



# EAS Response to Consumer Scotland Consultation – Scottish Government

September 2018

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## **Introduction**

Energy Action Scotland (EAS) is the Scottish charity with the remit of ending fuel poverty. EAS has been working with this remit since its inception in 1983 and has campaigned on the issue of fuel poverty and delivered many practical and research projects to tackle the problems of cold, damp homes. EAS works with both the Scottish and the UK Governments on energy efficiency programme design and implementation.

EAS welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Given its remit, EAS's response focuses primarily on those areas that it considers may impact most on fuel poor and vulnerable consumers.

## **Consultation Response**

EAS's comments mainly concern the consumer landscape in Scotland.

EAS supports the stance taken by Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) in noting that a well-functioning consumer landscape requires the consumer voice to be heard. The CAS network engages with Scottish consumers on the frontline (Extra Help Unit, Citizens Advice Consumer Service helpline, CABs). It is therefore best placed to represent citizens and bring the real life consumer experience to the regulatory/policy development process. A well-functioning consumer landscape also benefits from CAS having advocacy functions that are completely independent of government (and therefore unbiased). The CAS network provides an important perspective in the consumer landscape given the breadth and depth of its consumer data. These real-life consumer insights from the frontline help provide evidence which in turn informs CAS's policy work. This unique data set will be instrumental in helping Consumer Scotland identify those markets and businesses which are causing the most harm and working to address this. To be effective, the Scottish Consumer landscape requires adequate funding.

In addition, there is value of holistic advice provision in linking up multiple consumer issues such as debt with access to welfare benefits.

## **Conclusion**

EAS has no further points to make in relation to this consultation.