methods retailers use to bamboozle consumers and keep them fixed in plans over time. To create healthy competition that encourages competitive pricing for consumers. Many NZ households lose money by staying on electricity plans which are not the cheapest option for them. This problem is exacerbated because, among other reasons, it can be difficult to compare plans and electricity companies often don't tell us when there are better options. Additionally, the least wealthy consumers are likely to have the hardest time being aware of, accessing, knowing how to and completing changes to their retailer.</p>
<p>What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?</p>	<p>Clearly labelled as independent of any money making agenda. Display a range of options (low use, high use, 4 person household, 2 person household, 5+ person household) with current comparisons of the retail offerings that doesn't require personal details for the consumer to be educated on the options. Ease of comparison -- showing examples, up to date, of which retailers are providing better plans so consumers might choose to change with out having to negotiate the details of their current plan and billing</p>
<p>Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>What issues do you see?</p>	<p>There is a major barrier at Step 1 - this need to put in an address to even begin to compare seems onerous and likely puts many off. Why not just display a range of options (low use, high use, 4 person household, 2 person household, 5+ person household) with current</p>

	comparisons of the retail offerings . Allow people to input their own actual electricity use data
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	They should update consumers with their 'best plan' every 3 months - on bills and in emails
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Links with Citizens' Advice Bureau, Consumer NZ and advice to MSD for their clients' information
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	See above
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Connections with existing community networks will ensure they are effective. Publicity campaigns - including social media - to promote information about this service Include SCHOOLS in the networks - history shows kids are excellent at teaching their p
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	Illiteracy and lack of access to devices for online services include LIBRARIES in the networks -- librarians are already amazing at helping non-digital natives and people without resources to understand and access services
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	

Submission from Jeremy Dunningham on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Despite the proliferation of electronic media means of information, many in the community don't have access to it, for all sorts of reasons. There needs to be concrete, hardcopy comparison sheets available for consumers to work through, ideally with a neutral community adviser, such as CAB and Budget services volunteers, as well as electronic copy
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	As above firstly. Secondly, sorting out the confusion with differing suppliers offering all sorts of carrots to switch companies but hiding possibly negative detail in the small print. These offers are pretty ephemeral and will require a very flexible system to keep abreast of them and up to date.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	There needs to be at least one 'authoritative' neutral source to which consumers and their possible advisers, can turn
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Easy to read non jargon total cost comparison charts, with extraneous and often confusing detail, such as special discounts etc. edited out. Likewise with the confusing administrative costs which make up such a proportion of the bill. These need to be clearly set out and easy to compare
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Haven't had personal experience with it but the low numbers who do switch providers seems to indicate that it isn't working as hoped for
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4, provided that the Authority establishes the bona fides of each information site before endorsement, and removes or refuses to back any that don't follow the criteria
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	We use 2degrees as our phone provider and they regularly call us to discuss our plan based on their observations of our recent past use:and/or take the opportunity to do the same if we happen to contact them for any reason. Can't see any reason why pow
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Agencies like budget advisers, religious social services and CABs which incorporate regular training into their regimes, and which have established trust in their communities. They have access to electronic resources for those without.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could	See above

take) to make this an effective resource?	
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	As above
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	Time barriers are a difficulty, as the agencies I recommend generally work standard daytime hours which cuts out working people, however some have outreaches into work communities. MPs clinics could also assist after hours
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	The comparison charts, for want of a better word, need to be available in the majority of the foreign languages spoken in this country, as well as te reo

