

Submission form: 'Comparing and switching electricity plans'

Common Grace Aotearoa made this form. If you prefer, use the Electricity Authority's short survey, or long form (p. 49).

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Questions

1. What barriers have you experienced when comparing electricity companies? What would make it easier for you to compare and switch?

my flatmate actually organised finding the correct company. I was too busy with uni + work to invest time into properly looking. Something that would make it easier if there was perhaps a bundle/pack/quiz that's sent to people entering new leases. The quiz would assess their needs and advise the best plan/company to go with.

2. The Electricity Authority is proposing:

- To support an existing or new, externally run, website(s).
- To require retailers to provide their existing consumers with best plan information.
- Community advisers to support comparison and switching.
- Promotional activity and campaigns for comparison and switching services.

would people know to go to the website? →

Do you support their approach?

Yes! Only concern is that people might get annoyed with community advisers if they think that it's telemarketers which it's not.

3. Do you think it's important for the Authority to fund and support a comparison and switching website? Why?

If there is one place which people can go - then that website is probably a good thing as it would provide clear instruction and direction which is what people want.

4. What problems, if any, do you see with current comparison and switching websites, such as Powerswitch?

5. Do you support the proposal that companies must regularly tell customers which plan would be best for them? How often should they do this?

Yes - every time. It doesn't have to be in person, in fact it's probably better if it's something like an online questionnaire - something which people can do in their own time without getting confused; though people's illiteracy might be a barrier there.

6. What do you think about the idea of requiring companies to *automatically* switch customers to the best plan? (The customers could then switch back to the old plan if they preferred.)

I think that this is a good idea though would presumably require quite heavy resourcing for the Electricity Companies to individually assign and plan for each user but who knows?

7. Do you think companies should be required to include standard information on power bills, so customers can compare easily?

Yes. And potentially a form to set up auto-payments?

8. How else could the Electricity Authority support people to compare and switch power plans?

When someone is obviously paying too much for a plan, or too little, then making it a priority to contact that user to advise them to change - though obviously that would require access to records.