



Hard-to-
Reach Energy
Users

Barriers for Hard-to-reach energy users

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Some major findings - Definitions

- HTR is commonly-used (in and out of energy sector) but rarely clearly defined and it has many critiques
- Many different definitions in the energy sector, e.g.

“Those groups which are difficult to engage with from an organisational perspective because they do not feel empowered to do so, or due to barriers which may be overcome.” (Haringey Council, UK, 2010)

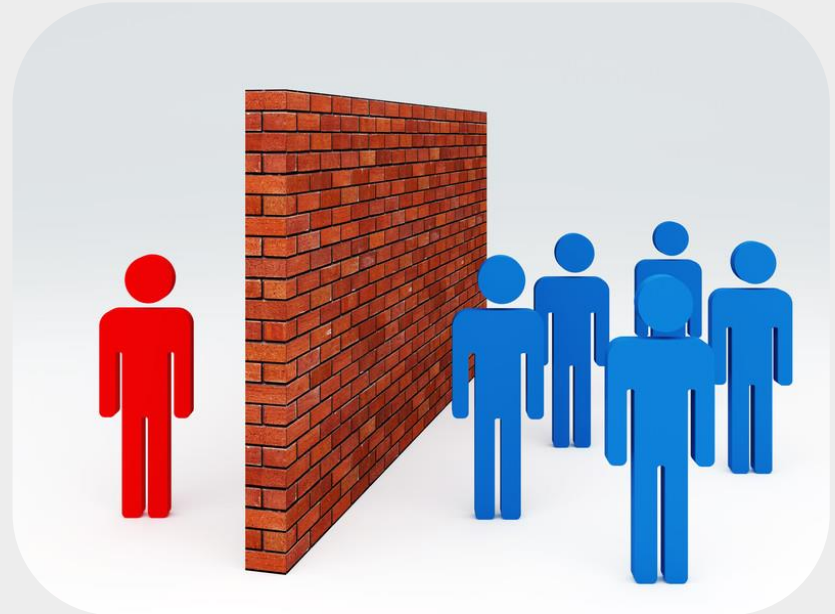
“Those customers who do not have easy access to programme information or generally do not participate in energy efficiency programmes due to a language, income, housing type, geographic, or home ownership (split incentives) barrier.” (CPUC, 2018)

“‘Hard-to-reach!’ exclaimed Kelly. ‘We’re not hard-to-reach, we’re right here! They are the ones who are hard-to-reach.’” (Symons, 2018)

⇒ Need to consider wider context and factors make these groups HTR

Some major findings - Definitions

- One commonality for HTR groups are certain barriers they face, e.g.:
 - Methods of involvement
 - Physical barriers
 - Technological barriers
 - Attitudinal barriers (esp. trust)
 - Financial / resource problems
 - Cultural misunderstanding
 - Gender, Age, Race
 - Timing
 - Competing Life Priorities
 - Perceptions of relevance
 - Etc.





Barriers: Key Findings Year 1

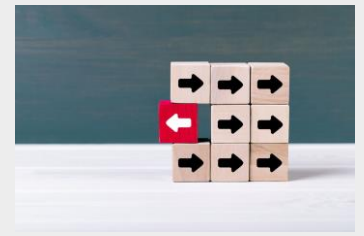
- **Most commonly mentioned barriers in HTR literature - across all HTR audiences:** Competing priorities, financial considerations, (mis)trust, market failures (e.g. split incentives), informational barriers.

⇒ *Much more focus in literature on describing barriers to engagement than actual needs of HTR energy users with HTR audiences or advocates.*





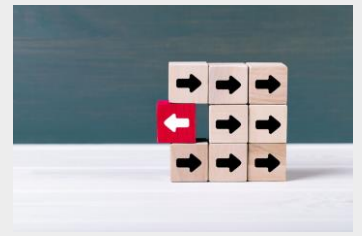
Barriers: Key Findings Year 1



- **'Vulnerable' households:** Neoliberalism in EE policy, prepayment as a barrier, stigma, lack of coordinated federal energy poverty strategy, lack of data/understanding, ignoring co-benefits of EE in CBA, poor quality housing, 'heat or eat', 'smart' tech vs 'smart' user, poor intervention design (eg in TOU), structural inequalities and racism
- **High income households:** perception of disposable income, price mechanisms are inadequate (high inc less sensitive to price inc), weak/no relationship between income and EE/conservation behaviors), negative correlation between income & reducing energy use
- **Landlords & tenants:** split incentives, principal-agent problem, barriers to investment, financial and informational barriers (landlords & tenants), trust, landlord perception/mistrust, multiple-dwelling buildings, rebound. For 'behaviour changers' - market fragmentation, no landlord body, lack of occupant data. Lack of co-benefit evaluations. Transaction costs.



Barriers: Key Findings Year 1



- **Commercial sector:** Different reporting practices, lack of access to ‘Behaviour Changers’, EE improvement in existing vs new commercial buildings, tragedy of the commons, human behaviours vs tech solutions, information asymmetry, lack of dedicated energy management/managers, importance/impotence of commercial building operators, administrative barriers (Behaviour Changers), poor evaluation of co-benefits & energy savings potentials, invisible energy policies, individual behaviours or social practices, sector specific barriers (eg office buildings, healthcare, food service, lodging, retail, manufacturing)
- **SMEs:** face many of the same barriers as commercial sector +/- landlords/tenants, but have more limited resources (time, money, skill/EE literacy, personnel), are more diverse, have a lack of awareness/mistrust of utility programmes, often have remote decision makers, and non-economic factors are also important.



*Q1: What are the **top three barriers** to engaging your HTR audience(s) of interest?*

*Q2. Have you encountered **(mis)trust** as a major barrier in your research?*

*Q3. How can you/should Behaviour Changers **gain and maintain trust** of your/their HTR energy users?*