Submission from Rochelle on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	I love the PowerSwitch website & I think it's a really important tool for consumers, but I think it needs power bills to be regulated by what information they have to include in the bill so we can more easily use it to compare costs. I also think it needs regular promotion, & they should be run regularly, once or twice per year.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Reading my power bill. When I'm on the PowerSwitch website I can't tell what information in my bill is helpful in comparisons. That probably sounds a bit dense, but back in December I was looking to change retailers & the information on my bill made it difficult to compare. I got lost & gave up. I'm guessing other people do the same.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	I love that website! It's brilliant. My power bills are opaque to me though, which makes it difficult for me to use the site.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Ease of use. Like having information on bills provided in such a way to make it simple to put the information & numbers in the website & press go.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	I'm not sure whether it's the website or the retailer, but I just want a straight comparison. For example, my power bill never says which plan I'm on, so I'd have to call them to find out. Which then means I'm missing a key piece of information that the website asks for. Is there a way that retailers can be regulated to provide all of the information in a clear manner?
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5 for sure!
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Well they could be required to either let consumers know that they're on a more expensive plan than they need to be & show which plan would suit them better. Or maybe they could just move people onto the best, cheapest plan for them. After all,
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could	I don't know, but I'd say it should include funding for the agencies to increase their resources. Groups that directly deal with the poorest

take) to make this an effective resource?	people & whānau would be ideal. WINZ is right there & it could save the country mone
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	I'm not sure what this question means, but I'm guessing funding.
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	Those stupid power bills. I should know what plan I'm on, then have the numbers for daily charges & power consumption be obviously available so I can pop them into the PowerSwitch website. Barriers can be language (WINZ already deal with
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	Multi-pronged approaches are always better. My main concern is access. There have to be multiple ways for people to find out about, & to access this. But you'll have experts to work with that. It might just be easier to require retailers to switch consumers onto the best plan for consumers, & inform them at the time. Saves anyone needing to do this work when they already work or are busy & tired. But still think it's important that all of the information we need to use the PowerSwitch website is easily available on the power bill so we don't need to hunt it down.

Submission from Max Thomson on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	To ensure provision of readily available data for current invoices that gives the information in the format needed to use a comparison website. To ensure an easy process with support available for those people who find it too hard. To provide incentives for Electricity suppliers to automatically change plans for consumers when it is obvious that they are not on the best plan for them within that supplier's range of plans.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Availability of relevant data. Lack of computer skills.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Companies should not be able to unfairly optimise profit by overcharging customers. There needs to be an external check on the process for cost comparison.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	A method of comparing very different plan arrangements.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	It is too hard to make relevant comparisons in many cases. e.g. I use Powershop and the amount I pay varies depending on my online activity. I think it is good to be able to reduce the cost by paying in advance but it makes comparison difficult.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4 as option 5 would be too subject to political interference.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	For them to show what it would have cost on a different plan on an annual basis initially. Usage and cost varies so much with seasons and technology changes made by customers.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Social welfare organisations are in a good position to detect the greatest need.



<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Knowledge of the need would help community advisers prioritise their time appropriately.</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Not sure.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>The percentage of a household's income/expenditure spent on electricity would help prioritise support.</p>

Submission from Heather on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Customers are unaware of what they could save by switching power companies. Many are on plans unsuited to their usage profile. Most don't know about services such as Powerswitch. Those who are not computer literate don't even have the option of comparing companies.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Lack of computer literacy. Lack of knowledge about how the market operates.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Without the support they will reach fewer people.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Simplicity, ease of use by people not digitally savvy.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Many users can't get the full benefit because they have no idea what the name of their existing plan is or how it works.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Via a plain English letter sent out each year.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Make it available in as many ways as possible, not just online.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Promotion by the Authority.

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Maybe they need some sort of accreditation.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Jen on 4 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	The authority must make comparisons easy to understand by requiring retailers to provide information in a standardised format. Retailers must make information about all their plans and options available to consumers.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	The varied formats that information is supplied in and the lack of consistency of plans that are offered.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	This would provide an independent way for plans to be compared
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Easy to use and understand
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Difficulty finding the plan that I am on
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Let consumers know the plan that would cost them least
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	It must be accessible and easy to approach
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	CAB would be good
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	They must be well informed and able to relate to people well

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Ease of access and placement within the community</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	There is no website where you can compare the different plans and costs explained in a language that everybody understands
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Its too complicated to understand
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	So anybody can access it and understand the differences
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Easy explanation of plan and costs
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Its a bit complicated
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 1
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Email
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Dont agree with a community advisers option
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	I dont know
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	I dont agree with that option

