

This email was sent to participants from April 2018.

If you are continuing in the project after June 2018, this constitutes part of the information material about your participation in the project, amending the original information booklet. (A PDF of that booklet is available [here](#)).

Subject: IMPORTANT: The IDEAL project is being extended: We need you to tell us if you want to stay in or leave the project

Message:

Dear <participant>,

IDEAL project to continue into late 2018 and beyond!

We've been busy looking for funding to keep IDEAL running beyond the original end date of 30 June 2018. We are happy to say we have been successful and can keep IDEAL going for the foreseeable future.

Your participation has been, and will continue to be, enormously valuable, and we would love you to stay involved. As one of nearly 250 homes in the project, you are helping build an unparalleled dataset not just in the UK but across Europe. Your involvement helps us to understand:

- how energy is being used in real homes,
- how helpful feedback is for people to save energy, and
- what that all means for energy policy in the UK.

We invite you to continue to be part of this exciting project. We will be offering some new feedback features after June. Before you decide whether to stay in IDEAL or to leave, please read the details below, so you are clear about what the changes mean for you.

Whatever you decide, we need you to tell us your decision by following the link at the end of this email. Thank you.

What does continuing beyond June 2018 mean for you and your household?

Most aspects of the project would remain the same. The details in the original information booklet would continue to apply, apart from the specific changes below. (A PDF of the booklet is available [here](#)).

Q. Will the feedback app continue to be developed from 1st July 2018?

A. Yes! Everyone will receive new features after 1st July.

The following are just some of the features that will be released over the next few months and on beyond July 2018.

- Temperature and humidity in each room of your home.
- Comparison of energy use between two time periods.
- Your electricity use shown minute by minute.
- The Energy Tester: test how much energy is used by a specific appliance, or for a whole activity like cooking.
- Estimates of which appliances you're using, when and what they're costing.
- The IDEAL app on your smartphone.
- Integration with Amazon's Echo.
- The ability to download your raw data.

Note: Some participants have had some of these features for some time, while some features will be new to everyone. As part of the project design, some homes have had fewer features than others to date. This has been a very important part of the project to help us evaluate what effect providing more information, in different ways, has on peoples' energy use. If you have had fewer features up till now, thank you for your patience and for staying with the project: from July, you too will get all the current features. And everyone will be getting something new!

All the following also apply **from 1st July 2018 onwards** (these may change again if we can secure more longer-term research funding):

Q. Will the Changeworks support phone line still be available?

A. No. The Changeworks support line will no longer be available; however, we will provide you with a new contact email address in case you need to get in touch. The support line would be one of the first things we reintroduce if we can secure additional longer-term research funding.

Q. What happens if my kit stops working?

A. We won't be able to provide repair visits to fix any problems. However, we will email you a short information booklet that will help you to deal with a few problems that some of the participating households have experienced to date. Again, if we secure additional funding in future we may be able to reintroduce the repair visit service.

Q. What happens if my sensors need new batteries?

A. The sensors are designed so that their batteries last several years, but they will eventually go flat. Sensors report to us when they will need replacement batteries. We have been able to secure a small amount of funding so we will be able to post new batteries out to you, when needed, with instructions on how to replace them.

Q. What happens if I want to stop taking part and want my kit removed?

A. We would love you to continue taking part in the project for as long as possible, but you are always free to leave whenever you want, and you don't need to give us a reason.

- If you decide to leave after 30th June 2018, we may not be able to visit to remove or collect equipment, although we will still try to wherever possible. Kit is simple to remove (we will email instructions) and is disposed of in the same way as other electrical waste.
- *[Applies to participants with an enhanced installation only:]* We will not be able to remove the electrical work done at your meter as part of your enhanced installation after the end of June – these will become your responsibility. The work is safe and has no effect on your electricity supply or usage, so can be left as it is.
- *[Applies to participants with an Evohome smart heating system installation only:]* We will not be able to remove or maintain the Evohome smart heating system after the end of June – this will become your property and so your responsibility, including any replacement of batteries in the TRV's.

Q. My energy company has offered me a smart meter, will this affect my ability to stay in IDEAL?

A. The information you get from us via the app is far more than you get from a smart meter (with more being available from July), but unlike smart meters we don't send your meter readings directly to your energy company. At this stage we cannot monitor smart gas meters though this may change with one of our prospective projects in 6 – 12 months' time. If you did change to smart meters then IDEAL feedback features that use gas data would no longer be able to use or display it from that date.

Preferably you would defer installing smart meters until later, which you are entitled to do. However, you are always free to change to smart meters. If you want to have smart meters we suggest that you check that they are the newer SMETS 2 meters rather than older SMETS 1 (see the link at the end of this email for further information).

Q. Will I have to give the tablet back?

A. No, the tablet is now yours to keep whether you choose to continue in IDEAL or to leave.

Q. I am still not sure if I want to continue in IDEAL or not. Who can I speak to?

A. If you are still not sure then we would be delighted to answer any questions you may have via email or over the telephone. Please contact us via IDEAL.energy.advice@ed.ac.uk, and provide your preferred telephone number and times of day you would like to be called.

Finally, we really do appreciate your participation in the IDEAL project. You have helped contribute to knowledge and understanding in energy research, which is helping shape future energy services and policy.

What you need to do now!

Whether you decide to stay or leave the project we need you to tell us!

If you decide to stay, **we need you to [\\$!://SurveyLink?d=give us permission to use your data from June 2018 in our research](#)!**

If you decide to leave and want the sensors removed we need to know this as soon as possible to book you in the diary for a visit to remove the sensors! Note that:

- For enhanced participants: you have the option to remove the additional enhanced sensors and remain in the project after June as a standard participant.
- For Evohome participants: you have the option to have the Evohome system removed and stay in the IDEAL project as either an enhanced or a standard participant.

Also, from June onwards, we will be releasing results from our project. You can also sign up to receive emails about the results.

So, don't hesitate, follow the link below to let us know your decision:

- {Link: Click here to tell us your decision}
- Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
{SurveyURL}

We are looking forward to this exciting next phase of IDEAL and continuing to provide a service to all of you who choose to stay with us.

Many thanks.

Best wishes,

The IDEAL team

SMETS 2 vs SMETS 1 Smart Meters – see this article for information about the benefits of SMETS 2 over SMETS 1: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/energy/2017/10/energy-firms-to-roll-out-smart-meters-which-let-you-switch-from-early-2018>