



Energy Downsizing: More than a quarter of people would consider moving to a smaller home in order to reduce their energy bills

- 28% of respondents would consider downsizing their property to reduce their energy costs
 - 16% spend ten per cent or more of their total income on energy bills
- In Wales, a staggering 43% of those surveyed would contemplate moving home to reduce their energy bills
 - 5.5 million UK households are suffering from fuel poverty

A new survey released today (**4th October**) has revealed the dramatic measures people are being forced to consider in the face of spiralling fuel costs in the UK. In a poll of more than 2,000 people, Ebico, the UK's only not-for-profit energy supplier, found that more than a quarter (28%) of respondents said they would consider "energy downsizing" – moving to a smaller property to reduce their gas and electricity bills.

The findings reinforce the government's statistics on fuel poverty published in July, which revealed that 5.5 million households in the UK are now considered "fuel poor", up by one million from the previous year.

In the Ebico survey, just over a sixth of respondents reported that they spend more than 10% of their income on energy bills, placing them in the fuel poverty category. And with 34% of respondents aged over 55, and almost 40% reporting that they live alone, the findings suggest that for many older people, trying to heat and light a property of which they are the sole occupant is becoming too great a burden.

Phil Levermore, Managing Director of Ebico, said: "It seems to be a case of desperate times calling for desperate measures, with a growing number of people in the UK contemplating downsizing their home to save money on their energy bill. The findings of our survey demonstrate how high energy prices are a very real threat for a large proportion of UK households. We need to do much more to support and educate people about how to become more energy efficient, so they are not forced to resort to extreme measures like moving home."

In fact, there is much that can be done to become more energy efficient and reduce fuel costs without consumers being forced to downsize their property. Ebico's survey found that the most common measures consumers employed to save energy included the use of energy saving light bulbs (15%), turning off lights (14%) or turning down the heating (13%). But there are other ways for



consumers to become “energy-fit” – by simply insulating their hot water tank, putting their washing on a lower temperature or switching to a high efficiency boiler, they can make considerable energy savings year on year.

Levermore adds: “At Ebico, we’re committed to eradicating fuel poverty in the UK. We operate a fair pricing scheme which means consumers who use very little energy, such as those living alone, are not penalised by paying a higher tariff. Equally, we oppose the practice of doorstep selling which tends to target the most vulnerable people, who as a result often end up paying more than they should for their energy bills, although they can least afford to.”

Ebico supports community initiatives across the UK through its Trust for Sustainable Development that help low-income households become more energy efficient and save money. Working in partnership with environmental charity Groundwork UK, its ‘Green Doctor’ initiative has helped low-income households in Leeds, London and Slough by offering free energy saving advice and by installing energy efficiency measures.

Already, the Green Doctor scheme has helped more than 2,500 Leeds households, who as a result are poised to save over half a million pounds over a lifetime through the project. It is one of several projects Ebico is involved in across the country through its Sustainable Development Trust.

Notes to Editors:

About Ebico

Ebico is the UK’s only not-for-profit energy supply company in the UK and is committed to the reduction and elimination of fuel poverty. The company’s flat rate tariff with no standing charge rewards low users of energy. For more information visit www.ebico.co.uk

Ebico was set up with the core aim of helping to end fuel poverty in the UK. It does this through fair pricing and energy saving advice and by diverting any surplus company revenue – through the Ebico Trust for Sustainable Development – to community programmes such as HEAT, that help people affected by fuel poverty.

About the survey

The Ebico customer survey was sent out to subscribers to Ebico’s monthly newsletter. Out of this, there were 2,404 respondents to the survey.