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>False</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	<p>Because we can make it simple. A website with all the plans - costs with easy explanation.</p>
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Yes, make electricity bills affordable again</p>

Submission from Lauren Goodger on 5 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	All electricity companies need to provide clear details of the plan you are currently on. It needs to be consistent between all companies. When I went to change electricity companies I could not get a clear understanding of the plan I was on.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	All companies need to report what plan you are on in the same way. Knowing that the power switch website is available to make it easy to switch.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	I believe it needs to be an external entity not done by the power companies themselves. They have no reason to make it easy for people to shift. I have saved well over \$100 this year by switching power companies.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	I think the current site is good it shows how much you will save, also it might be nice to know how the power is generated ie perhaps it would be good to know how environmentally friendly your new power company is. Also if they have special treatment for those that have to have power.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	False
What issues do you see?	
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	3 4 or 5
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Perhaps a review once a year and then an email or letter to customer
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	I imagine all budget advisers would be helpful here, also Consumer does a really good job with this, maybe support Consumer to make their power information free to everyone.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Consumer NZ Budget advisers Citizens Advice Bureau



<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Funding to include this services with their existing services, training,</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Power companies need to provide information in a standard and comparable way.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Lynley on 5 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	That the website is monitored by an authority to ensure correct and fair advice is being given. That a consumer can put in their exact details, so they are getting true information, not just estimates.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	There is no way to compare apples with apples.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	I think it will be more trustworthy that way
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	The ability to check the same criteria with each provider.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	It is difficult to use. We gave up on it. It is too restrictive, and doesn't allow you to adapt it to your circumstances.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4: Authority-supported existing or new, externally run, websites.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Every six months or yearly
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	CAB, Salvation Army, City Mission and cultural support services.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Cultural agencies eg Pasifika, Refugee agencies, and those agencies that work with the poorest in communities. Salvation Army is in most townsand cities so they are an obvious one.
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Funding for one to two days a week in towns and 3 days a week in cities. Good training.

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Funding.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Please have a plan for those who have made mistakes in life. Having them pay higher prices on pre-paid doesn't help these people to turn their credit history around.</p>

Submission from Rowan Cant on 5 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	I'm really concerned about the difference in power rates with pre-pay power and the re-connection fees. As a social worker, I deal with many people who are on pre-pay power. Often because they have failed to pay a power bill in the past and have been disconnected. Pre-pay companies take away the risk, but their rates are often more and this exploits people who are already struggling to pay and don't have options due to credit issues.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Many people don't know the options. They will just pay whatever because they don't know otherwise. It's easier to stay then it is to swap.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	I've used it before and I think it is an awesome tool. I think it would be good to include information on the units of power that are purchased and invested in by the power companies too, so that users can compare the investment and use of fossil fuels.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	I think comparing rates and ethics. I want to know that my power is cheap, but I also want to know that my power is ethical. I want to be able to know that if one power company is cheaper, they aren't burning fossil fuels to generate it, or paying their own staff peanuts to work for them.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	I don't see an ethics comparison. I want to know if my cheaper means unethical investing. I also wonder about the website's accessibility for people who can't read or speak other languages. Having a few common translations of the page would probably help a whole lot of people. Like mandarin, hindi, arabic, samoan, tongan, te reo. Having those language options are likely to help large communities of people. Some options to have the website read itself could also help with people who can't read. Also, maybe talk to deaf aotearoa about how to make the website more accessible for the deaf community.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5 seems to make sense. That way people can compare power, water, internet, etc. That would be awesome.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Yea, I think that retailers should at least attach a note to the power bill that says, "You could be on a better plan, check powerswitch for details."

