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# D3.3 Communication materials on smart meters and energy performance certificates – aimed at students moving into the private rented sector

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#### Introduction

SAVES 2 is made of two distinct campaigns – Student Switch Off (SSO) and Student Switch Off + (SSO+). The aim of SSO+ is to raise awareness amongst students of how they can save energy and money when living in the private rented sector, thus reducing their exposure to fuel poverty. Students are encouraged to take practical behavioural changes, search for properties with good energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings, and by getting and using smart meters.

This report relates to the communication of advice to students when they are moving in to the private rented sector and is focussed on partner countries that ran Student Switch Off as part of the original SAVES project (Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania and the UK). The target for the academic year is to reach at least 800 students with advice materials.

## SSO+ communication to students moving into the private rented sector

As part of the Student Switch Off+ campaign we want to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn how much they are expected to pay for energy, and what they can do to save energy, in their chosen new homes.

Before the start of the 2017-18 academic year, NUS UK produced a dummy energy bill that was to be communicated to students who had been involved in Student Switch Off in 2016-17 (please refer to Figure 1). The purpose of the dummy energy bill was to raise awareness of how much students would have spent on electricity when living in halls of residence to increase their consciousness of energy usage and the associated cost when they moved into the private rented sector. The bill included tips on what students could do to minimise their energy usage and costs when living in the private rented sector – including advice on smart meters and on energy performance certificates (EPCs).

The advice and statistics on the dummy energy bill were adapted by each partner country organisation to the relevant situation in each country – e.g. the rollout of smart meters is at different stages in each country so the UK advice was very different from the Cypriot advice. The partner organisations driving the adaptation and rollout of information were NUS UK (in the UK), University of Cyprus (Cyprus), Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (Lithuania), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), and the Technical University of Crete (TUC)

The dummy energy bill was communicated in the following ways:

- In **Cyprus** the dummy energy bill was posted on the University of Cyprus Student Switch Off page and the post was shared by the University of Cyprus student dormitories Facebook pages.
- In **Greece** the energy bill was posted onto the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and Technical University of Crete Student Switch Off Facebook pages. Posters of the dummy bill were also printed and put up in university buildings and on information stalls.
- In **Lithuania** the dummy energy bill was promoted on the Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Student Switch Off Facebook page.
- In the **UK** the dummy energy bill was promoted via e-mail, university specific Student Switch Off Facebook pages and the Student Switch Off Twitter account. Universities and students' unions were tagged in the tweet in order to encourage them to retweet the image to their students thereby increasing the reach of the advice.

Figures 1-7 give examples of communication materials used in the four countries. Table 1 provides a timeline of the communications between July and November 2017 and Table 2 provides statistics on the combined reach and engagement of these communications. Reach is defined as students receiving emails or viewing social media posts, with engagement defined as student interaction with our emails and social media posts, for example opens, clicks, shares, likes and retweets. Since the communications started prior to students moving into accommodation, in some instances (e.g. University of Cyprus, and the Greek universities) the e-mail list for students in the private-rented sector was still being compiled so the communication had just focused on



social media reach/engagement. As can be seen from the Table 2, we have already significantly surpassed our target of reaching 800 students so this aspect of the project has got off to a good start.

**Table 1:** Timeline of private rented sector communication materials in each country (September 2017 to January 2018)

Country	Communication Method	Date	Topic
Cyprus	Facebook Posts	September 2017	Dummy Energy Bill Tips for energy and money saving in rented accommodation
Greece	Facebook Posts	November 2017	Dummy Energy Bill
	Printed posters displayed on walls and presentation boards at events	November 2017	Dummy Energy Bill
Lithuania	Facebook Posts	September 2017	Dummy Energy Bill
UK	Email	August 2017	Tips for energy and money saving in rented accommodation
	Facebook and Twitter Posts	July 2017 August 2017	Dummy Energy Bill Tips for energy and money saving in rented accommodation

**Table 2:** Reach and engagement statistics of the private rented sector communication materials in each country (September 2017 to January 2018)

Country	E-mail reach (those sent information)	E-mail engagement (including opens, clicks, shares)	Social media reach (views)	Social media engagement (including clicks, retweets, likes, shares)
Cyprus	NA	NA	961	62
Greece	NA	NA	609	104
Lithuania	NA	NA	157	5
UK	14,567	1,185	26,223	440
Total	14,567	1,185	27,950	611



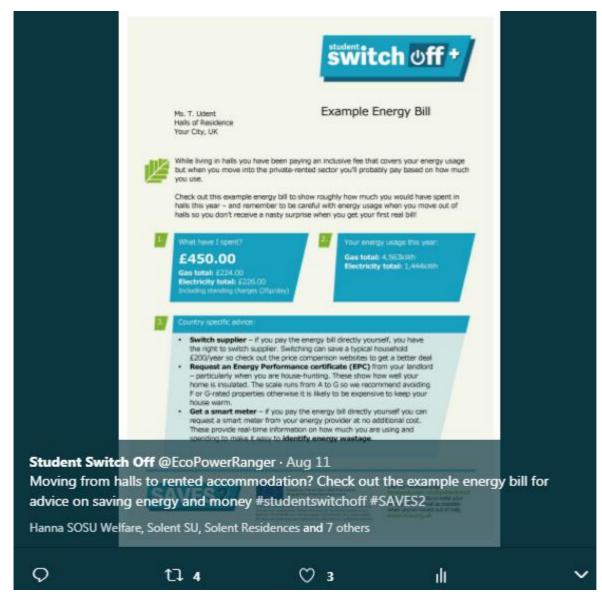


Figure 1: The UK dummy energy bill posted on Twitter with other organisations tagged, in order to increase the reach of the tweet



