

Press release: Smart data to protect consumers from rip-off tariffs

- Smart Data Review launched as research published today suggests customers who stay loyal to essential service providers are losing out on £4 billion a year
- the review will look at how we can use technology such as comparison tools and open banking to ensure markets work for consumers, as part of our modern Industrial Strategy

Consumer Minister Kelly Tolhurst has today (Friday 28 September) published details of a new review which will make it easier for consumers to get good deals on essential services like broadband and banking, and put an end to consumers paying unjustifiable 'loyalty penalties'.

The [Smart Data Review](#) will look at speeding up the development of innovative new services such as automatic switching apps to make bills cheaper.

Government wants to ensure that all consumers can benefit from these types of innovative new services, not just those who are digitally savvy and regularly look to switch providers.

The Review will report to the newly established Consumer Forum, chaired by Consumer Minister Kelly Tolhurst, which brings together ministers and CEOs of sector regulators. The government will consult with stakeholders including developers, regulated companies, consumer organisations and charities throughout the review.

Consumer Minister Kelly Tolhurst said:

Britain has long been a world leader in ensuring that markets work in the interests of consumers, but many loyal customers are still paying more than they need to.

The Smart Data Review will enable the development of new technologies to make it easier to access the best deals, and follows tough action we have taken in the energy market through our price cap which will protect over 11 million households from poor value default tariffs this winter.

It is our modern Industrial Strategy in action, ensuring markets provide consumers with keen prices and quality products and services through cutting-edge innovation.

The government's [Modernising Consumer Markets Green Paper](#) highlighted the challenges that consumers face in regulated markets such as financial services, energy and telecoms. For example, consumers can struggle to stay on top of their essential service contracts and find it difficult to identify

the best deal, and those that do not switch sometimes pay considerably more.

Today Citizens Advice revealed that customers who stay loyal to their providers are losing out on over £4 billion a year. The Competition and Markets Authority, the UK's primary competition and consumer authority, is investigating the concerns raised by Citizens Advice.

Citizens Advice research shows the loyalty penalty is disproportionately paid by vulnerable consumers, such as older people and people with mental health issues. These groups are particularly likely to struggle with switching.

In addition to the Smart Data Review, the government is working with regulators to ensure vulnerable consumers are protected by identifying and sharing best practice policies and approaches to vulnerable consumers from across all sectors of the economy.