<p>How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?</p>	<p>People who want advice in person generally go to the library or to citizens advice bureau. I think if you partnered with them, then you would be able to offer help to people seeking it.</p>
<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	<p>Citizens advice bureau. Grey power. Deaf Aotearoa - what would make the website accessible for deaf people? Blind low vision nz CCS Disability action group. Salvation Army. Presbyterian Support. Anglican Trust for Women and Children. Talking Troubl</p>
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Community advisers need to be available to the community and easily located. People won't find information if they have to go hunting for it. It needs to be easily accessible. I think also, it's probably worth thinking about who can and can't access webs</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Language, location and disability accessibility.</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

Submission from Sara on 6 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Power is too expensive for many people and it is too hard to find the best plan and switch to it. Power companies should automatically inform consumers of the best plan for them. It should be made easy for consumers to find which provider and plan is best for them, based on their actual usage.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	It is daunting, complicated and time consuming. It needs to be made very very easy. Providers should provide a link to an independently run comparison website with every email they send out, so that consumers can easily click on the link and the website, from their actual usage data, tells them their best plan. The switching process should then be made very easy.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	It is essential that this is done by a reputable independent authority.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Easy access, easy to understand, easily imports actual usage data
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	It is far too complicated and time consuming. People won't do it. My Meridian plan just says that it is Everyday Economy Fixed Plan. But on the website there are multiple variations but nothing that just says Everyday Economy Fixed Plan, so the website does not match up with what is said in the invoice, which makes it pretty difficult right there.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 1, but with retailers required to comply and give updated details of all their plans immediately that they change them. No option for retailers to opt out. Website should have an option to use actual usage. Website should supply a suggested best option at the top. Website should ensure that the retailers are available to the consumer at the time.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Best plan should be an algorithm that automatically produces best plan info on every invoice.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Advertise adviser availability in media including social media. Make sure that Ministry of Social Development, who deal with poorest people, beneficiaries, pensioners etc, refer people to the advisers. Transmit community adviser contact info on all old age communications that go to superannuitants.

<p>Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?</p>	<p>All agencies that deal with the poorest sectors of society.</p>
<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	<p>Make retailers more compliant in giving up-to-date information, so that advisers are easily able to help people.</p>
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>It is unfortunate that consumers are put in such a complex power environment. Power is an essential service, and should never have been made a profit-making area. The current electricity provider model that we have is a dismal failure.</p>

Submission from Sarah Woodfield on 6 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	It needs to be as simple as possible to find out your plan/charges and see if there's a better/cheaper option. Using your own data rather than averages is important, and people need to be able to trust the result (ie it needs to be government regulated or supported). We also need to ensure that those that can't switch also get a good deal, especially if they are on prepay plans
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Awareness that it can be done, trust that it will be a good outcome, easy access to the correct information. We need standard information on electricity bills so they are easy to compare
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Information needs to be correct, and consumers need to trust that it is correct
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Users own data should be used. Up to date, accurate information should be available
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	The website currently uses estimates, not specific consumer data
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5: Expanded government utility comparison website Why stop at power? Phone and internet are pretty basic necessary services now, and could be included in a broader comparison website
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	It should be on the bill, every three months. Even better, companies should be required to offer to switch people to the most cost effective plan within the company unless the user specifically requests staying on the current plan. Similar to the opt-o
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	Connect with existing trusted organisations like Consumer and the CAB network
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Budgeting services (Money Talks, CAP) and WINZ would be obvious places for this information to be as accessible as possible
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	



<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Definitely need to be clearly independent of industry, and arms length from government to be as trusted as possible</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>It would be good to require companies to automatically switch customers to the best plan based on their regular usage, unless they actively choose to stay on their existing, more expensive plan. You should make sure everyone can access affordable electricity, including a range of post-pay plans, regardless of credit history. In the meantime, investigate prepay prices to ensure those without options are not penalised</p>

