



Innovation: designing for a sustainable future

The uptake of green tariffs.

Dave Elliott

One of the easiest ways to save your personal guilt about consuming too much electricity or whatever is of course to pick up the phone or get on the internet and order a switch from your existing supplier to one of the green tariff schemes. It takes minutes and you can then have the high personal satisfaction of thinking the power that you're using is matched by power being generated from a renewable source, and lots of people do it. Maybe only a hundred thousand or so in the UK so far but there are special reasons why it's been slow to take off in this country. The main reason being is there isn't much green power to buy. Nearly all the green power that is available is going to the other mechanism, the renewables obligation. The companies are required to supply so much power so they are taking the majority of it. Anything that is left from that is offered up for the sort of last bargain sale. Except it's not much of a bargain because they're having to charge quite a lot for it through the tariff schemes. You go across the Channel to the continental Europe you will find it's very different, where I think something like 38 per cent of people in the Netherlands are signed up on green tariff schemes or nearly 40 per cent. In this country it must be 2 per cent or something like that.