

UK Consumers Want Government To Break Big Six Stranglehold Of UK Energy Markets

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Fed-up consumers, disillusioned with their energy companies, are demanding that urgent action is taken to break the stranglehold of the Big Six.

New research commissioned by customer-owned energy provider, Co-operative Energy published today reveals that customers think that there is little to choose between the Big Six energy companies and are calling on the Government to step in and take action.

The study found that 70 per cent think all suppliers are the same, two thirds (63 per cent) are fed-up of the dominance of the Big Six and a majority (61 per cent) believe that the principle factor behind recent price rises is the Big Six increasing their profit margins. A staggering 82 per cent want the Government to intervene to create more competition by making it easier for new energy businesses to enter the market. In addition, 86 per cent of the 2,000 respondents want to see all UK energy bought and sold fairly through a single wholesale market.

Ramsay Dunning, Group General Manager at Co-operative Energy said: "This research supports our long held view that six companies dominating the energy market is bad news for UK energy users.

"The Big Six have a stranglehold on both the UK's energy generation and supply, which makes it difficult for new, independent suppliers to enter the market. Consumers are deeply mistrustful of the industry and switching rates have fallen to woefully low levels.

"We need to ensure that all power is traded through a single wholesale market. Such a development would not only mean markets are working optimally and drive down prices, meaning cheaper bills for consumers, but it would also ensure openness and transparency."

"UK energy policy is at a crossroads. We either continue to stick with a few large corporates and hope that they treat us fairly, or we engage in wholesale market reform and diversification. Small, independent generators and suppliers are more than up to the challenge - but we need Government to be truly committed to allowing us to compete on fair terms."

The research also revealed the UK public remains strongly supportive of green policy. Two thirds (61 per cent) want to see coal powered generation phased out as soon as possible and 67 per cent prefer to see a wind turbine near their home rather than a shale gas well. 85 per cent would like to see the Government do more to support community energy.

Since its launch in 2011, Co-operative Energy, which is committed to putting its customers before profits, has been campaigning for energy market reform. It has led the market with a number of initiatives including tariff simplicity and its support for community energy generation. Last week, Co-operative Energy launched a market leading fixed price tariff with no exit penalties.

[Co-operative Energy](#), which is part of The Midcounties Co-operative, now has 160,000 customers.

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