Submission from Glenn on 7 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Vulnerable consumers. Information to make choices. And the absolute property of power as a public utility, under public/government control. Without any consideration of profit.
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	information. Ability to demonstrate credit for access to public not private necessity. And availability of choice. EG. companies who only work with certain meters, despite being capable of working with all.
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	It must be totally independent of both power companies and of power recruiters agents who will steer people away from the best company to the best company offering kickbacks to them.
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	The ability to put in actual power consumption. And the ability to access a properties past power use if moving into a new property. And accurate, not laughable, power estimation options. Access to every single power plan available to the property. Accurate, not laughable, ability to know which plans are available.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	All the current sites are laughable. They can not access your own power usage. They can not access the properties history of power usage. They can not ask easy to know questions, they do use a random low accuracy questions to provide widely variable estimates. They don't compare every single plan. They don't allow you to enter preferences to cut down the options. They don't even know which companies or which plans can connect to a property, or which meter type is at the property. Do they even account for solar power of water heating?
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	option 5 is the only option. Independence from vested money, and the ability to legislate for access to raw data needed.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	A minimum of very six months, preferably every three, the power company should give the people a comparison of the current and best plans.
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	The Citizens Advice Bureau. Work and Income should obviously be at the front line in this, but has a serious lack of competence and

	ethics. All community groups should be able to access the training and resources.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Citizens Advice Bureau. EA.
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Extended hours, telephone and internet advice.
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	

## Submission from Liz Kilduff on 7 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
<p>What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?</p>	<p>Keep it simple - needs to be easy to use and there needs to be independent support for those that find it challenging or difficult to use the tool</p> <p>A lot of consumers only have a phone which can make it difficult to display or interpret information. Need to be able to request online help and ideally request a phone call from someone who can assist</p> <p>Not all price plans are currently loaded on Powerswitch website. Any replacement tool needs to display all price plans</p> <p>All retailers should have to provide price plan information to any future tool.</p> <p>Ability to bundle and unbundle. Any contract conditions need to be clearly provided especially if conditions are different or apply only to one of the services being bundled.</p> <p>Ensure that price plan description on future tool match that on the consumer's invoice.</p> <p>Any future tool needs to provide not only a comparison based on the consumer's current metering equipment configuration but other meter equipment configurations supported in that network region.</p> <p>Ensure that all published and unpublished price plans are able to be found on the tool.</p> <p>Stop retailers from offering better pricing to new consumers and blocking this pricing from current loyal consumer's. Clearly state that the rates shown on the website are available to ALL customers. Clearly indicate the start and end date for a price plan.</p> <p>Assign codes to price plans and add price plan codes to the Electricity Authority Registry so that this data can be downloaded and utilised by any future tool.</p> <p>Clearly identify a consumer's price plan on their invoice along with whether they are a low or standard user. Provide a facility on any future tool for a consumer or advocate to report issues.</p> <p>Provide an estimate of what the savings would be if a consumer was to change to a TOU price plan (e.g. peak/off peak, with or without control loads, such as water heating).</p> <p>Provide the option of talking with a person to facilitate a comparison. This may encourage consumers who do not have internet access or are not confident with using the internet to contact. Consumers now have energy management systems, time clocks etc that control load this needs to be factored in when consumers are comparing and/or price plans or retailers.</p> <p>There needs to be a tool which utilises all the necessary information from industry participants which can provide consumer's with the ability to undertake 'what if' scenarios to get information that allows informed decisions to be made.</p> <p>Some Retailers are offering consumers TOU price plans even though this is not how the consumers metering equipment is configured.</p> <p>Hence these consumers are not able to switch to some Retailers and have a TOU price plan without the metering equipment being reconfigured at a cost to the consumer.</p>

