

# Beyond energy feedback

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Feedback in energy demand reduction workshop  
Edinburgh, 4-5 July 2016

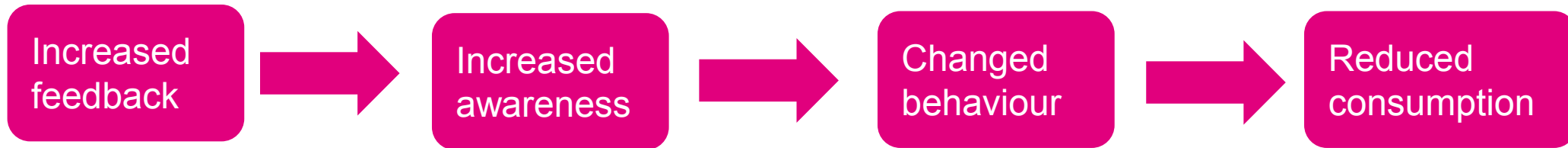


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# Energy Feedback



- ◆ Multiple forms of energy feedback
- ◆ Multiple media for energy feedback
- ◆ Multiple contexts for energy feedback
- ◆ BUT, one dominant logic for how it should work:



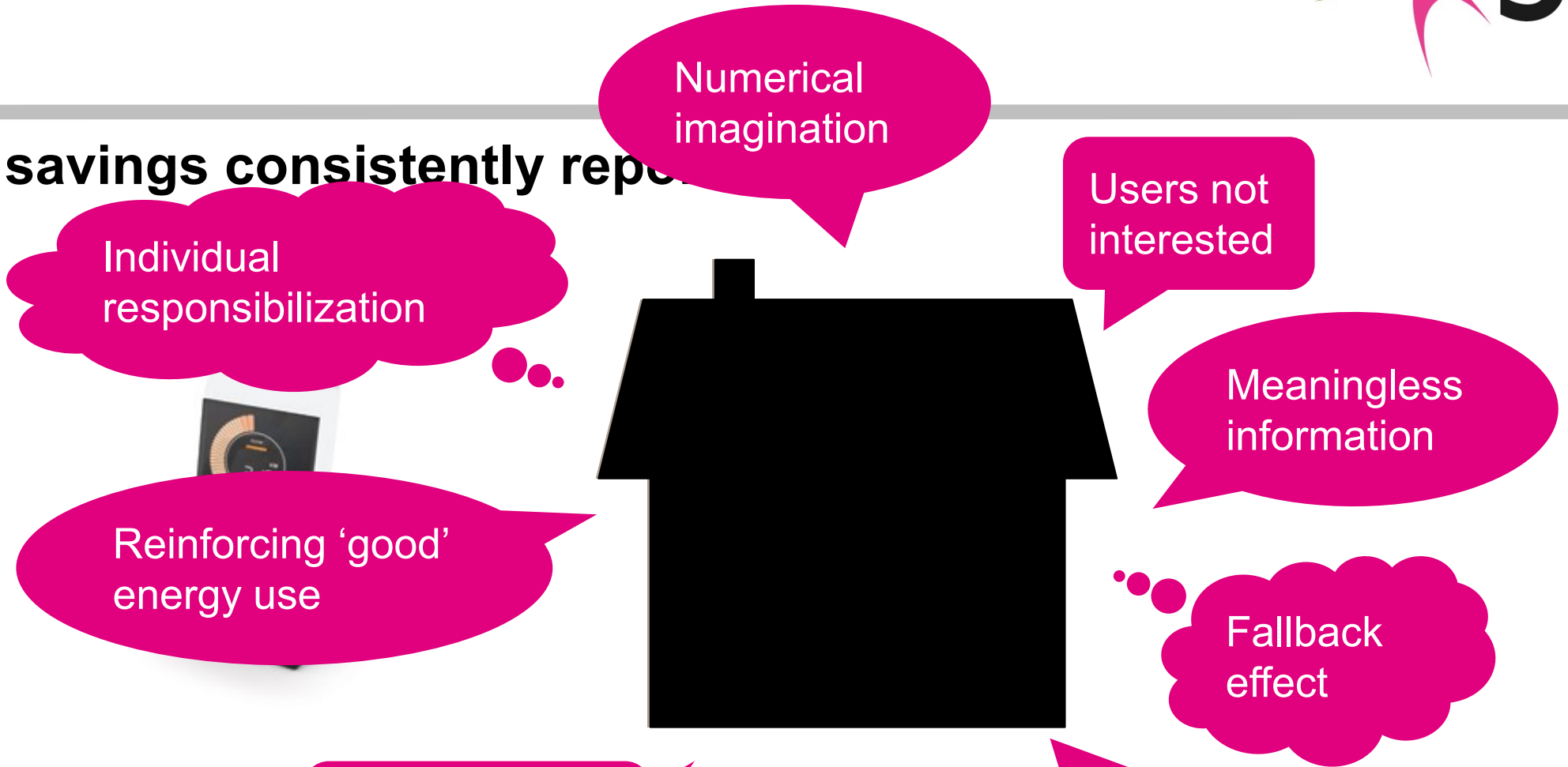
(Wilhite and Ling 1995)

