

**THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
ACHIEVED CUT-THROUGH
TO A DIFFICULT-TO-REACH
AUDIENCE WITH HIGHLY
TARGETED DIRECT MAIL PIECE**



**The Scottish
Government**



Royal Mail

MarketReach

BACKGROUND

The Scottish government needed to promote its free energy savings service to a difficult-to-reach target audience; lower income retired people who may be entitled to grants. EAP is one of the Scottish Government's flagship schemes for tackling fuel poverty. EAP provides free central heating, boiler or insulation to those who meet a very detailed set of checks and inspection criteria. The core fuel poverty audience have proved immune to past marketing. The net effect is most people predisposed to seek assistance have already done so, leaving a disadvantaged core in desperate need but stubbornly immune to marketing. EAP response rates have almost halved since inception (6% in 2009 to 3.2% in 2011).

SOLUTION

The first step was to identify and understand the target audience. So the database was re-profiled based on a targeting model looking at: age/presence of children; housing tenure; property type; benefits and income profile; and 'Lookalike' profiling of past EAP qualifiers. A core prospect pool was identified of the 210,000 most-in-need households. Direct Mail was chosen as the best channel to contact these households as it is more likely to be taken seriously and opened.

The biggest challenges were a series of deeply entrenched barriers. The audience were wary of those 'trying to sell you something' and were untrusting, so they used an official-looking mailing, with strong official branding. The audience also believed that offers are usually too good to be true, so straightforward language was used, avoiding hyperbole. Self-exclusion was tackled with an inclusive/exclusive tick-box device and by citing the number of households already assisted, plus the fullest range of reply options for easy response.

Conventional wisdom held that autumn/winter was the optimal campaigning period so the creative execution made a virtue of an unseasonal message with a snowman on the beach. This helped to overcome cynicism, self-exclusion and low confidence among the target audience. The snowman on the beach creative allied to the message 'Make your winter feel like summer'.



Source: DMA Silver Award, 2013

RESULTS

This campaign reversed declining response rates with over 9,000 enquiries (4.4% response rate versus 3% target) and 1,617 qualifying households: an average fuel cost saving of £669 and 2.9 tonnes of CO² emission savings per household. 1,617 households passed the full eligibility criteria for EAP assistance.