<p>What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?</p>	<p>Lack of confidence using the current tool Switching may require a consumer to have payments redirected by a bank or MSD to another retailer. This is not always understood by the consumer and can result in payment continuing to the loosing retailer and no payment to the new retailer.</p> <p>Often not identified until a debt situation arises.</p> <p>Consumers who have a debt with a retailer or are on a payment plan with their current retailer usually find it difficult to switch retailer Consumers do not understand the benefits of shifting load and/or price plan which encourages load shifting through better pricing Consumers are often faced with additional costs to change price plan which prevents savings being realised</p> <p>Currently there are no tools that provide comparisons between price plans.</p> <p>Current tool provides comparison based on price plans associated with current metering configuration.</p> <p>Consumers can request the consumption data however the format that this data is provided in would prevent many consumers from utilising the data to make informed decisions.</p> <p>Information is held in many different places eg EA registry, MEP databases, Switching/comparison tools etc. Ideally all information regarding the consumers ICP, Metering configuration, consumption data etc should be able to be accessed when a consumer is comparing and/or switching electricity plans and/or retailer.</p> <p>Process for when a consumer moves into a new property needs to be improved. Generally a consumer is offered a price plan based on the current metering configuration at the new premise and the last consumers usage decides whether they are low or standard user.</p> <p>If a consumer organises a move in via a retailers website the consumer is often required to choose a price plan, based on the current metering configuration and nominate whether they are standard or low user. If a consumer moves into a property with a controlled load eg hot water and has not had this before then there is little or no warning of the implications of the potential impact of this on their energy costs.</p>
<p>Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why or why not?</p>	<p>Consumers need the ability to access information that will enable them to make informed decisions when choosing an Energy Retailer. Consumers need to have confidence in the party that is providing a comparison and switching tool. The Authority has the ability to provide this. There should only be one tool rather than multiple comparison tools that currently exist. Multiple mechanisms to initiate a switch eg via Powerswitch or the Retailers website has the potential to confuse consumers.</p>

What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	Comparisons based on actual data. If consumer unable to provide actual data it should be accessible by the tool from either Retailer or MEP. Where a consumer has moved into a property then there should be the option to utilise consumption data from the consumers last property Ability for the website to provide 'what if' scenarios based on actual data whether inputted by the consumer or using the ICP's consumption data held by the Retailer or MEP Access to published and unpublished price plans All Retailers must participate Expansion of the information provided by the consumer regarding how the household uses energy, what appliances there are and how any of these appliances are controlled. This information should be stored and able to be updated. Ability to display the price plans that are offered whether or not the metering equipment is configured to match the price plan eg metering equipment configured to 'Anytime' but Day/Night or Day/Night & Weekend would reduce the consumers energy costs.
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	The price plan description on Powerswitch does not match that on the consumer's invoice. Powerswitch only provides a comparison based on the consumer's current metering equipment configuration. Retailers have unpublished price plans which are not released to Powerswitch. Better pricing can be found on Powerswitch from a consumer's current retailer only to be told by the retailer that the pricing is no longer available or is only available to new customers. Not enough support for those consumers struggling to use Powerswitch
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4 - Authority supported existing or new, externally run, websites
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	False
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	If the Authority was to establish a fund for community advisers so that they could provide a service to assist consumers to evaluate their price plan and whether their is potential to decrease energy costs by changing price plan and/or switching energy retailer. Community advisers would be able to advocate on behalf of the consumer with the energy retailer and work with the financial/budget advisers and other agencies to educate consumers and assist with transitioning consumers from energy hardship to energy wellbeing.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	Canterbury Energy Wellbeing Collective. Members of the collective have vast knowledge and experience of the industry. A subgroup of the collective is aiming to; alleviate energy hardship amongst our most vulnerable communities increase ene
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Any future website could provide consumers access to a list of Community advisers in their region. Ideally the consumer could access this service via the website or the website could also provide a list of advisors by region with contact details that th

<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Ability for community advisers to access data on behalf of consumers without having to do so via an EIEP file or through the consumers app. Ability for community advisers to advocate on behalf of consumers and for there to be standard process to insti</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	