- ◆ And a limited set of energy behaviours targeted.

# Energy Feedback



◆ Modest savings consistently reported



◆ BUT, lots of limitations highlighted



# Practice Feedback



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- ◆ So what does go on inside homes/workplaces and how does energy feedback impact upon it?
  - ◆ Strengers (2013) argues that energy feedback is just one form of feedback among many others in everyday life...
  - ◆ Need to identify the other kinds of feedback operating on/within everyday practices.

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## ◆ Social Feedback:

- ◆ Energy feedback provides some evaluative judgment/social feedback on energy use, but there are other important forms too...
- ◆ Friends, family members, non-humans, the media etc. All provide other forms of feedback that may require us to do things that use energy:
- ◆ *“If the kids are complaining about the cold, then I know I need to do something.”* (Interviewee in Wright 2016)
- ◆ *“I would know if it were cold in the house from Marley [the dog] if he were sitting on the warm patch of floor by the airing cupboard.”* (Interviewee in Wright 2016)

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## ◆ Material Feedback:

- ◆ The material environment may ‘invite’ us to do things that use energy in various ways...
- ◆ *“Because we have spent money on the tumble dryer, the coffee machine, we might as well use them now. Plus, they look at me saying ‘use me, use me!’”*  
(Interviewee in Wright 2016)

## ◆ Embodied Sensory Feedback:

- ◆ We sense when we may need to do things that use more energy...
- ◆ *“If I walk in the front door and you get that nice warm feeling, then that’s a good thing. If I don’t get that feeling, then I need to put the heating on ASAP.”*  
(Interviewee in Wright 2016)

# Practice Feedback



- ◆ Energy feedback isn't (yet?) of critical significance for how practices should be carried out, so it is easily ignored.
- ◆ So, either we need to make energy feedback more significant to everyday practices...
- ◆ Or, we should focus instead on the forms of feedback that are central to practices...
- ◆ And try to get better at using of these to reduce rather than increase energy demand.



# Policy Feedback



- ◆ **Beyond the home or workplace, what is the nature of feedback about energy feedback?**
  - ◆ How are problems framed?
  - ◆ What questions get asked?
  - ◆ How are key actors and objects defined and bounded?
  - ◆ What counts as legitimate evidence?
  - ◆ How are policies evaluated?





# Policy Feedback



## ◆ Energy focus:

- ◆ “[The smart meter roll-out] *can play a key role in transforming how consumers buy and use energy.*”

## ◆ Object focus (i.e. IHDs):

- ◆ “*Most consumers, including those who generally had little interest in technology, reported finding the IHD easy to use.*”

## ◆ Individual behaviour change framing:

- ◆ “*Consumers could benefit from suppliers obtaining advance information about their needs...and also to consider the role of tailored follow-up advice.*”



Smart Metering  
Implementation Programme

DECC’s Policy Conclusions:  
Early Learning Project and Small-scale  
Behaviour Trials

March 2015

# So what? Going beyond energy feedback...



- ◆ The limits of energy feedback suggest a need to experiment with alternatives...
- ◆ These alternatives generate different kinds of questions about engagements with and responses to energy demand in everyday life.
- ◆ Whilst energy feedback has an important role to play, significantly reducing energy demand demands that we go beyond energy feedback.



**Energy Babble**  
(Gaver et al 2015)



**The Natural Fuse**  
(naturalfuse.org)

# Thanks

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