

The recent manifestos indicate a **highly relevant topic**:

The Conservatives:

“Fair energy markets

... Energy suppliers have long operated a two-tier market, where those constantly checking for the best deal can do well but others are punished for inactivity with higher prices. Those hit worst are households with lower incomes, people with lower qualifications, people who rent their home and the elderly. A Conservative government will act in their interests....

We will introduce a safeguard tariff cap that will extend the price protection currently in place for some vulnerable customers to more customers on the poorest value tariffs... the safeguard tariff cap will protect customers who do not switch against abusive price increases.”

(Forward Together, The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017)

Labour:

“Labour understands that many people don’t have time to shop around, they just want reliable and affordable energy. So the next Labour Government will:

- Introduce an immediate emergency price cap to ensure that the average dual-fuel household energy bill remains below £1,000 per year, while we transition to a fairer system to bill payers.
- Take energy back into public ownership to deliver renewable energy, affordability for consumers, and democratic control. We will do this in the following stages:
 - Supporting the creation of publicly owned, locally accountable energy companies and co-operatives to rival existing private energy suppliers, with at least one in every region
 - Legislating... to ensure that national and regional grid infrastructure is brought into public ownership over time.”

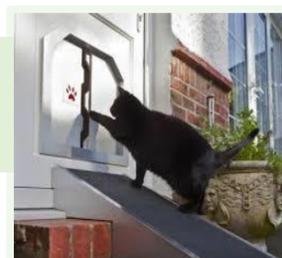
(For the Many not the Few, The Labour Party Manifesto 2017)

To inform the developing policy debate, we provide an interdisciplinary review of equity and justice in retail energy markets within a framework of **Access, Response and Outcomes**

a) How does *access* to opportunities vary?
e.g. different payment methods, suppliers, tariffs and information to make choices?

b) Consumers differ in their *response* to opportunities, because of different abilities and/or preferences.

c) *Outcomes*, such as expenditure on household energy, vary across time and consumer groups



The Equity and Justice in Energy Markets project is funded by the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC)

About the Research Packages

The project uses **quantitative and qualitative analysis** combining a variety of disciplines and methodologies - **legal, economic, policy studies and human geography** – in seven Research Packages:

RP1 – The Statutory and Institutional Context of Equity and Justice in Energy Markets

RP2 – The Impact of Devolved Administrations

RP3 - Who Hasn’t Switched, and the Postcode Lottery in their Energy Bills

RP4 - UK Energy Expenditure Shares: A Long Term View

RP5 - Energy Affordability Indicators: Energy Expenditure Shares vs Self-Reported Perceptions

RP6 - How SMEs View the Energy Market’s Performance

RP7 - Lived Experience of Energy Vulnerability

We identify **trends over four decades** to provide context to the current debates:

RP1, RP2, RP3 and RP4 show changes over time in the law, institutions, policy implementation, energy bills of households not switching supplier and household energy expenditure shares.

We provide **‘deep dives’** to explore the experience of residential and SME energy consumers:

RP3 identifies the characteristics of residential consumers who have ‘never switched’; RP7 explores the experience of social housing tenants facing ‘energy vulnerability’; and RP6 analyses the attitudes of SMEs to the market.

We explore the technical and political issues surrounding **fuel poverty measurement**:

RP2 compares policy design and its implications for justice in the devolved administrations; RP4 and RP5 consider the relation with actual energy expenditure and householders’ perceptions of heat affordability; while RP7 explores the experience of households who face difficulties but may fall outside official fuel poverty definitions.