## Submission from Alpine Energy Limited (Oscar Horstmann) on 8 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
<p>What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?</p>	<p>Consumers don't have equal access to the internet and there are differing levels of computer literacy. Power bills can be difficult to understand making consumers hesitant to engage with any service that requires them to interpret the data on their power bill. There could be a perception by consumers that the process of comparing and switching plans is too cumbersome which discourages participation. There is no consistency between retailers in the information that they provide to consumers and providers of price comparison websites regarding pricing plans. At the core of considering any option/s to support consumers, these option/s should be able to demonstrate that consumers are better off.</p>
<p>What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?</p>	<p>Consumers lack knowledge of the available resources which could lead to them switching to a cheaper/better price plan. Not all power bills provide an annual figure for a consumer's electricity usage. Instead, some consumers must calculate their annual electricity usage for comparison with other price plans as is the case with Powerswitch. This can be seen as a time-consuming process that discourages consumers from using a comparison and switching service.</p>
<p>Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why or why not?</p>	<p>The Authority would be a key stakeholder in the comparison and switching website allowing the Authority to provide regulatory oversight. This aligns well with the Authority's core role as set out in section 15 of the Electricity Industry Act 2010, considering other entities don't have the same legislated role. This allows the Authority to feed into the process of improving the website, ensuring it is user-friendly and consumer-centric. The Authority could also make changes to the Code which will ensure that the information that is provided to the provider of the comparison and switching website is up to date. The more accurate the information that retailers provide the easier it becomes for consumers to make cost-saving decisions.</p>
<p>What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?</p>	<p>1. There should be a step-by-step feature that shows the consumer where to look on their power bill to find the information to enter into the comparison site. 2. When consumers enter their address on the price comparison website, along with the system identifying their ICP, the system should also identify which retailer they are with and the name of the price plan they are on. 3. Consumers can then enter their electricity usage figures into the website. This could be for one summer month and one winter month which will create a more precise annualised usage figure for the consumer. This annualised figure should be adjustable (possibly a sliding scale) to reflect the consumer's annual electricity usage even more accurately. 3. The above is underpinned by the ease of use of the website and accessibility of the consumer's electricity information. 4. The comparison should also highlight any changes to fixed and variable charge ratios in the existing and proposed plans, for the benefit of a more advanced user. 5. The website should include application-based, i.e. app, technology. In most cases, it is easier for consumers to use a well-designed app. Also, more consumers have access to mobile devices than computers.</p>



Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Based on the information provided by the consumer, by clicking on different options, Powerswitch generates an annualised electricity usage figure. This figure represents the usage of an average household. This is not necessarily reflective of the consumer's electricity usage for the year and could be too high or too low. The website assumes that the consumer understands their power bill and what information they need to enter into the website to more accurately calculate their annual usage figure for comparison. There is no continuity between the information retailers provide Powerswitch and the consumer. The name of the price plan the consumer is on may appear differently on their power bill than the options on the website.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4 - In an open procurement process the Authority can set the minimum features required for a comparison and switching website before they sign off on any funding. This will ensure that the website is user-friendly which will encourage greater consumer engagement.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Retailers are in a unique position in that they can regularly access consumer electricity usage data. Retailers should be able to assess if consumers are on the 'best plan' based on usage patterns or if they would be better off on a different
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	The Authority could make funding for community advisers available. These funds could be for increased training or the hiring of more community advisers. Piggybacking off existing government programmes would be the most cost-effective rather than establishing a new stand-alone service.
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	MBIE, considering they already have the Support for Energy Education in Communities Programme (SEEC) in place.
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	Community advisers will only be an effective resource if they have up-to-date information. They would have to understand what information is presented on a power bill and how to use it to help consumers. It would be useful for community advisers to eng
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	They need to be easily accessible to consumers. Consumers would need to know that community advisers can assist with comparing and switching electricity plans.
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True

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Why not?

If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.

