



Hard-to-  
Reach Energy  
Users

# “Hard-to-Reach” energy users and the trouble with terminology

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## HTR in non-energy spaces

- **Health**
- **Social services**
- **Education**
- Employment
- Social media
- Sports
- Gender
- Age
- Parents and families
- ‘Vulnerable’ populations
  - minorities
  - formerly incarcerated
  - homeless(ness)
  - immigrants and refugees
  - sex workers

## HTR in energy spaces



- Low-income
- Otherwise “vulnerable”
  - energy poor
  - mentally or physically disabled
  - PoC, indigenous, immigrants
  - very young or very old
  - geographically remote

TO A MUCH  
LESSER  
DEGREE



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## Our definition of HTR energy users

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*“In this Task, a hard-to-reach energy user is an energy user from the **residential** or commercial sectors who uses any type of energy or fuel, and who is typically either hard-to-reach physically, underserved, or hard to engage or motivate in behaviour change, energy efficiency and demand response interventions that are intended to serve our mutual needs.”*



# Terminology/definitions: Key findings

## Gap Analysis

Demographics	Psychographics
Vast majority = low income (but doesn't necessarily mean HTR or vulnerable)	A major opportunity?
High-income largely overlooked to date	Largely based on assumptions e.g. "they don't care about their bills"
Limited focus on geography: rural and urban Interesting intersectionalities re age & gender	Provides insights overlooked by demographics
Non-English speakers	Relations (e.g. Social Relations, UK), Values, Attitudes, Interests, Lifestyles
<b>Biggest gaps: gender, race, age</b>	<b>Biggest gaps: Listening to the actual audiences, needs assessments</b>

## Social Relations

*“Energy demand is no exception: how we consume energy is shaped by relationships of conflict, consensus, collaboration, companionship, solidarity and oppression with our fellow human beings.”*

*(Hargreaves & Middlemiss, 2020)*





## Major criticisms

- Failure to acknowledge (spatial) heterogeneity
- Poor diversity in terms of those designing schemes and interventions
- Dominant focus on low-income (being ‘the problem’)
- Beyond demographic data/approaches
- Accounting for compounding vulnerabilities
- The bigger issues/picture e.g. structural, systemic racism?



## Input from the audience – Thanks!

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*Q1: What data do we need to better understand the **demographics** of HTR users?*

*Q2. What data do we need to better understand the **psychographics** of HTR users?*

*Q3. **Who** do we need to be collecting this data (i.e., actors, organisations, institutions)?*