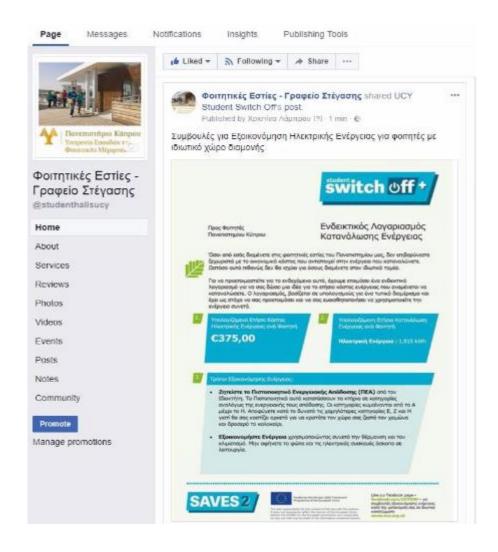


Figure 2: Screenshot of the Cypriot dummy energy bill posted on the University of Cyprus accommodation Facebook page





Figure 3: Hard copy of the dummy energy bill and advice for students at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens





Figure 4: Hard copy of the dummy energy bill and advice from the Technical University of Crete



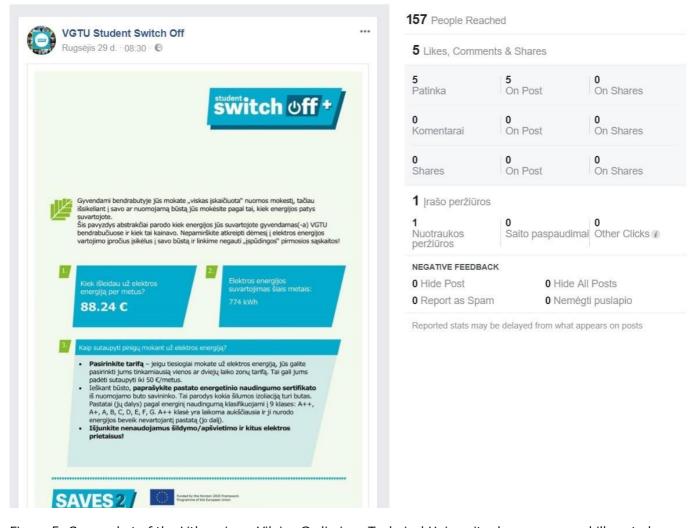


Figure 5: Screenshot of the Lithuanian - Vilnius Gediminas Technical University dummy energy bill posted on the VGTU Facebook Page





Figure 6: General energy-saving tips for students living in the private-rented sector posted on the Cypriot Student Switch Off Facebook page





### Tips for money and energy-saving in rented accommodation

Many thanks for supporting the Student Switch Off while you were living in halls of residence last year. As the majority of you will now be living in the private-rented sector and paying your energy bills directly, we thought it would be useful to share some tips on how you can minimise your energy expenditure, while staying warm and reducing your environmental impact! Plus, the fun isn't over yet, you can still win prizes for showing us what you've been doing to keep your energy bills under control. Read on to find out more...

The average student spends over £500 a year on energy in the private-rented sector and even those on an all-inclusive system sometimes have to pay additional charges which are avoidable. We've put together a list of actions you can take now to make sure you're not paying too much for your energy:

- Switch supplier or tariff if you pay the energy bill directly yourself, you have the right to switch supplier or tariff. Switching can save a typical household £200 a year so check out the price comparison websites to find the best deal for you.
- Get a smart meter if you pay the energy bill directly yourself you can request a smart meter from your energy provider at no additional cost. These provide realtime information on how much you are using and spending to make it easy to identify energy wastage. Check out our advice video here.
- Take meter readings it's really important to keep track of your energy usage in



order avoid nasty shocks, so we encourage you to locate your electricity and gas meters and to take meter readings (take a photo of the readings on the meters). This will be really useful if you think your energy provider may have charged you too much later in the year.

- Buy energy efficient appliances the majority of electrical appliances such as light bulbs will have an energy efficiency label which ranges from A+++ to D – obviously the D-rating is the worst! The better the rating, the less the appliances will cost to use.
- Don't leave heating/lights/appliances left on unnecessarily simple actions you take will save you money on your bills, and reduce your impact on climate change too!

Over the year we'll be running monthly competitions where you can win Ben & Jerry's and NUS extra cards as a thank-you for showing us how you've been saving energy in your rented property. Like the 'Student Switch Off' Facebook page to be kept in the loop and find out how to win prizes.

Catch-up soon,

Neil

P.S. If you don't want to receive these e-mails once a month you can unsubscribe via the link at the top of the e-mail. You can still get involved by liking the <u>Facebook page</u> even if you don't want to receive the e-mails.

Figure 7: HTML e-mail sent to UK students previously involved in the Student Switch Off campaign but now living in the private-rented sector.