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## Submission from Jack Gibbons on 8 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
<p>What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?</p>	<p>The key issue I see is being able to accurately compare time-of-use plans. This is especially difficult for free hour(s) plans.</p> <p>I have not been able to find a power compare program where I can upload my half hourly smart meter data. Some allow manual entry for loose data but still make large assumptions. Nor is it particularly easy to get smart meter data from many retailers, ideally it would all be self serve from their website.</p> <p>Time of use plans *should* be cheaper, a halfway point between full on spot pricing exposure and flat rate plans with power use shifted to lower wholesale cost times. The fact we don't see any of the big four retailers offering transparent peak / off peak / night plans* is cause for concern.</p> <p>(*except for EV plans, which some retailers require you to own an EV to access)</p>
<p>What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?</p>	<p>Knowledge that there are better deals out there than the one that they're on.</p> <p>A strange and widespread belief that there is any loyalty reward (I see this on social media all the time)</p> <p>Confidence that they can switch and find a better plan, and that they won't have their power turned off or otherwise make a mistake.</p>
<p>Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why or why not?</p>	<p>Having the websites lowers barrier to entry for consumer switching, aiding price discovery.</p>
<p>What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?</p>	<p>Ability to upload or otherwise gain access to a customers past year of smart meter data. Having access to all available plans. Make suggestions that consumers might be able to get cheaper overall power / consumer more for the same price if they take steps like time-shifting some usage. "Discover ways changing when you use power might help you save, if you shift power and choose a different plan you could save xyz"</p>
<p>Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>What issues do you see?</p>	<p>It doesn't have access to the actual consumers smart meter data so asks questions to try make assumptions (number of household occupants, heating type etc).</p> <p>This isn't accurate enough, ie someone could have the exact same situation but use wildy less or more electricity with totally different habits. And it adds friction to the process.</p> <p>They have the ICP number, the current retailer, they need access to the half hourly data from smart meters where they have it.</p>

Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 4 I have low confidence in any government entity to deliver a performant website at any reasonable cost in-house. But there needs to be some funding there for the service to be provided.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	Email out best plan yearly, or before their fixed term contract is running out. Consumer needs to be able to action what they see immediately and not have to come back later.  Use the last full year of meter data, assume the usage will be exactly th
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	
What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?	
What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?	
Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching	True
Why not?	
If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.	

## Submission from Rebecca on 10 Mar 2024

Question	Answer
What do you think are the key issues for the Authority to take into account when considering options to support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Information asymmetry- retailers have it all and its complex Economics says it's fine to leave consumers who don't shop around paying higher prices - reality says that disproportionately affects those who can least afford to pay Electricity is an essential service and (increasingly) a human right - not a commodity
What are the most significant barriers consumers face when comparing and switching electricity plans?	Complexity
Do you think it is important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website(s)?	True
Why or why not?	Leaving it to retailers allows dominant gentailers with market power yet another way to protect their market share
What features do you think are the most important to have in an electricity plan comparison website?	
Do you see any problems with the current comparison and switching website (Powerswitch)?	True
What issues do you see?	Complexity and inability to easily compare between tariffs based on individual and local factors.
Of the website-related options, which do you think would best support consumers to compare and switch electricity plans?	Option 5 - consumers shouldn't be expected to find a different information source for each of their utilities. A one stop shop will have much wider reach. In the absence of traction for that, Option 4 is next best. Options 1 and 2 shouldn't be considered including because market power problems have damaged trust in the industry, especially the dominant incumbent retailers.
Do you support the option for retailers to provide 'best plan' information to consumers?	True
What would be the most helpful way for retailers to present 'best plan' information to consumers?	A summary of look back analysis of 12-24 mths consumption for the ICP on the different plans - different total annual cost. Alongside a simple comparison of the plan features / structure / tariffs. Including relative to current plan (if prices are going
How could the Authority ensure a community advisers service option is effective and useful to consumers?	
Are there agencies we should work with (or approaches that we could take) to make this an effective resource?	

<p>What conditions or support would enable community advisers to be best able to help consumers?</p>	
<p>What barriers need to be removed to enable community advisers to be able to support consumers?</p>	<p>Central meter data repository for all ICP-level data, with the individual able to easily authorise access to their data. For a limited time period (limited retention and access)</p>
<p>Do you support the Authority's proposed 'four-pronged' approach to supporting consumer comparison and switching</p>	<p>True</p>
<p>Why not?</p>	
<p>If there are any other issues concerning supporting consumers to compare and switch that you would like to comment on, please note them here.</p>	<p>Retailers should not be able to leave consumers on high-priced plans. Need rules requiring them to follow up proactively (it will often be those who can least afford to pay).</p>